



**Université Bordeaux Montaigne**

**École Doctorale Montaigne Humanités (ED 480)**

**THÈSE DE DOCTORAT EN  
« Études des Mondes Anglophones »**

**Récits, images et marketing  
des territoires du surf en Irlande :  
lectures mythopoétiques  
d'un surflore irlandais**

**TOME 2**

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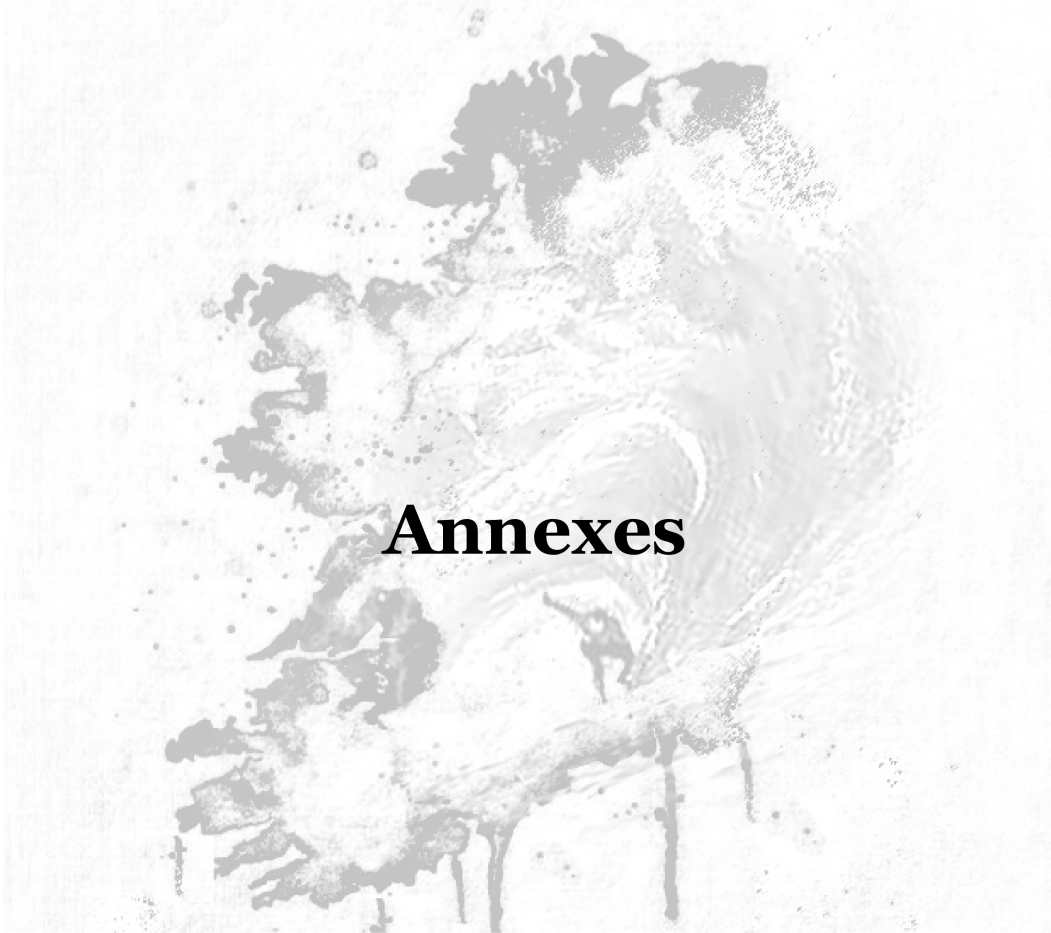
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# Annexe 1

## Questionnaire d'enquête

Les questions posées lors des entretiens avec les 30 surfeurs interrogés s'organisent autour des catégories suivantes, regroupées dans le tableau ci-dessous :

<u>Type de questions</u>	<u>Finalités</u>	<u>Thèmes ciblés par les questions</u>
<b>1. Questions de nature narrative et auto-biographique ; récits de vie.</b>	Recueillir des récits de vie évoquant l'introduction au surf, le parcours et l'évolution des savoirs et techniques de chaque sujet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Première vague, circonstances de l'entrée dans la pratique et accompagnement ;</li> <li>. la plus grosse vague surfée dernièrement ;</li> <li>. la meilleure vague ;</li> <li>. le pire <i>wipe out</i> ;</li> <li>. description du ressenti pour chacun des 3 points ci-dessus ;</li> <li>. raisons de l'attrance pour la pratique, effort de définition de la relation entretenue avec celle-ci (passion ou addiction?) ;</li> <li>. compromis voire sacrifices concédés dans la vie personnelle / professionnelle en faveur de la pratique.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Questions de nature descriptive et analytique : le surf en tant qu'expérience sensible individuelle ; récits de vie / biographies.</b>	Saisir les sensibilités propres aux surfeurs, leur appréhension personnelle de la pratique et de ses interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Préférence pour quelle manœuvre ?</li> <li>. Préférence pour quelle vague ou type de vague ?</li> <li>. Le surf est-il une pratique créative ?</li> <li>Rapports à la performance athlétique, technique et artistique ;</li> <li>. la place de l'ego, la relation à soi et aux autres dans l'eau, et l'importance d'être vu ;</li> <li>. relation à l'eau, au rivage et au monde océanique et engagement, prises de position, considérations environnementales ou/et politiques.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Questions de nature narrative et descriptive : l'histoire du surf en Irlande, lieux de pratique et leurs caractéristiques environnementales, mobilités et flux migratoires des sujets ; récits de vie / biographies.</b>	Saisir les singularités de la pratique irlandaise du surf ; suggérer des points de comparaison avec le surf tel qu'il se pratique dans d'autres pays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. L'histoire locale du surf et personnalités locales admirées ;</li> <li>. les rapports de genres au sein de la discipline ;</li> <li>. la revendication d'une forme d'adhésion à une culture du surf au sens large ;</li> <li>. localisme et relation au territoire, en Irlande et, d'un point de vue inversé, à l'étranger.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Questions de nature descriptive et analytique : actualités sociales, économiques et culturelles de la pratique irlandaise.</b>	Identifier les enjeux économiques, sociaux, culturels et environnementaux de la pratique irlandaise du surf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. L'institutionnalisation de la pratique en Irlande : affiliation à l'I.S.A. ou non, et pourquoi ;</li> <li>. le circuit professionnel le cas échéant et les modalités d'accès à une professionnalisation ;</li> <li>. les évolutions techniques de la pratique ;</li> <li>. les représentations médiatiques du surf irlandais ;</li> <li>. l'industrie du surf et son essor actuel en Irlande ;</li> <li>. les enjeux économiques, sociaux, culturels et environnementaux liés au développement commercial de la pratique.</li> </ul>

**Fig. 16 :** Tableau de structuration du questionnaire d'entretien.

## Annexe 2

### Tableau synoptique des enquêtés

<u>Sujet</u>	<u>Profil générationnel</u>	<u>Niveau de pratique et expérience</u>	<u>Motifs de la sélection</u>	<u>Modalités de prise de contact</u>	<u>Date et lieu de l'entretien</u>	<u>Entretien enregistré (son) / filmé</u>
<b>Giles CAREY</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau	Surfeur expérimenté âgé de 31 ans au moment de l'entretien, Giles est établi en Irlande depuis 1992. Ancien moniteur de surf à l'école Turf n Surf, il est photographe et vidéographe, connu sous le nom de « Pockets Full of Water ». S'il n'est pas natif de Bundoran, il est néanmoins reconnu et respecté dans la communauté locale de surfeurs de par son excellent niveau de pratique, son engagement dans les vagues les plus difficiles du Peak, de Pmpa, Blackspot ou Mullaghmore, ainsi que pour son investissement dans la vie culturelle de la communauté.	Relation personnelle : Giles est mon compagnon, et m'a assistée dans la plupart des entretiens réalisés dans le cadre de cette recherche en prenant en charge la gestion des enregistrements filmés. Ces derniers sont mis à profit en vue de réaliser un documentaire intitulé <i>Daoine na Mara – Tales from the Green Shores</i> , projet que nous menons en collaboration en parallèle de ces recherches doctorales. Giles s'est prêté au jeu de l'entretien semi-directif, me permettant ainsi de mettre mon questionnaire à l'épreuve.	5 septembre 2017, à Leap (co. Cork)	Oui / oui
<b>Liam AHERN</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté	Surfeur expérimenté, natif du comté de Cork, Liam est moniteur de surf et gérant de l'école de surf Inchydoney Surf School (co. Cork). Il est également musicien.	Recommandé par Giles Carey, relation personnelle ; prise de contact par l'intermédiaire de la messagerie Messenger de Facebook.	12 septembre 2017, devant l'école de surf dont il est le gérant, à Inchydoney (co. Cork)	Oui / oui
<b>Colm McAULEY</b>	Génération X	Surfeur amateur expérimenté	Propriétaire et gérant de l'école de surf Inchydoney Surf School, Colm est originaire du comté de Cork.	Recommandé par Liam Ahern.	12 septembre 2017, devant l'école de surf dont il est le propriétaire, à Inchydoney (co. Cork)	Oui / oui
<b>Nollaig HURLEY et Ellen O'CONNOR</b>	Génération X	Surfeuses amatrices	Propriétaire (Nollaig) et gérantes (Nollaig et Ellen) de la boutique de surf Jelly Fish Surf Shop, Cloanikilty (co. Cork).	Suggérées par Giles Carey.	13 septembre 2017, dans leur boutique Jelly Fish Surf shop à Clonakilty, (co. Cork)	Oui / oui
<b>Ben FARR</b>	Génération X	Surfeur amateur expérimenté	Propriétaire et gérant de la boutique de surf Dingle Surf Shop, Dingle (co. Kerry). Originaire de la Cornouailles (Newquay, spot de surf reconnu en Grande Bretagne), Ben et son frère Jason se sont installés il y a plusieurs années dans le comté de Kerry pour profiter de la qualité des vagues de la côte ouest irlandaise, et	Boutique de surf identifiée lors des premiers repérages sur le terrain ; l'entretien a été proposé et accepté dès ma première visite.	14 septembre 2017, dans sa boutique Dingle Surf Shop à Dingle (co. Kerry)	Oui / oui

			y ont fondé leur boutique.			
<b>Tim ALLCUTT</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté	Tim est un pratiquant régulier. Il vit dans son van aménagé et de son emploi saisonnier de moniteur de surf dans le comté du Kerry pour l'école Kingdom Waves Surf School, Inch.	Premier contact sur la plage d'Inch, puis recommandé par Giles Carey	15 septembre 2017, dans son van aménagé, garé sur la plage d'Inch (co. Kerry)	Oui / oui
<b>Jamie KNOX</b>	Baby-boomers	Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau	Ancien <i>windsurfer</i> professionnel, âgé d'une cinquantaine d'années, Jamie Knox est une figure reconnue du monde des sports aquatiques en Irlande. Il est le propriétaire et gérant de Jamie Knox Watersports à Castlegregory, co. Kerry, une boutique d'équipement de sports d'eau offrant également des cours de surf, kitesurf et planche à voile.	Suggéré par Giles Carey. Prise de contact par l'intermédiaire de la messagerie Messenger de Facebook.	15 septembre 2017, dans son surf shop à Kilshannig, Castlegregory (co. Kerry).	Oui / oui
<b>Olga DRAGON</b>	Génération Y	Surfeuse amatrice	Surfeuse amatrice, originaire de Lettonie, Olga est âgée d'environ trente ans. Elle s'est installée à Cork au début des années 2000. Pratiquante régulière depuis trois ans au moment de l'entretien, elle se décrit comme une surfeuse passionnée.	Relation personnelle : j'ai rencontré Olga lors de mon premier séjour dans le Donegal alors qu'elle était de passage chez Cosy Joe's. Prise de contact par l'intermédiaire de la messagerie Messenger de Facebook.	16 septembre 2017, dans un restaurant choisi par Olga à Lahinch (co. Clare) : Randaddy's, situé près de l'esplanade et de la plage principale.	Oui / oui
<b>Tom GILLESPIE</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau	Bodyboarder expérimenté et reconnu dans la communauté irlandaise de surfeurs de grosses vagues, ancien compétiteur, Tom est originaire de Dublin mais s'est installé sur la côte ouest irlandaise afin de profiter des vagues. Au moment de l'entretien, il effectue des recherches dans le cadre d'un doctorat en Économie Environnementale à l'Université de Galway (ses recherches portent sur une problématique liée à la surf économie, notamment la valeur des ressources immobilières en fonction de leur proximité d'attractions côtières).	Prise de contact par l'intermédiaire de la messagerie Messenger de Facebook.	16 septembre 2017, à proximité de la plage principale de Lahinch.	Oui / oui

<b>Ollie O'FLAHERTY</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur semi-professionnel de haut niveau	Surfeur expérimenté de grosses vagues, professionnel et compétiteur, Ollie est natif de Lahinch. Moniteur de surf et sponsorisé par des marques de surf telles que C-Skins Wetsuits, Globe, Creatures of Leisure, Monster, Coded Surfboards and Sexwax, il jouit d'une grande notoriété sur les scènes nationale et internationale. Il a notamment été nommé aux Billa-bong XXL Awards en Californie en 2012 (catégorie « Biggest Wave »), et de nouveau en 2019 (catégorie « Ride of the Year »).	Prise de contact par l'intermédiaire de la messagerie Messenger de Facebook.	16 septembre 2017, près de la plage principale de Lahinch.	Oui / oui
<b>Rory O'DOWD</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur semi-professionnel de haut niveau	Bodyboarder et surfeur reconnu sur la scène nationale, Rory participe à des compétitions et est également moniteur de surf dans la petite ville de Strandhill, co. Sligo, dont il est originaire. Âgé de 25 ans au moment de l'entretien, Rory est également un musicien reconnu, et se produit régulièrement en concert dans les pubs de Strandhill.	Prise de contact par l'intermédiaire de la messagerie Messenger de Facebook.	17 septembre 2017, au Strand Bar des frères Byrne, à Strandhill (co. Sligo).	Oui / oui
<b>Adam CROSS</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté	Surfeur expérimenté et moniteur de surf, Adam est originaire des « Midlands » irlandais (co. Kildare). Il s'est installé à Bundoran, comté du Donegal il y a près de dix ans et y est presque assimilé à un « local ». Adam aussi un musicien et compositeur reconnu sur la scène du Donegal, et populaire dans la ville de Bundoran.	Relation personnelle : Adam est un ami que m'a présenté Giles.	17 septembre 2017, chez lui, à Tullaghan (petit village à l'entrée de Bundoran, co. Donegal).	Oui / oui
<b>Neil et John BYRNE</b>	Baby-boomers	Surfeurs amateurs expérimentés de haut niveau	John et Neill Byrne sont deux frères reconnus dans la communauté de surfeurs de la région de Strandhill, co. Sligo. Les trois frères Byrne, aujourd'hui âgés d'une soixantaine d'années, ont tous trois participé à des compétitions nationales et internationales de haut niveau. De par la longévité de leur pratique, les frères Byrne représentent une source précieuse d'informations sur la genèse du surf irlandais.	Recommandés par Rory O'Dowd, qui m'a présentée aux frères Byrne à l'issue de notre entretien. Le troisième frère, Johnston, n'a pu se libérer pour l'entretien, mais John et Neil se sont avérés des sujets impatients et avides de partager leur expérience et leurs nombreuses anecdotes.	19 septembre 2017, au Strand Bar des frères Byrne, à Strandhill (co. Sligo)	Oui / oui

<p><b>Owen MURPHY</b></p>	<p>Génération Y</p>	<p>Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau</p>	<p>Surfeur expérimenté irlandais, Owen est âgé de 25 ans au moment de l'entretien. Il a grandi à Bundoran. Même s'il ne se considère pas comme un « local », n'étant pas natif de la ville, il est reconnu et respecté comme tel à Bundoran grâce à ses activités de moniteur de surf pour l'école Turf n Surf. Il est aussi apprécié pour son investissement auprès des jeunes surfeurs de la région à travers les activités de son école de surf (cours et location de matériel) Murfs Surf School, établie à Bundoran en 2017. Owen est également un compétiteur : depuis 2018 il fait partie de l'équipe de surf irlandaise mise en place par l'I.S.A. qui s'est rendue au Japon en septembre 2019 pour les qualifications aux Jeux Olympiques de Tokyo 2020. L'équipe irlandaise ne s'est pas qualifiée pour l'édition 2020 des J.O., mais Owen demeure membre de l'équipe nationale.</p>	<p>Relation personnelle : Owen est un ami que j'ai rencontré lors de mon tout premier séjour à Bundoran en juin 2015, alors qu'il travaillait en tant que moniteur de surf à l'école Turf n Surf.</p>	<p>20 septembre 2017, sur les hauteurs de la plage de Tullan Strand Bundoran, près du camion et de la remorque de location de matériel de surf de son école Murfs Surf School.</p>	<p>Oui / oui</p>
<p><b>Adam et Ellie HOEY</b></p>	<p>Génération Z</p>	<p>Surfeurs amateurs débutant dans la pratique</p>	<p>Adam et sa sœur Ellie sont deux enfants, âgés respectivement de 14 et 11 ans et surfeurs amateurs depuis environ un an au moment de l'entretien. Il était important d'interroger des enfants au sujet de leur engagement dans la pratique du surf afin de saisir les similitudes et les différences dans leur relation à la pratique et leur expérience de l'océan, des rituels de l'activité, de l'entrée et de l'initiation dans la communauté de pratique, ainsi que dans les récits qu'ils en font. Adam et Ellie prennent des cours de surf et surfent régulièrement ensemble.</p>	<p>Adam et Ellie sont les enfants de la compagne de Joseph Stapleton, gérant de l'auberge de jeunesse Cosy Joe's. Joseph et sa compagne Lesley sont des amis, et Adam et Ellie étaient très enthousiastes à l'idée de participer à ma recherche. Le contact a été pris par le biais de leur mère Lesley.</p>	<p>20 septembre 2017, dans la maison de la mère d'Adam et Ellie, près de la plage de Tullan Strand à Bundoran.</p>	<p>Oui / oui</p>

<p><b>Barry BRITTON et Conor MAGUIRE</b></p>	<p>Baby-boomer (Britton) et Génération Y (Maguire)</p>	<p>Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau (Maguire : semi-professionnel)</p>	<p>Tous deux sont des surfeurs expérimentés. Barry Britton est considéré comme l'un des « pères fondateurs » du surf irlandais ; âgé d'une soixantaine d'années, il est natif de la région de Rosstown, et surfe depuis plusieurs décennies. Il est notamment connu dans la région pour ses tableaux et illustrations mêlant réalisme et iconographie celtique (posters et affiches de concerts et autres événements culturels).</p> <p>Conor Maguire est quant à lui un jeune surfeur âgé de 25 ans au moment de l'entretien, natif de Bundoran. Il est connu pour son engagement dans le surf de grosses vagues, et il est sponsorisé par des marques internationales telles que Red Bull.</p> <p>Il a été difficile de mettre en place des entretiens individuels de ces deux surfeurs en raison d'incompatibilités récurrentes de nos disponibilités, mais j'ai eu l'idée de leur demander de participer à la 3<sup>ème</sup> édition du festival Pocket Films Festival en janvier 2018 dans le cadre d'une interview croisée sur scène en guise d'interlude pendant la projection des courts-métrages.</p> <p>Au moyen de cartes reprenant les questions et les thèmes centraux du questionnaire d'entretien, Conor et Barry se sont mutuellement posé ces questions au fil d'un tirage de cartes aléatoire, pour s'approprier ensuite le format de l'entretien, et s'interroger librement sur leurs expériences. Cet entretien en public a donc un format inédit, à mi-chemin entre l'entretien semi-directif et le spectacle.</p>	<p>Prise de contact via la messagerie Messenger de Facebook. J'étais en contact avec Conor Maguire et Barry Britton depuis plusieurs semaines afin d'organiser des entretiens, et j'ai pris contact avec eux via le réseau social. Barry Britton avait accepté d'exposer quelques-unes de ses toiles dans le cadre de l'exposition d'artistes locaux de la 3<sup>ème</sup> édition du Pocket Films Festival que je co-organisais avec Giles Carey. Il a également accepté de participer à l'entretien mis en scène face à Conor Maguire, lui-même enthousiaste à l'idée d'échanger avec l'un des « forefathers » du surf irlandais.</p>	<p>21 janvier 2018, sur la scène du cinéma « Eclipse Cinemas » de Bundoran, où se déroulait également la projection des courts-métrages de surf en compétition dans le cadre du festival.</p>	<p>Non (mais enregistrement vidéo)/ oui</p>
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<b>Grace DOYLE</b>	Génération Y	Surfeuse semi-professionnelle de haut niveau	Grace est une surfeuse professionnelle. Âgée de 28 ans au moment de l'entretien, elle est sponsorisée par des marques internationales telles que Billabong Womens, Quiver Surfboards, Beyond-Surf, Surfersskin, Etnies Shoes, SurfEars et Aura Leisure. Elle enseigne l'éducation physique et sportive et les maths mais consacre la majorité de son temps libre à asseoir sa notoriété sur la scène internationale du surf féminin. Elle a également rejoint l'équipe irlandaise de surf constituée par l'I.S.A. en vue des Jeux Olympiques de Tokyo 2020.	Prise de contact via la messagerie Messenger de Facebook. Grace m'a également été recommandée par Giles Carey, qui a réalisé pour elle un court métrage promotionnel.	21 janvier 2018, sur la scène du cinéma « Eclipse Cinemas » de Bundoran : Grace a accepté de se prêter à un bref entretien en public sur scène à l'issue des diverses conférences présentées lors du festival.	Non (mais enregistrement vidéo)
<b>Aaron REID</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau	Aaron Reid est un jeune surfeur âgé de 25 ans et natif de la région de Sligo, mais vivant et surfant à Bundoran depuis suffisamment longtemps pour y être respecté et assimilé à un « local ». Il travaille ponctuellement en tant que moniteur de surf pour l'école Turf n Surf. Sa maîtrise de manœuvres complexes et son surf de grande qualité en font un surfeur au style distinctif, admiré et reconnu.	Relation personnelle : Aaron est un ami, et a accepté spontanément d'être interrogé dans le cadre de mes recherches.	9 décembre 2018, chez Cosy Joe's.	Oui / oui
<b>Joe McGOWAN</b>	Baby-boomer	Non surfeur	Joe McGowan est un historien irlandais né en 1944 dans la région de Mullaghmore (co. Sligo). Spécialiste de l'histoire irlandaise, et plus particulièrement des comtés de Sligo et du Donegal, il est l'auteur de plusieurs ouvrages sur le sujet, et s'intéresse notamment à l'histoire et au folklore des marins de Sligo et du Donegal.	Prise de contact réalisée par email : ayant lu ses ouvrages <i>In the Shadow of Benbulbin: A Portrait of Our Storied Past</i> (1993, Aeolus Publications), <i>A Bitter Wind</i> (2009, Aeolus Publications) et <i>Sligo Folk Tales</i> (2015, Irish History Press), j'ai eu accès à son adresse mail en consultant le site web de l'historien ( <a href="http://www.sligohertage.com/">http://www.sligohertage.com/</a> ). Je lui ai écrit le 24 janvier 2019, lui décrivant l'objet de mes recherches, et sollicitant un entretien selon ses disponibilités.	26 janvier 2019, au domicile de M. McGowan, dans le petit village de Mullaghmore (co. Sligo), dans son salon offrant une vue spectaculaire sur le manoir Classibawn, objet de fascination pour l'historien.	Oui / oui



<b>Aisling ní GHALLACHOIR (GALLAGHER CLARKE)</b>	Génération Y	Surfeuse amatrice	<p>Aisling (surnommée « Ais », ou « Ash ») est une jeune surfeuse âgée d'environ 25 ans et originaire du comté de Sligo. Elle est également une artiste aux talents reconnus à la fois à Strandhill, Sligo et Bundoran, où elle réside au moment de l'entretien. L'inspiration de ses illustrations provient en grande partie de sa pratique du surf, de sa relation à l'océan et de son implication dans la culture et la communauté de surfeurs du nord-ouest irlandais.</p>	<p>Relation personnelle : Aisling est une amie que j'ai rencontrée par le biais du Pocket Films Festival, où une partie de ses œuvres a été exposée. Nous nous sommes ensuite régulièrement croisées sur les sites et chez Cosy Joe's et elle a spontanément accepté d'être interrogée dans le cadre de mes recherches.</p>	27 février 2019, chez Aisling à Bundoran.	Oui / oui
<b>Findabhair ní FHAOLAIN</b>	Génération Y	Surfeuse amatrice	<p>Findabhair (surnommée « Finn ») est une jeune surfeuse de près de trente ans, originaire du Donegal et installée à Bundoran depuis plus de cinq ans au moment de l'entretien. Sa pratique régulière du surf est la raison pour laquelle elle s'est installée à Bundoran. Son implication dans la culture de la communauté de surfeurs locaux et sa notoriété grandissante, due en partie à la publication de son livre <i>Finn's World: Do what you love. Love what you eat</i> (2017, livre de recettes sans gluten) en font un profil intéressant pour la recherche.</p>	<p>Relation personnelle : Finn m'a été recommandée par une amie commune, résidente de Bundoran. Jeune entrepreneuse maîtrisant parfaitement les rouages de sa communication sur les réseaux sociaux, Finn est une influenceuse particulièrement active sur Instagram. Elle a spontanément accepté d'être interrogée dans le cadre de mes recherches.</p>	10 mars 2019, chez Finn à Tullaghan (petit village à l'entrée de Bundoran).	Oui / oui
<b>Seamus McGOLDRICK</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur semi-professionnel de haut niveau	<p>Seamus McGoldrick, ou « Shambles », est un bo-dyboarder natif de Strandhill âgé de 34 ans au moment de l'entretien. De réputation internationale de par son excellente maîtrise des techniques et manœuvres dans les plus grosses vagues telles que Riley's ou Mullaghmore, il est connu pour son engagement et son implication dans la communauté de surfeurs et bodyboarders irlandais.</p> <p>Il a fait partie des premiers surfeurs et bodyboarders ayant découvert les spots de Riley's et Aileen's, lors de ce qu'il nomme « l'époque de Mickey Smith ». Il dirige depuis 2017 son école de surf Sligo Surf Experience à Strandhill.</p>	<p>Relation personnelle : j'ai rencontré Seamus lors des 4ème puis 5ème éditions du festival Shore Shorts à Sligo. Nous nous sommes ensuite rencontrés lors du Pocket Films festival que j'ai co-organisé avec Giles Carey en janvier 2018, puis à plusieurs reprises sur les spots de Mullaghmore ou Black Spot.</p> <p>Finalement, c'est par le biais de la messagerie Messenger que nous nous sommes donné rendez-vous pour un entretien, à l'issue d'une série de conférences auxquelles nous avons été tous deux conviés à Sligo.</p>	26 mai 2019, dans le Model Museum (ville de Sligo) à l'issue de la journée de conférences « Ocean Human Health » organisée par le Dr. Easkey Britton. Cette journée rassemblait des spécialistes des questions de préservation de l'environnement et de l'océan et de la santé.	Oui / non

<p><b>Rosa THOMPSON</b></p>	<p>Génération Y</p>	<p>Surfeuse amatrice expérimentée</p>	<p>Rosa est une surfeuse, ancienne monitrice de surf et, au moment de l'entretien, coordinatrice des maîtres-nageurs sauveteurs et de la sécurité des plages auprès du Conseil régional du comté du Donegal. Âgée de trente ans environ au moment de l'entretien, Rosa surfe depuis son adolescence et est une pratiquante assidue. Originaire de Cornouailles, près de Newquay, au moment de l'entretien elle vit en Irlande depuis plus de cinq ans, entre Bundoran et Tramore (co. Waterford), où son implication dans les communautés de surfeurs locales lui valent d'être reconnue et appréciée.</p>	<p>Relation personnelle : j'ai rencontré Rosa lors de mes premiers séjours à Bundoran, lorsqu'elle résidait près de Cosy Joe's (d'abord à bord de son van aménagé, puis dans l'un des appartements attenants à l'auberge).</p>	<p>4 juillet 2019, chez Rosa à Tullaghan, à l'entrée de Bundoran.</p>	<p>Oui / oui</p>
<p><b>Aga Pi</b></p>	<p>Génération Y</p>	<p>Surfeuse amatrice</p>	<p>Originaire de Pologne, Aga s'est installée en Irlande, à Dublin, afin de poursuivre ses recherches dans le cadre d'un doctorat en Sciences Environnementales. C'est dans le port de Dublin qu'elle s'est initiée à la pratique des sports aquatiques, d'abord par le Stand Up Paddle (ou SUP), puis par le surf. La découverte des vagues du Donegal et de Sligo l'ont convaincue d'abandonner sa carrière universitaire et de s'installer, seule, moins d'un an avant l'entretien, à Creevykeel, à proximité de la vague de Mullaghmore dont elle dit « être tombée amoureuse ». Aga est âgée d'une trentaine d'années et s'est graduellement fait une place au sein de la communauté de surfeurs de Sligo et Bundoran.</p>	<p>Au contraire des autres sujets interrogés dans le cadre de ces recherches, c'est Aga qui m'a contactée en juillet 2019, alors que nous ne nous connaissions pas, par l'intermédiaire de ma page Facebook. Je venais de publier le sixième épisode de mon programme de podcast <i>Tales from the Green Shores</i> sur la plateforme Soundcloud, épisode dont le sujet était Olga Dragon. Aga m'a contactée après avoir écouté les récits d'Olga, et m'a invitée à la rejoindre chez elle pour partager son expérience d'entrée dans le monde du surf irlandais.</p>	<p>12 juillet 2019, chez Aga à Creevykeel, près du village de Mullaghmore.</p>	<p>Oui / oui</p>

<b>Ian MITCHINSON</b>	Génération X	Surfeur amateur expérimenté	<p>Ian Mitchinson est un photographe et réalisateur d'origine sud-africaine. Âgé d'une quarantaine d'années, il s'est installé à Bundoran avec sa femme et leurs deux enfants après avoir vu le court-métrage de Mickey Smith, <i>Dark Side of the Lens</i>, qui l'a convaincu de vendre son studio de photographie à Cape Town et de s'établir sur la côte ouest irlandaise.</p> <p>Très modeste au sujet de son propre niveau de pratique du surf, il est désormais un membre connu parmi la communauté de surfeurs de Bundoran de par la qualité de ses clichés de surfeurs et particulièrement des grosses vagues de Mullaghmore, prises dans et hors de l'eau.</p>	Ian m'a été présenté par Giles Carey lors des 2ème et 3ème éditions du Pocket Films festival. Je l'ai ensuite rencontré à de nombreuses reprises à Mullaghmore. C'est par l'intermédiaire de sa page Instagram et de la messagerie du réseau social que je lui ai présenté mes travaux de recherche et l'ai sollicité pour un entretien.	28 juillet 2019, chez Ian à Bundoran.	Oui / oui
<b>Alice WARD</b>	Génération Y	Surfeuse amatrice	<p>Alice Ward est une jeune surfeuse, photographe et vidéographe irlandaise d'environ 25 ans. Originaire du comté de Sligo, elle surfe depuis son adolescence et est une pratiquante régulière. Son implication dans la culture dépasse sa pratique puisqu'elle est aussi investie dans la réalisation d'un documentaire intitulé <i>Ebb and Flow</i>, entièrement dédié aux portraits de membres de la communauté de surfeuses irlandaises, et qui est sorti en février 2020.</p>	<p>J'ai rencontré Alice par le biais de son compagnon Seamus McGoldrick. À l'issue de l'entretien que ce dernier m'a accordé en mai 2019, Alice nous a pris tous deux en photos, et j'ai pris ses coordonnées.</p> <p>Travaillant alors sur son documentaire <i>Ebb and Flow</i>, tout comme je travaillais sur le projet de documentaire <i>Daoine na Mara</i> en parallèle de cette thèse, Alice a été très enthousiaste à l'idée de répondre à mes questions et d'échanger sur nos projets respectifs.</p>	31 juillet 2019, chez Alice, à Sligo.	Oui / oui
<b>Josh McCREA</b>	Génération Y	Surfeur amateur expérimenté de haut niveau	<p>Josh est un surfeur néo-zélandais, installé depuis plus de dix ans à Bundoran avec sa femme Tabea et leurs deux enfants, nés à Sligo. Âgé de 38 ans au moment de l'entretien, Josh est un ancien moniteur de surf et travaille dans la boutique de l'une des principales écoles de surf de Bundoran, Bundoran Surf Co. D'un excellent niveau de pratique, « Big Josh » est reconnu et respecté dans la communauté locale.</p>	<p>Relation personnelle : Josh est un ami de Giles, et nous nous côtoyons régulièrement à Bundoran. Je l'ai contacté via la messagerie Messenger pour solliciter un entretien, qu'il a spontanément accepté.</p>	2 août 2019, chez Josh, à Bundoran, à proximité du site de « Pmpa ».	Oui / oui

**Fig. 28 :** Tableau synoptique des enquêtés.

# Annexe 3

## Tableaux synoptiques des données issues des entretiens

### 1. Présentation des données issues des entretiens : hommes :

#### A. Données démographiques :

Les tableaux suivants présentent des pourcentages arrondis par génération (notée : B (« Baby-boomers »), X, Y, Z). Étant donné la nature « libre » des entretiens, les questionnaires ont été adaptés en fonction des enquêtés et du fil de pensée suivi. Lorsque le total des pourcentages pour une réponse n'atteint pas les 100 %, cela signifie que certains individus n'ont pas souhaité répondre, ou que la question n'a pas été abordée faute de temps.

Données démographiques – hommes : 20 sujets	
<b>Lieu de naissance</b>	Irlande : un des six comtés de la côte ouest irlandaise (Cork, Kerry, Clare, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal) : B 20% / X 5% / Y 40% / Z 5%
	Irlande : autre comté : Y 10%
	Étranger : X 10% / Y 15%
<b>Niveau d'éducation</b>	Enseignement secondaire : Y 30% / Z 5%
	Niveau Licence : Y 5%
	Master et au-delà : Y 25%
<b>Lieu de résidence</b>	Irlande : comté de Cork : X 15% / Y 5%
	Irlande : comté de Kerry : B 5% / X 5% / Y 5%
	Irlande : comté de Clare : Y 10%
	Irlande : comté de Sligo : B 10% / Y 15%
	Irlande : comté de Donegal : B 5% / X 5% / Y 5% / Z 10%
	Irlande : autre comté : Y 5%
<b>Âge</b>	Baby-boomers (1946-1964) : 20%
	Génération X (1965 – 1980) : 15%
	Génération Y (1981 – 2000) : 60%
	Génération Z (depuis 2000) : 5%
<b>Activité professionnelle</b>	Liée directement au surf (moniteur, gérance école de surf, boutique de surf, etc.) : B 5% / X 10% / Y 45%
	Liée indirectement au surf – restauration : B 10% / Y 5%
	Non liée au surf – enseignement, recherche : Y 5%
	Non liée au surf – art (vidéographie, photographie, peinture) : B 5% / X 5% / Y 5%

	NA (mineurs) : Z 5%
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**Fig. 17 :** Tableau synoptique des données démographiques des sujets masculins.

**B. Données relatives à l'implication dans la pratique (hommes) :**

Implication dans la pratique du surf – hommes (20 sujets)	
Type de surf pratiqué	Shortboard : Y 35%
	Longboard : Z 5%
	Bodyboard : Y 10%
	Deux ou trois des types mentionnés ci-dessus : B 20% / Y 20%
Nombre d'années de pratique	Moins de 10 ans : Z 5%
	Plus de dix ans : X1 5% / Y 40%
	Plus de vingt ans : B 20% / X 10% / Y 25%
Port d'entrée dans la pratique	Famille : B 15% / X 5% / Y 15% / Z 5%
	Souhait personnel : X 5% / Y 30%
	Amis : Y 10%
Fréquence de la pratique	Quotidienne, ou « as often as possible » : B 20% / Y 60%
	Plusieurs fois par semaine : X 5% / Z 5%
Lieux les plus fréquentés et/ou spots favoris (plusieurs réponses possibles)	The Peak, Bundoran (Donegal) : B 5% / X 5% / Y 30%
	Black Spot (Donegal) : Y 20%
	Pampa (Donegal) : Y 20%
	Strandhill (Sligo) : Y 30%
	Riley's (Clare) : Y 15%
	Mullaghmore (Sligo) : Y 15%
	Lahinch (Clare) : Y 15%
	Tullan Strand, Bundoran (Donegal) : X 5% / Z 5%
	Rossnowlagh (Donegal) : B 5%
	À l'étranger : Y 5%
Manœuvres favorites (plusieurs réponses possibles)	Tube : Y 35%
	Airs : Y 20%
	Pas de manœuvre en particulier – un bon take-off, un bon tracé sur la face de la vague : B 10% / Y 10%
	Bottom turn : Y 15%
	Cutback (« a nice proper round cut back») : Y 10%
Raisons de	Quête de sensations : B 20% / X 10% / Y 70%

<b>l'implication dans la pratique (« Why do you surf ? »)</b>	Bien-être mental : B 10% / Y 15%
	Retrouver ses amis (« a social aspect to is as well ») : Y 15% / Z 5%
<b>Ce qu'est une bonne vague</b>	« Any wave that you can have fun on is a good wave » : Y 30%
	Un bon tube : Y 25%
	« A good really steep take off, free fall drop-in, good old bottom turn, tuck in, and then straight down the line, and a couple of snaps here and there on the way down » : B 5% / Y 5%
	Propre et glassy : Y 5%
	« A wave that keeps going and going and going and never ending » : B 5%
<b>Ce qu'est un bon surfeur (plusieurs réponses possibles)</b>	Technique et polyvalence (« Someone that's all around ») : Y 20 %
	« The one who has the most fun » : B 10%
	« Someone that's kind and respectful » : Y 5%
<b>Opinions quant à l'essor de la pratique du surf en Irlande (popularité grandissante)</b>	Plutôt positive, bon pour les affaires : B 10% / X 20% / Y 15%
	Positive, pas d'inquiétude quant à la fréquentation des spots : Y 35%
	Positive mais le respect du code de conduite commence à se perdre : B 10% / Y 5%
<b>Ce qui devrait être amélioré en Irlande pour favoriser la pratique des surfeurs (infrastructures, formation...) (plusieurs réponses possibles)</b>	Davantage de financement de la part du County Council pour la formation/accompagnement des jeunes surfeurs/-ses (coaching ou de véritables infrastructures pour l'accueil, le matériel, se changer...): Y 10%
	Mesures de protection de l'environnement – plages ou eau polluée : Y 5%
	Accès aux plages et installations (toilettes, douches) : Y 5%
	Lignes de transport plus directes : Y 5%
<b>Le principal attrait de la pratique du surf en Irlande</b>	La qualité des vagues : B 10% / X 5% / Y 20%
	Les gens, la communauté surf elle-même, « the craic » : B 5% / Y 15%
	Des vagues peu fréquentées : Y 15%
<b>La principale difficulté de la pratique du surf en Irlande</b>	Être patient (vagues -imprévisibilité) : B 10% / Y 20%
	Le manque de lumière en hiver (journées de courte durée): Y 15%
	Le vent : Y 10%
	Le froid : Y 10%

**Fig. 18** : Tableau synoptique des données relatives à l'implication dans la pratique des sujets masculins.

## 2. Présentation des données issues des entretiens : femmes :

### A. Données démographiques :

Données démographiques – femmes : 10 sujets	
Lieu de naissance	Irlande : un des six comtés de la côte ouest irlandaise (Cork, Kerry, Clare, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal): X 20% / Y 20% / Z 10%
	Irlande : autre comté : Y 20%
	Étranger : Y 30%
Niveau d'éducation	Enseignement secondaire : Z 20%
	Niveau Licence : Y 20%
	Master et au-delà : Y 30%
Lieu de résidence	Irlande : comté de Cork : X 20%
	Irlande : comté de Clare : Y 10%
	Irlande : comté de Sligo : Y 20%
	Irlande : comté de Donegal : Y 40%
	Ailleurs : Y 10%
Âge	Génération X (1965 – 1980) : 20%
	Génération Y (1981 – 2000) : 70%
	Génération Z (depuis 2000) : 10%
Activité professionnelle	Liée directement au surf (moniteur, gérance école de surf, boutique de surf, etc.) : X 20% / Y 20%
	Liée indirectement au surf – restauration : Y 20%
	Non liée au surf – art (vidéographie, photographie, peinture) : Y 10%
	Non liée au surf – enseignement, recherche : Y 10%
	NA (mineurs) : Z 10%

Fig. 19 : Tableau synoptique des données démographiques des sujets féminins.

### B. Données relatives à l'implication dans la pratique (femmes) :

Implication dans la pratique du surf – femmes (10 sujets)	
Type de surf pratiqué	Shortboard : Y 40%
	Longboard : Z 10%
	Deux ou trois des types mentionnés ci-dessus : Y 30%
Nombre d'années de pratique	Moins de 10 ans : Y 30% Z 10%
	Plus de dix ans : Y 20%

	Plus de vingt ans : X 20%
<b>Port d'entrée dans la pratique</b>	Amis : Y 40%
	Famille : Y 10% / Z 10%
	Souhait personnel : Y 20%
<b>Fréquence de la pratique</b>	Quotidienne, ou « as often as possible » : Y 80%
	Plusieurs fois par semaine : Y 10% / Z 10%
<b>Lieu le plus fréquenté et/ou spot favori (plusieurs réponses possibles)</b>	The Peak, Bundoran (Donegal) : Y 40%
	Tullan Strand, Bundoran (Donegal) : Y 30 % / Z 10 %
	Rosstownlough (Donegal) : Y 13% / Z 10%
	Lissadell (Sligo) : Y 20%
	Rivermouth, Tullaghan (Donegal) : Y 20%
	Strandhill (Sligo) : Y 10%
	Lahinch (Clare) : Y 10%
<b>Manœuvre(s) favorite(s) (plusieurs réponses possibles)</b>	Pas de manœuvre en particulier – un bon take-off, un bon tracé sur la face de la vague : Y 30% / Z 10%
	Bottom turn : Y 30%
	Cut back : Y 20%
	Nose-riding : Y 10%
<b>Raisons de l'implication dans la pratique (« Why do you surf ? »)</b>	Retrouver ses amis (« surf and have fun with your friends ») : Y 50% / Z 10%
	Quête de sensations : Y 40%
	Bien-être mental : Y 30%
	Connexion avec la nature : Z 10%
<b>Ce qu'est une bonne vague</b>	« Anything you can literally ride your board on, I consider fun » : Y 30%
	Propre et glassy : Y 10%
<b>Ce qu'est un bon surfeur (plusieurs réponses possibles)</b>	« Someone that's kind and respectful » : Y 50%
	« The one who has the most fun » : Y 30% / Z 10%
	Technique et polyvalence (« Someone that's all around ») : Y 20% / Z 10%
<b>Opinion quant à l'essor de la pratique du surf en Irlande (popularité grandissante)</b>	Plutôt positive, pas d'inquiétude quant à la fréquentation des spots : Y 60%
	Positive, bon pour les affaires : X 20%
<b>Ce qui devrait être amélioré en Irlande pour favoriser la pratique des surfeurs</b>	Mesures de protection de l'environnement – plages ou eau polluée : Y 30%



(infrastructures, formation...)	
Le principal attrait de la pratique du surf en Irlande	Les gens, la communauté surf elle-même : Y 40% / Z 10%
	La qualité des vagues : Y 30%
La principale difficulté de la pratique du surf en Irlande	Être patient (vagues) Y 50%
	Le froid Z 10%

**Fig. 20** : Tableau synoptique des données relatives à l'implication dans la pratique des sujets féminins.

# Annexe 4

## Index surflorique :

### Tableau de classification des motifs surfloriques

Afin de distinguer les différentes sources de récits, un code couleur est utilisé dans l'index selon les modalités suivantes :

- . en vert : références aux entretiens semi-directifs ;
- . en jaune : références aux œuvres littéraires du corpus (romans, (auto)biographies ;
- . en gris : références à des ouvrages journalistiques (presse en ligne, papier) ;
- . en orange : références aux œuvres filmiques du corpus ;
- . en bleu : références aux œuvres photographiques du corpus ; le numéro d'illustration est indiqué lorsque ces images ont été reproduites dans le corps de la thèse et référencées dans la table des illustrations ;
- . en mauve : références aux illustrations, peintures, œuvres d'architecture... ; le cas échéant, le numéro indique la référence de ces œuvres telles qu'elles sont listées dans la table des illustrations ;
- . en rouge foncé : références à des conférences en ligne ou à des podcasts ;
- . en rouge : références aux initiatives d'organisations de type O.N.G..

Type I Historical tales, surfing in Ireland : the then & the now	Type II Personal experience narratives : of men and waves	Type III Tales of the waves of Ireland	Type IV Surf island : tales of the elements
Récits historiques retraçant le développement de la pratique du surf en Irlande, ses enjeux actuels et ses perspectives d'évolution.	Récits personnels d'expériences du surf irlandais.	Récits des vagues irlandaises: récits historiques et descriptifs.	Récits anecdotiques et descriptifs des singularités environnementales du surf irlandais.
<p><b>1. History of Ireland's relationship to the ocean:</b> 1.1. Invasions, between myths/legends and history = <i>McGowan</i></p> <p>1.2. Sailors and explorers = <i>McGowan</i></p> <p>1.3. Fishing nation – a history = <i>McGowan</i></p> <p>1.4. An “island nation”: recovering Ireland's sea heritage (vs rural folklore) = <i>McGowan</i> (“sea bounties”)</p>	<p><b>9. The surfer's journey:</b> 9.1 Introduction: 9.1.1. Presenting oneself: = <i>Byrne, 1</i> = <i>Cross, 1</i> = <i>Olga, 1</i> = <i>Tom, 1, 2</i> = <i>Ollie, 1</i> = <i>Reid, 1</i> = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie, 1</i> = <i>Ahern, 1</i> = <i>Shambles, (1), 2</i> = <i>Murphy, 1, 19</i> = <i>Josh, 1, 2</i> = <i>Giles, 1</i> = <i>Ian, 1, 7</i> = <i>Barry Britton, Made in Ireland ep. 3</i> = <i>Noah Lane, Made in Ireland ep. 3</i> = <i>Barry Mottershead, Made in Ireland ep. 3</i></p>	<p><b>15. Memorable waves:</b> 15.1. From the past = <i>Tom, 8</i> = <i>Reid, 2 (first), 11 (La Gravière)</i></p> <p>15.2. Of recent = <i>Rory, 24</i> = <i>Olga, 9</i> = <i>Tom, 9</i> = <i>Ahern, 3, 4, 6</i> = <i>Murphy, 16</i> = <i>Josh, 11</i> = <i>Ian, 5</i> = <i>Giles, 17</i></p> <p>15.3. Friends' waves = <i>Byrne, 36</i> = <i>Reid, 12 (“G man”)</i> = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie, 24</i></p>	<p><b>21. Of climate, earth and ocean (what's special about surfing in Ireland):</b> 21.1. Seasonality: 21.1.1. Winter waves vs summer waves = <i>Olga, 12, 14 (community)</i></p> <p>21.1.2. The Dark / light (– short days vs longer days) = <i>Reid, 20, 24</i> = <i>Josh, 27</i></p> <p>21.2. The wait (for the right tide, swell and winds) = <i>Rory, 28, 29</i> = <i>Shambles, 15</i> = <i>Josh 3</i></p> <p>21.3. Commitment: = <i>Ahern, 2</i> = <i>Beyond the Noise</i></p>

	<p>9.1.2. The ordinary world &amp; the trigger / the initiator  = Cross, 2 (<i>holidays</i>)  = Olga, 2 (<i>a break up</i>), 3  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 2, 21  = Ahern, 11  = Murphy, 2  = Josh, 5, 6, 7, 8, 21, 22, 23  = Giles, 2, 3, 4  = Ian, 2, 3  = Barry Britton, <i>Made in Ireland</i> ep. 3  = CAVEY, 2012  = DUGGAN, 2012 (<i>Fergal Smith</i>)</p> <p>9.2. The call to adventure:  = Shambles, 1</p> <p>9.2.1. First memorable wave  = Rory, 2  = Cross, 3  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 6  = Shambles, 5  = Murphy, 3  = Josh, 9  = Giles, 5  = Ian, 4</p> <p>9.2.2. The call: serendipity:  = Rory, 1 (<i>finding a board</i>)  = Shambles, 18  = Cavey, 2012 (<i>Reader's Digest, the Britton brothers' boards</i>)</p> <p>9.3. The mentor:  = Byrne, 3 (<i>older brothers</i>)  = Ollie, 2 (<i>uncle</i>)  = Reid, 2 (<i>father</i>)  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 21  = Josh, 6</p> <p>9.4. The helpers:  9.4.1. Family  = Byrne, 4  = Reid, 3  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 4, 9  9.4.2. One-time guides  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 6</p> <p>9.5. The companions  = Reid, 7  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 5  = Josh, 23  = CAVEY, 2012  = DUGGAN, 2012  = FLANAGAN (III. 72)</p> <p>9.6 The quest: hunting for waves, travelling:  9.6.1. Hunting for waves  = Tom, 26  = Rory, 12  = Ian, 12 (<i>the dopamine lottery</i>)  = CAVEY, 2012 (<i>surfari</i>)  = DUGGAN, 2012 (<i>Mickey Smith &amp; Fergal Smith</i>)  = CAVEY: <i>first surfari, 1966</i> (III. 2)</p> <p>9.6.2. Discovering new waves  = Shambles, 11</p>		<p>(KAINEDER, 2018).</p> <p>21.4. Variety:  = Murphy, 27</p>
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	<p>= <i>DUGGAN, 2012 (Mickey Smith)</i></p> <p>9.6.3. Tales of goose chases = <i>Byrne, 39</i></p> <p>9.6.4. Hunting abroad – travel accounts = <i>Byrne, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 22</i> = <i>Rory, 12</i></p> <p>9.6.5 Coming back home from each adventure = outlooks on the homeland upon returns = <i>Rory, 12</i> = <i>Byrne, 38</i> = <i>Ollie, 7</i> = <i>Josh, 5</i> = <i>SMITH, Fergal, 2019 (TED talk)</i></p> <p>9.7. Adventures along the way:</p> <p>9.7.1. First board(s) = <i>Shambles, 18</i> = <i>Giles, 11</i> = <i>Olga, 2, 3</i></p> <p>9.7.2. Earning a nickname = <i>Shambles, 18</i></p> <p>9.7.3 Competing = <i>Tom, 5, 6</i> = <i>Ollie, 5, 6</i> = <i>Reid, 4, 5 (first comps)</i> = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie, 14, 15</i> = <i>Murphy, 4</i> = <i>Giles, 14</i> = <i>Byrne, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20</i></p> <p>9.8. Ordeals along the way:</p> <p>9.8.1. Obstacles/fiends :</p> <p>9.8.1.1. Fear : = <i>Olga, 4, 20</i> = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie, 11, 12</i> = <i>Shambles, 7, 8</i> = <i>Josh, 16</i></p> <p>9.8.1.2. A disability : = <i>Liquid Therapy</i></p> <p>9.8.1.3. Comfort zones : = <i>Ollie, 6</i> = <i>Josh, 17</i></p> <p>9.8.2 Wipe outs:</p> <p>9.8.2.1 Common wipe outs and injuries = <i>Rory, 25</i> = <i>Cross, 7, 8</i> = <i>Reid, 10</i> = <i>SMITH, Mickey, 2010</i> = <i>SMITH, Fergal, 2019 (TED talk)</i> + <i>DUGGAN, 2012</i></p> <p>9.8.2.2 Over the falls: serious accidents and injuries = <i>Rory, 14</i> = <i>Tom, 12</i> = <i>Ian, 9</i> = <i>Shambles, 8</i></p>		
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	<p>= Carve, 2019a          = MCGOLDRICK, 2016a          = DUGGAN, 2012 (Fergal Smith at Teahupoo and Cloudbreak)          = SMITH, Fergal, 2019 (TED talk)          = Barry Mottershead (BONYTHON, III. 76)          = Shambles's rescue from Riley's (III. 77)</p> <p>9.9. Lessons learnt along the way: "embracing the wipe out": surfing's lessons          = Rory, 11, 3          = Tom, 15          = Olga, 7, 8, 10          = DUGGAN, 2012 (Fergal Smith)          = SMITH, Mickey, 2010          = SMITH, Fergal, 2019 (TED talk)</p> <p>9.10. Achievements          = Reid, 15, 16          = Adam &amp; Ellie, 7          = Giles, 17          = DUGGAN, 2012 (surfers' and bodyboarders' portraits)</p> <p><b>9.11. The ultimate fight / death and resurrection:</b>  <b>9.11.1. The big fight :</b>          = Ollie, 25          = LOCK, Jason, 2020 (Maguire's big wave at Mullaghmore, Oct. 2020)</p> <p><b>9.11.2. The hero's symbolic death :</b>          = Shambles, 7, 8          = Ian, 9          = DUGGAN, 2012 (Fergal Smith)          = Fergal Smith's Moy Hill Farm (TED Talk)</p> <p><b>9.11.3. Resurrection :</b>          = Fergal Smith's Moy Hill Farm (TED Talk)</p>		
<p><b>2. History – surfing in Ireland</b>          "Back in the days...":          2.1. "Dawn surfers": the "forefathers" of Irish surfing          = STOTT, 2016          = Carve, 2019b          = CAVEY, 2012 (Joe Roddy, Cavey's bio, first surfers)          = DUGGAN, 2012 (George Freeth, Malloy brothers)          = CONROY, 2008.          = Joe Roddy and his paddle board (III. 1)</p> <p>2.2. "Like gold" - first gear          = Byrne, 5, 6</p> <p>2.3. "There is something wrong with them": perceptions of surfers / surfing then</p>	<p><b>10. Surfing big:</b>          10.1. Introduction to big-wave surfing          = Tom, 4          = Ollie, 17, 18          = STOTT, 2016          = DUGGAN, 2012</p> <p>10.2. Motivations          = Murphy, 20          = Ollie, 25          = MITCHELL, 2020 (Maguire's wave at Mullaghmore, Oct. 2020)</p> <p>10.3. "The fear thing"          = Rory, 15          = Byrne, 24, 26          = Tom, 13          = Ollie, 20, 21</p>	<p><b>16. Personal definitions:</b>          16.1. A wave          = Byrne, 30          = Cross, 16          = Reid, 29          = Adam &amp; Ellie, 16, 17          = Ahern, 8          = Shambles, 16          = Murphy, 21, 22          = Josh, 31          = Giles, 9          = Ian, 23          = Three Waves -GALLAGHER CLARKE, III. 112)</p> <p>16.2. A good wave / the perfect wave          = Byrne, 31          = Cross, 18          = Olga, 21          = Ollie, 26</p>	<p><b>22. Tales of The Cold:</b>          = Shambles, 15          = Logue &amp; Maguire, Made in Ireland, ep. 3          = Shambles, Made in Ireland, ep. 3          = Far North (BARNES, SALTAU, &amp; PLAYER, 2017).</p> <p>22.1. Rory and the biting cold:          22.1.1 RoryColdA          = Rory, 30</p> <p>22.1.1 RoryColdB          = Reid, 23</p>

<p>= CAVEY, 2012</p> <p>2.4. Promoting the sport</p> <p>2.4.1. First clubs</p> <p>= Byrne, 23</p> <p>= CAVEY, 2012</p> <p>= CAVEY, Dublin Boat Show 1966 (Ill. 3)</p> <p>2.4.2. Surfing competitions – a history</p> <p>= Byrne, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21</p> <p>= CAVEY, 2012</p> <p>2.4.3. Promoting Irish surfing abroad &amp; foreign stance</p> <p>= CAVEY, 2012 (San Diego comp)</p> <p>2.4.4. Investing in surfing</p> <p>= Ollie, 9, 10, 11, 12, 27</p> <p>2.5. Against the stream: fighting for surfing (ex: the surfing ban in Strandhill)</p> <p>= Byrne, 7</p> <p>= CAVEY, 2012</p> <p>2.6. The rise of big-wave surfing in Ireland</p> <p>2.6.1. first big-wave surfers</p> <p>= Ollie, 22</p> <p>= STOTT, 2016</p> <p>= DUGGAN, 2012</p> <p>2.6.2. Towing vs paddling into big waves</p> <p>= STOTT, 2016</p> <p>= DUGGAN, 2012</p> <p>2.6.3. The Irish tow surf rescue: establishment, operations and activities / growth</p> <p>= SMITH, 2016b (Mistakes made and lessons learnt)</p> <p>= CORKER, 2018 (Made in Ireland, ep. 2: the Nutjobs)</p> <p>= CONROY, 2008.</p> <p>2.6.4. The Irish big wave surfing community</p> <p>= Ollie, 22</p> <p>= SMITH, 2016b.</p> <p>= CORKER, 2018 (Made in Ireland, ep. 2: the Nutjobs)</p> <p>2.6.5. Big-wave frenzy: representing Irish heavy-wave surfing</p> <p>= Ollie, 14</p> <p>2.6.5.1. The show: representing the sport</p> <p>= Ollie, 14</p> <p>= Giles, 18</p> <p>= STOTT, 2016</p> <p>= CONROY, 2008.</p> <p>2.6.5.2. A commercial pursuit / market: funding, brands and the sponsoring of the sport (eco stakes, revenues from big-wave surfing for</p>	<p>= Reid, 9, 17</p> <p>= Josh, 18, 19</p>	<p>= Murphy, 24</p> <p>16.3. Surfing / bodyboarding</p> <p>= Rory, 17</p> <p>= Byrne, 32</p> <p>= Cross, 17</p> <p>= Tom, 10, 20, 11 (hist)</p> <p>= Reid, 29</p> <p>= Shambles, 4</p> <p>= Ian, 24</p> <p>16.4. Of waves and animals</p> <p>= Ollie, 25</p> <p>= Byrne, 34</p> <p>= Cross, 31</p> <p>= Adam &amp; Ellie, 22</p> <p>= DUGGAN, 2012 (multiple references to the creature)</p>	
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<p>brands, tourism boards gaining from the image, etc.) = <i>Ollie</i>, 13, 15, 16</p> <p>2.6.5.3. Myths vs realities of big-wave riding (representations vs riders accounts): “slaying the dragon” = <i>Ollie</i>, 14 = <i>CONROY, Joel</i>, 2008 = <i>Conor Maguire dropping in on a giant (GALLAGHER CLARKE, Ill. 70)</i></p> <p>2.6.5.4. The old boys’ (“dawn/silver surfers”) take on big wave surfing = <i>Byrne</i>, 43 = <i>Barry Britton, Made in Ireland ep. 2</i> = <i>CAVEY</i>, 2012</p>			
<p><b>3. Idiosyncrasies of surfing in Ireland</b></p> <p>3.1. Along the Irish shores – an overview = oral maps of surfing hubs = <i>Rory</i>, 9, 27 = <i>Reid</i>, 31 = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie</i>, 23 = <i>Shambles</i>, 19</p> <p>3.2. The local populations of surfers: heroes of old, storytellers, local legends (local surfing (hi)stories) = <i>Rory</i>, 6, 8, 18 = <i>Ollie</i>, 19, 22 = <i>Reid</i>, 19, 21 = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie</i>, 4 = <i>Josh</i>, 29 = <i>Ian</i>, 15 = <i>CONROY</i>, 2008.</p> <p>3.3. Local idioms in the water = <i>Rory</i>, 7, 31 = <i>Cross</i>, 12 = <i>Josh</i>, 28</p> <p>3.4. What’s kept me here (locally: surfing towns /areas):</p> <p>3.4.1. Cork = <i>Ahern</i></p> <p>3.4.2. Kerry = <i>Allcut</i>, = <i>Knox</i> = <i>Farr</i></p> <p>3.4.3. Lahinch = <i>Olga</i> 1, 13 = <i>Ollie</i>, 7</p> <p>3.4.4. Strandhill = <i>Rory</i>, 34 = <i>Byrne</i>, 2, 42, 47 = <i>Shambles</i> 10</p> <p>3.4.5. Bundoran = <i>Cross</i>, 11, 34 = <i>Murphy</i>, 5, 25</p>	<p><b>11. Personal experiences and visions of surfing:</b></p> <p>11.1. Personal definitions: 11.1.1 Defining a good surfer = <i>Byrne</i>, 33 = <i>Tom</i>, 18 (<i>bodyboarder</i>) = <i>Ollie</i>, 24 = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie</i>, 19 = <i>Shambles</i>, 3 = <i>Murphy</i>, 23 = <i>Josh</i>, 32</p> <p>11.1.2. Surfers and colours = <i>Cross</i>, 23 = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie</i>, 20 = <i>Murphy</i>, 20</p> <p>11.2. Favourite manoeuvres: = <i>Cross</i>, 4, 5, 6 = <i>Tom</i>, 21, 19 = <i>Ollie</i>, 23 = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie</i>, 18 = <i>Murphy</i>, 17, 18 = <i>Josh</i>, 30, 35 = <i>Giles</i>, 6, 7</p> <p>11.3. Passion vs addiction = <i>Cross</i>, 19, 20 = <i>Olga</i>, 22 = <i>Tom</i>, 7, 22 = <i>Murphy</i>, 29 = <i>Giles</i>, 15, 16 = <i>Ian</i>, 10</p> <p>11.4 Game vs sport: = <i>Olga</i>, 17 (<i>meditation</i>) = <i>Adam &amp; Ellie</i>, 10 = <i>Shambles</i>, 6 (<i>ocean children</i>) = <i>Murphy</i>, 28 (<i>learning</i>)</p>	<p><b>17. Tales of Irish waves:</b></p> <p>17.1. Favourite wave(s) in Ireland = <i>Reid</i>, 13, 14 = <i>Shambles</i>, 14 = <i>Josh</i>, 10</p> <p>17.2. Tales of perfect waves = <i>Rory</i>, 22 = <i>Rory</i>, 23 = <i>Byrne</i>, 35 = <i>Josh</i>, 13</p> <p>17.3. The one wave that hooks you = <i>Rory</i>, 26 = <i>Tom</i>, 7 = <i>Giles</i>, 15 = <i>Ian</i>, 4 (“<i>the wave that started the whole journey</i>”)</p> <p>17.4. There is a wave... (tales of individual waves along the Irish coastline)</p> <p>17.4.1. Doughmore &amp; Enniscrone = <i>Byrne</i>, 37 = <i>Cross</i>, 28</p> <p>17.4.2. The Peak = <i>Murphy</i>, 26 = <i>POCKETS FULL OF WATER, Sneaky Peak</i>, 2018 = <i>Ill. 9</i> = <i>Lighthouse Industries (Ill. 61 &amp; 146)</i> = <i>Celtic Peak (MC CREA, Ill. 111)</i></p> <p>17.4.3. Pmpa: = <i>Lighthouse Industries (Ill. 62)</i> = <i>Josh (FOX, Ill. 150)</i></p> <p>17.4.4. Mullaghmore = <i>Josh</i>, 19 = <i>Ian</i>, 8 = <i>MCLEOD (Ill. 6)</i> = <i>Conor Maguire Ill. 13</i> = <i>Lighthouse Industries (Ill. 58)</i> = <i>MCCALL (Ill. 59)</i> = <i>Conor Maguire (MCCALL, Ill. 60)</i> = <i>Noah Lane (Ill. 73)</i></p>	<p><b>23. Tales of the winds:</b> = <i>Reid</i>, 25, 26 = <i>Josh</i>, 14 = <i>Murphy</i>, 24</p>

<p>3.5. The country &amp; its people (“the vortex”, the country “choosing its people”)  = Rory, 32  = Byrne, 25  = Shambles, 9  = Josh, 4, 26  = Reid, 31</p>		<p>= Conor Maguire (FLANAGAN, Ill. 74)  = Ollie O’Flaherty (CRONIN, Ill. 133)  = Tom Butler à Mullaghmore (MITCHINSON, Ill. 148)  = Conor Maguire dropping in on a giant, GALLAGHER CLARKE (Ill. 70)</p> <p>17.4.5. Aileen’s  = DUGGAN, 2012  = Ill. 20  = Conor Maguire (MCCALL, Ill. 74)</p> <p>17.4.6. Riley’s  = DUGGAN, 2012  = Mickey Smith, 2011 (Carve: “Thicker than water”)  = FLANAGAN, Ill. 21  = Fergal Smith (SMITH, Ill. 68)  = Shambles at Riley’s (Ill. 144)</p>	
<p><b>4. Surfing’s growth, changes observed: the positives</b>  4.1. A positive economic boost  = Rory, 35  = Stott, 2016</p> <p>4.2. Surfing’s contribution to the community (social, cult.)  = Rory, 37  = Byrne, 8, 46  = Cross, 15  = Giles, 21 (festival)</p> <p>4.3. Surfing as a business, within pol &amp; eco contexts  = Byrne, 43, 44  = Tom, 16 (bodyboarding schools)  = Murphy, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12  = Fin McCool surf shop (Ill. 50)  = Sea Sessions Festival (Ill. 26-31)  = Shore Shots Festival (Ill. 32-36)  = Pocket Film Festival (Ill. 37)  = Doolin SurfFest (Ill. 38-42)  = Discover Bundoran (Ill. 118-120)</p> <p>4.4. Pushing the level of surfing  = Tom, 25  = Ollie, 8  = Murphy, 15  = Stott, 2016  = Maguire, Made in Ireland, ep. 2</p>	<p><b>12. Boards &amp; other gear:</b>  12.1. Boards presentation  = Rory, 10  = Cross, 9, 10  = Olga, 19  = Tom, 16  = Giles, 11</p> <p>12.2. Favourite board(s)  = SMITH, Kev. L., 2014: Growing (“Ferg’s quiver”)</p> <p>12.3. Board tales – board stories  = Byrne, 29  = Giles, 12</p>	<p><b>18. Secret waves and treasures:</b>  18.1. Tales of secret waves  = Byrne, 40  = Cross, 29</p> <p>18.1.1. Pioneers – famous wave discoveries  = Rory, 20  = Tom, 3  = Ian, 14 (“the Mickey Smith era”)</p> <p>18.1.1. Lissadella = Rory, 18  18.1.1. LissadellB = Byrne, 39</p> <p>18.1.2. Ireland’s still secret waves</p> <p>18.2. Treasure hunting –quests  18.2.1. Motivations  = Rory, 19</p> <p>18.3. Keeping vs sharing secrets  = Cross, 30  = Ian, 17  = SMITH, Mickey, 2011 (Carve: “Thicker than water”)</p>	<p><b>24. Of tides and swells:</b>  = Byrne, 36, 40</p>
<p><b>5. Surfing’s growth in Ireland – issues:</b>  5.1. Manners  = Byrne, 48  = Shambles, 13</p> <p>5.2. Territories and localism  5.2.1. “No such thing in Ireland”, “no big deal”: sharing the waves in Ireland</p>	<p><b>13. Life choices:</b>  13.1. Life decisions dictated by surfing  = Rory, 3  = Rory, 16  = Olga, 25  = Tom, 24  = Reid, 27  = Adam &amp; Ellie, 13  = Shambles, 10</p>	<p><b>19. Naming waves:</b>  19.1. Significant names  = Rory, 21  = Murphy, 26 (the Peak)  = SMITH, Mickey, 2011 (Carve: “Thicker than water”) (Riley’s)  = DUGGAN, 2012 (Riley’s)</p> <p>19.2. Place names</p>	<p><b>25. Of monsters and eadails (bounties): local sea and land lore</b>  25.1. Local tales and superstitions of the sea, sayings, proverbs / lessons from the sea (fishermen’s wisdom)  = McGowan</p> <p>25.2. Ocean magic</p>



<p>= <i>Byrne, 45</i>  = <i>Cross, 33</i>  = <i>Olga, 13</i>  = <i>Reid, 18, 22</i>  = <i>Josh, 24</i>  = <i>Giles, 10</i>  = <i>Maguire, Made in Ireland, ep. 3 (Nah Lane)</i>  = <i>Big Wave Kiwi (GALLAGHER CLARKE, Ill. 113)</i>  = <i>Woah Lane GALLAGHER CLARKE, Ill. 114)</i></p> <p>5.2.2. Tales of localism encountered by Irish surfers abroad  = <i>Byrne, 49</i></p> <p>5.2.3. Fighting for waves locally (Irish surfers, inter counties)  = <i>Josh, 25</i>  = <i>Ian, 16</i></p> <p>5.2.4. "Saving the goose that lay the golden egg":  = <i>Shambles, 13</i>  = <i>Rory, 36</i></p>	<p>= <i>Josh, 33, 34</i></p> <p>13.2. Sacrifices/compromises  = <i>Olga, 23</i>  = <i>Tom, 23</i>  = <i>Josh, 20 (surfing and parenting)</i></p>	<p>19.3. Drawing from mythology  = <i>DUGGAN, 2012: Aileen's = Aill Na Searrach (the « Leap of the Foals »)</i></p> <p>19.4. "For the craic": "ridiculous" names</p>	<p>25.2.1. Tales of fishermen's enchantment (witches...)  = <i>McGowan (the fishermen and the witch)</i></p> <p>25.2.3. Magical sea creatures and gods  = <i>McGowan</i></p> <p>25.3. Monstrous waves: tales of fear  = <i>McGowan</i></p> <p>25.4. Bounties and rewards  = <i>McGowan (collecting tea chests off wrecked ships)</i></p> <p>25.5. History and legends of the land  = <i>Rory, 33</i>  = <i>Ian, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 ("this land is sacred land")</i>  = <i>the Cliffs of Moher (SMITH, Mickey, Ill. 69)</i></p> <p>25.5. A people shaped by the sea and surflore  = <i>Josh, 15</i></p>
<p><b>6. Whistle-blowing: changes needed as pinpointed by surfers &amp; local initiatives:</b></p> <p>6.1. Sewage and environmental care  = <i>Rory, 38</i>  = <i>Clean Coasts</i></p> <p>6.2. Plastic &amp; coastal/beach clean ups: whistle blowing &amp; actions taken  = <i>Clean Coasts</i></p> <p>6.3. Sustainable growth / production / consumption  = <i>Olga, 15, 16 (Moy Hill Farm)</i>  = <i>SMITH, Fergal, 2019 (TED talk)</i>  = <i>Moy Hill Farm</i></p> <p>6.4. Infrastructural improvements needed:  = <i>Murphy, 13, 14, 15</i>  = <i>Ollie, 8, 9</i></p> <p>6.5. Horizon gazers – surfers at the forefront  = <i>Shambles, 12</i>  = <i>Shambles, 17</i></p>	<p><b>14. Artists &amp; surfers:</b></p> <p>14.1 Being seen  = <i>Tom, 14 (memory vs footage)</i>  = <i>Reid, 6</i>  = <i>Ahern, 5</i>  = <i>Josh, 12</i>  = <i>Giles, 8, 19, 20</i>  = <i>Ian, 6</i></p> <p>14.2. Surfing as a creative performance, expression of the self  = <i>Cross, 22, 32</i>  = <i>Ahern, 12</i></p> <p>14.3. Surfing / playing music</p> <p>14.3.1 surfing / playing tunes  = <i>Rory, 4</i>  = <i>Cross, 24</i>  = <i>Ahern, 10</i></p> <p>14.3.2. Surfing different crafts akin to playing different instruments  = <i>Rory, 5</i></p> <p>14.4. Surfing and visual arts</p> <p>14.3.1. the wave as a canvas  = <i>Cross, 21</i></p> <p>14.3.2. Shooting to surf, surfing to shoot  = <i>Ian, 13, 25</i></p>	<p><b>20. Ireland's heavy waves:</b></p> <p>20.1. Tales of big waves  = <i>Byrne, 41</i>  = <i>Ollie, 25 (Mullie vs Aileen's)</i>  = <i>Giles, 17 (Aileen's)</i>  = <i>Ian, 9</i>  = <i>Josh, 18, 19</i>  = <i>Carve, 2019b</i>  = <i>MCGOLDRICK, 2016a</i></p> <p>20.2. Heavy wave surfing legends (riders and rescuers)  = <i>SMITH, 2016b (Mistakes made and lessons learnt)</i>  = <i>CORKER, 2018 (Made in Ireland, ep. 2: the Nutjobs)</i>  = <i>CONROY, 2008.</i></p>	
<p><b>7. Marketing: representations of Ireland as a surfing destination:</b></p> <p>7.1. The market / people targeted  = <i>Byrne, 41</i></p> <p>7.2. Branding: Irish surfing as a product:</p>			

<p>7.2.1. Creating an image: big wave surfing / the showcasing of Irish surfing icons:  = <i>Byrne, 50</i>  = <i>Ollie, 13</i>  = <i>Murphy, 7, 8</i>  = <i>GLAZER, Jonathan, 1999.</i>  = <i>GLAZER, Surfer Ad (Ill. 52)</i>  = <i>SMYTH, Richie, 2008</i>  = <i>Ill. 5</i>  = <i>The Strand Bar (Ill. 16 &amp; 17)</i>  = <i>Madden's Bridge Bar (mural by PURDY Nik, Ill. 79)</i>  = <i>O'Donnell's Bar (mural, Ill. 80)</i>  = <i>Barry Britton (Intercounties posters, Ill. 53-55, 106)</i></p> <p>7.2.2. Brand content: the Wild Atlantic Way &amp; strategies  = <i>Red and Gray: the Wild Atlantic Way signs</i>  = <i>Wild Atlantic Way (Ill. 121-122)</i>  = <i>Wild-Atlantic-Way inspired business names</i></p>			
<p><b>8. Social: genders:</b></p> <p>8.1. "First Irish wahines": a history of female surfing in Ireland  = <i>CAVEY, 2012 ("wahines" + Zoe Lally)</i></p> <p>8.2. Being a woman in the line-up  8.2.1. Getting along with men  = <i>Olga, 11</i>  = <i>Findabhair</i></p> <p>8.2.2. Gender clashes in Ireland  = <i>Aisling</i></p> <p>8.3. Surfing with women  8.3.1. As a woman  = <i>Olga, 11</i>  = <i>Findabhair</i>  = <i>Aisling</i>  = <i>Olga &amp; friends (Olga's Intagram)</i>  = <i>FLANAGAN (Ill. 72)</i></p> <p>8.3.2. As a man  = <i>Giles, 13</i></p> <p>8.4. Men / women's take on the ocean, wave riding and the politics of the sport: whether genders define your perceptions  = <i>Olga, 24</i>  = <i>Giles, 13</i></p>			

**Fig. 29** : Index surflorique.

## **Annexe 5**

### **Transcriptions des entretiens**

Douze entretiens ont été sélectionnés pour figurer dans cette annexe en raison de leur représentativité de la population observée. Par leur profil amateur/semi-professionnel, leur âge ou encore leur niveau d'expérience de la pratique, les surfeurs et bodyboarders présentés ici reflètent la variété des individus interrogés. Dans ces transcriptions les récits identifiés en tant que textes surfloriques sont numérotés et marqués par une mention de type **[Rory, 1]** en fin de passage. C'est cette référence qui sert à identifier chaque récit dans l'index de classification surflorique.

# 1. RORY O'DOWD

## A. Profil en diachronie :

« He may not be the best bodyboarder in the world, but he might turn out to be the best bodyboarder-musician in the world! » C'est ainsi que Seamus McGoldrick m'a décrit ce jeune surfeur et bodyboarder de 25 ans, que j'ai rencontré pour la première fois en septembre 2017. Rory est originaire de Strandhill, co. Sligo, ainsi qu'il l'affirme fièrement au début de notre entretien (« born and raised ! »). Il a commencé à surfer lorsqu'il avait une dizaine d'années, et a rapidement progressé jusqu'à devenir l'un des jeunes talents de Sligo en se faisant remarquer lors des compétitions locales puis nationales. S'il s'est détourné de la compétition depuis quelques années, il demeure sponsorisé par des marques telles que Gul Watersports and Action Sports Distribution, et poursuit une carrière de bodyboarder freestyle, tout en travaillant en tant que moniteur de surf à Strandhill dans l'école Sligo Surf Experience qu'a créée Seamus McGoldrick. Rory est également musicien : il joue d'une grande variété d'instruments et se produit régulièrement dans Strand Bar, au cœur de la ville de Strandhill, entouré de son frère et de son père, également musiciens. Il semble ainsi parvenir à concilier son amour de la musique et celui des vagues.



**Ill. 130 :** Rory O'Dowd, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 17 septembre 2017 à Strandhill (Sligo).

Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Le lieu de l'entretien a été choisi par Rory : le Strand Bar est l'établissement réputé de Strandhill que gèrent les frères John, Johnston et Neil Byrne, trois frères entrés dans la légende du surf local en représentant l'Irlande à de nombreuses reprises dans des compétitions internationales des années 70 aux années 90, et que j'ai également interrogés. Au cours de notre échange Rory évoque son approche de la pratique du bodyboard en tant que compétiteur et surfeur freestyle, mais aussi du surf en tant que moniteur. Il décrit aussi son amour de la musique et son appréhension de la relation entre la pratique d'un instrument et la glisse. Il est un narrateur très enthousiaste, et s'est montré soucieux de trouver les bonnes formulations et d'évoquer, de lui-même, des thèmes qui lui semblaient pertinents. Il a notamment pris l'initiative à de multiples reprises de me livrer des anecdotes liées à ses expériences, et de dès le début de l'entretien (« it's a funny story how I started [*bodyboarding*] »). L'enthousiasme et les qualités narratives de Rory font de cet entretien l'une des sources les plus riches de cette recherche, puisqu'il m'a apporté son

expertise sur l'histoire du développement du surf dans la région de Strandhill, la découverte de quelques-unes des vagues les plus connues de Sligo et la communauté surf du nord-ouest de l'Irlande. Passionné des vagues autant que de sa pratique de la musique, Rory représente un profil de *soul surfer* amateur de haut niveau ; étant également sponsorisé, il est donc bien informé des rouages de l'industrie du surf et de l'approche par la compétition.



**Ill. 131** : Rory O'Dowd. Photographe : Clem McInerney.  
Source : compte Instagram de Rory<sup>1</sup>.

### **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 17 septembre 2017, enregistré à Strandhill, co. Sligo :**

**Rory:** So my name is Rory O'Dowd and I am a musician and I do some surf lessons as well, and the rest of my time I spend surfing and bodyboarding.

**Frederique:** How long have you been surfing?

**Rory:** Ehm, well I've been bodyboarding since I was about... probably since I was 11 or so, it's a funny story how I started: there's an island called Coney Island just over the road there, and we were camping over there with the family and there was a good bodyboard just sitting on the rocks, and I thought, "Oh, there's no one using that", I kept an eye on it, and I told my mum, "Hey, can I take this board, just like for a few hours?", she was like "Yeah yeah! But put it back, as it might belong to someone", so I took it out and I was sliding around all day, and I loved it, put it back, next day I got up in the morning it was still there, so I took it out for the day again, and then left it back for an hour maybe or so and ate dinner, no one brought it home so it was my first bodyboard, that's how I got started! That was just like a little toy bodyboard... **[Rory, 1]** And then when I was about 11, for my twelfth birthday I wanted to get a stand up surfboard 'cause all my friends were stand up surfing, and uhm... We were on holidays over in the Basque country, and I wanted a Pukas board and obviously the cost of a Pukas board, it's not the cheapest thing in the world, so instead of that they got me a pretty good bodyboard, a decent bodyboard, and a set of Churchill fins and uhm... When I got back I got my first kind of green wave, going down

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<sup>1</sup> Lien : <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5vfXeph7l5/>

the line on the bodyboard, and then, it was just bodyboarding from then on, yeah. And I started standup surfing a bit more when I was like 16 or so.

**Frederique:** How would you describe yourself, as a bodyboarder or as a surfer?

**Rory:** Ehm... which one would I say I am, as such? Ehm, well I definitely identify myself as more of a bodyboarder 'cause this is what I've been doing for more time, but... yeah definitely both now, 'cause I've been stand up surfing quite a lot too, but I don't stand up surf the waves I bodyboard, so they're both instruments that are used, for me anyway, for different types of waves. So, if it's a long, kind of fat point break I love to stand up surf that, whereas if it's kinda a shallower wave but that's a good slab, like a heavier wave to surf, that's what I'll bodyboard in, so I prefer to bodyboard those kinds of waves. So I get the best of both worlds, yeah!

**Frederique:** Yeah you told me very briefly about that first green wave you got, do you have a story about the first very memorable wave you rode, whether on a bodyboard...

**Rory:** Absolutely! I can remember, yeah, really well! I can remember the whole surf, I... it was pretty much, I'd say within a week of when I got back from that trip to the Basque country with my family, and I was with my friend Aaron Reid at the time, who's a standup – a very good standup surfer, and uhm... Yeah we used to hang out and surf a lot together, and I hadn't paddled out back previous to that, and he goes, "Eh come on, paddle out back out back, it's a nice day or whatever", and we were only, like, 12 or so, 11... paddled out back anyway and... I think the second wave I caught, I was going down the line, I will never forget that wave, as soon as I caught that wave I was just like, "Rrrh", the hunger kicked in and I never stopped! (*laughs*) Yeah, I was hooked from then on! [*Rory, 2*]

**Frederique:** So you give surf lessons as well? Why did you choose to teach surfing?

**Rory:** Well I took a year out, seven years ago (*laughs*) and I had turned 18 that summer and you need to be 18 to do your ISA Level 1 which is kind of your surf instructor course and your lifeguard and all the rest of it so, it was the next summer, while I was 18 that I had done that, those courses and then... got a job for the summer at one of the local surf schools, made a few bob and I was like "Oh I think I'll take another year and surf and travel a bit more" and I've just kinda been doing ever since, it was sort of a, maybe weirdly divine intervention, I think! (*laughs*)

**Giles:** What was it a divine intervention from? What do you think was the other option?

**Rory:** The other option would have been to just, like move to Dublin or Galway I suppose, and start studying a course, a degree, that's what I probably would have done if I didn't find this balance I have now, it's just kinda worked out well 'cause I'm a musician as well, so playing music during the nights in the summer and during the days do surf lessons so, you kinda make your hay in the summer, obviously during the winter too, I do play gigs but summer is just kinda like your time to work, and that will leave you all winter and spring flexible and free so you can surf and make it work around the waves, that's what I've done now, yeah I'm happy enough, for now anyway, it seems to work pretty well! (*laughs*) [*Rory, 3*]

**Frederique:** So you don't feel like you've had to make any sacrifices or compromises because of surfing?

**Rory:** Hmm, well, yeah, like, in a sense it's... I don't know how to answer that... yeah there is obviously more of an all day-to-day that we all sort of take, I guess, like... well... Let me think about that question! (*laughs*) Any sacrifices... No, 'cause I don't regret anything as such, I'm definitely quite happy with the way I've spent the time, but... maybe I'll find out



if it was more of a sacrifice in the few years to come maybe, we'll see how things go!  
(*laughs*) I'm sure it'll be ok, all is well that ends well!

**Frederique:** You haven't heard anything from your relatives or family about... any judgements on your life choices?

**Rory:** Nah, they're all pretty liberal, pretty happy about it, they're like, "Oh, if he's happy I'm happy!" So, it's all good, yeah!

**Frederique:** I have a general question about the balance you find between playing music and surfing, I was talking to that guy earlier on in Clonakilty and he was telling us it was difficult to pursue a musical career if you wanted to stay fit...

**Rory:** It depends, because at the moment, what I'm doing musically I'm just going around the local pubs and stuff around the west of Ireland, around the north west of Ireland so I try to keep it close to home, but yeah definitely if you're making a career choice out of it, you really want to pursue it, it's tough, because... especially if you're doing the whole original music scene, it's quite hard to fund, you know, your way of life and stuff as well, it's working 24/7, late nights and lots of driving, and very time and... very... So yeah, at that end of things it will be quite tricky, but for now, what I'm doing, I'm just playing quite close to home in different bars and stuff and... it seems to work good for now, yeah... it's not too bad.

**Frederique:** What sort of music do you play?

**Rory:** Myself... at the moment, yeah I play a bit of everything but at the moment I'm playing a lot of acoustic music, a lot of acoustic gigs, ehm... Like during the summer I do at least two weekly gigs, and my favourite one, one of my favourite ones is one with my brother and my Dad, and my Dad is quite a renowned musician as well and it's fun playing with them, it means every night is a different night, it's not like we play the same set every week, it's like, he'll just throw a new song that you hear in there and we all just pass songs around and that's my favourite one to do, it's more of a session than a gig almost, you know.

**Frederique:** Do you write your own music as well?

**Rory:** Yeah, bits and bobs... I write bits and bobs when I'm at home, but I haven't really played much of it, but maybe in time to come, get some more out there...

**Frederique:** Do you find that there's a connection between your playing music and your surfing?

**Rory:** Yeah, yeah there is, for sure. There's definitely that feeling, like there's a relative feeling of losing, like losing the sense of, like, moment in time, you know, like so when you're on a wave, or a good wave, getting a good barrel, you're not thinking about thinking anything apart from being in that wave, it's kind of like, you know, the moment? And it's, it's really good, it's the same if you're playing a really good song and you're really into it, it's really, you know, you're concentrating all your focus into this song, and it's kind of like a good wave, a good song is like a good wave when you're performing, yeah... So it's a similar feeling of adrenalin and kind of... euphoria I guess, yeah... when it's a good one... [*Rory, 4*]

**Frederique:** Do you find that one feeds the other, inspiration-wise or...?

**Rory:** Yeah, for sure, yeah it would, would do, I think it helps if they're both working at the same time, so it works well, say, when the waves are good, it definitely influences the way how you're playing and your style and... you feel fresher when you're playing music when there's good waves I think! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** So yes, music, we're looking at the relationship between music and surfing, Tom yesterday was telling us that surfing is creative and, and it's art, as well...

**Rory:** Absolutely, yeah!

**Frederique:** ... so I'm trying to put my finger on the relationship between surfing and music as well, not just visual arts... see how one feeds the other...

**Rory:** Hm, it's like different instruments too, I think surfing and bodyboarding for me, it's like... 'cause I play multiple instruments as well, like guitar, so I play guitar, bass, drums, a bit of banjo and a bit of mandolin too and a bit of bouzouki, but they're all different instruments and they're all different feels you get from them, so when you're playing bass in a band you're more... you're setting back and you're kind of... like, setting the groove of the band whereas you're alone playing and you're full front you're setting the melody and that... Ehm, I find, if you've a surfboard, your whole approach to surfing a board is different than with a bodyboard, you're thinking about different lines and different shapes and different forms of the water that you're gonna use, so... yeah, there's... the relativity there of the two, I think... yeah... if that makes any sense at all! *(laughs)* [Rory, 5]

**Giles:** Like an instrument, yeah, like you say it creates a groove, and then your board, you know, you're drawing lines, you're creating grooves, you're creating... and there are different rhythms, different instruments you know...

**Rory:** Yeah I definitely think in terms of an art form, you can relate that, so many people are so, so many people can be narrow-minded to like one type of music, and like surfing, people can be narrow-minded to one type of surfing, "Oh I just shortboard", or "I just longboard", or "I just bodyboard", "I just body surf", but if you give them all a go you can get something out of all of it, so yeah, if you're playing music you should give them all a go as well! *(laughs)*

**Frederique:** Yeah it's good to have you as well, as you play different instruments, Tom was saying yesterday he gave surfing a go but that he's more of a bodyboarder... So... are you a local from here then?

**Rory:** Yeah, born and raised in Strandhill, yeah!

**Frederique:** So what would you say have been... Have you seen any changes related to the landscape or the business or the surf tourism?

**Rory:** Yeah, lots! Lots, for sure, especially in the last ten years, there's been a huge boost, definitely a positive one, too. I can remember like when I was a kid, here, it wasn't, like there was, the Strand was always here, there was the shop across the road, and the news agents here and always a couple of surf schools, but now there is, like four surf schools, there's.... a couple of really good cafés, like Shells and the Draft House there, all the accommodation is booked out pretty much every week... And another thing that's nice in the village is that, now, like back when I was younger I can remember once September came that was it, the place had almost come to a standstill, it was really quiet, whereas now there's, the whole area, there's always people coming in and out, it's always busy, businesses are doing really good, and there's always new people to meet, and yeah it's good, it's definitely positive for sure, it's on the rise. [Rory, 36]

**Frederique:** Would you say that there's a core group of surfers here or just... Is it like ghost town in the winter for example and tourists and beginner surfers in the summer?

**Rory:** Yeah, so in the summer, a lot of beginners just go to the schools, but there's definitely, there's a core group, you'd almost see more of them in the autumns and the spring and



winter seasons, 'cause that's when the waves are at their best, so yeah there's definitely a nice group of guys here that all kinda surf together and stuff like that yeah... And especially in the village immediate there's like much more surfers and stuff, so... maybe they don't have the time to drive far for swells so they all stick around, so there's definitely like a base here, where a lot of surfers are surfing together, yeah.

**Frederique:** You were telling us about the owners of that place, are there like, here, are there any local heroes or local surfers who...?

**Rory:** I have to be careful how to answer that one! (*laughs*) Ehm, let me see, no, there is, there's lots, for me anyway, for my... Oh let me answer that again, one second... So... yeah so definitely there's a couple of generations ahead of me, the first one would be the likes of Shambles McGoldrick, Shane Meehan, Andrew Kilfeather, Steven Kilfeather, and like Aidan Kelly, Ryan McEnroe, they were bodyboarders and surfers who were from the village, and they definitely would have been an immediate influence from the start. And then you have a few guys that would be a little bit older than them, ehm let me see... in terms of bodyboarding the rest of them would have been from other parts of the country, but definitely the rest of the older surfers would have been a big influence on me 'cause they were the guys who would push you into the bigger waves when you were small, 'cause I used to be terrified of waves, you know, I'd paddle out "Aahh", guys were like "Ah, go on, you're already going", push you into them and then obviously... The names I just mentioned, I did bodyboard in waves and that, they were my immediate influence, and then, ahead of them, then, you would have the guys, for instance in this pub, who run the pub, Neil Byrne, John Byrne, Johnston Byrne, who would have been some of the first surfers as such here, they would have been a big influence on those guys, and then, ahead of them as well, you would have had Stan Byrne who's kind of one of the silver surfers I suppose, and there's a few other guys around that generation as well would have been some of the first surfers in the country, so, there's a bit of a line there in Strandhill, yeah...

[*Rory, 6*]

**Frederique:** I guess there must be lots of stories as well going around about those guys?

**Rory:** Er yeah, well every now and again there'd be talks or surf stories in the pub here, like Neil Byrne especially, he's got back into the water, he's stand up surfing quite a lot, so he's always, if we meet him we'd always be talking about surfing waves and that, every now and then he tells some of the old stories and they're, yeah they're interesting to hear, for sure. They're the old boys, they're probably around, but they'll definitely, if you can get them for ten minutes you'll get a wealth of information, for sure, yeah.

**Giles:** It would be nice to know what it was like, back then, like when they first started surfing...

**Rory:** I remember, actually I can tell you how this wave at Lislary was found. So, like, back, when these guys were surfing back in the 70s and 80s it was, all the spots, a lot of spots were just being found, and back then there wasn't as much, well there was no social media but there wasn't as much magazine coverage and stuff like that so, they had a lot of the waves to themselves, and there is a story I know of... I think it was... I'm not sure who... I can't... I'm not gonna say as I'm not 100% sure who found the wave at Lislary or Lissadell but I know there was... a few guys that had kind of sussed it out, and they'd been surfing it, and they were telling that guy, one of the old surfers, Peter Nielsen is his name, he's like a proper local legend in the area, and Peter Nielsen was like "Oh, I wanna find this wave, you know!" and... so he tried to follow them, you know, he didn't want to follow and get caught to so he was like, "How am I gonna find the wave?". So he knew a guy that worked in the... or flew a plane in the airport here, so he found out, the boys were out, it was a Lislary day

and the boys were driving to Lizzy so he got into the plane with his friend and drove up – flew up followed their van and they see their van parked at Lislary and that’s how he found Lizzie, yeah, that’s how he found Lizzie! *(laughs)* So, that’s how you had to find the waves back in the day! **[Rory, 18]**

**Frederique:** Yes, something I’m very interested is how a wave gets discovered and it’s... it sounds like it’s a treasure and it’s always been there in open view for everyone to see...

**Rory:** Yeah it’s definitely interesting alright... I think most of the ones in Ireland, someone surfed them at some stage, so... not too many left to find, I think!

**Frederique:** So how does it work, you find a wave and then it’s suddenly put on a map, or...?

**Rory:** I think it gradually gets out, I think these days it’s very hard to keep those sorts of waves, like, to yourself, ‘cause you just get too excited, you know, and that’s no fun I guess, you know, in away, to surf something to yourself, like, I know guys that have found waves, and it’s like, “Oh, I’ve found a wave, I’m not telling you” and then eventually he’s like, “Ok, I’ll show you”, and then it’s, it just gradually gets out, and then people find... But there’s always a respect for the guys who were kind of surfing there the longest or have found it, there’s always just a kind of a general, kind of, respect, like, ok those guys are from here, or they surf here a lot so you kind of give them a bit of a, even if I travel away to a new spot in another country, I’m always, I’m like “Ok, they’re surfing here the longest” so, they almost get a bit more waves, they’re a bit higher in the pecking order, something like that, I guess! *(laughs)*

**Frederique:** So how does it work when you are told about this secret wave, do you have to be sort of introduced by someone to that wave, then do you introduce someone else, how does it work, is there like a ritual or a pattern you get into?

**Rory:** With the surf spots? Yeah... yeah well it’s been a while since I’ve kind of found a new, or been surfing a new wave or whatever, yeah it seems to be... let me see... Yeah it’s, I don’t know how to answer that one, really! **[Rory, 19]**

**Giles:** So like, the first time you went to a new spot, you know, did you hear about it first, and then decided to try and find it, or... what was, how did it start before you go there?

**Rory:** Before I got to a wave... Yeah ok, I hear you, so there’s definitely, there’s been one or two spots like that where it’s been, “Ok there’s a spot here, and it’s really good”, and you just kind of, you almost kind of figure it out, in a sense you’re like, ok, you might have heard the guys say it works on such a type of swell and such a type of wind, but I’ve been lucky that I’ve never had to, sort of, you know... look for a wave, I’ve always, kind of, been around friends that looked for waves, whatever, like that, yeah... I’ve been lucky that the guys that are ahead of me, like, the names mentioned earlier, like Tom Gillespie, or Shambles and there’s a whole load of names I can pick, a lot of them were the pioneers for the waves like the slabs now, and obviously Mickey Smith, a complete... another legend, Cornwall man, found some of the waves, found and named some of the waves like Riley’s for instance, like really, like all the waves in the country, so he would have shown, like, his buddies, like Tom and Shambles and that, and I was good friends with Shambles, so, Shambles, I surfed with Shambles quite a lot here, so he would have showed me a lot of those waves when I was a grom, you know, and pushed me into them and that, so... **[Rory, 20]**

**Frederique:** Yeah someone I’m looking forward to meeting, Mickey Smith, ehm... I’m just a little bit intimidated right now...!

**Rory:** Here you go, the king! But one of the nicest guys in the world, as well, so easy to interview him, he's just...

**Frederique:** So why does Strandhill have such a reputation for surfing now?

**Rory:** Why is Strandhill beach so iconic? There you go! Strandhill is home to like, three... three... or two thirds of the Irish surf team are from Strandhill, like, so... Another thing, you've got bodyboarders, longboarders, stand up surfers, like Strandhill is quite a hub so you have, like, a couple of names which are central hubs along the... well, along the whole of Ireland, so, ones that I can think of, let's say, you'd have Portrush, Bundoran, oh Bundoran-Rosnowlagh, kinda tying the two, Strandhill, and then you have, so Enniscrone would be next to that, even Ocris, and Enniscrone would be kind of the centre up that way, and then you've got Lahinch, and then there's a few, you know there's a few, you know yourself, you're a man from Kerry, you're a Kerryman so there's like Inch beach and a few spots like that, Brandon Bay, Castlegregory would be the main one there, right, and then Cork, what would be the main place in Cork...

**Giles:** Clonakilty, Inchydoney...

**Rory:** Inchydoney and then you'll have like T Bay, like Tramore... so just from the top of my head they'd be like the main hubs, so that's kind of where all the surfers kind of live around, those beaches would be like where they all started off, such as Strandhill, from growing up here in my experience it's such a good beach to practice every kind of craft, so you have very good bodyboarders coming from Strandhill, good longboarders, good surfers, just from being able to spend time surfing the each every day, 'cause it gets, it offers quite a lot of different types of waves, so you have like a, you know like Blue Rock it's like a point break and... actually I'm gonna stop talking now in a second! 'cause I don't want to mention some of the waves and stuff! *(laughs)* Or cut that out! So you just keep in the bit from the hubs and... I was gonna say something else there, where was I... I was going...  
*[Rory, 9]*

**Giles:** Just the variety of waves in the area...

**Rory:** The variety of waves... So, go on, I'll start at Strandhill again, in case someone shoots me! So yeah growing up in Strandhill, it's such a good beach break 'cause of the way it faces the sea so it faces into the north west, so it catches quite a lot of swell, and you can get quite heavy enough waves here too, so when you bodyboard when you're a grom you can learn all your moves, and then stand up surfers – obviously good quality of waves for stand up for surfing waves, and longboarding and bodysurfing so... Yeah I think the small towns like that is where everything emerges, and from where people go out their way and look for other waves and stuff like that, yeah... *[Rory, 27]*

**Frederique:** I'm interested in names as well: how does a wave get its name?

**Rory:** Well sometimes it can just be the place name, straight up like Mullaghmore or people just call it Mullie for short, or the locals call that, like Mullagh is kind of the short for the Mullaghmore headland, but yeah, Mullie, and Mullaghmore is just the place name... Some places have very significant names, like... Let me see... it might be named after someone like I know Riley's – Mickey Smith named that after his niece I think? Oh his nephew, sorry, ok, so that's quite a significant name, when he found the spot he was gonna name it after something, so it really means something, and then you have somewhere that's found and you can just give it a ridiculous name for the craic, like... Let me see... another Irish spot... I don't know...

**Giles:** There's like, some of the waves in Bundoran, one named after a sign...

**Rory:** Yeah... so some of them are signs like Blackspot or whatever, let me see... or Pmpa, so Pmpa is quite a famous wave now, and it was named after like an insurance company that was parked there... I'm trying to find if there's any real silly ones... there's definitely a few silly ones somewhere... but anyway, yeah, it's all relative to who finds the wave, some people want to give it a serious name, it's like naming a boat, yeah. *[Rory, 21]*

**Frederique:** What would be your favourite wave around here in the country?

**Rory:** Oh my favourite wave... let me see... I think Blackspot is my favourite wave, Blackspot's got to be my favourite wave. I think – on camera... Yeah it's not much of a secret spot any more – yeah, for me it's kinda the perfect waves... ehm... yeah... simply 'cause it's kind of a slabby wave so for bodyboarding it's a very good barrel wave, so it's like nice and wide open, it's fast, there's a good bowl to do air manoeuvres in it too, and it's never too death-defying which is nice (*laughs*), yeah I enjoy it, I've always enjoyed that wave, it's a very very fun wave, yeah... and there's a left as well, so you can go left too, you know, when the tide drops, you've got a left-hander so you can go left and you can right, so it's quite a, it's like two waves in one... yeah... *[Rory, 22]*

**Frederique:** It's what you were saying this morning, the left is a bit more dangerous...?

**Rory:** Yeah, the left is a little bit more dangerous 'cause it breaks on a lower tide so there's less water under you when you fall off, but it's... yeah... it's fine.

**Frederique:** I think it's interesting you should say it's "the perfect wave", so that's something I'm wondering about, because waves are never really the same, day after day, so what makes one perfect?

**Rory:** What's the perfect wave? It's all down to... Yeah it's down to the individual but for me, as an indecisive person, I just try to find the perfect wave on the day that I'm out so (*laughs*), I can't think of what the perfect wave is! But oh seriously... what the perfect wave for me would be ehm... Let me see... So a nice rolling take off, I'm actually thinking of a wave now in the Canary islands, it's actually, I think, my favourite wave, so it's like a slightly rolling take off, and then when you get to the bottom of the wave it sort of doubles up and it just goes really really round and it's like a nice, long section that you go through. So you're all in, and it goes really round, nice wave barrel and it just goes nice and deep in the barrel, and you ride the barrel all the way to the end, and then it spits you out so all the air compresses and spits the spray out, so you come out with the spray, and you go out, you cop back into the shoulder and then there is like a bowl on the inside, so the wave wraps around like this, so then you can get a lot of speed and do an air manoeuvre, and then get on another barrel if you want... That's probably my perfect wave. Well it was the most perfect that I've found for now anyways, it's definitely my favourite one. I'm looking forward to finding more! (*laughs*) And it's nice blue water as well, it's lovely clear blue water, it's nice! And yeah, it's warmer! *[Rory, 23]*

**Giles:** What about your most memorable wave of recent?

**Rory:** Ehm... my most recent memorable wave? It would probably be... Funnily enough, it's not even that gnarly or anything, but the last sort of day where there was a bit of solid swell we surfed a point break just up the road, I wasn't even on my bodyboard, it wasn't like, big, heavy, scary waves, but I was on my stand up board, that's definitely one of the longest waves I've ever caught! So there was just... there's actually two point breaks over here and they both sort of joined, 'cause of the way the swell direction was and the way there was a big tide, and I remember just catching one wave there, and it just went on forever, it went on for quite a long time and... I remember at the very end, just my legs were kind of

burning and I was standing on the beach going “Jeez that’s the longest I ever caught!” and I can, well... It’s definitely a memorable wave as I’m talking about it now but, yeah, that was definitely the most recent kind of worth a note, very fun... Before that, there was probably a wave during the winter... more than likely, let me see... at the Canary islands. I almost find a little bit more confidence when I’m over there because I think the sun and the warm water kind of makes things almost seem more pleasant, and it’s kinda easier to relax in warmer climates so there’s definitely a couple of big days there that I paddled out and surfed in that... There was one in particular, one of the slabs, there, those stand to mind and... Yeah I remember just catching one pretty big wave there and getting a nice... nice barrel on one of them and a nice beating on the next one and I can remember those from that session anyway. That’s the last memorable one anyway, yeah. **[Rory, 24 (1/2)]**

**Giles:** Can you tell us about the good one?

**Rory:** The good one? Yeah. So, it’s a spot, it’s called El Fronton in the Canary islands, and obviously there’s quite a big local contingent there, but I’ve been going there for quite a while, so I’ve got to know some of the guys, and the guys have a bit of time for me now ‘cause I go over quite a lot, and I go over on my own too, I don’t bring like all the guys over but I remember, there’s a couple of guys that came here were saying, “Oh, next time we’re there, we hope we get a good wave” because there’s obviously a lot of hassling and stuff, and one of the guys there was gonna pretend to go for waves, like “Oh, I’m gonna go and then you go” and I’m like, “Ok”, so he was kind of going, he said “Ok, Rowdy, go go go go!” and I paddled in and went right, and it was just the most perfect wave, I was kind of like “Rrrr”...(*throaty sound*), you know, you feel like “Ooh here we go” going over the ledge and... yeah I remember getting a big nice white barrel and spat out the end. And then the next one I didn’t make it, I got busted on and... Yeah, it was pretty fun! (*laughs*) **[Rory, 24 (2/2)]**

**Giles:** What about the one you got busted? Can we go there as well?

**Rory:** Yeah the one I got busted on, yeah, just didn’t... just didn’t work out, I got to the bottom and then I had no speed and then the shock wave kinda caught and I just went up and over, rolled across and came up and I was kind of a bit solid enough too, and the inside of that wave is kinda sketchy I remember coming up and sort of looking and going “Oh crap!”. But I was pretty lucky because the white wash sort of washed me out into the channel but sometimes it can wash you out the wrong way to the right, and there’s like a little cave there, and people have been known to get washed in it but I didn’t get washed in. Nothing bad happened, ‘cause I was thinking of bad things in the inside but nothing bad happened, it was fine. Yeah, so it wasn’t the worse wipe out in the world but definitely before that I was like “Oh crap!” (*laughs*) **[Rory, 25]**

**Frederique:** What’s your train of thoughts actually when you get wiped out like that, what goes on in your mind, do you shut down in auto-pilot mode or...?

**Rory:** Ehm yeah you kinda go into auto-pilot mode but sometimes you think about what you shouldn’t think about, I suppose, if you think about dying it kind of makes it harder... best thing to do, just once you take a breath and... relax... Like I don’t do any sort of big wave surfing as such like some of the guys you’re gonna interview, like, I don’t know, say like Tom Gillespie you were just talking to him, I’d love to know what goes through some of their minds, you know, some of the waves they surf are so insane... ehm...Bbut yeah to my mind yeah, I just kinda hold my breath and yeah, just go with it! If something happens, it happens. It usually doesn’t, you’re usually ok, but best thing to do is just relax and like, go with the wave! The wipe out is also another part of surfing, you know, it happens all the



time, it's something you need to accept, so, yeah just try and take the most positive side of it and enjoy getting washed around I guess and come up like (*exhaling*), yeah, take a deep breath and you come up, it's almost like a release isn't it, you're just getting flipped around under water and you come up and you're like all relaxed again, well, not unless there's another one coming straight for you! (*laughs*) ... It's all down to the individual too, a wipe out is so relative, you know. I mean, wiping out, for someone who's used to small waves and they might get a heavy, 3- or 4-foot shore dump, that might feel the same to someone getting a 20 foot-wave into the head or whatever so yeah, it's all down to the individual, the wipe out, I think. But again, it's the ride, you've got to embrace it. [*Rory, 11*]

**Frederique:** When I started surfing wiping out was something I was always afraid of...

**Rory:** Same, I was terrified of... yeah, especially when I was a kid I was terrified of waves and each wipe out gets you kinda tougher and more desensitised and it helps you surf bigger waves so again, yeah, wiping out is quite important. It's like life isn't it, it's like an analogy in life: "Take the wipe outs! Get stronger, get better!" (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Travelling, you mention travelling, do you travel often?

**Rory:** Ehm, I definitely travelled the country quite a lot, you know, and... Like, a lot of the guys you would have spoken to there would do – would commit to quite a lot of driving around the country so travelling kinda internally in where we live is quite a big part of surfing. But we're lucky that Ireland isn't this huge landscape, so... I know – I was actually talking to guys there from Australia who've come over to visit and... you know, we might say, "Oh, I have to drive, oh, four hours to get waves", well we probably won't like that, but, you know, I remember they were telling me they drive thirty-something hours just to surf, so, I mean, we're quite lucky that Ireland is quite a small place like that to drive for waves but... Ehm, travelling as well apart from the country, yeah, the main time for me to travel in the winter, I like to travel in winter because, obviously summer is my time to do the work, and put the head down, the waves here in autumn are perfect so I like to surf here in autumn, and then winters sometimes it gets a bit stormy and almost just too messy and cold, so I like to save the money and time in winter to do a bit of travel. So I usually just go south, Canary islands is kind of an annual trip for me, or I went to Morocco a couple of times, Europe, nowhere too far yet but I've done a lot of those places concentrated, you know I've done the areas quite well, I think, trying to see the best of each area.

**Frederique:** Does it make surfing here more enjoyable? Does it bring something to your surfing here?

**Rory:** Ehm... yeah, it does, just give me a second now, yeah I think travels always bring the positives back... one thing I can notice... The surf community here is, I think, almost on parallel to a lot of places, where everyone gets along together, so like, for instance some places – I think it's to do with the fact that there isn't throngs of people at surf spots, you know, but even still, I've seen days where it could be very busy at spots but it's never too hostile, it's always quite good, and surfers and bodyboarders always get along together, I think sometimes maybe when you travel you see a bit of that surf aggro and stuff like that and you think, "Wow we're lucky we don't have that" so, maybe that's why it's not got bad in Ireland, because people don't want to see things getting rotten in the water... What else have I seen, as well... I'm thinking of other answers as well... Pff I don't know how to answer that one (*laughs*)! [*Rory, 12*]

**Frederique:** What's special about surfing in Ireland?

**Rory:** What's special about surfing in Ireland... A lot of things, then... I think... One that's special is, those who are special are rewarded quite well. I know guys who have come over on surf trips and not get waves, ehm, because Ireland you can pick, you see, you can be waiting for a month before you get some good waves, you know, and then when those good waves come it's just the best ever, you know, so that's very rewarding, it makes it quite a nice thing... Obviously the landscape, too, like the landscape here is just absolutely amazing, it's beautiful, I mean, you see and up an away you've got this lovely kind of hill, and when you're in the water it's almost all you can see is that big hill behind you, nice green hill with the cairn on top... You drive half an hour up the road, it changes again, you've got, like Benbulbin and the mountains up around there, and you've got Slieve League ahead of you, in the water, so you've got mountains both sides, and then you go further down the road it changes again so yeah, the vast landscapes are always interesting and keep things nice as well... it's a rewarding part of it for sure... What else... what else – what was the question again? (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** What's the best thing about surfing in Ireland, what makes it special?

**Rory:** Yeah... yeah, that, and the community too, I think the friends I've made out of surfing are more than friends, so it makes, it's quite special, say, like if I drive down to Clare I meet all my friends again, so it's more than just a surf, you're meeting your friends, you're hanging out, and there's so much more than just surfing as well, which is quite nice, too, yeah.. catching up with buddies, meeting new people... yeah... what else... [*Rory, 28*]

**Frederique:** What would you say is the hardest thing about surfing in Ireland?

**Rory:** Ehm... again the patience! (*laughs*) The hardest thing is waiting for waves... ehm... yeah, not even the cold and stuff, like... for me, I sometimes think – that's like why I surf different types of boards so I can get in the water every day, so it's hard, that's speaking as a bodyboarder – to wait... the whole summer, you're not gonna get those slabby heavy waves, it's not gonna happen, and then when the season comes, like in a lot of countries when the season comes you're like, "Ok, grand", you can surf most days, and you might wait two days without waves or three days but in Ireland you can be waiting two weeks, three weeks, and you'll have no waves so that's definitely the hardest part, it's just waiting for those days to come. But... yeah, that's why it helps to utilize every craft and get in the water every day and just... enjoy the ocean for what it has each day, you know... even if it's not the perfect waves that you want! (*laughs*) [*Rory, 29*]

**Frederique:** It's a bit of a cliché question but it's something that I've found is central to me, to my experience, do you find that you learn a lot about yourself, surfing or waiting to surf?

**Rory:** Oh absolutely, of goodness yeah, you learn lots about yourself! What I've even realized, 'cause, like, there's a lot of, it's almost like analogies in the water that you don't realize, you know, I was saying, when you take wipe outs, you know, I think, I remember I think Gerry Lopez saying in an interview, as well, something along these lines that, if you're out, let's say in a big day, and you get smashed in a wave, it doesn't go the way you want, when you come up from that wave you've a choice to make, you can just go "Ah, fuck, I'm gonna paddle in, get out of the water and leave it", or you can go, "No, I'm just gonna paddle back out, keep going", push yourself through the waves, and get out and then you get your rewards, you get good waves again, so you learn stuff like that, and you can learn that you can conquer stuff that you're afraid of, it's kind of fear-of-the-unknown stuff, you know, like big waves and stuff like that, like as I said before, when I was a younger kid, I was terrified of waves, any kind of waves, so you learn how to deal with certain things like

that... and what else does surfing help you learn about yourself... ehm... yeah, there's a lot of stuff... *(laughs)* I can't think of... **[Rory, 3]**

**Giles:** What does it feel like when you go out and, say, get a good wave or a big wave at a spot that you're kind of a bit nervous about? Like, is there... can you tell us about how that feels, when you finally conquer it?

**Rory:** Yeah, well you know yourself, anyway, you fly away in those big ones too! Ehm... how it feels, yeah so, fear, if there is a bigger day and the waves are slightly heavier than what you maybe normally surf or slightly bigger, ehm, you'll come to see it as you start to surf more yourself, there will be one or two days in particular where you're like, "Ok, this is bigger than what I usually surf", ehm... it kind of helps not to pass a heat or a high (?) 'cause some people are like, "Fuck, no no no, it's really big", so you just, ignore that, watch the waves and go "Ok, yeah, I'll go out there", listen to the guys who are calm and are gonna "Hey, you should paddle out there", and then, yeah you paddle out, and when you catch one, you know it's a bit more of an adrenaline rush than some of the other days you'd actually surf in... then you kind of set the bar of, in your head you're like "Ok, now I can surf these" and then that becomes almost your bar, and then you just keep setting your bar from there 'cause it's limitless, really. **[Rory, 15]**

**Frederique:** Some very easy questions now...

**Rory:** I just keep thinking about what you said about what you learn about yourself from the waves... there's definitely more I can say about it but I don't know...

**Frederique:** Well one of my interests in in my research is the theme of the journey... the journeys in the tales of heroes, overcoming obstacles, fighting monsters and the hero always learns something about himself as well... and I find there is some comparison to be made with surfing as well, like when you wipe out, when you have a good wave, and then how you learn about yourself... and just... yeah it's something I'm exploring at the moment...

**Rory:** You're talking about learning from defeat or from challenges...? Yeah yeah, absolutely, absolutely, ehm... well, again... immediately what comes to mind, there, is a friend of mine, Shambles, obviously a widely renowned surfer – bodyboarder... across the globe now, that question made me think of the time he was nearly killed a year ago, at a spot – at Riley's, that slab, quite infamous slab, he'll tell you the story himself but... yeah, the experience he had from, sort of, the monster, like the hero and the monster, the challenges, whatever it is, the mountain, whatever it is that's gonna be the... Riley's is a low-tide, Riley's happens to be the beastly fall of that day and... yeah, he was telling me about the whole experience and... yeah, he learnt a lot, coming close to death, you know it's... yeah... I'll leave that, and if you meet him, ask him about that, he'll give you a good answer... but I'll answer it myself, the other one, you were saying... **[Rory, 14]**

**Giles:** I know what you're talking about there, this kind of, the mythology side of what Fred is doing, it's like, you know you can... you can view it as, like, going out and surfing whatever is a big wave to you, it's like, d'you know, back in the day, being a knight and going to fight, walking into the woods to fight some dragon or... or ride the bull, you know, it's like...

**Frederique:** It's something I've definitely found more connected to Irish surfing than any sort of surfing I've seen...

**Rory:** The environment is a big deal! I think, yeah, definitely on some of the days like – actually! I can answer that question. Ok? So. Probably one of the most hard core experiences in terms of the climate and the weather, when I was a grom obviously I couldn't afford the best of gear, and there was one day, it was a winter's day, absolutely freezing, really cold



wind chill and I had like a, like a 4/3 suit and like another summer suit on under that the summer suit wasn't even a summer suit, it was like a 2mil shorty, and both of them had holes, and I thought "Ok, I'll be able to surf here" and... didn't have a hood or anything, and me and two of my friends went over to the top end of the beach, surfed a few hours and obviously "Oh, I'm really cold" and my hands and my fingers were white, and blue lips, I remember just getting changed behind the surf school, we were locked out of the surf school, no showers, couldn't get my suit off, the pain in my hands was so intense, the tears were coming out of my eyes, I was like "Uuh" like 13 years old, like freezing cold, my parents had come to pick me up, they were parked up the road, they were like "What did you surf for that long for?", I'd like purple lips, I was pale, I had to put like warm face cloths on my wrists and trying to warm them up, so that day was definitely fighting the mythical monster: the cold, that was a hard day, it was one of the hardest days I've ever... There are days you'd just be "Ah freezing" you're nearly hypothermic, but I think as a kid too it was just like one of the extreme sensations I had felt, I was just like "Aaah this is the worst thing ever!" (*laughs*) But, you'd done it for the waves, you'd no, you'd crap gear and stuff but you'd done it anyway, if you wanted to surf! Make do with you have, ha ha! (*laughs*) [*Rory, 30*]

**Frederique:** Same story for me, surfing in Brittany can be really cold as well, and I had a 3/2 wetsuit, and I was coming out of the water in December and my car wouldn't start and I was on my own in the car park! And I couldn't get out of my wetsuit... and I had to hitch hike my way in my wetsuit... you go back to it anyway!

**Rory:** Yeah! That was such a hard core day, I just remember being a little kid and being that freezing, I was like "Fuck!"

**Giles:** It reminds me of when I started, I got like, I think I had like a 3/2 or something and I did, like, the whole winter in it, I remember I was down in Ballycobh in Cork and me and my buddy had been surfing and it was like, it was cold, hey, I was walking up the hill and I remember, like, getting short of breath and I was like shivering hard, I was walking up the hill just thinking, like "This is just part of it!" (*laughs*) It's just part of surfing, you know, it's normal!" Didn't realize you could get warmer suits or anything but yeah, literally, just like "Fucking hell!" even getting sick trying to get up the hill, but... (*laughs*)

**Rory:** It's funny, though, like relative to any experiences I've had, that's definitely, in terms of the age that I was and stuff, that was probably one of the more hard core things, like, you know... it's funny, isn't it!

**Frederique:** Yeah definitely a topic I relate to, the hero, you know, because it's about pushing your own limits, like you know this edit by Ben Player, "Far North"... it's about pushing the limits of your own body and... wearing that helmet he looked like Robocop or something...

**Rory:** I think he was given money to put that on, though! (*laughs*), I think it was Redbull or something, like "Here you go, put this on!" Ah yeah, but still, though, it might have been the right thing to do, when you look at the end you're like "Maybe it wasn't a bad idea!" Fuck that end section...

**Giles:** "Scary shit, I'll take the suit!"

**Rory:** Ah, so will I, my God, crazy!

**Frederique:** Something that popped in my mind last night about addiction, something Tom said about how he started bodyboarding and he started being obsessed about waves all the time, so I have friends who also started surfing but they are not that into it as I am for

example, so I just wonder, what makes a person more passionate about surfing than other people, does it take a special mind, do you have to be an addictive sort of personality...?

**Rory:** Well, yes and no, I can try and answer it for myself, I'm not particularly addictive in my habits, you know I'm not like an addictive person, like, where I'm after this or after that, not an addictive personality... uhm, I'll start that question again! Basically, well, so, no I wouldn't have an addictive personality as such but I think surfing it's totally down to the individual, if you do have an addictive personality you're screwed! (*laughs*) 'cause you're just gonna end up totally hooked 'cause it's amazing, but no, it's definitely, once you catch that one wave like the one I said earlier when I was younger, when you get that one wave, there's like a bug that bites and it seems to bit everyone at some stage in their surfing... in their surfing life, so you might just be someone who's just surfing, you know, a couple of weeks here and there during the summers but you might just get that one wave where you're like "Wowoh man, that was amazing!" and it's like... Once that one wave kicks in and you catch that one, from there on, it's just, you drift off into the surf lifestyle and you... you keep wanting to find those waves that you wanna surf from that one, so it keeps – it goes into the journey, you know... and that's where the addiction starts, yeah.

**Frederique:** Because you teach surfing as well, I wonder, do you see that in a lot of your students? How many of all the students you've taught so far, how many do you think have actually embraced the lifestyle?

**Rory:** The ones that – how many have embraced... The ones that can, because a lot of people don't live, a lot of people aren't as lucky as us to live this life by the coastline, I mean lucky as being able to surf every day... So those people probably, if they're living inland away from the sea and have a way of life... they mightn't be able to kind of... continue their surfing, consistently anyway... But, for those that live near a coastline, like say, for instance, in Sligo, in Sligo town, I know loads of people who just went on to two surf lessons and that spawned into their everyday surfing lifestyle now, you know, or they've, eventually they've found the wave that's become the wave that would keep them going, and so a lot of those guys might start with a few surf lessons and then they buy their first board and then, off they go... So yeah, no I've seen a lot of people, after their first few lessons, begin to surf, yeah. [*Rory, 26*]

**Frederique:** How many surfboards and bodyboards do you have at the moment?

**Rory:** Ehm... well I've got two stand up boards at the moment, two or three years ago I bought a single gin Magic Carpet board, 7'2, so it's a lovely board you can surf all types of waves on it, 'cause before that I was just surfing the foam boards in the surf schools, but I was just like, "Ah, I think I'll buy a proper board." And then... I started surfing that quite a lot and then I bought a quad, it's like a 5'8 or 5'9 quad board that a friend of mine made, Art Counihan (*WaxOnSurfboards*), makes great boards, it's quite cool, 'cause he's from Sligo so it's like a board made in Sligo and you surf in Sligo, it's kinda cool, I like that! Uhm, so I've got two surfboards, and then I have a whole ton of bodyboards, that I've collected over the years... Ehm two of the main ones I have would be, one is a 40'1 inch, and it's quite a narrow board so that's good for the barrelling waves, so you can surf them barrels quite well and fast, get your speed, and the other board I have, the mid point is quite high up, so it's like wider high up, and it's an inch bigger, or half an inch bigger so it's 41 and a half so it's that much bigger... So it's a bit wider and a bit thicker, so it's better for smaller waves, so if you wanna do moves like in a contest or something like that it works better, so they're my, my main board.

**Frederique:** Where is Art based actually?

**Rory:** He's in Canada at the moment, I'll give you his details if you want. He's a great surfer too. He works with Conor, Conor at WaxOn... so he's kinda... He started off for him and... I think he still does work with him as well... *[Rory, 10]*

**Frederique:** I also like this idea of having locally made boards...

**Rory:** Yeah, those boys are just up the road, they're in Drumcliff, yeah!

**Frederique:** ... so far haven't found a lot of local made boards and businesses stocking them.

**Giles:** Yeah in the shops, it's not something you come across, hey..

**Rory:** Not really, but yeah Conor would be a good guy to chat to, yeah.

**Frederique:** Yeah so my easy questions, now... Imagine I'm a five-year old, could you explain to me what a wave is?

**Rory:** Hm... explain what a wave is? Ehm to a five-year old... err... *(laughs)* Let me see... that's an interesting one... I don't know how to say it to a five-year old... It's a... a really fun moving pile of water *(laughs)* that you can surf on haha! No, sorry, sorry... it's a... five-year old... let me see... what's a wave... yeah, it's a nice, fast moving pile of water that you can surf on and enjoy... Keep it positive! Don't freak them out!

**Frederique:** So how would you define surfing then, to that five-year old?

**Rory:** To a five-year old? That's funny, when you speak, when you're doing a surf lesson, the kids always pick it up the best, because they don't overthink, they just do it! So surfing, almost, you don't have to tell them. It's a good question but it's almost like you don't even have to tell them, because they're just thinking about doing it. They don't think about "Ok, ok, my foot goes here, my foot goes there, I paddle now, oh no I've done too much paddles", the kids just go out and they do it, they always, like, get it quicker than the adults, you know, 'cause as adults we're, or grown-ups, whatever, we need to understand those things, and we're curious, so we approach a wave, when we come out – I've seen, actually, when adults approach a wave for the first time they like, they think about this, "Oh, I wonder how do I this or do I do that" whereas kids just go "Ok, ok, ok! I go on the wave!" So the kids just feel the flow and they get into it straight away, they pick it up naturally. Yeah, it's like you don't have to explain to them, by surfing... yeah it's a good question, though, yeah... they just, they just pick it up so naturally, kids. *[Rory, 17]*

**Frederique:** I remember my first time surfing, this friend of mine who's a surf instructor in Brittany, he said "Looks like you're overthinking it a bit! You must be a teacher, right, in a university or something..." like he just read through me, like spot on, ... ..

**Rory:** Yeah... obviously you need to think a little, but I think it's minimal, what you think about, you know, it's just the wave's coming, paddle, be in the right place and every wave's a lesson so you learn more each wave you catch.

**Frederique:** A general question about surfing in Ireland, do you think it's going to... like it's growing bigger, you said that yourself, there's four surf schools here, do you think it's gonna reach that point that it's reached for example in Biarritz or Hossegor, where it's like, it's big and it's crowded line ups...?

**Rory:** Relative to the population here, ehm, because a lot of the coastal towns aren't that big, so obviously Biarritz and Hossegor would be quite big places, highly populated, and then... the thing that would be similar I think is people coming to spend, like vacation time, holiday time here, so, that in turns means more people in the water, yeah it is gonna build because the people that would come here every year for the summer, ehm... would keep on surfing... In terms of the... oh, you see it's different with our climates than in a lot of the

warmer countries so it's... it's for the dedicated I think, for people who are really dedicated to it and would stick to it... Will there be more... hopefully there will be a few more, I guess, maybe not too much more, 'cause it's nice to have a quiet line-up and that... [Rory, 36] But definitely I think, our home here in Strandhill, speaking from what I can see in the area, there's a big gap between... there's like a few... so I'm 25 now and below me there's a couple of guys, 19-20, there's a huge gap between like the teens here, there's not really any teens here, but there's a huge group of kids starting up now, and a lot of families are surfing so it's all incorporated within the local surf school, they've been really really pro-active with getting... [Rory, 37] introducing surfing into families' lives, which is very good because think of all the people, a lot of parents, must be thinking, it's quite, you know, scary, putting your kid into the Atlantic ocean but now that they're incorporating the parents with these young kids, there's like, I think there's like just under 200 people over the summer who were surfing regularly with the club, so there's a huge number of rising kids coming up now, it's like a new generation coming along, which is nice to see... So it's nice to see the beach and the waves being used. So to answer your question yeah, it's looking like it's on the up. [Rory, 36]

**Frederique:** What do you think the region needs in order to make it a better surfing location?

**Rory:** Ehm... What needs to be done to make it a better surfing... it's already, it's already fine the way it is,, I think the layout, the landscape is perfect as it's quite untouched... a lot of the areas, like...Strandhill beach is still, it's very open and it's kind of wild, you know, there's a big long beach that's not been built on and that, there's a small wee promenade here which is lovely... ehm... In terms of improving it, I'm not too sure... What else I could say there... 'cause it seems to be going – everything seems to be going quite well... ehm... The improvement that we were all thinking should be made is being made, the people that work at the surf club are making a huge positive impact with the local community in terms of bringing the young kids and their parents in so, yeah, it seems the measures that need to be made are being taken, it's all good and positive and going forward, yeah!

**Frederique:** Are you aware of any threats here, regarding the landscape... because it's growing bigger so for example is there any plan of extending towns or building hotels or... is the town or council keen on preserving the landscape as it now...?

**Rory:** I'll just say – it's an interesting question... ehm... I definitely think the sewage needs to... sewage is a big problem... ehm, a lot of places on the west coast of Ireland release raw sewage, and there's a lot of spots, I think that's the biggest issue I can think of... Maybe when more people start doing it, they'll realize, "Oh, hell, maybe we should do something about it". So I know sometimes, I'm not gonna talk about logistics but I know, being from here as well, surfing every day in Strandhill, there's a sewage plant on the north side of the beach, and it's been a while since that's been built on, and there's a lot of people living here and there's been a lot more houses built since, and sometimes the smell on the north side of the beach is unbelievable, it smells terrible... I think that needs to be sorted out... yeah... [Rory, 38]

**Frederique:** I remember finding it strange for me when I saw the raw sewage in Bundoran going out to sea, like in France you don't find it so often... or maybe you do but I wouldn't know...

**Rory:** Yeah... it's not good 'cause people get... you know, people get quite sick, if it's a day where there's a lot of run off, people can have an ear infections, maybe some kind of ... sore throat and stuff so... yeah it's not good, they need to do something about those spots, I think, here in Strandhill included... yeah.

**Frederique:** Ehm... maybe one last question about... where do you see yourself in the next five, ten years, do you have any plans or where do you think you'll be...

**Rory:** Ooh... interesting question, I wonder myself... yeah, the next five ten years, hopefully still healthy and fit and able to surf, hopefully still playing music... maybe in the next five years make something more, and develop more out of the music end of things as well as surfing... surfing is just something I'm gonna do anyway... I think musically, yeah, maybe develop more musically and... yeah... make some kind of a level out of the music and hopefully be able to still surf loads... we'll see what happens!

**Frederique:** What do you think you need actually in order to develop your music?

**Rory:** I'm not too sure, maybe it's meeting, 'cause I like to play with people, if I was going to be creative I'd like to do it with a band of people so maybe just meeting the like-minded individuals who have a similar lifestyle to myself, and then, work on a project with them, that would be pretty cool, yeah! So we'll see, God knows what can happen! I act on impulse quite a lot! So... *(laughs)* There you go, you're all set... Hopefully I answered them all...

**Giles:** Yeah some really nice answers, nice stories, nice insights into yourself and stuff, it's definitely worthwhile stuff.

**Rory:** Yeah... but definitely if there's one thing I'd say is, so long as I'm still able to have those days I can get up in the morning and I know there's waves, and just be able to jump in the van, and pack up my gear, and surf all day, that's kind of, like, the epitome of happiness for me, being able to do that during the day when I want to... so, hopefully, when I do have responsibilities when I get older I can still follow that lifestyle in some sense or form, yeah.

*[Rory, 16]*

**Frederique:** One question that I've forgotten about is, is there anything that you hear in the line up in Ireland that you wouldn't hear anywhere else, like greetings, or comments that would be typically Irish?

**Rory:** Oh, people would say, "How's the craic?", "How're you getting on?"... Let me see... one thing I don't hear a lot and sometimes you hear people being completely hung over in the water *(laughs)*, I've never seen that in other countries, people going, "Oh jeez, man, last night!..." and surfing to their heart's content no bother... ah no but seriously... what would you hear in the line up that you wouldn't hear... I'm not too sure! Here is an interesting one! But there's definitely a few things, phrases, it's just certain phrases, like, Irish phrases, like... yeah, "What's the craic?" or whatever...

**Giles:** For example, I was surfing down in Kerry the other day, and it started hammering it down, and this lad, I was like, I was like "Jesus, some heavy rain" and he was like "Yeah, it'd tear the eyes out of ye!" and it was just like, it wasn't the sort of things you'd hear regularly, but I don't think, because of the weather, because of the... the accent, people, you know, there's a great way with words, sometimes you're like, "Jesus, yeah, it would tear the eyes out of ye!"

**Rory:** Yeah, definitely in Ireland people talk about the weather way more in the water! *(laughs)* Yeah, the weather is a big one. Weather and pints! *(laughs)* Two things people talk about in the water more. *[Rory, 31]*

**Frederique:** What I like as well is the sense of, maybe not respect, I wouldn't go as far as calling it respect but kind of an understanding, when you look at someone and just saying hello, and you don't necessarily start talking in the water, but they see you, it's pouring down, and they kind of accept you as being part of the, the... whatever...

**Rory:** Yeah, there's a general camaraderie, no that's definitely a good point, one thing that's like, that's I've started noticing a lot more in Ireland than some other countries is... yeah, the camaraderie, so even if someone isn't from here and they're on a trip, it's like, you respect the fact that these guys are coming from a cold country, you know they have to buy the wetsuits, they have to buy probably a new set of clothes, you know, put a lot of effort into getting here and then they, you know, they get out in the freezing cold and the pissing rain and they're in the water with you, yeah you wanna know who that guy is, so "Hey how are you, what's your name?" You respect that guy and you want to get to know them and... 'cause obviously there's the relativity and... and there's obviously a big respect for someone that does that, yeah! So there's definitely more a comraderie I think in the water, in a sense like that, a little bit more, yeah.

**Frederique:** Maybe yeah, even in Brittany, in Brittany it's cold as well, but I've heard some very good surfer friends say "I'm not getting out, like, have you seen the weather, I can't be bothered", whereas here if you go, they're like, "Yeah, fair play", I was told that yesterday in Lahinch there was a big busload of Americans taking pictures and I was the only one getting in, and there was just one guy, just throwing airs, I was like "Oh, maybe I shouldn't get in because it's a bit big and there's only one guy and he seems to rip", you know, but then like, Tom saw me getting in so I told him I was getting in so I was like, ok I'm getting in... and this American guy with his big camera was like, "Oh, wow, yeah, good, fair play, like, good on you, good luck!"

**Rory:** Yeah it's definitely a cool thing here...

**Frederique:** ... the whole warrior thing...

**Rory:** That's it!

**Giles:** It's like that, you know, if it's hammering it down it doesn't matter because you're... if the waves are good it doesn't matter. You... you don't... the weather doesn't matter. It doesn't matter at all, does it.

**Rory:** Yeah that's definitely as I was saying, one of the things that's different like that is... yeah, people chat more and include each other more because it's a small... kind of, it's not a bit lot of people that stick it out through those winter seasons and that, so...

**Giles:** Very good.

**Frederique:** Yeah, thank you so much for your time, good stories, you have a good way with words...

**Rory:** Oh thanks, I was trying... yeah hopefully... that worked! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** I'll probably get back in touch with you at some point because...

**Rory:** Absolutely, yeah, any time... Great to see people doing this kind of stuff that you're doing, something different, it's like asking the behind-the-scenes and then getting to know the surfers intimately and... There's definitely something in the landscape, or... definitely, there's something about here I think... on the west coast of Ireland, and Strandhill, in particular, 'cause I can speak about all these things, 'cause I probably... but it chooses its people. And a lot of people pass through but there's some people that come here and they're like "Fuck! that is the fucking the place, like!" There's a guy, his name is Jeff, he's sixty-something, he's been sailing all around the world for twenty years, and he said the longest that he's... d'you want to record this? Ok, I was saying, like, the west coast of Ireland, in particular, I can say this from being from Strandhill, Strandhill's surf, I'd almost... my dad said this: it, like, chooses its people... in the sense that a lot of people pass



through, but sometimes, you get people and they come in and they might just be planning to stay like a week or two, but they're like "Fuck, you know, this place! Oh it's amazing! It's got the waves, the lakes, the mountains, the stories, the people!" and the whole environment... and it suits those people, and they might end up staying. And there's a guy I met there, he's sixty-something, his name is Jeff, he's been sailing around the world for the last thirty years and he says the longest he's stayed in a place for a few weeks, he's been in Sligo for two years now, on and off, you know, he's like, "I don't what it is, it's like a vortex, it sucks you in!" So it brings all these people together, there's some kind of a... I don't know, invisible thing about it, pulling all these people together, it's great! (*laughs*)  
**[Rory, 32]**

**Frederique:** I've heard the same about Bundoran.

**Rory:** Yeah Bundoran, it's the same, yeah! Pfffeew, pulls these people together..

**Frederique:** Like French Paul! Like, French Paul arrived five years ago I think in Clonakilty, he stayed in Clonakilty, he's started learning surfing and he said to me, he had just planned to stay one year in Ireland, working as a gardener somewhere, and he's been in Bundoran five years now...

**Rory:** It's the way it is! But even though, there was something I was gonna say as well, about the mythical side of things, like this part of the country, like that cairn, there's a cairn at the top, and people say that... have you ever heard of Queen Maeve? So she is supposed to be standing, like buried under the rock, standing with her sword like that, facing up her enemies, her enemies across the river Drowes, you know, just up... (...) so, that was the border, like, where Blackspot is, that was the border, north and south, so they used to fight each other and stuff, but apparently at the river, you know, they were digging, when they built the houses there, they put a shovel in, "Oh, there is a sword", they put a shovel up, pulled the shit out, and they found a center there, yeah... But anyway, all around like, there's loads of, like really old megalithic burial sites and stuff like that, like real significant ones, so this whole area in general has been, kind of, populated for like, 8,000 years or stuff like that, it's crazy, like... If you're interested in that kind of stuff, it's really really cool. **[Rory, 33]**

**Frederique:** Yeah, what you say about the vortex, it's interesting, there's lots of fairy tales about human beings being kind of kidnapped by the fairies and just dancing for one night with the fairies, and then waking up back in their human life again and they discover that they've been away for 700 years... whereas for them it just felt like one night having fun... but it was 700 years of absence, everybody's dead... ..

**Rory:** Certain parts of the world have that kind of thing alright, don't they? Yeah, no, Ireland, if you like history, it's a wealth of stories, like.

**Giles:** It's great like, what you say about the fairies, and the vortex, and you know, like there's these areas that are grabbing a hold of people and keeping them there, and like, I mean, for our community, the surf community, a big part of that is the waves, d'you know, the waves themselves, you know...

**Rory:** It's a common interest that keeps everyone...

**Giles:** ...like we dance with them and then we have to wait till the next day... What about Strandhill, or Sligo, what is it that's kept you here? Like you're a surfer, a bodyboarder, you know, you could live in Hawai...

**Rory:** Yeah... the people! The people's a huge part of it, you know, the people are very genuine, down to earth, and interesting, and obviously my family is here too, so that's a bonus,

being able to have them around. We get on most of the time, which is handy, yeah and the waves, too, it's everything, it all ties into this unique... yeah, lifestyle essentially... and it's hard to, kind of... hard to top it... Any time you go in, you come back and you, "ah, yeah, it's nice, I have it good, I'm happy enough, so..." yeah... **[Rory, 34]**

**Giles:** Groovy. Thank you!

**Rory:** Ah, no problem, Jeez, fair play to you guys.



## 2. OLLIE O'FLAHERTY

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Ollie est originaire de Lahinch, l'une des deux villes de la côte ouest irlandaise, avec Bundoran, qui se disputent le titre de capitale du surf irlandais. Âgé de 31 ans au moment de l'entretien, Ollie est un des noms les plus connus parmi les surfeurs irlandais ainsi que sur la scène surf internationale. Surfeur expérimenté de grosses vagues depuis plus de dix ans, il travaille en tant que moniteur de surf tout en poursuivant une carrière semi-professionnelle grâce à ses participations dans les compétitions nationales et internationales, notamment dans les compétitions de grosses vagues. Il est également sponsorisé par de nombreuses marques telles que C-Skins Wetsuits, Globe, Creatures of Leisure, Monster, Coded Surfboards and Sexwax, et a été nommé à plusieurs reprises aux Billabong XXL Awards en Californie en 2012 (catégorie « Biggest Wave »), et de nouveau en 2019 (catégorie « Ride of the Year »). Ollie est un habitué de Riley's (co. Clare) et de Mullaghmore (co. Sligo). Lorsque les conditions sont réunies, durant les mois d'hiver, Ollie fait partie de ces surfeurs qui partent à l'assaut des vagues géantes de ces sites lors de sessions souvent médiatisées au cours desquelles photographes et réalisateurs rejoignent les surfeurs dans l'eau et sur la côte pour immortaliser ces vagues. Les images rapportées de ces sessions sont ensuite partagées sur les réseaux sociaux des athlètes, des photographes ainsi que, bien souvent, sur les sites de la presse spécialisée tels que MagicSeaweed.com.



**III. 132 :** Ollie O'Flaherty, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 16 décembre 2017 à Lahinch (Clare).

Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Ollie est donc un des membres les plus emblématiques de la communauté surf irlandaise, et bien qu'il soit connu pour être l'un de ses surfeurs de grosses vagues les plus intrépides et talentueux et aussi les plus médiatisés, il est une personnalité très accessible. Il a accepté de m'accorder un entretien en septembre 2017, et je l'ai depuis rencontré à plusieurs reprises, sur le site de Mullaghmore notamment. Je l'ai également retrouvé lors du festival de film de surf de Doolin en mars 2019, lors duquel il a été récompensé du prix du meilleur court-métrage pour le film *Le Chéile* réalisé à son sujet par Kevin L. Smith, qui montre l'implication du surfeur dans sa communauté locale du comté de Clare. Ollie représente ainsi un sujet particulièrement intéressant

pour l'ethnographie en raison de son statut de surfeur semi-professionnel reconnu, sa connaissance des rouages institutionnels du surf et des problématiques liées à la marchandisation de l'activité en Irlande, et sa maîtrise d'une déclinaison spécifique de la pratique : le surf de grosses vagues. Une des questions de notre entretien porte sur les raisons de son engagement à affronter les houles gigantesques d'Aileen's ou Mullaghmore, et sa réponse est particulièrement révélatrice d'une philosophie de vie et de pratique de ce qui, pour Ollie et beaucoup des surfeurs interrogés dans le cadre de ce travail, est beaucoup plus qu'un sport : « If you're just in your own comfort zone the whole time then you're not really living ».



**Ill. 133** : Ollie O'Flaherty sur la vague de Mullaghmore (Sligo) en janvier 2020.  
Source : capture d'écran de la page personnelle d'Ollie sur Instagram ; photographe : Fionan Cronin<sup>2</sup>.

### **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 16 septembre 2017, enregistré à Lahinch, co. Clare :**

**Ollie:** So my name is Ollie O'Flaherty, and I'm from Lahinch county Clare and I got into big waves when I was about 17 or 18, I'd just go over to Riley's or Aileen's, Laurens and waves like that and yeah I just really like the good waves, and I want to make the most of it while I can you know, it's on my doorstep so why not. *[Ollie, 1]*

**Frederique:** When did you start surfing?

**Ollie:** So I started surfing when I was 4, on a family holiday in France, my uncle has been surfing for, since kind of the early 80s so he taught me when I was really small and I was lucky enough to have him, his name is Alan Coin, he used to bring me surfing so, yeah I was very lucky.

**Frederique:** Where in France?

**Ollie:** In Lacanau.

**Frederique:** And do you go back there sometimes?

**Ollie:** Yeah yeah, have done yeah, lots of times. And we spent a lot of time in Hossegor as well, in Seignosse, so I was lucky. *[Ollie, 2]*

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<sup>2</sup> Lien : [https://www.instagram.com/fionan\\_cronin/](https://www.instagram.com/fionan_cronin/)

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your first memorable wave?

**Ollie:** My earliest memory I think, I remember my uncle pushed me to go across a wave, at the end of the beach down in Lahinch, it was like a little clean A, I just remember the rush of going across the wave, and the wind, feeling like I was going 100 miles an hour, I don't know I just got that connection, I suppose then it's like an addiction from then on then you know, it must have been maybe, let's say I was 8 years old or something like that, maybe a bit younger? *[Ollie, 3]*

**Frederique:** So you are a stand up surfer, do you do any other types of surfing?

**Ollie:** Not really no, I kind of like, within surfing, within stand up surfing I do change up quite a bit, like I ride a longboard and, last year I was national champion on longboard, so, I do shortboard and longboard, yeah I just enjoy surfing to be honest, whether it's, it's 2 foot and clean and nice I'm going longboard and try nose-riding, I enjoy that, you know, and maybe not just as much as getting big barrels but, you know, it's a different type of surfing but it's just as enjoyable you know. *[Ollie, 4]*

**Frederique:** What brought you to competition?

**Ollie:** I just decided I suppose, it was just a good way to meet people, and I think, back you know when I was... I started competing... so I'm thirty now, when I was about 12 so that's 18 years ago so, it was just nice to meet guys from Waterford, and Sligo and Bundoran, you know have a little bit of a, you know, kind of a base and friends and different places so I can go and surf different places you know, just to make more friends and have a little bit of a group and it's good to, I think like, to be competitive in one way is good because it pushes you to be better you know, even if it's within your group, within your peers you know, I think it's important like, you wouldn't hear many surfers say that they're not pushed by their peers you know, they see you or their mates get a good wave, and obviously you're stoked for them and anyway you're going "I really want one", you know, and "I want to get a better one", you know, so that's, I think, everybody is competitive in their own way you know... *[Ollie, 5]*

**Frederique:** Outperforming yourself or others, is that something that's important to you?

**Ollie:** I don't... depends on what you want from surfing you know, depends on what you want from it, like I think for me if I didn't have, if I wasn't competitive and I didn't push myself or still wanted to be the best I can be then I'd lose interest, you know like I mean, I just think like what's the point doing something if you can't push yourself, I think that's what's is about like, you know, if you're just kind of in your own comfort zone the whole time and you're not really living like you know... *[Ollie, 6]*

**Frederique:** On a daily basis, what would you say is the difference between competitive surfing and just surfing?

**Ollie:** Yeah it depends on the days I mean, it's, I think when the waves are good, you still want to get the best waves you know, you still kinda surf the best you can to get you know, in a way I think it's not competitive, it's just trying to be your best, whereas in a competitive environment, it's just I suppose the satisfaction of, of beating somebody, and I think it's just a natural thing, you know I think not many people would say, if they get your heat, they're not happy you know, I think it's, to be honest I like competing and it keeps me on, it keeps me on point you know, it keeps me kinda surfing the best that I can but you know in another way I could have probably competed a lot more and travelled a lot more competing, but I just decided I wanted to kinda, I don't know, surf, put my time into heavier waves you know, that was kinda where my heart lied there you know, I felt the best opportunities I had, you know to have a good time and enjoy the most would be doing that

you know, instead of chasing kind of a contest lifestyle, I don't know if I would really have gone into it, but I do love watching it, I love watching contests, I don't think travelling around the world is the best lifestyle you know, and to be honest a lot of contests are held in really bad waves, so yeah it's not really, you know... I'd rather be here for good days than travel around the world surfing two-foot beach breaks you know... [Ollie, 7]

**Frederique:** What's the competitive scene like in Ireland?

**Ollie:** From a junior point of view, the young surfers at the moment I think it's probably the best it's ever been, from under 14s down, there is about 20 kids or maybe more, maybe 25 kids in the country and they're all gonna surf at a high level, there are probably 6 or 7 of them that are girls, the rest are boys, maybe a bit more the girls actually, they could be up to 8 girls you know, which is really good to see because I think conditions and cold affect, you know, I think young girls usually go "oh no it's too cold" but now it's kinda changed and they all kinda go, the technologies are better the wetsuits are better, I think it's just... there are more girls it's just great you know, so I think on the junior level it's gonna, I think in about 3-4 years it's gonna blow up massively, I think there's gonna be some amazing surfers but... I think on the senior tour level, kinda on the senior level it's still stuck, kinda stuck in a rut, there's not that much, there's not really a tour, and you know there's not enough events scattered around the country, like there's 2 or 3 events in Sligo, and that's it you know, it's kinda, there's none in Lahinch, there's none in Tramore, there's none in Kerry, like how are you gonna spark interest in people to compete and become better surfers when there's no contest you know so... [Ollie, 8]

**Frederique:** What do you feel needs to be done?

**Ollie:** I think there should be more events, and I think there should be more incentives, I think if there's a little bit of money involved, people will turn up to the events you know, like if you are giving cash for prizes then people will turn up, like. We have, I'm the chairman of the surf club in Lahinch, and we have put money up for the longboard contest, like we're getting like 50+ entrance in the longboard contest, which is really good going like... 250 quids or 350 euros or whatever, you know, it makes a big difference, and I think also, incentives and like if there was coaching you know, if there is proper coaching, I just don't think there is enough coaching, like the ISA should have a coach that's going around each club doing training and you know, like coaching the kids, 'cause part of my business is coaching, you know, teens and kids, some adults but mostly teens and kids you know, and like the standard in 2 or 3 years here is just gonna skyrocket because kids are getting coaching, you know? And video analysis and... that's the big difference, and I think that's what's gonna change. [Ollie, 9]

**Frederique:** So there wasn't anything like that in place before, just to get that across? What was it like when you started competing?

**Ollie:** When I started competing, there was squad trainers. I think you know for a small boy that was there was a time when I think Tom Hickey was involved in Strandhill and there was training camps, and there seemed to be a bit more emphasis on kinda like, maybe training and being fit and healthy to surf, but now it just seems to have just kind of drifted off, there is like squad training or coaching but I think outside of that if you are not going to squad trainings there is nothing you know, people kinda fail having coaching and it's still the same and it's a pity you know, that's the only way the kids are going to get better, I mean, like, say in France, so in France kids are going to school and part of the curriculum is to be coached surfing you know like. Boy what's stopping us doing it here, schools are saying "Ok you can go play a GAA game", why can't you go for an hour, hour and a half

surf coaching, you know what I mean so, I think something to needs to be looked at. Yeah.

*[Ollie, 10]*

**Frederique:** In France surfing can be part of your Leaving Certificate curriculum...

**Ollie:** Yeah. Not it's like it's crazy you know, like. That's just that's why France have, you know, two surfers in the world tour, because they, you know like, Joan Duru and Jeremy Flores, you know, well he's from Reunion Island, he's not from France, but yeah you can, you can claim him kind of like, it's like it's like us yeah exactly, it's like us with the footballers you know it's like oh yeah he's from Sheffields and we're like nah his grandmother's from Cork, ah yeah yeah he plays football... Ah it's good you know, it's good, and it pushes the French kids you know and all the kids see that and they're like I want to be him, like Joan Duru. It's a pity like that we don't have that system. *[Ollie, 11]*

**Frederique:** Why not, with big wave surfing the big thing in Ireland?

**Ollie:** I think that it's just recognition, I think recognizing surfing as an actual sport, or big wave surfing or whatever like, there's no funding out there for us surfers like, there's nothing there's no, like. You know it's just crazy there's no funding whatsoever. If you want to get funding you have to get sponsors and getting sponsors these days is not easy you know, like, companies don't want to part with money because they don't need that anymore, you know, to... like, imagery and stuff like that so easy to come by, like they don't need to do it unless they're a big company and it's like... Ireland has everything, you know, but it's just going to take time for people to realize that the waves are that good and like I mean, like I've been on the news a couple of times and like, in the mainstream papers like heaps of times, and it still kinda amounts to nothing you know and I've mentioned it, it's not being recognised, it just doesn't seem to kinda bring it to air, and then stuff like how many surf schools are in Ireland, like if you did a statistic on how many people are learning how to surf, like it's crazy, you know, I think it was, we'd like, 250 000 people a year something like that come to Lahinch a year to surf, like to do a beginner lesson. Like it's crazy. It's crazy crazy that's what in rentals and everything you know. So it's like, Clare County Council they just don't care, you know, I mean there's no amenities, there's no shower, there's no surf club, you know, like which is just madness you know like there's no, like that say for example the car park, I wonder how much money is made from surfers in the car park in Lahinch, and how much of it goes back into..., goes back into the... like, the actual surfing community, like nothing the club sees none of it like, anything we do is all club, it's all fund raised towards the competition, so like we, say for our junior, we've a junior league of like you know thirty kids or more, up to 40 or 50 kids, we do twice a year for six weeks every Sunday, and like we've had to buy a van through the club and ordering stuff like you know it's, like we have to do it all on ourselves. Which is good you know it's, I guess we'll do it you know, and we're still going to do it. You know there should be some help there you know, like especially when the economy in Ireland is definitely, without a doubt, making good money from surfing you know. Hopefully someone realises it. *[Ollie, 12]*

**Frederique:** There were some statements from the government, Fáilte Ireland and the Board saying it was one of the goals of the government to market Ireland as a top surfing destination, and I'm trying to look at what has been done since then, that was like 5 years ago.

**Ollie:** Like yeah all I saw of it was, I did a 360 video with six Go Pros on a rake, and they brought it all around the world promoting Ireland, like as with the 360 camera, and I got paid 500 euros. That's what I got, like, at the time I was like I really need the money, I was like okay, I'll do it 'cause someone else will have just done it, but like, it's like, oh my God you know



like, they've literally shown this to millions of people, you know. And like I've made 500 euros. It's like, just it's ridiculous you know. And like, so I think it's on an app, it's on it on a 360 video app in the States, and like I could be on I don't know, I don't know how many minutes it could be on millions of views for all I know, you know. You can't download the app in Ireland only in the States. So it's pretty mad like. But yeah they are pushing it so all you can do is for me personally is like keep doing that kind of stuff and just hope that they'll kinda, you know if stuff pops up in the future that they'll ask me to do it or you know that kind of stuff. So. Yeah I don't really care to be honest as long as I'm surfing.

[Ollie, 13]

**Frederique:** There has been an increasing number of edits like Mick Fanning's video last year promoting big wave surfing in Ireland, do you think Ireland is portrayed correctly in those videos?

**Ollie:** It's 100 percent idealized. I think if you didn't idealize it, people, why would you want to come? I think it's just, like, I mean for example, you saw the documentary, *Between Land and Sea*, that's a real kind of depiction of, it's not all, you know like it's not all nice and, you know, perfect slabs and offshore. There's plenty of downtime. There's plenty, you know, like, windy days and, to be honest it's, I mean for example now, it's September. Yesterday it was the first offshore wind I've seen in three months, maybe maybe one or two days in three months. Just crazy. You know it was like onshore howling and it was the same thing, you know like, you can be staying in Lahinch or Bundoran and it can be onshore for a month, you're just sitting there going like, what am I doing here, you know, so, yeah. I think it's, to portray that kind of thing to people is very important as well, that they're prepared when they come here. But I don't think, I think it's definitely, the videos really definitely portray it in an idealistic way you know. [Ollie, 14]

**Frederique:** What are you doing here, why stay here then? travel more or go somewhere where you'd get more sponsorships?

**Ollie:** Yeah definitely more sponsorships like. Now Ireland is kinda a niche current type of thing. So... from my point of view and my sponsors, I'm kind of sponsored to surf heavy waves, cold heavy waves. That's what I'm kinda here for you know. I suppose, like, you know, there is opportunities like, I do go to northern Spain and Portugal every winter and try to do La Vaca, a big wave contest and you know get down there and paddle some waves but yeah I think, like it's something that I really wanted to do. But yeah you're right, the sponsorship just isn't there, you know but, and I think, getting out there and see, the problem is like, if I save, for the winter, I can blow it all and, say I want to go to Mavericks and spend it all on to Mavericks. That's my whole, that's every cent that I have could be gone, you know, I'd say six weeks or two months in California that's it, it's too expensive, you know, it's like, and you go over there you might break, you know you might have a couple of boards that are going to cost you you know a thousand dollars to get them shaped for more, then you know say you get two shaped, you snap both of them in California you've no money, you know, it's like, it's nice, like, believe me all these things go to my head, like I've almost pushed to get flights to California numerous times and you know, I've had like the opportunity to go to Cortez bank and all these kinds of waves through contacts I've made you know. And it's just very hard to justify it when the waves are so good here and I can weigh it out, you know, but yeah I think in the future next few years I'm definitely thinking about, like Nazare is one place I'd like to get a few waves. The thing about Nazare it's just not, the quality of the wave isn't as high as they are here. But in one way it's going like, if you ride one massive wave there you could sort yourself out for two or four years here, you know, that's what I'm thinking in my head. Like you go down there and ride one massive wave, not one massive wave, you know, you get on try and ride

some big waves, you might sort yourself up for three or four years in Ireland, you know. So it's kinda, I know it's kinda not a great way to look at it. But I don't think there's as many surfers out there that turn around and say, oh yeah, you know, if I had the choice would I surf Nazare, they probably wouldn't, you know. They're all going, well I can ride a huge wave here. You know I'll get an XXL nomination or get recognized. And I'll set myself to go surf Porto when it's 20 foot or Cloudbreak or Teahupoo, d'you know what I mean, so. Or even Jaws you know, those kind of waves, they're more wave waves, than Nazare is, but you can paddle into the biggest wave you ever paddled or towed because you can get towed down there very easily, you know, so. *[Ollie, 15]*

**Giles:** Could be a no-brainer.

**Ollie:** It is a no-brainer. It's so true, though, isn't it like. How many of those guys want to be there...

**Giles:** The hype.

**Ollie:** Yeah.

**Giles:** And you don't think that could happen here really?

**Ollie:** It happened in Mully, it did happen in Mully yeah, it happened because I think Mully is now more, maybe not the biggest wave, I think it's more right the year our biggest barrel, I think that's what you're looking at, like, so, like, I got nominated for the biggest wave in 2012, that was the biggest I've ever seen it still to this day. But... Last year Connor got Tube award for a photo. I've had a few other really close, like I've had two other really close entries that just were outside the cut... I had one that was like would have been chosen like biggest barrel, would have been in the biggest barrel thing but, but the quality of screen grab wasn't enough, that was a bit of a sick... I was like, no way, so if it was a still photo, it would have made it but, it's just you know it's not the end of the world but it would have been nice to have another one you know, you have a chance of winning it, yeah.

**Frederique:** You need top wave, top conditions...

**Ollie:** Yeah exactly. And then, you know, I'll get, like, finding guys to come out and shoot, it's hard because, you know a lot of the time it's hard to sell on stuff and it's hard to kinda, like someone was trying to make money off it and that's just not really that viable of an option. Like I think everyone has to have a separate gig, because, it's just you know I think you have to really love it and do it, like if guys are coming to shoot stuff, and they're not, you know, like they're expecting to get paid or they're just thinking about money, you know it's just not, it's not really viable you know, I don't think anyway, there is a little bit of money to be made. And it's to be honest, like, you know, you want to see, you want to have uncrowded line ups and you want to have, you know, you want to keep it limited as to how many will come, but in another way, if guys, the top guys come, they're bringing guys that are going to shoot with red Epics, all these amazing cameras so like, probably the best footage you've ever had is because all the top guys have been there, so it kind of goes hand in hand, you know, like it's, just it's kinda, it's a tricky line to toe, you know it's like, you don't want everyone to come but you want enough people to know so, you know, you're still getting the publicity to keep going. Not that it's about that at all but, you know, it's to keep kinda the dream alive because it has to happen in some way, you know. *[Ollie, 16]*

**Frederique:** Talking about heavy wave surfing, how did you start?

**Ollie:** I started... so I think it was around the time that, say, John McCarthy and Dave Blount and like Micky Smith and a few of them bodyboarders started to surf Aileen's and surf Riley's and guys like Tom Lowe started coming over and started surfing those waves with them,

and kinda, like, just saw just saw them and went like oh my god it's, like it's actually here it's on our doorstep you know. Those guys like Rusty Long as well came over and you know those guys that had traveled the world, and you know, kind of see the potential, to unlock the kind of potential, you know, to unlock it for people sometimes. Yeah. I think it was around then and I just kind of I saw what was going on, I just thought wow, like, this is like, these waves like, you know the whole world is looking at these waves and they're on my doorstep. Like how stupid would it be, if I have the ability to surf them, I should do it, you know. And I, just I kinda just set a goal for myself, that I wanted to get the biggest barrels that I could and ride the biggest waves that I could. Kind of over from the age of maybe 21-22. Kind of like once I finished college I was 23 so I thought well, you know, I have maybe six or seven years to play with, so I just decided that I want to try and push myself as hard as I could you know, so, yeah that's kind of what brought me there, just realizing the quality the waves were here and I couldn't just let it go, like pass in front of my eyes and, I wanted to make sure I was part of it. *[Ollie, 17]*

**Frederique:** What about your first heavy big wave? Can you tell me about the first one that you've had and that you've made?

**Ollie:** I have made, I've made a few. I probably don't make as many as I should. But the first one, the first really crazy wave I rode, I towed into a wave at Riley's when it was about an eight to ten foot day, yeah just like rode it open to this, I'll never forget, like I've never felt, such a back, like the wave was sucking out so hard it was I felt like I wasn't moving, like I was in one spot, like kinda I just remember the lip going 10 foot 12 foot past my head, I was standing in this massive barrel, I was actually a little bit too deep, but I managed to kinda make it all the way to the end, and then just as I was coming off it was closing out onto the rocks and I just jumped off feet first time and kinda came out through the back. And there was a massive crew around the time, there was a lot of Ozzies and Michael Anthony Welch, one of the GoPro ambassadors, one the best riders in the world but he was over and, he actually towed me into the wave, so yeah there was kind of like maybe 15-20 people in the water and big crews, so everyone's cheering, and I think everyone kind of got a lot of bombs that day, so.. I'll never forget that, it was insane, just don't, I just was like, that's it, and that's just that's what I want to do you know, and that's nine years ago now maybe, 9-10 years ago. *[Ollie, 18]*

**Giles:** So there were role models, guys like Anthony Welsh, or Rusty Long that was in, that kind of showed you what was possible. I guess now you're kind of doing that for the younger generation. I hope that's gonna kinda push things, help things grow I guess.

**Ollie:** Yeah I think, there's some amazing role models out there and I think, I think I am doing some kinda a good job in that way, especially through, like I was saying through, my business, that's kind of what, like to be honest I'm doing it just as much for money as I am for the love of it actually, you know I want to see Irish kids and the kids from Lahinch kinda, just want to see them out there charging those waves or you know, like, say one guy who's gone and travelled they're going, oh jesus, the guys here surf really well, know like, the standard is way higher than I thought it was or, you know, it's, that's really important. And just to have, you know, that we're actually making the most of the waves we have, and the opportunity we have and I think it's super important and I think, like role models like, there's great role models like, like Gearoid McDaid and Conor Maguire, not only are they good surfers, but they're nice guys you know. I think that's, how you conduct yourself outside the water is just as important as how you conduct yourself, you know on videos, how or people perceive you, like I think, them lads in particular, you know, have a great attitude and are open to everybody and I think that's super important, you know, and they



have no problem helping out younger kids or giving back you know. So that's, that's really important. *[Ollie, 19]*

**Frederique:** How you prepare mentally before a big swell?

**Ollie:** To be honest, I go through you, like, all different phases of, like kind of going, nah it's not going to happen, it'll be bad for this reason, you know I'm always like playing it down on my head, and then, I'll always turn up, I'll always walk down to get to the cliffs or get to Mully. And then it's just a case of, I'm kinda, going on autopilot just to, to get out there and then once I'm in the water I seem to calm down, like, say if it's horrible and stormy once I get on the end of the rope, I'm just like, I just accept that I'm here, that I'm there in that moment and I'm like, alright I'm here. And nothing else matters except what I'm doing right now, and, you know like just whatever happens I'm able to handle it, and just keep telling myself that over and over and over and over and it seems, it's worked so far. To be honest like so many years I'll do brain training and stuff, and other years I don't do as much, depends on what kind of headspace I'm in and from a good place, if I'm, depends how fit I am and how good my preparation has gone. The problem is with that is. You know like in winter I'll try not to drink or party that much and, like it's really hard because you know Christmas comes off and everyone's around and you're like, oh the waves could be you know, any time, and like so it's a problem in Ireland, it's like you can look at a chart and you're like "Oh it's terrible for 10 days" and the next day you look at it and it's like "Oh it is time, it's going to be 20 foot", and last night you know you went out and had five or six pints with your friends and you're just like "Oh", you know, and that is the tricky thing you know, I guess finding that balance is really hard, it takes a lot of dedication, a lot more than people realize you know, like and...

Yeah, it's, mentally, it's the most important thing, it's a mental game like, I think you can be, you can be flipping overweight and smoke fags and eat as much shit as you want and if you've got the right head, you can take anything. I've seen guys... and I remember seeing this Aussie guy in Puerto Escondido and, like watching him, like, just throwing on himself into these, like 10 foot bombs, 10-12 foot bombs, you know, heavy heavy waves, he's got, like, bald head, doesn't give a shit. He was just throwing himself in and getting hammered, just like. That's just totally in your head, you know, like it's all in your head. I mean obviously physically, I think taking a wipe out, and be mentally prepared, you can do that but I think you can only take one or two wipe outs, if you're not physically fit. But it's being able to take continuous wipe outs is the thing, when you're, that's when your fitness level comes into question, and in Ireland too, I don't think you can be unfit and surf in Ireland in the winter, it's too cold, it's too much rubber on your, you just, it's not, you know, like, we never usually surf just one spot in a day, like if it's really good you're going to surf. Say you're in Bundoran, and you could surf Pmpa and Mully on the same day you know. And same as here, you can surf Aileen's on a low tide and you can be gone and tow Riley's on the high tide, you know or you're not going to arrive back in Lahinch and the waves are 4 or 5-foot perfect and clean, you're not going to sit the car car and go, no I'm not going to go in, you're going go surfing, you know. So I think, mentally it doesn't matter what kind of shape you're in. But as, for like to be able to have, kind of longevity and even in just one surf the fitness is so important, so. *[Ollie, 20]*

**Frederique:** Take me on a journey in your mind when you go out surfing just big waves... is it like you go on auto pilot mode? Can you try maybe to put into words what happens in your mind?

**Ollie:** Yeah. Oh yeah definitely, you trust, I think when it comes to towing I think you definitely you trust your driver. You just you trust in them, and sometimes you talk to them, you're like going like "No", "Oh yes", or "No" or... Paddle surfing and surfing big waves like it's it's

it's just... positioning, and just patience you know, like you do talk yourself quite a bit, you know, quietening down that chat in your head is the most important thing. The more you think and the more, that's, you're wasting energy you know, like the more you're thinking, the more you're thinking about it the more energy you waste and some days that doesn't work, some day I'm going... Like if you're sitting out at Aileen's, like the buoy is like six foot, and it's like there's, you know, like, every set seems to be just, you know, too big and, you know, you're dodging like 15 20 you know 15-20 foot waves like, it's, yeah, you know, your mind is going "What are you doing, why are you here?!" Like that has happened a lot of times that I've got caught inside and like I've been caught inside like one of the biggest days I've seen, they were probably the biggest cleanest barrels there I've ever seen there, and like I got caught inside by the biggest set of the day, just like I got pulled back a little bit and then I got pulled in maybe 20 feet and I was literally in the heaviest place that you could possibly be in, and I'm just looking at it and I just you just have to go like that, it's happening, and there's nothing I can do about it, just I just put my board to the side and I just went under the water because I don't like to go that deep, because the deeper you go the deeper you're going to get pushed you know, but yeah, and it was crazy and I only had like a thin vest, like nothing that floaty. And I actually have, I have one of the suits, the safety suits, like the Billabong ones that you can pull, and I forgot I brought on the wrong size canisters, so I got down there and that was like, you know I would have driven all over to Lahinch and that would have taken me an extra hour, so yeah I really wish that I had the canisters for that 'cause just, it was horrendous. I definitely was under, I don't know, I was like, getting rag-dolled and it was violent for maybe 40 seconds straight. It was crazy... So... yeah, I think, yeah acceptance, just accept, what's going to happen, you know, because if you panic then that's it, like, you're a danger and real trouble. That's when you get cramp or that's when you, like, when the stress comes in your body you're using all that energy and all that oxygen that you need to survive you know so... just calmness. **[Ollie, 21]**

**Frederique:** How does the big wave surfing community work in Ireland?

**Ollie:** We've been lucky, like I, like the first kinda good experience, tow-in experience I had in Mully was like I towed, Gabe Davies and Richie Fitz towed me into the waves, and like I was lucky enough that they were good enough to give me the time and get the opportunity to do that. I mean those guys have been amazing for tow-in surfing or just big wave surfing in general. Outside of that... like guys like Paul O'Keane have been massive, I think without Paul I don't think things would have, I don't think it would have developed the way it's developed, I don't think I'd have surfed the waves out there that I have, I wouldn't have surfed them so quickly, it would have taken a lot more time. Paul deserves an awful lot of Kudos for that you know, and he's always there for advice and, you know, and he's kind of guy that just is, he's amazing for big wave surfing in Ireland, he's probably the Godfather of it and... (*giggles*) the Godfather! And... so maybe other guys like that that have, that paddle kind of bigger waves like John McCarthy and Dave Blount would have been travelling to Madeira and Hawaii, going a long time back, and they're you know, hugely influential for me because they were kind of, they started to live around here when I was a kid and... just surfing Crab Island when it was massive and, going out with them, borrowing boards off from them and... yeah just kinda like, you know, bouncing ideas off of them, getting advice off them and just seeing them putting their heads down and charging you know, that was... amazing, like that pushes you more than anything, you know, and they're still doing it you know, they're still out there at the cliffs when it's big and, like, I've seen Mac, John Mac and Dave get just crazy waves out there you know, it's pretty... pretty cool to have those guys and it's really important, like, seeing role models,

they're great, they were amazing role models for me when I was growing up, you know.

*[Ollie, 22]*

**Frederique:** There is that thing that Giles once told me when we were talking about surfing big waves, and about why you set out surfing big waves, and he said something about trying to ride a big wave it's like something you have to do, it's like slaying the dragon, and I thought that was a pretty striking image.

**Ollie:** I think the dragon or the beast is more inside you than it is on the wave, you know. It's getting over your, like, your subconscious mind that's telling you "What are you doing?", and you're like "No no no no, it's OK, it's OK". You know, like, you're battling down and I think, no it is, I think it's a good example, like, I mean, it's like you are going into battle, like, it's you against... I think it's you against yourself, I don't think it's you're against the ocean because I don't think that's a viable fight, I think the ocean is always going to win, so... you don't want to fight the battle.

But yeah, it is, it's kind of like getting on the back of a bull and like staying on as long as you can and sometimes just you stay you till the end and jump off and sometimes you don't, you know, and it probably is very similar to that because Mully is definitely the bull, if you describe it, if you're to give it a, you know, characterize it will be a bull because it's like slip and go and you know it's trying to buck off all over the place you know. So... whereas like Aileen's is kind of more like, jeez I don't know, be like Avatar. You're on one of those, you know, the back of one of those bird things. You're trying to ride it! You know, like, it's more of a graceful, kinda smooth thing. Whereas Mully is like a bull, it's like, just yeah yeah yeah...

**Giles:** I like that. Yeah the dragon and you were like, I completely relate to it, that smooth like that... very exhilarating...

**Ollie:** It's much smoother... And the wave is more... it's cleaner, you know, whereas Mully is like just... it's just a bull. It would be cool to see someone do that, you know like those Japanese cartoon things like, something like that, with surfing and like she's waking up and you like, you know, it would be class, like. Like Mother Nature kinda waking up.

*[Ollie, 25]*

**Frederique:** Could you define wave, very simply?

**Ollie:** How to define a wave... A wave to me is live, kind of energy, it kinda... how to describe a wave... Jeez I don't know, it's really hard to describe, it's like, the most addictive thing I've ever, I've ever come across in my life, over any woman or drug or alcohol or anything (*laughing*), it rules my world (*laughing*).... Yeah pretty much.

**Frederique:** A good wave?

**Ollie:** A good wave for me has got nothing to do with conditions, it's about how it makes me feel, and a good wave, if I finish a wave and I get that feeling of kinda, I don't know, content or just... buzz of adrenaline and that's, you know, it can be a three foot, onshore wave and it blows the fins on the turn or it can be, you know getting spat out of 20-foot barrel, you know, they're all good waves if it feels right, you know. *[Ollie, 26]*

**Frederique:** What are your two favourite manoeuvres?

**Ollie:** Getting barrels. Getting on the face, I'm saying getting barrels because getting barrels obviously is what it's all about. I'd say, probably, a big open face hacks, kinda, rail turns and then... I'd say like a backside off the top when you're, when you really click like, when you get your board vertical at the lip. It just feels really natural as a movement, kinda backhand surfing feels more natural I think, and you just get into a rhythm... Yeah. So

both of those things, I'd say. And airs feel pretty good too, when you get the opportunity to try them. *[Ollie, 23]*

**Frederique:** What is a good surfer to you?

**Ollie:** Someone that's all around, that doesn't just stick to one thing. Someone that uses his waves really well and, kinda, just, yeah that is a very all around, you know, is good in a barrel, good at everything. And I'd say someone that's just, you know, kinda very open and respectful in the water and kinda good to other people as well. That's really important. I think you can be an amazing surfer but if you're a dickhead you're going to, you're going to probably, you know, I just don't see, like everyone you know, we've all have moments in the water, and people, you know, like, people who drop in by accident and all that kind of stuff. But then, yeah I think it's just important to be kinda humble and just, you know, be nice to everyone. No matter what level they are, because at the end of the day, everyone's, everyone's got to start somewhere. *[Ollie, 24]*

**Frederique:** With Bundoran, Lahinch capital of surfing in Ireland, what needs to be done in the next few years to improve the area?

**Ollie:** I think it definitely needs a surf centre, for the surf club, it's the first thing it needs. I think outside of that, I think yeah I, like, just the County Council need, you know, the local County Council needs to get behind surfing and use that. We have some of the best amenities you could possibly offer, right in our doorstep. And there's amazing surfers are already here, that should be pushed and should be, you know, given all the support they can give. And that's what should happen, yeah. *[Ollie, 27]*

## 3. AARON REID

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Aaron est né dans le comté de Sligo et a grandi aux abords des plages de la ville de Strandhill. Initié dès son plus jeune âge à la pratique du surf par son père, lui-même surfeur expérimenté et côtoyant les surfeurs locaux, Aaron a progressé rapidement dans sa pratique et est aujourd'hui considéré par ses pairs comme un surfeur accompli, en compétition ou en freestyle.



**Ill. 134 :** Aaron Reid, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 9 décembre 2019 à Bundoran (Donegal).  
Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Âgé de 25 ans au moment de notre rencontre, Aaron fréquente alors régulièrement Cosy Joe's : en hiver il surfe le Peak presque quotidiennement, et l'auberge constitue son repaire depuis lequel il peut surveiller les vagues et retrouver ses amis. Lorsque je l'ai rencontré en 2016, il travaillait aussi ponctuellement comme moniteur de surf pour l'école voisine TurfnSurf. Connue et appréciée des surfeurs locaux, particulièrement ceux surfant le Peak, Aaron est un jeune homme affable et amusant, et une figure singulière de la communauté surf de Bundoran. De l'avis des surfeurs locaux interrogés à son sujet, son style distinctif dans l'eau est tout aussi incisif et explosif qu'élégant ; il témoigne d'une telle aisance et d'une telle fluidité dans les manœuvres, même après plusieurs mois hors de l'eau, que les locaux qualifie d'innée la qualité de sa pratique. Aaron n'en demeure pas moins un jeune homme modeste et accessible, et un représentant singulier du type du *soul surfer* ou surfeur-bohème. Il participe occasionnellement à des compétitions (il a été sélectionné par l'I.S.A. pour rejoindre l'équipe nationale de surf dans le cadre des Jeux Olympiques de Tokyo), mais il affiche, en privé du moins, une répugnance à s'investir totalement dans une professionnalisation de sa pratique, dont il dit l'apprécier davantage en dehors de toute pression compétitive et médiatique.

Aaron n'est pas originaire de Bundoran mais il y vit depuis quelques années et maîtrise la vague du Peak depuis suffisamment longtemps pour être assimilé à un local, ou du moins respecté en tant que tel. Il est impliqué dans la culture de la communauté surf de Bundoran de par ses réseaux d'amitié, ses participations aux compétitions de surf locales et ses activités de DJ au Kicking Donkey, l'un des pubs de la ville. Il est enfin connu autant pour l'excellence de sa pratique que pour ses qualités d'amabilité et de bienveillance envers ses pairs, sur les vagues ou en dehors



de l'eau ; il correspond donc au profil de surfeur recherché dans le cadre de cette ethnographie.

Aaron partage ici, dans un style narratif énergique, drôle et percutant, de nombreuses anecdotes illustrant ce qui, pour lui, caractérise le mieux la pratique du surf en Irlande, entre qualité des vagues et recherche du « craic », qu'il cristallise dans cette phrase ironique en conclusion de l'entretien : « Don't bother lads, it's cold, wet, rainy and dark! ».



**Ill. 135** : Aaron Reid à Bundoran (Donegal).

Photographe : Ian Mitchinson.

Source : capture d'écran de la page personnelle d'Aaron sur Instagram<sup>3</sup>.

### **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 9 décembre 2018, enregistré à Bundoran, co. Donegal :**

**Aaron:** My name is Aaron Reid, I'm from Sligo town, originally, ehm... I've been surfing since – I don't know... 22 years if you count the infant years! And I've always been around, kind of, the Sligo-Bundoran-Clare area... but... I don't know! (*laughs*) [*Reid, 1*]

**Frederique:** When did you start surfing?

**Aaron:** So I started surfing in Strandhill, with – my Dad surfed as well so it was always really good just travelling around with him, going out to a few spots in Sligo, I used to always sit in the van and watched Dad surfing and I always wanted to be able to surf the waves that he was surfing and... yeah, and then I remember being able to surf with him the very first times, it was pretty deadly, yeah...

**Frederique:** So you said, 22 years surfing it's a long time surfing, can you tell me about the first time you went surfing?

**Aaron:** Ehm... I always used to... I can't really remember my first time going surfing, I think it was out in Rossnowlagh, ehm... I think I have a picture at home, me being a toddler standing on a board, my Dad used to stand me up on the board and hold on to my hands and then push me onto the wave and I'd be on his 8-foot mal, something like that that he had back then, we have a few of those funny pictures alright, I think the waves were about, like, not

<sup>3</sup> Lien : <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bd9tSYjvJp/>

even knee-high you know, that kind of way, but I always used to love it... Ehm I think... the first time I saw surfing was out in Easkey when I was... I think I was like a baby pretty much, my Dad saw my eyes light up when I saw people surfing Easkey Right so he knew that I kinda really wanted to surf so, he was happy out then, being able to bring me around with him, you know?

**Frederique:** Do you remember your first wave that you managed to ride yourself?

**Aaron:** Ehm... I remember... I remember when I got my first board that was my own, it was probably like a 4-foot-11 mini-mal-shape single-fin and ehm... we were in France I think, we were driving around in a van and ehm... I remember I pulled up into this wave and it was pretty small, there was some nice left-handers coming through, and I remember catching the wave and taking off and it was my first time going down the line, where I got that feeling where I'm not just going up on the wave but going across it and ehm, I remember as well there was lots of tiny bits of seaweed in the water so... it sticks out to me... ehm so yeah that was like my first time being really like "Woow! I'm kinda doing something here!", you know? And yeah I'd say that was like my first memorable wave.

**Frederique:** What age were you?

**Aaron:** I think I would have been... 6 or 7 maybe? Yeah, like, I think I was probably going along the wave, you know, just about, but I felt like I was flying across the thing, that kind of way! (*laughs*)

**Giles:** It kind of... something happens and it kind of just, like magic hits you or something...

**Aaron:** Yeah, like a click or something, yeah, yeah... and there was a load of local kids there as well and they kept on trying to take my board off me and give it a go and I was just kinda like, "i just wanna surf!", you know! (*laughs*) [*Reid, 2*]

**Frederique:** So something clicked that day and did it all start from there...?

**Aaron:** Ehm yeah my Dad would have taken me to Streedagh a lot and we would have gone surfing – we would have gone surfing in the winter and all as well, got me like a good wetsuit and my Dad's friend Derrick would have been very good to me, he used to get me stuff from America as well 'cause he'd always be over there, so he was always a big help and he was always trying to keep me at it and help me out with things... ehm... what was I gonna say... what was the question again?

**Frederique:** How did your surfing take off from there...?

**Aaron:** Oh, how did my surfing take off, oh yeah, just, I suppose, living out in Strandhill as well and just having, I suppose, a good community of people that would really kind of help you, you know, even at such a young age, they'd always be kinda "Keep going with it", keep you happy and motivated, they'd include you when you were out in the water as opposed to leaving you to your own devices. It was always good and there's a good... there was a good standard around there I'd say at the same time, like Stephen Kilfeather and Andy Kilfeather, and Aaron MacDonall and everybody... everybody who kinda just surfed around there all just kept pushing each other, you know? I remember the first time seeing somebody doing a cutback and I saw Steevo doing a cutback, and ehm, I was just like "Woow! That was crazy! Was that a cutback?" and he was just like "yeah, that was a cutback, man!" (*laughs*) But yeah, it always pushed ya to want to do those kind of things, so I suppose that inspired the way I kinda surf now, trying to do turns and tricks and stuff like that... as well as getting barrels but I suppose I'd be more renowned for my turnes and my wiggles! (*laughs*) [*Reid, 3*]

**Giles:** Wiggly Reidy!

**Frederique:** Did you compete then as well?

**Aaron:** Yeah, my first competition was in Rosstown when I was 11 years old... ehm... again, I remember surfing Strandhill just the week before I had this clicking point of taking off on my wave, going down the line and I actually started to, put a kind of rail in on it and I didn't really know that the Nationals were going to be on that weekend or whatever but Andy – Andrew Kilfeather saw me doing that, he was like “Wow! If you entered that competition at the weekend and you did that you'd get a ten for sure!” and then I was like “Oh, I might give it a go so”, so we went up and met a lot of – really good as well to meet a lot of other kind of, kids, I think it was like under 12, maybe? I think it was the under 12s section and then I got beaten by two of the girls, May and Tallia, but, I was kind of like, “Oh, I got beaten by girls!” but I was kind of happy to be there and that was another pushing point as well, ‘cause if you can get to the finals it's pretty... you're over the moon, d'you know what I mean! So yeah, that was like my first surf competition then, yeah. So that was the start of it. And then I got asked to go down to Lahinch I think for the Irish Squad Training. And I went to Lahinch and I was asked to go to the Squad Trainings and ehm... from then on... I didn't know it was for the Irish team, I just thought it was just some sort of thing that they were kinda doing for kinda kids and stuff and then we found out it was for the Irish team so were like, getting a bit, shaky... I think that was like a few years later... 13 maybe? Yeah I think I was 12 or 13 when that happened so... That was when I figured... you can actually do something with this sort of thing, this can go somewhere, you know, so... yeah... [Reid, 4]

**Frederique:** And where do you stand you in regards to competition, is it still something you'd pursue?

**Aaron:** Hmm... I'm not too sure, really... like... I always did want to do the competitive thing you know, I am quite a competitive person, ehm.. I did enjoy doing them a lot, like, years ago, I liked doing the Irish ones ‘cause the stoke was good, you meet a lot of people you haven't seen in a while from around the country and there's generally a bit of craic around even as a kid, it's always good to just be skating around and seeing people but nowadays, if I was gonna go off and do the QS you know, thing like that, ehm... just the pressures of it I suppose yeah, of all these unreal surfers you can.. you kinda... you can knock your confidence pretty easily, I suppose... but... I remember doing a pro junior alright and I felt fairly... fairly under the bubble like, and it just like kinda put me off it, and I didn't really want to surf, I couldn't surf as good as I do, I could never, like, perform in a competition how I wanted ‘cause of all these, like, exterior influences kinda coming into your head and... you start panicking and I just didn't have the head for doing that at that level... but maybe, I might just, I might do a few QSs at some point just to...for the fun of it, and see how I get on, ‘cause I suppose you're a bit more mature now, and you're really gonna care about what other people think, at the end of the day anymore, so... maybe, yeah...

**Frederique:** It's interesting what you said about pressure in regards to surfing and having other people watching you when you surf... Why is it... I don't know how to phrase that, like I remember Giles saying the other day, a few weeks ago, and it was quite late at the Peak and there was no one in the water and I think he said, “I felt like there was lots of pressure off my shoulders and I actually surfed better than I have in a while”, and so, how is it for you, do you feel like you... it's nice to have people watching and tell you you've been surfing good or is it better if you just surf on your own and...

**Aaron:** Ehm... I suppose, like, yeah it's always nice to get a compliment, you get a little bit of boost out of getting a compliment, but I think like some of the best surfing I've done was out on my own, even at the Peak there, like, I used to surf it a lot when I was 15-16, like high tide, how howling onshore and pretty solid as well but I've always had my best sessions out there whenever it would be like that, because there would be nobody around and you're



just completely on your own, in your own head, and you're really working on things I suppose, but when there's other people too, it just all depends on your mood, and what kind of mood you're in, you can be like in a bit of a rattled mood or you might be in a rush sometimes and when there's other people rushing you you're like, "Oh there's people out, I wanna get waves!" and you don't, you don't end up doing what you want on the wave 'cause you're kinda playing it safe 'cause you don't wanna queue up again and stuff like that so... yeah I definitely like getting waves on my own anyway, it's always good to try things when you're on your own and you do feel a lot freer, yeah, it's always good. [Reid, 5]

**Frederique:** As regards having photographs taken of you or videos of your waves, when you look at Conor or Cian getting lots of footage, ehm someone was telling me, I think Tom was telling me that it's actually better not to have footage of a very good wave you remember because it takes off it, so is it important do you think to have your surfing documented or to have someone film you...?

**Aaron:** I think if you're getting filmed a lot it's really good to see what you're doing, and you can really suss how you can do things better which is really good I suppose but when I'm actually getting filmed I don't think I surf to my potential really, like, like definitely, like... sometimes you might get, like, 80% but then, like, I've never had, like, one magic session kinda filmed, it's always those when you know you're not being filmed that you just, you don't really care but then whenever you're getting filmed you just have this thing of getting really good waves, and if you don't make it you're like "Oh damn!", you know, and yeah you do feel the pressure when you're being filmed but I suppose getting filmed more would help with that, you know, you would just, get used to it then, you know?

**Giles:** There's something that I'm getting close to there, that's nice, it's that kind of, you know like, do we perform when we're not being watched kind of a thing, isn't it? When you're in a competition, you can feel the pressure, the camera's on and you feel the pressure and then, you know, I remember some days I'll be like down at Ballycove, my local beach, and I'll be like on my own, and I'll do something that I've never done before, and I'll just be like, "Oh! I just can't believe I did that!" you know, and you fucking go back and you tell your mates and you say "Oh, I wish you'd been there!" but then if they were would it have been the same? Or is it that in my head it was that good but then, you know, sometimes you see a picture of a barrel and you think "Jeez, that was a big barrel when I was in it" but when you see the picture it's not, it doesn't capture it the same way that you would expect? So do you think that pressure affects surfing?

**Aaron:** Yeah, definitely, yeah... It can be either for the good or the bad, like some people love the pressure and they can really deal with it and surf better with it and some people just can't deal with it, and it just comes down to kinda... who, like, it comes down to how you are when you get into situations like that, you know, and your headspace and, there would just be a lot of exterior things, you know... [Reid, 6]

**Frederique:** About pressure and how I don't deal with it very well, when I'm surfing and Giles is on the beach watching for example, as opposed to other people who enjoy being filmed and being watched, so just wondering is just about who you are as a person or how confident you are in your surfing...?

**Aaron:** Yeah, like... like, whenever it's crowded, I... like, it doesn't really bother me too much, I don't feel the pressure out of other people, if you're surfing with your friends, and you see your friends getting a good one you're gonna wanna get a good one, but you're not really gonna care if you don't, you just kinda want it, but then whenever the camera's on it's like, "Oh I have to get a good one in this time, 'cause I really want, you know...", if you're

making a clip or anything like that you obviously want to have the best surfing you can do in it... So yeah, pushing yourself with friends is always good, even in bigger stuff, like, what I would consider bigger stuff as a kid would have been, I don't know, like a few hollower waves, like a-head-and-a-half-kind-of size, ehm I used to always be scared of them, I used to go down to Clare and see my friend Damo and he hadn't been surfing half as long as I had, but he just had this, like, yeah he just has this kind of go-for-it attitude, he just... can you swear in it? (*laughs*) just didn't give a fuck he had that kind of attitude when he was younger and he still does but that kind of balls-to-the-wall attitude as well kinda, like, you'd see him – I'd see him go for one and then you're like, "Oh, I have to go for one now!", you see! You do have that competitiveness in it as well, which is really healthy and, like if you're not gonna go for something then how are you gonna know, in the end, you know? So, it's good to have people with you for that kind of thing. *[Reid, 7]*

**Frederique:** Yeah actually talking about surfing bigger waves, what kind of a surfer would you say you are, would you, like do you consider yourself more like a technical surfer or like someone who would charge for big waves or a bit of both?

**Aaron:** Ehm... I consider myself more a technical surfer – at the moment anyway, I'd like to get into kinda getting bigger waves and this would kind of push the fear barrier a bit more, I am very much in my comfort zone I suppose! (*laughs*) You know I like to just kinda work on the techie stuff as well, 'cause I do come from a skating background, and what I used to always watch is videos where people were just getting barrelled, just getting airs and doing big turns and that would've, really, like, influenced me more than watching people surfing Jaws or anything like that, like... yeah... ehm... like, I had that video, I got my first video when I was a kid, I got it for Christmas, it was called "Super Computers", it was a Rip Curl movie, I remember Mick Fanning in it, and they're all doing these laybacks and I used to watch with my Dad, and I was just like, "Dad how are they doing them! I don't know, like, this is nuts! What are they doing?", you know, 'cause we had never seen surfing like that back then, you know, so it was always good to, like, there was no phones, there was no internet, there were these videos that came out every now and again that you get your hands on that would blow your mind, so, and that was what I always used to look at as well, you know? So, yeah, more techie, at the end of the day. *[Reid, 8]*

**Frederique:** The fear – it's interesting 'cause it's something I've been looking at a lot, so I have quite a lot of it myself apparently! For me when it's 1 ½m I'm just not going, ehm... I was wondering if that was, like is fear kind of part of surfing as well, like you have to kind of be able to handle it? Or how do you handle it, like, yourself, when it's like, big and a bit frightening, do you still get in and what pushes you to get in?

**Aaron:** Ehm... the fear thing I suppose, the first thing that nowadays after surfing like big waves a bit is just not to sit and look at it, the more you sit and look at it the more fearful you're gonna get and, kinda, your adrenaline is gonna run down so you're just gonna start feeling like, "Oh I shouldn't be here, this isn't for me" kind of thing, so I think the first thing you should do is just go for one, once you see, like, if you want to start surfing bigger waves whatever level, like if you're afraid of waves that are, like, a meter and a half then you just have to get wiped out by a wave that's like a meter and a half and realize it's not that bad and then just bring, like baby-step it up higher and higher, just kinda pushing that little barrier that you have of, where you're kind of like "Oooh!" like if you're looking over the ledge and all of a sudden "Oh no no no!", like you better off just to go for it, and if you make it then you're gonna be, fucking... over the moon! Walking around, running around in circles screaming but... But if you don't, you realize it's not that bad and you'll go for next one then so ehm... I always find, if I'm going out into somewhere where I'm afraid I

just kinda go at it quick, like, you know, just kinda, settles the nerves, and you generally realize it's not that bad as you think it is. [Reid, 9]

**Frederique:** It's what Rory O'Dowd told me as well, that wiping out is part of surfing. I was like, "I avoid wiping out if I can!" But he was like, "No, it's part of it, you learn from it probably more than you learn from surfing"...

**Giles:** Yeah definitely a big part, the more comfortable you are with it the easier it becomes doesn't it, it's very true what you say, it's just, just go for it and you get it out of the way, d'you know?

**Aaron:** Yeah, that's it! I had a big, I had a few big wipe-outs there myself surfing a spot close by, I was just going for it and ehm... yeah, I had some bad wipe-outs alright, definitely some of the worst, but you come up, like and you'll be laughing your ass off to yourself, you know? I remember my first tow wave, we were surfing down at Riley's and Lowe towed me into it and I was so scared, my legs were shaking, everything, going for it you know? And, yeah he whipped me into it anyway, and... 'cause Riley's is so... sucky, I didn't really realize, I'm used to kinda barrel-riding, down the line and adjusting down the line but with waves like that you nearly have to aim towards the beach so that you don't go up them but I didn't... I went too high anyway, and it was a good, solid wave, like a big tow wave that rose and... I just got flipped off, like I remember, like being, like, in the barrel, weightless, looking out of the thing and just going "Gggghh" (*suction noise*) in the barrel and then fell down, got like washed back up and around and then just like slammed down into the rocks but I just pressed onto the rocks on my back, and it was just holding me there for a while and then I came up and, everyone was like, "Oh, are you ok, are you ok?" 'cause, obviously it looked a pretty crazy wipe-out, and I just started laughing my ass off 'cause, I was like "Yeah I'm grand, but that was, that was fucking crazy!", you know! (*laughs*) So yeah, it's always good, then, like whenever you in big waves and things like that you just have to, like, go for it, like even if you don't get one, or if you take a few wipe-outs, you'll come in, you'll be happier than if you didn't go, you know... [Reid, 10]

**Frederique:** What was your last memorable wave?

**Giles:** Can you tell us about your best wave in the last two weeks or...?

**Aaron:** Oh... I don't know... there's been a few... I think the last two weeks have been a bit blurry to be honest... ehm... I find sometimes they come back to you like later on, you know like, it will come back into your head, and you're like, "Oh Jeez, I remember that one!", you know? My last most memorable wave... I don't know, maybe... Oh I couldn't tell you... (*laughs*) You've a few waves that stick in your head, I've one from France when I was pretty young, that's just like imprinted in there, I don't think it will ever go away. I was surfing La Gravière, was there with my Dad, and my friend Owen Murphy he was over with us as well, and there was lots of people surfing this peak way down here, there was like thirty people out there, and we were just saying, "Ah, we'll just go out into this small little left", and Murph went out to get some food, and he like came back, and he said, "There's this, this mad set where me and Dad were", there was two of them, and the first one I took off, pulled in, fell, and then the next one I took off, pulled in and it was like, my first, proper, I don't know like, really like, it just felt like I was really deep in it and I kinda came out the doggy door then, like it was proper like, holding my head coming out, you know! Murph said he dropped the sandwich and like he came in and there was no other waves after that. But I'd say that was like my most memorable wave, it probably stopped other waves from being remembered, you know that kind of way! (*laughs*) Uhm I'll think about it and let you know! [Reid, 11]

**Giles:** I don't know is this is one of your questions anyway but can you tell us a story or a memory of a great wave you've seen a friend catch? Or something that, or even a wipe out, a story that would involve a friend, maybe, rather than your own wave, their wave?

**Aaron:** Ehm... yeah there's definitely one that G-man [*Gearoid McDaid*] caught there at the Peak and I... I just remember seeing, like, 'cause it was so windy as well, it was just a big air drop, and I was like, "Jesus that's the heaviest air drop I've ever seen at the Peak!", that kind of way! (*laughing*) It was pretty mad! And then he had one, he'd one barrel as well, where he took off right behind it and he came out and – just as me and Murph were paddling over this big mad... like, grab-a-rail, cut-back, and I was like, "That was shh-tyling", like, you know! Ehm... yeah it's hard to, it's hard to say though... 'cause generally you'd be behind, you know! (*laughing*) You're always behind them whenever people are getting good waves! [*Reid, 12*]

**Giles:** Or even from your childhood? Maybe you remember one from back then?

**Aaron:** I remember my Dad catching one in Strandhill alright. He claims he's never got a barrel, and he used to always say, "We're going to Indo, and I'll get a barrel!", so that was like one of our plans, but I remember Strandhill beach, like years... I was I don't know, like... fifteen no fourteen maybe? I can't really tell but there used to be this bank there anyway that used to be really hollow, we used to call it Kiera, me and the young lads used to call it Kiera you know, I don't think we would have said to the older fellows 'cause they'd take the piss out of us but, really hollow right-hander, and I saw my Dad taking off on one, and he was just cruising along down the line on it and I don't think he realized that the thing was just barrelling off behind him, he was just kinda standing there, like, kinda like, going along and the barrel kinda caught up with him and he was, like, right in it for... for a while then he comes out and I think there was me and Kenny Larkin screaming at each other like "Hooo! That was crazy like!" and he didn't even realize he'd got barrelled you know! (*laughing*) But I remember as well, just because it was such a hollow wave in Strandhill, you know, my Dad's on it, and the light was insane, it was a sunset-kind-of light, so all the light going through as well, it was pretty, pretty magic, but yeah... I'd say that was, that was probably the most memorable one I've seen other people catch! (*laughs*) [*Reid, 12 (continued)*]

**Frederique:** What's your favourite wave in Ireland? Like you don't have to name it, don't name it if it's a secret one or... but could you tell us about it, in what conditions it breaks and why you like it...

**Aaron:** Ehm... I suppose a long, left-hander and hollow! (*Laughs*) Yo! I love waves where you can kinda get a barrel, do a couple of turns as well, you know, I just love... I love getting barrelled as well but... I'd say Riley's would probably be, like, my favourite wave in the country, like, just 'cause it's a crazy-looking wave and then when you're surfing it just feels like you're not, you're so like away from everything you know, it's like ehm... big massive cliffs all around ya and you're looking down towards, like where you walk up and you just see, like, waves just bashing all around the place it just feels really raw, and like a mad old spot like... And then there's obviously the Peak, Pmpa, I like Blackspot as well... like... my favourite wave, just for consistency at the moment, probably the Peak, just 'cause I surf it all the time. But I know that there's class other waves around that are better! I just need to get driving! (*laughing*)

**Frederique:** What kind of wave is the Peak?

**Aaron:** Peak is a... it's an A-frame that nobody goes right on! (*laughs*) Ehm kind of, nice bowly left-hander, always has a bit of power, except when it's onshore, pretty handy, you can just

surf it a lot it's just... it's always there pretty much... ehm... what else... yeah, that's all I have there, sorry! [Reid, 13]

**Giles:** Oh yes, favourite wave, so... again you don't have to necessarily name it, you can if you want, but can you describe... Can you describe what your favourite section feels like, on a wave?

**Aaron:** Hm... ehm... really... really sucky... I like really sucky waves... I'm more of a man for my shallow waves than the my deep ones any day, like, I prefer hitting rocks that I would getting sent way down into the ocean, like, d'you know! (*laughs*) Ehm... Favourite section... probably... probably, like, 4- to 6-foot size, pretty sucky, coming into a nice coupla, nice section for wraps, like... I love bowly waves, I always like my real bowly ones, you know, ones that you don't have to bump and around the fucker, ones you hit the bottom, you're doing the bottom turn you're straight up into it, I love those kind of waves, you know... some with a bit of mass... [Reid, 14]

**Giles:** Can you explain what it feels like to either do your bottom turn or to do your top turn as you come up into it, like, what does that feel like? What does it feel like to ride a wave in essence you know?

**Aaron:** I don't know... I don't know, it's kind of hard to say, isn't it... it's like... er... I never really think about these things when I'm in the water, like, so like... That's why it's very hard for me to remember other people surfing too, because, you're so in the moment of it, like, nearly everything like mushes together, like, you can get a really good wave and someone's like "Jeez, that one was class!" and you're just kind of like, "I can't really remember anything", like, you know, so, yeah whenever I'm doing a bottom turn I suppose, like, or like even like a bottom-turn top-turn combination, I don't even know how it feels, like, you're just kinda, you're just kinda going for it, and it's just like a... natural... it's just kinda subconsciously-built in there, now, after years... you know? So... (*laughing*) Ehm... I do remember doing my first few snaps and stuff like that, and whenever you'd make them you'd be like "Yeaaah!", you know? It's all – if you do something where like, if I end up landing an air I'm always just like completely over the moon, 'cause like they're very rare to me at the moment, d'you know! (*laughs*)

**Giles:** So, you'd say, it's like, the memorable moments, now like the next-stage moments? So like, as you're, you know, a very well-progressed surfer, d'you find that there are less memorable moments now than when you first started?

**Aaron:** Maybe, yeah... maybe I'm just kinda chasing more memorable moments... ehm... I think that happens to everyone at certain stages though, like you're gonna... you'll end up hitting a point... and then... like, say, if you're, like, up here, if you hit that point then you're like, "Oh yeah!" you'll go down a bit, and the memorable moments will start to fade away, and then... you'll probably have a couple of really bad surfs, and then you'll start thinking about it... and then you'll go up higher again, and then it will float you back down there for a little while and then... and so on, and so on, and so on, kinda, you know... So it's always every now and again, like it's always...you'll always be really pissed off at something before you'll be really happy about something, you know? You can get – I can get really down about myself if I don't feel like I'm surfing good, I'm just like "Aaahh... screw this!", you know, 'cause you're not getting that buzz off surprising yourself anymore? And then once you do surprise yourself again you're just like, you just can't stop then, you know, you keep chasing it. [Reid, 15]

**Frederique:** Yeah actually what do you think about this thing you hear a lot that's a bit... that I find a bit cliché, a bit naff sometimes, but you hear people saying "As long as I'm in the water I'm happy", or "Surfing always makes me happy" and... I have a very good rant by



Giles back down in Portugal, we'd spent the whole day trying to decide where to go surfing and he ended up surfing very late 'cause he had been, like, to lots of different places and I was like, "Screw that, I'm just gonna wait for you at the café there!", he came back, joined me at the café and he was very grumpy and I got him a beer so he got a bit... and he was like, "Just fuck that, you know, like, surfing doesn't always make you happy", and so, do you feel that as well, that sometimes surfing can make you feel miserable as well?

**Aaron:** Yeah, definitely, like, yeah.

**Frederique:** Why is that?

**Aaron:** Ehm... I don't know, really, it's probably down to, like... I suppose... if you're going hunting for waves and you don't get them you're gonna get a bit groggy... If you're not surfing you're definitely gonna get pissed off... Getting in the water does make you feel better at all, I always come in happier than I went in regardless, but definitely sometimes you're gonna be a bit pissed off that you just... you just have a crap surf, like, it happens to everyone, you have an awful one and it puts you off of it, "Oh I'm gonna take up golfing or something", you know! (*laughs*)

**Giles:** Fishing, or something...

**Aaron:** Fishing! Yeah, fishing is probably a good one, yeah, I definitely couldn't play golf...

**Frederique:** Because I've seen Giles getting in, or even before he gets in the water, just being like, not being sure "If I'm getting in here but then I'm gonna miss something good there", so it just can ruin the whole session, just wondering, "What could it have been if I had gone there instead of here..."

**Aaron:** Yeah... I can go on a goose chase alright, and then just getting skunked, but I suppose you just have to take the good with the bad, and that's it, and you end up getting kind of over things, like, you'll always have your... you can't have really happy moments without really pissed off moments, like, d'you know, and having pissed off moments makes you appreciate the happy moments better, like, so...

**Frederique:** Yeah it's quite... what I'm learning is, I'm really taking my time in becoming a good surfer, because apparently when you become a good surfer you get less satisfied, so I'm like...!

**Aaron:** Yeah... I suppose you just get used to it, like, you know, it just becomes more normal then... than not, like... ehm... yeah I don't know...

**Giles:** Yeah it's like, when you think back to... I remember being in Inchidoney, in Cork, and like, looking out back, at were these lads surfing, and I was like, "Oh!", it was like pumping, for Inchidoney you know, it looked amazing and they were out back catching these long right-handers and I was just like, "Oh man! I have to get out there!", you know? Get down the rock, get into the water, fuckin' started trying to paddle out – I, just couldn't get out, you know, couldn't get myself out back, I wasn't at the stage where I could duck dive efficiently enough to actually get there, and just being so raging that I couldn't get out there... But then like, now, you know I can go out and surf the Peak or something, and like, "Eh it's alright, you know, it was alright, it was alright", you know, whereas, if it was me back then, surfing the Peak, I'd be fucking shitting myself like going fucking "What the fuck is this?!", like, d'you know? (*laughing*) It's just, yeah... the comparison of it, isn't it, it's interesting that you become subdued to it a little bit or something, it's cool, in some ways, and then you kinda have to remember that inner kind of before-you-were-a-surfer, that kind of, that inner child, I suppose, you gotta try to enjoy it and...

**Aaron:** The grom effect. You've to bring back the grommie effect... how you do that is just by acting like a child all the time, you know! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Isn't it why you step up your game all the time, like you try to surf bigger waves because that's just pushing the bar up, whereas if you stay in your comfort zone this is where the feeling gets... it's always the same level... you're not gonna get the same...

**Aaron:** That's the joys of being able to do lots of things with surfing, like... if you... like... Say if you're a big wave surfer, and you're only a big wave surfer, you're like, really, seeking those... those big waves all the time, you know... ehm... because, like, you mightn't be accurate in smaller waves or anything like that... like... so, like... but then if you're a smaller wave surfer then, whenever it's big everywhere you're just kinda like, "Oh, I can't go anywhere now", or you know, you have to go off find something else, like... so being able to do a lot of things definitely helps, 'cause you'll always end up having fun wherever you're going, you know... like, yeah... does that make sense?

**Giles:** Yeah, definitely, it gives you a bit more... it gives you more variety, it gives you more fun then...

**Aaron:** For like people who surf... who don't like surfing slop like, I love surfing slop, 'cause I surf lots of slop, see, I know how to surf slop, like, so you'll be able to get lots of sessions on your own if you're surfing crap waves, like, you know! And what's deemed to be crap waves, 'cause it doesn't look pretty or something near like? I'm here, fuck if it doesn't look pretty, d'you know, I'm probably gonna be in there! So yeah, just surf everything and then you'll enjoy everything, the more you surf... surf it. *[Reid, 16]*

**Frederique:** What would you say is your goal at the moment, in surfing like? What do you strive towards...?

**Aaron:** I don't really have any goals at the moment with it I suppose, just kinda, have the craic a bit... Ehm... I used to have goals... ehm... back when we had sponsors like, I used to have loads of goals but that whole pressure kinda put me off it, like... I stopped surfing for maybe a year and a half or two years then because of that, and then when I got back into it then, like yeah there was a lot of frustrating sessions because you're so unfit (*laughing*) you haven't done it in a while, you're like, "Oh I'm never gonna get any of this back" but after a while you're starting building it up again, it's like... it's like a little re-start and I wasn't doing it for anyone else then, I was just doing it for myself, like so then... it became more fun... Ehm... I'll always kinda have a few stops here and there where I'll just go off it completely, go off and do something else, but that's probably good for you as well, you can't just always be surfing kinda... or maybe you can, I don't know... (*laughs*) I probably went way off the question, did I?

**Giles:** Oh yeah I think it's good, like, how you take a break, like for me, I find sometimes if I just surf surf surf surf surf I can't get to that next stage, or like I can't improve my top turn and then I might go in... like I remember going back to Cork and working in Cork for the summer and I just went running a bit, didn't really get to surf much, and my first surf back up here at the Peak I went and did a load of sick turns like, hitting – hitting it really nice and like, I's always struggled to surf the Peak anyway.... and I was hitting the – hitting it, like just a nice spot, everything felt perfect and I hadn't surfed for, like, probably, for a couple of months, and I think it was just that going away from it, kind of, let me just do it, rather than think about doing it when I, you know when you get on a wave and you think, "Ok I'm gonna bottom turn here and I'm gonna try and come up", it was like, you know you can kind of forget... and you just do it, 'cause you're not thinking "oh my foot needs to be here a little bit more, and I need to turn and I need to put my hands here", and that kind of freedom almost makes you surf... makes me surf better anyway... So taking a break is a kind of positive thing, I think... definitely...

**Aaron:** Like I had a little break there, not so long ago, I moved up to Dublin for a while, and I suppose a lot of people were like, “What are you doing, going up to Dublin?”, but moved up there, my girlfriend, she was working up there so I worked down like at the festivals, went around doing – she does hair and stuff, so I went around with her, helping her at the festivals and stuff like that, which was good craic instead of surf lessons for a summer you know, so that was I can back doing surf lessons and not be like “Uh I hate this completely”, you know, and then... I found myself skating a lot then, you know, like... going round to places with bowls and stuff and that’s how I kinda get my fix of kinda keeping myself doing something, a release so whenever so I go back I won’t be all over the shop, and it was really good ‘cause you know in skate parks, people are really nice in skate parks, you know! (*laughs*) You know everyone will come up like, you go in and you’re kind of, if you’re a little, like, bashful and shy, people will come up, “Hey man how is it going!” and like shake fist bump or whatever and then off the bowl they’ll be chatting to you, you’re sharing the skate park I suppose... I suppose with surfing it’s harder, the waves aren’t always there so there’s this, like, everybody is kinda cramming sometimes, you know, trying to get as many as they can before it goes, but with skating and stuff like that it’s a kind of good thing to bring back then, you know, ‘cause you’ll be taking falls, skating, and you’ll be really hurting yourself, like, busting yourself quite a lot but then when you come back, sure it is just water, like, so you’re start going a bit bigger than you would’ve before, which is good ‘cause, like, the whole surfing, like, breaking-the-barrier is you’re just afraid of pain, like... I remember when I was younger I used to skate loads, I used to skate more than I surfed probably, so I’d always be falling, always be wrecking yourself, you’d be cuts and bruises everywhere, so you’d have no fear when you’re in the water then, like, you’d be going for it, like. So... going away you kinda always learn something that you can kinda take back into it, like, you know...

**Giles:** I like that, with skate parks, you know, that no matter what you’re doing or whatever you’re at the lads will always there to sort of give you a little hoot or say hello, like, you know, even... when I was in France it was the same. Skaters have that, which is kind of cool. Sometimes you feel like it’s maybe lacking from surfing a bit?

**Aaron:** Definitely... There can definitely be a lack of... a lack of respect to people that can’t surf that well, I know it’s kind of different too ‘cause like somebody who’s not a great skater the skaters in the skate park they’re not gonna hurt anyone else, like, you know... so... beginners who end up in you know kind of big stuff, like, you know, boards flying everywhere, I suppose, that kind of thing... but... you know I suppose people might give out to other people if... they get in the way or... run over! (*laughs*) But you can’t ‘cause everybody is sound, if you put yourself out there, some... it might happen from somewhere, like... but I suppose, people who can’t surf or haven’t been surfing that long, it’s kind of daunting, like, it’s a lot more daunting to be out with other people who’ve been surfing for years because... you feel like, “Oh, I don’t wanna get given out to!”, because surfers always, like generally all around the world but be a bit like... you know, like, the whole “kook” thing and, all that, and you’ll never go see a skater, like go on to another skater, “Oh, he’s just crap!”, d’you know what I mean, (*laughing*) or taking the piss out of their style, you know, so that’s kind of the difference of it... **[Reid, 17]**

**Frederique:** Actually, yeah, d’you think surfing, surfers in Ireland are judgemental? I was told that by someone I interviewed and she was saying that surfers are quite judgemental, I found in France, in some places, they can be, I never really found that here they were, not in the places I surf anyway! So would you say that it’s also something you find here?

**Aaron:** Like a bit like, but not, I think like, Ireland... Ireland is really, actually, nice for it... ehm... yeah, like, I suppose there’s... like... I find if I go into Europe there, I have a fucking awful



time surfing, 'cause it's just, there's so much, like localism, and people will get aggro pretty quick, you know? One guy, I was surfing Coxos and ehm... it was really busy, you know, I blew my wetsuit basically because of what happened, he took off on this wave and just was on a bomb, and it was a really nice wave, and I'd just got a wave, kinda, a smaller one before, and I was paddling back out at the very end, I saw him on the wave, and he was like, go on, pull into the barrel, and somebody snowballed that section so he had to go around that one, around one, and somebody else, it was like, you know, everybody just crashing the wave, down on him, and then I saw him fall off, and I duck dived, like he fell off way off the point, you know, I duck dived that and I was like paddling back out and he goes: "You!" and he starts shouting at me in Portuguese, he was like, "You!" and he comes up and he starts going at me and I'm like, "I'm not Portuguese, man, like I'm Irish, like, speak English", and he was just like, "You snowballed that wave!" and I'm like (*laughing*) "Nah, man, that wasn't me, like you know, there is like a million other people doing that" and he's like "I saw you with the blue wetsuit!" and I was like, "No, man!" and he came up and he was like shaking my board and everything and I was just like, "Ah, here, this is... this is ridiculous" and then the same thing at a few other spots, just getting dirty looks, like, so I suppose Ireland is really sound for it, 'cause even if you're not from here and you're surfing, yeah like, locals may get a few more waves but they're not gonna, like, start trying fight you on the beach, or anything like that, they might say, "Oh hey, you go down there where it's a bit better for you", or whatever, you know? But... yeah, going back to the... the people not being that good I suppose, like, I don't think it's that bad here, it's just, like... There's a level, like, going back to the skating there, with skating it's always there, you know, you're not gonna hurt anyone else, but then with surfing it's... if you don't hold on to your board and there's someone behind you then... that board is gonna get onto someone else so I suppose... there has to be a level of it, but then, you know, not to be like slating people if they're, like just surfing along the wave and they look funny like, just 'cause they haven't been surfing as long, or even if they have, like, who cares like? (*laughs*) It's all a bit of craic at the end of the day, isn't it? [*Reid, 17*]

**Giles:** It's just about having fun.

**Aaron:** Yeah.

**Frederique:** Is there one local surfer around that you kind of would look up to, like? I wouldn't go as far as saying like a role model, like, but a surfer, old or young that you kind of look up to around here?

**Aaron:** Ehm... yeah, like, I look up to a lot of people for different things... Definitely... like... I look to Maguire for what he's doing and the big wave stuff, fuckin mental... ehm... yeah there's loads of others, loads of other surfers around that are all good at different aspects, I suppose, like, I've respect for Franck, I suppose, 'cause he just kinda holds down there, I get why, like you know, people need to kinda hold onto, like, their waves, like, I had a guy say to me recently, like "Where are you living?", I'm like, "Oh, in Bundoran", and he was like "Oh yeah, Jeez good waves, locals have a fairly held down", I thought he was kinda going at me or something, and then he was like, "No but it's good, like, 'cause everywhere is getting way busier now, so there's definitely more travelling surfers coming in so if you just have a free for all, then it's just gonna... the whole place is gonna be destroyed, like you know", like... Yeah you can't have too many people, or it'll just be fighting, it'll just be chaos, like, so yeah, I respect him for those kind of views and a few of the other lads... I respect... like, I look up to Murph for what he does for all the grommies around here and what he's doing... ehm... Surfing-wise, when I was growing up the people I would have looked up to, like technically-wise, definitely would have been Stephen Kilfeather, and Cain who I think is like probably the rawest talent in Ireland, and... Yeah who else is class,

there's loads of class lads, like... a lot of respect for like Stevie Burns, he would have helped me out a lot when I was a kid, with mental things so you know like, just, like... what was he saying, like you're like afraid going into the competition, you know, and you're up against, like, a big name and then Stevie would just, he could see that you're kind of a bit rattled by that, or had been rattled a lot by that, and he'd be like, "Don't worry about your man, he shits just like the rest of us, like!" (*laughs*) Stuff like that would really, like, just kinda helped so yeah... (*laughs*) [Reid, 19]

**Frederique:** How would you... yeah you said, basically the surfers around here are quite sound, how would you qualify the surfing community here in Bundoran? Like I've read some of posts on Instagram, people talking about the "family", d'you think it's like a close, tight-knit community of surfers?

**Aaron:** Yeah, it's tight enough, like I suppose, not everybody hangs out together or go do things together but like there is a lot, like, you respect everybody that you see out there and you'd be friendly with them, you'd be friends with them, but like, yeah, I wouldn't say, yeah, it is tight-knit, it's not like, it's not sh-tone, like (*laughs*), which is good too, you know, everybody goes off kinda and does their own thing, you just see each other in the water maybe, you know... Does that make sense?

**Frederique:** What do you think is the hardest thing about surfing in Ireland?

**Aaron:** The hardest thing... the light, probably, in the winter, like, we get the best waves in the winter, but then, we only get like seven hours of light or something like that so, I've often thought, like, how many waves are we missing? Because there is, because it goes dark, you know! So yeah I'd definitely say the light. The cold's grand, you know, it's fresh, good for ya! (*laughs*) [Reid, 24]

**Frederique:** The best thing about surfing in Ireland?

**Aaron:** Ehm... I suppose being Irish! (*laughs*) It's just home, like, I can't travel anywhere else, really, like, well I used to travel quite a bit, I just don't like it, like 'cause... yeah, it's hard to get in anywhere, but when you're at home, you're at home, like. So like, I love surfing in Ireland, don't really wanna go to many other places, unless they are really uncrowded, or you have a few people. [Reid, 20]

**Frederique:** What makes it different then, you say you're at home because you feel more, like, you're confident because you're local or is it just because other people make you... like, they make it ok for you to get in because they know you're a local?

**Aaron:** Ehm... I don't know if it's like the local thing, like, if I go surfing anywhere else in the country or if I'm surfing a new wave, it's just... the whole... the whole vibe feels very different, like... there's a few spots there where you go in and people are happy to see you, they're just been surfing on their own most of the time so they're just, "Oh hey, how are you!", like, big friendly face and they come up to you like... And even when you, if you're off on a mission and you see people who, it's just all sound, everybody would chat to each other I suppose, like, the Irish surf community is really small so everybody is really nice, like, as long as you're not up to devil out there, you know... That's what I love about it, really. [Reid, 20, continued]

**Frederique:** Do you know... actually, do you know how surfing came to Ireland? Like, do you have any idea how it started or who brought it first?

**Aaron:** I don't know... I don't know who started it first, I suppose there's people who say Kevin Cavey started it first, people say that Barry Britton started to surf first, like... who brought it over? I don't know... was it... it's in the 60s anyway... when the first boards were brought over, was it? I don't know, I'm kinda crap at the history of it. But yeah... you see a few of

the, like, first surfers, still in the water, which is... which shows how young Irish surfing really is as well, you know, like... like when did they start surfing in France? Probably like ages ago, was it? Or it would have been the same, like... it's pretty mad, yeah...

**Giles:** I think it's been there longer...

**Frederique:** It's been a bit longer but not that much, no.

**Aaron:** Not that much, no... yeah...

**Frederique:** Like, would your dad have told you about when he started surfing and... how it was like back then?

**Aaron:** Ehm... he would have... ehm... I think he lived in Cork for a while and moved out alone and then he moved to Sligo when he was about 15, and he started getting out at Strandhill there, and he told me a few funny stories of Stevie Burns when he was starting off! (*laughs*) 'Cause Stevie was like Ireland's first grom or something like that, you know what I mean? The first young surfer! So Stevie would have been younger than my dad when he started so, and dad was telling me, there was a wave coming, and I think Stevie knew it would wreck Dad, and Stevie was like, "Go on Reid!" and my dad would turn and paddle and get absolutely destroyed and Stevie would be there laughing at him, like "Hahaha!", you know... yeah my dad was pretty..., well he was 15-16 when he started, so... yeah he's got a good old look on it, you know... just kind of feels a bit of craic, you know? He always was a bit worried about me doing competitions, he thought I'd lose the fun for it, he's always tell me, "It is just fun, at the end of the day", like, just true! [*Reid, 21*]

**Frederique:** How do you see surfing evolve in Ireland, like, you were talking about crowded line-ups in some places and... do you think like it's really likely to happen around here? I hear people talk about the cold, in France some people actually don't know you can surf in Ireland?

**Aaron:** Yeah... ehm... yeah I don't know how it's going to go... it's hard to tell, it'll probably get really busy the better the wetsuits get, you know, people are gonna realize that the cold doesn't... doesn't affect them so much so yeah, it's gonna get busier, it might get a big more aggro but d'you know I think there's a few things starting to happen, like coming to place of... like programmes just to stop... I don't know... the place getting overcrowded or... I know there's a good few surfers who don't want kinda like big competitions like a QS or a CT in Ireland just 'cause it might bring too much spotlight on it, like I know the spots, like, it's happening already, like all the waves, like, sure, they've been in the magazines for years... It's kinda surprising that people are only starting to come now, 'cause they've been in like, in lots of, like, kinda big feature videos, like, back in the day as well... Yeah, just tell them it's cold wet rainy dark, don't bother lads! (*laughs*) [*Reid, 22*]

**Frederique:** So the cold doesn't affect your surfing in any way or...

**Aaron:** Ehm... I don't think so, I like being in a hood and gloves and boots, feels like you're still in bed, you know (*laughs*). As long as you've good gear, like, you know!

**Frederique:** I heard some stories by Rory again, in Strandhill, like, one day when he was 12 or 13, he probably was surfing with you that day, he mentioned your name anyway, and he got out of the water and... I think he didn't have a proper wetsuit, like he had a summer wetsuit and it was winter and he was like shivering, he couldn't get out of the wetsuit either 'cause he was like completely frozen, he said that was like the worst day ever, like "hardcore" and it stuck with him like, it's like the big monster, the Cold, that day!

**Aaron:** Yeah, I think I remember that day, yeah, I think... my Mum used to drive us all around as well, like drive us up to the competitions and stuff, she'd drive us down to Easkey, I think that time we were driving down to Easkey, and he was like, "Ah I've only got a summer

wetsuit, man!” “Ah you’ll be grand, like, come on, we just go for it!” And, I think it was kinda big enough, Easkey so we were quite scared like but yeah... (*laughs*) The cold can be a monster if you don’t have the right gear! I remember... I remember doing one winter just being a stupid dope and trying to hold the winter without a hood, and it was, was ok like, you get used to it but then, like, your ears, like, you’ll be ruining yours ears like... ehm... yeah... The monster’s the cold... I think the dark is the cold, that’s what I think, ehm the dark is the monster, that’s it. Blackens us off, we’ll have to get LEDs, like, definitely gonna build, like, a headlamp or something, that’d do the job! (*laughs*) [Reid, 24]

**Giles:** Yeah the elements was something, wasn’t it, we wanted to push a little bit, like...

**Frederique:** The wind...

**Giles:** ...There’s, d’you know, like... so yeah, one of the elements that you have to deal with in Ireland that make it a little bit harder at times?

**Aaron:** Ehm... yeah, definitely...The motivation to go whenever it’s... Whenever it’s cold and wet and windy like, it just looks ugly, like, so you just have to break over the fact that it looks ugly, you just know that you’ll always come in happier than if you didn’t go in like, so ehm... yeah.

**Giles:** What about the... how do you say it... like, like yeah so you have, like, the short days, the dark, and what are the other things that come into play then, like, regarding spots, you know... there’s the tide... Is there anything else that makes it difficult that you could explain...?

**Aaron:** Yeah... yeah I suppose, ‘cause there’s only seven hours of light, at this time of the year like, now, in December, so you’re only gonna get one phase of the tide, so if there is... a certain swell and a certain tide, ehm some places mightn’t break at all, you know what I mean, but you know that’s like a good swell for it but just ‘cause the tide is completely wrong throughout today you might miss it so I suppose that can be kinda like, you see the chart and you’re like, “Oh, that could be good, oh but..., yeah, I won’t be going there!” (*laughs*) Ehm... but I suppose where we are it’s just what we have to get used to like, so... have to travel around and find some more waves like...

**Frederique:** How do you handle it actually when it’s not good or it’s good but you can’t surf it because it’s night... How do you handle it when it’s like a flat day or not a good day, what do you do then to replace the surfing?

**Aaron:** When it’s not a good day, if it’s a big storm then anyway I’d probably sit in in the house, play the X Box and jam away on the decks for probably like eight hours or something like that! (*laughs*) It’s always a bit of craic, yeah... d’you know? Just kinda get around, trying to do something, it’s always good to drive around, have a look at places, get out of the house... I like being, like even it’s stormy I love being outside for a little bit and just getting blown around, a bit of craic... We used to go down, when there was big a storm in Lahinch we used to go down to the prom and the way the waves would come in, they would come in at an angle and end up hitting the prom, and they were, like, smashing over but they hit it in sections so it’d be like “Boom, boom, boom, boom!”, kinda thing, you know! So... you’d see a wave come in, you had to lay it through the prom without getting soaked, that was always a bit of craic! And then... if it was like a gale-force like kinda wind, like, there was always these, like, alleyways in Lahinch, and we used to go stand in the alleyway in the gale-force wind so the wind’s, like, even faster and then you, like, pull out your jacket you’re like, trying to stand there, you know... There was one time though there was that massive, massive storm that ripped out the whole prom, and we were standing at a corner of the... across from the Celtic t-shirt shop and there’s like a little corner there, so you’d be standing there against the corner then you’d see the water going like “Pff!”, like flying past

you, you know! So we were doing that for a while and then the coast guards started telling us “Stop doing that, like!”, you know, and we were like, running out in front it, like, stupid, “Ah, we do this all the time, like, it’s grand!”, you know! And then we saw this massive wave come smash up over O Looney’s bar, and like, all the water was just sprayed up everywhere and we were, like, we were a good bit back at this point and then, yeah... and once the water cleared, like, there was just big boulders, like, this big, just like, right there, we were like, “Yeah, ok, this could be a bit... a bit dodgy”! (*laughs*) [Reid, 25]

There’s another – there’s another time, as well, we were up... where was that... with my friend Murphy, Cian Murphy, he’s a mad boy from Limerick, and he had a few of his Limerick friends up, and they wanted to go and fly a kite, pretty much, in like gale-force winds, and... I was like, “Lads, this is a bad idea, like, don’t fly the kite!”, they were like, “Where’s the best place we can go fly the kite? Ah, we’ll go up to the Cliffs of Moher, like and ah, the wind’s onshore, we’d be getting blown away from the Cliffs”, I said, “Lads! This is not a good idea, like, going up to the Cliffs of Moher in gale-force winds and fly a kite”, you know, so we hopped over the wall and we were walking down the path towards Aileen’s, and because that wall was bust down now, because the wind was blowing onshore, it blew into this kind of, like, valley that was like that, and I remember it was, like, so strong against us coming down and then it just stopped and then all of a sudden the wind just blew back around and started blowing us, like... We weren’t close to the edge, we were like a good bit away from the edge, we were half way down the rock, and it just lifted us, like, I got lifted up off my feet, I landed, like I landed, like, on the footpath kinda holding on to it and sliding and then I got back and the other two lads were, like, completely, like, skidding on the floor but holding on to each other, then like one of them got grab of the fence or something like that, and I saw Cian holding on to the fence like this, so, I like scrambled up on the floor and grabbed onto the fence as well until the thing stopped and then... and then it was grand, like, we just kinda were like, walked out, and I was like, “I fecking told you, like, this was a bad idea to go flying a kite on the cliffs, like!” (*laughing*) Ah... that was a funny one alright...

**Frederique:** Did you manage to bring the kite back home after that?

**Aaron:** Oh no, we definitely did put the kite away and that was the end of that one! Probably went for a pint or two just to calm the nerves like (*laughs*), ‘cause, that was dodgy, we were like, we were moving, like, you know, I think it lifted me like this high up the ground, like, proper landed on my ribs and everything, like, yeah... [Reid, 26]

**Frederique:** Just two questions to finish... Where do you see yourself in about, I don’t know, five years from now?

**Aaron:** Oh Jeez, I don’t know... I don’t know where I see myself... still surfing, anyway, or maybe I might go on one of my breaks again, who know, like, you know! (*laughs*) I can definitely, right now I can still imagine myself surfing probably based around here or in Ireland anyway, but hopefully travelling around a bit and getting a few... a few waves elsewhere, ‘d be nice... yeah... I don’t know... I’m pretty planted up at the moment here... (*laughs*) [Reid, 27]

**Frederique:** Maybe it’s a tricky but it’s a simple one... Why do you surf?

**Aaron:** Ehm... don’t know, just... good craic, I suppose... I used to play rugby for a little while, when I was under 8, did a bit of football but yeah... I hated the way they took up every Saturday, so I was like, “Screw that”, like, I’m just... like... I’m just gonna go and surf instead so I just dropped them all and just kinda kept surfing and just haven’t really stopped since... ‘cause I suppose that... I suppose back then I had a real buzz which I still do now but yeah, I suppose, it’s just something I can’t stop doing now... like, you might



have your breaks and stuff, but I wouldn't just stop, like... unless you can find something else class, jumping, like, wing-suiting or something, and then it just seems like surfing is just... stupid! (*laughs*) I suppose, it's right there, as well, isn't it, just... such amazing waves right in front of you... **[Reid, 28]**

**Giles:** It'd be hard to stop...

**Aaron:** Yeah... and you see other people who start surfing now, who used to play, like, just like, team sports back in the day, they're like, "Oh, I just wish I'd started surfing years ago, like", you know what I mean, like, so I'm very lucky that my mum and my dad have kinda chaperoned me around the place doing it, driving me north south of the country like, going to competitions and all that, I was lucky.

**Giles:** Can you explain... Imagine that I'm a... five-year-old, imagine I'm a child, and you need to explain to me what surfing is?

**Aaron:** If you're a five-year-old child... ehm... I don't know... (*laughs*)... (*accent*) "That thing that you do, you're like magic-water-sliding, skidding, you know?" (*laughs*)... I don't know... I don't know how you describe it... sorry! (*laughs*) How would you describe it?

**Giles:** Uhm... I guess I'd go something along the lines of it's something you're doing in the water, in the water there's... ripples... so they're like... how to explain a wave, it's.. so you imagine the water that's there starts to grow out of the water, and gets higher and it moves towards you and... it's really fun and you have to catch it... so you catch it... and you start sliding along, like if you were on your belly sliding on the floor and then... you jump up onto your feet and you keep on sliding! (*laughs*) ... it's difficult to explain!

**Aaron:** Yeah. (*forcing accent*) It'sh like shlidin down the shteps, but on water, and you're standing. (*laughs*)

**Giles:** D'you know when you get the duvet?

**Aaron:** Yeah! Sleeping bag... **[Reid, 29]**

**Frederique:** Maybe another question would be, if I was a five-year-old, explain what a wave is. What's a wave?

**Aaron:** (*Dramatic tone*) It's a wall of water that builds itself up and breaks itself down. (*laughs*)

**Giles:** Is there anything else that maybe you'd like to share or any... any advice that you'd have for fellow surfers, something like that? **[Reid, 29, continued]**

**Aaron:** Don't fuckig snake me mother fuckers! (*laughs*) ehm... I don't know... no, not really, I don't really know what to say to them. There's too many of them! (*laughs*) There's too many to talk to, you know! ... Nah, I don't really, sorry...

**Frederique:** Just one thing, that's not really a question, just... I've been coming here for the last three years, or more than that, and I feel like around this place, in Bundoran, there's a bit of a fairyland, a kind of vortex thing going on, there's like, people I've met that came, didn't come randomly, like, they came here for a reason but somehow, they never really intended to stay and five years later they're still here, and they don't seem to... like, they're not planning to stay longer, it just drags on and on and time flies by and it's just like, as if... there's a slow down in the timeline, just that the waves are so good here you don't need to travel down to Clare for other waves and it's just... you know... days merge into one another.. it's something I've noticed, anyway...

**Aaron:** Like, I've definitely... I think the whole west coast of Ireland is a bit of a vortex like that, and I've gone from vortex to vortex a few times, it's hard to get out of them when you're in them, you know, just 'cause, just the good way of livin', around here, I suppose, like there's more and more people from even Dublin, just, like, they end up moving down to the west

'cause they just can't cope with the city and stuff like that so they'll be moving down here, but... I met a lad before, like, a lad called Billy, he used... it was down in Clare, he used to make his own clothes and all that kind of stuff, and I think he was like a big businessman, at one point he used to make a load of money, he traded it all in to fucking nothing, just so he could live in Clare, he was a real eccentric, a real legend, and he described it to me perfectly: he said, like, "Sure, like, the west of Ireland is the furthest point in Europe, so we used to have all the people from Europe, or even like Romania, or wherever, like, people first started off, and they all started spreading out all along, getting away from certain places, getting away from the crap and they all went off into France and stuff like that, and then they were like, oh, I don't want to go there", so they to go off into England and in England they go, like, "Ah, screw this, let's get away from this crap!" so then moved away to Ireland and they all end up out at the west, so they got as far away from the crap as they could be! *(laughs)* ... and then they ended up falling the end of Ireland and ended up dropping into the sea to get away from everything and they were gone. *(laughs)* [Reid, 31]

**Frederique:** I think Rory told me that his Dad was saying the west coast of Ireland chooses its people, it's kind of a select few that, you know, come here and stay...

**Aaron:** Yeah... class! *(laughs)*

**Giles:** Cool!

**Frederique:** Yeah it's pretty cool, thank you! Very good stuff, good stories, thank you!

**Aaron:** No worries, thank you! I'm looking forward to seeing it, all of it, now!

## 4. OLGA DRAGON

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Olga est née en Lettonie et est arrivée en Irlande aux débuts des années 2000. Après avoir vécu à Dublin puis Cork, elle a commencé à surfer récemment (Olga surfe depuis trois ans au moment de l'entretien) et s'est très vite prise de passion pour l'activité. J'ai rencontré cette jeune femme pétillante d'une trentaine d'années lors de son passage par Cosy Joe's, en octobre 2016. Elle était alors accompagnée d'un ami sud-africain, amateur de grosses vagues, qui souhaitait repérer les sites du Peak et de Mullaghmore lors de son séjour à Bundoran, puis de Riley's et Aileen's dans le comté de Clare. Ce fut l'occasion pour Olga de se confronter pour la première fois à la vague du Peak, expérience qu'elle me décrit au cours de l'entretien.



**Ill. 136 :** Olga Dragon, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 16 septembre 2017 au café Randaddy's, Lahinch (Clare).  
Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Olga a découvert le surf à un moment charnière de sa vie, à l'issue d'une rupture sentimentale douloureuse, lors d'excursions le long de la côte du comté de Cork. Son initiation et sa découverte des vagues du sud-ouest de l'Irlande ont ainsi posé les jalons d'une relation affective à la pratique du surf, relation à laquelle d'autres surfeuses telles que Findabhair ni Fhaolain et Aisling Gallagher Clarke, notamment, ont également fait écho dans leurs récits. Après une première année passée à « charger la mousse » (« shredding white water »), selon les propres termes auto-dérisoires d'Olga, et à créer des liens avec la communauté de surfeurs du comté de Cork, elle décide de s'établir aux abords de la ville de Lahinch, réputée pour la qualité de ses vagues et pour le dynamisme de sa communauté, et dans laquelle Olga est désormais pleinement impliquée.

Le profil d'Olga correspond ainsi aux critères recherchés dans le cadre de l'ethnographie : n'étant pas originaire de la communauté surf étudiée, ni même du pays, elle en est pas moins un membre parfaitement intégré. Elle relève de la catégorie des surfeurs amateurs et passionnés, et revendique une approche de la pratique s'apparentant à celle des *soul surfers*. Elle a pu enrichir la recherche par son entrée distinctive dans la culture de cette communauté, son point de vue éclairé sur la pratique et les réseaux au sein de cette dernière, ainsi que sa perspective de surfeuse sur la



question du genre et celles de la présence, de la visibilité et des interactions de la population féminine dans les *line up* en Irlande.



**Ill. 137 :** Olga Dragon, à Lahinch (Clare). Photographe : Clem McInerney.  
Source : compte Instagram d'Olga<sup>4</sup>.

### **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 16 septembre 2017, enregistré à Lahinch, co. Clare :**

**Olga :** My name is Olga, I'm originally from Latvia, my parents were Russian, I moved to Ireland in 2005, ended up living in Dublin, didn't really like it, the city buzz, moved to Cork, yeah lived there for about ten years, that's where I started surfing, and yeah visited Lahinch a couple of times, the surf is more consistent in here and I ended up – after my travels after one year ended up coming here and living here. So yeah it's been pretty magical through the last three years, I feel like this is my home. *[Olga, 1]*

**Frederique :** When did you start surfing?

**Olga :** It's very exciting. Well it is and it isn't I suppose. I didn't really know anything about surfing at all at all. I had seen people surf, I didn't grow up around the sea or, it was more like lake and river so it never really appealed to me like, when I moved to Cork I'd often go to Garrettstown or Clonakilty and it never even crossed my mind to even rent a board and go surfing. And then I went through a break up, that's was pretty tough, like many other people go through break ups, everyone feels a different way, I seem to have tried so many different ways of getting over problems and stuff but this time something just said, I think I was in Garrettstown one day and I was sitting on a wall and I wasn't driving at the time as well so either a friend would give a lift or I would take a bus, and I would sit on a wall and watch like tiny little waves in Garrettstown beach, I was like 'oh I think I need to start driving' 'cause I loved adventuring and yeah, from then on I think I did everything pretty fast like and within a couple of months I passed my license, provisional, bought a tiny little car, my first car yeah fiesta, and then yeah, bought a board, my first board, it was like a mini mal, 7'6, it was beautiful, and yeah, threw the board in the car, drove to Garrettstown, pretty much every day sometimes twice a day, it's like one of those things

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4 Lien : [https://www.instagram.com/olga\\_polga/](https://www.instagram.com/olga_polga/)

you start doing and you just get like so, I don't know, that first like, feeling when you're in the water you, I suppose first I was doing it for fun or activity and then I realized every time I was in the water I'd just be smiling ear to ear and I would never be thinking "Oh, break up", or "troubles", or "bills" or anything like that it was just complete stoke, I'd be just smiling and happy, it always feels great when you get out of the water being salty and, you know, kind of like carefree I suppose in a way but then you just go back to the city to city life I suppose, even though I lived in the suburbs so it wasn't really in the city so for a year I was shredding white water, it was a lot of fun, it was like, and at the time I was like "Yeah I know so much about surfing", I'd be telling everybody and eventually took part time at the place I was working so I just travelled, Garrettstown was like my stepping stone and then first I was going to Inchydoney beach, a few of my friends were already in surfing, Shane O'Connor, Owen O'Connor, like a few of the lads from Cork, and they were living there actually at the time, they'd after bring me to Castlefreak – it's in Clonakilty, yeah, just watch the guys surf bigger waves and being like, I remember thinking "I think I'm ok to do it" I'd be like excited, often paddled out to places I should have paddled out to, I suppose that's like part of a learning curve, so I it was just like I surfed there for a while, like from my house to Clon it would be like a solid hour, that's no traffic, like 50-55 minutes, and like when you get addicted to something, I'd often travel like early in the morning, come back, drive back in again same day. So I did that for about like well over a year, just like constantly constantly driving, and then... What happened then? Oh yeah, I met this guy from South Africa who was like mad into big wave surfing, and he invited me to South Africa, and I went over to South Africa and seen their lifestyle and their beaches and how you can surf with your wetsuit down in some parts, and just got more and more addicted, I got my first short board, it's not really a short board it's a 6'10 gun but, yeah ended up travelling, going to Sri Lanka, had my first surfing accident, that was exciting! Still there for the scar, just there, and yeah, just moved back, and the minute I got back I think I realized, like I lived, even in the suburbs, or the city, I think I stayed in Cork for like a week and then moved to Lahinch, packed everything into my car, drove up to Lahinch and got somewhere to stay, got a job in the same day and... yeah sorry I'm mumbling a lot... *[Olga, 2]*

**Frederique:** When did you start surfing, was it a long time ago?

**Olga:** I think it was three years ago, yeah three years ago summertime, yeah I was back in Cork and yeah definitely like I've often looked up to like big wave surfers like people you kind of see in like in documentaries, after like on Facebook you see... the minute you start surfing there's obviously a way of like purchasing boards, wetsuits and, if you're a surfer, unless you're in here in front of your parents or something, there's not much money going down surfing so obviously you have to find a way to find cheaper gear, and that's like... we have this website for surfboards in Ireland and yeah you'd often like check out like boards and, I learnt my mistake when I just started surfing I thought I knew so much just from like shredding the white water, and I'd often buy like surfboards, so embarrassing like looking back now I'm like "Oh my God that was so embarrassing"!

**Frederique:** Why is that?

**Olga:** Well first of all 'cause, I thought I knew how to surf, at the time I didn't really know but I thought I knew, just the amount of time I spent surfing, and then you just see boards up on sale, and they could be like short boards and anything, like, I think one time I bought 5'8 fish tail off this guy in Dublin and, I remember I messaged him, if you're a surfer you'll go back, if someone messages you about their sale or sth, you'll go back and you'll look at their profile, you'll see who are their friends on Facebook, are you really that much into surfing, unless you have, like we're judgemental, we don't like to admit it but we are

judgemental, maybe not in a bad way but, so obviously this guy had seen me holding a board at the beach, you know like, all this (*mimics the shaka*), and he, he sold it to me any way for way too much money than I should have bought it for, the end story: I couldn't surf it, I was like falling all over the place so yeah, it took me like solid a year, if not over a year to... and my first board was a mini mal, which I should probably, and I would advise to all my friends to start with a mini mal or a long board, yeah. [Olga, 3]

**Frederique:** Did you have surfer friends around you to advise you and guide you?

**Olga:** No not really apart from a couple of friends from Cork, and one of them said to me "I think you're too old to start surfing, you know you're too old to pick it up", but I'm quite challenging like, I like to prove people wrong, but... I definitely think I improved and proved to that person, that person knows who he is, that it's not too late, it's never too late, and it's not all about competition and how good you'll get, it's about the joy of being in the water, I think a lot of people forget about that you know. [Olga, 4] Definitely if you leave it for too long and especially I think we had, I like to say "we", like I'm part of this little area here in Lahinch, we've had a really bad summer, so I might haven't had a surf for maybe a week, maybe a little less, but even those couple of days that you leave it off and you jump back in, it's like a learning thing, it's not like in cycling or anything, it's almost, and it does matter on your physique as well, you gotta be semi fit to do it, but yeah you got to keep it up you know and the more you do it like, sometimes when we get like a good run especially now with winter coming, like if I go in like every day or every second day, a couple of hours a day, it kind of, it boosts your like, I don't know like, as tired as you feel it kind of makes you feel great and fit and you definitely feel you're ready to take on sth a little bit bigger, like you know, going up up up up up all the time. It's strange to explain unless you're in the water and you know, like you probably know if you've gone back to white water. [Olga, 5]

**Frederique:** How would you qualify yourself as a surfer, what kind of surfer are you?

**Olga:** I don't know like, as I said I've been part of surfing like three years, I've gone more like on short boards, the board at the moment I have is like 6'3, it's shaped similar to my 6'10 gun, like the measurements were probably kept pretty much the same, more like I really like the feeling of going like fast and being able to do moves and stuff on the wall of the wave but again we've had a pretty bad summer this year, like it was constantly like onshore, just crazy winds, big swell or completely flat, like... I would love to go into long boarding for sure, and it kind of makes you think when we've had these, we had one last weekend like long boarding competition, you kind of look at the people doing tricks on the board and you're like "Oh I really want to do it", you know you're like "Ok next summer I'll get a long board" but you just keep going with your short board no matter what kind of waves you get so... I suppose... short boarding? Yeah, sure... [Olga, 6]

**Frederique:** Have you got to that stage where you have favourite manoeuvres?

**Olga:** Yeah at the start when I upgraded on different boards, there was like so many different stages, it was not like straightforward, taking off on the wave, and obviously for like a year just staying on the wave and going, it's either straight or you if you're regular you just go right and you'll stay on the wall, but recently, only recently, a couple of months back, I'm more experimenting, and it's like, it's really like jittery kind of feeling in your stomach when you actually pull something off, yeah it's cut backs at the moment, it's just, like obviously I'm a regular so I'll go right and I'll try to pull some moves, probably from the shore I look like an idiot but it feels amazing when I'm doing it! And also because where I live at the moment we have so many lefts, like Lahinch in here alone you have three lefts I mean four lefts you know, so I'm trying to learn how to go left more, I mean I can do it, I

prefer not to, like I'm sure a lot of regulars would agree with me, yeah so that's like kind of they are the two main things, it's like pulling manoeuvres and going left. *[Olga, 7]*

**Frederique:** Are those your challenges?

**Olga:** It's always a challenge, well it is a challenge for sure when it's like some sort of thing you want to prove yourself, that you, it's the fact that you can surf a short board, it's like you just want to prove that you are getting proper use out of your board. *[Olga, 8]*

**Frederique:** Tell me about the last best wave you've had recently?

**Olga:** Oh there's always a story! I can give you the best one or I can give you the scariest one. ... Probably the scariest one was, a friend of mine from South Africa was over and we decided to drive north, we drove to Bundoran, I remember it was like last year October it was like Halloween, and we went, all of us went out for a drink, had lots of drinks, of course had a few rollies as you know you do, the next day next morning, we were staying at Joe's at the hostel, and we woke up, it must have been around 8 o'clock in the morning, we just like opened the blinds, and we saw the Peak working, what looked like from the room it must have been like four foot, perfect, like little waves, it was like perfect offshore, beautiful, beautiful. So, still being semi drunk, jumped into the wetsuit, the board and we before we knew we were paddling out, there was maybe 20 + already on the wave and I had, like a friend of mine who was like trying to encourage me to ride bigger waves now, when you're a little bit hung over I don't think you think, like quite clear, straight, so he suggested, we could see a set coming in and I decided to wait for the last wave of the set and one of the guys on my left pulled out, didn't go, and I literally had 3 or 4 seconds to think, ... a friend of mine and another guy, Anthony, shouted "Go go go!" and I was like "Oh shit I'm actually gonna do this!" without thinking just turned the board out, there was not time for paddling, the wave was already peaking, I popped up on it and then, yeah I rolled away for a little bit and got washed and then came back up and before I knew it a massive lip was coming right on top of me, and my friend was like "hang in there" and I just made a big inhale and I went under, and it's like when it's taking you down, like the low, like, you don't, your eyes are obviously closed but you're losing light, and I'm not very good at holding my breath for too long so, especially after a night of solid drinking, so yeah I just got caught right on top of the reef, I got washed out but it took me a while to get out and I definitely got a fright, like that's probably my scariest one... kind of proud, but scary. What actually happened I remember, it picked up, the swell picked up a little bit more, so, really at the end probably 5 to 6 foot so it was quite, quite scary. *[Olga, 9]*

**Frederique:** Did it scare you off for some time afterwards?

**Olga:** It makes a bit smarter maybe to do things a bit faster, but no it didn't scare me, like obviously I was scared at the time but it doesn't scare no no. I think if it scares you, if you feel you're not gonna go back surfing, you're not really a true surfer I suppose. You know it's kind of a passion, you know if you fall off the board you just gotta get back right on it, that's kind of like the way. *[Olga, 10]*

**Frederique:** Being a female surfer: a difference in the line up in Ireland?

**Olga:** In Lahinch definitely not, we have so many female surfers in here, like so many, probably the most female surfers in the whole of Ireland, the community here is huge, and a lot of them are females, I haven't noticed... Even going back to Cork now, surfing back at home where I learnt how to surf, actually arriving at Castlefreak and seeing sometimes.... And I see the guys that I used to look up to, and now I'm surfing with them, there's no like, you know, take the wave 'cause you're a female, definitely not in Ireland, but from surfing abroad, I have noticed that like, you do have it's like, privilege, what? I don't know. Not really like, I mean, as I said before, other surfers are quite judgemental, I don't know if

judgemental is the right word, just judging maybe, just to see, they might say hi in the water but unless they see you can really surf, they don't really like, especially when it comes to bigger waves, you know, uh no, around these parts we're quite friendly. [Olga, 11] We're as I said a big community but we're quite connected, especially when the winter comes, we all gather together, have drinks, you know, go work at the farm or do a lot of different things and it keeps us together, maybe some guys if they fancy you they'll let you go on a wave, I wouldn't know a thing about it! [Olga, 12]

**Frederique:** You sometimes hear stories about local surfers giving out to visiting surfers, do you feel that is the case here, would you consider yourself from here and do you think that there's some localism going on around here?

**Olga:** I definitely feel like I'm from here now, like that's how I feel about Ireland in general, so it doesn't matter where I am in Ireland, it'll always be my home so I definitely feel connected with this place, I feel like staying here for a while, I don't think there's any of that you know separation between, it's funny to say because like, let's say you surf on the beach just over here in Lahinch, and people... as I said previously, if they see you can surf, there's absolutely no problem, it's just having respect you know, and don't drop in, it's like a main thing, having an understanding of how the wave works and how the line up works, and that's the main thing, but from surfing solid two years in here I don't think I've ever ever come across arrogance or anything like people being angry in the water... But then saying that, I don't surf Riley's cliffs, certain waves, there might be something going on but I don't know anything about it... yeah it's just respecting... [Olga, 13]

**Frederique:** What is special about surfing in Ireland, why not go to warmer climates?

**Olga:** I don't really care for the weather that much, unless we have a really bad summer which we have now, then you kind of crave sun but somehow you just adjust.. we have great waves, when there's waves, they're great, we don't have that many people on the waves, which is great too, and again we have a really great community of people you know, it's always nice to paddle out with someone you know and cheering each other on the wave... I don't really think I'd want to live anywhere else apart from Ireland. I love travelling, I love surfing somewhere else, every winter there's a lot of people from here they leave, especially in Lahinch it's like, kind of like a funny cult, everybody like chills for the summer, surfs till December January then they're off for a couple of months, and they're back again so yeah, you get to enjoy the sunshine for three months which is kind of handy in my work as well. [Olga, 14]

**Frederique:** What type of work do you do?

**Olga:** I do video edit so I got really lucky when I just moved here I my house mate ('cause every time I say house mate people think I say husband), nope, single! My house mate he is a videographer more for like weddings, but often do like music or ads or different stuff, so yeah it's kind of freelance editing, I can travel with my work if I want to, or I can work whenever I want, surf which is amazing for living on this part of... if there's waves we'll just go surf, if there's no waves we'll edit the absolute shit out of it so yeah, I got really lucky.

**Frederique:** I know you've been a little involved with the guys up at Moy Hill Farm... how did you get to meet the guys up there?

**Olga:** I suppose I kind of knew about Fergal Smith when I lived in Cork, he was definitely a guy that I was looking up to, or... Yeah definitely looking up to, being totally amazed by how people can surf that wave, you know, size of the wave, so I moved here last summer properly, heard about the farm, then got to know a few of the girls, one of the girls... that's going out with one of the guys from the farm, Sophie, and yeah she was like, why don't you



come we have volunteers day on Tuesday you know, you can just work full day or half day, chill, talk to us, have tea, do yoga in the morning... But I was really nervous last year, I wasn't really like, I suppose, meeting people, like locals and stuff, just kind of was shy and you know, I was new to the place, didn't want to be judged but after I came back I really felt a difference and when I went to the farm I was really like nervous, didn't know what to expect you know, I thought they were gonna be like these people... gods... but they're actually really cool, they're chilled, you know, exactly like us... but shred bigger waves!

*[Olga, 15]*

**Frederique:** What they do at the farm, the project behind it?

**Olga:** At the beginning I suppose they're just trying to promote, just growing your own stuff you know, they started like really small and I think it's been a little over two years that they've been doing this, they grow their own veggies, they have chickens, a few ducks, they have pigs and stuff so obviously they have their own eggs... It's just kind of like, I suppose, bringing it back to what it used to be, I don't know if they're trying to promote it but it's definitely affecting a lot of people, like a lot of people are talking about it, a lot of people are starting to grow their own stuff, you know, getting tunnels, it's definitely inspiring. This year – not sure about last year if they were doing it – but they're doing a veggie box, so I think it starts in May so once there is vegs ready to go out, they do like a box and you can choose the amount of money that you want to spend on it. But you sign up so you have food coming in once a week, fresh stuff that's not spread, that's not imported, it's just great to see the variety of different vegetables that you get, stuff that you can't buy in the market, and that money is going back into the farm... And then those guys have already travelled 'cause they've been, you know, into surfing, sponsored, ... they've done their travels. The three main guys that live at the farm, I know they're not flying any more, they're not travelling any more, so their dedication is just purely into the farm... And actually at the moment they're buying land next to their land, and they're trying to raise some money for it, which is great to see, so they're having music, like live music at the farm, a few well-known artists from around Ireland play there, and it's based on donations, like, so you can donate online, you can donate at the place, and yeah, they're just trying to expand, and you know have maybe a few horses, eventually or, not home schooling but kind of like a crèche I suppose for local people around the area, so yeah, they're doing an amazing job and it's really inspiring to be there and be surrounded by them and be involved and work with them and learn how to grow your own veggies, definitely. Also they do like, volunteers day, Tuesday, if you wanted to you can have like yoga, you work with the lads, you know you're provided lunch and everything, then you continue working, which is amazing, and it's very therapeutic, 'cause I grew up in the countryside and my mum used to give out to me for not wanting to work in the garden, and I hated it, and she was like, "Trust me, one of these days, you know, when you get a bit older, you'll realize, it's actually great", so yeah, I definitely believe that she was right! *[Olga, 16]*

**Frederique:** I think it's fascinating, to think of how surfing can actually bring you closer to the earth, the land as well as the ocean...

**Olga:** Yeah, it's kind of like meditation... If you ask to compared to surfing to how you feel when you surf, it's definitely like a sporty type of meditation, you know, like you're working out or, at the same time you're constantly focused on one thing it's like meditation. ... you're like focused on one thing when you're meditating and you're focused on one thing when you're surfing... When you're surfing you're just, like, chilled, and you're, you want to be more connected to the earth, for sure. *[Olga, 17]*

**Frederique:** What sort of thoughts go through your mind when you're surfing, a train of thoughts or auto pilot mode?

**Olga:** Depends on the situation, sometimes you're like, when is that set going to come in you know, or sometimes "Please don't kill me"!! But like never really problems... and then even if you do start thinking about it, next thing, your wave comes in and you're like, on it, and before you know it you forget about whatever you were thinking, so there is no.. like for me there isn't any specific thoughts when I'm surfing, it's just having an absolute great time because, specially where I live now, we have so many different spots for surfing and... every single spot is surrounded by amazing scenery, like we have Lahinch, well maybe Lahinch isn't a great example, Doolin, we have cliffs, you know, so, you know, chilling, watching, appreciating, no matter what the weather conditions are, or just trying to survive and have fun. *[Olga, 18]*

**Frederique:** How many boards do you have?

**Olga:** Two. I had a mini mal which I sold off once I got a short board, actually it wasn't a short board it was the 6'10 gun that I was riding for a while, and I had a lot of fun on it, and then, I went down to sth a bit shorter, 6'3, shaped by a local guy actually, he's not really a local he's Australian I don't know why I said that he's a local, but he lives here and he's married to an Irish girl, and he's an amazing shaper, so... Two boards at the moment. I don't really feel you need that many different varieties, like you might need a long board, or a foamie for like smaller days in the summer, but like you kind of *set*? what you like to surf, and you know, even if it's super small, or when it's super big, I'll always surf that one board, you know. *[Olga, 19]*

**Frederique:** Do you feel you need to challenge yourself as a surfer, ride bigger waves?

**Olga:** I actually had set myself, it was... my first summer when I just started surfing in Cork, and I remember I came here for maybe the first time in Lahinch, and I ended up following the guys to the cliffs, 'cause I knew that day was gonna be working, and I just watched a few of the guys surfing, that was my first time seeing Cliffs and that wave, Aileen's, working, so it was like quite emotional, and I think something in my mind said, it's more like to prove something to myself, 'maybe one day I can do this', and I semi put it on my bucket list, but everybody I've said to so far, they're laughing, but it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to ride it when it when it's like, huge, 15 foot, it can be like 6 foot and you can still ride it, or even if I never do it, I still would like to have paddled out to it, even on a flat day, then I'd probably be paranoid it's gonna pick up or something, so yeah it's definitely a challenge, for sure, to ride something bigger, something about, a step you know. *[Olga, 20]*

**Frederique:** I have some very simple questions for you now... Could you define a wave?

**Olga:** A little ripple of water coming towards you, or like a lump out of the surface of the water, I don't know, it's a very strange question! Once it's not flat... If there is a bit of a shape to the water, I would call that a wave.

**Frederique:** What is a good wave for you?

**Olga:** I don't necessarily say I prefer glassy clean perfect breaks 'cause I think you'll get bored, like eventually, or it will just become a routine, so anything you can literally ride your board on, I consider fun, like it could be onshore it could offshore, it could be cross or whatever it is, once you're able to stand on your board, and stay on it for longer than a few seconds, is a wave and is fun for me. *[Olga, 21]*

**Frederique:** How do you feel when you haven't surfed for a long time?

**Olga:** Oh that's a good question. So, it's like, you'd wake up and do whatever your daily routine, and you'd feel agitated, and you're like, there's something going on, there's a bad energy, bad vibes, something going on but I'm not sure what it is, until you realize you haven't



surfing for a couple of days, aaah, that's what it is. Yeah so... you definitely feel I don't know like, it's like you know when you're presented with something really good, like, another way of explaining you went to a really good party and you had a really good time, and then you don't have it for a very long time, it's like a craving? **[Olga, 1]** It's hard to watch... and often I'd see like waves that I probably like, not ready yet, sth too fast or, like a little bit out of my level, or even sometimes on a small wave, like every time... My heart is racing I don't know why, it's like excitement with nerves, it's like a mixture, like a crazy cocktail, I just have like this, if you look down you can just see you your wetsuit almost moving... that's how I feel, I don't know if every other person feels the same way, but I just get excited no matter what kind of wave it is. Nervous excited.

**Frederique:** Do you feel that since you've taken up surfing it's had an impact on your life to the point where you feel you've had to make sacrifices?

**Olga:** No, absolutely not, if anything it's probably brought me on the trail that I should have walked in the first place. I was just getting lost in the city, like, the city is definitely not for me, I grew up in the countryside, it was just, I always say things happen for a reason and you gonna be like at the right spot on the right time and I feel I had to go through a break up to pick up surfing, and now I'm just absolutely grateful that I have gone that path... It definitely changed me for the better. I don't think I would have met all the lovely people I have met like yourselves, if it hadn't been for surfing, or I wouldn't have travelled, if it wasn't for surfing. There's so many different things positive apart from the not having so much money you know, when it comes to buying gear 'cause it's quite expensive! **[Olga, 23]**

**Frederique:** I've talked to more male surfers than girls at the moment, and when I've spoken to girls I've felt that, there's like... a more emotional relationship to surfing than men, it seems there's a different connection...

**Olga:** For guys it's probably more sport, or thrill, adrenaline, competition... It makes you a little more boyish I suppose as well, like, you know, 'cause you're mainly hanging out with boys... **[Olga, 24]**

**Frederique:** Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

**Olga:** Hopefully still here, and having travelled to many places and meeting more people, experience more and maybe one day ride big waves, you know, if that's what I'm supposed to do then I'll do it. And if it scares me and I feel that's not what I should do then I won't, you know, I'm pretty good at listening to myself... so yeah... I'm not crazy! **[Olga, 25]**

## 5. OWEN MURPHY

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Owen Murphy a grandi à Bundoran, même s'il n'est pas natif de la ville. Il se considère ainsi comme un « blow-in », c'est-à-dire un non-local, mais l'observation sur le terrain révèle que « Murf » est un surfeur apprécié, respecté et impliqué dans la communauté surf de Bundoran, notamment auprès des jeunes surfeurs (les « groms »). Âgé de 27 ans au moment de l'entretien, Owen est un surfeur talentueux. Je l'ai rencontré lors de ma visite à Bundoran en juin 2015 alors qu'il travaillait en tant que moniteur pour l'école de surf TurfnSurf. Depuis il a ouvert sa propre entreprise de location de matériel, Murfs Surf School, située sur les hauteurs de la plage de Tullan Strand, près des parkings pour les visiteurs et surfeurs. Depuis notre entretien, réalisé en septembre 2017, Owen a également rejoint l'équipe des pompiers de la ville de Bundoran.



**Ill. 138** : Owen Murphy, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 20 septembre 2017 à Bundoran (Donegal).

Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Owen surfe depuis son enfance. Sa silhouette élancée et son style puissant et dynamique sont aisément reconnaissables, en particulier sur les vagues du Peak, qu'il surfe régulièrement. Il participe fréquemment aux compétitions locales, et a été invité par l'I.S.A. à rejoindre l'équipe irlandaise de surf dans le cadre des Jeux Olympiques de Tokyo 2020. Il est néanmoins un surfeur modeste, et bien qu'il confesse en toute humilité son appréhension des grandes vagues lors de l'entretien, il a désormais entrepris d'affronter les vagues de Mullaghmore dans de grosses conditions. Owen est profondément impliqué dans la culture observée, que ce soit en tant que pratiquant expérimenté, compétiteur et coach, ou en tout que jeune entrepreneur dans l'industrie du surf. Il a ainsi pu enrichir cette ethnographie de son expertise sur le plan de la pratique elle-même, ou sur le contexte plus général du développement de l'activité touristique liée au surf dans la région de Bundoran.



**Ill. 139 :** Owen Murphy, sur le Peak à Bundoran (Donegal) en novembre 2018.  
Source : photographie de Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

**B. Transcription de l'entretien du 20 septembre 2017, enregistré à Bundoran, co. Donegal :**

**Owen:** My name's Owen Murphy. I live in Bundoran. I have a surf school here at Tullan Strand. It's been a year and a half now, I set up just before the summer last year, and now it's just after the summer this year so, yeah about a year and a half, two seasons... *[Murphy, 1]*

**Frederique:** Are you from around here ?

**Owen:** I'm kind of a blow-in, I moved here when I was six, so to some people still classifies me as a blow-in.

**Frederique:** How long have you been surfing?

**Owen:** I guess since I moved here, so since I was six or so, I'm 26 now so, for that's 20 years.

**Frederique:** What brought you to surfing ?

**Owen:** Well my dad surfed, he's from Strandhill in Sligo and he'd always surfed so us moving back here was kind of a way of him trying to get living and working back somewhere up where there is waves because he'd been living in land for a while and then he took a job Bundoran, moved us here and he was getting back into surfing then and was able to teach us, me and my brothers how to do it, so, that's kind of why or how we learnt it, and yeah I just loved it so I kept at it from then and eventually ended up working in it. It wasn't so much my Dad, it was more myself like, he never really pushed us to be surfers, nothing like that, he just kind of had old boards and when we'd go to the beach, you know if we wanted to use them we could and if we didn't that was no big deal you know. And yeah me and my brothers kind of really enjoyed it so we started sort of doing it more then, I guess we didn't like get that into it until we were probably teenagers you know, just because it's sort of, harsh elements here like, and when you're a little kid especially back then like it was it was hard to do more than just on the sunny days you know. And when you're kind of 13-14 and you're a bit harder then you're able to fit the suits a bit more you kind of got more of a drive to do it more often you know. It became more accessible. *[Murphy, 2]*

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your first memorable wave ?

**Owen:** It's probably one that I got here at Tullan, it was here like at high tide, and what can happen here at high tide is that the wave still kind of crumbles really far out where it does at low tide, but instead of just running straight up on the beach it kind of runs through a deep section and then like reforms on an inside, so I remember being taken out the back and it was high tide and pushed into a white water wave but i ran into it into the deep water and all the white water disappeared. So I was just like I was still going straight, I wasn't like trimming down the line or I was going straight on like a clean clean swell and I just loved that because I was on quite a big board and. I was just able to bridge the whole deep section you know and make it to the inside, and yeah I was frothing on that because it was the first time I'd been, I felt, you know, actually being on a rolling swell rather than just being trashing around? In the white, so yeah, I'll always remember that one...

**Frederique:** How old were you then ?

**Owen:** It was probably the first day I did it, probably six. Like I'd been standing up on my like body board and stuff like that and on the white water a bit before that but that was the first time I was brought out like a proper surfboard and shoved in and from way out at the back and got a nice nice long clean ride, you know, and it just felt so much different than what I thought surfing was like, you know, when I was, you know, messing around in the front.

*[Murphy, 3]*

**Frederique:** What type of surfing do you do ?

**Owen:** Yeah just mostly short boarding, I kind of started long boarding a little bit this year, just trying to learn like kind of, from a friend that is big into it and has some, has a lot of cool longboards and stuff so I started playing around with that the small days this year but up until now I pretty much just always always shortboard. And I have a couple of sort of old short boards as well, I like it like playing around on them when the waves are really good. But most of the time the waves are less than perfect and I find the most fun you can have on less than perfect waves are just on the more modern, like, advanced shortboards.

**Frederique:** Have you ever been into competition ?

**Owen:** Yet I was big into it I think when I was around, was around 12 or yeah probably like yeah about 12 or 13, just popped at Rossnowlagh just for a kind of family day, and there was a contest and gave that a go. I met some other kids my age that surfed and I had never really done that before, like, because I was just doing it with my family and stuff, my brothers and, I'd never met, like, other, there was no kids at my school all that that surfed, so when I was brought to that contest I didn't really fall in love with the competition style of, form of surfing, like, it was more, I met some friends that are still my best friends today, so, they were doing it all the time like they were doing competitions all the time and, going away, you know, to different towns and meeting up a few times a year and that sounded really cool so the following year I kind of ended up kind of doing that with them you know. And yeah I got really drawn to that for a long time. I do the odd ones still now, but it's definitely more about, you know, going to a different town and having a lot of my mates show up and getting to surf with your mates and a bit of friendly rivalry and afterwards getting to, you know, celebrating whoever won. I'm just as happy to see one of my mates win, beat me, like, you know, it's just a bit of craic and, yeah, I enjoy it, like, not everybody's for that but I like it.

**Frederique:** Have you ever considered a career in competition surfing then ?

**Owen:** When I was a little kid like, it's kind of, I think every kid sort of dreams of that, you know, no matter what they do, you know, like if a kid is playing football with his mates he's going

to sort of have the dream that he's never going to have to work and he can just play football forever. Same with surfing, I suppose, like when you're a kid you think it would be cool to be able to make a living out of surfing but in the back of my mind I kind of knew I was nowhere near good enough, yeah I was probably never good enough you know. I still kind of, had something in the back of my head and I was, like, it'd be nice to in some way be able to work around surfing, so that's sort of what drove me into setting up a surf school, it was, not that I could be able to make money off surfing forever, but that I could hang around the beach forever which is pretty cool, and I kind of like that, you know. Even if the waves aren't good or whatever I'm still hanging out down here at the beach and having a chat with whoever comes by. *[Murphy, 4]*

**Frederique:** How did you get started with your surf school ?

**Owen:** Well our house is just like the third one on the right there, before you got to the beach, and we sort of had a lot of gear built up over the years, just for me and my brothers and my dad and all that so we kind of always had people coming to borrow equipment and even strangers just knocking on the door and asking for stuff, you know, boards and all this so we just kind instead of lending them stuff for free, we just started charging them! And yeah just, like I kinda worked in surf schools a long time locally and overseas and when I moved back from overseas I kind of realized while I was away how good Bundoran was, and I was trying to figure out when I came home how could I stay and not have to go back away again into work you know. So that's why I did up. *[Murphy, 5]*

**Frederique:** Why did you choose to set up here in Bundoran?

**Owen:** Now I kind of always had it in my head if I was going to do it, it was going to be at home, I just, to be honest it felt kind of, really easy setting it up because I knew so many people, you know, if there was something I didn't know how to how to do I was able to ask someone, like, I don't think I would have been able to do it in a different town, I just wouldn't have known enough people and I've never really lived anywhere else for long enough to sort of know enough people in a community like that, you know, so, in Bundoran it was it was kinda easy, like lots of relatives and friends and stuff, a lot of help there, like for anytime I needed something or that, you know, so I kinda, Yeah I kinda liked having it in Bundoran, it's nice being able to work just around the corner from your house as well, you know. When it gets a bit cold and miserable down at the van I can just close up and go home for a coffee or whatever!

**Frederique:** There are many other surf businesses around here so can you tell me about your beginnings and how you get along with the other schools?

**Owen:** Yeah it was really pretty easy, like, all the guys in Bundoran that had surf schools before me, like, I'd worked for all of them, had good relationships with them, so they were really supportive, and I guess that's another benefit of doing where I was from, you know, whereas if I was to move to somewhere else and I'd never, contributed to that community beforehand, and then I was setting up trying to, you know, make money out of it then, it might, people could have been hostile or whatever, but the fact that I had already lived here for so long and worked here and grew up here, and when I eventually set up shop I kinda, I didn't get any grief out of anyone, so it was one of the benefits of doing it on your doorstep, and I like, yeah yeah it's friendly, like if you're ever short on a couple of wetsuits or boards or whatever, you're able to just to chat to whoever else is up here working, you know, and even instructors, like, you can you can get a hand of any of us. You know it's, it's a good community like that, Bundoran, you know. *[Murphy, 6]*

**Frederique:** How do you advertise yourself ?



**Owen:** Advertising... I kind of don't do a whole lot, to be honest, my main business is surf rentals because I'm at the beach, and that's sort of, it was sort of a niche market because Bundoran is a bit unique that the beach front isn't on the town, you know, the main street and the beach front are really separated. So all the businesses in town that, you know, rent surf equipment, were down the main street and it's too long to walk. So when you hired gear traditionally in Bundoran, you had to put it on the roof of your car and put the wetsuit in the back, drive it up to the beach, use it, get it wet and sandy and then drive it back. And I just set up here at the beach so... I shoot myself in the foot with the lessons because like with the surf lessons people prefer to go down the street and get changed in the changing room and have a shower afterwards, and things like that, but with rentals people would rather get to the beach and not have to get their car wet and sandy and things like that. So when I opened up I didn't have to advertise that much people who were coming to Bundoran to go surfing for today, they'd come up to check the surf first, and they can rent our board there and then. But after I got set up, like after I got last year done, then I went and got a bit of time off last winter so I started to sort of develop my business a bit more then, so I set up like a Web site and Instagram and Facebook and got flyers printed and went around hotels and BnB's and that kind of thing. But initially I just opened up and waited for people to walk in but this year is definitely up as year after, after marketing myself over the winter. Now, before doing a lesson, like, organizing a lesson we try to put it out on social media as early as possible, like what kind of lesson it is, like, what kind of level it's for, is it advanced or is it beginner. And when you're doing that I find you kinda, you have to keep reposting the same thing over and over again, like, every day or every couple of days, otherwise it just sort of disappears, a couple of times with the camps and things like that, you like paid for ads, so you pay for an ad on Facebook and then it keeps it there for a few days rather than it just disappearing down the feed. So that's kind of repetitive, you know, but like you know because people might be planning on surfing for a week so, you know, if they only look at their phone once a day or whatever you're just relying on them to look at it whereas with the daily or with the, like the photos that you're putting up of the surf in the morning, that's, you're already targeting someone that's coming surfing anyways, so you get a much more, like, instant, feedback off it even if less people see it, the people that have seen it are the people that are coming surfing, so I've noticed, if you take a picture of what the waves are like at 10:00 in the morning, you know, by half 10 or 11 o'clock somebody can be messaging, direct messaging you saying "Oh looks nice I'm on the way" or something like that, you know, you've got like an instant pull on it whereas like if you're posting something about a lesson that's happening in a week's time, you mightn't hear anything for three days and then somebody could ring and inquire about it and then by the time it comes around to actually happen and the water is terrible then they go actually "No I'm not going to come anymore", you know, so... It can be funny like, the picture that you take once and post up, you can get a lot of traction from the post, like you're constantly like posting and sharing and paying for it and all this, and really having to work on it, can actually end up not getting you that much you know. So it's it's a funny one. I think they definitely work better for something that's happening today rather than something that's happening, in general, in a week's time or whatever you know.

**Frederique:** Yes it seems like hard work figuring these things out.

**Owen:** Yeah, definitely I find that, like you know, it can be hard work, like if you end up chasing yourself in the morning then you don't get it done and then you do it at 4 o'clock and it's for no reason you know, so it's kind of something you have to remember to do every day and I'm the worst at remembering to do it, like I never had a smartphone until I set up the business, I only got one because I had to, like, so I hadn't used, I didn't have an Instagram

and I hadn't, I had a Facebook but I didn't use it much so I was kind of trying to learn how to use these apps but as I was setting up, I was doing it all wrong you know. So I find it hard, like, I'm sure somebody that's used to like Facebook and Instagram for themselves like for their own thing would find it easier to do a business and then you know. It's yeah it's definitely a. Yeah I find it hard. Like. *[Murphy, 7]*

**Frederique:** What's the story behind your logo ?

**Owen:** The logo, yeah I've had it since I set up, but I kind of, it was only just on the side of the trailer you know, but then this year I got the van and got some clothes and stuff, so we got the website, so it's out there a lot more than it used to be just in one place. It is just a friend of mine, we were in Indonesia and I was telling her I was setting up a surf school and she's a graphic designer, Shawna Ward, and she just started sort of playing around with a pen and piece of paper and stuff and just drew me a couple of things, and some of them are like more professional and corporate, things like that, you know, if I wanted to be targeting big groups for lessons and stuff like that, but then she had this other one that was more groom friendly, so I aim at having a bit of craic and the families and things like that, and that's kind of what I rather do, you know, I'd rather get people that are coming to learn to surf rather than get people that are just booking an activity. So I'd rather, I like the sort of the cartoony character, it appeals to kids and appeals to people that are here and I want to surf rather than just trying to do, like, corporate groups. *[Murphy, 8]*

**Frederique:** Yes I have noticed that TurfnSurf, for example, they do a lot of these groups...

**Owen:** Yeah it's just different. Like the others, they all have bed and breakfasts, so big groups are more valuable to them because they can also fill the bed nights or as. I don't I'm not trying to I don't have a BnB so I'm not worrying about bed night so the impulse is good to me, like, I like people that have just come to town for the day and just want to surf, and you know, rather than trying to tie in the whole package.

**Frederique:** Is it difficult to have your business set up on the beach, how does it work ? Where do you apply for permission?

**Owen:** Yes that's County Council Land, so Government, and you have to apply to the County Council so early in the year, like January February and tell them what you're doing and then purchase a trading space. So there's only a limited amount of spaces at the beach, the car park is quite big but they don't want that overrun with chip vans and ice cream vans and all this so they've got a limit of a couple of the spaces so you've got to apply nice and early and pay your fee and then you get one, it runs 12 months, so... It works well for us, like, you know, if you pay for it in the spring you've got it till the following spring, but it's kind of good to get it in early. *[Murphy, 9]*

**Frederique:** It seems quite handy yes, so how come the other schools haven't done the same ?

**Owen:** Well it's a small, it's a very small market, the surf rentals, you know and they, like, the small group surf lessons they'd be more interested in trying to like, upsell, so the Main Street would be more valuable to them, they've got, like as I said the bed nights, and then they've also got the retail fronts so, like you get 25 euro off a kid for a surf lesson whereas, well with me, like, that's what I get, whereas with them, while that kid's waiting around to be picked up, he can see a hoodie that he likes or a skateboard that he likes or something that's worth 100 or 150 euros, so that's that's much more valuable to them. So if they've got someone ringing for a surf lesson or a rental they don't want to send them to the beach, like they'd rather get the feet tread the floor, it's like surf lessons are more of a feeder for, like they exit through the gift shop, you know. They are teaching surfing as well, they've got the main street premises and it's much more expensive to do that than it is to have a trailer at the beach, they are paying rent and rates and things like that, so they have



to make it pay for itself, so surf lessons alone probably wouldn't pay for them. *[Murphy, 10]* If I was to rent a commercial unit on the main street and only do surf lessons and rentals I probably wouldn't make enough to pay my way, you know, I'd need to, like, those guys, I'd either start charging for accommodation or selling, you know, hoodies and equipment and stuff like that because it'd be, especially in a town like Bundoran where there's lots and lots of visitors coming to Bundoran, but the main street is really quite small and there's a limited amount of commercial units so I can only imagine that it's quite expensive and you'd need to be using as much as you can your retail space, or whereas me, it's easy you know. I paid a fee and I opened up and I'm not making as much money but I don't have as many headaches, you know, I don't have any staff and I don't have any electricity and don't have any rent or anything like that, so it's... less money but less headache! *[Murphy, 10]*

**Frederique:** You've only just started, so where do you see yourself in 5 years ?

**Owen:** Well I'm kind of hoping just to do the same thing you know. I don't really want to take on all that risk. It's working at the moment and kind of... if I find in a few years that it doesn't work, you know, like to provide me with the right employment, I don't think I'll mind you know. I think I just look forward to it being, you know, a good summer job. Like last winter and this winter, the same, I just pick up extra work in the winter and no matter what it is like, I don't really mind, if I haven't made enough at the end of the summer to get me to the next year. I don't mind, like, you know, I'll work in construction. I'll wash dishes, I don't mind, like you know, if I'm looking forward to another summer at the beach. And like the summers are quite a long season here, like, we're lucky here in Bundoran because the people who visit Bundoran live quite close, they have caravans and holiday homes and stuff from Bundoran. And some of them only are from an hour away or an hour and a half away. So if there's a sunny weekend in March or October they come down and use it. So I get enough work from the trailer to do me Paddy's Day to Halloween, so if I have a good season I can take it easy for November December January and if I don't stay. In I can work at a job, a different job, and even if it's a job I don't like, I don't really mind if it's only going to be for three months, you know... *[Murphy, 11]*

**Frederique:** How do you view the business, the surfing industry in Ireland ? Do you think it's going to continue growing or will it start decreasing a little bit ?

**Owen:** Yeah like it's hard for me to say because the places I worked before, they were really big surf schools and they always seemed to be really busy, you know, and then last year when I opened I didn't market myself very well beforehand, you know, didn't market myself at all, I just kind of opened. So I was quite quiet but it it's good because I hadn't bought that much equipment. And then this year obviously I was a lot busier because I marketed myself over the winter. And I think probably even more people will know about me next year so in the early years of the business I find it hard to make an assumption of what the industry as a whole is doing. Whereas the guys that are there are 10 12 years, you know they can see it going up and down. Yeah so whereas for me for the last year and a half it's just sort of steadily gone up. So but yeah like from here and what people say, they say that it's kind of gone dying the last couple of years. But I think that's people talking about the town, like Bundoran as a whole, you know, they think it hasn't been as busy as it used to be, and, like, most of people in Bundoran are kind of always following the Pound, you know, how the Pound is doing, and when the pound is weak, you know usually means the euro is strong and it's good for people that earn in euros but in Bundoran it's kind of the opposite because we're only four miles from the border and most people that have holiday homes and caravans are from the north, so if they're not getting good value out of buying in euros then they mightn't come as much, you know. Like, last year they would have been

getting... So for every hundred euro or every 100 pound they brought down, they were getting a hundred forty five euro, whereas this year you're only getting one hundred and ten euro. So that's a big difference, like to a family coming down, you know, if they're coming down and stay for a day or they're coming down and staying for stay for three days, you know, if every tenner is costing them, you know every tenner is getting them 14 quid or if it's only getting them 11 quid, you know. *[Murphy, 12]*

**Frederique:** Do you know if there is any concern with Brexit ?

**Owen:** Yeah. Yeah. The border communities definitely aren't too happy about Brexit like, they're kind of worried. It's sort of fear of the unknown, you know, that you don't really know how it would work out, like these things are really hard to predict. You know everybody around here got scared when the recession started thinking, you know, that there'd be less visitors but Bundoran has done quite well during the recession because they hadn't thought that people still want to take time off, so you know, if the families weren't able to afford to go to New York anymore, then all of a sudden people were able to take more Irish holidays, like, so like towns like Bundoran, thanks to things like surfing, were able to do quite well, and survived the recession instead of suffering, like, because people were taking cheaper holidays at home rather than going away... So you wouldn't know how Brexit works, you know, like how it will happen. I think people from the north will always come to Bundoran, it's been such a long tradition, even when there was a border people were still coming to Bundoran for holidays, they own houses here, you know, and they have caravans here and they've come for generations so I think they'll always come. The question in terms of how much they bring to the town is just how long they stay when they come ; So... yeah, like, if they come down it's worth – it's cheap for them, you know, they'll stay for three nights and if it's not, you know, if it's expensive for them to come down because the Euro's gotten really strong and the Pound's gotten weak then they might end up only staying a night, you know, or whatever they can afford, so... it kind of, it just fluctuates with the market I'd say, after the whole Brexit has been and gone just see whatever way whatever state it's in... *[Murphy, 12, continued]*

**Frederique:** What would you say the region needs in terms of infrastructural improvements for example to make it a better, more welcoming or easier surfing place ?

**Owen:** Probably more direct public transport. It's definitely something, like, that's definitely holding Bundoran back at the moment. If you're going to Dublin you either have to get a bus or a taxi into Ballyshannon and then get off the taxi and wait around for the bus and then get the bus direct to Dublin or else get a bus to Sligo and then wait around and then a bus or train to Dublin. So that kinda holds people back, you know, I've got calls from people that are trying to come up and get a surf lesson but they're doing with public access, or public transport, and it just takes them so long you know, by the time they got here we're nearly closing or whatever, you know. So yeah that'd be good, like, if there was direct buses from Dublin or go back to the old days when there was a train straight from Belfast, that was andy, like... I had good friends from Belfast when we were kids, it was like they would come and stay at my house, it was a nightmare, you know, for them to get down and they'd have to get one bus to Elliskillen and then stop and change and get another bus to Ballyshannon and then get off that and get a taxi into Bundoran and, like it wasn't ideal, like you know, it's a two-hour drive but it would take you a whole day to do on public transport so that's definitely going to put off some visitors, you know. Yeah something like that would be good.

And also then just for a bit more infrastructure around our beaches will be nice, and also like our access here at Tullan strand isn't ideal, it washes away every winter and the community ends up having to fix it because the Council won't do anything about it, you

know, there's newspaper articles from the 60s where the Council has been announcing they were going to put in safe access to Tullan strand and it still hasn't happened, you know, they're just saying that they're doing it next year, next year, and that has a knock-on effect on the whole beach area up here because then they don't want to put lifeguards up here because there's no access so they don't want to... (?)then you're taking a risk just by getting to the beach... And then there's no toilets. There's not enough bins, and all that sort of stuff, so safe access to the beach would definitely be good, you know, there's so much room on this beach and there's so much parking and everything but yet there's no facilities... and the small beach in the middle of town, it's got great facilities but it's got very limited space, you know, it's a tiny little cove and there's a lot of hazards and stuff... so, it's like, it's tricky... *[Murphy, 13]*

**Frederique:** It seems intriguing though that there isn't more effort put into it, considering Bundoran is known as the surfing capital ?

**Owen:** It's hard, like, Bundoran did have, like until a couple of years ago there was, district council, you know, so Bundoran had its own Town council and then it was a lot easier to get stuff done, you know, people that worked for the government were working in town, and the politicians were local and they could see on their way to work that there's something not working or, you know, something that needs to be done and it would get done whereas now Donegal is a big county and it's being managed from one office which is Lifford, like, it's, you know, over an hour inland, and so when you're trying to tell them that there's bins overflowing on a beach, you know, an hour away it doesn't really... not that it doesn't matter to them, but like the fact that's ... They're not going to be able to solve it just there and then, you know, that's probably not coming in high on their priorities, like, they've got a lot of other stuff going on. So it's a, yeah, it's hard, like, to get things done, like, when there's fewer... *[Murphy, 14]*

**Giles:** In regards to the younger generation in the town, is there much going on to promote them surfing, and get them surfing? Anything you would like to see them have?

**Owen:** Yeah, so... what we have in the town is a surf club, so the Bundoran Boardriders, which supports young kids, not for profit organization, you know, it's just a club that come under the Irish Surfing Association umbrella and they're here to support kids at grassroots level, you know. The one thing that the club doesn't have is a surf club itself, you know, it's got no tangible building, and in other towns they have that. So the kids even if they're from, you know, not close to the beach, they're able to store their equipment at the beach and when they get, you know, all they have to do is get to the beach and are able to grab their gear and go surfing and we don't have that in Bundoran which definitely holds back to kids, you know, and the club is great, you know, they organize training sessions for the kids and the kids are able to represent the club when they go away to different competitions and when they do well then, they, like, if they make it onto the Irish team and they're going to international events to clubs that help them financially and stuff like that. But in terms of just a roof over our head we don't have that. That's a harsh environment here, like, and winter, when kids are having to get changed outside, you know. Like, the surf schools are great in Bundoran for supporting the kids and stuff as well, but the surf schools are only open 9:00 to 6:00, you know, in the winter time and kids are trying to go for a surf after school, they'd have to hope that their parents aren't working or are able to bring them to the beach and to change them back and start having to get changed and leave their stuff on the beach whereas in other towns like Rossnowlagh an Strandhill and that, they've got purpose-built surf clubhouses and the kids are able to go in there and take off, you know, get changed, take their gear out, get changed, they go surfing, get unchanged, phone for a lift, staying indoors, like, having things like showers

and you're just a hub, you know... Like the populations aren't a lot different in those areas but they've got so many more kids doing it because it's so much more accessible, like, to everyone you know. A town like Bundoran has so many surrounding sort of country towns, like villages, and if the kids are from out there, the logistical hassle of them trying to finish school the morning and then get home and get their equipment and get back into Bundoran and get back home then afterwards, is a nightmare, you know, whereas, if there is a surf club when they finish school they just walk from school to the club, pick up their gear, hop in, hop out, and it just means a lot more water time, you know. So that would be really good and that's what I can see as the main thing that could help Bundoran get more kids into surfing and help progress the ones that are surfing and get them more water time you know.

**Frederique:** Is there talk of putting up a surf club? Who is it down to actually?

**Owen:** Well it would all be down to trying to get the Council to supply us with a public building, like the surf club wouldn't be able to afford to rent a unit, you know. So it would have to be a community centre or building that would end up having to be purpose-built, you know, well not purpose-built, purpose-customized, you know, that there is a community centre in town but you couldn't just tell the surf club that they're allowed to start to leave the stinky wetsuits and surfboards lying around there all the time, you know, it needs to be more of a more custom-fitted building, you know and there isn't a whole lot available in the town, you know, and there is a couple of service units down into the small beach in town which we're hoping to try and get use of, you know, even if we can just to use this as a storage. But the problem then is that Tullan Strand's the better beach to surf on, so and there's no building up here. So if we do get to one of the buildings at the main beach 90 percent of the time the main beach is too dangerous to surf on because, you know, because it's a nasty shore break and there's a lot of rocks and stuff, whereas Tullan Strand is lovely, really consistent, which is good for advanced surfer, but then also really really safe, really flat sand and nice for learning. So this would be the ideal place to have a surf club and there's no such unit up to rent or something so. Maybe a long time a long time coming but that's, that's what we need. *[Murphy, 15]*

**Frederique:** Could you tell me about the best wave you've caught recently?

**Owen:** Recently... there hasn't been many! It's been pretty bad... uh... Yeah, there's been fun waves, but it's been onshore, you know, a lot of low period swells and onshore winds, it's been a long time since we've had a proper period swell with some onshore winds so there hasn't been a lot of good waves, like, where you get, you know, lots of turns and barrels and stuff like that, it's mostly just been ... long onshore days, but still pretty fun, like... Can't really single out one, though, good wave, when it's like that, you know?

**Frederique:** Alright, so for the last few months then, including last winter?

**Owen:** I got this old single fin that I have in the house, it's like an old board of my dad's, and I had it reglased, 'cause it was all falling apart, like the glass had all, just delaminated, you know, so there was big patches of glass missing so I just got it re-done, and took it for, I had it for a couple of surfs since I got it, but there's one day, back in the spring, the surf had been really really good for a few days, like I was kind of getting bored of surfing the same places even though it was really good, you know, and there was one evening, the surf was still really good, I was kind of burnt out, like, and instead of taking out my shortboard I decided to take out this old funky single fin, to just surf it here at Tullan when the waves are kind of funky but solid like, over head, offshore and just had the best fun on it, you know, I thought I was only going to mess around for half an hour, just 'cause I was sort of burnt out but I ended up staying in for hours, it was like the longest surf I'd had with that

swell, and just the different lines I could draw, like just, one wave in particular, it kind of double up and barrelled and it was the first time I got barrelled on a single fin, and just the hole that you had, any chandeliering bits you're able to just plough through and yeah it just blew my mind, like, you know, 'cause I'd always kind of been riding like thin little short boards, that are good for turns and trying them in tubes and falling off is not great – I'm not a great tube barrel rider so as soon as any bit of water would hit me or that I would just fall whereas this thing it was just, you'd started on a line and just plough through, I was loving it! You come out of them with so much speed you take the high line and just make so many sections, you know, one wave in particular, like, you can take such a high line you wouldn't even need to pump, maybe feet a little forward and just fly, like, you know, that that was just blowing my mind, like, you know! There's waves that I usually linked up a couple of times in my life, you know, on that board, on that day I was, every wave I could make it through, you know. *[Murphy, 16]*

**Frederique:** What would be your two favourite surfing manoeuvres?

**Owen:** Tubes and... a hack, a big strong hack, like, when you got a strong deep section, you're able to pull up really on rail and really lean into it, you know, I'd like to say tubes and airs but I can't do airs so got to say tubes and turns! Yeah no, real hard down carve, or right cut back at the right section you know, a good steep section, yeah I like me a good rail turn.

**Giles:** What does it feel like?

**Owen:** I suppose it would like taking a hard corner, like a cyclist or a driver or something might feel, you know, a lot of the rest of the surfing is just more, like other kinds of turns, floaters and snaps and things like that you're kinda, like, rebounding off a lip whereas a hard carve you're fully on rail, you've gone into a lot of speed, you can't do it without speed so and then, like it feels really good when the section sorts of bend in back on you, rather than a section that's bending away, so when you push into them you can get a lot of push back, and you're kind of managing your speed and navigating your line through that, you know, it's one of those things, the more speed you have, it almost feels like you've got more time, even though you're going faster, and that's kind of what I like about them, whereas when you're attacking the lip, the lip is falling, and it's falling at its own speed anyway, like you have to meet it, like, whereas like a cutback or like, a hack, they're kind of what you make of them, you know, if you go into them without too much speed it doesn't feel too good because you feel like you're sort of fighting the wave, you have to, like, do it all at once, whereas when you got lots of speed you're able to like really lean into it, it almost feels like you've got more time to do what you want, even though you're going faster. So yeah that's what I like about them. *[Murphy, 17]*

**Giles:** What about tubes, how do they feel ?

**Owen:** Tubes? Uh good, really good, like the best in surfing I think, because there's so much more that's out of your control, and that's why they feel so good, when you make a good one there's a lot of things you have to do right, but at the same time you're relying on the wave to do a lot of things as well, you know, and that's what makes them so special, so you don't get them all the time, first of all, and then, you now you're relying on a lot of things, you're relying on certain breaks to work and it's that you're checking the forecasts for all the time, you know, so when you get them that's why they're so special you know, because they don't come around all the time, and those breaks that you're getting to surf to get them on, you don't them to get them as many times as you would your local consistent beach or whatever, and then even when you get one then like, you know, you're relying on the lip not hitting you, you're relying on not getting too fast, you're relying on it too being too slow... Yeah it's just a lot of different things going on, whereas with turn you can force



them, you know, you can do a turn on a small onshore day, you can do a turn on a big offshore day, you can do a turn in fat waves or fast waves whereas with tubes, like, everything else has to line up... So there's a lot of things that are out of your control and then the things that are within your control are kinda, you have to make all the right decisions to make it work... So, yeah they're rare, that's why they're so sweet... [Murphy, 18]

**Frederique:** What's the urge to pull tricks or manoeuvres on a wave instead of just riding along and letting the wave carry you ?

**Owen:** Yeah, I never thought of it like that, seems like such an obvious question, like, why would you do that, like? But... I think first you kind of want to challenge yourself, like I find when I was trying to learn new tricks, like when I first starting to do them I was more just to be able to say that I could do them, not say that I could do them but, like it almost felt like part of your progression, you know, surfing like you kinda saw someone else cutting down a line you're like, "They could be having more fun, because that looks cool so I want to do that", and then you see someone doing a cutback and you're like, "Oh they could be having more fun than me so..."! So you know, you're kinda always trying to do what other people see but, like I know what you're saying, like, I have a good friend who's like, he's been surfing as long as surfing's been in Ireland you know, he's been surfing since he was a kid back in the 60s and 70s, he said they were surfing in the white water for years, like, thinking they were doing exactly what they were supposed to then some guy came over on a trip from England, like paddled past them and went sideways on a wave, and they were like "Oh what is that?!...?" But they were having just as much fun, like, you know, like all the time when I can do the same thing in the white water, but they didn't know that there was anything else to do, like, and as soon as they saw it, all of a sudden that's what they wanted to do, you know, so the next day they were, alright, they were back in there trying to go sideways, you know. So yeah that's alright at the start, but when you get better, when you're able to do those manoeuvres, then it becomes less of about being able to do them and more about how you feel when you do them, and so it kind of gives you, like when you do a bad one it doesn't feel very good, like, you lose all your speed, whereas when you do a good one, it kind of gives you speed, you know, so like when you try to pull it – start for a barrel and then it doesn't barrel, and you get the lip to the head, you haven't gained anything, you know, you've actually lost speed and you wasted a section because you've hit the brakes whereas when you pull into a barrel and you make it, like you're coming out with speed, and then that's really really fun and then, same with a turn, like, when you land a turn nicely, you come out of it with a lot of speed, like... And you're going faster than you were before you've done it, and that's really nice, whereas if you do a bad one, like to do a turn in the first place, you have to use your fins, you have to surf off the tail of the board so if you've done it wrong and haven't transferred your weight, probably you'll waste a section again, you know, and you'll just hit the brakes for no reason, and then the wave starts to run off without you, you know, and there's no worse feeling than seeing a really nice peeling wave heading off and you're just been left behind, going slower and slower while the wave is getting faster and faster, so that's kind of why a turn feels good, 'cause completing it is nice? but where it gets you is even nicer... [Murphy, 18, continued]

**Frederique:** How would you describe yourself as a surfer ?

**Owen:** Ehm... gangly... ! (laughs) Really skinny and I've got long arms and legs so... it's not nice to look at ! (laughs)... A seagull... (laughs) A seagull trying to... skate... ice-skate (laughs) !

**Frederique:** If you were to pick a colour to describe yourself as a surfer, what would it be ?

**Owen:** Ehm... yellow... sometimes I get a bit scared ! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Scared of what, actually ?

**Owen:** Ehm... I'm not really good in really big waves, so... I'm a bit... a bit of a scaredy cat that way...

**Frederique:** What does it mean, not good in heavy waves ?

**Owen:** When I was like, sort of a teenager and there was a lot of emphasis on surfing new places and like really, really heavy waves, there was a lot of things happening... ehm... with the guys buying jet skis and towing into these crazy waves... growing up in Bundoran there was probably the chance to get into that and I didn't, like, I shied away from it, I'd think of a good excuse on those kind of days, you know, and ... .. so I definitely was a bit of a scaredy cat, and now like I'm trying to surf those waves a bit more and more... but now the emphasis is on paddling them, you know, so I'm trying to surf these new places and paddle into them and it's really scary like, being on your own surfboard and having to, more like get yourself out of the way of as et that breaks further out, that's what scares me than actually taking off on a wave, like when I've decided that I'm going for one I'm totally happy and I enjoy whatever happens but that just... of fear in your belly when a set breaks further out, having to get out of the way... *[Murphy, 20 (1/3)]*

**Frederique:** So why go then when it's really big ?

**Owen:** I don't know, I think it's just a different element of surfing, like, it's kinda... just... it's like the fear factor, like, isn't it, when you're scared of something and then you do it, you think you're not gonna be able to do it, and then you do it and you're kind of chuffed at yourself, you know, but when it's like that most of the time I try to stay out of trouble (*laughs*)... I'm not the best at, like, committing to doing something really risky you know, that's probably the weakest part of my surfing... *[Murphy, 20 (2/3)]*

**Frederique:** What colour would you say Giles is ?

**Owen:** Giles... Giles is ehm... purple... (*laughs*) ... 'cause Giles likes being scared (*laughs*), purple is kind of a scary colour to see on a swell chart... yeah... I get scared when I see it and Giles gets excited and comes up with crazy ideas... (*laughs*) and I start thinking of excuses (*laughing*) *[Murphy, 20 (3/3)]*

**Frederique:** I have a couple of easy questions : what is a wave ?

**Owen:** It's energy passing through the water, eventually that energy... ehm... kind of... topples itself over and pushes water towards the beach... so the energy's travelled through the ocean on the water, water is lifting up and down and then eventually the energy forces the water to topple over the water on itself and at that point then, water starts getting pushed towards... towards land... *[Murphy, 21]*

**Frederique:** What is surfing ?

**Owen:** Ehm... Surfing is... managing to ride that energy... rather than ride the wave. Rather than having the wave push you towards... towards land, out of control you're actually putting yourself on the swell as it's still energy, you're... you're in control then, being able to... to navigate that, to ride that... *[Murphy, 22]*

**Frederique:** What is a good surfer ?

**Owen:** One that's... ehm... more in control of what they can do, so rather than letting the wave dictate what they must do, a good surfer is a surfer that's able to put himself where they want on the wave rather than just going along with it, a good surfer can decide if they want to go, you know, inside the wave or out far from it and then turn back into it or project above it or... *[Murphy, 23]*



**Frederique:** What is a good wave to you ?

**Owen:** Ehm... good waves... lefts... (*laughs*) Just when it's clean, you know, when it's glassy, it's rarer here, we always seem to be battling the wind you know, whether it's small or whether it's big, it seems like the constant thing is like, it's very rare for us to get no wind... it's nice, like, when small waves are onshore they can be fun, it can make them more interesting you know, especially at beaches where they can be a little bit fat and stuff, instead of just having to, you know if it was always glassy and it was really small you'd be riding a longboard or something whereas, I suppose with us when it's small and onshore at least you can ride a shortboard, you have a few sections to hit and... But we've got some really good waves here that are, like, quite consistent, you know, a couple of slabs and point breaks right in the middle of town that, even with just a one meter swell or a meter and a half swell they can get swell, and it's such a tease because most of the time the winds aren't great... you know surfing these waves can be really really good but you end surfing them onshore or surfing them cross-shore... I find, when I travel to other places with better climates and you get to surf with no winds, you know, glassy, glassy water it's... you really like it and you come back here, and you never get it, like ! (*laughs*)... I still enjoy the wind though, like, it still makes surfing annoying but... it's a nice surprise, a nice treat when you get... get glassy water... [*Murphy, 24*]

**Frederique:** So you travelled abroad, so if you found those perfect conditions abroad, better climates, what's the pull to come back to Ireland ?

**Owen:** I'm a bit of a home bird, it's not even about surfing, I like walking up the street and knowing everybody, going to the pub... I like travelling as well... I have lived overseas for long periods of time but i have always had this draw back... back to home... Even when the waves aren't good, always a couple of friends at the beach and having a bit of craic, it just kinda makes a session, you know, you just end up having a craic... And just knowing as well like, every time a swell does come i know exactly what to do, like, and I'm on the best waves... ... [*Murphy, 25*]

**Frederique:** Being a local here, do you know stories related to the waves around here ?

**Owen:** The fishermen call the Peak something else, can't remember what is called... Some old name anyway that they call it because there's a boulder in the middle of the reef, so that the reef is really really flat, it goes out for ages and at low tide, you know, it's a long, long walk out the reef, but there's just one boulder that sticks up... Most surfers use it as a tide marker, you know, it sits about mid-tide... Whereas when you start to see the boulder you know that the tide's out and that the waves keep getting heavier... They call that wave, the fishermen call that wave after a guy that, apparently... His ship, or his boat got overturned or whatever and he was trying to get back into Bundoran in the swell and you know he missed the channel and got washed into where the wave breaks and a wave hit him and capsized him and he got capsized up the reef and it was an incoming tide and, and he hit this boulder and he held on to that boulder and like clinged on to that boulder like, as the swell kept hitting him, until the tide turned and went out and then he got off the boulder and walked in and... they have some name for that reef, you know... and they call this «Pigeon Hole »... [*Murphy, 26*]

**Frederique:** What's great about living and surfing in Bundoran ?

**Owen:** It's got really good waves, what makes it such a popular surfing destination is the quality of the waves... Tullan, there is always a wave, it's never flat, if you've come to surf Mullaghmore or the Peak or Pmpa or whatever and there ends up not being a swell you'll always be able to surf Tullan everyday you know, it's really consistent, I think that's why so many people have ended up living here you know, there are so many places around the

world that have amazing waves, places all around Donegal that have mind-blowing waves but none of them have ended up with this big surf community... they've come here to surf the Peak but the reason they've stayed is that everyday after work, no matter what they can skid off to Tullan and get a wave if they want... but... yeah, Tullan... Tullan is a godsend really, and the variety of spots we have here, and it's rare that they're so close... So it helps everybody get a lot of water time. *[Murphy, 27]*

**Frederique:** Do you feel you learn about through your surfing ?

**Owen:** Not so much learning about myself but learning how to put things into perspective, it's like a good way to escape from everything. *[Murphy, 28]*

**Frederique:** Would you say surfing is a passion, an addiction, or something else ?

**Owen:** A bit of both... Definitely a passion, 'cause people want to revolve their lives around it, trying to work their whole lives around it, sacrifices... Definitely an addiction 'cause the more you do it, almost... the more you want to do it like, missing out on some things... Now that I've managed to work a way so that I can surf all the time, even if it's crap... It's a weird one, like... It must be the same with fat people and food, like... Or smoking, fast cars... Like with surfing manoeuvres, it's the call to « climb the ladder », we're not gonna be happy just going in a straight line forever ! *[Murphy, 29]*

## 6. TOM GILLESPIE

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Tom Gillespie est un jeune bodyboarder originaire de Dublin. Il est entré dans la culture surf par sa découverte du bodyboard en compagnie de son frère Fintan, lors de séjours de vacances en famille dans le comté de Mayo. Il est désormais une figure incontournable du surf et du bodyboard irlandais, à l'échelle nationale, plus particulièrement au sein de la communauté surf du comté de Clare, ainsi que sur la scène internationale<sup>5</sup>.



**Ill. 140 :** Tom Gillespie, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 16 septembre 2017 à Lahinch (Clare).  
Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

J'ai rencontré Tom lors de la quatrième édition du festival Shore Shots, en avril 2017. Lors de l'édition précédente, avril 2016, Tom figurait dans l'un des films récompensés lors de cette édition, *Tommerline*, réalisé par le photographe et réalisateur Mickey Smith, qui a remporté le prix du meilleur court-métrage de bodyboard. Le déferlement des sombres murs d'eau, d'une hauteur et d'une force invraisemblables auxquels Tom se confronte dans ce court film, donne la mesure de l'engagement et de la maîtrise qui font la réputation de ce bodyboarder intrépide.

Au moment de l'entretien, réalisé en septembre 2017, Tom mène des recherches dans le cadre d'un doctorat en Économie de l'Environnement, dont il me dit qu'il a en partie décidé de le réaliser à l'Université de Galway en raison de la proximité du littoral et des vagues du comté de Clare, dont il est un habitué : « I think I moved to Galway because of that, I think I wanted to do a PhD because [...] you kind of want to be on call in Ireland if you wanna get good waves. [...] And a PhD was kind of flexible... ». Tom fait ainsi partie de cette catégorie de surfeurs qui ont orienté leurs choix de vie en fonction de la proximité des vagues et de l'accès à la pratique, sans pour autant renoncer à un projet de carrière et s'engager dans une disponibilité et une mobilité pouvant impliquer une précarité des ressources économiques. C'est aussi un bodyboarder engagé, impliqué dans la communauté surf locale dans le comté de Clare, notamment sur le spot de Riley's, ce « slab » réputé pour sa dangerosité.

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5 Tom Gillespie est une figure discrète mais mentionnée néanmoins par la presse internationale spécialisée en ligne, notamment WeBodyboard (<http://www.webodyboard.com/tag/tom-gillespie/>), Surfertoday (<https://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/the-pioneers-of-irish-surfing>) et Magicseaweed (<https://es.magicseaweed.com/news/deep-dark-irish-tunnels-in-tommerline/9411/>, ou encore <https://magicseaweed.com/news/watch-conor-maguire-and-tom-gillespie-in-beauty-chaos/10410/>).



**III. 141** : Tom Gillespie à Riley's.  
Photographe : Clem McInerney.  
Source : compte Instagram de Tom, 29 décembre 2017.<sup>6</sup>

Tom s'est très volontiers plié à l'exercice de l'entretien. Il décrit ses expériences sur les vagues de la côte ouest irlandaise, de son initiation aux vagues à ses affrontements les plus mémorables. Il évoque aussi, entre autres, la relation qu'entretiennent entre eux surfeurs et bodyboarders, notamment du fait que le pratique du bodyboard est « cool » précisément parce que, reprenant l'expression de Mickey Smith, elle est « uncool », c'est-à-dire moins bien perçue et comprise d'un grand public davantage exposé à des représentations très médiatisées de surfeurs considérés comme les pratiquants d'un sport de roi. Les bodyboarders seraient quant à eux parfois perçus comme des « underdogs », c'est-à-dire des surfeurs de seconde zone. Tom apporte ici un éclairage intéressant sur la dichotomie entre ces deux types de pratiques et leurs représentations, et sur la façon dont elle est perçue et appréhendée sur la côte irlandaise. Son approche de la pratique telle qu'elle transparait dans ses réponses lors de l'entretien relève de celle d'un *soul surfer*, ou *soul bodyboarder* ; il apporte ainsi des éléments d'information, narratifs et descriptifs, enrichissants pour la recherche.

**B. Transcription de l'entretien du 16 septembre 2017, enregistré à Lahinch, co. Clare :**

**Tom:** My name is Tom Gillespie, I'm doing a PhD at the moment in Galway on Environmental Economics, looking at the value of the coast.

**Frederique:** What precisely is your research about?

**Tom:** Yeah, so I'm looking at house prices, how house prices vary, like, the closer you go to the coast, and kind of seeing which has the bigger effect on house price, over everything else, like, the size of the houses, everything, which has the bigger effect: being close to the coast or having a view of the coast. So it's called "Picture or Playground", that will be the paper, it's kind of like, do people value having access to the coast for, you know, recreation, or having a picture in the house. That's just one paper...

**Frederique:** What's the overall goal of that research?

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6 Lien : [https://www.instagram.com/tom\\_gillespie/](https://www.instagram.com/tom_gillespie/)

**Tom:** It kind of... puts a value on the coastline, like, an economic value, even though it doesn't have a value, it's kind of... how do you put a value on the environment... which is kind of... to put it softly... it might be a bit unethical but it kind of... it needs to be done in a lot of ways so...

**Frederique:** It's something I'm looking into as well, the surf economics and how it works in Ireland.

**Tom:** Yeah, yeah, I saw a paper that was done where they looked at how, like, surf spots affect communities in third-world countries and how, like, you know, surf development... They measured development in these really poor places in South America and Indonesia based on night-time satellite photos so they could see that lights were growing over the years over one spot due to, like, a wave being there and then they correlated that development with surfing, basically, so... *[Tom, 1]*

**Frederique:** Yeah, it's something I'm looking into as well but related to Ireland, one paper was done about the area around Lahinch a few years ago... So... the first thing you said about yourself is that you're a PhD student but are you... something else?

**Tom:** Oh yeah, sorry! I suppose I'm a bodyboarder as well, like, I've been a bodyboarder for... I don't know, since I was eleven, so... twenty years, now.

**Frederique:** How did you start bodyboarding?

**Tom:** Yeah, ehm... it was like, I grew up in Dublin, there's no waves in Dublin, like, but I used to go on holidays to Mayo, like, since I was a baby, and it is kinda, you know, there's lots of beaches there and, like, we'd fish a lot and sail and... One of the days we just went down bodyboarding... Like we went surfing, got surf lessons and then... my brother, yeah... he was kind of into bodyboarding, and then... I just kind of followed him... yeah... from age like, 12... and then... I met some guys up in Sligo when I was about 16, I kind of just became obsessed with it, like, I started just to think about it in school and shit and... I kinda... Yeah, like, my Mom used to bring me and my brother on day trips to Bundoran from Dublin, like on a Sunday, like! And... so cool! You know I'm, like, so grateful for it... you know, like, we were too young to take the bus or whatever, she used to take a whole day, we'd leave at 6 in the morning, drive us there and drive us back. And then when we got older we started getting the train and the bus, you know, Fintan got a car, and... I got to know Andrew Kilfeather, you know, in Strandhill, I didn't know any of the bodyboarders, I didn't know anything about bodyboarding, didn't know anybody, like, you'd just get these magazines or the odd video, so it was weird, like, I didn't know anything about it but it was really, underground I suppose, bodyboarding in Ireland, I remember... anyway Andrew Kilfeather was doing some, I started hanging out with him, and he was like, I used to do some competition so we started doing some contests and all that... went to the Euros a couple of times...

When I was, like, eighteen... Mickey Smith started coming over and he started discovering all these waves, like Bumboloids first, then Aileen's at the cliffs and then eventually Riley's. It was so far beyond than anything anyone was doing, scary, he was like pushing people to do it, there was this mad progression, the bar was just getting up and up and up every single year with these lads, and eventually he became mates with Fergal Smith and Tom Lowe and they started a unit and it was all just happening at the time, and it was, like, really cool to just try and follow it, not be a part of it, we were not... but just to follow the kind of standard that they were riding waves at... that was when I was eighteen to twenty... yeah whatever... *[Tom, 2]*

**Frederique:** What brought you to riding heavy waves?

**Tom:** I suppose you'd be thinking about... You just start thinking about what's possible, like, imagine, just imagine, you know, surfing that wave, you know... just a kind of... I don't know... curiosity, you know, just kinda something to work towards, just like, you see someone else do it and you're like, well... and you know, as well the lads would be pushing you to keep trying harder and harder... I don't know, it's like, there's always a reward, I suppose it's scary but, like... if you got a good wave, it's a really, like, good feeling, you know, so... yeah... I suppose that's the best motivation... just like, if you're fantasizing about how crazy it would be to be on that kind of wave like that, then you're kinda motivated and eventually you get to that point I suppose... *[Tom, 4]*

**Frederique:** Do you compete as well?

**Tom:** Ehm, no, I used to when I was younger but I was never any good at it, like, I never got any good results or anything... Well I did ok once at the Europeans once, under 18 but... No, you see, the thing is with bodyboarding the waves need to be really really good for it to be really showcased properly, so it's kind of... like, you get... If you want to follow that, like, the competition thing, you could kind of let down on the day because the waves aren't good or... you know, it's kind of a hard thing to aim towards... you know, as opposed to, like, big and heavy waves... just competitions are so fickle in Ireland, the waves can be very bad... *[Tom, 5]*

**Frederique:** What makes a good competitor versus a good surfer? What makes you a good competitor?

**Tom:** Well, Fergal used to compete in the BPSA, like, he was, he did really well, he won a big event in Scotland, like, he was a good, that was what he was doing, like, that's the path Fergal was following, before he met Mickey, you know, he was following pro surfing in terms of contests, and then... and then he kind of moved on to big wave surfing or whatever... ehm, yeah I don't know, sometimes people... like, I'm not that good, like, I'm not good at surfing small waves, like, I don't know, I wouldn't rate myself anyway, you know, like, competitions are just not my thing... *[Tom, 6]*

**Frederique:** How did you get hooked on bodyboarding?

**Tom:** I just found myself in school thinking about waves a lot, fantasizing... That's when I knew I was really into it... Nothing really stands out, the first wave I had at the cliffs was pretty cool like, nice barrel, it was mad, it was a really sunny and myself my brother and Shambles paddled out and there was a lot of them ozzy body boarders that we would have seen in movies and stuff, I think it was one of the first couple of times it would have been surfed you know... *[Tom, 7]* It was a really sunny day, like 8 foot absolutely pumping, and it was just like paddling into a surf movie, like getting down the cliffs and everything, it's completely taken for granted now but it's cool when people do it for the first time, you kind of remember what it was like the first time... And yeah that day was really cool, such a high, and then you're back to school and you try to explain to people what happened and they're like..., just don't get it, that kind of thing, you know that's fine... But no, really, not one wave really sticks out... *[Tom, 8]*

**Frederique:** Could you tell me about your best wave over the last few months?

**Tom:** I had a fun wave today at a wave in Clare, yeah it was nice, a nice barrel, the waves have kind of been bad lately so I was really desperate to get good waves so... It wasn't that big, but it was kind of hollow, so it's a wave that's really good for body boarding because body boarding kind of needs a wave to kind of bend in on itself so yeah it was like 2-3 foot maybe, and a nice little barrel, a good little spit out, yeah it was nice! *[Tom, 9]*



**Frederique:** Simply put, what would you say is the difference between surfing versus body boarding?

**Tom:** With bodyboarding you lie down but it's funny like, I suppose, body boarding is not really seen as something cool like, you know, a lot of people tend to go into surfing because they think it's really cool and I think people get into body boarding because you know, they don't get into it because it's cool, it's not seen as cool like, even though it is cool, like, you know, it's *deadly (stresses the word)*, so there's not much money in it, the people who do it because they love it and they're passionate about it, there's no real egos in the sport, like you meet the best guys in the world, the majority of them are just absolute legends, like, really down to earth, like really really nice people, I think it's different with surfing, and other big sports, there can be lots of egos, you know, whereas with bodyboarding you kind of, bodyboarders tend to do their own thing, they don't seek fame, like, it's really hard to make money, it's very hard to do it for a living, there's a couple of guys who do it in Australia maybe, in Portugal and all that, but it's very very difficult... Mickey says 'it's cool because it's so uncool', and it kind of sums it up quite nicely. And we're kind of like a tribe you know, they just go out and surf, like all the really heavy waves around the world were first surfed by bodyboarders like Teahupoo, Shipsterns, Shark Island, the Right in Australia, that wave called Arz, which was actually discovered by body boarders and these douchebags from Sydney took it over and not a lot of bodyboarders surfed there any more so they called it Arz like, that's a perfect example like, but it's fine, you know, it doesn't stop bodyboarders doing their thing, but I think it's cool like, because they don't really talk it up, it's generally a pretty underground thing. People don't get into it because of fame, but because they love it, and that's refreshing in a lot of ways. *[Tom, 10]*

**Frederique:** Would you say the body boarding community a tight-knit group in Ireland?

**Tom:** Well it is, and I think that's funny, surfers who look down on body boarders are usually one of two things: they're either a kook or a dickhead, basically... but it's usually the best surfers who generally don't have that attitude. And it's funny because actually... So, "dick draggers" is usually one of the nicknames for bodyboarders and now there's this bodyboarding company in Australia called Drag, it's completely taken the piss out of itself and that's cool because like, a lot of surfers just take themselves too seriously and bodyboarders just don't, they're not trying to impress anyone you know, and I think a lot of the surf industry is kind of looking into that at the moment, I think, a bit... It's unfortunate... Bodyboarding was one of the fastest going sports in the world in the 90s, and it was doing really well, and apparently the story is that a lot of shapers got together and were like, "This is going to affect our business, so we're going to bring out these ads showing that bodyboarding is lame", and they did, there was this advertising campaign in the 90s, and they're like, can't remember what the phrase was, it was like a picture of a surfer doing some mad airs or something, and a picture of a tourist body boarder, in a speedo...the beach, and it was like "cool or lame", but I heard that, and it could be, like there wasn't any reason for it to be looked down on back then and then all of a sudden it kind of changed and there was this kind of animosity towards it. *[Tom, 11]*

**Frederique:** Have you ever had bad accidents or injuries?

**Tom:** Not recently no, I hit my head, the worst accident I had I hit my head on a reef down the coast here, and I kind opened up my face, like here and there and there, I hit the reef, like, face first, yeah it was pretty mad, I was out with my brother, he came over to me and I remember looking at his face ... open wound... I had to get plastic surgery... It was kind of scary... It was pretty funny, like I had scabs on my face for like weeks afterwards so I looked pretty dodgy, d'you know what I mean, I had really short hair and I looked like a



dodgy punk so anyway I was walking through Dublin, just walking down the street, and these two rough lads come towards me, they were rough lads, junkies, like, I don't know, whatever, and they're kind of walking towards me and I was passing them and they were kind of looking at me, like, two rough lads, as they're passing they're like "Alright?", like this, I was like "Alright" hehe, "you should have seen the other fella like!" (*laughing*)

**Frederique:** What happened that day, what was the accident like?

**Tom:** I just... it's a really kind of shallow wave, it breaks over a reef, and I just fell, and the wave just threw on the bottom, and I just went face first into a rock, and I came up... I saw like a flash of light, I came up like, I was so disoriented, I paddled back out on the slick of my board, the board was upside down, it's like you come back on top of a surfboard and you try to paddle on top of the fins, and I just looked down and the whole board just went red, straight away like, there was just blood just pissing out of me, and I thought like, yeah it was mad. I remember I looked at an Ipad from a guy, I just looked at the reflection on the thing and I was like "What the fuck am I doing like?", it felt like a dream like, it was really weird... Yeah that's probably the worst... *[Tom, 12]*

**Frederique:** How do you prepare before a really heavy set?

**Tom:** Not really no, I suppose you get nervous, I don't know, I don't do really any preparation, like I'm very unprepared, compared to like Dan or Ferg or Lowe all those guys, I should actually become more fit, but anyways, I don't know like sometimes you're just like, you see waves coming in you're just like "Fuck" you don't think about it you just go, and usually you never regret that.

**Frederique:** Would you say you go onto some sort of an autopilot mode?

**Tom:** I don't know, it's hard to explain, you might be thinking about one or two little key things, like what you're doing with your body like, the kind of movements that you're doing, and then just try to read the waves as best as possible, like once you're going I suppose, you know, just trying to control yourself, control what you're doing... I don't know, yeah, I suppose it is autopilot mode, you don't, like, make choices you know, well you do sometimes I suppose, I don't know, yeah it's pretty much auto-pilot I think. *[Tom, 13]*

**Frederique:** Do you manage to have a very clear memory of some really good waves you've had? Some people like Giles manage to describe every second of that wave whereas me, I'm like "I don't know, it just happened" ...!

**Tom:** Some waves I definitely remember more than others, and it's kind of annoying sometimes like, you might see footage of yourself, and it kind of takes away from it sometimes, some of the better waves I've had I don't think there is footage of them or maybe there is actually I don't know, but it's kind of better when it's in your memory. I remember this young lad surfing Riley's this one time and he got this amazing wave in front of me like this really nice barrel ... I could tell it was probably the best wave of his life, and he was like "I wonder if anyone has footage of it I want footage of it", and I was like "Man, don't, don't look for the footage, whatever, you know don't look for the footage 'cause you know if it doesn't look as good as you remember you'll just be disappointed, just remember it as being, you know, as good as it was." But then again you know, if you got a really good wave you kind of wanna, sometimes you wanna see what it looks like, have a recording of it, 'cause it's like an achievement. *[Tom, 14]*

**Fred.:** What about wipe outs, how do you cope with or prepare for them?

**Tom:** I think, like if it's a really bad wipe out in my head I just say "Relax relax relax", I just have that repeated over and over and over... Trying to use as little energy as possible, I've been down here a while, I've been down here too long now, if you let that creep in you it goes up

and you start to... Sometimes it's good to have a good wipe out at the start you know, instead of making you more scared it does the opposite sometimes... You can have the worst injury on a small wave, you can like break a leg or you know, it could happen...

*[Tom, 15]*

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your boards?

**Tom:** I have two, and a new one on the way... They're made of foam, and they have like slick very smooth plastic surface on the bottom that glides along the water, and the main difference between, well I suppose a surf board is solid, it bends slightly but not that much, whereas a body board bends quite a lot, and it makes a huge difference to your speed and how you ride waves, the more the board bends, so if it bends a little bit it flexes back into its position it's really good, but if it bends too much it slows you down, if it's too stiff it's hard to turn because you need to bend the board when you're bottom turning so... I mean, like, yeah some people get really tech on it, they put stringers inside them, like carbon fiber stringers, you know they can be very expensive, you know, boards can be 300 quid or whatever, so it's not, like there is actually a lot of precision that goes into it, but probably not as much as in surfboards you know, you got longboards, you got shortboards, whereas you know there isn't much difference between body boards... So you actually get away with two boards.

**Frederique:** Size-wise, do body boards differ much?

**Tom:** Down to your belly button, for bigger waves, I tend to prefer smaller boards, and smaller waves, kind of bigger boards... A smaller board will slow you down on small waves... But then if you're on a big wave sometimes you don't need more speed you just need to be able to control your speed so... smaller board... And bodyboards, you know, they're handy, they fit in boots in cars, if you ever bring one on a plane you can say they're paintings and, there are so many conveniences, they don't break, like, they don't hit you on the head or fuck kill you. It just sits in the boot, it's happy there. *[Tom, 16]*

**Frederique:** What do you think is the future of surfing and bodyboarding in Ireland? Like, surfing is growing at the moment here, will bodyboarding follow the same route?

**Tom:** See it's a pity like, a lot of magazines, they're finished now, I think there's one bodyboard magazine left, same with surfing, it seems that surfing and bodyboarding are reduced now to Instagram... which is a bit mad, but... There's a couple of young guys from Cork, Jack and Cian, some people are getting into it, they really like it... And they go into it because they really like it, a lot of people go into surfing because of the lifestyle and it's kind of the wrong reason... No it's not really growing very fast, but still there are guys here that are really good, like Dan here, he surfs the cliffs, he surfs absolutely mental waves at the cliffs and he doesn't get any money for it or anything like that... He just kind of does his thing and... He does really stylish moves and like gets a lot of power in surfing, goes on big waves as well, is able to control on big waves, it's really really enjoyable to watch, he's a really good body boarder at Aileen's. Like, I watched Ben Player there and it was so cool to see it... *[Tom, 25, 1/2]*

**Frederique:** What kind of manoeuvres can you do on a bodyboard?

**Tom:** There's lots of aerial moves you can do on a bodyboard, like I'm not that good, you see like the really good guys can get huge airs and do spins in the air and come back down or even two spins in the air, two big backflips, loops, might do a big roll and just kind of... And some can do spins like inside the barrel and stuff, but I think it's when people connect them together really well or can do it with a lot of speed and a lot of flow it looks really cool. But yeah there's lots of manoeuvres like yeah. A good roll, yeah you can't beat that! *[Tom, 21, 1/2]*

**Frederique:** Initially, what got you to be a bodyboarder rather than a surfer?

**Tom:** I can't really remember, it was probably because, to be fair it was probably because I wasn't that good at surfing, think my brother's mate was actually into bodyboarding, he actually had a bodyboarding video and we watched it, 'cause it's funny like we started surfing with friends of ours, and they got into surfing and we got into bodyboarding, I'll have to ask my brother, but I've never really figured out why we stuck at bodyboarding and didn't go surfing, I don't know, I think we had this bodyboarding video we just thought it was so cool... In the early days it was never which was cooler, like, it was just like, it felt really fun... But it might have been because I was no good at surfing. Like I surf, now, but I think everyone should learn how to bodyboard and learn how to surf, because there's days when bodyboarding is so much more fun. What's cool is that a lot of the really good surfers around here like Fergal and Hugo will surf Riley's on a bodyboard, when it's big and when it's heavy. They've learnt now and they're actually ok at it, they see its functionality and its advantages in a lot of ways. And there's Andrew Kilfeather now, he's been a body boarder his whole life but he just won the long boarding contest, he's a really good surfer as well. But he knows like, guys like that will know when it's good to get a bodyboard and when it's good to get surfboard, and I think, if you can ride two different crafts well, then you get the most enjoyment out of the ocean. But... I can't really remember why. I think it was that friend's one video. *[Tom, 20]*

**Frederique:** What advice would you give to someone starting body boarding?

**Tom:** Make sure you get flippers for your feet, they tend to hurt people... You're lamed up without them. I'd say Hossegor is ideal for giving bodyboarding a go but give it a go at the beach but it's kind of, if you think the waves are a little bit too heavy, and you're not doing that well on a surfboard, then just give it a go on a bodyboard instead... Fergal has had barrels on a bodyboard and on a stand up board and he said getting barrelled standing up it's far more enjoyable... but I don't know, he still bodyboards so I don't know what he's talking about. It's a different feeling, you're much lower down...

**Frederique:** Could you describe what it's like to get a big barrel?

**Tom:** I suppose the appeal of it would be kind of, ideally to be as deep as possible, you're in this huge moving cavern of water, like it's such a fine line between getting absolutely smashed and really scary and actually making it, going into the tunnel getting the right amount of speed to be as deep as possible and it's an absolutely mad experience. Like you know, if you've never been barrelled before and just got a big barrel it's just amazing like. Sometimes you just take it granted, you just stop thinking about what it's actually like, it's absolutely like nothing else, d'you know... It's like trying to escape from a cave with a big bomb going off behind you and rolling and its flames coming at you. *[Tom, 21, 2/2]*

**Frederique:** Earlier you mentioned being obsessed with bodyboarding, what do you feel when you go without it for a while?

**Tom:** I've been doing for so long... As long as you're chasing just like the... you want the experience of being one wave like that or whatever, as long as that is your motivation and your goal, that what's right. If you have any other reason than that, it doesn't tend to work out, you know, and you tend to get scared, and you tend not to want to do it and... If the waves haven't been good, I'm old enough now, I'm grown up enough now to start to kind of go, "Ok", you know, "It hasn't been good, that's ok, I'm grand", but then you know, it's better when you do get waves after it has been bad for a while. *[Tom, 22]*

**Frederique:** Have there been any sacrifices you feel you have made because of bodyboarding?

**Tom:** Yeah I think so, I think I moved to Galway because of that, I think I wanted to do a PhD because I wanted to, you kind of want to be on call in Ireland, if you wanna get good waves you need to, it could be on a Wednesday, it could be on Tuesday, or whatever, you need to be, if you to keep doing it you wanna... You need to be able to be free, flexible anyway. And a PhD was kind of flexible. My brother moved to London, and he doesn't get to surf as much, I suppose, I don't know maybe things could have turned a different way, if I didn't have it, I'd probably be somewhere else... I would have liked to live in a city for like a year... like Madrid or Berlin or sth like that, but I don't... I couldn't do it, I know I would miss the waves and I just kind of would be annoyed.... I don't think there's any other major sacrifices, I'm not sure... probably has, I mean it has dictated my life for a long time...  
*[Tom, 23]*

**Frederique:** Where do you see yourself in ten years?

**Tom:** Probably in Ireland still, probably working in a position in relation to my PhD, research, whatever, and I'll probably not be able to surf as much, there's a couple of older guys who go out at the cliffs and they still give it a real dig like, so I'd like to be in their position. I know they're a lot more committed to fitness than I would be so I probably need to step up my game now if I want to surf still when I'm 40. But well yeah I still think I'll be surfing.  
*[Tom, 24]*

**Frederique:** Have you seen any changes in Clare in surfing and body boarding over the last years, and where do you see it going?

**Tom:** Mickey and Ferg did that stuff, that was over a 6 or 7, ten-year period, and before that no one around here was surfing any of those waves at all, they hadn't been surfed before, like they were the first people, Mickey and his friends, the first people to surf it... I think like nowadays... back then it was so like, so out there, so far beyond what the level was, and now the level is up to here like, all the guys around here like they're constantly surfing those waves, like Ferg doesn't surf you know he's still out there he's not pushing his surfing as much as he used to like, you know he still surfs really well but it's not his primary goal now, his primary goal is to grow food and Lowe is actually a big wave surfer now and Mickey is a rock star, like Flam, Patch and Smithy and the other guys are pushing it... Most waves are ridden now at the cliffs, you know, people are they are really on top of it, the bar is raised up here now and it's not going now, it's up there. I suppose it could go way higher, there's waves out there that are absolutely ballistic like mental like... If the bar was to be brought higher it could still be done, but I think at the moment there's a really high level of surfing in Clare when the waves are big and you know the best guys come from around the world and they could still be outshone by the guys that live here d'you know. So that's really cool. It's a nice place to surf, there's a nice vibe, it's a nice community, everyone gets along most of the time. *[Tom, 25, 2/2]*

## 7. JOHN et NEIL BYRNE

### A. Profil en diachronie :



**III. 142** : Neil (à gauche) et John Byrne, lors de notre entretien réalisé le 19 décembre 2017 dans le pub dont ils sont propriétaires, le Strand Bar à Strandhill (Sligo).  
Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Les trois frères Neil, John et Johnston Byrne sont des figures emblématiques de la région de Strandhill, comté de Sligo. Aujourd'hui âgés d'une soixantaine d'années, ils ont tous trois participé à des compétitions nationales et internationales de haut niveau : Neil Byrne a notamment représenté l'Irlande en 1994 lors des championnats du monde de surf au Brésil, où il s'est classé 13ème au classement mondial. John a quant à lui représenté l'Irlande plusieurs fois lors des championnats du monde au début des années 80, tandis que Johnston a participé aux championnats du monde en Australie en 1982.

C'est par l'intermédiaire de Rory O'Dowd que j'ai fait la connaissance de John et Neil Byrne, qui ont accepté spontanément et avec grand enthousiasme de me rencontrer de nouveau pour un entretien. Le jour convenu Johnston, le benjamin des trois frères, n'a pu se libérer, mais John et Neil se sont avérés des sujets impatientes et avides de partager leur expérience et leurs nombreuses anecdotes. Tous deux sont des surfeurs talentueux et sont toujours des pratiquants assidus. Ils ont observé le développement du surf dans leur région mais aussi à l'échelle nationale et sur la scène mondiale, et représentent donc une source précieuse d'informations sur la genèse du surf irlandais, les bricolages des premiers surfeurs au matériel parfois rudimentaire, l'organisation des premières compétitions locales et internationales, l'essor de l'I.S.A. et ses divisions internes, ou encore le développement des spots au fur et à mesure de la découverte de leurs vagues. Leur approche de la pratique relève de celle de *soul surfers*, telle qu'elle est résumée dans cette réponse que les deux frères me donnent au cours de l'entretien : « Surfing is a way of life ».



**B. Transcription de l'entretien du 19 septembre 2017, enregistré à Strandhill, co. Sligo :**

**Neil:** So I'm Neil Byrne, from Strandhill here in county Sligo, born and reared on the beach, my job here, what I do here is make ice cream and gelatto, I trained with the best gelatto Italian chefs, and bringing the art back here to sunny Strandhill.

**John:** John Byrne, Strandhill, county Sligo, same born and ehmm here in Sligo Strandhill, and I work here in the Strand bar, family business, right beside the eback, best place in the world, can't get any better! *[Byrne, 1]*

**Frederique:** What has led you to stay here?

**Neil:** Well myself, yo, the same as my brother, yo, from a very young age we travelled, we travelled around the world so we did and I think the more we travelled the more we appreciated what we have here, like its version territory even today there's still a lot of undiscovered and undersurfed waves, again when we were travelling back in the 70s, 80s, yo again we were surfing places that were undiscovered and to go back to those places today they're very much overrun. I think what keeps the lid on things here is is this perception of the ice-cold water and stuff like that. And that's what's kept me here, surfing has kept me here, that's what has kept me here.

**John:** Yeah it's one of the best places in the world and it is so unique and you don't have crowds, the weather, you know, in the summer time and in spring time, and you wouldn't want to be anywhere else, really, I've been to Australia and a lot of places around the world, and the biggest problem is the crowds, and dealing with the crowds, and trying to get a good wave and that type of thing... and we're spoiled for choice here, every road you were down and corner you turn there's a different place to surf and there's really good waves. *[Byrne, 2]*

**Frederique:** How did you start surfing?

**Neil:** D'you want to start John or will I start? As a young guy, yo, I always looked up to my bigger brothers, John and Johnston, they were always out surfing so they were, and that's what got me into it, they'd lend me board, I'd mess around and stuff like that, and again growing up here in the 70s, there was, at different times there was mass emigration, like the majority of people went off and played football, but we ended up with mass emigration, we couldn't put a football team together, that was the weird thing about surfing, it's an individual sport, you go out by yourself, and just take on... Challenge the ocean and stuff like that, that's basically how I got into it, again, looking up to my bigger brothers and watching how good the waves were, and trying to... I used to be often in trouble, we'd be fighting meself and John, "Who's getting out next" and stuff like that, John would be ... "You're going out" and I'd go out and of course John would arrive out then and I'd have to come in but he'd have just timed it to perfection so he would, and the beach would be working at its best! *[Byrne, 3]*

**John:** Yeah we were always... sometimes I timed it to perfection some other times I didn't and you just work with it like that I suppose... Our uncle had been out in Malibu in California back in the late 50s and he brought back wooden belly boards to Strandhill and we all used those two belly boards and every kid in the village used the belly boards in the summer time and then winter came and we put them back into the shed and summer came around again and the belly boards were taken out and they were a great start to and then after that then lifeguards would arrive here in summer time and they would have one surf board or maybe two surf boards and if we ran errands for them and cleaned the hut and made the



coffees they might let us use the surf boards and myself and my cousin Philip would do this and Neil would have followed around and Johnston and that, once we kept on the right side of the guards we were guaranteed the use of the surfboards and so that was our phase and then the next phase would have been travelling surfers coming around to Strandhill and they would be selling their surfboards [Byrne, 4] and that's, that's, my surfboard, I still have it today, was a Fiji and it was 19 pounds, and that was a fiber glass board, and it was really good for the time and that's it, that's how I started. [Byrne, 5 (1/4)]

**Neil:** Yeah one thing yo you got to remember is like back in those days, like, yo to get a surfboard was like a bit of gold, yo like, it was impossible, even to get wax, we couldn't get wax, we sat and melted down candles so we did to wax our boards, but Jesus you might as well be putting on fucking you'd slide off, as much, yo there were certain types of candles that were really good we discovered there was one particular kind that was sticky and the other ones were no good yo, and to get a leash, what was a leash, Jesus we never had leashes, we used to go, the mother's clothes line I remember doing this a few times yo, it'd be rope so we'd cut the clothe line and you'd get the dog's collar, put the dog's collar around your ankle, and tie it down to your board so if you wiped out on a wave you had two choices: grab the rope and get rope burnt or not grab the rope and get your leg nearly pulled off so that was the choices you had! [Byrne, 5 (2/4)] But then I remember Ticky Tim, he was one of the first travelling sales reps that came around, so Ticky Tim got us leashes, these leashes were unbelievable but one thing you had to remember about those leashes was, once you came off that board, you had to stay down, 'cause there was such a spring in them it was like a catapult coming back at you so it was, and you just kept you had to go down, there was a few accidents, people getting their heads taken off and all that but just you can imagine it was just like an elastic band and it came back like the clap was a hell at you so it did... We take it for granted, like even the wetsuits, like you know we wore polo necks and we'd put a bit of kind a little bit of wax on it so as to just kind of keep the wind off to stop it kind of soaking in too much, and so you've a bit polo neck on you a pair or shorts and stuff like that, and that's how you were surfing during the summer time, and then it was a local diving club that was set up d'you remember. [Byrne, 5 (3/4)]

**John:** In Sligo...

**Neil:** ... In Sligo so they had these wetsuits with the flappy bit hanging off the back so we got these wetsuits, oh Jesus...

**John:** ... Diving suits!

**Neil:** ... Diving suits, they were all like stretchers, virtually (*mimics*), you know you go out surfing you think you're really cool with this flappy bit banging off you and it was like a stretcher you know... But Ticky Tim came around anyway, and all stinky wetsuits they were the first wetsuits yeah with the zip coming up like this, and they were the really cool suits so they were. And like, you got to remember like John bought his first surfboard and it was 19pounds you paid for it and we were working back then, our week's wages were 15 pence a week, 15 pence a week, so that will give you an idea of what you were yo buying and I was very lucky, I used to get all the hand-downs so you know... [Byrne, 5(4/4)]

**Frederique:** Were there many surfers around when you started?

**Neil:** No there would have been ten of us...

**John:** Yeah it was just the lifeguards and they left at the end of the summer and you'd be only all by yourselves, our parents would be very annoyed "You're not going out until that tide", "You can't be going out there it's just snow on the ground" and I'll never forget one day I was, it was in the middle of winter time, and I had my wetsuit on and my surfboard and I

was coming down the road, I was set out for a surf and the guarda car, it was a black car with the light on the roof, came around by the..., and there was all snow on the ground and I was making my way down to the beach and the guarda fellas ...the Strand bar, and they stopped and looked at me and I looked at them, and I just gave them a wave and they kind of went, "This guy is crazy" you know but I went down into the water, they went up the road, turned came back to watch see what this guy was at so I had a surf, it'd only last for about an hour because in those days it was so cold and the wetsuits weren't that good but, the local perception was "These guys, there is something wrong with them" you know, out in the water and it's ice on the wall... *[Byrne, 6]*

**Neil:** Like you also have to remember that yo, back in the early 90s, it would have been the mid-90s yo, we had a situation here, at least I'll give you the perception of the whole, like yo the local authorities, Sligo County Council, tried to ban surfing, so we were very lucky the ISA, the Irish Surfing Association, Brian Britton and Rocci Allen got in behind the local surf club and they fought the Council tooth and nail to, you know they were gonna ban surfing in Strandhill, and it's amazing that it got such coverage with a news crew over from Australia, they were doing something in Dublin or London or something like that, and heard about this, and this small little village on the west coast of Ireland who were looking at banning surfing, so they flew over here, and they done an interview with us, so that went all around Australia, so we were getting all these phone calls here from Australia, the Byrne brothers you're at it again so you're on national television all around Australia you know, they couldn't believe that they were trying to ban surfing. *[Byrne, 7 (1/3)]*

**John:** Yeah the same, they were comparing it to Bondi beach back in the 60s because they wanted to ban surfing in Bondi beach in Australia back in the 60s so they thought, Jesus this is the 90s and they're at it in Strandhill in Sligo in Ireland, my God we want to check this one out, you know! So they came, they saw and they conquered! So they did... with all the publicity to try and ban surfing actually highlighted Strandhill as a major surfing destination because they need a TV crews that came to interview and look at the place, they all zoomed in?? we had a sign on, a couple of signs on the promenade "Welcome to Strandhill surfing beach", they just zoomed in onto this, "This is a surfing beach, why do you want to close the surfing beach? That doesn't make sense", that went across the whole world of media, Sky news, everybody came saw and did a documentary...

**Neil:** They actually did us a big favour, Sligo Co Council trying to ban it because really, it just highlighted and brought the whole issue out there, this is a surf beach, it's a top quality surfing beach, and they go and produce some of the best surfers in the country, that come out to Strandhill, 'cause it's such a powerful break, and it's, yo..

**John:** ... The Irish team right through from the 70s right up to even today, was always dominated by Strandhill, Sligo surfers, 50% of the team was always made up of guys from Strandhill and Sligo and all that, and they all surfed here on this beach and this coastline as well, mostly on this beach, it's a great training ground for everybody you know...

**Frederique:** The ban?

**Neil:** What happened was, back in 1995, this beach was always manned by lifeguards, so in 95 the local authorities said it was too dangerous to put lifeguards on it, so they withdrew the lifeguards, now we warned the local authorities that there was going to be some major tragedy on the beach by withdrawing the lifeguarding service, so we were an unofficial rescue service when they withdrew the lifeguard service so we were out rescuing people constantly and we kept on highlighting the issue, like something major is going to happen, year after year, like we were all just pulling in people rescuing people, and all the surfing community were yo rescuing a lot of people...

**John:** We had a rescue boat here as well, a small rescue boat as well, a 30 horse power engine, that was our main tool for rescuing people...

**Neil:** ... And what happened then was in May 98 three young lads lost their lives on the beach, they went out swimming, no lifeguards on the beach, John was the first one to raise the alarm, yo we went out, we rescued one and we lost three so we did, and yo and Council says, right it's too dangerous for surfing we're going to ban surfing like yo, the surfers were the main protectors, and still are today, are the main protectors of that beach like yo, the amount of people that yo are still rescued by surfers yo, swimming isn't allowed, and I totally agree with that, no swimming, but it is a surfing beach, and probably one of the best, and of the most powerful beach breaks around in the country. It was a shame because yo my answer to the local authority was, if there's trouble on the street in Sligo, you don't withdraw the police off the street, you put more police on it, and that's the same here, you don't, people are drowning, you don't withdraw the lifeguards, you put more lifeguards on it, that fell on deaf ears so it did unfortunately. *[Byrne, 7 (2/3)]*

**Frederique:** And there are still no lifeguards?

**Neil:** ... Still no lifeguards here in Strandhill, but we set up a voluntary surf rescue team here now, and yo it's getting grip and momentum. We have a couple of guys that are yo, Kiwi Paul and Rory and a few guys and they're all quite highly trained and they're passing that knowledge on to the next generation, the new generation coming up, so like we want to set up a team that's the first of its kind, a surf rescue team set up in Strandhill and anywhere in the country I think that's the first ever but you know they want to be the lead and the role models for the rest of the country and the team I see behind it, yo I've no doubt that they will achieve that yo.

**John:** It's kind of... the Strandhill rescue service that was here in the 60s and 70s and 80s and 90s and then mid-90s then it disbanded and 2016 it started up again, so this tradition of surfers and rescuers on the beach is being carried on again so it is, you know.

**Frederique:** It makes for quite a striking image, banning surfing, surfers being criminals...

**John:** The reason they gave for it was legal... Legally the reason was that when a surfer becomes detached from his board, he then in turns becomes a swimmer so we have to ban surfer because he's gonna fall off his board and he's gonna become a swimmer so we can't let him turn into a swimmer.

**Neil:** And then the bizarre thing is, there is this big, they call it the warrior swim, alright, they start off in Norse Point and swim to Strandhill, ok, so they land on Strandhill beach, that's legally ok, but you're not allowed to start swimming from Strandhill and then up in Norse point! It's ok to land on the beach but you cannot take off.

**Frederique:** Is it like, there are police officers controlling?

**Neil:** ... Beach wardens, but again the beach wardens are only employed two days a week, so the other five are ok. *[Byrne, 7 (3/3)]*

**Frederique:** Did you both do a lot of competitions?

**Neil:** Yo myself John and Johnston unfortunately Johnston can't be with us tonight, but both meself John and Johnston three brothers, we both represented Ireland on a number of occasions, at both European level and world level. I represented Ireland three times on the world stage, John you represented Ireland on a number of occasions...

**John:** I've lost count!

**Neil:** John's lost count, Johnston, his claim to fame was back in 82 surfing in the world championships in Australia, surfing against Tommy Curren, yo, so I think Tommy Curren

knocked him out so he did, but yo, my own claim to fame was surfing in the Europeans there, I was point one double point to get a medal in the Europeans, [Byrne, 9] and I remember the team coach told me “Oh you should have won that you should have won that”, yo called the judges team and the whole lot but unfortunately it was an Irish judge that had marked me down, and the coach was like “Why did you mark him down?” “Well I didn’t want to be seen to be biased” d’you know, so that was my missing getting a medal in the Europeans, ah yo, it’s not about getting medals, it’s all about participating and yo taking part. Last year last November I represented Ireland at the world SUP championship in Fidji, I think the first night... .. Kelly Slater, had a few beers, you know chilling out, a couple of good heads there and stuff like that, surfing Cloudbreak was pretty amazing so it was, specially on a SUP. Actually, I’m a SUP-er now, I’ve gone from surfing the past five years and gone into SUP surfing so, you know, surfers slight me but I’ll tell you one thing, you’ll be at it before too long! [Byrne, 10]

**John:** There was a time when Neil was away in Sri Lanka back in the early 80s, and full-blown war was going on in Sri Lanka and the whole lot, and I hadn’t been out there myself at that stage, but Neil was only 17 or 18 at the time... met a few Australian surfers... a buddy rang me from Colombo at 9 in the morning and “Ah it’s great here and the surf is good, back in a few weeks’ time, no worries that’s ok”, put the phone down, half an hour later news flash: bomb in Colombo, 300 people killed d’you know, oh my god, and I’m ringing Sri Lanka didn’t know who to ring but I was really anxious... Neil – an hour or two hours later he rang back...

**Neil:** It would have been six hours later because we had to get out of the city, there was a big massive curfew... And we just got out of the city before the curfew was imposed like yo, it was like the only way I can describe Sri Lanka at the time it was full-blown war, it was like being dropped into Vietnam, guys running around the streets with guns stuff like that, and yo when you’re that age yo, 17-18 years of age you’re mad so we went down to... But you got to remember back in those days there was no internet there was no Facebook, every now and again you’d get to a phone and it was a nightmare to try and ring home and I remember you sent me a telegram, I got a telegram three days ‘cause I tried ringing them back and communications were gone down and stuff like that... and I got the telegram... I eventually got to a phone a couple of days later... my parents were like...

**John:** ... I was getting ready to go out there!

**Neil:** ... It was very sad, it was very very sad, the most gruesome sights, I’ll never forget it, I’ve ever seen in my life, and we were actually heading for the bus station, we got blown back by the blast, it was only 400 yards down the street, we were blown back from the blast, so we headed for the train station, we got on a train, it was the last train out of Colombo... it was totally bombed out so it was, there was no restaurant no hotel, but the beauty about it was, there was this one hell of a wave just peeling around the point, that’s all we wanted, that’s all we wanted, that’s all we were there for. So straight off, threw our bags on the beach, got our boardshorts paddling out and surfed this one hell of a right-hander...

**John:** ... It’s like Vietnam...

**Neil:** ... Oh, yeah you know, now and again you’d hear a bomb gone off in the distance, you’d hear a few cracks and shots of M16 going off... We got actually familiar with the sounds of different guns and stuff like that... “Is that a mosquito or a bullet?” Some great stories... We were very lucky, meself and John, when I look back on my whole surfing life, I wouldn’t change it for the world because we went to so many unexplored places and we had it to ourselves, like even, I remember, the gang was very young, there were us, Scotts, Griffiths, Chops, Andrew, Ritchie, Neil, Burk, Kennedy... We chartered a boat from

Sumantra so we sailed around the islands, we met nobody, just deserted breaks you know, Cloudbreak, Thunders... You know, we were surfing all these to ourselves, you know, bang... We had it all to ourselves... *[Byrne, 12]*

John you were telling me, Bali, you know John was there in the late 70s, and we were watching a wee surf movie in Kiwi Paul's surf shop there, and it showed "Here is the first guy who surfed Padang Padang you know 1981 or whatever" and John was there "Sure I surfed that in 78" you know, hacking his way through a jungle they surfed this place you know... And that's, you know, that's some of the stories, John was back there a couple of years ago, you know where there was all rice paddies things that's all a concrete jungle now...

**John:** ... We got lost in Padang Padang... *[Byrne, 13]*

**Neil:** There was one thing too, yo when you're travelling around the world and you said you're from Ireland normally people laughed at you, you know "Ireland? Surfing?"... You know they couldn't, couldn't, they'd laugh, no matter where you went in the world, people laughed at you surfing, you know, "Seriously, you can't surf in Ireland", you know...

**John:** They laughed at you... in Australia, they thought it was an Irish joke, Irish surf team arriving for these world surfing championships in Australia and the Ozzies are falling over the place, thinking that was just hilarious! *[Byrne, 14]*

**Neil:** One thing too, just to kind of go back on, like one guy who spent quite a bit of time here in Ireland, was Micky Dora. Micky Dora: legend. I lived with Micky Dora down in the south of France for about six months, and that's how I got into longboarding. Just watching that guy was just, I don't know if it's the right expression, it was like ballet dancing on a longboard, he was just, and I still have it in my head, this crystal-clear picture of him, and I'll never forget just looking out there, surfing in Seignosse, this 8foot swell solid coming sunshine, and just Micky, clopping in, hardly moving, puts the hand up behind like that, and the lip just spraying off his hand... But you know Micky, it was one of so many times about Micky Dora... Micky Dora ended up coming to Ireland and himself and Linda? Surfed Easky quite a bit, you know that's how I got to know Micky, a really good guy, and then we met down in Seignosse Hossegor, surfed all those breaks, but Micky was such a legend... I was only about 20-18... I was fascinated about some of the stories, him being arrested and being in jail... Getting stabbed in jail, used to wrap himself in newspapers to stop himself getting stabbed, showed me how to forge documents so if you need to forge documents I've been trained by the best, Micky showed me... *[Byrne, 16]*

**Frederique:** So to go back to your competing days in Ireland, what were the competitions like?

**Neil:** The competition always took second place, it was a big social event, it was all about the craic, the fun, it was all , you know, the drinking competition, like I remember we always used to get second after Sligo, but then back to the pub for the drinking competition, and we'd always have them their hands down on the drinking competition.

**John:** They don't have a, they have a name for it today, they call it binge drinking or something, well back then we just called it drinking!

**Neil:** ... Then after ten pints to the back room and start over again... That was the whole fact of the surfing context, it was all about the social aspect, competition took second place, it was all about us meeting and being friends and good fun... *[Byrne, 17]*

**John:** Barry Britton and Rocci used to kill us, because we would always have a big influence on the juniors and they would turn up the next day extremely hung over and not win their heat, and Brian and Rocci would get on to us and "It wasn't me, I didn't do, it it wasn't me"! *[Byrne, 18]*



- Neil:** And at the Smirnoff competition. John Kelly who owned a pub in Sligo had a caravan so he brought a caravan so he did, but in the caravan what did he have? He didn't have beds in the caravan, he had a couple of kegs of beer and draft and the whole lot... That was back in 79, that little caravan, it was like Father Ted! *[Byrne, 19]*
- John:** ... And the Welsh guys, the Welsh guys loved coming to the west of Ireland... The Welsh surf team... and they arrived anyways and we told them: "We have a surprise for you this year!" "What's that?" "We've got a caravan with beer in it!" And free flowing beer and the whole lot and they thought "This is amazing" and the whole lot, they spent the weekend stuck in the caravan drinking away... *[Byrne, 20]*
- Neil:** We actually hadn't done very well at that Eurosurf actually so we did, I think that was our ploy, get everything? Smashed? That was our secret weapon: getting everyone drunk!
- Neil:** And then there was travelling... What gave us the travelling bug was going on the Irish team, representing Ireland on the Irish team, going off to these offbeaten places, and that's what gave me the bug for travelling...
- John:** You met the Welsh guys there and they'd tell you stories you they were just back from Indonesia or Sri Lanka or Papua New Guinea, and you said to yourself oh I have to go there...
- Frederique:** How did you pick those destinations, how would you know there would be waves there, seeing as there were no surf reports back then?
- Neil:** Well again it was meeting up with travelling surfers, that's how I got you know Phil Parker, he was the guy who told me about Sri Lanka, says I have to go there, and then you go to Sri Lanka you meet other guys yo, that's how I got to Papua New Guinea, hacking my way through the jungle and coming across crashed WWII planes and surfing the most amazing waves you know, and you meet guys on that trip and they say oh you have to go here, yo and that's the way it was yo, we had no internet, we had no, yo we didn't have magazines, getting a few magazines was like getting gold, and they were American magazines that were just, you know, surf wear and surf clothes and stuff like that, but that's what it was all about really, just meeting other surfer travellers, word getting out, that's what it was, bush telegraph. *[Byrne, 21]*
- Giles:** Going back to Ireland and to some of the waves you would have ridden, could you tell us the best wave you've seen each other ride in Ireland?
- John:** There's quite a lot: Kilcummin would have been, in the winter time, one of our favourite places, it's a very very big wave, big left-hander, and just down from Kilcummin there's a monastery as well, that's another good place, one of the biggest waves would have been the sand barrel off the beach here. That's daunting, that's a daunting wave, 'cause it comes in out of very very deep water and just lands on the sand bar, and there's days when we'd go out there back in the 80s and you'd turn and go back. *[Byrne, 36]*
- Neil:** The only way yo, you could describe it, yo, like when it's on, yo you could drive a double decker bus into the barrel so you could it's just, it's just that perfectionist wave yo, it comes out and it just "Pffrooh", it is, yo, you could get on that, it's like somebody has a blow torch to your rear end and you're just charging down the line, like yo and again, we used to have inflatable rescue boats, and we'd go out there... A good back-up thing to have...
- John:** ... The lighthouse is another...
- Neil:** And the lighthouse just after Bay here, again it would be yo, the nearest thing I would compare it to is the Peak in Bundoran, but again it would come out of deep water and again very fast and furious, you know. Kilcummin would be, yo, I've had incredible surfs up there in Kilcom, so I've had, Blue Rock here, again it's a long right-hander, and



sometimes you can take a wave up there and the whole lot connects up at certain tides, just perfect wave, and so many perfect sections to it... *[Byrne, 36, continued]*

**John:** Getting the Peak in Bundoran to yourself...

**Neil:** ... Yeah amazing yo... Lislary, Prowlers?

**John:** No, remember, it was kept secret in the 80s and they wouldn't, they wouldn't show us, the rock brick off at Lislary! That wave there, that was only discovered in the mid-80s, and it's an amazing wave, but the lifeguards used to surf it in the 80s and we were there and we were all young guys and wondering and they'd be slagging us off, oh we're going after to our secret spot, the whole lot, and we'd follow them and they'd lead us up in the deep quarry the whole lot, so that went on for a few months anyways, so one particular day anyways they went off surfing Lislary and our friend Peter Nielsen, his dad... He flew planes so we sent Peter and Karl up to search the coast for them to see where they'd gone so off they go on the plane anyways and there's no mobile phones or stuff like that so they're up and Peter is hanging out of the plane, he's like "Ready?" and up the coastline they're up as far as Bundoran and they both turn and they come back down again and anyways Peter is looking out "No sign of them I can't see them at the moment"... They landed the plane here in Strandhill, the guys came back from the surf, we knew they were surfing there the whole lot, and they heard we had a plane up looking for them the whole lot were laughing at us and whatever, like... About, yeah it might have been two months later myself and one of the lads were out driving around and having a look around the place and that and we came across a steep cliff and we look down and see a couple of guys surfing, that... spot in their vans, we'd found it! We had just found it! So we went over, clambered up their van, blew the horn, giving them heaps and the whole lot, and so we had sussed it out, we came back and told all the lads we found it, it was Lislary, mid 80s, nobody surfed it up to then and now it's oversurfed I suppose now, but the *brick* just out to the left hand side of the Lislary, it's, you know, that's some wave... *[Byrne, 39]*

**Neil:** Yeah they call it Outers Inners, or sorry, Outers and Middles, and again, very very heavy wave, so it so really really good yo, that's actually probably, yo, a very very undersurfed wave, Outers, very very heavy...

**John:** The big swells really go down Mullaghmore, even back then, and you can scratch your head and you wonder how big is it really? And you're so far away when you look at it you just see this massive left hander and until the tow in started coming you realized how big it was, just as well we didn't surf it, we'd be dead!

**Neil:** We'd be dead yeah...

**John:** ... Then you head down to Clare, Doughmore or, that was a beach, you drove onto it and, you can't any more, well the golf course is down there now but you know that was a good spot or Spanish Point in Lahinch.

**Neil:** ... Enniscrone is another wave there, and it's actually quite an unusual wave to surf, again a lovely right hander so it is but again you get wiped out, it's one thing yo you get wiped out on any wave you get kind of thrown back up to the top after a wave but the meanest thing about Enniscrone is, you get wiped out there, you get held down, you get dragged across the reefs so you do, it's one thing I'll never forget my first time surfing there, it was one of the weirdest experiences, I'd been held down, I'd been dragged across the reef, "When is this going to end?", but then you get to pop up eventually... But again, beautiful wave... *[Byrne, 24]*

We're surrounded by world class waves here in Ireland like yo, a couple of guys.. myself, my brothers have travelled the world, surfed everywhere, and a lot of travelling surfers yo,

good travelling surfers, yo, Ireland is Indo with a wetsuit, that's what it is, and then the quality of the wetsuits, yo I've no problem going out, it could be minus 10 outside, I've no problem, it's warmer out there in the water than it is standing around here, so it's it's, yo that is that is, yo I'm surfing more now, in the winter time, than I ever did in my youth!

*[Byrne, 38]*

**Frederique:** How do you view the growing popularity of surfing in the country, and in your town especially?

**Neil:** Yo again, because I come from a business background, yo it's good from a business point of view, I know a lot of people there that wouldn't be involved in business would totally disagree with me, but I grew up here in the 80s, I watched all my friends, mass emigration and yo I'm lucky that I can stay here because I have developed the business on the back of surfing, like if I didn't wasn't able to develop that business on the back of surfing I'd be just another one of those numbers and statistics that emigrated and left the country. I provide a lot of employment, provide a lot of work for surfers as well, but like yo it has its pluses and its minuses, I think it has more pluses, like you do have what we call the black wetsuit brigade or anti everything yo but it's alright for those guys who have good secure jobs, yo and don't have to don't depend, I depend on surfing for a living, these guys might work for the government or might have a good banking job or whatever job, it's alright for them to go and criticize that I'm "exploiting" surfing, I don't think I am exploiting surfing, like I love the sport, I'm passionate about the sport, and yo the development of the next generation coming up I think is very important, developing the youth, developing...

*[Byrne, 43]* Again when I grew up, as a young guy, I watched a lot of guys there that got involved in surfing and I would watch a lot of guys that just hang around the street corners, they were the guys that got into trouble and got into mischief then, yo even today, you look... ... but again look at all the guys that got involved in surfing and have really, I don't know if, it gets you determined, gets you ambitious, you want to see the world, you want to achieve things in life, because it is an individual sport, and yo it is, there's nobody to blame other than yourself if you surf a bad wave, and it's like with business like if you don't succeed in business, there's nobody to blame other than yourself, you know, and I think that's what it instils in you, you're surfing, you're an individual, you're responsible to stay alive, you're responsible to surf the wave yo catch a really good wave, there's nobody, I can't blame Jimmy or I can't blame Mick, oh it's his fault, no it's your fault, it's like in business, if you don't succeed in business, there's nobody to blame other than yourself.

*[Byrne, 44]*

**John:** The biggest fear would be, for some people is that surfing would be overexploited and that you'll have masses of people surfing the beach, on point breaks and that, it does get a bit critical you know, at the height of the summer and times like that, but come this time of year, September-October, there is no amount it's just endless the amount of waves that are there and just the swells that come and you look at this point break here at the end of the beach here at the sand bar, it's not surfed from one end of the week to the next! You're out there surfing by yourself, and that's always been the case, and the reason why it hasn't been surfed is it's too far to walk! *[Byrne, 45]*

**Neil:** It's the same like yo, like I live here in Strandhill but yo, it has to be really really good for me to leave Strandhill and surf somewhere else you know, there is a couple of the peaks that have been overrun like yo the likes of Bundoran yo, Bundoran is one of my favourite wave, it would be my top ten favourite waves, Bundoran does get overcrowded, but again that's a peak break, yo there's only two people that can surf it to the left or to the right at a time and again there's one thing I remember when the ISA were looking at the development of the sport and stuff like that... a lot of reef breaks... ISA says no, more the

beach breaks, beach breaks yo they can handle mass crowds and stuff like that. Yo the introduction of the surf schools has been very good for the sport as well because it gives a safer environment, yo a controlled safe environment for people to experience the sport and yo nurture them and bring them on...

**John:** ... And they're also told... the surf schools also teach them wave etiquette...

**Neil:** Yeah and that is very important, I see a lot of young guys do not have manners in the water, yo they're just out there, catch, yo greedy, catch as much, like the way I was brought up in surfing was, yo, go on catch a wave, alright, paddled back out, it's your turn, it's your turn, and you shout "I'm going left" I always paddle for a wave and I like "I'm going left", so... I said it to the other guy I said "What way are you going?", "Oh I don't know yet", yo you're paddling for a wave, I can't say, yo that's really rude, yo if everybody was to shout "I'm going left, I'm going right", 50% more people would be catching the waves, yo it's just simple little things, so there'd be two guys going right on that wave, there's another two guys sitting out there and another five guys, so you only get rid of two people at a time you know, use your head, yo it's just simple little things, yo it's having manners in the water, like I'd say "Hey next wave is yours ok" and you'd paddle and miss it "Oh Jesus, you're next, or you go for the next" or stuff like that or... Yo it's manners it's sharing it's having a bit of decency in the water...

**John:** ... It's courtesy...

**Neil:** Like so many young guys are just so aggressive in the water, and actually no respect for, like it was one thing I always had was, the older generation in the water, you treated them with respect, whether they were a shit hot surfer, or whether they were crap, you treated them with respect. Doesn't happen today, it's very sad to see, very sad to see. Yo there's a bit of a bad element creeping into it and it would be a shame to, like yo surfing growing up here in Ireland it was respectful, it was manners in the water, it was, you respected your, I've some things out there the water where guys were just tormented... I would paddle to them and say "Guys would you just quit it, we're out here to relax, enjoy, away from the bullying, stop this aggression, yo leave it on the beach" and yo, there is a bit of an, there is that element creeping in... And it needs to be stamped out, and that's why the surf clubs should be concentrating on and looking at it because you don't want to see that, yo even when it's abroad I always let the local man go first, yo or I would shout, I remember one time I was down at the Canaries and I was surfing and it was a right-hand break but I was surfing left and I would shout "Going left" yo, a couple of guys, I won't say what nationality they were, said "Ah feck those locals" and the locals were giving them a hard time, but I started getting on really well with the locals, and it was not a problem, "Hey Irish you go you go" this type of thing. So you give respect, you get respect, yo you give aggression you get aggression, it's always been my philosophy in life. *[Byrne, 46]*

**Frederique:** How is surfing promoted through the ISA?

**Neil:** Back in the old days, I'm mainly talking about the old days, yo the ISA Brian Britton and Rocci Allen yo their whole thing was focusing on the teams yo, getting the publicity out there, getting big sponsors in, it really, yo surfing really started to very much punch above its weight back in those days, and the way it got recognized by Board Fáilte, it got recognized by government bodies and stuff like that so eventually Board Fáilte started getting behind surfing and today now the seed that... you know and it took a long time for that to be recognized yo, those guys worked very hard at that and then Board Fáilte got in behind it and then a couple of marketing campaigns ended up yo showing surfing shots and stuff like that, yo and they've got more and more behind it Board Fáilte, it's outdoor

life, it's wild Ireland, it's the Wilds Atlantic Way, it's what it is, it's what we are about here on the west coast. *[Byrne, 23]*

**Frederique:** In recent years we've seen a lot of videos, edits portraying surfing in Ireland, especially big wave surfing, promoting Ireland as a big wave destination, do you think they offer a realistic portrait?

**Neil:** Well look yo, it's like any country yo, when they go and start promoting the place, they'll pick the most spectacular, the greatest waves, like Cloudbreak... Most of the time Cloudbreak would be like Strandhill, but when they promote the place they will look for the most spectacular... But again, it depends what market you're going for, like if you go for the hardcore surfer that has no money or if you go for the public holiday sunshine surfer that wants to ride the white water, they're the people with the money, you know, they come down more often, they stay in a hotel... That's the market that should be hit because as we call them the sunshine surfer the weekend surfer they're the ones with the money, the hardcore surfers like myself and John you know back in the day, we were living on a shoe string you know, living on a budget of ten dollars a day... and you made them last...

**Frederique:** Did you get to observe... Do you remember the first times heavy waves started being ridden in Ireland?

**Neil:** Again yo that's something, like yo, I knew of Aileen's a long time ago, Mullaghmore as well, but it has never taken my fancy, it's a total different league altogether, yo I'd be quite happy surfing the Peak at 8-10 foot, maybe push to 12 foot, but surfing the likes of yo Mullaghmore at more 8 foot, 10 foot, it's a different league, yo it's one of the most awesome most powerful incredible wipe outs you'll ever get, I've just seen some, I've been out close on a board and just watched it and you can feel that trembling, you can feel the water shaking, it's just powerful the raw energy is just absolutely incredible so it is.

**John:** ... Just the noise... I was chatting to Ritchie Fitzgerald, I ask him "What it is like?", he says "The noise it makes once you make that drop the noise is frightening"...

**Neil:** ... It's like a freight train coming at you... Yhat's what they say, it's a different league... As I said I would have no problem surfing yo Bundoran at 10 foot, surfing Mullaghmore at 10 foot, nah, I'm sorry... *[Byrne, 41]*

**John:** ... Different league...

**Neil:** ... Different league.

**John:** ... I wanna live a bit longer!

**Frederique:** What's the urge to surf those big waves?

**Neil:** Surfing is all about pushing yourself to the limits, yo and you just keep on pushing yourself, yo and trying to get yourself to the edge yo, I think I've found my edge so I have, I'm happy, I know my edge so I do, I can understand why the boys do it, maybe if I was half the age I am, I probably would be at it, but it's just pushing yourself to a limit, it's what surfing is all about, it's pushing, again you depend on nobody, only yourself, and you just see how far you can push yourself. I think it's ambition, being ambitious.

**Frederique:** To you, is surfing more a sport or a game?

**John:** It's a way of life.

**Neil:** It's a way of life, yeah. That's yo what it is in a nutshell, I would not be here in Strandhill, only for one thing, and that's that Atlantic ocean, that's the only thing that has me here. And that's why I am so lucky that I developed a business and been able to live here all my life, yo, I pity so many people, yo I have a lot friends in Dublin, and they all work Monday

till Friday, yo Friday evening hop in their van, down to the west coast. Quality of life is very important, I could be in Dublin, I probably could be making an awful lot more money than what I am making here but it's not about money, it's about quality of life so it is and the quality I would never change, I would never give up, I remember one day just chatting to my elder brother Johnston and just saying to him, yo we had nearly ended up moving to the States back in the mid-80s, sold everything here, 'cause things had gone so bad, it was just so hard and I said to Johnston, "Jesus imagine if we went and took that job back in the late 80s... We probably would have made it?" and John was with me there as well, and John said "Yeah we probably would have been millionaires, but look at what you would have missed", and I stopped, and I thought, I wouldn't trade it for all the money in the world, just the life experience that we have had, continue to have living here, it's just, you couldn't put a price on it, you couldn't put a price on it so you couldn't. I wouldn't trade it for all the tea in China as they say! *[Byrne, 25]*

I remember paddling out, it was the national championships, and it was a really really big swell, and paddling out there there was three other guys so there was, and this big big clean up set came in and the horn hadn't gone for the start of the heat, and I just, bang bang, this clean up set coming in, the boys were going at me, "The heat hasn't started" and I said "To hell I'm going for this wave" and just go and dropped into this one hell of a wave so I did and just yo powered into it, like I go for the love of it, I really really love what I'm doing, I love the sports so much, again yo I know my comfort zone yo, and I've just yo I've pushed myself to the limit with regards surfing big waves but again, it hasn't been anything like Mullaghmore and stuff like that, I've had some very close calls, and I think you end up respecting life a bit more when you get those close calls, like alright, I've done that, let's take the foot off the pedal a bit and just chill out and enjoy. It's like I used to go, every year I used to go skiing, I haven't skied since, I had the most unmerciful crash once skiing... It's taught me, now I know my limits in surfing, I know my comfort zone... *[Byrne, 26]*

**Frederique:** So I have a couple of easy questions now for you... If I was a five-year-old and have never seen a wave, how would you define it... How would you define a wave?

**Neil:** A wave is a volume of water crashing onto the beach, I think that's basically what I would... yeah...

**John:** A wave is lots of fun, crashing onto the beach, once you have the right implement!

**Neil:** ... Yeah that's actually that's what I thought! *[Byrne, 30]*

**Frederique:** How would you define surfing?

**Neil:** Define surfing... Surfing is a way of life, once you get bitten by the bug, I'm sorry you're in trouble, it will take over your life!

**John:** ... Yeah it's a... as a young kid all you wish for the summer to last forever so you can stay surfing all day every day, and that's what you wish for, you know. *[Byrne, 32]*

**Frederique:** If you were to pick one colour to describe your brother as a surfer, what would it be and why?

**Neil:** Red... 'cause I used to be so envious of him, standing there in the shop looking up at him and streaming down the feast of waves, I mean...

**John:** ... Vice versa, I'd be standing in the shop and Neil'd be surfing I'd think "Aah, time to run, he's got the best waves, damn it!", that would be that.

**Frederique:** What about your other brother?



**Neil:** Johnston? I don't know maybe blue, 'cause again images in my head, he had a lovely graceful style so he had, and I just picture in that really nice sunny day in a the blue background, very laid-back cool style.

**John:** ... Oh yeah he had one of the better styles and he was known for it too, we used to call him "the bear" – bear, b-e-e-r, not the b-e-a-r one because he liked his beer. *[Byrne, 27]*

**Frederique:** What is a good wave for you?

**Neil:** ... A good wave for me is a good really steep take off, free fall drop-in, good old bottom turn, tuck in, and then straight down the line, and a couple of snaps here and there on the way down.

**John:** A good wave is, yeah a wave that keeps going and going and going and never ending, that would be the ideal scenario. *[Byrne, 31]*

**Frederique:** What is a surfer?

**Neil:** When you become a surfer I think is when it becomes a way of life, yo when your life starts to revolve around surfing, surfing becomes the priority, I think that's when you become a surfer, yo I just say, my life is, get up in the morning, first thing I do is check the weather charts, winds, stuff like that, or trying to plan my next week yo, what's going on, trying to plan yo, everything goes out the window for me once the waves hit, it's "John, sorry, I'm gone, goodbye".

**John:** Your whole schedule goes on where the tide is at, whether it's in or out, or on the way in or on the way out, you're timing everything on that so you can..., you push all your work and all the things you have to do on the side and you make sure you're free when the conditions are right and the whole lot like so, that's what you do. *[Byrne, 33]*

**Frederique:** If you were to compare your favourite wave to an animal, what animal would it be?

**Neil:** ... I think an elephant kind of...

**John:** A lion, because it roars!

**Neil:** Well an elephant because of the sheer size and ferocity of it, and... sorry, male elephant when he's in heat, 'cause I've seen a male elephant when I was in Sri Lanka in heat and they are mental... *[Byrne, 34]*

**Frederique:** Would you have any stories revolving around the waves around here, legends?

**Neil:** Not, yo the older guys like, the likes of Stevie Burns and that crew, they would be kind of always keeping the secret waves secret and stuff like that, that was the only thing I could... Yo growing up as a youngster and looking up to these guys and keeping their mouths shut about these waves they surfed but never told anyone else.

**Frederique:** What about secret waves? How do you learn about secret spots?

**Neil:** ... Yo about secret waves, there's not too many waves now, everybody knows where they are these days... No sorry there's still a few waves that are, yo that I don't personally know about, the boys, yo you'd hear them talking about yo over Ballycastle, I've surfed that, Ballycastle, yo the young generation are getting a bit like too, they're kinda they won't let you know where certain waves are and stuff like that... Back in the day I used to have a lot more time so you'd hop in the van and you just go driving on a good swell, you'd just drive down boreens, and you just "Ooh, Jesus that's some left-hander pumping in there", that's it, you know, that's the way you discover waves and stuff like that yo... *[Byrne, 40 (1/2)]*

**John:** They might be breaking one day, and you're down there the next day there'd be nothing there, so it's part luck too, and you have to get the tides right and all that, so there is a lot of, you know you might go to the same spot ten times and nothing happens and someone



will turn up there and it could be working really good and they will get a great wave and that's how it's kind of discovered too as well like you know, like Blue Rock, we used to walk by Blue Rock here at the end the beach back in the 80s and surfed the other points, and you know we'd look out at Blue Rock and go "I don't know about that", it's only when an American guy started surfing it when we realized it does actually work, it was the better wave of all the waves you know, so it's hard, and it was very fickle the tides as well, you had to get the tides right, the swell... At that point you get a knowledge of it.

**Neil:** It works on a high tide you know so you just... and then certain spring tides might be too high for it so there is a window of two hours for it to work so, it was a long walk, it was too long for us to walk down there you know...

**John:** Yeah down and you had to walk down again along the beach! Surfers don't like walking, they're bad like! *[Byrne, 40 (2/2)]*

**Frederique:** Do you have children, and are they surfers?

**Neil:** I have a son, Graham, he's a... yo I introduced him to the sport but I never wanted to push him so I did, but he never took to it, I was... yeah he never took to it. But my nephews, Andrew Steven Aoine Aaron, I introduced them to, they're all now, they all eat sleep surfing so they're just total surfaholics you know so, it's something, you know you don't force it on somebody, you're either made for it or not made for it, either you love it or you hate it you know.

**John:** My daughter arrived over here this summer and her first time out surfing that was four hours in the water I nearly had to drag her out of the water and she just loved it to bits, and no doubt she's gonna be back at it, and I was at least quite surprised, her stamina and just like 3-4 hours like non stop, all through determined to get standing and to get... it is very hard, it is very hard to get getting in on that you know.

**Frederique:** Would you say surfing is a passion or an addiction? Does it take a certain mind to get addicted to surfing, to get the bug?

**Neil:** Personally I look at it as an addiction, I find it very hard to keep up... when if I was told that I was to move to the east coast, I think I'd be devastated to be honest so I would, so...

**John:** ... It's like being put in jail!

**Neil:** ... Yeah it is an addiction to me so it is yo, like, the only way like, yo I go away on holidays, and my poor wife, it has to be a surf destination, I'm sorry, so, I have to be, I can't be, I have to be near the ocean, it has to be near surf, otherwise I'd blow off my head, I have to be in the water, I'm sorry but that's my, yo, rule on holidays, we have to go somewhere there's waves. *[Byrne, 28]*

**Giles:** Can you tell me what does it feel like to surf a perfect wave?

**Neil:** It's actually very hard to describe it... It's just such a buzz you know like, you know when you surf a really good wave, I was out there recently and I just caught this absolutely cracker – and it wasn't a big deal but it was this absolutely cracker of a wave, you now beautiful bottom turn, smack off the top, smack off the top, tail slide, yo, off the top bang! Cut backs, poom poom poom, I've done about ten manoeuvres on the wave, and yo came off the back of the wave and just, your legs are like jelly, ay, just get this, I don't know, thank God I've never taken heroin or cocaine or anything like that but from what... I watched a few documentaries on it, it's probably, yo, getting that shot of coke into your system so that it's "Aah Jesus! That's was deadly yo!" Like, one thing, yo it's quite a stressful environment I work in, the hospitality industry, there's days yo, that I have the whole world on my shoulder, and I'd be about to crack and explode, and John would often say to me, yo good surf, "Go on, get the hell out", you get out there, for one hour, and it's

like massive therapy, you come back in, the world is gone off your shoulders, you can come and you can take on the world again, you come just so charged up, it's like getting 220volts shoved up your rear end, "Tzzzz"! Here I go!

**John :** You're re-energized, you know, whatever it is like, you know, you're just re-energized and you're ready to do anything and take on anything and the whole lot like, it just, it does lift that big could off your head or whatever is there like you know. *[Byrne, 36]*

**Frederique:** What would be your train of thoughts, like, when you've just caught a wave and are riding it?

**John:** "Can this go any faster?"

**Neil:** It's just, you feel that big adrenaline rush, yo, just "Pohpohpoh", it's just your hear pounding you know, just, bang, just a big adrenaline rush you get you're your whole body you know.

**Frederique:** How many boards do you own?

**Neil:** ... *(thinking)* A lot!

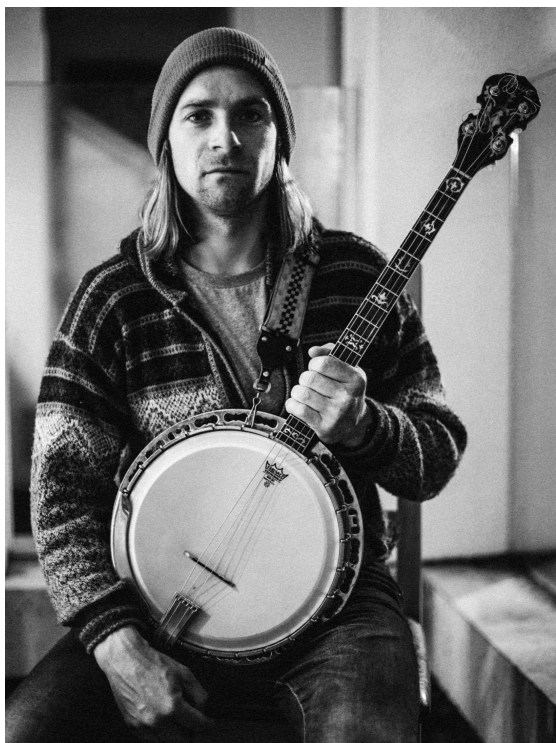
**John:** There's a stack of them in the shed there, oh my god, all longboards now, few shortboards...

**Neil:** I'd say we own about thirty boards and it's one thing I would always say to a surfer: never ever ever sell a board, always hold on to it, it's like... Some of the boards that I've sold on through the years, it's like, how would I describe it, losing a woman yo, it's like a woman if I could just hold on to that it would have been great yo, some of the boards I look at that I've sold would be great to have today you know, even some of them, lightening bolts! Those on my porch John? Jesus they were just, they were just beautiful boards, classic boards, Mark Richard boards, just you know, just to have them you know, they were just so beautiful, like I have some beautiful boards out there still, but as an old surfer... don't sell boards! *[Byrne, 29]*

## 8. SEAMUS MCGOLDRICK (« SHAMBLES<sup>7</sup> »)

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Seamus est originaire du comté de Sligo et a grandi près de Strandhill. Son initiation au bodyboard commence par la découverte de cassettes vidéo de surf et de bodyboard dans les années 1990s. À cette époque, les styles de pratique les plus à la mode sont un surf explosif et spectaculaire affichant manœuvres et figures aériennes sur les vagues – les fameux « airs » qui consistent à décoller au-dessus de la vague avec la planche et à atterrir adroitement sur une section de vague permettant de pouvoir continuer à la surfer. Les bodyboarders de l'époque, quant à eux, sont filmés surfant les vagues monstrueuses de Shark Island<sup>8</sup> ou Pipeline<sup>9</sup>. Seamus se prend de passion pour ce sport, et à la faveur d'une rencontre avec un jeune garçon dont le père est surfeur et maître nageur-sauveteur et qui lui prête une planche et une combinaison, il devient un bodyboarder désormais reconnu sur les scènes nationale et internationale pour son excellente maîtrise dans les plus grosses vagues telles que Riley's ou Mullaghmore.



**III. 143 :** Seamus McGoldrick est également musicien, auteur et défenseur de l'environnement. Source: Tozer, site web du podcast *Looking Sideways*<sup>10</sup>.

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- 7 Seamus explique l'origine de son surnom à la fin de l'entretien.
  - 8 Shark Island est un *reef break* déferlant au large de Cronulla, une ville littorale en Nouvelle-Galles du Sud située à une vingtaine de kilomètres au sud de Sydney, et très prisée des connaisseurs de vagues massives et creuses et de tubes pouvant dépasser les 5 mètres.
  - 9 Pipeline est un des spots les plus prestigieux dans le monde. C'est une gauche déferlant sur les récifs de la côte nord d'Oahu, à Hawaï, dont la puissance et la proximité du fond de corail en font également un des spots les plus dangereux et redoutés.
  - 10 *Looking Sideways* est un programme de podcasts créé et présenté par le journaliste Matt Barr. Chaque épisode a pour sujet un athlète ou une personnalité en lien avec le monde des sports d'action. Parmi les invités du podcast, le présentateur Ed Leigh (BBC), le surfeur britannique Andrew Cotton, spécialiste des grosses vagues telles que Nazaré, le snowboarder Sascha Hamm, le photographe Tim Nunn, engagé dans la lutte contre la pollution de l'environnement marin, ou encore le fondateur de la marque britannique de surf Finisterre Tom Kay. L'interview de Seamus McGoldrick constitue l'épisode 56 du programme: <https://wearelookingsideways.com/podcasts/056-seamus-shambles-mcgoldrick>

Seamus a également fait partie des premiers surfeurs et bodyboarders ayant découvert les spots de Riley's et Aileen's lors de ce qu'il nomme « l'époque de Mickey Smith ». Il est également un surfeur investi dans la communauté locale, à Strandhill, où il a ouvert son école de surf, Sligo Surf Experience, en 2017, afin de rendre, à sa manière, à sa communauté, et de partager le plaisir des vagues avec ses élèves. J'ai souvent rencontré Seamus sur les rives de Mullaghmore ou Blackpot, près de Bundoran, par conditions de grosse houle. Je l'ai également rencontré lors des festivals Shore Shots, en avril 2017 et 2018, où il apparaissait dans un court-métrage présenté en compétition, et lors du festival Doolin Surf Fest en mars 2019. Nous nous sommes retrouvés pour un entretien à Sligo à l'issue d'une journée de conférences intitulée « Ocean Human Health » organisée à l'initiative du Dr. Easkey Britton et de l'association Irish Doctors for the Environment, à laquelle nous avons été tous deux conviés. Seamus est intervenu lors de ces conférences afin de présenter son école ; sa présentation a établi un lien entre les activités des écoles de surf et celles des militants pour la protection de l'environnement marin, mettant notamment en évidence leur engagement commun dans la défense de la santé des océans et des hommes.



**Ill. 144 :** Seamus McGoldrick à Riley's.  
Source: Tozer, site web du podcast *Looking Sideways*<sup>11</sup>.

L'implication de Seamus dans les communautés surf locale et nationale, son expérience en tant que compétiteur, surfeur *freestyle* et coach, ainsi que sa connaissance des problématiques internes à la communauté (territorialisme, le développement de la pratique et de l'industrie du surf en Irlande) font de ce bodyboarder reconnu et apprécié un profil intéressant pour la recherche.

#### **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 26 mai 2019, enregistré à Sligo, co.**

##### **Sligo :**

**Frederique:** So just to explain the research a little bit, just the first thing that I wanted to do was to go and interview surfers, to try and understand the community a little bit better, like an anthropologist would do, like studying a tribe and their rituals and they have a special language, so I was collecting stories and then, because I studied folklore before, I was like,

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<sup>11</sup> Lien: <https://wearelookingsideways.com/podcasts/056-seamus-shambles-mcgoldrick>

« Hang on, I have a collection of stories here, from people sharing a relationship, with specific values, they have rituals, they share a culture... » and what I call surflore, basically it's a folkloric material related to surfing and the ocean, and it kind of emerged onto me that it's kind of a bit of a nation, like, it's a surfing nation of people who are gathered around, like the definition of a nation as a group of people gathered around the same culture...

**Seamus:** But surfers don't have the same borders as other people, you know... And it's instinctive: we have the one ocean, you know?

**Frederique:** What interests me in that definition of nation is that it goes beyond the traditional definition which is usually very politically oriented and very centred on geography, but we do have the notion of territory in surfing, it's just very shifting, it's ephemeral, and you share it as well, you have localism, which we have associated to the notion of nation as well...

**Seamus:** Mostly concerning males, mostly concerning surfers, but also, yeah, it's an infection in surfing, I don't think... I don't think it's endemic, I don't think it's indigenous to surfing, maybe in Hawaii there's the tribal warfare but, I think it's an infection from the modern world into the pure... pure aspects of surfing...

**Frederique:** The question of possession as well, like my wave, my spot...

**Seamus:** Ego...

**Frederique:** But that doesn't, like, seem to happen so much in Ireland?

**Seamus:** Yeah it's there but I mean, we're friendly and that, to me, is important, we're just basically, like, from my point of view, strictly regarding surfing I guess the most important signposts in my life with regards to surfing are... Growing up in Strandhill was a major influence, ehm... I surfed on the Irish team and got to travel to international competitions and mix with all the top... or... Lots of surfers from Europe... Australia and Spain and around the world... then I also was hanging out with Mickey Smith and Fergal... and they were doing the discovery... then ehm... I started a surf school... with another interesting story which I'd love to share with you for this podcast is when I broke my leg... so... .. Yeah, well that's interesting but maybe a lot of people don't know as I injured my leg, I recovered and then than twelve months later I was in Hawaii surfing Pipeline, fulfilling my dream... but I had – I had not money, so I did an online fundraiser and a local fundraiser and then I went to Hawaii... met Mike Steward at the end of the competition which is – you know, Mike Steward did... - but Tom Morey was the inventor of the bodyboard in the 1970s and ehm... when I came home Mike told me that Tom was actually in trouble financially, he didn't have money... like, a lot of the surfers... individuals who are millionaires... companies etc... but the bodyboarder guys, like... and he had gone blind... and I was asked to do ehm... 'cause I did an online fundraiser that was kind of successful ehm... He asked me to help start up an online fundraiser for Tom Morey and so I basically got involved in the Friends of Tom Morey campaign which meant that ehm... in November 2017... We launched it and we raised 100 grand for Tom Morey, so basically, bad thing happened: I broke my leg, and then by divine amazingness got sponsored to go to Hawaii and because of the charity of the local community I got an opportunity to give back to the founder of my sport and ended up raising a 100,000 euros so... That's kind of unique and to me it's got a story to it, that, like ok so bad happened, but something good happened... You know, and it was... it was... kind of by coincidence... but anyways...

**Frederique:** Maybe just, if you had one minute to introduce yourself and say who you are, what would you say?

**Seamus:** Eh, well my name is Seamus, I am a proud member of the Irish surfing community, ehm I'm a bodyboarder from Strandhill... ehm... and ehm... I'm living here in Sligo and I'm running a surf school called Sligo Surf Experience, and very happy at it. And I'm here today – today is my birthday, my 34<sup>th</sup> birthday and I'm here with you at Ocean Human Health workshop that we're having with the Irish Doctors for the Environment, having really really healthful conversations about... ehm... what the ocean can do for you for health with a lot of really nice stakeholders like Wildsea, we have Sumo, Easkey Britton's here, we have Havin' a Laugh charity, we have Liquid Therapy, we have Clean Coast, so it's been a really really really pleasant day and ehm... yeah, it's been really good. *[Shambles, 1]*

**Frederique:** How would you describe yourself as a surfer?

**Seamus:** Ehm, yeah, I'm a surfer, I mean the dictionary definition of surfing is someone who is propelled forward on a wave, either on a board or off a board. A lot of people see surfing as associated with surfboards but I would associate myself as a bodyboarder... So I started bodyboarding when I was 12 years old, and then I only started taking up surfing about age 23. *[Shambles, 2]*

**Frederique:** How was the transition from bodyboarding to surfing?

**Seamus:** So the transition from bodyboarding to surfing or from surfing to bodyboarding is a lot easier than taking up either of those sports to begin with, because when I started surfing I had all these ocean skills from bodyboarding to transfer, I mean I found it tough to learn how to stand up on a board and all that but I found it easy to have the strength to paddle, to catch waves and stuff like that so... yeah it's been great, I think everyone who enjoy surfing waves should ride bodyboards and surfboards and... *[Shambles, 3]* Maybe it opens people's horizons too because there's kind of a bit of surfers versus bodyboarders thing which is happening since the 1980s, which is a very interesting genesis in the surf industry reacting against the bodyboarding industry which grew frighteningly large in the 80s for the surf industry who was a competitor, but gladly and I'm very happy to say, there is not much animosity between the two tribes in Ireland and I think Ireland leads the way in the sense that, like, the whole surfers versus bodyboarders thing is, like past 2000, so ten years ago, it doesn't really exist anymore so it's... I'm really glad Ireland has shown the way like that, you know? *[Shambles, 4]*

**Frederique:** Do you remember your first memorable wave?

**Seamus:** I'm not too sure I remember my first memorable wave... I do remember the excitement of wanting to learn to bodyboard and to be a surfer, because... how I got into it was... my child minder – both my parents worked full time so when I was in primary school I used to get child-minded by a lovely woman named Mary Mc Dermot and her two sons, one of them was a champion surfer, one was a champion bodyboarder, so when I was finished with homework I would go and watch these tapes, surfing tapes and bodyboarding tapes, the bodyboarding were really raw and hard core, and surfing – we're still in the 90s so power surfing was the big thing, there weren't big aerials or big tow-in surfing or big barrels, and ehm the bodyboarders were surfing those crazy waves like Shark Island or Pipeline and I just... loved... loved that... So, before I started surfing I knew, I watched, I religiously watched surfing and so I was like, really wanted to do it, so ehm... a friend of mine... Paul O'Donnell, his dad John was an old-school Sligo surfer lifeguard and ehm... my friend Paul, his brother surfed and his family took me out, gave me a wetsuit, put me on a bodyboard, I remember catching a few waves and John was coaching from the beach, I'd do spinners and all that... I was about ten years old in Sligo, in Strandhill, and then from that then I became pretty infatuated so... It was a good intro... *[Shambles, 5]*



**Frederique:** That's cool yeah, do you think then that it is a passion or an addiction when you say "infatuated"?

**Seamus:** Yeah well... it's an addiction I guess in the sense that there's withdrawal symptoms! (*laughs*) It's an infatuation in the fact that it takes over your mind... ehm... I consider myself lucky to have been introduced to it at a young age, because I even see people, from my experience as a surf school owner, as a surf coach, I can... I have this observation which I'm quite adamant about, that surfing... Everyone's different, but surfing has the same effect on people, no matter who you are, you know, surfing has the same effect on you, as it has on me, you know, and it... That infatuation happens in adults as well as in children, but adults as so much... They're busier, they've got careers, they've got college, they've got families and wives and husbands and stuff, and so the infatuation is there but it can't take over, whereas... When I started to bodyboard and get infatuated with riding waves and becoming a surfer, I mean, once I had my homework done, I could grab my bodyboard and spend the whole day at the beach you know, I didn't have a girlfriend or a mortgage or a job or, you know, all this kind of stuff so ehm... yeah! That was fun! I think it challenges adults' insecurities maybe, not just physically and ehm... On a technical level, maybe just psychologically, on the emotional level... ehm... But I still think the ocean and the practice of surfing and riding waves gets people to become more child-like, you know, running to the sea, yelping, screaming, hooting, you know and when I take people out on surf lessons... Well first of all when I take kids out, they get it straight away, they get excited, they go "Yeah I wanna go surfing", they go jumping in the ocean, they go laughing and screaming, just like it's... it's super easy, in five minutes they're laughing and they're getting it... ehm... Adults, they might take it more seriously, their head is a bit more... but, you know, after the first half an hour they start to loosen up, after the second half an hour into the second hour they start to, like, smile and laugh and take it less seriously so they turn into into kind of ocean children, but it might just take a little bit longer, you know...

**Frederique:** Yeah 'cause maybe you're like, as an adult, "Alright so I need to put my foot here and then... Can you show me again?" It's almost more like, studying it...

**Seamus:** Exactly. Well if you look at hypnosis, you know, hypnosis works on the idea of the critical mind, and, you know, that's why children below the age of ten they believe in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy because they don't have that critical faculty, then after the age of ten, before the onset of puberty it's a kind of a critical junction in human development where we have a critical mind, and then your parents say "Oh Santa Claus is gonna come next year", you start saying "Well, how does he get around the world", or "How does this work?", or "Where is he going to put the presents?" and suddenly the critical mind kicks in..." [*Shambles, 6*]

**Frederique:** I read Keith Duggan's very good book *Cliffs of Insanity*, and I read a little story about you that made me laugh a bit, about you, you were rather young I think, bodyboarding and getting in a little bit of trouble, and there was a dead bird involved in the story as well?

**Seamus:** Yeah... Well that was actually my first near-death experience...

**Frederique:** Oh so it wasn't such a funny story then...

**Seamus:** No it was not funny at the time, no. but the funny part of it was... I was surfing a shore break and it just started to get really really good, it was sucking up sand, it was super heavy, and I really – I remember this very very well, I was about fourteen or fifteen – and a set of waves came in, I paddled over this really ledgy place where the shore break was getting really really intense and insane, and a set of waves came in and the first wave I tried to paddle for it but it sucked up and slabbed up so much I couldn't quite get into it,

then the second wave came and I tried to catch that wave too and I just couldn't quite catch it, and then the third wave came, and I paddled for it, paddled for it, and I kind of... nearly got it but I tried to pull off, but when I pulled off I kept going, I got stuck at the top of the lip, and I went over with the wave and I got winded on impact, and ehm... I remember just being down at the bottom, kind of panicking, just trying to struggle to get back to the surface, but then suddenly kind of stopping struggling, and kind of feeling sleepy and kind of like... ehm... and I had this image in my mind of like policemen, guards coming to ehm... my parents' house to tell them that their son had drowned... I clearly remember that in my mind, my parents being really really upset, and then ehm... Poom! I was back to reality, I was up at the surface, I was coughing, then I got washed onto the beach so I had a pretty... pretty gnarly experience basically and ehm... I crawled up the rocks and I collapsed on the rocks, and then all my friends were all pointing at me laughing, 'cause where I'd collapsed it was right beside a dead bird so like I nearly sat on this dead bird! (*laughs*) And ehm... I think ehm... Yeah I realized I was a bit rattled and I needed to jump back in the sea so I just jumped back in the sea and just paddled back out and got a couple more waves... I think that was an important part of things as well, because ehm... Those things can kind of linger, and your relation with the ocean can be a bit estranged but, I think, one of the words of advice when a surfer has a bad wipe-out, he or she should jump back on the horse so to speak, and just nip back in again, just maybe one more wave, even if it's a small, safe wave, just so we don't have that estrangement of the relationship, you know... [*Shambles, 7*]

**Frederique:** I still wonder about that like, how, especially when you've had a very bad one, how do you recover from it? I read that you had one in which you were seriously injured, I read about it on *Magicseaweed* I think, you had a pretty bad femur injury, how did you recover and did you get the fear afterwards and how did you overcome that?

**Seamus:** Yeah that, that was really, like, I mean, it was a really, it was a bummer, in a sense, but it was a really interesting experience because so much of it was to do with not surfing, because once I broke my leg I... my life changed and ehm... I wasn't in the sea a lot but I mean, I'd been in the sea... that happened I was 31... ehm... that was 3 years ago and ehm... but I'd been in the sea pretty constantly since the age of 11, so 20... 20 years in the sea, and I'd developed that unbreakable bond, let's say, with it and ehm... Yeah, like I mean, I've had lots of days when ... (...) I had these amazingly good days and great days and you come back and you feel great for a few days and then you need more and you go back for more and, you know... but this was a... I guess it was a negative experience, a very scary experience, a very... gnarly experience in a lot of ways, but it had an equally amazing effect in my life and ehm... The one thing I'd really like to share about that... accident, was when I was rescued by Mickey Smith and Fergal Smith and also a guy called Leroy, Brown, was there, so those three guys, I have a really big shout out and say thank you for them 'cause without them it could have gone a lot different, but ehm... You know, in particular, Mickey... and in particular Fergal, 'cause those three guys are great friends, and they have been great influences on me my whole life, and when Mickey came to visit me when I was... initially after my recovery before... after the surgery, he brought me lots of healthy food, he said "Look, you're gonna be alright, Sham", and... 'cause those were the guys who dragged me out of the water and carried me up the rocks and they're... like, you know... Mickey and Ferg and Tom Lowe as well, like, those guys couldn't have gone and done what they did unless they were positive, and like, "Yeah we can do it", "Nah this isn't so bad", and "Hey, this isn't so scary", so ehm... From the very very instant of the injury, their positive vibe was there and I kind of went, "Hmm... you know, let's just be positive about

this, let's take all the positives out in it" and I think so from the beginning that pretty gnarly incident, I said "Look, I'm gonna make the most out of this", so... *[Shambles, 8]*

**Frederique:** So the importance of the group, then... Like, we say surfing is kind of a solo sport but it's not, really, in the end if you have a nice group around you that helps drive the values home and especially when something bad like that happens?

**Seamus:** Well, surfing is an amazing brother- and sisterhood and bodyboarding is the same brother- and sisterhood except it's maybe a little bit smaller so it's a little bit closer, which is really really nice and ehm... Ever since I've been surfing I've been mixing with the... Some of the most amazing men and women in the country... ehm... you know, mixing with males and females in a different (...?) of class, in a different (...) to your village and your... your town... and ehm... I just always felt very lucky for that... (...) and I've always thought, because you surf, you have your own little social circle, you have your friends that you choose in school or in work, but with surfing, because random people just can learn to surf... you are kind of mixing with random people from different parts of the world, from different parts of the countryside, different social strata, different jobs, that you might not necessarily have met before, so I've got, like, friends all over the world, all over Ireland, because of surfing, that I wouldn't have had without it, so that's a really really positive thing.

**Frederique:** That's something I like about the idea of a surfing nation, that it is spread all over the world, it doesn't have boundaries, it's people that are spread all over the world but still share the same culture, values... I think it's interesting to view it in that way?

**Seamus:** Yeah, well that was interesting Frederique, 'cause I was asked to speak on behalf of this "EU and me" campaign, now I'm not gonna advocate the EU, ehm there's loads of good things about the EU, there's loads of bad things about the EU, but I don't really wanna get into political discussion about that but basically, for some reason they rang me and wanted to get me involved in the campaign, ehm I think because of Brexit, the EU wanted to have some propaganda to say, "Hey the EU's great!" but besides all that, what... when they initially contacted me about it, would I be interested I was like, yeah, sure I can talk about it because I've surfer in European competitions since I was 15 years old and us European surfers are a bit of a tribe because the ocean connects all our coastlines and there's no real barriers you know, and once I started saying that they loved me and they selected me for the little interview I had so... I think that was quite interesting... *[Shambles, 9]*

**Frederique:** I have read that initially you considered doing a PhD in physics but then opted for a surfing career instead, so... what's led you to that choice, and what's led you to open a surf school?

**Seamus:** Ehm... yeah, like, that's a really, really, it's a very good question Frederique, it's also a very personal question because when I was in my late teens I was starting to progress as a bodyboarder and I was starting to do a lot more competitions and ehm... throughout my teens, as a lot of teenage surfers would do, well I was watching a lot of videotapes and DVDs, now it's all Youtube and Instagram stories but ehm... I was fairly obsessed with the idea of travelling and I watched so many videos of surfers and all these crazy waves in Australia and around the world that once I was coming to the end of my teens I really wanted to travel so basically I went to college because I thought that was a good idea... Yeah I wanted to travel so I actually started college when I was 17, so I was quite young and ehm... when I finished my fourth four years in college I ended up going off... I actually worked in an old folks' home which was a very interesting experience and then I went travelling in Indonesia afterwards and then when I came back home I basically decided to sign on the dole and all that, but I'd made my decision before I went to college that I was

gonna get my degree because it was a good thing to do and because I enjoyed studying science... I was actually quite young when I started college, I was 17 but because in my teenage years I was watching so many surfing and bodyboarding videos about these guys gone off travelling, surfing these amazing waves so I was... really really wanted to travel, but I was also interested in progressing my education, I was also interested in maths, and science... So I did that, in college but ehm... Always in my mind I was gonna four years in college and then gonna go travelling, that was pretty much a dead certainty from the beginning... I guess in the last year then, you know, other friends were going off to study PhDs, and “Oh I can get a few letters after my name”, and this started another... I went, “Oh maybe I could do this”, but in the end, once I finished college I actually ended up working in an old folks’ home which is a really really interesting experience because I was tending with old people and a lot of people in their early twenties don’t see people in their late sixties, late seventies, late eighties, late nineties... very interesting experience, I mean, in... the end of our lives isn’t pretty, and you know we’re kind of sold this idea of youth, and you know, being in the prime of your life, you know, what you gonna do? You don’t see people like, you know, at the end of their lives and, you know, wasting away in an old folks’ home, and I really loved it, I really loved the work there, and it was really eye-opening because I was a young person starting off in my life, so I realized, what’s really important here, what choice am I really gonna make and then... I ended up working there for three months and I got fired for – I kind of had an argument with the manager’s son... Long story but when I got called into the manager’s office and told, “Oh, we have to let you go”, and they wrote me my check for, for the way... I was like, instead of being really upset I was like, “Ok, so where am I going to go, Mexico or Australia?” and I ended up going to Indonesia for a few months... and ehm, that was it, yeah. [*Shambles, 10*]

**Frederique:** So the idea for a surf school, from my own experience, a lot of the surfers, my friends who work for a surf school in France, they only do that for a while, it seems they just do it for a living and then they’re off again, travelling and surfing. It doesn’t seem to be like that for you, you seem very involved in it?

**Seamus:** Well yeah look, I think when you’re in your early twenties, it’s very very hard to find out who you are, and not just trying to find out who you are, how are you gonna fit into this world we live in, you know, how am I gonna make my ends meet, how I make gonna make money... I was lucky that after college I kind of really really went with surfing, and that gave me the time to like mature a little bit, you know because I think, in the school, school education is fantastic, it’s one of the best things Ireland has to offer a young person, but when I was in my early twenties, ok, since five years old, I’ve been in school, I’ve always had exams in May, I’ve always had pressure and... and... And then suddenly it’s gone, and you can, you know... School is not in the way of surfing or in the way of this or in the way of that... ehm... So ehm essentially... And that’s why it’s quite personal, ‘cause it wasn’t easy, as I was... being a surfer is hard, it’s... especially when you get to the real world, quote, unquote, “real world”, because you’re like, you’re torn between your desire to surf and your obligation to do this and do that and do other things so ehm... To be honest I was quite, quite confused, I had a lot of issues going on that I had to sort out, and amongst all that confusion, the one thing, when I really reflected deep down inside, the one thing I believed in and trusted in, was surfing. The people that I’d met, the experiences I’d had, you know, I felt like, “Oh”, well like you know, academics, study, I was like, “Yeah it’s good, but like”, there was also a feeling of like, “Yeah, it’s not so good...” and then like living in cities, like “Yeah it’s good” but there’s also this underlying feeling of “Yeah, it’s not that good” or... you know, earning lots of money it’s good, but... it’s not that good, you know, and I wasn’t earning any money and I was like, it wasn’t so bad so ehm... But, when

I thought about surfing, I had this 100% feel-good factor with it, so, there I was, 21, and I said “Ok... I’m gonna go surfing...”. And that’s what I did for the next five years. I had a van, and around that time, it was Mickey Smith and Tom Lowe and Fergal Smith and we discovered, you know, Bumbaloids and Aileen’s and Riley’s and Mullaghmore and, you know, all this kind of stuff was going on and, you know, I wasn’t really advancing my career but I was having a hell of a good time and learning a hell of a lot at the same time so ehm... I guess my advice to young people is to, even if you’re not into surfing, if you’re into books or, you know... whatever you’re into, art, or science, or engineering... go with your heart, you know, because that’s what I did, I wouldn’t recommend to do exactly what I did because I got there in a roundabout way but ehm... eventually I kind of found... you know, I stuck with my guns and I didn’t have a plan but I just stayed with what I felt was the right thing to do for me at that time and ehm... things kind of worked out, things have gone pretty well... ehm... But I never expected to have my own business, like, I never expected to have my own surf school, it just kinda happened, it worked out that way, and especially when you’re leaving secondary school in Ireland, you’re given a lot of these tests by career guide counsellors or you’re filling a survey, you know I ticked all the boxes, and then you know, when my test result or whatever it was like, “Oh, you’re gonna be a scientist”, I was like, “Oh really? Ok... well I’ll be a scientist so...”, you know, no one really turned around, no one of my teachers or you know people like this turned around, or my educator turned around and go like, “You can run your own business, you can actually control your own life and also have social impact you know, in the community”, but that’s exactly what’s kinda... since... has turned out, with running a surf school so... it was kinda... One thing led to another and I guess, because you’re following your intuition, you’re following your heart, you end up in the right time, at the right place, you know, whereas if you use your head too much you can... be on the right time and place on paper, but maybe it’s not what the universe has in store for you... if I’m making sense... *[Shambles, 10, continued]*

**Frederique:** I was thinking about you said, that period when you were sharing in the discovery of those waves, it must have been pretty amazing to be a part of that, discovering new trails, this pioneering period?

**Seamus:** Yeah well, looking back I mean, it was amazing, but I guess, like... there was a period of time where I was kind of jealous of Fergal, and I was like, “Oooh, look he’s got to hang around with Mickey and they’re surfing this and they’re going away on that” but then, like, very very quickly, they started taking it to another level, another level where they were surfing like massive Riley’s, huge cliffs, big Mullaghmore and when I was like, 21-22-23, look at that, I was like, suddenly, not jealous at all, I was like, “That’s amazing, but I don’t want any part of that, that’s way beyond what I want”, but slowly, with their inspiration, they were years ahead of their time, slowly, I felt like, I was off doing my own thing, I was playing music and doing... different things, but slowly over time I kinda felt I built up my skills to that point where I was ready... so ehm... and those guys just led the way, I think, not enough credit can go to them, and ehm... Also I think there’s been a bit of an explosion of interest in surfing in Ireland since then, and the explosion, the amount of media and surf media coming over to Ireland and people coming to visit Ireland... but I still think that no one has done it as well as Mickey... I mean, like, ehm... I mean, Mickey... like, he never even put “Ireland” in any of his movies, he never even put “Riley’s” in subtitles, he just... He just let the art speak for itself and ehm... he showed the beauty without exposing the kinds of ins and outs of it... and ehm... I think it was just really really beautiful, and it’s been often copied but never equalled... so ehm... I just wish people took more of a cue on his artistic kinda sensitive exposition of... of what’s happening there... And, you know, as you said before, you know that was quite unique to what other nations were doing, it



wasn't sunshine and pineapples and palm trees, it was, you know, really off the beaten surf tracks so... it was definitely an exciting time to be a bodyboarder anyway... I really think from my age of 20 to 25, even though I wasn't doing anything career-wise, or anything much with my life, in one sense, it was the most... Being an Irish bodyboarder was the best thing you could have been, because it was such an exciting time and there was lots of many people doing it, and it was incredible, very exciting, yeah... *[Shambles, 11]*

**Frederique:** Do you feel nostalgic about that time and do you still get excitement of that level from something else?

**Seamus:** Oh I think surfing is a perennial experience, I mean, you can look back, and I think, a lot of surfers, male and female, they're, nothing, like talking about the old days, and you know, it's a great meet up when you met people, but like... All the talk about past will never live up to like the next swell... that session you've had... it's, you know, surfers are very... As Easkey Britton says, surfers are horizon gazers, we're always looking at it, always looking forward but ehm... I am very nostalgic about that time, and I love meeting up with Mickey, I love meeting up with Fergal, I love seeing Tom Lowe and ehm... Just how it was, it was just an incredible time and ehm... But it's also the people like Hugh Galloway, there was Andrew Kilfeather, Seamie and Tom Gillespie, Fintan, Cain Kilcullen, all these people were involved in it and... You know, I could go on listing names and stuff, so... But I mean, like, you know, what Mickey and Fergal and Tom did was nothing short of miraculous, with the... given support and the money and how they all made it true without killing themselves (*laughs*) or like... You know, but anyways, they made it all work and ehm... Yeah, they're all off doing other things I mean, Tom Lowe is still a groundbreaking big wave surfer, he's one of the... the greatest surfers to come out of the UK, which is a pretty huge feat for that guy, eh Mickey is still an incredibly talented artist and he's a musician, ehm... Still following his muse... and then Fergal is leading the way with maybe the soul surfing, which is kinda going back to what can we do, what can we give back, I mean... ehm... around 2002 and 2004 and 2008 when a lot of these discoveries were happening surfing was really taking off in Ireland, there was surf schools setting up, there was surf brands being set up, there was surf competitions... More surfers, better equipment, better wetsuits which is great, but like, in places like California or Australia where surfing's been around for generations, you know, like those little enclaves like in Byron or in Malibu or all that, just basically the soul surfers and the surf hippies and the philosophers and all this kind of stuff... ehm... But that hadn't filtered through over to Ireland yet, the really... I mean, I think it was there with the founding fathers, and the founding... mothers, of surfing, ehm... They were generally kind of off beat characters, generally alternative... Well maybe not all, some of them came from very mainstream backgrounds, but being a surfer you're on the fringe, straight away, ehm I think they were very forward-thinking, and ehm... Well I think with Fergal, and I'm not saying there's not other surfers... like-minded to Fergal, but I think Fergal, after being such an excellent pro surfer in... well, in so many different areas, ehm... He kind of went into the real... like a lot of surfers that I've met, who are super inspirational and they might not be the greatest surfers in the world, but their values, their connection to their environment, their idea on social impact and what can we do, ehm... You know, whether it's growing your own vegetables or, you know, buying a KeepCup, you know it's... much of a muchness, but Fergal really brought back that deep soul and ehm... he knew, Ferg told me once, he goes "Shamb, you've got two things in this world, you've got your time, and you've got your energy, you know, so be very careful what you put your time and energy into", so I think Ferg just realized this is what he wanted to put his time and energy into and he went ahead and did it, you know and all the power to them. And of course, you know, Matt Smith and Mitch were there as well, Mitch Corbett,



so those guys, they're a real power trio, and all their friends and accomplices as well, so it wasn't just one person, it was a big community, and Sally and all the girls as well, you know... [*Shambles, 12*]

**Frederique:** I heard Fergal Smith at Shore Shots two years ago, he was part of a speech group about about issues of localism in Ireland and he said something like, localism in Ireland there's not so much of it because of our, I believe, our farming background, like we are a rural country, and maybe if you compare to the Basque country or Malibu or Hawaii it's a completely different culture, maybe because of the farming culture in Ireland, where you're used to greeting each other, saying hello when you meet another surfer... And I was like, "Oh, maybe that's the answer to my main question of what's so different about surfing in Ireland"

**Seamus:** Well I think it's like the Irish food is different to the French food which is different to German food, which is different to Jamaican food... you know, and I think every country's cuisine is unique to the country, thus, as well, every surfing, every country's surfing is unique, it's a celebration of differences as well, which is what I like about international get-togethers and competitions, 'cause we celebrate our differences as well as coming together with our... What draws us as common which is surfing, ehm... and... Yeah, I'm a very very proud member of the Irish surfing community, I think it's one of the best places in the world to go surfing... ehm... I spoke to Mike Stewart when he came to Ireland which was a huge moment for me as a bodyboarder and he said... He shocked me, he said, "Yeah surfing is a real selfish sport... surfing is a selfish act, you know when you catch a wave you don't catch it for anyone else." And I was a little bit shocked, I was like, "Mike, you're the man, like, I want you to say that surfing is amazing, and I wanna go and catch all the waves and... you know, he's a father, he's... he's... He's in a marriage as well, so, when he is to go out and surf he's used to taking into consideration, he's gonna take time with his wife and his family, so ehm... I was like, "Ok, so surfing is a selfish sport, you're kinda right there", it did feel a little bit selfish... ehm... And then we talked maybe about the rivalry between surfers and bodyboarders and localism, Mike just pulls a face and he goes, "Some people are just arseholes... and that's the long and the short of it".

But I hate this thing about "localism"... You know, I don't see localism as bad, you know, it's the way it's perpetrated, people getting violent or people having issues that they're taking out on other people, or people are angry or people are using drugs or people are, you know, being antisocial that's... a different issue, but surfing has its own, I guess, the surfer's code, ehm... there is such a thing which, it's a checks and balances, you know, if I'm out surfing, I'm a very go-along and get-along person in the water, I've always been inspired to be especially because I started surfing with Mickey Smith at the right time when I was in my late teens, initially I was gonna get into the competition mode, "my wave, beat this guy, you know, we wanna beat the English team, we wanna beat the French team" and you know, there's that little beat of perseverance in competition, you need to maybe excel in the sport 'cause it's not easy, but then once I met Mickey he was like, "Competition? Pfff! Who cares? We wanna go and get barrelled with friends and, you know, have a good craic, it doesn't matter if you're Cornish or Irish or French or Japanese or... you know, who cares about that kind of stuff" and I was like "Yeah!" 'Cause I'd always tried to be the competitive guy but it just kinda wasn't really me, ehm... but then when I started hanging out with Mickey and Ferg and... surf with all these other rad bodyboarders ehm... we kinda like, yeah, this is really me, I really like this... b=But that's not to say that there isn't a code, and the code is there for safety, and for enjoyment. So ehm... the locals are generally the people who ehm... are aware of that code and if people come from another place and they're not really as aware of that code, it's the locals' responsibility to

pipe up, and so I'm really go-along and get-along in the water, I wanna hoot, and give thumbs up but if I take off on a wave and if an experienced surfer takes the same wave or does something I see as dangerous in the line-up, I think it's my... my... duty as an older surfer to kinda go up and go, ehm, like, "Hey mate," or... "Missis! (*laughs*) "Whoever you are, what you did there was really unsafe and you shouldn't do it again and maybe next time you should try this and try that", you know, so... I don't see that as a particularly negative thing, and not doing it is worse than doing it, so ehm... You know, I'm cruisy and go-along to get-along but if someone steps out of line I think it's a good thing surfing is a self-regulating thing, in fact we actually have an initiative in Strandhill in Sligo called "Saving the Goose" which I think is worth mentioning because we do have an Irish Surfing association which is very helpful and is very ehm... does a lot of work, but again it's based on a very much... The Irish Surfing association is still based, like, on the Irish Football Association or the Irish Tennis Association, it's based on a typical sports association, there's another association called the Irish Soul Surfers Network, which are ehm... Maybe surf elders who surfed before there was hype, before there was media, before there was sponsorship and photos and any international competitions, and they have a lot of good stories to tell and they have a lot of wisdom to give... I mean, ehm... So basically, the "Saving the Goose" is about... it's based on the story about the goose who laid the golden egg, so the goose who laid the golden egg is Nature providing rideable waves, you know, so we don't wanna kill the goose, it's what we're saying. And ehm... There's a lot of people... and I'm one of them, I teach people how to surf, I teach a lot of people how to surf ehm... As many surf school managers do... A lot of people are learning to surf, but they're not learning the code that goes along with it, which a lot of people maybe they kinda maybe learn by themselves, ehm you know, the hard way let's say, they kinda would learn that eventually through trial and error so... And they've, they've a little... They're handing out fliers, just to help people, you know, respect line-ups you know, don't overestimate your ability, and one of the key takeaways I take from that as well is from Mickey, Mickey Smith, and his great respect he has for other people, it's just respect the people that are doing it the longest. You know, respect your elders, ehm you know, maybe you're the youngest kid who knows all the flash manoeuvres but like, you could be the old guy with the beer belly on the longboard, or the old lady who's out there, you know, who's been in it longer than anyone, and ehm... Just because they're not the best surfers out there I think they still deserve their waves and they still deserve respect, so... yeah... [*Shambles, 13*]

**Frederique:** Can you tell me a little story about your favourite wave? You don't have to name it if you wanna keep it secret but maybe just describe where, like, the setting, and how it works, the conditions it works in and how... why you like it in particular?

**Seamus:** Yeah like I mean... I guess, there's lots of waves up at home I like... but I guess there's... there's... one place in particular... There's two places in particular, like Aileen's and Riley's which are two fantastic waves down in Clare, I'd say they're some of my favourite waves to surf and ehm... They were both discovered by Mickey and they were both pioneered by a small crew which I'm friends with most of them... So it's just a very special place for all of us... ehm... Aileen's can scare the hell out of you, and Riley's it's kinda like, it's a scary wave too, but ehm... what I love about them – I could go on about how good quality waves they are and how well they break but, because... bodyboarding with Mickey and going surfing with all the Cornish lads and all the Irish lads, all the Irish bodyboarders we had this kind of very relaxed attitude that wasn't that serious or overbearing, we ehm... would kind of take it... We'd laugh and shout and joke in the water you know, 'cause the crowd was small as well there wasn't an issue with crowding so everyone would wait their turn and catch good waves and, you know, if you caught a good wave everyone would cheer and

if your mate caught a good wave you would scream your lungs out at him... and it was that really good vibe and especially concentrated back when we began... And I feel that that vibe exists still in Riley's so, even though it's become more famous and more and more people are coming to surf there, and the level – it used to be a kinda bodyboarding spot – and now the level of stand up surfing there has got really really huge and I'm actually so excited my stand up surfing brothers getting bombs, getting sets and coming out of those waves with those big smiles on their faces, and the looks on them, the looks of disbelief, ehm so... That's all so really amazing, ehm... Gearoid McDaid, Cillian Ryan are two names that popped in mind there, plus a bunch of other guys ehm... so ehm... One of my favourite things about Riley's is it's just... There's that really great... great vibe in the water, and it's not perfect all the time, you know, ehm... I know for a fact, I give away loads of waves across the country because I don't wanna be that surfer that's overbearing and takes too many waves... but ehm... yeah Riley's, apart from having fantastic surfers it's also got, like, a great respect between everyone who's there, and it's just great and like, you know, sometimes you may be waiting twenty, thirty minutes between a wave, but we're chatting to each other, we're catching up and, you know, even now, going down to Clare the last, you know, ten fifteen years, I've got such good relationships and friendships with my friends down there that ehm... I'd take a trip down there even if there's no waves to go down and visit them, but, you know, when we get out in the surf it's half to catch waves and half to catch up with all your friends so ehm... yeah. *[Shambles, 14]*

**Frederique:** What is the hardest thing about surfing in Ireland?

**Seamus:** Ehm... the hardest thing, I guess, is... when... the waves are bad... when the waves aren't good, I mean, Ireland has a great media profile now for surfing, the word's getting out there, but ehm... the photos can be very deceptive, films can be very deceptive because they're filmed over long periods of time, ehm... you just get the highlights in two minutes, so you don't the weeks of bad surf, or the... you know... The hardest thing about Ireland is predicting the waves and, you know, if any one of the many factors that need to come together are off, the waves aren't just quite... quite right... Ehm... I guess another thing that makes surfing in Ireland difficult, especially in the winter, is the cold, ehm... I don't try and complain about it too much but ehm... Yeah, it makes... It makes life difficult because you have to wear a big thick wetsuit and... You got to really toughen up in really cold conditions and stuff like that but ehm... Apart from that it's fine! *(laughs)*  
*[Shambles, 15]*

**Frederique:** Just very quick, very easy questions: if I was a five-year-old, how would you define a wave?

**Seamus:** Let me think about for a second... if I was to explain what a wave is to a five-year-old, I would say, it is the swings in Nature's playground. *[Shambles, 16]*

**Frederique:** How would you explain what surfing is to a five-year-old?

**Seamus:** Ehm... yeah... surfing is a way to, to... it's like the gates into Nature's playground, you know... It's like a medium, it's like an entry... I suppose a five-year-old wouldn't understand half those terms but ehm... Again I would just use that playground analogy and the surfboard is like your entry into. *[Shambles, 16, continued]*

**Frederique:** What is a good surfer?

**Seamus:** Ehm... the best surfer is the one with the biggest smile!

**Frederique:** So it's not necessarily the best...

**Seamus:** Well there is that too, I mean, we like to see progression in every aspect of our lives, you know, we're looking for innovations in science and technology and environment and all

that so, I think... surfing... since... you know, last century I mean, it's just been constantly evolving and it doesn't seem to be stopping any time soon... so ehm... but ehm... Yeah the best surfers are generally humble, you know, big wave surfers, they got big egos, big waves, big egos, but if you don't have a big strong ego, you ain't gonna get out there in those big tough waves 'cause they're gonna make you feel really really really insignificant so you need to have a strong ego, and people say, "Oh, he's got a strong ego" or "She's got an ego" but egos are actually an important part of our make-up, you know, we develop egos after we're born, because when we are in our mother's womb we don't have an ego, we're part of her so when you separate from her we need to develop our own sense of self... ehm... but ehm... like, you know... I guess... you know, nobody likes somebody who's too cocky or, you know, or aggressive in the water or taking too many waves and all that kind of stuff so I would say, a good surfer is someone who respects the line-up, who... who enjoys the ocean, likes to share, ehm... and... you know, isn't prejudiced, isn't this, isn't that... and other... and, you know... obviously, like, I still go back to the best surfer is the one with the biggest smile because you could be, you could have world titles, you could have competition results on your belt, but you could be a sour lemon in the water and just be grumpy and I've seen a lot of competitive surfers get burnt out and stuff, it's not healthy... but ehm... Then again, if you wanna ask me, like, you know, what is... what is a good surfer, what is a good bodyboarder, you know, what kind of bodyboarding do I like, you know, you might like a certain type of car, I might like a different type of car, that's an endless conversation, you know, but I think that, in general, ehm... Yeah the best surfer is the one who's kind of... just enjoying it and putting good vibes, you know? And that could be the person starting for the first time, that could be someone who's been doing it for thirty years, you know. *[Shambles, 17]*

**Frederique:** With regards to surfing, in Ireland what would you say, either nationally or locally where you're based, what would you say needs to be done to make surfing either more useful or more accessible?

**Seamus:** Yeah, I mean, like... I think surfing's been developed in Ireland and elsewhere to a huge extent, ehm... I mean, going back to this Irish soul surfing, the proper soul surfers from the 60s and 70s who started surfing before there was any... when surfers were really persecuted people... considered lunatics, complete fringe people, whereas surfing now is really trying hard to break into the mainstream, ehm... Like surfing has developed at a synthetic and accelerated rate because of the profit motive in a lot of cases, I mean, ehm... surfing magazines, surfing guides, surfing companies, you know, surfing schools and travel companies, all these organizations are out there to use... to commodify surfing and in that sense it's been developed, and developed and developed, even somehow it's developed beyond where it needs to be developed and overdeveloped and that kind of thing... ehm and I think that a lot of the older soul surfers have kind of, have this sense of loss about... There was a pureness to surfing, which has definitely been sacrificed and, you know... I'm really really delighted to see somebody making a living from surfing, professional surfing, competition, free surfing, you know, running a surf school, which is what my business is, ehm... but I still think surfing has lost a little bit of its soul with trying to be like, you know, like mainstream sports and to try and act like them... ehm... But, in another way, you know, that's what I felt before I started surf coaching and running a surf school, we just had talks this morning, about ocean plastics, about problems facing the environment and about ocean human health, and ehm... before I started running a surf school I was all about me, me, me, you know, I didn't really... I hadn't heard about what Steward said about surfing selfishness, I was just like surfing, surfing, surfing, ehm... and I was younger... And now, as I matured, and as I started to step back and get in the

water and not take waves, and just help other people get waves, it was a real transformation for me, and it really, I don't know, it made me grow as a human, you know, and actually ehm...

I wanna go back to what you said, you asked me what's a good surfer, well a lot of surfers get coached to be the best competitor and the best athlete and bla bla blah, ehm... in my book, it's not about becoming a good surfer, it's about becoming a good human... and that's, you know... if you're being a good human, and you surf, well, and surfing's been helping you do that, well, that's amazing. So that was a big change in my life when I started to go into the water, not take waves, and focus on giving other people the same experience that I had, whereas before I might have been, "Oooh, who wants to teach all these guys to surf, all these surf schools are clogging up the line-up with all these beginners on the beaches" and bla bla bla bla blah, but then I really took a step back and I was like, "Wow, this is kind of amazing", because there's a lot of... you know, a lot of my time was spent reading about, you know, corporate corruption, about social problems, and about wars and about these terrible genocides and you know, all this kind of stuff, actually, really interesting, that kind of aspect of books and literature and... there's lots of content online... so... And I don't need to maybe explain that we're, at a certain point, we're, you know, humanity has to start to learn and to change and to do that kind of thing, ehm mainly because of the environment, mainly because of all these natural disasters, all these environmental disasters, and ehm... You know, that's happening. Then, when I started teaching people how to surf I started realizing, like, well actually bringing, you know, a group of five or ten people into the water, ehm, you know, over the summer, and bringing them back out even for the two hours that they spend in the sea, it really affects them and they can really take that home with them, you know, people aren't gonna learn to surf in two hours essentially, they get a nice introduction, they have a nice experience in the sea, ehm... But I actually thought that's actually a really healthful thing, you know, ok surfing is a very special thing but we can't hold on to it, that's what I've learnt, it's, like... you know... You go back to people like Duke Kahanamoku, he was a famous Hawaiian swimmer and surfer who really introduced surfing to the world, he was an ambassador for the sport, he was an ambassador for Aloha... ehm... and he knew deep down in his bones, he knew from his ancestors' spirituality and Hawaiian culture, he knew that surfing was a panacea for the world, you know, it shouldn't be hoarded, it should be shared, you know, and I think, you know, maybe a little bit of fear, people don't want things to change, they like it the way it was, when only few people knew about it, and bla bla blah, but like, I mean, once the genie is out of the bottle, you can't put him back in, you know, ehm... you know... so... I think all these people engaging in going away on surfing retreats, surfing yoga retreats, you know, going to surf schools to get in the water and especially what guys like Tom Losey does with Liquid Therapy, that's a whole other aspect, the surf therapy aspect of it, ehm... Look at what Tom does with these children with sometimes very distressing mental and physical issues in their lives, and you see what Tom does with those kids, you see the effects surfing has on them, you tell me, we should be spreading the word about this, big time. Ehm... so... yeah I think the more surfers we have in society is probably a good thing, you know, so ehm... Now I am quite glad that I'm actually in a part of that, but then again, going back to these guys who started the Saving the Goose thing, we need to teach people surfing but we also need to teach them all the unwritten rules and the code that goes along with it, you know, because things can easily get out of hand. *[Shambles, 17, continued]*



**Frederique:** My last question is about your nickname, you probably have been asked that hundreds of times but just to have it on the record so, can you tell me the story behind “Shambles”?

**Seamus:** Yeah... I don't know, I guess, “Shambles” was... I was 14 or 15 and I went away to the Europeans in Jersey with the Irish junior surf team and there was a couple of coaches there, and Boogey was the bodyboarder coach and ehm... Chris Martin was there as well, and ehm... Yeah, I was Seamus before I went on that trip, and I was Shambles when I came back! And I guess the story goes, was, my parents had given me like, whatever, £250 to go away on this ten-day trip and, my Mom and Dad, they were my early sponsors, you know, ehm but... Basically, it was pounds as well, because it was before, just before the Euro came in in Ireland and I went away to this surfing competition and I think on the second day there we got a bus to the other side of the island to go to a surf shop, when I walked into the surf shop I saw this bodyboard I couldn't get over it, it was like the board I just had to have it and ehm... it cost £240 (*laughs*) and I had £250... But that didn't stop me, I went and bought the board and then, I didn't really think much of it, I was like, “Ah look, this will be worth it and I'll get by”... But on the way – on the bus back, people were like, “Oh you've only, like, you've just spent all your money on the second day” and I was like, “Oh you idiot” or whatever and then... We actually got back to the campsite then, my manager comes us and goes “Oh, here is Shambl – Seamus, I heard you've, you know, spent all your money... Where is this board anyway? Give us a look at it”, and I was like, “Ah sure”, and I looked around and I was kinda like, “Oh yeah, where actually is it?” and I had actually left it on the bus! (*laughs*) So... 'cause I'm a little bit of a featherhead sometimes, an airhead... And ehm luckily it was on Jersey so it's only like a tiny little island, the bus goes round in a loop so it was eventually handed in to the campsite, but... Of course we had a lot of our friends in Northern Ireland on that trip, and what I love about the surfers from Northern Ireland, is you know, a lot of surfers around the world the copy the Ozzie... Ozzie inflections or the Ozzie language or the American language “Hey man, hey dude, what's up?”, you know, ehm... but the Northern Irish are, just they have their own language, you know, “How you doin' Sham? You wanna go for a few sauces?” and “Watch your blade!” and you know, yadeeyadeeya, so they've a very esoteric kind of language to do with surfing and they're one little fringe group, so what they were calling me they said “You *negumption*” which means someone who has no sense, and “Ah you're only a shambles” that was their expression for someone who makes a scene or does something silly, and ehm... Seamus, Shambles, yeah, after that, then that was it, stuck so... Yeah! I mean it's cool, it's cool 'cause having a nickname, it's funny like, some people might think it's derogatory but... What ended up happening was, no one really remembered the name Seamus, everyone wants to hear Shambles, I became kind of a more memorable name and then... Yeah I never really thought too much about it, and then all of a sudden when I started opening my surf school, a lot of people knew about me and you know and it ended up being kind of a helpful thing, so, ehm, yeah, that's it!  
*[Shambles, 18]*

**Frederique:** You've gone into legend yourself!

**Seamus:** Oh yeah, you said it, not me! But yeah, we'll say now, Seamus is my name, don't write it out, and I've no problems with my nickname as well, but I've no problems with my actual name too, so ehm... yeah, it's a good Irish name, so, I'm still proud of that one.

**Frederique:** What's your plan now, are you gonna celebrate your birthday?

**Seamus:** Yeah, yeah, well I mean I was really delighted to be involved in this Ocean Human Health here this morning and see Easkey here and all her wonderful work done, like Wildsea.ie.eu are doing and ehm... Just so many many great talks and great conversations



so I'm actually gonna just... quite involved in that and I really want my business to be involved and help out in any way I can and so I mean... It's my 34<sup>th</sup> birthday, it's not my 21<sup>st</sup> so I'm not gonna go too mad, there's no real point, all them days are really behind you but ehm... what I have actually decided to do is to celebrate my birthday with a beach clean from now on, because you know, as you grow older some people stop drink alcohol, sometimes your friends are 60 but sometimes your friends are 16, you know, but a beach clean is something everyone can do. My Mum and Dad come down, you know, my niece, everyone can kind of enjoy it, ehm... probably gonna go for a few beers afterwards as well, but them... yeah we did a little bit of a beach clean yesterday with the Irish Doctors for the Environment, so... Apart from that, I'm gonna go ehm... myself and my girlfriend are gonna go to Stoke restaurant, which is my really really good buddy Seamie, they've set up a really really fantastic restaurant in Strandhill, and it just does really really funky, next-level food, so... It's kind of really nice to have a cool new restaurant in my local village so I'm gonna go there for a bite to eat, and then my really good friend Rory O'Dowd who's also an amazing musician, he's playing in the Dunes Bar in Strandhill, he plays regular Sunday sessions with his Dad, his brother, so ehm... We're gonna go and see that, and then... might have a few beers just to finish the day off, and then, apart from that then... I'm flat out for the summer so there won't be much festivities for me for the summer but I really enjoy seeing people come to Strandhill and enjoy our beach and enjoy visiting our island and learn to surf, so... And then, once the summer's over, it kind of gets a little bit less busy, and ehm... like... you know, like... After I finished college, I was just pretty allergic to getting a job in a restaurant or a pub or in an office or something like this, and it's not that I didn't wanna work, I just didn't wanna miss good waves... So now, with the surf school I've kind of found my kind of dream job because I can work in the summer when the waves are nice and small and fun for, like, surfing on a longboard at my local beach, and then during the winter I get less busy and get plenty of time off to chase bigger swells and going surfing in Ireland, which was always the goal which was to find a job or a career in which I could fit in my passion for surfing. Like, life's not perfect but it's pretty good, I'm not gonna complain. *[Shambles, 19]*

**Frederique:** Thank you very much for your time Seamus, some good answers and stories there!

**Seamus:** Yeah it was great to finally chat with you Frederique, great to see Lugha, he's looking really good, he could be a future ocean warrior right there, he looks like it!

## 9. GILES CAREY

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Giles est né en Angleterre, dans le comté de Worcestershire, mais il a grandi en Irlande, où il vit depuis 1992. Il surfe depuis son adolescence et est devenu un surfeur expérimenté bien connu des spots du comté de Cork, où il est entré dans la pratique, et de Bundoran, où il s'est établi en 2013. Après avoir passé plus de six ans à travailler en tant que moniteur de surf à l'école TurfnSurf à Bundoran, il se consacre désormais à l'activité de sa société de vidéographie (Pockets Full of Water, puis Gilesy Visuals) et photographie.



**Ill. 145** : Giles Carey, *a.k.a.* Pockets Full of Water.  
Source : photographie personnelle.

S'il n'est pas un local de la région de Bundoran, il est néanmoins connu et apprécié dans la communauté locale de surfeurs pour son excellent niveau de pratique, son engagement dans les vagues les plus difficiles du Peak, de Pmpa, Blackspot ou Mullaghmore, ainsi que pour son investissement dans la vie culturelle de la communauté. Giles organise Pocket Film Festival depuis 2015, un festival annuel de films et d'art, et réalise notamment des vidéos promotionnelles pour des entreprises de la ville, en particulier l'office du tourisme Discover Bundoran. Giles représente donc un profil intéressant pour l'ethnographie en ce qu'il est un surfeur d'une trentaine d'années dont l'expérience et les connaissances des différents spots le long de la côte ouest irlandaise, du comté de Cork au Donegal, ont enrichi la recherche.



**Ill. 146** : Giles Carey sur la vague du Peak, co. Donegal, février 2019.  
Photographe : Lighthouse Industries (Darragh Gorman).  
Source : compte Instagram de Giles<sup>12</sup>.

Giles est un amateur expérimenté, et des éléments de son discours ressortent de l'entretien qui relèvent des caractéristiques et revendications du type du *soul surfer*. Giles consacre par exemple une grande partie de son temps à sa pratique du surf et à son perfectionnement, et non à la concrétisation d'ambitions d'une carrière toute tracée ; son choix de devenir photographe et vidéographe relève d'un souhait de vivre librement de sa passion sans être par ailleurs lié à un sponsor. C'est grâce à lui que j'ai rencontré beaucoup des autres personnes interrogées dans le cadre de l'ethnographie. Giles, enfin, a accepté dès les débuts de la recherche de m'assister dans la conduite des entretiens pour la partie technique, c'est-à-dire pour filmer et enregistrer les sujets interrogés. Notre projet de collaboration sur une série documentaire intitulée *Daoine na Mara – Tales from the Green Shores* rassemble les informations recueillies lors de l'observation ethnographique, et est en cours au moment de l'écriture de ce travail.

## **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 5 septembre 2017, enregistré à Leap, co.**

### **Cork :**

**Frederique:** Hi Giles, how are you?

**Giles:** Hey Fred, I'm good, thanks.

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about yourself?

**Giles:** Ehm, I am Giles and I am a surfer, I've lived in a number of different places the last while, currently based in West Cork. I'm from England, in Worcestershire originally, but yeah, growing up in West Cork and I've spent quite a lot of time in Bundoran and France currently as well.

**Frederique:** What do you do?

**Giles:** Ehm... yeah I do a few things, the main one at the moment is building, renovating a house in France. I've also been a surf instructor for the last few years up in Bundoran, ehm... and I do – I run a little production company called Pockets Full of Water where we make sort

<sup>12</sup> Lien : [https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt\\_Nlw5gi8p/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt_Nlw5gi8p/)

of surf movies and promotional videos for businesses, photographs and that kind of stuff.

*[Giles, 1]*

**Frederique:** How would you describe yourself as a surfer then?

**Giles:** Ehm... I would be a, I suppose, a free surfer, d'you know, I don't have any sponsorships or anything, I fund it myself, and... yeah I just do it because I thoroughly enjoy it! *(laughs)*

**Frederique:** Have you been seeking sponsorship?

**Giles:** Ehm, not really, I kind of tried a little it here and there just to, I sent a few photos to people and I've made little edits of myself, I guess you, secretly you'd hope that you might get something but that's never really been the main goal so I haven't put that much time and energy into it.

**Frederique:** Have you ever considered to make surfing a career, or is it just a passion...?

**Giles:** Ehm, I've considered setting up a surf school or, doing that kind of thing, I have all my instructorships and qualifications that would allow me to do that, I guess I... I enjoy surfing and... I don't really want to... I just never really wanted to spend all my time standing in the sea, teaching people how to surf, like, I mean the idea might sound nice but it gets a bit repetitive, and I've done it enough and I think there's other things in life that I'd like to do...

**Frederique:** Are these other things you would like to do in life related to surfing?

**Giles:** Yeah, yeah, definitely, ehm like I'd like my production company to take off, to take more work with that, whether work for surf or the outdoors, always enjoyed it, being outside and especially working outside and working with people that enjoy outdoor sports and have that kind of energy to explore and stuff and test themselves so... yeah, maybe...

*[Giles, 2]*

**Frederique:** I would just like to qualify what we mean by surfing so what is surfing to you, if you could explain it to me as if I was five years old?

**Giles:** Ehm... it's a board sport, in the water, in the sea, in the ocean, ehm... close to the shore, where you ride waves... ehm... yeah, it's fun, it's exciting, it's definitely worth doing... ehm how would I explain it? Yeah I guess...

**Frederique:** What sort of surfing do you do?

**Giles:** I generally surf a short board, er... stand up surfing, on a short board... yeah...

**Frederique:** Have you gone in body surfing or body boarding?

**Giles:** A little bit of body surfing, not loads, every now and then, put the fins on and go for a swim, otherwise a little bit of stand up paddle boarding, on the flat days... and... I've done some kayak surfing, did a bit of that a few years ago, that was good fun on the onshore days... ehm.. otherwise, yeah I've done a little bit of long boarding, but not loads.

**Frederique:** So it's all about riding waves, right, so what do you prefer surfing standing on a board?

**Giles:** I guess it's what I fell into, d'you know, I could have been bodyboarder but something about short boarding and I liked the idea I guess when I was younger, I kind of saw it as the cooler, fast, kinda idea, played games and stuff and I'd seen those boards so I wanted one of those... ehm.... I like, I guess, for me anyway short boards get you into places that I wouldn't go with a big board...

**Frederique:** I have one sort of lay man question about surfing so you say that you fall into a certain type of surfing, stand up surfing or bodyboarding or... Is there any such thing as an identity in surfing like I'm a stand up surfer or I'm a body boarder... to me they seem all

related, those sports, they're about riding waves so how come there seems to be a classification or well-defined identities... Is it true or...?

**Giles:** Yeah, it is true, I think everybody has kinda, their sport, d'you know, like, you know there's body boarders out there that will surf a short board or a long board when the conditions aren't right but you know them as body boarders, definitely... ehm... Same for me, I'd be known as a short boarder but I could surf a long board from time to time... er... yeah I don't know why it happens, yeah it's just what you do, it's why happens.

**Frederique:** You ride waves more or less the same way, not the same way but you ride waves as well, and you also get barrelled, so how come one type of surfing gets your preference?

**Giles:** I guess it's just what you started doing, d'you know, like... Bodyboarders can generally surf heavier waves, easier, whereas surfers will struggle as they go from lying down to standing up so it's harder to get into a heavy wave... ehm... And then yeah like longboarders, you know they're, I mean not all of them of course but the majority but those like, it's more of a cruise kind of ride d'you know, you're moving along, you're gliding, d'you know, it's much more relaxed I imagine whereas a shortboarder is looking to use all the power of the wave and, like drives his turns, sure it can look relaxed but there's lots of energy going into it, ehm... Whereas longboarding would be more of flowing dance... ehm and then bodyboarders, like, that are surfing heavy waves, they're just, d'you know, they're kicking in and pulling in and they're holding on for, holding on for the ride I guess. So it just depends what you're looking for in surfing, if it's heavy waves, or manoeuvres, or you just want to get up and cruise, you know, I guess everybody likes a bit of everything, but at the end of the day, some people want to go surf the big heavy waves, and some people want to hang out on the beaches and the points and just cruise and... that kind of thing.

**Frederique:** How long have you been surfing?

**Giles:** I'd say about... maybe twelve years, twelve-thirteen years? Mmmmh... maybe longer? Maybe almost fourteen years now.

**Frederique:** You started as a teenager?

**Giles:** Yeah.

**Frederique:** So how did that happen? Most surfers I know have surfed since they were very young, everybody in their families was a surfer so how did that happen for you?

**Giles:** I... ehm... owned a Playstation, me and my buddy Simon we bought a surfing game, Surfing H3O I think it was, played that for a while, well actually we tried playing it and it was a bit crap and we couldn't really figure it out so we left it. And then eventually once we'd sort of completed all the games we went back to that one, started playing that, and we got the hang of it, completed it, it went back on the shelf, and we started saving for a holiday, we were, you know, 16, so we started... there was four of us going to Spain for our first sort of trip, you know, we'd been planning it and I started saving what little bit of money I had and er... that got cancelled, two of the lads decided they didn't want to go or... I don't know what but it wasn't happening anyways. So myself and Simon said we'd go buy ourselves surfboards, and we gave it a go yeah, I think I bought a surfboard but I had to borrow his wetsuit, which was a bit big for me but I eventually got my own, but yeah, it was all thanks to Playstation would you believe! *[Giles, 3]*

**Frederique:** How were your beginnings as a surfer how long did it take you to get a good feeling?

**Giles:** I enjoyed it straight away. Like, I remember having my surfboard and just being, like the two of us were in his place, we'd gotten back to his house, his mum had driven us up there to get the boards and just having the boards in the room we were so excited you know, standing on it on the floor and everything, like they were plastic boards but, just standing

on them, sort of imagining how we were gonna use them before we got down to the beach. And he eventually talked – no it was my Mum eventually took us to the beach, it must have been a week later, the nerves were killing us (*laughs*), we got down to the beach, and it was, I don't know maybe knee-high, we both went out and er... Yeah we both caught a couple of waves, you know, we kinda figured, we knew what we had to do from the game, paddle into a wave, stand up, off you go! We managed, we were young, you know, able enough, and we'd done water sports, some kayaking and that sort of thing, swam a lot so we were able... Yeah, that's where it started, good old Longstrand. *[Giles, 4]*

**Frederique:** Longstrand, here in county Cork?

**Giles:** Near here, yeah.

**Frederique:** What kind of beach is that?

**Giles:** Just a beach break, standard, few little peaks, just... it was very small. Can get good, has its gem days, but... not amazing the day we surfed it but...

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your first memorable wave? The first one that really stuck with you?

**Giles:** Ehm... yeah, it was at Ballycove. Oh I'm naming all the spots, eh... Ah it's alright, Ballycove, everyone knows Ballycove. So yeah it was at Ballycove, I lived in Schull so I didn't have as long a drive. Myself and Simon we stayed surfing together you know and, we must have been surfing maybe... I don't know, I'm terrible when it comes to times and dates but... I don't know, a year or two? And ehm... I remember getting this left, d'you know we were only getting up and getting left or right and trying to do a little turn and... I got a left and the... the wave I guess it bowled a little bit, I kinda... it tried to come up over me, I got a little bit of a barrel, kinda felt it and saw it and it hit, the lip hit me in the back of the head and ehm... I finished the wave, I remember Simon saying he'd seen, hed' seen the spray as it hit my head, d'you know, and I was over the moon, first kind of barrel, had seen it in the game but that was the first one. So I guess that was the first most memorable wave that I have, it was nice, it kinda let me step into it, a little drop down into it and then it barrelled... Felt huge but it was probably just shoulder high seeing as it hit me in the head.

**Frederique:** How long had you been surfing when you got that wave?

**Giles:** I think about two years maybe, there, thereabouts, not too sure... *[Giles, 5]*

**Frederique:** What's your favourite surfing location?

**Giles:** My favourite surfing location? Ireland. Yeah, Ireland. Yeah I've travelled a bit, I don't know if it's a lot, but... enough.

**Frederique:** You've been to places that are known for surfing, the quality of the surfing, you've been to Australia, Indonesia, right? So... how come Ireland would have your preference?

**Giles:** Ehm I guess because... just really good waves... Some good heavy waves, cold waters, some good people in the water, it's just ehm... Yeah it's just great surfing here. it's... I mean it's hard but it's, when you get a good day I guess it makes it even more worthwhile, you know, you wait a while and... makes you appreciate it.

**Frederique:** What sort of challenges do you face as a surfer? In terms of your everyday life? Have you had to make any compromises because of surfing?

**Giles:** Ehm... yes and no... I guess... surfing has changed my life a lot... hmm... compromises... (*folding his arms*) I guess, not really, I haven't made massive compromises, it's always been pretty easy, ehm... Apart from missing a birthday here and there... d'you know...



showing up to work a little bit late or that kind of thing... but generally it's ok. It's generally been positive effects I've had from surfing.

**Frederique:** What's your favourite surfing manoeuvre? Describe it to me and say what it's your favourite...

**Giles:** Er... my favourite surfing manoeuvre would be... er... my favourite surfing manoeuvre – I like getting barrelled, yeah, definitely. I... it means... (*ponders*) it means (*lifts his right arm over his head to mimic*) where the wave goes over you, creates like a tunnel (*using both arms now, rounding his hands before him*) and you go from in the back of the tunnel, you move all the way to the exit of the tunnel, on your surfboard in the tunnel of water... ehm... yeah, that's what I like.

**Frederique:** Why?

**Giles:** Er... (*ponders*) because... I guess there's so much timing that goes into it, before you can get barrelled it's so difficult and then once you start managing to get barrels you learn about all the timing and how it's a great piece of synchronised timing, all your movements linking up with this wave, this energy, and just the look, it just looks great! You know, a tunnel of water, something you could hardly dream about unless you'd seen it... yeah it just feels really nice... like (*breathing in, holding in*) and then pfooooh (*puffing out*)! It's just that moment of like everything coming together and working, 'cause you get so many times when it doesn't work! And then it works and you make it... it's just a great release of energy, it's a great buzz! Just... yeah... [*Giles, 6*]

**Frederique:** Do you have time to think of anything when you're getting barrelled, does anything pop into your mind?

**Giles:** Just like, "Yes!", I guess, d'you know, I guess, or "Oh no... oh yes!" or "Uh...!" It can get a bit scary if it's big or... No I don't think too much, I guess maybe thought is getting a bit easier in the barrel, I've had like a long one where I'm like "Oh I'm still in the barrel!", sometimes I've reminded myself to breathe, because you're like, "I'm going for a bit longer, I need to, yeah breathe"... but no, you don't really get to think that much. I think the more time you spend in the barrel, or barrels, the more times you get barrels, you can start slowing the process down you know, and starting to actually go "Oh I'll have a little look at that bit of", or... you know, you start being able to use your body more efficiently, it's not all like "Ooooh!! go go go, make it!!", If you've done it a lot then you can sort of, I guess you start to slow it down, and be more relaxed and breathe and stuff (*laughs*). [*Giles, 6, continued*]

**Frederique:** Maybe another one? Another manoeuvre you like to do when there's no barrels to do?

**Giles:** Ehm... yeah, I like doing... I like doing a good snap off the lip, ehm it's rare enough but sometimes I get a good one. Ehm otherwise a nice drawn out carve, just turns, you know like, when you do a nice powerful turn it feels good.

**Frederique:** So it's all about feelings, is it, like?

**Giles:** Yeah...

**Frederique:** I'm still at the stage where the wave catches me more than me catching the wave, the wave catches me and I just ride it until it dies off basically, and so I'm just wondering why do you feel suddenly you need to do this...?

**Giles:** Why do you need to do manoeuvres?

**Frederique :** Yeah, instead of just riding along?

**Giles :** Ehm... I guess they're tricks, you know, if you don't have stuff to do along the way it gets a bit boring, and also you need to stay in the power pocket and being a shortboarder that power pocket is kind of small so if you go outside the power pocket you go too slow, and you sink and you have to start again, so turning keeps you in the power pocket, and it keeps you moving, and keeps your speed up. If you don't have speed it's just boring. D'you know, you wanna go fast. It's like riding a bike, riding a bike uphill is boring but going downhill is quite exciting, d'you know, I guess it's like that, it's like skateboarding, anything, you know, tricks, you land a good trick you're happy... you know... same with surfing, you do a nice big turn and spray one of your mates, it makes you happy. *[Giles, 7]*

**Frederique:** Going back to something you said about that first memorable wave you got, you said your friend Simon had seen you, d'you think it's important to be seen, surfing, and you also mentioned being selfish when surfing, so do you think it's important to be seen when you have a good wave or you just like to do it for yourself?

**Giles:** Hmm... it's nice when someone sees your wave because it's a solo sport at the end of the day so it's pretty... it's not every... like, it's not everyday you get a good wave and then you go back and you tell people about it, like "Oh I got a sick one!", and... d'you know, it's your take on it, whereas if someone else sees it, it's a nice one, because you can share it together, d'you know, they'll give you a hoot or whatever, and then you can also, it's a story to tell isn't it, you kind of, "Oh that sick wave", d'you know, or... and it's nice, even, like, when you're, it's nice to see your mates on a good wave and give them a hoot and you get happy for them which is nice so it works both ways... It's not like you get to see your buddy get a good turn or get a good barrel everyday so when you see it, you're delighted for him then you can help him tell the story afterwards which is... I always enjoyed it, you know, like sometimes I talk a little bit too much about it but it just makes me excited, it's nice when you can share it with someone as well. *[Giles, 8]*

**Frederique:** So it's a solo sport, as you say, but it's also about the group, right? It's also about being part of a group?

**Giles:** Yeah, definitely. Yeah like, there's always a pack in the water, and then there's always your mates that you surf with, they're either in the water or not lucky enough to be in the water if it's good, so you know you've got a, they always ask you what it was like, you tell them and... yeah, you get a couple of good ones, you make them jealous, they'll be there next time. *(laughs)*

**Frederique:** So a little exercise now, imagine I am five years old... Can you define what a wave is? What's a wave?

**Giles:** Ok. Ehm... A wave is a form of energy that has travelled and... yeah, I guess it's a form of energy... it's a form of energy. *(laughs)* *[Giles, 9]*

**Frederique:** So you said you lived in Bundoran for some time, so you would be more of a local here than in Bundoran I guess?

**Giles:** Yeah, I guess so, just 'cause, I guess I started surfing here and I got to know all the guys, ehm.. I don't know, I guess it's where my roots – my surfing roots are so that's kind of... it's where it began and yeah... like, I lived in Bundoran for five years, maybe, almost five years, and... it's my second home you know, I get on with all the lads, everyone is really sound, I've sort of climbed up the ladder to being able to surf, I suppose, sort of sit with the pack and take the good set waves, but there's still guys that are like locals that you still... they're still the locals, you know, I wouldn't consider myself one of them.

**Frederique:** Do you think it affects... when you're not a local do you think it affects your relationship in the water with those that are from the area?

**Giles:** When you're not a local? Yeah it can do, different places, different strokes for different folks, isn't it... some places local are very happy and welcoming to see you... ehm... If it's pumping, generally, the locals... d'you know, it's their spot, they get priority over the good waves, which is fair enough, ehm... But some of them are sound about it and some of them aren't so sound about it you know, you get different... different places... vibes in the water.

**Frederique:** How would you define the vibes in the water in Ireland actually, since you've travelled abroad?

**Giles:** Ehm yeah, it's a nice place to surf, even travelling surfers, d'you know, that show up for a weekend or a week or that, they're always welcomed... If they're greedy, they're put in their place, ehm... But generally, you know, if you arrive in Ireland and you say your hellos and are respectful of the line up, you have a great time here. It can always get like, d'you know, anywhere, people have bad days, that kind of thing, or you step on someone's toe, or you accidentally drop in on someone, sure, you can still get lots of grief here, it's not like everyone is like "Hi, how are you! Great, yes, we love everyone!", it's not always like that, you know... And there are some places where, d'you know, you... you do have to mind yourself, d'you know, there are some heavy enough locals about... ehm... But in comparison to a lot of countries I've been in, not to mention any names... but, some places, you know, you paddle out, and you're told to go back in, and for me, I prefer just not to go and be around that kind of vibe, I don't like it, it's not surfing, you know, it's just aggro, and who likes aggro, It's more about sharing the waves and being happy for each other and... you know, that's part of surfing, it's not... it's not all about "Oh I can get the best wave", d'you know... yeah... *[Giles, 10]*

**Frederique:** What's your favourite board, out of the 9-10 boards you have?

**Giles:** Probably just my standard short board, 5'11, and... and yeah, it's just the board I'd surf in most conditions, so it's, I guess, something that I would get... more suited to me, uhm... yeah it's just a fun short board.

**Frederique:** Ok so you said you were getting boards from Blue Rage, is it? So it's not a local brand, he's not a local shaper? Where is he from?

**Giles:** He's from South Africa.

**Frederique:** How did you get to know him?

**Giles:** Ehm I was working in Bundoran in the surf school, and he showed up trying to – he being Anthony – he showed up trying to sell surf boards to the surf schools and to promote his brand, that kind of thing, and me being a local surfer / videographer / entrepreneur, I decided to ask him if he would be interested in us, uhm kinda, sort of promoting his brand through our films, so d'you, adding his logo to our films and that kind of thing and er... he said he would think about it, see what the rest of team would think about doing something like this, and he got back to me a while later saying that he could do me a deal on surfboards and if I could try and sell them in the area, so I went about asking mates and stuff if they could buy some boards and sure enough I sold a few and got a few at a good price for myself and... That was the first time I got boards made for myself, otherwise I would just not be able to afford it, really.

**Frederique:** Is it expensive to have boards made for yourself?

**Giles:** Hm-hm, depends what brands you're looking at, but anywhere between 400 and... jeez I guess, some 800? Depends on style of board and that sort of thing but, for me, I guess the

most expensive short board you get is somewhere around 700, maybe... I don't know... don't go there! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Why not?

**Giles:** Too expensive! The boards are amazing, I'd love one, but, d'you know if I snapped an 800... 700 euros worth of board, d'you know I could buy four decent second-hand boards for that price, so yeah I just... above and beyond me, really.

**Frederique:** To you a board is kind of a disposable product, right? You break them and replace them?

**Giles:** Yeah. Sadly, yeah. (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Yeah whereas me, I have this expensive board but I don't intend to break it... so it's kind of... and it's a different level I guess. Ehm... How many boards actually have you broken so far?

**Giles:** (*Thinking*)... Don't know, really... a lot... yeah, too many to know, really... I'd say... probably... I don't know... that must be, like 20-30, wouldn't say any more – nah, couldn't be more... I guess about 20, maybe. I'm not too sure really but yeah I guess about 20 boards.

**Frederique:** I was wondering about your this relationship you have with your boards, like you were telling me about this first board, you were all excited and you kept it in your room for a week before you tried it... So does your relationship with boards... has it changed since you've become a more experienced surfer now? How do you... relate to them, do you, like, care, do you look after them?

**Giles:** Yeah I suppose some you are more fond of than others, like, like I said, my short board is my favourite and I wouldn't like to take it out in heavy conditions because I might break it and then I don't have a fun board to surf, so I have other boards that are more suitable for those conditions, yet I love them the same, uhm just they're built better and hopefully won't break as easily as the more fragile short board. Yeah you have to look after your boards, you know, a little ding is a weak spot and that could be the end of a good session. You'd just snap if it had a ding in it, d'you know, so... I'm not the best at looking after them, I'm... a bit clumsy... I can bash them off of things or... uhm... But I do try to look after them, clean them up every now and then, you know... you gotta keep them clean for all the photographers and sponsors! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** What happened to those boards you've broken beyond repair? What do you do with them?

**Giles:** Ehm I used to get them repaired, snapped boards, I'd get them repaired but these days not so much.. I've given a lot away, to artists, guys that would spray them up or...

**Frederique:** So what do you do with those boards when you break them and they're broken beyond repair?

**Giles:** I would try to repair them, first, like, especially when I first started snapping boards I tried to repair them. Otherwise give them away, or store them in the shed, try and dig a fin plug out of them if needs be... But yeah I guess a lot of them just go to the bin, a lot of the time... given a good stack of them to artists, because they'd... at least they're used for something, you know! That kind of thing... Or they're just left in the shed... some go on the wall! (*laughs*) Show 'em off, d'you know, "Oooh that was the one... almost drowned me..." (*laughs*) [*Giles, 11*]

**Frederique:** Do you have a good story to tell about one of your boards?

**Giles:** Uh... A good story to tell about one of my boards... I don't know, like, I guess... my first... no it was my second fibreglass board, it was a Rusty board, really nice, red rails, a bit of orange up through the tail, it was pretty cool, cost me about 500 euro, I took to Indonesia, and uhm... surfed it for a while there, I don't know, maybe a month, and then... snapped it. I was heartbroken, it was like, d'you know I hadn't snapped a board before, this was my first snap and it was such a lovely board and it was really expensive and... I got it repaired, started to snap again, the repair that was done wasn't very good, it started to snap again and then, uhm... I think I got it repaired again and... yeah it was just getting really heavy and horrible and I ended up getting another short board from one of the local shops, just a second-hand board and.. I think I had a big board as well so I had my moped and I had the three boards on it and so I think I just decided that I wasn't using it and ending just giving, we were driving from the south of Bali to the north, up over some hills and around, up over the volcano, cruising and... eventually gave it to some kid on this little seaside resort and, yeah, they were pretty stoked but I... yeah, don't know what happened to it. There you go, that's about the only story about a surfboard that doesn't involve... waves. *[Giles, 12]*

**Frederique:** It's a good story... I'd like to go back to this idea of a pack in the water, I like this expression you used. And you were saying also, that when you see surfers with a good level in the water you try to do as good as them or maybe outperform them because it's what you do, right, maybe it a question of character, do you think it's a male thing to do or do you think women surfers also do that, have you seen a difference?

**Giles:** Between male and female? Uhm... yeah... I mean, anybody that surfs wants to surf good, and do big turns, you know, male or female, doesn't really matter, they want to get good waves once they're out in those conditions, whatever the conditions are, they want to surf them to their best and... I guess the only thing I've noticed between men and women, the difference, not all the time, but a lot of the time, it is girls can bring a bit more fun to the water, it's good because it has a knock-on effect onto the men, where like, suddenly, d'you know, men that were all like ego-y, or, like, macho-y and that kind of thing, suddenly they become much nicer and a bit friendlier and I guess the energy is kind of lifted, or the tension is taken off a little bit, not with all guys of course, you have lots of fun with guys, but that's one thing I do notice, sometimes when the girls paddle out at the Peak in Bundoran or something, there is just a little bit, like a breath of fresh air you know, just yeah I guess they just lift the spirit, they're happy and friendly and they're enjoying themselves whereas men can get a little bit more competitive and a bit more serious, I guess that's kind of a nice thing. *[Giles, 13]*

**Frederique:** About competition actually, there is a lot of a competition spirit in Ireland, like, are there lots of surfing competitions held in Ireland?

**Giles:** There's quite a few, yeah, there is the nationals held regularly enough... Yeah, there's a competition scene, it's not huge, I don't think, but they're, like, d'you know, if you went to one you'd kind of know all the guys that are there from surfing, anyway, d'you know, so, it's not like you, I don't know, everyone knows everyone in that sense in the surfing world, I haven't been to that many of them myself so I don't really know how often they're on, d'you know... I guess it's bigger... It's becoming a safer place, and more accessible for people. So I guess, in turn, it's making surfing grow. *[Giles, 14]*

**Frederique:** For some people surfing is more like a leisure activity they do over the weekend, whereas for others it becomes a lifelong passion, how would you explain that, is it down to individuals' personalities, the fact that for some people it just clicks, and for others it doesn't, some become "hooked"? You've been hooked, right? Can you pin down the specific moment where it felt, "Wow, this is it"?



**Giles:** Hmm... not really... I remember, when I first started I was really into it, like, we were trying to go all the time, and then there was a phase where, I remember I didn't go for like a couple of months and I was like, I don't know what I was doing but, school and stuff but I don't know if I went back and I realized "Oh I really... I wanna do this more, like I missed out all this time", I felt like kinda guilty about not surfing and er... I guess that's just something that grows on you but I remember that time in particular, I was like, "Oh I missed out, I should have been practising more!" So I guess it was kind of the start of the bug hooking me. *[Giles, 15]*

**Frederique:** How do you feel when you know there is good surf out there but you can't go?

**Giles:** Hmm... A little bit sick, generally, yeah... If I can't go, er... pfff... Yeah like just, times when I've not been able to go like if I'm working, d'you know I was working for TurfnSurf and they're right in front of the Peak, and you know you can see it pumping and you're getting your group ready to go for the class and... you just have to get out of there so you can't see it you know, sometimes it's almost worse being able to see it, and it being right there and not being able to get in... Yeah just, ah it makes me all anxious and uncomfortable and... like it's grand if I'm away doing something 'cause I can distract myself from it, but those moments when you can see it or you realize you're not gonna get to go, like it's a bit (*mimicks a sickening, heavy sort of feeling*), it's not nice... *[Giles, 16]*

**Frederique:** What's the biggest wave you've caught so far in the last ten or twelve months and can you tell me about it?

**Giles:** ...ehm the biggest wave in the last ten or twelve months that would be... probably... a wave I caught at Aileen's and... yeah I was super lucky, couple of... er, a friend of mine, Pieter from South Africa, we'd just made friends and he'd be living down in Clare and I'd be up in Bundoran and he came to stay in Bundoran and we met and hung out and he's pretty keen to surf big waves and.... I'm keen, I'm... I need someone to kinda come with me, d'you know it's not like I'm gonna go hunting them on my own, and he was like super amped so I went with him back down to Clare and there was a good swell and... I remember we met at Crab Island and we were looking at it and it was a bit small looking and... it was a bit small, it was actually pumping, and he was like "Oh I'm sure it's gonna be good over at Aileen's" so I... I was kind of like "But it's pumping here, like loads of good waves" and he was like "I'm gonna look" so he went to look and I was waiting for him, waiting to hear from him if it was on or not, and I heard from him, he said "It's a bit slow but there's some... there's definitely some good waves", and he said "I'm getting in" so I was like, "Right, ok... er I better go", d'you know it's not everyday I get to surf a wave like that and have, sort of, someone pushing me as well, so I went up there, and got changed, ran down, got in the water, paddled out, he was already out there, he'd been out there a little bit, and it was just him, myself and himself, and... I was pretty nervous, it was bigger than I'd surfed it before, it was super clean and... I think he got a wave and then I got a wave and I was like, I got a good drop, it was kinda a heart-in-throat moment but made it, I was pretty happy and then paddled out... It was setty so we were waiting a while and ehm... Fergal Smith just started paddling out and this sick set started, came rolling in, like good two, three waves just rolling and Piet turned and went on the first one, I was like "Ooooh, man...", the next one came round and, I was like, Fergal Smith's paddling out a bit and I'll f...ing mess this one up, you know, so (*nervous laugh*), I was, like, paddling in, got in, stood up, ehm... manageable enough drop, little bit on my tail, and when I got to the bottom and looked down the line, I could just see a proper, bowly sort of slabby section of the wave, and I knew, like, I just had to pull in, but I was a bit scared about it, juts, yeah, I just went with it, I knew if I didn't pull in I was gonna get smashed so I pulled in and it threw over and I just got one of the biggest stand up barrels I've ever had, nice and deep



and I knew, once I was in, that I was coming out, and I could just see out of the barrel I could see Piet just down the end just “wooh!” , hooting up like that, and sure enough I came out, he was right beside me and... Ah, it was just a great moment (*now facing camera but looking beyond, proud happy look, folding his arms*), the two of us just... Like he had a sick one before and my first time getting a proper wave there, oh it was, like, nice that we kinda got to share it, you know... and paddled back out and Fergal was like, “Oh, those were two good waves, you know”, so that was even cool to hear, that that were proper waves for here and to be able to get one as well so... That was the highlight of my winter... last winter... *[Giles, 17]*

**Frederique:** So where do you think you’ll go with big wave surfing, do you have this as a goal?

**Giles:** Yeah. I kinda do. Ehm... taking my time a little bit about it. Not rushing into it but I would like, like, I... that’s what I’d like to, that’s what I like about surfing is bigger waves, ehm... well, hollow waves, you know, and I’m getting more into bigger, hollower waves so, just slowly but surely, make my way there I guess... and just take what I get along the way... I’m not – I can’t afford to travel all around the world when there’s a big swell, I just kinda have to get what I get and push myself whenever I get the chance, d’you know.

**Frederique:** So yes, big waves, they are what put Ireland on the map for surfing, you can see lots of photographs, videos online of world-renowned surfers trying to surf them... So how does that make you feel an Irish-based surfer, as an Ireland-based surfer how does that make you feel the fact that Ireland is becoming very famous for its big waves?

**Giles:** Ehm... it’s good, yeah I guess if it wasn’t getting famous for them, I probably wouldn’t know as much about them myself... I’m not really tied in somewhere where people would be like “Oh you can come and surf this wave with us”, ehm... So like it was through media and films that I learnt about Ireland having these amazing waves you know, otherwise I’d probably still be down in west Cork surfing Ballycove and Longstrand if it wasn’t for films that I’d seen. Sure, stories would eventually get to you, you know, knowing people surfing you eventually learn... Ehm... Like, it’s a good thing and a bad thing, I guess. More people, less waves. I guess Ireland’s lucky ‘cause it’s cold, so not so many people are that interested in it, but as time goes on it can only grow I think, so it will only get busier. But I guess that will, I would imagine it will make the people that already know about the waves that everyone surfs go find some other spots, d’you know, because I think, people have almost got a little bit ehm... stuck to what they know and... that leaves for less adventure, you know, I’m guilty of it myself, up in Bundoran living there, “Ah it’s gonna be good here, we’ll just surf here”, when you could go travel and look around, and try and find other spots... which can be disheartening ‘cause, you know, you go and try find another wave and miss out on a good session... it’s hard to do... *[Giles, 18]*

**Frederique:** You said you run a little film productions company, can you tell me a little bit about your business?

**Giles:** So my business is Pockets Full of Water Productions. It started out as an idea to make a film, a surf film, and it took a while for that idea to actually grow into anything of substance so, yeah, it was kind of a collection of people that had the right skills and the right equipment, so... I always surfed so I wanted to surf and be in the film, but also had the idea to sort of put it together, so I had friends like Conor Conlon, he did a lot of filming, and I asked him if he would like to do some filming for this film that I’d like to make, and same with Ben Cole, he came over and did a lot of filming with us... So that was sort of the collection of the footage, and I had that and I thought “Oh we need to probably have a name for the company”, so we were brainstorming for a name for the company and a name for a film, and this is where the name of Pockets Full of Water came from, and

then the first film was called “Wet Dreams”, so yeah... it all grew from that idea, the footage, then the name, then the film, we made the film and then we launched the film in the cinema in Bundoran with the idea to raise funds to buy our own camera so... that’s how, yeah we actually raised enough money to buy our own camera and go about actually shooting for ourselves, shooting footage for ourselves, taking photos more regularly and... yeah that’s kinda where Pockets Full of Water came from, making more films and promotional films and that kind of thing I guess. *[Giles, 19]*

**Frederique:** So how do you feel your surfing influences what you do as a videographer?

**Giles:** Hm... I guess being out in the sea a lot and in the nature you see things and you think “Jeez, that looks really nice”, it kind of gives you an eye for stuff that way... I’ve always been quite imaginative anyways, so I really enjoy, like, stitching stuff together and making edits, I always really liked that sort of creativity, I don’t know if it’s a reflection of surfing in it or not...

**Frederique:** So I understand surfing came first and film making, photography, arts came after... does one take over the other sometimes?

**Giles:** Yeah, there’s probably times I’ve been staying out of the water and filming footage but I can’t miss out on good waves, I’d generally snap a picture and get changed and go surf... But then sometimes I get a job, and I’ve got to go film when I’d like to be going surfing, but that’s the dream, it’s to actually be able to get enough jobs so I can film the job and then sort of edit in the evenings and go surf in the day, kinda, be able to work for myself that way. *[Giles, 20]*

**Frederique:** So I know you’re organizing a film festival, I guess one of the reasons you’re doing the festival is to maybe showcase some of your work, but what’s the other goal of this festival?

**Giles:** Yeah so we’re setting up Pocket Film Festival, it’s an outdoor sport films festival... I guess the goal... I don’t know, really, we grew from, it started back with the launch of “Wet Dreams” in the cinema in Bundoran so it’s just a steady progression... I guess it’s nice because it brings the community together and it showcases what’s happening in Ireland and around the world and other countries in outdoor sports... yeah I guess it’s super fun, we also get artists in to showcase their art and musicians, just trying to create a festival-y day, it’s happening quite naturally, it’s kinda happening and, like... It is, it does require a lot of work, d’you know, lots of people to get in touch with, that sort of thing, but it’s, I guess the idea is nice, the day is always kinda stressful but, when we get to the day we’re like “Yeah, cool!” It’s a nice thing to do! It’s happening, go with it.

**Frederique:** So it’s about bringing the community together as well? Is it also advertising Ireland in a sense as well as a surfing destination and an outdoor sports destination?

**Giles:** Yeah, I guess it’s helping to promote, yeah, definitely, and within itself as well, you get a lot of families coming to see the films and they get to see what people are doing, and you’d hope that it would be kinda inspiring towards kids and stuff growing up in the area, push them to get their mum and dad to get them to the beach more and grow the sport because what’s the point if it’s not growing I guess... Yeah it’s a nice way for people to show what they do, it’s not everyday people get to do that, show their film, show their art, show their photography, show their music, and for people to talk about it and share that, it’s a nice day of creativity isn’t it?

**Frederique:** So it’s a great idea, you push people to be more creative and also to get outdoors, to get active, to get in the water, to go surfing, but there’s kind of a paradox because you want the sport to grow but then you complain that there’s too many people out there as well,

so... like, it's the case in France, summers... traffic jams everywhere... aren't you afraid that this might be happening in Ireland?

**Giles:** Yeah... It's different in Ireland, like you say in France in the summer, it's a holiday resort anyways, you know, people just flock to the beach for the sun and the heat, and sure the waves are good but Ireland, sure it gets busy in the summer... -ish, d'you know, like it can take you a bit of time to drive up the hill in Bundoran there in the summer time, it gets a bit traffic-jammy already but during the winters there's not many people around, d'you know, you paddle out and you can... You know everyone's name, you can say hello to everyone and everyone knows everyone you know, whereas... I'd say it's probably the same in France, you know, I don't think it's... it's not consistent enough to be overly populated.

**Frederique:** That brings me to my last question: where do you see Irish surfing in about ten, twenty years from now?

**Giles:** I'd like to see it... like, the level progress, for sure, I'd like the young guys to try and make sure that what's happening now stays happening, you know, the friendliness and the open arms towards other surfers, travelling surfers, you know... Of course, they still need to put their foot down from time to time... I would like to see it go too far in that kind of localism way you hear in some places... yeah... I just hope it doesn't get too flashy, d'you know, I think there's a realism in surfing, and that's kinda taken away by the surfing brand, or that sort of... There's something that's real about surfing and being out in the nature, being out in the nature and, d'you know, you're kind of with the elements, I think that's one of the most important things about it, d'you know, and if it was to lose that, then it's kinda sad because it would be like a game of football or something where, d'you know, it's all about advertising, marketing and money and it's not at all that, it's a hundred per cent real! (laughs) D'you know? Not that kicking a football isn't real, but TV and that sort of thing...

*[Giles, 21]*

**Frederique:** What advice would you give me, surfing in Ireland?

**Giles:** Just get in every day, even if it's ankle high, onshore, raining, just get in every day.

## 10. IAN MITCHINSON

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Ian Mitchinson est un photographe originaire d'Afrique du Surf. Il vit depuis une dizaine d'années à Bundoran. Il est entré dans la pratique du surf à trente ans, plus tardivement que la majorité des surfeurs interrogés et rencontrés au cours de la recherche. Sa passion pour la glisse ne l'a plus quitté depuis, même s'il se définit modestement comme un surfeur de niveau moyen. Ian a pris la décision de s'installer en Irlande avec sa famille suite à sa découverte du film de Mickey Smith, *Dark Side of the Lens*, qu'il décrit comme une révélation : subjugué par les images de ces lieux et de ces vagues, il lui fallait les voir de lui-même. Il a alors vendu ses studios de photographie et ses biens à Cape Town pour s'établir sur la côte ouest irlandaise.



**Ill. 147 :** Ian Mitchinson lors de notre entretien le 28 juillet 2019.  
Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey  
– Pockets Full of Water. interview (capture écran).

Ian consacre une grande partie de sa profession de photographe à prendre des clichés et filmer les surfeurs dans les spots du Peak, de Pmpa ou Mullagmore, souvent depuis l'eau, ou depuis les falaises au moyen d'un drone. Ses photographies et courts-métrages sont régulièrement partagés et acclamés sur les réseaux sociaux et dans la presse spécialisée. En octobre 2015, sa photographie du surfeur britannique Tom Butler sortant d'un tube d'une vague colossale à Mullaghmore rencontre un succès fulgurant et est nommée aux prestigieux World Surf League Big Wave Awards (édition 2016) récompensant les surfeurs de grosses vagues et leurs photographes<sup>13</sup>. Si cette image a mis Tom Butler sur le devant de la scène internationale, elle a permis à Ian d'obtenir la reconnaissance de ses pairs et des surfeurs de sa communauté d'adoption. Parallèlement à sa profession de photographe et vidéaste, Ian est également passionné d'histoire ; depuis 2018 il exerce en tant que guide pour l'office national du tourisme, Fáilte Ireland. Son site

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<sup>13</sup> Un article du *Irish Times* du 18 avril 2016 intitulé « Stunning image of surfer in Co Sligo up for major award » traite du sujet, et l'on peut y voir la photographie et la vidéo prise par Ian Mitchinson de la vague surfée par Tom Butler à Mullaghmore. *The Irish Times*, 2016. « Stunning image of surfer in Co Sligo up for major award ». Article du 18 avril 2016 : <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/stunning-image-of-surfer-in-co-sligo-up-for-major-award-1.2614604>.



internet<sup>14</sup> indique qu'il effectue régulièrement des recherches historiques dans le cadre de son association avec Fáilte Ireland ; sur son site et son compte Instagram Ian partage ses images et vidéos dans le but de partager ses connaissances des sites historiques du nord ouest de l'Irlande<sup>15</sup>.



**Ill. 148 :** Tom Butler à Mullaghmore, le 28 octobre 2015. Photographe : Ian Mitchinson<sup>16</sup>.

### **B. Transcription de l'entretien du 28 juillet 2019, enregistré à Bundoran, co. Donegal :**

**Frederique:** Thanks for having us, by the way!

**Ian:** Oh yeah no worries!

**Frederique:** If you had one minute to introduce yourself...

**Ian:** Okay you want to say it now? We're recording now and everything? Yeah, okay okay well... If I was gonna introduce... I wouldn't really introduce myself as a surfer, like surfing's like something I love to do and definitely surfing is what brought me here but... So my name is Ian Mitchinson and I'm... I was born in Canada but my family is basically... a patchwork of South Africans and so I kind of grew up between Canada and South Africa but I kind of... Even if I was born in Canada I kind of feel like I identify as South African just because that's where, like, my roots come from and yeah... **[Ian, 1]** I got into surfing a little bit late in life, I was running a photography studio in Cape Town and I'd always been a water person, I was like a dive instructor, like I did diving on the side before... long story but anyway I was into the ocean, and... I always wanted to become a surfer and I literally... I do remember the day I decided I was gonna start surfing. I was in a pub having too many drinks thinking "What am I doing here?" and I saw Kelly Slater and like it was like a surf comp' but they were playing it on the screen in Cape Town, and I thought it looked really easy because it was Kelly Slater, and I thought, like "Jeez, I bet you I could be really good at that! And I really want to do that" And then I decided that the next day I'd start surfing and like... I didn't... I realized how bad I was at it and for the next... well, since then I've been surfing. And I'm still not that great at it, but I was living in Cape Town and after probably about like two years of being into surfing, I saw a video by Mickey Smith online...

<sup>14</sup> Lien : [www.ianmitchison.com](http://www.ianmitchison.com)

<sup>15</sup> Une page du site internet de la Wild Atlantic Way est consacrée à une interview d'Ian Mitchinson, qui décrit son parcours de surfeur et photographe et ses explorations des sites historiques des comtés du Donegal et de Sligo : <https://www.wildatlanticway.com/highlights/photographer-ian-mitchinson>.

<sup>16</sup> *The Irish Times*, 2016.

And it was actually not *Dark Side of the Lens*, it was the other one with Tom Lowe, I forgot the name of it right now, but anyway it was like the Tom Lowe video, and I literally... I was like blown away by it, and then I watched *Dark side of the Lens* and it made me like realize that I was doing stuff that was just kind of like commercial, and it was just for money and for living and like... I was like... I realized that... When I originally got into photography when I was a young kid I wanted to do stuff like work for *National Geographic* and like, I wanted to be a photographer, so I went backpacking, I went travelling, backpacked around the world like ten years and with my cameras, before digital photography and Instagram and everything else... And it was just, really, that video... I decided I wanted to do something like that and I really loved surfing and so... From that moment I decided I was gonna move to Ireland and go live where the waves were and like that's literally... And within six months I was here, I sold my business, sold all my properties, everything I was doing I sold, we just packed up, sold, paid off all our debts, with two little kids, two little babies and we moved here and that's... and that was five years ago... Yeah... Sorry if that took longer than a minute, but that's, uh... That's kind of like... Was that a good introduction? [\[Ian, 2\]](#)

**Frederique:** Yes, it actually ties in with my next question, which is... How did you end up I Bundoran? Why did you choose Bundoran?

**Ian:** Right so when I first decided to start researching Ireland, I didn't know anything about – I actually lived in Ireland years before, that's what kind of made my choice a little easier because I'd already lived here, and I kind of... I had an idea of what it was like to live in Ireland, I thought it'd be good to raise my kids there, that was like the kind of... actually the main thing... But I started googling on where's the best place for surfing in Ireland and although I don't believe it's the best place for surfing, and Ireland is a great place, but what was coming up all the time online was Strandhill... Strandhill, Strandhill, Strandhill... And so I just thought “Okay, that just looks like the best place to be”, so I decided straight away I was gonna move to Strandhill, and we moved there to Strandhill, and we lived there for 3 months and after that 3 months... As soon as I arrived I started exploring the coast and it didn't take me very long to realize like all the... like real good waves were actually in Bundoran... And the reason I moved here originally was... When I first moved here I wasn't making any money at all, and I was actually like struggling financially, and I just worked out how much it was costing me to drive to Bundoran and how much time was involved, that it would probably like... and then I like looked at how much it was to rent properties here versus Strandhill and I thought it like just makes more sense to live in Bundoran... So it was literally to cut out the travelling and, you know, I just figured I was spending almost my rent money on petrol... So I figured... I'll just move there... And you know, I did... Again, I like... Everything I did sounds a bit like not irresponsible but, like kind of, just “I just do it”, but you know, I always research everything, I've done has been like researching if it was good for my kids... And I thought Bundoran, even though it's a tourism town, I learned there is like a good community here and there's like lots of like sports teams and good schools, so so... That's why I came to Bundoran... It was basically because I thought Strandhill... I didn't like Strandhill that much, not because it's not a beautiful place or anything, but just because when it's really nice there, it's like swarmed with tourists and so you kind of want to leave... And it's like all on the hills, you have to go up and down the hill, like, all day every day, so Bundoran just seemed like... I don't know that's why I came to Bundoran... [\[Ian, 3\]](#)

**Frederique:** Maybe a little bit more about surfing, you said you started a little bit late...

**Ian:** Yeah, I was thirty when I started surfing...

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your first memorable wave?



**Ian:** I do, yeah... So... well, I was surfing at Muizenberg, which... So, like, in Cape Town, that's where I was living before Ireland, it's kind of like the Rossnowlagh or the Tullan strand of surfing, that's where like everyone learns, that's where all the surf schools are, but it's really... The waves can get very powerful there and so I started like going to Muizenberg all the time, and the way I got into surfing was... Because I decided to go surfing... That same pub that I was at, there was a wave like 200 metres away and I just went down there like literally the next day and I was walking my dog and I saw the sky surfing out of this wave and it was like, it was huge, like really big barrels, and there was just one person out there, and when he came to shore, he still a good friend of mine, I told him like, "Wow that's amazing, you're surfing, I really want to surf!" And he just so happened to be like, kind of... Well he's actually a lecturer at a university but he's a real intellectual person, but for some reason he just like sent me that like mega long email telling me about surfing that night, and he told me "Go to Muizenberg". So I went to Muizenberg, I was going to Muizenberg for like a few months, and I'm starting... You see, I'm a good swimmer because I've been in diving a long time and so even though I'm not a good surfer I wouldn't be afraid to kind of swim out to the waves, or paddle out to the waves, so I was at Muizenberg and I paddled out and it was like really big swell, I'd already been hit like a few times, but I was like quite far out, and I'd noticed that I couldn't actually see the land anymore because the swell was so big so I was kind of getting scared, and I remember there was so much foam in the water, and like I was kind of struggling to breathe because like every time I breathe I was like inhaling foam, so I was kind of like trying to like breathe through my... through my hands, and there's lots of sharks around there too, so I was kind of like freaked out... And then I decided that like I was coming... Nah I wasn't panicking yet, but I decided I actually had to get back to the... to the water because like the waves were huge, like... like six to eight foot kind of proper waves, and when you're not a good surfer, and I was on a longboard, and I'm kind of like too far, and I literally like couldn't see the land anymore, I was like probably... It was, it's a really far break, you have to like really paddle out far and then this massive wave came and it was double... Well I don't know, it was like much bigger, like the biggest wave I'd ever... and normally I would never surf it, but just out of fear and because I wanted to like get back to the shore I decided to paddle and I went and I caught like the craziest wave ever and it was, you know, it was like... It didn't barrel, it was just a big huge wave and the whole fear and everything was replaced with like the highest of highs like I ever had, and then I was kind of like, I... You know, I wasn't scared anymore, so I just I think... I probably did paddle in after that but I just remember that wave where... Where where you're like... you're going so fast that you could hear like noise, like the fins were "Prrrr", you know... It was, it was like the first time I was actually being... going with the power of the wave rather than kind of like standing up and going along a little wave where you were kind of like... You could you could feel the board was now a... You know, it was now a vehicle and like anything you did would be like very sensitive, and... So I remember that and I do remember like going back and calling my friend, his name's Adrian, and telling him about this wave that I got and you know, and that's... That's really like how it started and then soon after that I actually closed my business down, I had a studio in Cape Town, had five full-time employees... And I didn't fire them all, they actually kind of took over bits and pieces of my business, I sold off like little bits to them, and I moved to a town just down the road from Muizenberg because then that was like kind of like the Bundoran of Cape Town, where all the good waves were, so yeah... But it was like definitely that first wave that kind of started this journey... *[Ian, 4]*

**Frederique:** And you got hooked...

**Ian:** Yeah, definitely. Like, I can't remember there... I mean, when you surf, that's the kind of like good and bad thing, you kind of forget the waves but there's certain ones that like you can't forget... You know, that was one of them, that was the first one that I couldn't forget. Are you gonna like edit out the little bits and pieces? I might not... Am I babbling on too much? I don't want to... like I can just talk and talk and talk, I don't want to like make it boring or something...

**Frederique:** No no no, that's precisely, like, part of it!

**Ian:** Okay. And yeah like, I don't want to go off-topic but sometimes it's hard to answer the question without kind of giving you like a background to the answer,

**Frederique:** No, that's perfect, that's much better than just going straight to the point or...

**Ian:** I just don't want to make it too long...

**Frederique:** Have there been many waves of that level since then?

**Ian:** Oh yeah, like well, so... I think that in Cape Town and South Africa the waves are really good, and I didn't explore South Africa like I've explored Ireland, but to me Ireland is like a whole another level and I have, like... My real surfing started when I came here, and yeah, I've got so many unforgettable waves here, I've got... I've got loads and loads but there's like one or two that really stand out, and you know, I've been injured a whole bunch of times in the last couple of years where I've like literally been out of the water for months at a time, and and... Then I kind of make goals in my head and it's not to like achieve anything more than I've already achieved, it's like to have that same experience again... So around Bundoran I've caught... Well there's like one wave in particular and it was, you know, at Pmpa and... There was like, not that... You know I'm a photographer so most of the time, most of my experience of surfing is like, I kind of switch, it's like you know, if here's really good surfers in the water sometimes I decide just to take photos because first of all I probably won't catch up any waves with that quality of surfers all around, and you know as a photographer it's... To get a good opportunity to take photos of really amazing surfers and really amazing waves, you know, it's so... So a lot of the time... So there was one time there where I decided to, "No screw it, I don't want to like take pictures, I want to catch waves, I want to, like, catch one of these waves", and there was loads of photographers there anyway... And that's another thing if I see loads of photographers I'll be like "Oh, well, I don't like, you know, I don't want to just have want another shot like these ten people", so... So I totally remember this wave and it's almost like, I wasn't sure if it really happened, and the reason is because... I borrowed a board from Wax On who is Conor [*Conor Flanagan*] and he gave me like a nice six-foot board, he said like "You need a different board for... a bigger board for going up there" and for my ability and so on, and like I remember it was a beautiful six-foot and he gave it to me and I'd caught a couple waves and my friend Shane [*Shane Meehan*] and Shambles were there I'm good friends with Shane and Shambles, I work with them a lot, and you know, like they haven't seen me surf that much, and they're like, Shane was quite impressed when he saw me go by, like on a previous wave he's like "Hey!", like, "That's amazing!", you know so I was kind of feeling like quite confident, and again there's like lots of photographers around... So uhm... I got this one wave and I got barrelled like, so far, like I mean... I would like to say for like eight minutes but it was probably more for a few seconds but anyway I was like getting barrelled, I like totally... I came out the end I went the full distance, and I was just like blown away that I did that, like I was like... I wasn't sure if it really happened... And as like bad as it sounds, 'cause a lot of surfers wouldn't admit this but I don't care I'm a photographer, I wanted to be like, all these all these surfers – all these photographers were there and I went up and I was asking them like "Did you see

that wave?” and like none of them had seen it, and so I was kind of like, I was kind of like, you know... That's maybe a good thing, but it was just kind of bizarre 'cause I was like starting to question like “Did that really happen?” So this wave is kind of like an anomaly because I really like did catch an amazing barrel, I made it the whole way, I came out at the end, there's loads of photographers there and no one saw it... So maybe it didn't happen. But so like, I believe it did, you know, but it did. [Ian, 5]

**Frederique:** It's interesting, it reminds me of a question I asked Tom Gillespie... A lot of my surfer friends, they really like it when there's footage of their waves, and then Tom told me actually sometimes it's much better when there's no footage, 'cause usually it's different in your memory, maybe not always better but different?

**Ian:** Yeah!

**Frederique:** Would it really have made a difference to you to have...

**Ian:** You know what, like I think that... I did hear that, that was the one podcast that I listened to the whole... the whole thing just recently when you asked me, and I totally agree with Tom, you know, because I'm not I'm not at the level of surfing where I could judge my style and skills, more just like a souvenir, to be like when we go like “Here's me on a wave”, and you know, it was like such... It was like, you know, I was deep in the chann... deep in the tube, and like, you know, I was holding on, I remember closing my eyes and thinking like because I'm gonna wipe out, and then opening them and I'm still going, you know, and it was awesome... And I totally wanted to have this, to see it, you know, and but had I seen it maybe it wouldn't have looked as good as it felt, and been as... You know there would have been something I could look back on and it would have become maybe less special, because it would have just become like a bit of a commodity, you know, because it's something you've got and you know... 'Cause I've got a few pictures of myself, not many but a few, that I'm like I said it at the start of your question, it's like something that I just want to get another one, you know, so... Because I've got it in my head, and because I've been through like injuries and life in general, if I could get another one that felt that good regardless of if I have a picture of it or not, that... that would be like an amazing achievement... But had I had a picture of footage maybe I would have lost the kind of... maybe I wouldn't think it was as good as it was, you know, maybe maybe... Even better or it'd be like, but you know... That's what's cool about it, like... Uhm when I first got into surfing and I was not as good as I am now, not that I'm that great, I would take a GoPro because I'm a photographer I love footage and editing, I would always take a GoPro with me, I'd almost think like if you don't go surfing and have like a GoPro, it's kind of like, you don't want to go and now I... like I never take... I don't care anymore, you know, I just go surfing because it's fun... [Ian, 6]

**Frederique:** I'm just a bit intrigued at how often you've said you're not that great a surfer...

**Ian:** Well, now don't mean like... I don't mean it... I just don't identify as like a surfer, you know, and not because... I feel some people really, yeah... I don't want to say I'm not a great surfer because like I'll go surf most of the waves or I'll paddle out in most of all the main spots, I got a nice wave at Aileen's once, and I've paddled out at Mullaghmore and I got a not a great wave there, but I'll go and give it a go, and if I get too scared or too hurt maybe I won't come back, but I'll go... go at least once... So when I say... I just mean, when there's such a high level of surfers around, you know, I'm not on that level, and I just... I just... Like for me, maybe because I'm a little bit older or also when I was at school I wouldn't like to hang around like all the cool kids kind of thing, and I just feel that people that kind of like identify as a... as a surfer and make that their like... the thing that they are. I'm not like that at all, so I just don't like to say to people... 'Cause when people say,

especially when you talk to people that aren't surfers, and then you say you surf they're like "Are you any good?" and you say "Oh I'm ok, you know, I'm not that good"... I don't know...

**Frederique:** Yeah the question of identity as a surfer is something I struggle with a little bit, and becoming a parent kind of puts things in perspective a little bit as well but back when I was living with my housemates back in France, all boys, didn't do sports, so to them I was a surfer girl, they wanted to see footage, and I was like, "Oh you know, I'm not that good, I shred white water..." And then I met Giles and I was put in my place, you know, I was like "Yeah I surf small waves", but I don't necessarily identify as a surfer either, it's not something I define myself as, but because you do it you still are one... So it's something I want to try and explore a little bit...

**Ian:** Yeah, like... I don't want... I don't want the ideals of surfing and like the rules of the surf community to like affect me or to be like something that I like make my judgements based on, you know. And... but it's kind of like... I'm not saying that I'm a good surfer or not but I just don't like... I don't even like to say I'm a surf photographer because, you know, I've been a photographer for a long time but I only started doing surf photography when I moved to Ireland, so I've only been doing it for five years, so I wouldn't say to people "Oh I'm a surf photographer", so it's just more of like... I don't know, I don't know... Maybe it's an insecurity thing, you know, it's like you... you just know, like, when there's people that are as good as Giles or like, people like Noah, and those are your friends and people you surf with, and they're like literally doing backflips on the waves and, you know, you're just happy to kind of like stand there in the barrel, you know, that's what I mean I think...  
*[Ian, 7]*

**Frederique:** It's humility, I guess...

**Ian:** Yeah...

**Frederique:** Is there... you don't have to name it, but is there a particular wave here in Ireland that you particularly like?

**Ian:** Well you know, see... Again... There I wouldn't have one particular wave that I like for all reasons, I have... I like different waves for different reasons. So my most experienced wave and, or the wave that's affected me the most and one that I've like literally just caught like a little miniscule wave at, and it's not really... It would definitely be Mullaghmore, but it's more just because... like, to experience what happens there, you know, like I'm just... To sit there in the channel and watch people surf and see like just how powerful the waves are out there, like there's nothing that compares to that. Aileen's too, you know, but it's more just... it's more just what it looks like and just to see like... people, what they're prepared to do and what they can do in it, and you know... So, so definitely like... The wave that... I that, you know, I always keep coming back to but more as a photographer, regardless if I'm standing on the land with a tripod or if I'm like sitting there in the channel, whatever, it's definitely Mullaghmore... And... but I... You know, the thing about it is, like I said this once, it was actually to my friend Adrian, the same one that kind of helped me get introduced to surfing, it's like, that's the wave, in this area that's the wave where like you learn who you are. Like you learn how you handle stress, how you handle situations, and you know, I don't want to say 'cause I don't think that like, if you surf big waves that makes you brave or smart or something like that, but it definitely... You witness like what people... there's like a certain thing... And I kind of attribute it or like compare it to as if you were a soldier, and you were like going to go into a battle, you know, you could be like the bravest guy, the bravest, the best soldier prepared to do anything but like, when the bullets are flying over your head, you make cower in the corner, it doesn't matter if you're

a big strong person or if you're... if you're like not... You know... Or if you're like a little computer nerd at home... In that situation you become a new person and you... Then being out there, you like witness it, you know, and you witness, like you see it and then you can see, you know, the euphoria and the highs of like what happens when things go right... And then also you see the tragedies of what happens when things go wrong... [Ian, 8] And me personally, like I got injured at Mullaghmore, and I got... I burst my eardrum and after my ears started ringing, and it still rings to this day, just rings and non-, non-stop rings, and rings rings for my life, and the doctors have told me it's never gonna go away... So it's like every time I hear it I think of Mullaghmore... [Ian, 9 (1/2)] So but as a surfer the waves around Bundoran, like you know, I'm not, like the waves I like to surf are just the kind of normal waves, like the Peak and just a few... You know, like Pmpa is like, I love Pmpa, I'd say for it to be able to surf because I can kind of get some waves or I'm prepared to like go for them, you know, and it's pretty mental out there, and like yeah, if you get... get one there, it's... it's insane...

**Frederique:** Yeah I remember the first time I saw Pmpa it was... end of the autumn two years ago, the first time I saw it it was pumping, there were guys in the water, guys on the rocks there cheering the guys on, one after the other, and when you see that for the first time, and you're just a beginner, and you see this, it's kind of a rodeo show, where the guys are taking turns and being cheered... And then, a week later, I was at Mullaghmore and that was a whole different level...

**Ian:** Yeah, it's like a whole different thing, yeah...

**Frederique:** The last session I was at Mullaghmore was in October, no in November, it was like really big, Giles was in there, and I was like... Everybody went in, it was a Sunday, there were loads of people from town were there, from the cliffs it was just a show, and such an experience, you almost experienced... I wouldn't say the personality of the wave, but you got a glimpse of it from the cliffs, I can't imagine what it's like when you're in the channel like you... And I wanted to ask you about Mullaghmore 'cause I read about how you got injured in written form, but like, would you mind telling me that story, like, orally? I know it may still be a little bit painful still?

**Ian:** No it's fine, like you know, I'm... For me it's... it's a life lesson, it's like... I call it my rebirth, you know, because I decided, like I decided that day that I was... My priorities were in order, you know, like so, it's not a like... a bad story for me... But the only thing I don't like about is the fact that I have ringing in my ears that like, literally that I can hear all the time... But so yeah yeah... So... so how do you... You want me to tell that story? Okay well, so the reason that I was out there that day was more of like... I'd actually had surgery on my shoulder three months before I got hurt at Mullaghmore, and the surgery was to do with an actual... another injury that I had down in Clare and I'd kind of pulled my arm, I'd hurt my shoulder basically, and like from that day my shoulder kind of never really healed properly, and it took me two years... There was a point where I couldn't lift my hand above my head anymore, so I actually stopped surfing or when I was surfing I could only surf and paddle with one hand, and then I got like too sore, so that was a lot of the reason why I was also taking photos... And when I had the surgery it was like way more hectic than I thought it was gonna be, I just thought they were gonna go in and do like keyhole surgery and they didn't, they like cut my whole shoulder open, and they drilled away like a big piece of bone and it was really really hectic. And the doctors even said I might not be fully restored because before the surgery I couldn't lift my arm... I couldn't lift my arm up more than thirty degrees, so I couldn't touch my head or anything... without help and... so I had a useless arm. And I just remember lying in the hospital after the surgery and I even I remember, I even took a picture of it, I've got the picture still, and I like made a statement

on Instagram and I said like “I can't wait”, like, “I'm feeling good” (I wasn't feeling good), that I'll be back and I will get barrelled again, like I will be inside the barrel again, I will take photos of it again, and and... But by that time I hadn't been, you know like... I haven't actually been out to Mullaghmore that many times, it's not more than like 10 or 15 times that I've been out there in the channel... But I've vowed to go back, and you know like, there's such... There's like... When I was out there, I was after the Mickey Smith era but I just was lucky enough to be out there at a time when it was just... There wasn't a lot of other people out there... And since I was injured the game (if we can call it that) of surf photography got like raised by some of the younger guys, because like, they're... A lot of the surfers that are like conditioned to take the beatings out there were now like swimming out there and going like deeper, with like wider lenses than me... So I wanted to say... I just decided in my head like I wanted to like... I could still... I could do that too, and it became like an obsession for me that I just wanted to like get back out there to Mullaghmore... It was kind of like, that I would... I would be like back out there, you know, because it's like, really... and it's not... It is something, you know, like a personal goal and it's fun, but it was more like to prove that I could still... I could still like do it or something, I don't know, it's not like... I'm not... It's not something I'm proud of, but I became obsessed with getting out there... So it was only like maybe three or four months after my surgery and so I was still like in pain, and I had only gone surfing once since my surgery the day before that day, so in no way was I like ready to go out there... But I went out there and I was on the ski... and... with Peter Conroy... And he told me to jump off because I have to go, because a lot of times I will do some swimming, but I might be sitting on the back of a ski, but it'll be like the rescue guy, so they'll tell me to jump off to go do a rescue, and so I jumped off and they wend and did the rescue... And then I just felt like in my head, like everything felt okay, so I decided like “I feel okay”, you know, and so I decided to swim in in deep... And I took... You know, it was like doing great, I was there and there was like... The thing is, it was really dark because it was like a real dark morning, and the sun was still coming up so I was... I was like shooting shots but it was like the light wasn't good or anything like that... And because I'm not experienced swimming out that deep I didn't... I wasn't really able to tell... like... if I was like, you know... The water changes depending on how big the next wave is gonna be and if you're out there a lot, you can actually start telling like, from the photography... I call it the cherry, there's like a certain place out there that, if you're sitting on the cherry you get the shots... So I was like trying to find the cherry... But anyway like, that's what we call it, or that's what like I named it and ehm... So I was trying to find the spot... the right spot... and I was doing good, and like I was feeling good, and I was feeling strong because I am a good swimmer and I was swimming under the waves, and like the next one came and all was good... And I just remembered the water started like churning, it started like going... And I didn't know like, that was like a trigger warning, and one of the Dutch guys in ski like came up like, “Are you okay here?” and I was like “Yeah yeah, I'm fine, like, this is fine” and he was like “All right...” and just like took off, but he didn't say to me like “You realize there's a like, like 25 foot wave about to come break here?” And it's not his fault at all, 100% everything is my fault, like I never would blame anyone, like it's all me, but anyway that's what happened... And then I just remember seeing... and I like I've got it all on footage, so that's the kind of... The thing is I was recording on my GoPro so the whole thing is kind of recorded, it's like this 50 minute long recording, and I just saw like all of a sudden it was Nick von Rupp and he was like paddling into the wave, and then I just looked.... And it was literally like like... Well after I was told by some of the guys in the land that, you know, some of the guys that are regulars out there, they said it was like 20-25 foot wave so... That's by their standards... So it was a big huge way basically, and I just remember it was monstrous...



And I kind of went like the... My instinct was not to look at it, and like rather look through the camera because then it wouldn't be there anymore... So I just started like taking photos, feeling okay, and then so... I was swimming up and then like Nick von Rupp, I just remember like, came flying by me like a hundred miles an hour and... I don't think I realized like I was kind of at the top of the wave, so it didn't seem like it was huge but it was like... I wasn't like looking behind me, but when you're on the wave before it actually turns, I don't think you can like appreciate the scale of it, so I decided to like just start swimming down, just swim underneath it, and I'm swimming down, and like as I came to the top I could see the top, and I was like getting to it, and all of a sudden like I just couldn't get to the top... And like I could like feel it, I was like grabbing at the top of the water, like my hand was coming out the water and then all of a sudden I just... It was almost like... like an orca whale grabbed my foot and just pulled me down and I just went down like, it was just like it was just like falling off a building, and I remember thinking like "Okay, I'm gonna go down now", and I try to hold onto my camera because I had a camera with me like, and the camera just got like pulled, but it is like... pulled away like, but I had a leash on so then I felt like the leash was pulling me, like even deeper, but the whole time it's going deeper, I felt like... I didn't feel like I was getting turned around, I felt like I was just falling... Like it felt I was falling off a building... And... but the whole time my ear started going "Dzzzzz...", I could feel the pressure building up and also it went "Poooff!"... And then I got like... then I wasn't sure if I was still attached to my camera because I thought I was... And then I decided to... Because I've done breath-holding training, and actually that training session... I wouldn't like to say it saved my life, because I probably would have just passed out and come to the top and the rescue guys would have saved my life, but I feel like the training kicked in, and... And also from my diving that I just kind of decided... I just held my breath the whole time... And I just... I started to swim up like, I felt like... I closed my eyes and I felt like I wasn't falling anymore, and I opened my eyes and it was just pitch black... And then I was like "Okay let's just close them again"... And then like I decided to start swimming up but I didn't know if I was swimming up... I felt like I was swimming around in circles... Or I didn't know what I was doing, so I just decided to not swim up anymore... And then like I felt like I was trapped there... Like I couldn't go up or anything, like I just felt like I was trapped, and I couldn't hear anything and then I just decided to like... I remembered like "Don't like panic", and just like "Don't like fight it", and just "Hold on", so I just just grabbed my... Because I didn't have a jacket on or anything... I just grabbed my wetsuit and I just like... just like said "Okay, I'm just gonna hold my breath", and I just remember hearing the water like and I thought like "Okay I must be close now", and then as soon as I got to the water, I remember opening my eyes, and like I was like "Okay I'm here", and then there was another wave... And it was like just like two seconds, I didn't even have time to take a breath and... And then like... I don't know what happened like... so I don't... I think I might have actually... So so then I got like turned in the other one, but it was more... That was more like tumbling and tumbling and but I don't actually remember it very well... And I kind of think that I was under water for about 25-30 seconds but some other people have said that maybe I wasn't, and then maybe like and... And I don't dispute it because it wasn't recorded and I wasn't like hundred percent conscious, but I think that maybe what happened is, when I burst my eardrum and I went down I might have actually like passed out, but I didn't hold my breath... And like all these things that happened were actually me being unconscious and it was something I imagined, like I don't know... But my camera was recording the whole time, and it recorded for 30 seconds before it came to the surface... And so I kind of think that like, the camera is way more buoyant than me, it's filled with water like you take a camera down and you let go of it it goes flying up to the top because it's filled with water

and pressure, but so like technically, like if you swim to the bottom of the ocean and let your camera go it'll get to the top before you will... So I just kind of attribute it that it was probably down for 25-30 seconds, but if I wasn't, then I would have actually been on the surface with my face in the water having complete vertigo, holding my breath, thinking I was underwater... But regardless, I just sat there and held my breath, so that's what happened... And then ehm... Peter Conroy came to me, and he told me, like this was after the second wave and like, I was kind of like... I came to or whatever, and he told me to climb onto the sled, and that was like, I couldn't like... I mean, I did... I was able to, but when I tried to lift my arms up nothing worked, like my body didn't work, it was kind of like... like... Because I was so weak, all my oxygen had been depleted... And so then I was able to kind of like get on, and then I just said, the first thing I said "I lost my camera", he's like "Don't worry about your fucking camera" (*laughs*) And so then, we then... I jumped on but like, the thing is, when I went down and I heard my ear burst, I heard "Toooooooo", it started as soon as it burst, I just started hearing a ringing, but... So I like, I didn't think so then I got... I hopped on another ski with the Dutch guys and we drove around looking for my camera, and then we couldn't find it, and then like they took me to the shore, and then I just remember, like, getting on the shore and I like had like a nervous breakdown... I was like crying or whatever, like just because I couldn't believe like I almost died, like I literally almost died, definitely... And then... But then I kind of came to a bit, and I went up to the shore and some of the guys were like "Hey man, that was pretty gnarly!" And I was trying to like be cool about it and... But I was like "Yeah but I lost my camera", and then Dylan Stott was there, he was doing rest safety but from the land, because they talk to the guys in the ski, and he was on the walkie-talkie, and then we heard like, I'm there like... I remember I saw in the water a yacht sailed into the line up, like a flipping yacht, like something I've never seen, and I didn't know what was going on, but like there was a yacht there, I just thought maybe there was a photographer on the yacht, they wanted to get a good angle, but it turns out that yacht had like... And this was about 40 minutes, or maybe like, yeah, maybe about 20-30 minutes after I'd been on the land, and then I heard on the walkie-talkie "We've got his camera"... Because what happened, my camera had like floated out into the channel and this yacht had passed it and picked it up, and then they brought it to the skis, and then the skis brought it to the harbour, and then someone brought it to me... and then like I got my camera, and I looked at it and I saw the GoPro was still like recording, and I was like "Oh my god, it's still recording" and then I turned it off... But so like, the kind of whole journey was recorded, and I have like the video of it... But you know, I was kind of like, I wasn't fine, I had to go to the hospital after, and I was like... I just remember I was like, I didn't know where I was, because like the whole ear and whole neck was like filled with water like, water had gone in and was trapped in there... And they like literally, I remember they just gave me aspirin, or like, you know, like... They're like "Yeah, just gonna have to... You burst your eardrum, like, it's gonna heal in a few weeks, don't go in the water for three... for a few months", they said... And so it was fine kind of, like, I came home... And yeah, and I came home, and like... But I felt embarrassed of what happened, because of like, you know, everybody... Well whatever, like, I just felt embarrassed, and I was trying to like sleep, but I couldn't sleep, and there was like all that stuff coming out my ear, blood and yellow stuff, it was really gross and so I just decided to go out and have a drink... And... But I heard this like ringing, but I just kind of attributed it to... Being like "It'll go... get better", and I like went and had drinks, and just to see everyone or whatever, and just to kind of like... 'Cause I couldn't sleep, but it was like about a week later that the ringing was still going, and like I had to go to it and see the doctor, and I was like "I don't know what it is, but there is like ringing, and it's like... I can't sleep, I can't concentrate... I've got kids, I can't concentrate, because I can only hear

the ringing” And then they said “Well it could be this thing called tinnitus”, and I was like “I don't even know what that is, what is that?” And they said like it might go away but it might not, and then that's like... Then I kind of went into like a mental spiral like, and it took me... I had to go see... I had to like be on medication, and I like became very depressed, I became like suicidal, like because I... It wasn't because I wanted to be like that, it's because I couldn't concentrate, I couldn't sleep, and I told the doctor “I can't sleep”, but it was like... It's kind of like having an anxiety attack that doesn't go away, because once you realize this is something you have to live with for the rest of your life, that realization is like a big... It kind of like changes everything in your life, like it changed everything, because it's like having a disability all of a sudden or... But like having this kind of like, like a disease or something, like realizing you've got like this thing... Now you do get better with having it but... So that's why I say it's like a rebirth, because when I decided when all that happened that I wasn't gonna like do stupid things like I'd been doing, and like I realized like what's important, like it's definitely not going surfing or taking pictures, it's like my family, and like you know, taking care of them, and so on... So yeah, I don't want to carry on about it, it's like... I'm not really that embarrassed to tell people, but like the doctor wanted to send me to like the psychiatric ward, and all kinds of stuff because I said, like you can't be like carrying on like this... If you need to be medicated... And like the thing is... Then I just started watching like YouTube videos and whatever about it, and that actually kind of helped... And I know it sounds corny but like, when I found out like a lot of musicians get it and loads of like people, like loads of famous people have it, and then I know it sounds dumb like I said, but when you then like look at them talking about it, they say like, you know, oh well, you say “Well, they're... they're... they're able to live with it, so maybe I can too” kind of thing... And you know... and then you learn this thing called habituation, like where basically your brain kind of just gets used to it a little bit, so just become something that's... It's kind of just something that's there, you know, like your new little friend that lives in your head... Yeah that annoying little friend, like you can't sleep like... But anyway, so that's... that's that's... kind of what happened... But it's kind of, a good thing happened because I was always successful, I kind of became... financially like I've always had businesses and been able to take care of my family, and like go on holidays, and and... Then when I moved to Ireland I got into surfing I just became dirt poor, like for years.... And it was really tough... And then I just decided that day, like “No, I'm... I'm gonna fix everything”, and I started doing it, and like it's been two years now since that happened, and like I was able to... My life's changed since then, like completely... And I still go surfing and stuff but I always have it in my head like... not to be stupid, because... If you look at what you're willing to risk when it comes to surfing and going in the ocean, the reward is just like a bit of euphoria, a bit of a high, it's not really like... It's not a good investment, you know... So I decided... I decided like... That I don't care about surfing anymore... But I love surfing, and I still go surfing all the time, and I'm gonna stay here, and it's because of the waves like... I can't wait to go get that barrel that was never recorded... It might not ever actually happen again but... But I don't care about it if I don't or something because of that... **[Ian, 9 (2/2)]**

**Frederique:** It's interesting what you say about getting your priorities right since day... It's something I've wondered about you, Giles, for example as well, like when I met Giles he wanted to surf bigger waves, that was the main goal, but now we have a baby son so... Obviously I wonder like... From my perspective I don't want to surf bigger waves, but I'm still a little bit generally a little bit more careful in what I do now, I wonder... When you're a big wave surfer, when you wanna surf big waves, like how does that affect you as well...? So that's kind of... it's interesting to see how you evolve with it or not... Another friend of

ours, Pete from South Africa, he just had a baby son and he still surfs massive waves, he's just mad for them... So it's something I wonder, the psychological side of it, like the urge...

**Ian:** It's definitely some kind of addiction, you know... And like definitely... And you know, it's also something that's very hard to let go of, because like I said, I didn't grow up with surfing, I was definitely an outsider that like decided to get on the inside and like learn and become absorbed with surfing, I made that conscious decision.. So it might like... No one in my family surfs, nobody understands it like, so I don't come from that actual culture of surfing... But you know... but I kind of like... I document people that do it, and I see it, and I do think that like... It's an addiction, and it's a good one, but it's also not a good one... You know... and I think that... If you like... I think a lot of people don't recognize what it is that... that it's like... It's almost like a little bit being one-dimensional, because it's like... They... they focus on that and that's like everything for them, and it's almost like nothing's like really important... That's like, compared to that... And I don't want to like... I don't judge people, or just for me personally, because I've got a lot of other experiences, because I don't come from that culture... I like made it like super duper like important to be on all those big swells and like to be in the channel, make sure I get the shots or whatever... And ehm... so I think I experienced it, but then I like... because of what happened I realized like it doesn't actually matter, you know, like I don't really care like... And you know... But it is hard because you don't want to miss it it's that FOMO, like the ultimate FOMO, that Fear Of Missing Out or like... And also you know, when other people like start it, as a photographer, and other people start doing it, you don't want to like... You achieve something, you want to like keep it, you know, you still want to like relive it, or you don't want to like let go of it... It's kind of like accepting you're getting old and not being able to do it anymore, ou don't want that day to come. So you keep going back... But yeah, I don't know... But I could be wrong, and you know, other people... That's what's great about life, you know, you get to choose... *[Ian, 10]*

**Frederique:** Yeah about going back, actually, the next wave, your next day out at Mullaghmore after like that accident, that wipe out, and even since then, I guess, you have a constant reminder of that day, so how do you deal with fear and... maybe potentially vulnerability? Like, you're just swimming like, not that your surfboard is really helping you in any way, but you're just out there by yourself with your expensive gear as well, so how do you deal with that?

**Ian:** Well, in all honesty, since that happened I've only gone out to Mullaghmore once again... in the channel... And I just did it to prove I still could do it... And and like the day I went out, I didn't swim but it was double the size, like the swell charts were like twice the size of the day I got hurt... And I was like, it was like super anxiety, definitely but well I just decided I'll never like go swim... swim in, like, if I do something like that I will need a partner. I don't want to... I've... A lot of the time I was going out there without, like... Like the jet ski guys are there, but they're there to do the rescues, they're not there, like, their job or they're not there to like help photographers, basically like. If you want to go out there and take photos and you get them in a bad situation they'll come rescue you, but they're not there to help you take your photos... So like, I decided, for me to continue doing that, I need a buddy. Like so you know it's... But again, it's not really... I still will go out but I got like really into more into like drones and stuff like that, you know, doing films and whatever, but I like... I totally will be out there again... 100%, but not not in a way like... Not not when the risk level is so high... So basically I try to cover all my bases and, you know, it's it's not... It's not that dangerous, as bad as it sounds, like what happened to me is like a freak accident, and it's like something like, I shouldn't have been out there yet,

I should have like trained a lot longer and so on, so it's like something that I could blame myself for, so I just try and not make the same mistake again. *[Ian, 11]*

**Frederique:** I wonder actually... You say that thing about Mullaghmore, you really like that wave, so I wonder... You see, after that big swell in November (I'm trying to bring up my question in a way that makes sense!), there were loads of pictures, there were loads of shots 'cause it was such a nice big day...

**Ian:** Yeah I know that day, yeah.

**Frederique:** There were loads of pictures, like, wave after wave after wave, and it is a beautiful wave, there is a fascination for Mullaghmore... And so I wonder, from the surfers' perspective, there's a lot of surfers going on, you know, that quest for the perfect wave, so I wonder, for the water photographer or the surf photographer, is there such a thing as either the perfect wave to shoot or the way to capture in the most perfect way that particular wave?

**Ian:** Definitely, like you know, what I've learnt is going out there... regardless of if it's a big or small wave, it's like buying a lottery ticket. You've just got a chance at like... something magical to happen... by the ticket... because if you don't swim out there or go out there or even sit on the land with your camera... the chance of something happening, well definitely nothing will happen if you're not there. So by going out there you put yourself into this like, you buy yourself a lottery ticket, because there's no way you can predict what's going to happen, or can like... can create a scene that you want, but... For instance I've got one shot out there of Tom Butler and everything was perfect. But the main thing that was perfect was, like because I got a GoPro footage of it, besides being in the perfect position in the perfect wave, and the surfer like being in the perfect position, yeah him being in the right position, you being in the right position... It was dark, I couldn't even see into the wave, but all of a sudden however, the clouds... a ray of sunlight shone through the wave and illuminated the whole wave, and then "Pampampam", I got a few shots and then it became dark again... And like it was like more than once in a million, like it was one in a billion chance of that happening, you know, because it was just to do with the light on this occasion, regardless of all the other things, of like being out there, being in the right position, everything... It was only because like the light just shone on the wave just for like a split second that I got the shot, and because it made the wave look like so beautiful, and it lit it up like all around, and then there's a surfer right in the middle of it... So I remember that was like at the start of the season, and it was like this first first well and there was like, all the big surfers were out, and like everyone would check the charts and they were like, they said to Tom like "You don't even need to surf here anymore, you got the shot!" kind of thing! And then I was just like, well this is just the first swell, like, I wanna be out there every single swell, like I want to do that again, and I've never like gotten a shot that good again, myself, you know... Because I say you've got to have your priorities right but at the same time, you still want like go and do it, like that, you know? Like so, I don't know, so uhm... That's the great thing about it, it's a... it's a... like and it's the same thing for a surfer, it's like buying a lottery tickets, the only way like... It's not like running a hundred meter dash race, I count 330, they're gonna shoot the pistol and you're gonna run 100 meters and race the guy, like you just go out there and you have no idea what's gonna happen. And if you don't go, you got to be in to win, you know? That's it. It's the ultimate... the ultimate life lottery. The dopamine lottery. *[Ian, 12]*

**Frederique:** So there's a little bit of that addiction thing in the creative process as well... Something I really want to explore a little bit is, you know from a painter's point of view, or a photographer's point of view, you make beautiful portraits of waves with your camera, you know this thing that Mickey Smith says, "I want to portray surfing the way I see it in

my head”, is that the goal really? Have you achieved that so far, have you made one shot that kind of shows how you’ve experienced that particular wave?

**Ian:** Well... you know... What I love... I don't know, I how... I don't know the answer to that question... But there are, like... I have gotten... I don't feel like I got the shot yet, do you know what I mean? And so like, definitely... I want... I want to do it, I'd still want to get the shot but I'm sure I'll never get it... But at the same time, to answer the question like... Surfing made me fall in love with videography with editing and filming... And because I've always liked when I first got into photography... and as a little kid... I remember because my dad used to have a factory and all my like cousins and stuff would work there, and they're all like kind of gung-ho to work at the factory, and I was... I just remember saying to them like... I wasn't like... I had to work there from the time I was 8 years old, but I remember I was around 15 years old, and I was telling all my cousins “In 10 years’ time I'm not gonna be working in the shitty factory, I'm gonna be like filming Red Hot Chili Peppers for like an MTV Music Video”, and that was like what I wanted to do, you know like, I mean... I only got into videography literally when I was like... like 20 years later it was... I got into photography first, but what I loved about surfing and filming is you can like bring in the music you like, and you can like show it off in a way that kind of like defines like your generation... Like I grew up with like reggae music and ska and punk, and that's just like what... When I was a kid that's what I loved and like... Still in the car that's still what I listen to like, all the Pumpkin... And so you, know going back to like the Mickey Smith thing, I remember I got a video of Tom Lowe like, and I love this shot, it was a video shot I got of him at Mullaghmore, and I showed it to him, but I put in like... like a reggae tune by Eek-A-Mouse and I showed it to him first, I was like “Check out this cool video!”, and he's like, you know, like he goes “Hey man, if that's the way like you want to express it then go ahead, but like I don't like that music, you know” and I was thinking like, you know... And he didn't do it in such a way, he was just kind of like, “That's not how I feel about the waves... as you”, but he's cool like, Tom Lowe, he's really a smart and cool guy, but he's like “If that's the way you feel like you want express it, then like I'm all for it” kind of thing... And and I did, and I love, still love that clip... And it's like... with like Eek-A-Mouse, it's called “Gunja smuggling”, the track, you know and it's just like Tom Lowe, there and it's like the “Ganja smuggling” track going on, and so like... I like surfing because I can bring in those references and those things I like that maybe don't connect with other people, or different – the generation, the younger generation now... because like they didn't grow up with that... But I grew up with that so it's like... So I can use surfing to express myself and make my music videos that I never got to make, you know... *[Ian, 13]*

**Frederique:** Yeah it’s interesting, I was talking about that as well, like how music... the choice of music shapes the whole edit differently...

**Ian:** Yeah! Like you know... Yeah that's right... Someone said to me, like Mickey Smith, to me is... And I've got to meet Mickey Smith in the water, and had a cool interaction there, and like I got to... (I have like a cool story) But someone said to me, like you could literally take Mickey Smith's music and words from... – and he said like, it's like kind of like a fun thing to do... And like take the audio track from *Dark Side of Lens* and just play it against any other surf video, and it'll like instantly become amazing, you know!

**Frederique:** Yeah the soundtrack was, that edit was the one that got me on this research project... I think the soundtrack is probably the main reason... There's... I always tell people about that little part of the video where there is, like the whole piano flight scene...

**Ian:** Yeah I know, that’s, it's like that's the masterpiece like... No like, that... that Mickey Smith era, that's that's like... You know, outside of surfing people might not appreciate it or know about it, but in the Irish surfing community that was like... That was like when someone



hit the nuke button, you know, and that's not gonna be repeated... That was like a Nirvana moment, I that's what I always say: Mickey Smith is like the Nirvana of surf photography, yeah... Like the Kurt Cobain, kind of... You know... Like he's had that kind of impact on the surf surf photography...

**Frederique:** Yeah we were talking about him with Seamus McGoldrick... There was something interesting Seamus said about him, like Mickey Smith, in any of his edits he never mentioned Ireland, he just showed it for what it was. And then the second thing I find interesting about Mickey Smith is that he did that over, what? Maybe over an eight-ten year period? And then...

**Ian:** Hmm, he just stopped! Yeah yeah, he's a real artist, like he's a true artist, you know, he has like... Sorry if I interrupted, I don't know, I just like talking about how great he is... Yeah yeah yeah, it's better to burn out than fade away, you know like, it's totally like... He came, did it and but he did it, like when it was just like this unique thing, and like as soon as like people like me, you know, then I came along and other people came along, and I definitely didn't want to recreate it... But that was my inspiration, you know... But then when there's like loads of people doing it, and I see like Mickey-esque... Mickey Smith-esque things all over the place, and you know, it's kind of like... It just shows you the influence he had and like how he's... You know... Yeah just basically how he's given people so much inspiration and stuff like that... But at the same time, you're kind of like... You want it not to be like Mickey Smith, you know, but if he was still out doing his same thing again and again and again, and everybody else was trying to like copy him, then all of a sudden it's like this competition thing, and it's all like "Oh which one is his?", you know... And so I think... Yeah that's like, he's just... That's that's the amazing thing, that he did that, and that it just stopped... It's kind of like, a great show and it... Rather than like doing another season and another season and another season and the show becomes crap all of a sudden... You know, yeah like *Breaking Bad* is a good one, like *Breaking Bad* just stopped, like they almost went... It almost became breaking good, but it stayed *Breaking Bad*, you know, by ending it... I remember, I never used to watch series until I watched *Lost*, there was one called *Lost*, I don't know what happened to me but I... Like they ended up doing like 200 episodes or something, and I just watched all of them in like the space of two weeks, and at the end I was just like... I need I need to see a psychiatrist, you know! (*laughs*) Whatever, I'm never gonna do that again, yeah... That was just like, 400 hours of my life I can't get back... [*Ian, 14*]

**Frederique:** Is there one particular surfer you like shooting?

**Ian:** Ehm... Well, I really like shooting the bodyboarders, because like they're... They're just mental and they're like... They're just my friends, like I'm good friends with a lot of the bodyboarders around here... Yeah I really... Well there's no one specifically, but like Noah Lane is a very good surfer to take photos of, because he's a very good surfer, and he's got a really like good style, and he's got... His personality comes out into his surfing and yeah... And then like, you know, Conor [*Conor Maguire*] and Cian [*Cian Logue*] and Aaron Reid, I like to shoot all those three, because I see them as like this like little triplet group, and they all like have like different like little things they bring to surfing... So I kind of like to shoot them all, like like... I kind of see them as just like like Power Rangers, you know, not like Power Rangers, I don't know how like... Three that... all have like different abilities, you know, and if you put it all together, it's like, like they're untouchable... Yeah you know, they they cover the whole spectrum between the three of them... They're all and they're all like cool kids, great personalities, you know... Yeah like, and they are also... Like, they're like... Those three kind of represent, you know... There was the Mickey Smith era and the Fergal Smith and then the Shane and Shambles, they actually have like a big impact on

surfing that... I think they do get credit from it from the surfing but I think a lot of people don't realize... And then like people like Tom Gillespie and Dan Skajarowski like... But those are the bodyboarders... But what they did then, these three... these three kids emerged from that, you know, and yeah, and carried and carry on that... So I like shooting all those those guys. *[Ian, 15]*

**Frederique:** How about... 'cause you've been, you surfed in South Africa, and now you're here so what do you think about the surfing community here in Bundoran compared to other places you've been? Have you had any issues with localism...? As a photographer or as a surfer actually, are there any issues, actually, in the water?

**Ian:** I think, like well... That's like... That's a question... I don't want to get myself in trouble with that question... Yeah, no there's not names, it's more of... like I think there's a lot of entitlement and surfing... But I don't like... I think it's like, it's more around like hectic spots, like where like famous spots, where people have like declared it as their own and, you know, like... So sometimes I just feel that a lot of people kind of... it's kind of... I don't know how to say it... Because it's not really about anyone specifically, and it exists everywhere, but it's something I hate about surfing, and I kind of feel like... There's this entitlement that people would think that... Maybe because they were like... They were born in the town... That could be like one... that it's like, people like create a reason why they're like more entitled to the waves than you... And it could be anything, so you could say like "Well I was born here", or another person could say "Well I've been here for like six years", or "I was like the first one to...", and it like doesn't matter like, they'll figure out their own circumstance... And like I'm probably guilty of it too, "Oh, I've been, I'm taking photos of everyone here, so I get to catch a wave..." So I just like... The thing that bothers me the most... Just about surfing in general... But it would be more about like... It doesn't happen everywhere, like you... Like Ireland, if you go away from the heavy spots, it's a really amazing place to surf because it's like a really good vibe, there's a really good like camaraderie, but it does exist where, you know, people will think that, well... You like... Or they will like label you like "You're not from here", so they'll create a circumstance that works for them and works against you, and I kind of attribute that to like racism, you know, where you can say "Well like you're not... you're like a different color so you can't do this, this, and this, and this", but like I don't see how that's any different to saying "Well I was like born here, so therefore I get this, this, this and this and you don't because you're not", so like to me that's just like racism. And I really, so like when I see that, or when I kind... I'm probably like not a good one 'cause like sometimes I could get an argument, I try like not to, because I surfing to be fun and not to like... But if I... if I feel like someone's like that it kind of makes me even like just want to drop in on them or something... Just to be like... That is ignorance like personified, because you know, like in a way, if you looked at like... If you looked at like a time-lapse of Earth and you looked at like the human migration patterns, never for one second has it ever stayed in one single place. It's always just moving. So if you looked at the time-lapse of like a hundred thousand years or million years or whatever, you'll just see people moving and you know like no one's from anywhere... So I kind of think that in surfing, there's this thing that like people just create a circumstance and entitlement that works for them regardless of their circumstance. They could be like "I could consider you a blow-in" but they could consider themselves a local, and they'll just decide "Well I've been here for six days so I'm a local now", like they'll just make it up, whatever works for them so that they can take the wave... And I just feel like in the water, like, the way... You know, it depends. And then, you know, there's like a lot of like "Oh and so and so", and "This and this", so it's like quite political. But the thing is, it probably exists in every... in everything, but when you go in the water, it's just a little bit

different because in the water there's no... There's no like... There's no license to go on the waves, you know, like for instance there is on the roads... Like everybody follows the rules on the roads... to a point... but you know, like you don't need to indicate for instance. So there's there's like that... and that like bothers me about surfing, and that's like... So sometimes when I go surfing, I just want to go out and have the wave, catch some waves and it's nice to have a chat, but you know somebody could be out there telling everybody else how to act and so on and, you know, it kind of bothers me... So like that's the only thing I don't like about it... *[Ian, 16 (1/3)]*

But that's what's great about Ireland, is that if you are, you know, well it's quite difficult, especially once you get older and you have kids and responsibilities and stuff, you just want to like run down to the waves quick, catch a few waves and come back, but you know it... Depending on the crew out there and maybe it's not so much fun, but if you get in your car and you go look and you've learned where other waves are, you can literally go there and there's maybe two or three people... And at any time it's like that, it's usually nice... So basically what I don't like is basically I... Probably like all the other surfers, if it's crowded it's usually a bit like okay, it can be orderly and cool, and sometimes it's really crowded and everyone's like “Ah that was actually quite fun”, but most of the time it's crowded and it'll be like a few people out there maybe, some guys yapping a little bit more than the other guys, and you know... Or you see like, you'll see bad aspects of people come out, but then on the other side, through surfing you meet amazing people... So it's like a little microcosm, and you know, as a photographer again, or as like a storyteller like you know, you kind of like have this thing, you're like “Okay, this would be a great skip”, you know, to be like... Like replace surfing and put it in like the swings, being like “You can't go in that swing”, or like “This is my swing”, “I'm going on the swing”, you know, it could be like really funny if you got kids to do it for instance ... So I don't know... I don't want to get myself in trouble... But it's true, I think that's just the way it is, but it's like that everywhere, it's not... I don't associate it here... But Bundoran is a surf town and there are like a lot of established people that like that have lived here and, you know, don't favour other people coming and, you know, at the end of the day this is a place where a lot of people do come to go surfing, so there's always going to be that... And the more people that come here and the more surfing becomes popular that's just gonna... That's just gonna grow that little like undercurrent of tension, when it's crowded and everybody wants to catch the waves. *[Ian, 16 (2/3)]*

**Frederique:** And as a photographer in particular, do you think that could be an issue, taking pictures... so many pictures of this wave, selling it to a certain extent, do you feel some people some people kind of, maybe would give you aggro for this?

**Ian:** I used to like, and it used to affect me... But it doesn't anymore and I don't care anymore at all, like if it affects me or somebody comes in and tells me “Well, you know, maybe some people aren't gonna be so happy”, I'll be like “Tell me who these people are so I can go tell them to eff off because I don't care”, because there's no like proven... That's just somebody's opinion... So you know, like if you want to tell me “Oh you're taking photos of the wave, now it's gonna get crowded”, or whatever I will want to say like “Okay, I want to see the figures, show me some statistics here. I don't want to know your opinion, I don't want to know your feelings, because it doesn't attribute to anything, it's just something you say, and there's no way of proving it”. And there's so many other facets, you know, I could say for instance, you know, if somebody doesn't like me doing photos, you know, I could say “Well like I don't like people making wetsuits”, because like... Because everyone's got a wetsuit now, so now they can all go in the water, so you know, why not like blame the guys taking the photos of the wave, and go blame the people making it

possible to make wetsuits. Or like I could say “Why don't you go and...” – to a surf school – and say like “Instead of like bussing people here from Dublin and then taking their money, I mean, and like teaching them where all the waves are, and like how to surf, why don't you like start doing an anti-surfing campaign so nobody shows up here like?” But the point is, there's no way of proving it, there's like... It's only like one tiny tiny little facet, and I do think like as a photographer, if you do that, you don't get like... Like you don't want to upset people, you know, and... Like that wouldn't be your kind of thing, like your goal wouldn't be like “Oh I want to take a photo so everyone gets upset”, like that's not what it's about at all. So I do think that, you know, you shouldn't make a point of like trying to like show where secret waves are, there should always be like a hint of mystery in it, but regardless of what you do, no matter what you do and how well you try to... I've done it for years, where you try to make everyone happy, someone's not going to be happy. And so at the end of the day, it just becomes like you're... Like something that you have to decide for yourself, are you doing a good thing? Are you doing a bad thing? Like do you feel... Like because you know, what I'm doing today, like... There are times where I think... I don't need to do that, like that's not necessary, where I did this or this and then I will learn from that and say “I'm not gonna do that, I'm gonna change the way I do things”, but it's not because of other people, it's because like... I realized that's not necessary, you don't need to do that, you know, but when people like object to me taking photos, I will like point out, going back to the wetsuits, if it wasn't for photos there wouldn't be any technology, like there wouldn't be any of surf... Like you guys wouldn't even be getting sponsors, you like... So it all like... If it all boils down to... Photography makes us all possible, and if there weren't any photos you wouldn't be here right now, because you wouldn't have seen... You wouldn't have been inspired to come and do this, it's only because of photos. And in most cases, many people are, not in most cases but in a lot of cases, if it wasn't for the photos, people wouldn't even go surf the waves. Secretly, deep down inside, people are doing it so they can have an Instagram post, or or... Like get a bit of street cred', you know, so like... I don't... Like for me, I don't know... But as you get older, it becomes less important. You realize that you know what, if people are telling you to stop, that's when you... that's when you actually have to accelerate, because that's, that's how you do well in life. When, when other people like... When other people come and tell you what to do and not to do things, that's when you like... that's when you say “I'm on the right path, I'm gonna continue doing this”, because that's what success is all about. And success isn't about like a selfish thing, or about like making money or getting attention, it's about like you know that like there are certain things that you're supposed to do, and certain things you're not supposed to do, and if you listen to all the noise around you, you'll become a confused person, and you won't like... You won't be able to make your own decisions. So you have to, like... It's just, it's just one of those things where you have to make your own decision and do what's like good in your heart. Because if you like believe in karma, you know then... Because I do... So like if you keep creating bad karma, then it's gonna come back to bite you one day. And so like you have to decide, is this good or bad karma? Like am I like, sure A, B and C people are saying this? But like who are they? Why are they saying it? Maybe it's for... maybe there's something deeper inside that's worth exploring, you know. **[Jan, 17 (1/2)]**

But I'm yeah, like... I don't like... First of all, I don't go around to like secret waves and try to expose them. And even if you tried to, most of those secret waves are like novelty waves where they like literally are blips on the radar, where they'd like rarely happen, it's like a just like buying a lottery ticket. So they can go and go and look for it, and try be there but eventually they'll just give up, it's like... There's no... there's no like statistics out there showing that like a photographer has spoiled a wave, and like now there's millions of people there... Like a photo could have been the camel that broke... the straw that broke

the camel's back, but there's a lot of other factors that attribute it to... to that, and it's all about tourism, overpopulation – the world's growing, you know... And, and... I saw a like an interesting article once, actually it wasn't an article, it was a video, it was like with Mickey Smith but there was another guy, I don't wanna say the name because I'm not sure of who was but he mentioned that people want to own the experience of surfing, like they don't want to share it, like they don't want you to have that experience, they want like the experience of surfing, like they want to own it, they want it to be theirs, and you know, like when other people are doing this, it's kind of like... It's kind of like, they don't want you to have it, it's like an ownership and entitlement thing, like you're not allowed to... to have that. And so whenever you hear people saying that, it's just kind of like, well that's just your opinion, you're trying to tell me what I can and can't experience. And when you go out of surfing and you say to tell people “Oh yeah these people don't like it when you take photos of the wave”, they won't even know what you're talking about, like it's like a surfing thing... You know, you just... Like, everybody wants to... Especially on the ocean, everybody wants it to be theirs, and like, I'm no different. But at the same time, you know, you want... you want it, like you have a special relationship with places... It's like people come on tourism to Bundoran, and they don't surf and they don't live here and they're not there either, but they've been coming here since they're little kids and they feel like Bundoran's like their home, they're like... So it's like an experience that they like... they hold onto, and they cherish. And then like, maybe you'll see somebody else come along and throw a bottle on the street, and then you'll think like “The hell, that guy!”, you know... And so it kind of like, you know, puts the hairs on your back up a little bit, but anyway we're all humans. And there's much more important things to worry about, I think. *[Ian, 17 (2/2)]*

**Frederique:** I understand as well that your love for Ireland, your love for the waves as well and your love for photography, it actually goes beyond the waves, like you do a lot of photographs of the mountains as well, so I was wondering if you... Like, as a visual artist, like what connections you make between your surf photography and your land photography and how... do you get the same excitement from shooting waves or creating nice content as well about the land...?

**Ian:** Well... yeah it's all to do with... It's kind of a similar thing but it's more to do with like the light and the conditions. So in Ireland, like Ireland is like literally... the most beautiful place in the world when the lights right! You know! So like you can like find a place a beautiful angle or like a mountain or a spot, but like the light has to be good or the shot won't be good. So it's kind of like a “gold at the end of the rainbow” kind of thing, where people might not appreciate it, you know... Especially with Instagram, social media where you see so many good shots, but in every case almost like, you know, there's billions of... there are millions of people trying to get lots of good shots, it just seemed like good shots are there, but to go, you know, to a place that isn't... that is quite undocumented or like not documented that well, like Ben Bulbin is a famous mountain, there's like loads of shots of it, but from the similar angles... So to find like a new angle with the light right is like... it's like... it's really difficult. So... and anybody who like would be in that trade, just like being surfing, will appreciate like how difficult that must have been to do it. So it's just really like, it's like a task, an adventure. But what I really love about Ireland and the mountains and photography is I like the history of Ireland. So I study Irish history, I read a lot of books, I did a course in college, but I like... I kind of... Maybe even more than surfing now, because I haven't given up on surfing, but I kind of feel a little bit like... like I did it and like, kind of like... How many times do you want to take photos of the same wave, you know? So I like to explore the... where like all the castles are and like try find out the



stories of what happened there, and then like try... And you learn stuff about that, so then you'll like find out "Oh something happened in this like other location", it could have been a battle or like some significant moment, or something like that... And then you like look in the tourism guides and there's like nothing no mention about it whatsoever. So then I will go there and like just look around, and just like try like, wrap my head around it and say "This is what happened here", and then maybe take a picture and then it can become like a blog post or like a story. But you know, it's all part of... similar to like getting little bits and pieces of content that maybe one day you can put together, and like tell an even bigger story, you know, because... I have like... My biggest goal now is to... I've got two stories I want to tell, but I want to tell them... like like... I want to get funding, and and create like real movies about them. And it's all to do with the local culture and local history. And also because of me personally... And to go back to your question about localism and "you're not from here", blow-ins or whatever, especially in Ireland you can like almost, no matter who you are (well to a point) can like attribute your relationship to Ireland. So I set out like a couple years ago to find, do I actually have a relationship to Ireland? And I found loads, like, I found like like... that I actually could claim, well like four hundred years ago my family built that castle St. John's point. Because they did, you know. It wasn't my family, but I mean if you go back in the annals of history, that's the truth. So you can say, well like "Our people were displaced and put in other countries and now we're just coming back and rediscovering it". So like what I love about the Irish history, and answering your question, is to like create content and create beautiful pictures so that I could put a story together to create an even bigger story and telling you've a bigger story. And it's all to do with the local history, and like the Gaelic chieftains and like the story of Donegal... Because there's movies like *Braveheart* and other ones that are like so epic but they're like, when you start reading all the books, and like learn the real history of this place, it's like even way more exciting. So, so most of my explorations into the mountains and the hills isn't so much about... Besides I do it to get new angles and stuff, but it's more about like going to places that things happened at, and just taking like... and creating like a visual document of it. **[Ian, 18]**

**Frederique:** Could you tell me one such story that you've uncovered? Without spoiling anything...! About the local history...

**Ian:** Yeah! Well, there's, there's two like people that... Well I study... See there was the Nine Years War and I don't know if people know the story about the Nine Years War which is from like 1594 to 1603, in that time period of the turning of the century in the 1600s, like the whole modern-day history of Ireland, all... Like basically, that was the, the defining moment of like modern-day history, so like of what happened, and it all originates in Donegal, Tyrone. So there was like these three earls, the Earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Fermanagh, Conor Maguire (believe it or not!), and the Earl of Donegal... Well they weren't actually earls, there's the Earl of Tyrone... They were Gaelic chieftains, there was three Gaelic chieftains and they ruled all of Ulster, and the one that I want to discover or talk about (well there's two) is Red Hugh O'Donnell. And he was like... Donegal castle was the O'Donnell castle, and we're actually in O'Donnell's land right now. Like in Bundoran, that field right there, the golf course, was where the O'Donnell kept their horses. And when they went to go fight the British they would come and get their horses from that field right there and go march off into the country and go have like crazy huge battles. And they like... So basically the story of Red Hugh O'Donnell, I want to tell that story but... about the Nine Years War, about the Earl of Tyrone, the Maguire clan and the O'Donnell clan, how they came together and they basically like started the biggest shit storm that ever like existed in Ireland... And they went down to... That's what the Battle of Kinsale is all



about... So I would like to tell the story of Red Hugh, of how he was like... I don't know if you know this but Queen Elizabeth at the time knew of Red Hugh O'Donnell when he was only twelve years old, and knew that he was going to become like the chieftain of Tyrconnell, which is like today Donegal, and they sent like secret special force, well basically secret service back in those days, to come and kidnap him and they did. But they smuggled him onto a ship by like like telling him there was free booze on it. And they took him, they stuck him in Dublin Castle and he escaped from Dublin Castle when... He was in Dublin Castle for three years, he is the only person to ever escape from Dublin Castle in the history of ever. And he came, and he was able to get back here by... with the help of the Earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill and he took over... He became like the chieftain of all the O'Donnell's and... So yeah, so like I want to tell that story and then like when all... There's a thing called "the flight of the Earls" where after the Battle of Kinsale, they all left, all the Earls left, and they created a power vacuum, that's what, like it's called the Plantation of Ulster. And today Northern Ireland is all like a reflection of what happened during the Plantation of Ulster. And all of the Irish and Irish armies went to like Spain and the Netherlands, and they were like all camped out there for 40 years. And then it's (this is actually to do with surfing) there was like... One guy's name was Owen Roe O'Neill, so he was the nephew of Hugh O'Neill, and he came back in 1642 with a mercenary force of only a hundred soldiers, and he landed at one of our surf spots in North Donegal. So the place where we go surfing was the exact place where he landed and he started the hugest second biggest shit storm ever, and for like... He had this massive campaign and he was eventually killed. And because of like what he did, and like the things he did, they sent in Cromwell. So like, you know... So there's like... So these stories are like... So you've got *Game of Thrones* for instance and, you know... And that's all fake, but like they're using the castles of all these like people, you know, so I think the real story would be way better. **[Ian, 19 (1/2)]**

But I don't know like, I kind of... You know, I don't know if I should tell people that, but you know... Like who's gonna... I don't know... It's kind of like something you have to kind of tell people... But you know... Yeah, study the real history and watch movies about what really happened...

There's like another... another really interesting story about Bundoran, which a lot of people don't know... I'm dealing with university lecturers at the moment, yeah like, like proper historians I should say, whereas... Because I'm an enthusiast, I'm not a historian, like I don't claim to be, but I read a lot about it, and like... I think I know quite a lot about it now, but I'm still like on my journey of discovery. But I know enough where I can talk to like people that are like have PhDs on the subject and this, but I kind of come from entertainment... I want to turn this into entertainment for people, you know, whereas they just wanted like the facts, and it to be like... Because they're trying to discover what actually happened. So I'm already dealing with people like to write scripts and so on, and like put presentations towards Fáilte Ireland, and say like "You should give us funding and we can make films about this". So like I do think, that I thought about if I say this or not, because maybe... rather than somebody stealing my idea, which is totally possible, maybe people... When people know that you're interested in it they might rather contact you and say like "I like this idea" and you're like into, it because you know... And then also maybe if I say it now, and then somebody else does, I could say "Hey look, hey look you stole my idea". Like it's not really like, the thing is, to do that I wouldn't be able to do that by myself. I would just want to be part, I would be happy just to put the team together, you know. Because I'm not a director, I'm not a real filmmaker, I just... I'm just like, I take photos, like... it's like anybody can hit the button whatever, but it's like... Photography, it's

just like documenting what I'm doing, you know, it's not really like... It's like the same way I say I'm not a good surfer, because that's not what I am, like it's just something that's fun.

**Frederique:** You were going to tell me another story about Bundoran...?

**Ian:** Yeah so another story of my quest to well... just like learn about the local area more than anything. What I discovered along the way was the story of Finner Camp. And Finner Camp's a military base just down the road from Bundoran, and it was actually built by the British for the Boer War in South Africa. So in 1890 the Boer War happened, and that was the biggest war ever in the history, beside the First and Second World War, so the biggest, the third biggest war ever was the Boer War in South Africa. And the British developed like... The British sent troops there to go fight the battle, but obviously they didn't want to send their, like their people so they found Irish people instead to go fight their battles. But anyway... Finner Camp was built specifically to train the soldiers of the Boer War and the reason is, it's because they had new rifles back then that... and new ways of like... Because you know, the technology was more advanced than it was before, so they needed like a certain kind of like... size of field and landscape to train the soldiers... And so when the soldiers were here they would know they're going to South Africa, but this was a war, like when you went to South Africa you didn't come back, it was like you're going to South Africa to die, basically. And so because of that, you know, obviously that's kind of the story of Ireland, like it's... there's a story... like the story of Ireland's immigration is part of it, is a big part of it, like. And the troops in Bundoran... sorry the troops in Finner Camp would come and pray at the little church that's all boarded up, you know, the one like on the West End, there's like an old church that's all boarded up... And they would come and they would pray in there, and there's... There's, there's like inscriptions in that church of like people like signing their names and stuff before they went to the Boer War, like so they could leave a little bit of themselves here in Ireland, and it's like just sitting in an old boarded-up church. And it's like pretty mental, but the thing is like, the... One of the remarks that the troops made when they left Ireland was, they would... Because they would leave like, from from here basically, Ballyshannon and Killybegs and so on, to sail to South Africa, that they would wave bye to Ben Bulbin... Because it's like, you know, just just I a guess geographic place but, you know, a significant and symbolic area of their home, and when they arrived in Cape Town, the first mountain they saw was Table Mountain, and Table Mountain looks just like Ben Bulbin... So they would like leave one mountain and then go to the other one. But a lot of like English South Africans would be Irish, and they would have been sent there by the British to go fight the battles... So uhm when I first came to Bundoran I didn't... I didn't know about Ben Bulbin, and that was like... My first thought was like, "Well, that looks just like Table Mountain!" **[Ian, 19 (2/2)]**

So I sort of like... So the story of Bundoran that I was telling was like, the significance of Finner Camp and the West End and the little church, but going back to my little whole story, it's like, you know... And to do with the locals and everything else, it's like people from other places might have, many generations actually come from right just here, so you know... But anyway, so like Bundoran is like a crazy significant town, the history of it is like so in-depth, and it's really hard to imagine it when you just see like amusements and slot machines... Because that's only like, if you look, on the scale of like what's going on here, it's been like a tourist town for 500 years, that's like the last 30 years... But like before that, this there's so much there's so much stuff that happened here, like even from... You know, yeah... I don't even want to say it... Like there's... Like there's just so much stuff that's, that's happened here, but yeah. So, so that's what's really cool about the kind of like stories that I like to (going back to the whole photography thing), it's... I like to like learn

about that and go and see the places for real, because then they're just sitting there, they're like... There's no line up, there's no tourists, there's no trail to it, you know... I found like a bomber crash on the mountains, I don't know if you saw that.

**Frederique:** I remember you told me about that last year, at the festival... I remember you got in trouble for it...?

**Ian:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, so I got in huge trouble for it... But then I also got published in *The Irish Independent* like three times because of it, and I recently got invited to go speak at the Hawk's Well theatre [*in Sligo*] with like a panel of like real historians telling stories about Sligo culture and history... And like I felt like "What am I doing here? I'm just, you know, a blow-in", but I spoke in front of like 200 people and told them the story and a lot of them didn't know it, you know. But so, that's what my photography will be about, it would be like to go there and just to take the photos. But the thing is, going back to it, like I want to create more of what I'm doing, but it's so difficult because like, you're just one little person with a laptop and a camera, and you're like trying to do something huge, and you don't really know what it is and how to do it. But you know, it's not just a sleepy little surf town where there's a bunch of slot machines. [*Ian, 20*]

**Frederique:** Yeah especially when you've spent a few winters here, you realize, you get the soul of the place, I think, in the most hardcore ways... Like you said, the winters are really tough, if you make it through the winter I feel it's... like a proving ground, you're allowed to stay!

**Ian:** It's an achievement, yeah no kidding, yeah. Once you've done a few winters here, like it definitely, definitely makes your skin a little tougher... But yeah like I mean I've got lots of stories about Bundoran and... But that's the whole point, it's like... I'm not an expert, I'm just like discovering them and trying to figure out, like what do you do with this? Because it's... I think people should know you know, it's like... And it's nothing to do with surfing, like surfing's... Surfing's is the backbone... Like surfing's like, like the sport you do, like, your, your passion but it's not... your everything, yeah.

**Frederique:** Yeah and like you were saying, tourism is a big part of Ireland's economy so it's very good to show the main assets of the country, like the landscapes with beautiful shots of the coastline and the mountains and so on, and the entertainment, like the surfing and so on, but there's a lot more, and the history could be a part of it, and not something to be relegated to RTE or...

**Ian:** 100%... Yeah, and people would be so interested like. And you see, that's another thing, people will be, like especially on social media: "I met so-and-so castle", and that's it, and I'm like "Well, that's not that interesting, what happened? Like tell us something else?", you know, it's not about like, okay that's just like a token, but like, I want to know what happened there, you know. And when you do that, all of a sudden you can go anywhere and it becomes like super interesting. It's not interesting just to take a photo of something, it's interesting to know what it's a photo of, you know.

**Frederique:** Yeah I wanted to ask you about the historical research side of your work so that's really nice as well... And it reminds me of that interview I did in January with Joe McGowan in Sligo...

**Ian:** Yeah, John McGowan, that's crazy! I'm actually looking to speak with him...

**Frederique:** Yeah he's adorable and he had us for like, I checked it up the other day and he had for like two hours and a half... It's great, and he gave me two of his books that I had borrowed from the library, he's amazing, and he's just doing, like you, his own... Like he's passionate, I loved the way he tells his own story of his land...

**Ian:** He's a real, like yeah... He's... But it's funny because of this bomber thing, long story... Like but I got speaking to like loads of people, everyone's told me, like it was just the other day I got "You have to go and talk to John McGowan", so like that's in my head now, that I have to... Now you're saying, it's like another reference of like, oh yes I actually have to go speak to this person... Now that's part of... that's part of like... The next step and that's a step in the journey, you know. But yeah, like for me, it's like well... So that's what I say, I started with the waves, then I learned about the mountains, and then I learned about the history and then like... then you're like "Oh, hold on", you know, this is like.... You could spend your whole life, and you wouldn't even know, you know... It's like really, like Donegal is not a place, like people come here and they just want to, "I'm gonna drive around Donegal today" and it's like, you can do that, and it'll be beautiful, but you could drive around 10,000 times, and like every single time you'll like learn way more stuff like. *[Ian, 21]*

**Frederique:** Yeah it's interesting, surfing is not just about the ocean, it's like, there's always something that the surfers will always always tell you about the land as well, so for example when you ask them "What's the hardest thing about surfing in Ireland?", they will tell you about the tide or the light – Aaron Reid told us about the light, the dark, especially in the winter, and they'll tell about the mountains, there's always something to do, so it's quite interesting... Yeah, at the moment that's what I'm exploring, like how the land has a big part to play as well, like the coastline, and the mountains here especially, like, yeah... I don't know where I was going with this, but (laughs)...

**Ian:** No but I think, like you know, well... Especially when you start discovering about the clans, like this is clan land, like there was like all these clans, and then you like learn the different names of the families, and then you can research all of those families, like what they did and, and... Then like you can meet someone and... Like you can say "Do you know that you have the name of this person, and do you know what he did?", and like sometimes they will know and sometimes they might not know, but like... You know, they fought for that land... That, that person is still, like... is a real... I don't know how to say it, really but... Like they're... It's like they carry on, and like they're, they're an element of that person, of those people and you know, living on this land... And this land is like a sacred land, it really is... There's, you know... Just ten minutes from here, a lot of people don't know this, in Boa Island there's sculptures, there... There's statues there just sitting in a field, and they're like 5,000 years old, they're all like from before Christianity, like from pagan times... And they're just sitting there and nobody knows what they really mean, they just know like, they just carbon-dated it back to a certain time, and you know it's like, these like... It's like, the people believe it's like a fertility stone... and... But the point is like, in this land here, like it's been going for... It's like one of the oldest places like of human evolution, you know, that kind of exists, I mean. Well every place is, you know, Africa... But if you could... there's just so much here, and because of that it just has like some kind of special magic to it. You know I'm not from Ireland, but I live here now, I raise my kids here, but when I leave I'm... When I come back I'm always happy to come back here, you know, I'm always like "Okay I'm back, like, sweet!". And it's magic, it is magic, you know. And I I'm so happy with, by doing tourism, I do guiding, like I take people in tours, and I show them some of my discoveries and tell them like what happened... And to share that with people like... You know, people come to Bundoran all the time, and I tell them like "This is the field, ..." And then all of a sudden, it's like you can see the... like You're like sharing that gift, or like magic, I should say, you know... *[Ian, 22]*

**Frederique:** Yes the sharing, the culture, or the folklore, it's all about handing it down, sharing it...

**Ian:** Yeah! I think that's what I meant, it's like, you know, it's that all the things that have happened get passed down, get shared and like, that's what makes it magic, you know, 'cause... It could just be a bog, or it could be the reason, that bog could be the reason why a whole country exists and in this case that is what happened, you know.

**Giles:** Did you ask the little fun questions, just to... wrap it up? I just think they're nice, it could be like a little fun thing for the edit as well...

**Ian:** I don't mind at all, I just feel like I'm just giving you hours of like endless mumble jumble to go through...

**Giles:** It's nice, it's different as well, which is good, there is a nice new angle...

**Ian:** Okay.

**Giles:** Especially with the land, there's a nice relationship with the land which you share...

**Ian:** Okay. I hope so because I don't want to, like I'm not... Sometimes I'm not, sometimes like my vocabulary... I can't express the word I mean, even if English is my first language, you know, and I feel like trapped a little bit, like I can't think of the right word, and I want to explain it better, you know. But it's fine, hopefully I did okay...

**Frederique:** No, it's great! It's funny, actually the most interesting people I've interviewed have mostly been the ones who were worried, like "Oh, sorry, I'm mumbling on", and I'm like "No, you're exactly...!" It's not like "What's the answer to this" and you should say A or B or C, it's like... But anyway, my easy questions are... From a photographer's or from a surfer's point of view, how would you define a wave? If I was a five-year-old, and I'd never seen the ocean...

**Ian:** How would I define a wave... So how would I explain what a wave is to like a kid... I could say that the wave is the magical energy that is produced on the other side of the world, that bounces back and forth, sharing the energy of the earth. And what happens, well because... I'll probably... just explain it like that, you see how the wind blows every day? Well that wind is blowing stories and waves back and forth, and when the wave crashes here in the land, it's something that's travelled hundreds and thousands of miles to arrive here, and every single one is different. *[Ian, 23]*

**Frederique:** Cool!

**Ian:** I brought that a little bit in because I'm explaining to a kid, you know, like I was like "Hold on"...

**Frederique:** Yeah yeah!

**Giles:** They're easy but not so easy!

**Ian:** Yeah, right! *(laughs)* They're easy, like, "Hold on...!"

**Frederique:** It's interesting because I have loads of different definitions... He *[Giles]* like went into the physics of it and he got lost in it...

**Giles:** I like that moment when you have to try and grasp something, like that moment just there, when people go searching, I think that's kind of cool! *(laughs)*

**Ian:** Yeah!

**Frederique:** The same five-year-old has never seen surfing before and you tell him that you're a surfer, how would explain to him what surfing is...

**Ian:** Ehm... Well if I just explained like the magic of the waves being... coming from the other side of the ocean and arriving here, you get to go... Like surfing is the only, only way... Like the only thing I can think of that you get to go with your own human self, and you get to go and like be inside of that energy, and get to ride that unique wave... But every single one is



different, and when you ride that wave you're riding something that is very special because it's travelled thousands of miles to get to you, to get to the land, and... There's a special magic that you feel when you get to ride that wave, and the only way you can ever know that magic is to paddle out to it and try and catch it. *[Ian, 24]*

**Frederique:** Very nice! Oh, let's use the same five-year-old, if you were to explain to him what you do, like your art, your photography... what would you say?

**Ian:** Ehm... I would say that I like to take pictures, because pictures get to tell stories, and everyone loves a story, and when you tell stories to people, you get to... You get to create ideas for those people, and those ideas could become realities... I don't know, like... Yeah, like, I just... I take pictures so I can tell people stories. That's it. *[Ian, 25]*

**Frederique:** Cool! That's it for me. Thank you so much!

**Ian:** Cool, no thanks so much too, like I was kind of... The only thing I thought was, if you ask me about localism, I just didn't want to answer that in a way that would... Because again, just in the exact same way, well if I piss someone off by taking a photo of a wave, well I piss someone off if I say what I think, you know. But I kind of don't care because... A lot of people that would be... that would class themselves as locals and like really hold on to that wouldn't go out and study the history and, and everything else, like... I find like very educated intelligent people don't like localism, all that isn't something that they are like so gung-ho about, you know.

**Frederique:** Yeah, well it's nice to get an honest answer as well, you know. Well if it's something you're not comfortable with it, I'm happy to keep it for myself to work around...

**Ian:** Well, yeah, well I'm sure you're not, your intention isn't to create controversy, so like it's not like you're a reporter for TMZ and you're trying to, you know... headline, yeah, "He says locals are racist!" *(laughs)*

**Giles:** *(laughs)* It's a really cool... analogy, right?

**Ian:** Well it is, like it's the exact same... I've just learned it's the same ingredients of racism, like "You're not entitled to this and this and this because of where you're from or because what you look", like you know... Yeah because there's loads of people that say "Well like I've been here for five years", or the other one I've heard is like "I've contributed to the town like, like, what do you contribute to the town?" And I was like "Well you just sell weed..." *(laughs) [Ian, 16 (3/3)]*

**Giles:** But yeah it's true, everybody has their own way of creating their...

**Ian:** Yeah, so that they can be from here and entitled, yeah...

**Frederique:** And then you kind of feel uncomfortable in return, like me, being French, I've been coming here regularly, I've been living here for a long time, like... I'm a blow-in anywhere anyway so, I'm not really from anywhere...

**Ian:** Yeah, me too, I'm not from anywhere either, really...

**Frederique:** And when people ask me how long I've been living in Ireland, I'm like "Oh, I used to live here for four years, like, like ten years ago, does that count?"

**Ian:** Yeah, I also do that, I also do that! I'm always like "Well, I started in Dublin, then I left..."

**Frederique:** And you [*Giles*] tell your life story every time you're asked where you're from: "I was born there, but I grew up here..."!

**Ian:** Yeah yeah, you're quite... Well you're both, but you're [*Giles*]... you're nomad, it seems to me...

**Giles:** Yeah! *(laughs)* I don't quite blend in anywhere...



**Ian:** Well no, you're like, you're just here and then you're gone, and then you're back again, you know. So you're nomadic, like you know, that's what it means...

**Giles:** Yeah, I'm gonna put that on my Instagram profile! (*laughs*) Can I get a picture of you looking at the lens?

**Ian:** Yeah sure!

**Giles:** Nice one!

**Frederique:** Cool! Thanks, thanks very much!

# 11. JOSH MCCREA

## A. Profil en diachronie :

Josh McCrea est né en Nouvelle-Zélande. Il a appris à surfer alors qu'il était enfant, fasciné par le rituel suivi par son père, qui représentait pour le petit garçon d'alors une sorte de super-héros, avec sa panoplie de combinaisons de surf et son matériel. Après avoir dû choisir entre une carrière dans le rugby et sa passion pour le surf, Josh se met à voyager, et découvre les vagues irlandaises au débuts des années 2000, où il décide de s'établir. Il vit depuis une dizaine d'années à Bundoran avec sa femme et leurs deux enfants, et travaille comme coach et gérant d'un des magasins d'équipement de surf et de textile les plus fréquentés de Bundoran, Bundoran Surf Co.



**Ill. 149** : Josh McCrea lors de notre entretien, 2 août 2019.

Source : capture d'écran de l'entretien filmé par Giles Carey – Pockets Full of Water.

Le profil de Josh est intéressant pour la recherche en ce qu'il représente une catégorie de surfeurs de très bon niveau, d'une trentaine d'années et qui possède donc suffisamment de recul sur sa pratique et sur le développement de l'activité à la fois sur le circuit professionnel, qu'il suit de près, et dans l'industrie du surf, dont il fait partie de par son activité de coach et de gérant de boutique de surf. Enfin, Josh représente une catégorie de surfeurs qu'il convenait d'observer dans le cadre de l'ethnographie : il est un expatrié installé de longue date dans le Donegal, et est apprécié et impliqué dans la communauté surf irlandaise, plus particulièrement celle de Bundoran où il réside, tout près de la célèbre vague de Pmpa. Il vit en Irlande depuis suffisamment longtemps pour être accepté comme un local, même s'il insiste, au cours de l'entretien, sur le fait qu'il n'en est pas un et que les locaux le lui rappellent bien, plaisantant notamment sur son accent « kiwi ». « Big Josh » est également respecté pour ses talents de surfeur et son style puissant et efficace dans les vagues du Peak et de Pmpa dont il est un habitué.



**Ill. 150 :** Josh McCrea à Pampa, en octobre 2014.  
Photographe : Daveth Fox.  
Source : page Facebook de Josh<sup>17</sup>.

**B. Transcription de l'entretien du 2 août 2019, enregistré à Bundoran, co. Donegal :**

**Frederique:** How would you introduce yourself?

**Josh:** Okay, so my name is Josh McRae I'm 38 years old, living in Ireland, father of two, surfer and... Yeah those things keep me pretty busy... That's pretty much me: father, surfer, husband... Yeah that's me... *[Josh, 1]*

**Frederique:** So are you originally from here?

**Josh:** Nah, yeah yeah so born and raised in New Zealand until I was 20 and a place called Papamoa, and then when I was 20 I got a passport and another older guy from the town I was from took me to the Gold Coast and... Lived there for a couple of years and... oh no, we went to Indo before that, Jeez, I'm forgetting, so long ago, yeah went to Indo went to the Goldy, travelled around Europe for a while, back to the Goldy, just cruising... And then back to Europe, and then I think I came to Ireland in 2006 and... That was it, you know, like something just really resonated with me in Ireland and I just hung around, and hung around, hang around like a bad smell and I'm still hanging around here and I got a couple of kids hanging around with me now, and yeah, got a wife too... Living the dream! *[Josh, 2]*

**Frederique:** What was it that impressed you in Ireland?

**Josh:** So the first thing that impressed me was the surf, and I just remember 'cause I'd come from the Gold Coast and I came here and March, and there was actually no waves when I got here, and I didn't know much, like... Back then, you know, there was... There was no... You couldn't go onto YouTube, maybe... Maybe YouTube was out there but it wasn't like really, really common and I had seen a few things in a boogie-boarding magazine of

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<sup>17</sup> Lien : <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10150892305880344&set=pb.677930343.-2207520000..&type=3>

Ireland and I was just like, “Wow this place looks amazing”, and I wanted to come to Europe so I was like, and I had a girlfriend at the time from Europe, so we thought “Okay we'll go to Ireland and at least I can work there and surf there”, and we came here and March and it was pretty grim, and we hung around for a couple of weeks and there was no swell, and then when the swell turned up it was just... I don't know, it was just a bit surreal, you know, like, how good the surf was, and I felt... [Josh, 3] It felt still really secret back then, you know, I know it wasn't, but there wasn't that many people surfing it was... It was like a hardcore crew but there wasn't that many people getting around and yeah just... A combination of the people and the surf and it just... It just really stuck with me, and it still sticks with me to this day, you know, the whole place and the culture here and yeah... It was also an easy transition from New Zealand, you know, like the Irish people and the New Zealand people are quite similar, and we have a lot of Irish roots back in New Zealand... And yeah it's just... I don't know, without sounding too cheesy, just felt like I was home, you know, but I wasn't! [Josh, 4]

**Frederique:** We had a friend over recently, he's Irish but he lives in New Zealand now and he was saying how it really looks much the same over there...

**Josh:** Yeah, yeah... Except the surf's like 30 times better...

**Frederique:** What was is like growing up in New Zealand?

**Josh:** Oh man, it was... It was amazing growing up in New Zealand! I really, I really loved, I still love New Zealand and growing up there was insane, you know, like we just... Where I'm from was just this little beach town and we lived like a road back from the beach and it was just... Yeah it was just this awesome little town, really similar to Bundoran, like everyone knew everyone, you went to the shop and you bumped into everyone at the little shop, and yeah everyone was super friendly and that, and then it was amazing and like, good friends and good people... The bad side about that place where I grew up now is like it's totally been developed and developed and overdeveloped, and it's huge now and in the place... The last time I went back to New Zealand I was like... Well the place where I grew up was... is gone, you know, because in essence it has, you know, it's just... The shop where I used to hang out is no longer there, the path I used to take to the beach it's gone, there's buildings everywhere, I don't know anyone... It was pretty sad, but growing up it was amazing, yeah I loved it, yeah. [Josh, 5]

**Frederique:** Well maybe here it is a little bit like how it was there back then, isn't it?

**Josh:** Exactly, exactly, yes, so I'm like, reliving my youth! (*laughs*) Yeah yeah, now that, that's also like a really big drawer factor with this place, you know, especially raising kids here, it's like trying to give them the same upbringing that I had, you know, that same... Like, safe little perfect surf community, and yeah it's just nice and pure here even though it gets a bad rep, you know, Bundoran, but I really like it, I don't know why it gets bad rep!

**Frederique:** Does it?

**Josh:** I've heard it does, yeah! You don't agree?

**Frederique:** Well I don't really know, I'm not too sure, I don't know if Giles would think that, he's been here the longest... When you say “bad rep” what do you mean, within the surf community or the town itself or towards the tourists...?

**Josh:** Yeah I don't really know too much but I can remember when I got here you know it had a real reputation of being quite... quite rough... quite a rough town, and you know, it would get pretty wild on certain days out of the year, and the crowd that it drew was kind of not ideal, but I think like, in the whole time I've being here it's like, it's done like a massive

180, I mean I wouldn't be the best person to comment on that, but I've definitely seen it in my time here, and that it's just changed, like it's totally different.

**Frederique:** Going back to you growing up could you tell me when you started surfing?

**Josh:** So I started surfing in Papamoa. My dad was a surfer, still is a surfer, so and you know what it's like, you're married to a surfer, so it's kind of like, if there's a surfer in the house you really know there's a surfer in the house! But I mean, I was young and Dad surfed, and just like every little kid I just wanted to be just like Dad, you know, and just... I was like super curious, like, what surfing was and where he would go and why Mom was angry that he was gone and why did he do it so much and yeah... Just it was just a natural progression to follow him onto the beach and yeah, I also think, like, as a little kid, like, surfing is such an attractive sort of sport especially if you have a surfer in the house, you know, like you see your father or your mother and they check the surf and then they come back and they're like, "Yes, surf's pumping". And there as a little kid you can pick up on the vibe, you know, like Dad's super excited, he's kind of surfing, whatever that means, you know and then he gets into his wetsuit, and I mean that just looks amazing as a little kid, you know, he's like strapping like a superhero he's putting on this suit. And my dad, also, he like looks like a full Viking you know he's like got ginger hair and a huge beard and so he's like strapped up in his superhero suit and he's got this huge big yellow surfboard, and he just grabs it and just runs off to the beach... And I mean, you're just sitting there witnessing it all just going "I can't wait till I surf", you know, "I just want to be like that, I wanna be a superhero too", also to let you know like he'd get phone calls that the surf's pumping so he's answering the phone and he's just like "Yep it's pumping yeah, how big? Okay I'll be there in five minutes", you know... And then he's gone, it's like a superhero, I reckon (*laughs*), so yeah. I just I followed him to the beach and floated around for a couple of years and didn't really get the hang of it but I was out there and I thought I was surfing... And yeah it's good fun hanging out with Dad and all his mates and that... [**Josh, 6**]

And then when I was about I don't know I must have been about eight or nine, someone came to town with a boogie board and it was just like, wow, that's... No one had ever seen one, you know, was they laugh what's this thing and I remember like instantly overnight like half the surfing population, the younger population, just grabbed boogie boards and then that was it... Just boogie boarding and it was heaps easier but yeah it's been a couple of years boogie boarding, even though I don't like to admit it and I fenced all my boogie boarding friends out there! And then, yeah, and then just like gradually, Dad was real cool with that, you know, he was like "Yeah you want to do that, that's sweet, just don't come near me now, hey" (*laughs*). And then, yeah, just gradually went back to surfing because, that's just the natural pool you know of having a father that surfed and that yeah... [**Josh, 7**]

**Frederique:** Yeah it's true, like, growing up I would see surfers and bodyboarders with their suits in the water they'd always look a bit like special creatures...

**Josh:** Yeah, oh as a little kid, you know, they're getting changed out of their normal clothes and like, sometimes, I can remember sometimes he'd come back from the surf and he would have hurt himself and there'd be like this trail of blood, and it was just like "Oh Dad's been surfing and he's got hurt", whatever surfing was... "And now, like, now Mom's real angry and Dad's real angry too and like, he must have to go and do more battles against surfing or whatever it is", you know, and it was just... Yeah it's such a superhero sport, you know, it's the different suits, the different boards, the different characters within surfing you know like, you go down the beach and you see that the short boarders in there and they, like, definitely have a different vibe you know and just classic, I reckon, thinking back, it's pretty weird... [**Josh, 8**]



**Frederique:** Yeah, the different powers and...

**Josh:** Yeah yeah! And like, the surfboards, they're like, also unique in that you can fully fully adapt them to like different superheroes with their different crafts and that...

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your first memorable wave?

**Josh:** Yeah yeah for sure, yeah, I can remember it was, like, it was the crappiest evening and the surf was probably like one foot and I think I was, like... I was surfing and I just begged my Dad to come to the beach, "Please come for a surf" because I didn't want to go out surfing alone 'cause I was like eight years old and bit of a pussy, and I was like "Mom will you come, will you come" and then somehow I managed to convince them both to come to the beach and we went all wet Dad went out for a surf with me and I think he was just like paddling around 'cause it was pretty much unrideable, but I just remember I got this little wave, and I went along it and then it started to close out and I went up, and I kind of like hit the lip and did a floater, and then came down and it was just like that moment of like going down the line, having the look, doing a floater like this weightlessness moment, and then landing it and I pretty much I actually did, I just went straight in, and I was like "Mom, did you see that, I did a floater, I swear I did a floater!" And it's just nice, she's probably, just full Mom, you know, she was like "Yes", sort of "Darling, it was great, yeah can we go now?" But that was pretty much... Me I was just like just chasing that feeling ever since then... Yeah that was the first one. **[Josh, 9]**

**Frederique:** What would be your favourite wave in Ireland?

**Josh:** So my favourite wave in Ireland is definitely the one at the end of the road, it's... ehm... If anyone knows where I live they know which one is at the end of the road, and yeah it's just... It's such a crazy wave, it's just... It can be so perfect, but it can be so unperfect... So so... when you get a good one out there it's really rewarding, you know, because if you're like me you get heaps heaps of bad ones out there, and then when you get that good one that's just it's so rewarding, and it's... It's pretty intense I reckon as far as waves go, pretty slabby and it has like so many different moods, you know, it's so tidal so it's not like it breaks all the time, and... Yeah it's just... it's just forever changing, but when you get those good ones out there it just makes it all worth it, you know, when it all comes together and it kind of... I definitely think it is the jewel in the crown around here, you know, there's... There's probably... Other people would disagree that, there's other waves, but I think, like, that wave is probably the one that gets hunted down the most, and yeah it's got a couple of different moods, you know, a couple of different reefs depending how big it is and depending on the swell direction... And yeah, it's definitely one of the waves that I love when it all comes together, when the planets align and I've got some time off, and yeah, it's pretty rewarding if you get a good one. **[Josh, 10]**

**Frederique:** When would be your best good wave there?

**Josh:** Oh goodness the last good one out there, I think like... I think there was probably about three times that it broke, you know, coming out of winter, and I surfed it like three times, and I just did not make a single wave... And yeah, that kind of diminished all the memories of the good ones I've had out there... *(laughs)* Yeah well, like, sometimes you think you get a good one and then someone's got a camera and then you see it and you're like "Oh that actually wasn't a good one", you know... *(laughs)* Yeah I don't know, it was definitely last winter, can't really count really pinpoint the exact session, they all kind of get smashed into memories of sleepless nights and kids and yeah, they get messed up in there, you know *(laughs)*. **[Josh, 11]**



Yeah I was talking with Ian Mitchinson the other day and he was telling me about that one really wave he had and there were also lots of cameramen out there that day so when he went in he started asking them whether any of them had a picture of his wave and no one had...

**Josh:** No way...

**Frederique:** ... so he actually started doubting himself... So I'm wondering, is it important to... be seen, to have your wave seen to...

**Josh:** Validate...

**Frederique:** Yes, to validate it?

**Josh:** I had the exact same thing, and I pitched it to a couple of my friends, and I think I even did like a little post on Facebook or something, and it was like, if you get barrelled and come out and no one is there to witness it, did you actually get barrelled? You know, like, the whole "If a tree falls in the woods and no one's there to hear it, does it make a sound?" And I was just real curious, you know, just to see what it would take on that, and a lot of people were like "Oh that's when I get my best barrels", you know! (*laughs*) And it still definitely counts, you know, but I guess moving on to the age of like, where everyone's looking for that validation of, like, media and and and... And it's also readily available, you know, I mean it's pretty cool when someone gets a good shot of you but it also adds to the mystique if someone hasn't got that one... And then that wave grows a couple of feet each time you tell the story (*laughs*), the barrel gets a little bit longer each time! Definitely, no those are my barrels! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Yeah can maybe having the picture taken take a bit of the memory away? When you see the picture you can be like, "Oh well, it wasn't that good or big or..."

**Josh:** Oh, definitely! It can either put like a massive dampener on it or... Or like a massive spin, you know, like... I can remember reviewing some footage of me thinking like "I can't wait to see that turn" and then you see that turn you're like "Oh that's the most hideous turn I think I've ever seen anyone do!" And then you see other turns that might not have felt that good and they look amazing on camera, you know! And I mean, without getting too deep and cosmic light, like what's that, which one's better? The one that felt amazing and you thought was good or the one that looks amazing on camera? You know, maybe I'll lift it to another post (*laughs*), another poll, just another survey! [*Josh, 12*]

**Frederique:** I was asking Tom Gillespie about that and he said how he'd seen a young bodyboarder who couldn't wait to see the picture of his best wave that day and he told him, "Man, don't look for the footage, don't... just remember it"

**Josh:** Yeah, that's this really wise, yeah, I think that's a great thing to tell someone because it's the wrong reason to be doing it all right...

**Giles:** Did you get an answer to what's your favourite wave?

**Frederique:** Yeah... didn't name it, but yeah!

**Josh:** You know it, Giles!

**Giles:** Yeah, just making sure!

**Josh:** Haha!

**Frederique:** That's one great thing about the area isn't it to have so many great waves within such a small area it's... A few people I've asked that question they were like, "The Peak", straight away so it's nice to have a different answer...

**Josh:** Who said the Peak?

**Frederique:** Aaron...

**Josh:** Reidie [*Aaron Reid*]? Yeah... Yeah I can believe that, yeah. I mean the Peak also has a lot of different moods, you know, and I think like last winter a lot of people saw one of the moods that they'd never seen before I think, you know the day I'm talking about... Yeah it was like... It was... I'd never seen it like that, it was amazing, you know, and I think it was a combination of so many things coming together, and it was just, it just transformed and to have that in the middle of your town it's mental! [*Josh, 13*]

**Giles:** What were the things that came together that day?

**Josh:** Oh, so my take on that thing, the biggest contributing factor, in my opinion, was the wind you know. Like, I think that we've had swells like that but without that wind, you know, I think the wind was the was the main thing how strong it was because I remember the swell was like 18 seconds or whatever, it was crazy so the swell lines were just marching in, and a couple of times I got caught out because when I first got out there I was like, "Oh this is just gonna close out the bay", you know and these swell lines would just come marching in and stand up, but because the wind was so strong it was just like feathering from like... from Donegal Bay, it would just be feathering and you... And I know I was just like... scratching for the horizon way and then, like they just wouldn't break... So they'd just come right in, right in, right in and then they were just trying their hardest and then they couldn't and then as soon as it hit that shelf at the reef, it was just like "Brrr!", it was just square and then, like, even when you you got those ones and you're like "For sure this is going to close out" but it just couldn't, it was just like peeling with just... perfection, just like grinding perfect, like a three-foot day on the Peak you know, it was just, like, taking the exact same line, like right down the reef... It was insane, I've never seen it like that, you know, it was just it was crazy... And I remember seeing Reidie and Owen and Gearoid there yeah, it was sick... [*Josh, 14*]

**Giles:** It was something else, it was... The week before I was chatting to Owen and Reidie and I was like, "Man, the Peak is gonna be unreal, like!", 'cause it had the mid-tides as well...

**Josh:** Yeah that's right yeah...Yeah it was insane, yeah... Yeah like, when the sits came it was just stacked like, every like eight-ten waves, like "Crrrr..."...

**Frederique:** What I find fascinating with surfing is that, at this level, at your level is the knowledge you have of the winds, the tides, like I know what a mid-tide is you know, but this knowledge you have and how you know that this wind and that tide is going to suit that particular break, that you see that just by looking at a chart whereas sure, I can read a chart but most of the time I just drive to the beach and see for myself...

**Josh:** I think living here, like, breeds that sort of person you know... Like there are definitely other places in the world where it's not as tidal is here, so it's just like "Should we go surfing now? Okay let's go", but here it's like "Should we go and s... Oh no it's high tide and it's not the right direction for that place and it's not a high enough type, it's not high enough of a high to go to that wave, and it's not... So you really got a chain, ain't that right Giles, you really got... because I know where I'm from it's it's not tidal, and it's not like super dependent on all these things and you can just like go for it whenever sort of thing... to a degree. Sure all the boys back home are shaking their heads right now, "Okay no wonder that guy always misses the good sessions, he's got no idea!" (*laughs*) [*Josh, 15*]

**Frederique:** Yeah I just think this whole science, like that of the fishermen of old days, they didn't need the weather forecasts, just could tell by looking at the sky, it's fascinating, it's like a magician looking down into a cauldron, you know...

**Josh:** Yeah, yeah! (*laughs*)

**Frederique:** Have there been times you've been scared in the water?

**Josh:** Yeah, yeah, yeah the older I get the more it happens, yeah, heaps of times. It happens heaps in this country too, I'm always out of my depth, even though I don't charge as hard as most other guys around here, but yeah... But I think it just goes all... It's all part of the course, you know, getting in and out of your comfort zone and pushing yourself, and yeah I mean like, I also think like your comfort zone fluctuates too, if you know what I mean like... Like you could have had a good couple of days, you know, where like... Where you're getting some, you're having a really good time and like things are really happening for you and you're feeling on top of the world and you had a couple of good surfs, and then your comfort zone is probably raised up, you know, and then, like, nothing really seems to bother you and then... On the flip side of that I think you could have had a couple of really bad days and a couple of really horrible surfs and then and then your comfort zone is a little bit... the scale has dropped a bit you know, and then all of a sudden you're like "Oh this doesn't feel that good", and um... Yeah especially with, like, learner surfers, you know, that must happen all the time, you know, going out there and being intimidated and maybe just from the crowd factor and like, things like that but... Yeah so I think that's like a fluctuating scale, definitely. *[Josh, 16]*

**Frederique:** "Out of your comfort zone": what does it look like?

**Josh:** Oh out of my comfort zone it looks like a month-long flat spell, haven't been in the water, haven't done any physical exercise, I've probably had like three or four massive nights and that... that month-long flat spell, and then all of a sudden there's like a swell pops up on the charts and then before you know it you, like, hear stories, like such-and-such is just flying in for this swell, and you're just sat at home just like doing a few press ups going "Oh my goodness, it's gonna be huge!" You try and get roasted on at work or something so you got a good excuse! *(Laughs)* And then yeah, and then maybe it's a fizzer, maybe it's not even that big, but still you're just rattled because you're just out of shape and then... And then yeah yeah... That counts heaps for me, like you know, the vibe on the day and... It could be real sunny, everything could be sick and you can be having a good day and then you're not too rattled even if it's like real spooky gnarly surf, but if it's like gray, maybe you had a fight with the missus or something, and the boys are like "Come on, you pussy!" *(laughs)* and then you're just like "I don't know, got stomach cramps, I'll just sit this one out" *(laughs)*, you know what I mean? It's just that fluctuating scale and... And then like physical fitness, I think, definitely from my point of view, that contributes a lot to my mental fitness, you know, like if I'm physically fit then my mind is like physically, clear and then my mental game's strong, but I haven't felt like that since my early teens so... *(laughs)* Saying that as I'm reaching for the wine bottle! *(laughs)* *[Josh, 17]*

**Frederique:** Well I've seen you surf the Peak and... I put you up there with the chargers of the area so, I mean I've seen you surf the Peak pretty big, that's how I pictured you anyway so...

**Josh:** Aw thanks!

**Frederique:** I was wondering, "Does he surf Mullaghmore?"

**Josh:** I don't surf Mullie, no... I have surfed it, well I've only tried it a couple of times, I haven't paddled it, but like it's been on my list "to do things" for ages, I know Giles has paddled it and that's kind of like thriving me on to get out there and all the boys and that, but yeah, I've tried it a couple of times back in the day and that was it, kind of... Yeah, just I didn't really take to it, I remember it like sort of happened really quick, you know, it was like everyone's... just everyone's got jet skis, you know, overnight it was like everyone's tow surfing, yeah that's like "Yeah let's do that!" And then I remember I just was like just cruising along and then, yeah, didn't really resonate with me, and so maybe I better get out

there and paddle, you know, maybe that's more my cup of tea, yeah... But like, man, fair play to those guys out there at the moment, legends pushing it, yeah yeah... [Josh, 18]

**Frederique:** Tell us about one of those experiences where you've been out of your comfort zone... Like something like, I don't know, one of those stories like, big wipe out...

**Josh:** Yeah, like when Pete [*Pete Craig*] dragged me out at Mully I was definitely out of my comfort zone, you know, firstly like first time ever towing, and and... Like that's just a whole different sport, you know, to surf and there's so many things... And I remember like even just like hanging out in the channel on the back of the ski, you know, that sucks as a tall dude, you know, you're just hunched over and there's... And then it's like "All right you're up!" And and you're just kind of like thrown into it, and... And like heaps of your mind is just like... Well there's that massive doubt factor in your mind, you know, "What are you doing? You're a kook! Like don't go the next one!" But you don't have any control unless you let go of the rope but your hands won't let you let go, you know, pride is just gripping that thing! (*laughs*) And there before you know it you're getting like wept into this huge one by Pete, and then yeah, it was just classic... I remember I skipped out on my first one and then I just fell and I was just floating in like the takeoff area, and I'd never seen waves that big... And the next one just came and it was just huge, a huge mass of water and I was just like "Oh my goodness, I can't believe I got talked into this! I don't want to do it!" And yeah just like freaking out and I remember Pete pulls up on the ski and he's like, he's shouting something at me and I'm like "I know, I'm gonna die as well, yeah!" And he's... and then he gets closer and he's shouting something and I'm like "I know, just save me!" And then he gets a little bit closer and he's shouting "Get the board!" and I'm like "Get the board? Me? I'm about to die here, bro, you just want your board!" But yeah so like, I was a good boy and I got the board and I didn't die but it's pretty pretty freaky, yeah... It's good to be out of your comfort zone, right? [Josh, 19]

**Frederique:** Ollie O'Flaherty told me that if you're staying in your comfort zone all your life it's not really a life worth living, I was like "Yeah... but..."

**Giles:** It's about knowing where you're at, and where you wanna be at...

**Josh:** Definitely...

**Giles:** And then it's about being like, "I kind of like this", or "I don't", but it can go either way... You can have a bad experience pushing your comfort zone but you can also have a good experience and, yeah, you wanna do it again...

**Josh:** Yeah! For sure, yeah!

**Frederique:** It depends on the measure as well, like how big a step you're taking out of the zone...

**Giles:** Yeah, it's about knowing your limit, that's the main thing...

**Frederique:** For me that was my little wipe out in Hossegor, for me it was a big wipe out but I have a witness so I have to tone it down a bit!

**Giles:** It was overhead anyway...

**Josh:** It was big enough, yeah!

**Frederique:** Yeah it was over Giles's head! But yeah it was big enough of a step for me to be like, "Okay, I can take this"... If it had six meters then, of course, that would have been a different story!

**Josh:** Yeah, even out of surfing, you know, like you can push your comfort zone, you know, like daily right, you can do things, you can approach people that maybe you probably wouldn't approach, you know, do certain things or like...

**Frederique:** Except you nearly died that day at Mully!

**Josh:** Yeah yeah, that's true yeah! (*laughs*)

**Giles:** You're like, "Hey, how do you do that...?" Bam!

**Josh:** I'm sorry...! (*still laughing*)

**Frederique:** Maybe a topical question for us, becoming a parent, how... Has it had an impact on your surfing?

**Josh:** Oh, definitely the... It's definitely an amazing, amazing journey, you know, to go through parenthood, and to share it with someone like my wife, you know, it's also amazing... The way it's affected my surfing is like there isn't definitely as much time to surf but, you know, I still get so pumped on like hanging out with the kids and see... and like now I get to see them surf... And yeah, I definitely wouldn't change it for the world, it does get hard you know in the surf's pumping and you have friends like Ryan Watts telling you how much the surf... how bad it was but also how good it was, and how much you missed out, but yeah, it definitely... It definitely helps you to appreciate those sessions, you know, like I was saying before, like when that... When everything's good and you don't have the kids and... And you can just go for a surf... It's actually taken like... You become a lot less fussy, you know, it's like "Can I go surfing?" Or, not that I ask permission from, you know, I wear the pants in my relationship and that, but it's like everything's sweet and I can go surfing now and that's just like, "Okay, is the tide high or low? Okay I'll go there or there" and then I see, like, heaps the young crew, you know, they might be on the dole and and I'll rock up to the waves, and it's... It's like "Oh yeah, it's a little bit cross shore", "Oh yeah it's a little bit sitty", and you're just like "Serious man? It looks pretty good", like I'm straight out, you only have a small window, "Oh I see you go out" so you're definitely... The appreciation factor of surf sort of rises up, but I mean, surf excites you, you know, you always want more, you always... You always feel like you're missing out, yeah... But yeah, kids are amazing... **[Josh, 20 (1/2)]**

**Giles:** Yeah, I've found it really great, like I surfed only – I managed to surf the end of the winter, and the first couple of weeks when it pumped, I went out and got a few waves, and then it was like, nothing... Not surfing, being away from it, has almost made it way better...

**Josh:** Yeah...

**Giles:** And I just had, like, the best time!

**Josh:** Yeah the appreciation factor a just rises through the roof

**Giles:** I think, like, if you're surfing all the time, you're just surfing, then you expect so much out of it and out of yourself.

**Josh:** Yeah they're fluctuating scales, you know, your standard is raised because you know that, like, the tide might not be... might be better later, so you're like "I'll just leave it for a bit", but when you don't have that... that kind of... What's the word... that... what's the word? When you don't have that privilege of being able to wait and then you're just like, "Okay I'm going for it", and then your, like... The benchmark, you know, it sits so low, you know because you don't expect anything and then you go out and you get a couple of fun runs and you're like "I didn't even know it could be so fun"! Yeah, it's good...

**Frederique:** And how about putting yourself out of your comfort zone, now that you have kids is that something that you are a little bit more wary about, staying safe?

**Josh:** Yeah, to a degree... Yeah yeah, I mean like, definitely I think your pride drives you out there, you know, "Jeez got to, like, put in a good show and... and give it a craic and that", but yeah definitely, when you're in those situations where you're just like getting held down (*laughs*) and you're like, "Yeah I need to hold my breath longer, I want to see my kids again", yeah then you pop out at Tullan and everything's good! (*Laughs*)



**Frederique:** Yeah I remember that session at Mullaghmore back in November and Giles got out and and that's the first time actually, I was eight months pregnant, I wouldn't say I was worried but I was a little bit, there was a bit of that...

**Josh:** Yeah... You were out there? Oh, Giles was out there! You were freaking out for him!

**Frederique:** Yeah... And you were a bit... I wouldn't say worried but you were a bit nervous, right?

**Giles:** Fuck yeah! (*laughs*) When not!

**Josh:** I don't know how those guys do it, hey!

**Frederique:** And I'm never worried, you know, when he gets out, even when it's big, but like, this one time was a bit different...

**Josh:** Yeah, yeah it's crazy, hey, they're kind of, like they just come like naturally, you know, those feelings, they develop naturally and like you hold on to those feelings forever because you're always going to be a parent, you know, and like, they just... These changes start happening and you're like "Oh maybe I shouldn't do that because of the kids", and like even in everyday life, you know, "Maybe I should...", there's little eyes watching you and you should... Maybe you should like resist acting like that or maybe you need to set an example or like... Yeah it's crazy, all of a sudden you go... It's a huge transition from, like, a single person or in a young person to become a parent and you just get thrown into these responsibilities... [*Josh, 20 (2/2)*]

**Frederique:** What about getting them to surf, is that like... do you remember their first wave?

**Josh:** I just... I guess it's 'cause you like the beach you know, surf for years, it was just like, we'd say "Let's go surf, you want to go surfing?" But it was more like, we'd all pack up go to the beach, they'd start wearing wetsuits, you try and coax them onto a board and like, you know you want to catch a few waves but they'll just like to be like throwing sand at you and kick in the water and that and that's totally cool, but I was always, "Let's go surfing", and and yeah... But it was more beach time, you know, just heading to the beach, and I mean I hope that, like... Because my wife surfs as well and they just see how like stoked Mum and Dad are on it and they just... They'll like sort of follow us into the water and but, like, my little boy and my little girl they've both had some pretty sick little waves, you know like yeah, as well as like... How amazing the surf is here for like for good surfers, but there's some really good places for kids, you know, beaches, growing up, Rossnowlagh, you couldn't design a better beach really for a kid... And yeah we've had some good sessions... I haven't seen my kids for a month, so I can't talk about them too much without crying you know, "I miss them so much!" [*Josh, 21*]

**Frederique:** Just going back to your arriving in Ireland, do you remember your first surf?

**Josh:** My first surf in Ireland... I think it was like... I do remember my first surf in Ireland, yeah that's right, it was like March... And like I said I hadn't done any research, I'm like coming to Ireland and I knew, like, what the waves were like and I knew I needed like a real thick wetsuit, but I'd been so desensitized to cold water living on the Gold Coast for a while so I had a like five four and... And we'd hung out for a couple of weeks and then the surf picked up and it was like, this amazing day in March, you know, offshore sunny and it was like four foot and I think the day before it had been like one foot and I'd seen Tullan and I was just like "Oh my goodness, if this place is like four to six foot it must be insane!" So we checked the Peak and it was like four foot and perfect, and I was like "Oh I'm going to that beach, that'll be like crazy, it'll be like hardcore, and like just spitting barrels!" And I remember I walked around there, dragged my girlfriend around there at the time, and we got around there, it was just like washed out and I was just like "What? I can't figure it out!" So then we walked all the way back and... And I had no booties 'cause I just had no



idea, I just remember like paddling out at the Peak and just like actually nearly vomiting because it was that cold, no hood, no nothing, no idea, you know. Yeah, went out there and the surf was amazing and everyone was just staring at me and I was just like, you know, when you surf on the Goldie there's so many people no one even takes a notice of you, you could... You just do whatever you want, you know, no one bats an eyelid at you, you get out there and everyone was just staring at me and I was just like "This place is out there, everyone is staring at me", freezing cold water...The surf was amazing, though, and then yeah, that was it, I was sold. *[Josh, 22]*

And I remember I met this guy, he's like one of my best friends to this day, and and like... He... he just, he probably helped a lot with like falling in love with the place, you know, like he had everything dialed and, you know, he had been stirring in the cauldron a while and he knew what to look for and he just he let me stay at his house, he let me party with him, he like... We got jobs together, we just hung out, he helped me break up with my girlfriend at the time (*laughs*), you know, just like the classic friend! I don't know it was definitely a good move, but I'm yeah and he just showed me around and we just, like, we just surfed all these waves, it felt like there was no one else around, you know. I mean gradually the more I surfed here I bumped into all the locals and that, but there was definitely, like, so many quiet sessions. But another really memorable session and another one that like sealed the deal with staying here was at the end of the road here, and my good mate, the one that I met, his name's Tyrone, he has ADHD like... And he, we lived together and he wouldn't let us sleep with the curtains pulled, you know, 'cause he was like, "No, you know, we need to get up at the crack of dawn man, you're gonna get bed sores all the time you sleep, whatever bro!" Anyway we got up at like 4:00 in the morning to check this wave and it was the tide was like way too low, you know, this crap. I'd never seen the wave break before and I was like, "Are you serious?" And he was like "No, trust me trust me"... We went back to sleep for an hour, we got up at 5:00, I was still just like "What are you doing?" Terrible. And he said "No trust me trust me, that's just it, it's gonna come in a bit". Back to bed, got up at 6:00, and that was just like, you know, it had just turned on in that time, you know, just like that, it just... It goes from like, just nothing to just this amazing wave, and we went out there, and there was another guy out there and it was Mike Morgan, do you guys know him? It was like Mike Morgan Jr., he was like, he was like the original, the OG from Bundoran. Anyway he's out there and this set came in, and there's like three or four perfect waves and he was on my inside and I'm just frothing, like, paddling in circles like "Oh my goodness, I've never seen a wave this good in so long!" And he just looks at me and goes "Do you want this one?" And I'm like, "Do I want this one?" and I just go and I just got it and... and pulled in and came out, and then we just like... We all just like shared waves that whole morning but that moment when he was like he had offered me this amazing wave, like, "Do you want it?" and I've come from a place on the Gold Coast we're, like, no one would offer you anything, you know, like I mean there's some amazing people on the Gold Coast but I mean, like surfing Snapper and that, you know, with everyone's just fighting for the crappiest waves and good ones as well... But yeah that was like, that was just like sign, the sign the deed right there, yeah sign up for life, yeah, he got me, yeah sweet and done, it's me, handcuffs on! (*laughs*) *[Josh, 23]*

**Giles:** Mike Morgan, is that... Nicole...

**Josh:** Nicole Morgan's brother, yeah yeah. Well his dad's called Mike as well so there's Mike Morgan Senior and Mike Morgan Jr, yeah. And he was a ripper, he still surfs pretty good too, he lives on, it's funny like, we've done a full swap, like I live here now, and he loves on... he lives on the sunny coast now, raising kids. And he comes back, he's like "G'day mate! Like how izit going?" (*laughs*) This is like the full swap!

**Frederique:** What is like, living here? Do you consider yourself as a local?

**Josh:** Oh, one hundred percent not! Definitely not, yeah and everyone reminds me of that every day and I'm so grateful for that, you know, being reminded constantly that I'm not from here... Yeah, it's just something that I hold so dearly to me! But yeah, you know I'm not from here, I mean I don't sound like I'm from here, I don't pretend to be from here, I'm actually from North Donegal! Yeah I'm not from here but it's cool, you know, like, that's like... Everyone's so welcoming here, I mean yeah yeah...

**Frederique:** It's something, it's kind of a question for myself as well, like how do you call somewhere at home when you've been travelling, I've grown up and lived in different places, and then you choose a place that you call home but how is it home?

**Josh:** Yeah home is where the heart is, right? *[Josh, 24]*

**Frederique:** But it doesn't feel like it's very important here anyway? Like in the Irish surf community it doesn't seem that important compared to other places I've seen?

**Josh:** Nah. If I'm honest that kind of worries me, though, you know, like it kind of worries me that the... that the locals, I feel like they could sort of I don't know, if they're not careful I feel like it could easily get taken away from them, you know, especially if I... if I think about where I'm from, and and... what it's like back then now, you know, with like the influx of people... It's probably never going to happen here but I do... I do worry, you know, that that... like that there could be like a whole influx of people and because... because the local crew's so sort of easygoing and receptive of new people and friendly, which is amazing, which like, made me move here, but like I'd hate for it to just turn sour and then like all of a sudden, you know, heaps of people turn up and you can't get a wave.

**Frederique:** Do you see it happening here?

**Josh:** I see it happening everywhere, you know, I think it's only a matter of time... There's probably people shaking their head right now, going "Yeah you're here!" But I know a lot of people that are like "Ah it'll never happen here, you know, because it's too... it's too cold and it's too unwelcoming" and... and I hoped they're right you know, I still want to get more waves! *(laughs) [Josh, 25 (1/2)]*

**Frederique:** To you, what is the best thing about surfing in Ireland?

**Josh:** Oh... it just... it would have to be the people, yeah! The people. And then the waves, you know, they're pretty close together, the people and the waves. Obviously the waves are insane here. For anyone that's listening and I'm not from here it's not actually that good, it's cold and crap! But yeah, the coolest thing is like the people, and and the big difference is like... Like where I grew up in New Zealand and I know I knew like the whole surfing community, you know, and like you could go out, and it'd be similar here, you go out for a surf and you see all the boys and you see like the dudes you were in school with and then it's just like, you have so much craic and that, it's such a good time. When I go go back there now, I go out and like I don't know anyone and like... and just... And it's very rare that I that I come in feeling like "Wow, that was such a fun surf, and I got to catch up with all the boys!" And and over here, it's just like, when you go surfing it's just, you catch up with all the boys, you know, and the girls and it's just like, you catch up with all your friends from the surfing community because that's all the people that are here, you know, in the surfing community, so like even if the surf's crap, you'd be like "Oh I caught up with old Phoenix, or Giles, we were having a chat, Charles Tommy's having a kid", you know, I feel like that's epic and you... Just it's a real social aspect too, you know, as much as it is surfing... Does that make sense? You know, you just... you have to catch up with all the boys... *[Josh, 26]*

- Giles:** It does... but if you were still in New Zealand, would it be the same?
- Josh:** No, and that's what I'm saying, it's totally different because there's too many people where I'm from now, and and like you don't see all the boys, and so you can see... You could like really associate surfing with like... "All these people that I don't know and they just like, they're not that friendly towards me", and yeah and over here it's totally different, you know... But it's a double-edged blade right, like if you fall out with the surfing community yeah and then you just want to continue surfing and then like you're constantly running into these people but like, but no one's that into seeing you and then it's like... I've been in the line up sometimes and and you can definitely feel that vibe, you know, and it's just like, "Hmmm... what's gonna happen here...? I think, I just paddle for this one!" (laughs) Do you know what I mean? *[Josh, 25 (2/2)]*
- Giles:** It's like, it's that small, that no matter where you go, you know someone or they... you're just gonna know someone.
- Josh:** Exactly yeah!
- Giles:** Whereas when you go back to New Zealand it's just gone so much bigger than what your community was...
- Josh:** Yeah, so there's no social aspect, you know, back there... Unless you like bring your mates up in and you're like "I'm going for a surf, let's go!"
- Giles:** I mean, I could go for a surf down in Kerry, and I haven't surfed there in years, you'd be able to have a conversation... would that happen in New Zealand?
- Josh:** Yeah I mean, like definitely if you were travelling to the right spots and that... But like it's just exploded, you know, the surf community... You could definitely go like a whole year without surfing with your mates if you wanted to... Which you don't! (laughs)
- Frederique:** What's the hardest thing about surfing in Ireland?
- Josh:** Oh, definitely the lack of sunshine, not the lack of sunshine, the lack of light, you know, like in the winter when the surf's cranking and it just goes dark, and and... There's just all those perfect waves going unriden but it's dark or... You know, it's just... Yeah it's probably the most testing thing... you're like, you get it get up in the morning and you can just tell it's pumping but it's dark, you know, and it's just like "Oh I've got to go to work in like 15 minutes maybe I can scratch out there for a couple" and it's like "Not" so it's probably the hardest thing you know, that lack of of... like daylight and surfing hours and and yeah, that's probably the hardest thing... The cold's all good, you know, like the wetsuits are sweet these days... *[Josh, 27]*
- Frederique:** Is there anything actually that you hear in the line up in Ireland that you don't hear anywhere else? Or hear or see, like? Something that would mean, "Sure, I'm in Ireland, like", like a joke or a greeting or...
- Josh:** Oh yeah, "What's the craic?", yeah, "What is the craic?" I'm asking you, what's...! (laughs) Yeah this is the best one, aye, that's yeah, that's the classic, "What's the craic?", and I just remember getting here and I hear these old ladies going "Any craic?" and I was just like, "What? These old ladies asking for crack? Asking the postman for crack?" Yeah so yeah, that would be the best one... There's heaps of classic ones, though, yeah they're so witty hey, the Irish, you know, they're so so funny, and just really quick with the wit and keep you on your toes... yeah, definitely... I actually caught up with Conor the other day, Conor McGuire and I was, I was like real pumped on the cricket, you know, because New Zealand had been in the World Cup, and and he was like listening to my story about it and then, I was like "Yeah yeah, what don't you follow the cricket?" and Conor was like, "No, actually

the only thing I follow is people to the pub!” Like! (*Laughs*) He just had me in stitches!  
[*Josh, 28*]

**Giles:** The quickness of it all! There’s the moment, “How did you go from there to...?”

**Josh:** Yeah!

**Frederique:** Is there actually a local surfer you kind of look up to, a local legend like, young or old...?

**Josh:** Oh yes, I mean, Conor for sure, Conor Maguire, he's he's definitely, like you know, when I first got to town and there was, there was like that little core group of grommets and they were so young, you know, Conor being one of them, Reidie, Murf [*Owen Murphy*], Áarom Madden and Ronan Orton, you know, they were just like the tiniest little grommets and just to see them kind of develop into the guys they are today and just like how well they surf and like how hard they're pushing it and how they just represent our surfing, you know, it's... it's... it's awesome to see. It makes me, I don't know if I can say that it makes me proud, but yeah you know like I'm so stoked for those guys especially since I taught them everything they know! (*Laughs*) I'm joking! [*Josh, 29 (1/2)*]

**Giles:** (*laughing*) He’s good isn’t he? These little bombs just keep dropping!

**Josh:** But those guys, okay you know, what they're doing now is so sick... Me and Conor we hung out heaps the first winter I was here, he was, he was... he was so small! Yeah! Still in nappies, I think! And yeah we hung out heaps, playing Xbox and just surfing, and just yeah... And oh he was so classic when he was young, hey, just the most classic head, you know, just full surf grom, and I just... I remember ‘cause we'd go travelling for the winter and I remember we'd go away and come back and and like he'd still be the same, you know, like, super polite and and and like telling me that he got barreled, and and did it here and stuff, and I was like “Ah sick, sick!” And then I remember, this one year I came back and he was just like “I surfed the cliffs and I got cleaned up why this huge set”, and I was like “What?” And he was like “Yeah, check out this picture”, and he whips out this picture that's like this huge wave down at Aileen’s, and he's just like this tiny speck caught like jumping off his board, and yes some somehow through that winter he just like transitioned into this mad dog (*laughs*) and he's just like he just kept going and going, so yeah... [*Josh, 29 (2/2)*]

**Frederique:** Would you wish that for your own kids, actually?

**Josh:** Yeah yeah...

**Frederique:** Surfing big waves...

**Josh:** Hum, yeah if they want that, surfing in general, like I mean, I'm a full surfing aficionado, you know, like I just, like I think it's the most amazing thing ever so if my kids want to surf, you know, just I'd love to see them take that path through life, you know, the same path that me and my wife have taken, you know like that the full coast road, and just... and going to all the beaches and just meeting all the characters along the way and just really enjoying surfing and being outside. But if they want to do something else that's totally cool...

**Giles:** Just not bodyboarding!

**Josh:** Hahaha! Giles said that, just for the record! It was not me!

**Giles:** Oh, you gotta get the jokes in there!

**Josh:** Yeah yeah!

**Giles:** One question I wanted to ask is, can you walk us through, like step by step, maybe like your best wave, a good wave?

**Josh:** Ehm... So definitely... I can definitely remember the first time I got barreled... with the stages yeah yeah... It was... it was summer I remember that much! (*laughs*) And no, I was like... I was surfing at the place where I grew up surfing, you know it's not famous for barreling, and I didn't... I was just like went out there with no intention of getting barreled. And I think a lot of people have said like, you know, sometimes you think you barreled, you know, you're like "Yeah yeah, I got a few barrels, I got a few barrels" and then at one time when you actually get barreled and you come out and then you're like "Oh... what was that... I wasn't actually getting barreled before", you know what I mean and then it's like this game-changer... So this is like the first time I got barreled, it was summer, I was out there, there was no one else around either, it's one of those ones! (*laughs*) Except... (it gets better!) so I paddled out, it's like a beautiful day, I just paddle into this wave, I'm pretty young, and I just... I just took off and I got to the bottom and I pulled up... I didn't do anything, and I just pulled up and the waves just like pitched over me and like, you know, you're just having this rush of thoughts, like "Oh my goodness! This is it!" Of like "This is what everyone is talking, I'm doing it!" And then yeah you're out, you know, and then it's all over, and I'm scanning the beach and I'm scanning the horizon, and I'm like "I just got my first barrel, it's amazing!". No one's seen it. And then my friend Jelly Bean comes running up the beach and he came out, and he just, he just grabbed me, and he was like "Bro I saw your barrel, that's amazing, you got barreled!" And I was like "That's right" (*laughs*) Yeah it was like the sickest thing, anyone who's been barreled knows, you know, don't have to like explain it to you, but it is that, like... game-changer right, it is the full... full game-changer... That's crazy... You remember your first time, Giles? [*Josh, 30 (1/2)*]

**Giles:** Yeah, I do, it was... like that, I didn't really mean to, and I don't know if I really got barreled, but I remember the... like, the waves, it was a beach break and it stepped out a little bit and I went over the step, and yeah like, Shipsterns and (*laughs*), airdrop! And like I got the lip in the head, I don't think I actually got a view but I was like "F... I got barreled, man!" But yeah... I'd say the first time I got a real barrel was at Blackspot, yeah... maybe eight years now...

**Josh:** Yeah... the beginning of the end...

**Frederique:** Is it the one thing that you're chasing in your surfing, like, the barrel?

**Josh:** For sure, yeah definitely it's like the coolest thing, you know, and like in a sense it's it should be one of the easiest things, 'cause you're just going straight, but at the same time it's like one of the most technical things, you know, to go straight, so it's real it's bizarre to try and explain... I could try but I'll just come out sounding like a retard (*laughs*).

**Frederique:** How would you teach it?

**Josh:** Well I like to think that I helped Huib get barreled. Do you guys know Huib?

**Giles:** I think you've helped all of us get barreled!

**Josh:** Hahaha! By showing you what not to do! (*Laughs*) I helped him, yeah... Yeah I mean there's definitely a few tricks, I'm probably like the worst person to ask, there's way better barrel-riders than me... The first thing, though, you know, 'cause I teach surfing as well, and the first thing, you know, people say "Oh how do you get barreled?" I'm like "Well first you have to surf waves that barrel, you know... You can't go out on like two-foot mushy days and ask me questions like "How do you get barreled?" because the first thing is, you just have to surf barrels, you know". You're like asking how do you drop in on a mini-ramp and you're skating the road or something, you know, like first you've got to go to a mini-ramp to drop in on the mini-ramp... So yeah... I'm sure no one's gonna want to



sign up for a surf lesson with me after that! “This guy is a simpleton!” (*laughs*) [Josh, 30 (2/2)]

**Frederique:** If I was a five-year old and, yeah I am bit like you when you were a kid watching your father put on his superhero suit, I ask you “What is a wave?”

**Josh:** What is a wave? To a five-year-old... Yeah... I'd probably just keep it real simple, you know, just like... I'd be like “It's this amazing ride that you can take at the beach, it's totally free but you just have to come out and get it, you know, and and then like once you get your board and your wetsuit, all those rides are totally free, and all those rides are different and all those rides can be better than the last”, you know, and and then hopefully that this plants a seed and they're just like, “Oh I can't wait to go get rides at the beach”, you know. [Josh, 31]

**Frederique:** What is a good surfer?

**Josh:** The best surfer is the one having the most fun, for sure, yeah and no matter who he is, no matter... what no matter what he's doing, it's definitely the one having the most fun definitely, yeah, so on any given day it can be someone else... Cliché, but it's definitely true. [Josh, 32]

**Frederique:** If you were not a surfer what do you think you'd be doing now?

**Josh:** Oh my goodness... I would just be playing rugby somewhere in New Zealand... Yeah... I mean before surfing, rugby was my life, and yeah... Definitely think I would have just continued that path, but luckily enough I fell into that the footsteps of surfing and... and they led me away from rugby... Not that not that rugby is bad or anything, but I just remember it got to the point where... You know, you're playing rugby and your coach wants you to train, and and he wants you to be there on the day of the match and and then I got to the point where like there was surf on the day when I should have trained, I was like “No way, I'm going surfing” and we had this rule in my rugby club, if you don't come to training, you don't get to play on the day, so then before I knew it I'd skipped three trainings, then I wasn't getting game time, and then I was just like I could just see myself taking that other path... And yeah if I hadn't have taken that path of surfing I definitely would have just been on that rugby buzz and just yeah, rugby is a sick game, so fun... Jumping around with heaps of other guys! (*laughs*) [Josh, 33]

**Frederique:** Maybe my last question, where do you see yourself in ten years?

**Josh:** Oh, man... Hopefully I still am surfing... At the moment, no in ten years, yeah I'd love to still be surfing in ten years, if I'm honest... You know, like, I feel like I'm in this... in this transition period, you know at the moment, because I'm approaching middle-age and I was never the most amazing surfer but I'm already, you know like... I'm already on that like... I feel like I've gone up to the top... not the top, you know, but I've gone and I definitely feel like I'm heading down, you know. And that's just honest, you know, middle life's approaching, I'm not surfing as much, yeah it's a tough pill to swallow, and yeah... I mean, you still love surfing, I guess you just... you just gotta like... keep just reinventing it you know, different boards, you just, like yeah... different boards and then... And yeah, hopefully still surfing in ten years, yeah definitely... I want to keep surfing my whole life. My dad is still surfing, so he's driving me on... But yeah... Definitely... I think, I was talking to my mom about it, you know, like approaching middle-age it's like going through puberty again, you know, like you wake up in the morning and and... you're getting hair in all these weird places! (*laughs*) Coming out of your ears, and like coming out of your eyebrows, and that is full... like a second puberty and your body's changing, you know, like, there's bulges just coming where there didn't use to be bulges like, even like... Even you know, you have... You're starting to have different thoughts, just like you did in



puberty, except these ones are like about gardening and reading books and stuff and it's just... Like it's weird, like no one trains you for that, you know, they teach you about puberty and how you're gonna change from a kid into a man, but there's no lessons about turning from... we'll just say like a young adult into middle-aged, you know, it's just... No one warns you what that's like, it's heavy, you know... **[Josh, 34 (1/2)]**

I saw the best thing the other day, it was like “Ways you injure yourself when you're young, and ways you injure yourself when you're middle-aged”, and ways you injure yourself when you're young it's like jump off the top of a building and you hurt your foot, you you run through a fire and you get a little burn, and then like, ways you hurt yourself when you're middle-aged is, like, I slept funny, you know, I sneezed too hard, stuff like that (*laughs*), and it's so true you know! I was like, it's just... yeah it's the toughest pill to swallow, you know, like I don't know, me and my friends we say like... like turning 30 was like side B, you know, like you know the old cassette tapes... On side A you know you get all those like hard trashy tracks and like everyone loves side A 'cause it's got all the hits on it, and then you flip it around, you turn 30 and then you got like side B, and you know... and like no one's really into side B, but but once you start listening to side B you're like, there's loads of slow songs and that, and then you're like “Actually side B is way better than side A, I definitely prefer that”... And then I reckon like turning 40 is like... like the remix you know, and when they bring out the next album and there's like dubstep, like “Waaa dubdubdub” and everyone's like “What? That band used to be cool! And now that's just like... that is the worst music ever” (*laughs*) but you think it's cool, you know... Yeah Giles, stretch up, all right, listen to your wife! **[Josh, 34 (2/2)]**

**Giles:** I want to ask... what does it feel like to pull your favourite manoeuvre?

**Josh:** Oh, what it feels like to do your favourite manoeuvre... Yeah it definitely feels amazing, you know, when everything comes together and you you pull off, like... when your favourite manoeuvres or like a new manoeuvre the feeling is insane, you know, you feel like you're sort of achieving your goals or you just... you just get so pumped I reckon, you know, makes you feel good, like you feel validated as a... “it was worth going out”, or you know, like yeah “I've still got it”, even though you might not but you know, it's just... Yeah it's... it's amazing, it just feels like in any sport, you know, when you do something good, just like, yeah “Sick!”... **[Josh, 35 (1/2)]**

**Giles:** That's the emotional... what about the physical?

**Josh:** The physical achievements of doing it?

**Giles:** Yeah, like a turn, or a barrel... maybe putting a rail in... What's that sensation?

**Josh:** Yeah... man usually it happens so quick... well maybe it happens slow but my mind is running so quick... But it's kind of hard to put into words, you know, like yeah... It's super difficult to analyse that one... It's definitely like your senses are all super heightened, you know, like... you like... Your thoughts are just pinging around and you're here, “then I do like this and like this” and and then before you know it's like all over and you've done it, somehow, it's just like a sec, I guess... I guess that's a lot of muscle memory, right, you know, when it... when it just sort of happens and you can't think about it, it'll probably be easier to describe, I move that and you're trying to learn, you know 'cause you're still in the process of learning it and you still sort of analysing everything and trying to make things click and that, but yeah... I mean surfing's insane... Like it kind of bugs me how people are like “Ah you know, when I go to the skate park skaters are so like cool to each other and they're like super chilled out and nice, like, to meet you, but when you go out in the surf they like, you know, it's just not that vibe, you know”, and I just think it's really unfair because waves are like a finite resource, if that makes sense, you know... No two waves are

the same, there's limited amounts of them, sure like you can go places where there's more waves but, like because of that aspect, everybody wants more waves than the next one, whereas you go to a skate park, I'll be like "Yeah you skate for 10 minutes and then I'll skate for 10 minutes and then you skate", like we can just skate together and take different lines and like everyone's... No wonder everyone's so chilled when they skate, you know, because they can go skating in the middle of the night or like... Surfing it's like, everybody just wants that wave and if you want to get better then you have to get more waves than everyone... **[Josh, 35 (2/2)]**

**Frederique:** Yeah, interesting... It's like driving, if you ask me where the accelerator is or where the clutch is, I have to think about it, I don't know, my foot knows...

**Josh:** Yeah! Exactly! It's the same as my wife! You guys must drive the same! She doesn't know where the brake is! *(laughs)*

**Frederique:** Thanks anyway, I hope we haven't kept you too late...

**Josh:** No worries... I hope I wasn't waffling on too much...

## 12. ADAM et ELLIE HOEY

### A. Profil en diachronie :

Adam et sa sœur Ellie Hoey sont âgés respectivement de 14 et 11 ans au moment de l'entretien. Ils sont les enfants de la compagne de Joseph Stapleton, alors gérant de l'auberge de jeunesse Cosy Joe's. Surfeurs débutants, ils prennent des cours de surf depuis environ un an et surfent régulièrement ensemble. Il semblait intéressant d'interroger des enfants au sujet de leur engagement dans la pratique du surf et de recueillir leurs récits afin de saisir leur relation à la pratique et leur expérience de l'océan, des rituels de l'activité, de l'entrée et de l'initiation dans la communauté de pratique.

### B. Transcription de l'entretien du 20 septembre 2017, enregistré à Bundoran, co. Donegal :

**Ellie:** Hello my name is Ellie, and I surf after school. I go to Creevy National school in Ballyshannon. I'm in fifth class.

**Adam:** My name is Adam, and I go to school in Ballyshannon, and I like surfing, like, I like surfing quite a lot, and I do it mostly after school, whenever I get the chance. *[Adam & Ellie, 1]*

**Frederique:** When did you start surfing?

**Adam:** A couple of years ago on a lesson with TurfnSurf. We did the camps every year and we started doing camps each year and just came the time where we were like, well, this is fun, so we got a bit more into it, got our own things and got involved with it and it's taken off from there!

**Ellie:** And Joe helped us getting boards and wetsuits each weekend and all.

**Adam:** Joe's been a great help with it... planning everything, the whole lot, it's been good. *[Adam & Ellie, 2]*

**Frederique:** Who do you surf with?

**Ellie:** Usually us, and sometimes we get our cousin Ryan to come with us, and or we might go out on a lesson.

**Adam:** Yeah like ... We helped our other cousins do it this summer, yeah barbecues on the beach and we'd all surf with them or something, or lessons or like after school with a friend or something, yeah. And I've been doing that quite a lot this summer where I've surfed with a couple of my friends, it's been good, so it has, yeah.

**Frederique:** How often do you surf then?

**Ellie:** We try to surf every day.

**Adam:** As much as we can.

**Ellie:** The days we get off school we, like on the weekends we try to surf more than once a day, and sometimes you get four times in a day...

**Adam:** Sometimes! Yeah, no we try to surf as much as we can, yeah.

**Ellie:** ... to enjoy the waves. *[Adam & Ellie, 3]*

**Frederique:** You say you surf as much as you can, but every season, winter and summer?

**Ellie:** It depends how the waves are, this year I try to go more, I try to surf at the end of October and see how it is then on my birthday.

**Adam:** Yeah I'll try to surf this winter and I haven't, like, I surfed a couple of times last winter, but like, it was ok but I'd like to surf somewhere big this winter, like, I don't know, try it out, there's been a couple of big days up in Tullan there during the summer, it's been really good fun, so I'd like to try and do it in the winter now, you know, a bit of fun.

**Giles:** Nice one! Good goals!

**Frederique:** Where do you surf?

**Ellie:** We surf mainly Tullan strand 'cause like they have nice, big, powerful waves, even in summer and oh I want to try and see Rossnowlagh. We try surf... we... well our main spot for surfing is Tullan strand because it's on our front door, a little walk over there, yeah we walk from the... down to the beach.

**Frederique:** Did you start surfing together?

**Adam:** Yeah, but we were on different lessons like, with different instructors and all that. We were on a lesson with Joe one day and we had no clue who he was, no clue, and it was a good lesson, it was, then...

**Ellie:** ... Joe is fun, and then, even outside of lessons and outside of surf camps, he still got us to go surfing and get more interest in it.

**Adam:** If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't be here where we are so, we're kind of grateful for that.  
*[Adam & Ellie, 3, continued]*

**Frederique:** Is there someone around you who is a surfer and who you look up to?

**Ellie:** Well there is Joe, he is very helpful, he helps us organise for surfing, sometimes we do a comp, maybe, he always goes with us for the whole day, he will be there watching us at the top of the beach when we go surfing and then, also there is Owen Murphy who basically supplies us surfboards and watches on us when we are in the water...

**Adam:** Those two people they are like, amazing people...

**Ellie:** ... and then all the instructors that have helped us through the year to get us where we are now on hard boards now. *[Adam & Ellie, 4]*

**Giles:** What sort of surfboards do you surf now?

**Ellie:** Ehm... hard boards and we're kind of progressing on and trying to get really good at surfing. And smaller or bigger boards, it depends what you want to do.

**Frederique:** How would you describe yourselves as surfers?

**Ellie:** The best thing about loving the ocean is that if you can go surfing and get knocked off a wave or a big wave just hit you you can just get back up again and go back out again and try your hardest.

**Adam:** Just try your best, try your hardest, even if you've never surfed before, give it a shot, like I invited a few friends this summer that haven't a notion about surfing, and I talked them into it one time and they thought it was so much fun, and like they just loved it and they thought it was really good, so, like it's quite nice to have that because you've got someone else into something you like, so like you can do it together with them like, so it's pretty, pretty nice, that.

**Ellie:** Yeah I was saying to Adam actually a few weeks ago it's good to have that because me and Adam we're brother and sister, it's good that we both love something very much that makes us go surf. *[Adam & Ellie, 5]*

**Frederique:** Can you tell me about your first memorable wave?

- Ellie:** My instructor, Rosa, she really helped me, like, she helped to kinda, not just going straight to the beach, she kinda helped me go in different ways and she helped me on the board for ... and she helped me be a better surfer I guess. And she was there from the very start as well and I remember the first wave I got and it was with... I can remember the instructor but I just remember standing up on the board like this and pointing straight to the beach!
- Adam:** Yeah I think it was the same, yeah we were on a lesson and on big nine-foot foamies and ... nine-foot foamies are probably the best ... to surf, they're so easy to surf, so easy to get up on, and like, at the start you thought, "Oh this is really hard", but when you got one you're just "Yes, this is the best thing ever!", like standing and floating like, standing and floating going through the water like, when you're on it you're just like "Aw this is the best thing ever!", like once you got a good go at it!
- Ellie:** And our feeling like of just being on the wave, the wind at your face, and you're just... just a surfboard! And then after you like maybe jump off the surfboard, you're excited you go back again and you keep getting waves and that's the good thing... that you keep trying and trying. *[Adam & Ellie, 6]*
- Giles:** What does it feel like when you're stood on a surfboard on a wave?
- Ellie:** It feels really nice because it feels really refreshing like, you're standing basically on the ocean and it's really nice with the wind in your face and like just after thinking after all that hard work ... you're standing on that hard board you just did it and you probably might go back and keep trying and trying and you might get even better.
- Giles:** Cool! And Adam? How does it feel to you?
- Adam:** Well it feels, like, you kind of feel proud of yourself, like, practising and then you get on a really big wave and you're surfing as long as you've ever surfed and you just surf as far as you can, and you'd just be like, you'd be proud of yourself, be happy, you know, and yeah, have a good feeling, like good vibes and all like, because you've done this, all all. *[Adam & Ellie, 7]*
- Frederique:** How would you say surfing has changed you or the way you live since you started?
- Ellie:** I became... I think I became a lot fitter by just doing pop ups at home and I'm outside more, being out in the ocean and it's kinda... I love being in the ocean so much and trying to go surfing as much as I can, and even walking to the beach is good, 'cause you're like outside and you're going to do something really fun, that you love.
- Adam:** Yeah, like same, when I was growing up, I used to like a lot of different things. My dad runs a business with lorries, and I used to love, I just grew up around lorries, but when the day came to our surfing lesson, it just changed me completely like, I've got just so interested in it, and yeah, it started off, one surf lesson and with TurfnSurf and like, it has changed me quite enough like, I've been fitter and healthier, I've been out of the house a lot more for different things, different occasions so, it's changed me. And I'm happy for that, like, I'm happy for the change.
- Ellie:** And surfing like makes you get up and do something. So you're happy that you're not just lying around the place, you're like surfing in the water with your best bud and all having a craic. *[Adam & Ellie, 8]*
- Giles:** What do you think your Mum thinks of all of this?
- Ellie:** Hum actually, she's just surfing with me, with Rosa on some evenings and like, it's really that I can also go surfing with my Mum, and sometimes we might go surfing with Joe as well, but Mum like, really helps us because some evenings we just come home from school, we're like "Mum can we go surfing" and she says yeah, no problem. She just lets us walk

up to the beach now and trusts in us in the water looking after each other and it's really nice that Mum trusts us to like go surfing and have fun.

**Adam:** And it's nice as well to have the support like, because support is a big thing when it comes to surfing. And I suppose it's alright when you're on your own, but you can get a lot better at different things when you have more people behind you and people saying different things, and like "Oh you're so good at that, keep going and all", you kind of have that urge to just keep going and not stopping and yeah like, just it's support, Mum's been so supportive through the couple of years, and yeah...

**Ellie:** And sometimes in the water actually when I was at the start of when me, Mum and Adam started surfing together, I remember I was in the water and I was trying to catch waves and Mum noticed that I wasn't paddling enough and noticed a few things and she told me and that really made me like look at what I'm doing and realize "Oh I'm doing that paddling wrong, I need to do it better", so it's really nice that Mum spots these things for us so we can be better at surfing. *[Adam & Ellie, 9]*

**Frederique:** Would you say surfing is a sport or a game?

**Ellie:** I think it's a sport really if you're having fun...

**Adam:** ... It's competitive, well not necessarily competitive but...

**Ellie:** ... You don't really need to be competitive but if you want and feel comfortable doing competition then that's fine and you can go and do competitions and try your real hardest but I think surfing is a sport if it means you're doing something for a few hours nearly every day and you're trying your hardest in it, I think it's a sport 'cause it gets people fitter and healthier, they can go for healthy options so they can get fitter for surfing so I think it's a sport yeah.

**Frederique:** What do you think Adam, is it a sport or a game?

**Adam:** Oh definitely a sport, like, a game is when you play someone at it I suppose, but you're not necessarily playing, surfing, you're more, like, doing it? You're more, like, you're more into it, you're not, like, for example if you're playing a game of football, you may get the ball? get them all? but you might be part of the team, but when you're surfing, you're part of the surfing community, which always gets waves, when like on different occasions when you're surfing, but no, that's definitely a sport, like. To call it a game is like calling... it's like, calling it a game, it doesn't suit surfing, it's more of a sport, yeah, it's more of a sport because it's the same with any other sport, you can become fit and healthy from it, you need to be fit and healthy to do this sport, like, I suppose, you need to put effort into it, like, if there's no effort you can't really get away with it.

**Ellie:** Well I won't take surfing serious because, like, you're supposed to have fun in the water, and have fun with your.... But it's good to be serious, like, say "Oh yeah, ok, I'm gonna get this wave", but you don't wanna be too serious with it and like not have fun and just like train too hard just to get this surf better and all... Don't take it seriously, just have the craic and all! *[Adam & Ellie, 10]*

**Frederique:** You're using the word 'fun' a lot, but have there been times when you have been afraid in the water?

**Ellie:** I won't be afraid of what's living in the ocean, I will be more afraid of the bigger waves that would come for me and sometimes I go out a wee bit too far because I'm trying my hardest myself but sometimes when I'm paddling out this big wave might come and might hit me in the face and just completely changed my mind but if you want to feel comfortable you can go back out and try your hardest, and that's the only thing that I'm kinda afraid of, not



the animals and what's living in the water even though there's some weaver fish that might hurt your feet the odd times...

**Adam:** ... And jelly fish...

**Ellie:** ... But you just have to know that you're coming into their world so you will get stung...

**Adam:** ... If you interfere!

**Ellie:** ... Yeah so you need to be, you need to respect the water when you're going in with it so big waves is really the only thing I'm really afraid of.

**Adam:** Yeah so I suppose, I was surfing a couple of times this summer and I got in off the rocks thinking I'm a big hard man, but like, sometimes you can get a bit scared, like, I'm not that the strongest person about and so like I wouldn't really... I suppose big waves, I'm not really trying to get a go for them or such, I would try to paddle past them, but I remember I got caught in a set during the summer and and it was a big, like, a big wave, and was just breaking and I duck-dived it, like just about, and it caught my tail and it flipped me backwards and I got hit in the head with the board, so I was a bit, like, I was a bit shocked and all and a bit, like, "Oh should I be here or should I move away from this area and go somewhere else?" But I stayed there and I caught a nice wave and I was like, "I don't know, should I stay here or not?" *[Adam & Ellie, 11]* but like, you can get just a bit eerie over different things, like, I have no fear of jelly fish or weaver fish 'cause, I've never had any occasion with them, but like, I suppose, different friends have, and they say 'oh they're really bad, stay away from them', but just honestly I just don't see the fear in them, like they're not the biggest fear out there.

**Ellie:** Yeah I know some friends who like, some days there would be a whole wash out of like a lot of jelly fish and like, say, when we go surfing with the camps, there is one friend that I know haaaates jelly fish and somebody like would pick up a jelly fish and like throw it onto her board and she would like scream, and... but I don't like she realised that we, really, if you don't, like, go near them or harm them, that you'll be ok as well, 'cause they're kind of protecting themselves, and they, like, you need to know where you are and what you're doing, you need to know that you're in the water full of other creatures and... *[Adam & Ellie, 12]*

**Adam:** ... Other people like, so...

**Frederique:** Yeah what about friends actually, do you always surf with your friends, do you think it's important to surf with friends?

**Ellie:** Well, it's all right if you surf on your own if you get a wee bit older, but see if, yeah most the time we do go in with our friends or go, I usually most of the time go with Adam and even when I'm with Adam, Adam looks after me in the water and all and I try to look after him as well, but there's always Murf – Owen Murphy as I said or Joe over the top watching us when we're in the water, keeping their eye on us and making sure we're safe now.

**Adam:** Even if we're on our own, like if it's just the two of us, like we're not still the safest people out there, but there's always someone looking, like making sure, but like when there's your friends with you just feel a lot safer 'cause there's a group behind, you know, I suppose things can go wrong but not as much things... *[Adam & Ellie, 5]*

**Ellie:** ... you're with people...

**Adam:** ... and you enjoy your time in the water a lot more when you're with friends and family and have good fun I suppose.

**Frederique:** Do you watch films about surfing?

**Ellie:** So I watch loads of Youtube surfing and I mostly watch this family surfing a lot and it's in Costa Rica and all, I watched *Soul Surfer* so many times and it really has inspired me because if Bethany Hamilton can surf with one arm, then I definitely can do it if she can so yeah I try to watch a lot and people actually in the last few days people told us there's a documentary on Netflix of surfing, a family who just goes around the world surfing and all so yeah... we watch surfing videos a lot!

**Adam:** Yeah I like to watch the WSL like, I think it's absolutely amazing what people can do, how people can surf, like it's absolutely amazing and it's so inspiring like, when you see, you can be like, "Oh I want to do that too", you know, so you get so inspired by different people like in the WSL, 'cause there's always a different comp on each week or something, there's different people and there's just so many good surfers on it you're like "Oh!", you pick and choose your favourite, like what their technique is, like and who they are where they surf and all and you just, like, you get inspired by them and you just follow them and, yeah, you get very inspired by different people like, on that channel on Youtube, 'cause what they can do is brilliant, just really good. And even, without even watching Youtube, if you just come down the cliffs here at Tullan Strand, what people can do there is just unbelievable, they're ripping out there like, UNREAL surf...

**Ellie:** And then you're just like saying to yourself: "if they can do it, I can do it!" And you're in a really good spot 'cause they can do these class waves, like right where you surf, you're like "I have the good waves, if like I try really hard I can do it" and I just keep watching other people to get inspired and all.

**Frederique:** When you grow up, do you think you will continue surfing as a job or will you keep it as a hobby?

**Adam:** I suppose, like, for some people surfing it's their job so I respect that in their way but for me I see, I see a future apart from surfing, like I love surfing and all, I'll keep it on, I wouldn't just ditch it completely when I leave school and all and get jobs and college and all, I will keep on surfing and enjoying my time in the water, but I will mainly focus on work and family and all and business, like stuff, when you're that little wee bit older, from a teenager, a very old teenager and adult, like I suppose you don't really ditch it as such, like, you have it beside you, like it's your friend to you, so yeah...

**Ellie:** To me I think I'd like to keep it on maybe not as a job, I would like to teach other kids like to surf and to inspire them, like to get up on a board and surf and it would be cool because it's something you enjoyed when you were younger so other people might enjoy it as well, and you know what you went through, like your instructors did this to you, so it would be nice to teach other kids in the water how to, like, be safe in the water and how to, like, enjoy your time in the water when you surf, I think it would be cool to have a job that you really enjoy. *[Adam & Ellie, 13]*

**Frederique:** Do you think you would try to do a competition when you are more experienced?

**Adam:** Yeah!

**Ellie:** We have, me and Adam we actually have been in a competition recently and we did well for our first competition...

**Adam:** ... Yeah we've done alright like, we were up against some tough people!

**Ellie:** ... And because it was our first competition, we know like what goes on, and so from that we have practised and...

**Adam:** ... We've learnt...

**Ellie:** ... we've learnt so much in that little space of time.

**Adam:** And I'd like to do a lot more comps, like, it's, on the day like we had some much fun, like I met loads of new people over there, and my friends were there too, and it was a really good day out, like just a great day spent on the beach like, so much fun so it was.

**Ellie:** I find they're really nice especially when it's like a national competition because loads of people are like over your country, they come to this one place, they come together and put up a competition for surfing, that loads of people obviously over the country love and they do for a hobby as well, and it's really nice because, especially when you're in the water and it's your time and you take your wave and then there's people, lots of people on the beach cheering you on, it's a really nice feeling, and you meet other people who have tried their best as well in the comps. *[Adam & Ellie, 14]*

**Frederique:** How is it different when you surf with your friends or Joe or you Mum to when you surf in a competition?

**Ellie:** When you surf with your friends like you're not trying as hard, but at least, you know, when you're surfing with your friends, you'll have like the party waves and all that and you don't have to follow the rules really, instead of comps, but it's good though, I like, I prefer surfing with friends because nobody, like you're not competing against your friends I think, or you're not trying to be someone else, you're just having a nice surf and you're not worrying about like "Oh I have to come for a surf" or anything, you're not worrying about anything I think, I would prefer surfing outside comps.

**Adam:** I suppose to surfing in a comps, like you experience, like you see how other people surf, but I much prefer surfing on my own or with a friend because you can have a bit more fun. It's not as serious because when you're in the comp, you kinda need to like to knuckle down and try hard if you wanna get top scores, like, but when you're just with a friend, there's no seriousness at all, unless you bring it into it, but when I'm surfing with my friends, I'm just honestly just having fun, like there's no tension, like, "Oh who's the better surfer", it's just, we're having fun and all, yeah, that's really how I... I really don't see, I don't really see why we should make a competition out of just like surfing between me and Ellie, like there's no real need in it, 'cause we're both good surfers and all, we don't need to prove who's better than one another, yeah. *[Adam & Ellie, 15]*

**Frederique:** I have some easy questions now... How would you define a wave?

**Ellie:** Like, what would I think about a wave?

**Frederique:** Yeah, if I was five years old, and didn't know what a wave was, how would you explain to me?

**Ellie:** This is... basically... it's kinda hard to explain! So it's like, it's water in different sizes and forms and breaks and all coming out of the water and it is... some can be big and some can be small and it depends how you take the wave as well, what way you surf the wave as well... kinda hard to explain!

**Adam:** So it's like, I suppose there's different aspects to a wave, there is, like, waves that are, that haven't broken yet, and they're just going, and getting a wee bit smaller, and then they break, and then the white water just pours over, and just floats clean into the beach, and then there's bigger waves, glassy green waves that start bowling really, that just break like, it's like, it's something rolling, like that and just comes back around and keeps going, but it goes along the wave until the wave just stops, and... To define a wave is like, it's a piece of wat-... it's not, yeah it's a bit... It's a chunk of water that is sucked up from the water, formed, and then it would, like, start curling downwards and then break... and then move along on the top, there, top of the water and then would just keep going until the beach and, like, just end...

**Ellie:** It depends really what type of wave it is, some waves, like, see, when they... some waves, like, curl down, and then the waves just, like, slide down... and... some waves are really strong and powerful, and other waves are like nice for beginners and they're like, just like easy to push the board along, and yeah, I think that's how to explain it! *[Adam & Ellie, 16]*

**Frederique:** Could you explain what surfing is?

**Ellie:** Ok. So, it's, it's either a foamie or a plastic shaped, and you, basically you paddle when you see a wave and you jump up on the board and the power of the wave pushes the board and you along, so it's like you ride into them, it's like a skate board, but you're safer when you fall off! And you can turn, it depends how experienced you are with surfing, I guess...

**Adam:** I say surfing, it's like... it's kinda hard to explain, but surfing is a board, it's like, yeah it's a board and it can be different shapes, different sizes, different lengths and you use it in the water, and with different waves you can choose, well I suppose, it's not really, it's not the choosing part, it's like you pick which wave you think is gonna be a good wave, a good strong powerful wave, and you would paddle for that, and I suppose if you're a beginner, you do the beginner pop up which, I, people still use, which has been progressed from by some! So, like you're paddling really really hard to get a certain wave you want, and when you feel, like, an extra push, it's like someone is pushing you from behind, but that's the wave, and you would like paddle harder to make sure you definitely got the wave, and you would slide your knees up and like stand, in a slow movement, to your feet, and just have fun when you're standing, like, just like (*hands in the air*) "looooh yeah! into the beach!"

**Ellie:** And you will like, feel the sensations of, like, standing up on the board, you will be like, you will be thinking that somebody was behind you, like pushing you along the wave, but it's actually just the water pushing you! So I think that's what surfing is! *[Adam & Ellie, 17]*

**Giles:** Excellent! What's your favourite thing to do on a surfboard or on a wave?

**Ellie:** I love going left, me, like left is turning, like leaning on my back hand, and I really enjoy doing that because, at the start I found it that because, like, you have to lean back and you might fall back, but I kept doing that, it's now kinda my favourite, I love going left now! Because... it depends, as well, on what type of wave and where you want to go, some waves, well most waves on Tullan Strand are going left, 'cause the cliff is there and the waves are hitting off them, so it's going left again, so left is really handy especially where I am because it's basically all waves in Tullan Strand are going left so... they're easier as well!

**Adam:** I suppose, too, it depends what wave you pick, if you choose to surf a wave that is white water, I suppose, there's not much things you can do in it, but if you're, like, on a wave that hasn't broken yet, like clean, glassy one, like, you can go left, or you can just be going along, like in the middle of it, but it hasn't barrelled, you'd just be going along, like the wave would just be like that, and it just, like as you go past, it will be breaking, behind your board, which would give you speed and you just keep going, until the wave stops, like, I suppose that ... looks cool, and cut backs, watching people do cutbacks and all, like, it's so cool! *[Adam & Ellie, 18]*

**Frederique:** What is a good surfer to you?

**Ellie:** A good surfer is somebody who really tries their hardest for every wave, it's not like, "Oh, I don't like that wave but I'll still go for it", and then you just start getting cross with yourself, you're like "Why didn't I try harder?" A surfer is somebody who enjoys being in

the water, and they have fun, and they try different things when they're on a wave and they try harder every wave they take, and make sure they enjoy themselves and all!

**Adam:** Yeah, so a good surfer is someone that doesn't just do it once and gives up, a good surfer is someone who sticks to it and enjoys it, and well, you can need to define all the aspects to be able to do certain things on a surfboard, and you need to have a bit of strength, like to be able to push yourself up, to be able to paddle and different things like that... So a good surfer would put his time and effort into it, like different things like becoming stronger, fitter and healthier, so a good surfer is someone who like takes their time out of doing different things, to put effort into their surfing and to make him or her better at what they're doing, and, yeah, that's how I see a good surfer... *[Adam & Ellie, 19]*

**Frederique:** If you were to pick a colour for yourself to define yourself as a surfer, what would it be?

**Ellie:** Blue!

**Adam:** That's was all very straight up and all!

**Ellie:** ... Because blue is the colour of the ocean, and I really like the colour blue, it's really fresh, and it just reminds me, everywhere I go of surfing and the water really, just reminds me of what I do all the time, everywhere I see blue or turquoise or something...

**Adam:** I think green, it's just, I like the colour green, even that green here is nice! And just when I see it, like some days the water can be crystal clear, and other days not so clear, but it can be, when a wave is coming, it can be a bit greener, just before it breaks, and you just, like what Ellie, you just like, you think, whenever you see the colour green, you're like "Oh, that's like the same colour of a wave I would surf!" or something, you know. So you just, you like, you'd see that and you'd just be like "Oh yeah, that's what I can do", like you'd memorize it, and then you'd be like "That's what I've done, I've surfed something", well that isn't just that colour, like, has... someone that's like... someone that's, I suppose, a bit memorable, like, when you've surfer something with something that, when you surf a wave that's green, I suppose you can memorize it because your favourite colour is green or something like that... So yeah I suppose that's how you can think of it...

**Frederique:** What colour do you think Joe has as a surfer?

**Ellie:** Joe? Red, yeah, he loves red surfboards and I think, well every board I'm using, I see him using, is red and...

**Frederique:** What colour would you give to Joe as a surfer?

**Ellie:** I would give him a red because every surfboard that I see him use is red and it's very handy for us as well especially when we're watching him at the Peak with all these other surfers and we see him on a really good wave...

**Adam:** Red board, you can't miss him! I suppose, other surfers too, that like...

**Ellie:** ... Might have the same colour, one of them maybe, but, we can still tell!

**Adam:** Most surfers have white boards, not as much people I see with coloured boards, like, Joe's red board is just pure red, you can't, can't miss it! Like, it's different because not everyone can be, like, seen, well unless binoculars but like, not everyone has a set of binoculars in their car when they're sitting at the Peak, but I suppose, just, even, red, I see red as someone strong, and big and powerful and tough and that kind of person, you know, like red is, like... like Red .... The Irish legend or something like that, like he was big and strong and all so it kinda comes from that I suppose...

**Frederique:** What colour would you give to your Mum? As a surfer?



**Ellie:** I would give her an orange? Because she gets really cool in the water and... but she's still a really good surfer and...

**Adam:** Dark blue, no, dark blue...

**Ellie:** And she loves surfing in the water, it's just that she gets cool, she's a cool person! But she's a really good surfer yeah, I would definitely look up to her, it's cool that my Mum surfs with me, and I think she's a really good surfer, and she went surfing once or twice about a few years ago and recently she just started up surfing again, and she really, she has really improved, and she's a really good surfer.

**Adam:** I suppose just the same what Ellie said, like I can't really say any much, any more 'cause Ellie explained a lot! Yeah... what colour?

**Ellie:** Orange

**Adam:** Yeah, well I see... bright, orange is a bright colour and my Mum is a bright person...

**Ellie:** She's a right bubbly person... who loves to be warm!

**Adam:** Yeah, that type of person, you know, someone who is...

**Ellie:** Looking after us...

**Adam:** ... Like, takes care, well she does take care of everyone, like, she looks after everyone, like, me Ellie and... but someone that, is out there, is like, what's the word? It's like...

**Ellie:** ... Takes off their time to do something with their kids...

**Adam:** ... Yeah, someone that gets out there and does do things with their family and all, so that's how I see, like, my Mum, as a colour, anyway... *[Adam & Ellie, 20]*

**Giles:** I know you guys started surfing a few years ago, so you would have, like, tried it a little bit, and then I know recently you started surfing a lot more, can you tell me what happened? Why suddenly you started surfing a lot more, or...?

**Ellie:** Ehm because...

**Adam:** No, Ellie, let me now, this is my one now! At the start of the summer, Owen Murphy gave me a job and I just thought, "This is the coolest thing ever to get a job" like I knew him well, but not as well as we do now because what he's done for us through this summer is unbelievable...

**Ellie:** Let us take boards...

**Adam:** ... Boards, wetsuits, whatever we need, like lifts up home, like, lunch...

**Ellie:** ... Hot chocolate!

**Adam:** ... Hot chocolate and all, and like, when I got the job, I was happy, like, I was working, I suppose, most days, washing wetsuits, like, I just thought it was the coolest thing, being offered a job at a surf school! Like washing wetsuits... like, when people call to rent wetsuits and all, like, you'd just be like, "Oh, you know what size you are, oh I think this one suits you and all", like just that transaction with people it's just, so cool, but... I tried this summer then ... Because he has a lot of different hard boards, I tried a 7'2 hard board he has, and I thought, it was very fun, like so much fun, but I was still surfing the foamies he had, and like I just, each time I was there, I kept trying different boards, and I just went down, and down and, like, I surfed a 6'3 but I didn't think it was the best, I think, like... he talked to Joe, I suppose Joe knows a lot more Murf, knows a lot more, like, than what I do, so like, they got me surfing something a wee bit bigger but still, it was 6'10 which I'm surfing at the moment, it was so much fun I love surfing it, but like, I suppose if it wasn't... if I hadn't got the job at the start of the summer then I wouldn't have had the chance to go surfing everyday, whenever he's working, and I wouldn't have been able to try



a lot of different boards, to be able to go down in size, I suppose you'd have to kinda perk up and I suppose that takes a bit of time, to be able to perk up because you need to know if they're going to be there, or, like, for example if he's an instructor, he can be there to take you out, I suppose, but like, it was just so handy, having the job, like, because you can be finished up and he'd be like, "Oh you wanna go for a surf", like, "Go for a surf" and leave all the stuff up at his house, like it's handy his house is where it is 'cause everything can be dropped there, yeah ... If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here, as well...

**Ellie:** Yeah, he really, last summer he's really helped us, like he lets us borrow boards, and he's the one who's helped me get down to smaller boards and he's said "Oh, maybe you should try this size board, it's kinda better for you", and he became a big part of surfing to us, so he did, as Joe did as well, but Owen really has helped us with like the whole boards thing, and like he's, sometimes he asks do we want to go out for a surf, even when Adam was working, I went down when he was working because they work like right on the cliff which is over the beach and it's really helpful for say, if me and Adam did wanna go surfing when he took two hours off to go surfing with me, Murf would be up there watching us so it would be really helpful, even just that, I'm really grateful, because I wouldn't be surfing where I am right now if it wasn't for Owen Murphy.

**Giles:** So Owen Murphy helped you surf more, but what made you want to surf more? Was there something happening in the water or did your mind change that suddenly you wanted to get yourself to the beach or...?

**Adam:** Oh I'd say it was more of a personal thing, you'd be like, "Well I have the opportunity to do it, so like, I'm not just going to waste this opportunity and not take it", so the more I got surfing, and more I got into it, I just... I enjoyed it so much, and I was so grateful for the opportunity to be given a surf, like, even this afternoon, I've just been asked if, "Oh, d'you wanna go surf?", like, that just made my afternoon, going surfing it was so good, and... I suppose, if opportunities, like, don't come too often, so you kinda take them when you get them and if the opportunity wasn't given for surfing then I suppose I wouldn't be here, which is quite often said, but I wouldn't be as good at surfing as I am now because I wouldn't, like, I wouldn't be as interested, I wouldn't be doing it as much, but because I am doing it as much as I am doing it, like I love it so much, it's just really fun, so yeah...

**Ellie:** Hum, I realised that, like, the children who maybe, like, live in more land and... they probably don't get the opportunity and I kinda realised, well, if I want to make something out of surfing I'm gonna try harder and do better and surf more and practice more, and again by watching other kids surf and they surf everyday so I kinda try and surf most of the time, every chance or time I had off I tried to surf... *[Adam & Ellie, 21]*

**Frederique:** If the waves were an animal, what would it be for you?

**Ellie:** Hum, maybe a dog because some waves can be like, coming, like, right actually out and like really powerful and it's like, they chase you when you're on the surfboard, and they keep pushing you and pushing you! It's like, see, when a dog chases you, you keep running and you don't stop, it's like, so when the waves are behind you and you're on a wa... – you're on the board and the waves are just like pushing you out and pushing you out to keep going, that's how I would compare an animal with a wave!

**Adam:** I would think, I would compare it as a lion, I suppose, same as Ellie, but with a lion, they're quick, they're big, powerful, strong, and can be dangerous, in a sense, because waves are dangerous, in different occasions and, as Ellie said, they just, they keep going and like, if you wanna go out a wee bit, like out at the back to surf some big waves, they just keep coming and you need to keep going like, so you kinda get a bit tired of that, like, usually looking up and you see, as if it's a big lion, but it's just a big long, powerful wave,

and you either duck dive it or you just go over it, and it could drag you back 'cause it's powerful as it is and like, it can get tiring, but once you're out there, you like... Yeah you're happy, 'cause you're where you are and you're able to surf some nice waves, nice big waves and... that's how I would compare it, like... *[Adam & Ellie, 22]*

**Frederique:** One more question, it's about... So you said you watch surf movies and videos and so on, I would like you to compare surfing here to surfing as you could see in other places, like in South Africa for example where it's like, blue sea and warm weather and people surfing in their bikinis... How would you compare it to here, what would you say is good here?

**Ellie:** Well...

**Adam:** I suppose, it's good here because, well, I suppose it's the same, the only real difference is they don't usually wear wetsuits and it's a lot warmer, but like, that's just 'cause of the tropic, like, tropical area they are in, and temperature of where they are, but like, during the summer, once or twice, I wore shorts and a rash vest surfing, and like, it was really, it was really just refreshing and cool and all, but I wouldn't really say there's much difference, it's just what you would wear surfing, because I suppose if you wear a 5 mil in Hawai'i, for example, you would be quite hot, like quite hot, so like, if you wanna wear any wetsuit I suppose I would say a 2/2 like a short sleeve one, short sleeve short leg, if you want to wear a wetsuit, but if I was there to be honest I'd wear like, swimming togs, like swimming – board shorts, and like a rash vest or something like that, I suppose that's what I would wear, but here, like, I don't mind putting a wetsuit, like I have no bother with them, they're on so easily, slide on, and yeah, I don't see any real bother and a difference with them, so...

**Ellie:** I don't see a difference as well, in the waves, like, it depends where the waves break and what type of day is it for the waves, there's no big difference in the waves it's just, again, what Adam said, it's just what people wear, it's just how hot the water is, in no way it should affect your surfing, but I guess you just, when you're just in, when you're in like colder places such as Ireland, you kinda just have to deal with the coldness and just try your hardest and surf well 'cause there's no big difference between waves anymore... *[Adam & Ellie, 23]*

**Giles:** Nice one! I have one more for you, and then we'll finish up... hum I'm trying to think what would be better, yeah, Ellie, you've seen Adam surf a lot, yeah? Can you tell me about the best wave you've seen Adam ride, and what happened?

**Ellie:** Hum, it was actually when we were surfing with Rosa and I remember this so clearly so it was Adam, it was like a small surf and it was a 9 foot foamie and Adam was nose-riding and he just kept going down the line between all of us girls, and he was just like showing off, he was like nose-riding and it was really cool... and when we told him he was nose-riding, he didn't know what it was!

**Adam:** I hadn't a clue what I'd done, I just thought I was surfing really well, like, I was going straight through a bunch of people, like, just going, not straight, like, at an angle going straight through people, turning, swerving up, and I remember it now just after Ellie says and I suppose, that one a pretty nice wave I suppose! That was a good night surf actually, yeah it was a good night... *[Adam & Ellie, 24 (1/2)]*

**Giles:** Cool! And Adam, the same for Ellie, the best wave you've seen her riding, and what happened.

**Adam:** Right, hum... I'd say it was during the summer, right, you were on a 7'2, yeah you had just got the wave, and there was a clean one like, it was a really clean day, and I was out the

back, remember, it was pure flat, and then a big wave came out of nowhere, and Ellie surfed it so well, she turned left, and turned right again, not necessarily a cut back 'cause it wasn't as quick, but she went left and slowly became – came right again, and like, it looked so cool the way she was doing it, like, she was just, she got up on the wave, it was really clean too, she went left and went back across the white water again, it was a really cool wave, that, it was.

**Ellie:** I actually remember it now...

**Adam:** Yeah, that was a good day.

**Ellie:** I actually, the 7'2 was the first ever hard board I used and I actually surfed in my first competition and I did really well with it, well that's what I thought anyways! And I actually really enjoyed that wave – that board, I really liked that because it's actually, for a hard board it's very easy to catch waves, I really liked it. *[Adam & Ellie, 24 (2/2)]*

**Frederique:** Brilliant! Nice one, very good! Some great answers, we're sorry for keeping you up so late! Great stories, thank you.

# Annexe 6

## Ethnographie virtuelle

### **1. Mise en œuvre de l'observation virtuelle :**

Une observation de l'activité en ligne et sur les réseaux sociaux des surfeurs interrogés a été réalisée au cours de la recherche, et les lignes suivantes présentent une objectivation des données issues de cette ethnographie virtuelle. Ces données, relevées sur les comptes personnels des réseaux sociaux des sujets, sont rassemblées de manière synthétisée dans le tableau synoptique figurant dans la seconde partie de cette annexe. L'observation des pages personnelles a été effectuée sur les réseaux sociaux Facebook et Instagram, et s'est concentrée de manière générale sur ce dernier. Concernant les sujets possédant un compte privé à la fois sur Facebook et sur Instagram, l'observation de ces pages a montré une activité plus intense sur ce dernier, ce qui s'explique notamment par le fait que les sujets passent beaucoup plus de temps sur cette plateforme que sur Facebook. La littérature sur le sujet tend à montrer en effet qu'Instagram domine son rival pour chacune des cinq principales raisons de l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux, qui sont la narration autobiographique (l'auto-documentation ou « self-documentation », « self expression »), l'interaction sociale (« social interaction »), le divertissement (« entertainment »), le besoin de passer le temps (« passing time »), et la facilité d'utilisation (« convenience »)<sup>18</sup>. Rachetée par Facebook en 2012, la plateforme compte moins d'utilisateurs que ce dernier, avec 800 millions d'utilisateurs par mois en moyenne contre 2 milliards sur Facebook.<sup>19</sup> Cependant l'activité des sujets plus jeunes sur Instagram est bien plus intense que sur Facebook : Instagram est en effet majoritairement utilisé par une population de moins de trente ans, alors que Facebook est davantage utilisé par un public plus âgé<sup>20</sup>.

Une recherche effectuée au sujet des recours de Facebook et Instagram à des algorithmes a conforté le choix de l'ethnographie de se concentrer sur ce dernier. Les algorithmes utilisés par ces plateformes permettent de déterminer le rang des publications, et donc leur visibilité, selon des critères précis, et les différences entre les priorités accordées par chacun des deux réseaux dans la mise en œuvre de ces algorithmes guident en grande partie les motivations des utilisateurs à publier sur l'une ou l'autre de ces plateformes. La finalité de ces algorithmes est de proposer aux utilisateurs une expérience plus pertinente, tout en représentant pour le réseau social une source de contrôle vis-à-vis des publications publicitaires. La recherche montre que l'algorithme mis en œuvre par Instagram prend en compte, en priorité, le degré d'engagement des publications, ainsi que leur pertinence, le réseau de relations et le partage direct, priorisant ainsi la découverte et l'observation plutôt que l'interaction. La notoriété d'Instagram repose de plus sur le fait que cette plateforme est perçue comme une « ressource visuelle, surtout pour la génération Y<sup>21</sup> », et donc un

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18 ALHABASH, Saleem, et MA, Mengyan, 2017. « A Tale of Four Platforms: Motivations and Uses of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat Among College Students? », [En ligne], Volume: 3 issue: 1, article consulté en ligne le 12 mai 2020 : <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117691544>

19 KALLAS, Priit, 2019. « Most Popular Social Networking Sites and Apps [2020] », in Dreamgrow.com, ressource d'informations sur les réseaux sociaux et le content marketing. Article consulté en ligne le 12 mai 2020 : <https://www.dreamgrow.com/top-15-most-popular-social-networking-sites/>

20 Sondage réalisé par le Pew Research Center paru en mai 2018, qui a montré que 51% des adolescents américains utilisent Facebook contre 85% pour YouTube, 72% pour Instagram ou 69% pour Snapchat. ANDERSON, Anderson et JIANG, Jingjing, 2018. Teens, Social Media & Technology ». Article consulté en ligne le 12 mai 2020 sur le site du Pew Research Center : <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>

21 ELLIS, Matt, 2018. « Instagram vs Facebook : quel est le meilleur canal ? ». Blog de la plateforme de design

lieu de découverte de tendances, tout en offrant la possibilité aux utilisateurs de dévoiler leurs quotidiens par la prise d'images ou de vidéos et leur partage instantané par le biais des « stories ». L'algorithme de Facebook, quant à lui, priorise avant tout les publications du réseau familial et de connaissances, favorisant les interactions interpersonnelles et le partage de contenu entre famille et amis, qui priment ainsi sur l'engagement<sup>22</sup>.

L'observation des pages personnelles des sujets des entretiens a montré que les individus de plus de trente ans ne possédant pas de compte Instagram utilisent leur page Facebook pour relayer des informations personnelles et publier du contenu lié à leurs activités familiales ou à leur pratique du surf. Les sujets de moins de trente ans, quant à eux, possèdent généralement un compte à la fois sur Facebook et sur Instagram. Ils sont toutefois davantage actifs sur ce dernier, partageant régulièrement du contenu visuel, parfois même quotidiennement par le biais des *stories*. Le compte Instagram de ces personnes est souvent lié à leur page Facebook, qui relaie automatiquement les publications mises en ligne sur la première plateforme.

Le jeu des hashtags, enfin, semble davantage prisé et efficace sur Instagram. Il permet aux utilisateurs, lorsque l'accès à leur compte est public, d'augmenter la visibilité de leurs publications au-delà du cercle familial et amical et des connaissances créées sur le réseau. Les sujets dont l'observation a montré que l'intensité de leur activité était bien plus marquée sur Instagram semblent ainsi manifester une volonté certaine de se rendre public, d'atteindre une cible marquée par l'utilisation de hashtags sous les images publiées. Ils construisent ainsi une identité publique<sup>23</sup>, à destination de leur cercle immédiat de connaissances mais aussi au-delà. Pour les sujets ne possédant pas de compte Instagram personnel (soit pas du tout de compte, soit uniquement un compte professionnel), l'observation a pris en compte l'activité de leur page Facebook.

Les lignes qui suivent présentent un résumé des relevés effectués au cours de la recherche afin de dresser un portrait, sur la base de d'une ethnographie virtuelle, de six des 30 surfeurs observés et interrogés au cours de la recherche. Ils ont été sélectionnés en fonction de la représentativité de leur profil socio-démographique et de leur pratique du surf, ainsi que de l'intensité de leur activité sur les réseaux sociaux. L'observation a ainsi porté sur les pages personnelles et/ou professionnelles des individus suivants :

. Giles Carey : surfeur de 33 ans, de haut niveau assimilé à un local, photographe/vidéographe ; il possède une page personnelle sur Facebook et un compte professionnel sur Instagram ;

. Josh McCrea : surfeur de haut niveau de 38 ans, originaire de Nouvelle Zélande et bien intégré dans la communauté locale de Bundoran, conciliant vie de famille et pratique assidue ; il possède uniquement une page personnelle sur Facebook ;

. Olga Dragon : surfeuse amatrice de 34 ans, originaire de Lettonie, entrée dans la pratique en Irlande et exprimant un discours relevant du *soul surfing* ; elle possède une page personnelle sur Facebook et sur Instagram ;

. Aaron Reid : surfeur de 26 ans de haut niveau, assimilé à un local, exprimant un discours relevant du *soul surfing* ; il possède une page personnelle sur Facebook et sur Instagram ;

. Ollie O'Flaherty : 34 ans, surfeur semi-professionnel de grosses vagues de renommée

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graphique [99designs.fr](https://99designs.fr). Article consulté en ligne le 12 mai 2020 : <https://99designs.fr/blog/marketing-publicite/instagram-vs-facebook/>

22 Ibid.

23 Hector Rodriguez Tome et Françoise Bariaud (1980) ont introduit l'idée d'une déclinaison de l'identité prenant en considération la complémentarité de deux formes d'identité, l'une personnelle et l'autre sociale. Selon ces auteurs, l'identité privée rassemble tous les « éléments subjectifs du soi, non visible d'autrui » (ceux-ci incluent certains traits de personnalité, pensées, sentiments, valeurs, ou encore certains systèmes de représentations). L'identité publique quant à elle, passe davantage par le corps, les apparences, et est constituée des « facettes du soi accessibles aux autres » (comprenant les traits physiques, le style vestimentaire, l'appartenance à des groupes). RODRIGUEZ-TOME, H., et BARIAUD, F., 1980. « La structure de l'identité à l'adolescence », in P. Tap (Ed.). *Identité individuelle et personnalisation*, pp. 61-63. Toulouse, Privat.

internationale, local du comté de Clare ; il possède une page personnelle sur Facebook et un compte d'athlète professionnel sur Instagram ;

. Seamus McGoldrick : 34 ans, bodyboarder semi-professionnel de renommée internationale, gérant de l'école de surf Sligo Surf Experience ; il possède une page personnelle sur Facebook, et sur Instagram un compte d'athlète professionnel ainsi qu'un compte professionnel au titre de son activité d'école de surf.

L'observation s'est concentrée sur les pages personnelles de quatre de ces individus sur Facebook ou Instagram, et sur les pages professionnelles de quatre de ces personnalités de la communauté surf de Bundoran et Strandhill. Les critères de l'observation ont reposé sur ceux proposés par Anne Barjolin-Smith<sup>24</sup>. Ces critères ont été adaptés aux besoins de l'ethnographie de la communauté surf irlandaise, et ont inclus :

- . les éléments biographiques présentés sur les pages Instagram ou Facebook des sujets ;
- . le nombre de publications au cours de la période d'observation et leur fréquence ;
- . les éléments récurrents, soit centraux aux images, soit présents sur l'image en conjonction avec d'autres éléments, en particulier les éléments relevant de la pratique du surf, du mode de vie surf, ou d'autres pratiques sportives ;
- . les lieux mentionnés ou non ;
- . la diversité iconographique globale sur la période d'observation ;
- . la présence de marques ou de logos à des fins promotionnelles (particulièrement dans le cas des pages professionnelles) ;
- . pour les pages professionnelles, l'observation s'est intéressée à la composition des images, professionnelle ou amatrice, leur complexité et leur structure, et leur caractère informatif (montrant un produit, un savoir-faire) ou non (relevant davantage de la personnalité et du mode de vie de la personne possédant le compte à titre professionnel) ;
- . les hashtags les plus utilisés.

L'objectif est ainsi de proposer ici « une objectivation des manifestations discursives les plus récurrentes dans les pages personnelles<sup>25</sup> » de ces individus, et de poser les jalons d'une étude de ces mises en narration virtuelles en lien avec la construction de l'identité publique de ces surfeurs.

## **2. Objectivation des données issues de l'ethnographie virtuelle :**

### **2.1. Tableau synoptique (Fig. 30) : observation des publications personnelles (privées) des surfeurs interrogés :**

<b>Période d'observation : mai 2019-mai 2020</b>	<b>Giles CAREY page personnelle Facebook</b>	<b>Josh McCREA page personnelle Facebook</b>	<b>Aaron REID compte personnel Instagram</b>	<b>Olga DRAGON compte personnel Instagram</b>
Nombre de publications	49	25	19	40
... dont photographies	49	25	15	38
... dont vidéos	0	0	4	2
Publication de <i>stories</i>	rare	nulle	rare	modérée : de 0 à 3 par jour
Biographie	« Owner/Photographer at Giles Carey Videography » . Lives in Donegal, Ireland »	Pas d'élément biographique.	« Aaron Reid, Surfer. Ireland. Living in Bundoran. »	« FILM editor, coffee drinker & Ocean Lover, Living in the west of Ireland, m.soundcloud.com/fred-erique-pnt/episo de-6-

24 BARJOLIN-SMITH, 2018, p. 498.

25 Ibid., p. 114.



				olga-dragon »
Nombre d'abonnés (si compte Instagram)	NA	NA	1036	649
Surf : pratique du sport	8	10	11	6
Surf : matériel		5		1
Surf : événement sportif				
Mode de vie : vagues, océan	1	12		511
Mode de vie : plage, baignade	2			11
Mode de vie : nature	4	2		2
Mode de vie : plantes, animaux	10			4
Mode de vie : alimentation	1			
Mode de vie : alcool, cigarettes, etc.				
Mode de vie : tatouages				
Mode de vie : marques de vêtements ou autres produits				1
Mode de vie : création artistique			2	
Autres pratiques sportives / <i>lifestyle sports</i> skateboard, snowboard ou yoga			2	...
Transports : van ou camion aménagé	1	1		...
Lieux : spot de surf dont le sujet est un habitué		Lieux non mentionnés		12
Lieux : comté où le sujet est résident				11
Lieux : autres comtés et Irlande en général				7
Lieux : étranger	1			11
Social : famille	9	3		...
Social : amis	3		1	3
Social : relation amoureuse	11		2	4
Hashtags les plus utilisés	Pas de hashtag.	Pas de hashtag.	#surfer, #surfing, #surfingphotography ou #wildatlanticway	#westcoast, #clare, #lahinch, #ireland, #wildatlanticway, #homies, #friends, #ocean, #west, #ireland ainsi que #surfers, #surfgirls, #surfgirlmag et #atlanticocean

## 2.2 Objectivation des données :

Giles Carey ne possède pas de compte Instagram privé mais une page Facebook personnelle, sur laquelle il se présente comme propriétaire et photographe de la société de production Giles Carey Videography (désormais Gilesy Visuals), et comme établi en Irlande dans le Donegal, bien que vivant entre l'Irlande et la France depuis trois ans. Il publie occasionnellement du contenu

personnel lié à sa vie de famille, et plus fréquemment du contenu lié à son activité de photographe et vidéographe, qu'il partage simultanément sur son compte professionnel. Le contenu photographique partagé, 49 photographies au total, présente une large variété iconographique et consiste, sur la période observée entre mai 2019 et 2020, en des images de nature (7), particulièrement des *timelapses*<sup>26</sup> (6) mais aussi des images liées à sa pratique professionnelle du surf (8). Celles-ci ne sont cependant pas prédominantes sur sa page, même si la photographie de couverture de celle-ci le montre niché dans le tube d'une vague à Hossegor. L'engagement moyen provoqué par l'ensemble de ces images est de 43 mentions « j'aime », avec un engagement pouvant atteindre 87 et 92 mentions pour deux photographies à caractère personnel. Les images représentant sa pratique du surf sont rares sur la période d'observation, Giles n'ayant pu surfer beaucoup pour des raisons personnelles et circonstancielles.

Josh McCrea ne possède pas de compte Instagram, mais seulement une page personnelle sur Facebook, qu'il n'alimente que rarement. Son identifiant y est « Josh M », et les publications consistent essentiellement en des partages d'articles liés à des événements sportifs (rugby en Afrique du Sud le 17 décembre 2019) et divers faits d'actualité (feux de forêts en Australie, le 6 janvier 2020) ou encore son actualité personnelle (Josh a notamment suivi une formation en ligne de coach sportif à destination, entre autres, d'un public de surfeurs). Ses photographies personnelles incluent un grand nombre de clichés. Sur une période d'observation de trois ans, depuis janvier 2017, Josh a publié 25 photographies ayant pour élément central l'océan (12), sa pratique personnelle du surf (10). Ces dernières sont généralement prises par des photographes professionnels dont le nom est mentionné en légende. D'autres publications ont pour objet sa famille (3), des éléments d'équipement lui appartenant et symbolisant sa pratique personnelle (4) ou bien qu'il met en vente dans la boutique Bundoran Surf Co. (2). Enfin, six photographies transmettent divers éléments d'information, incluant un message à destination de ses amis surfeurs néo-zélandais, ou un élément de paysage rural du Donegal. L'identité ainsi transmise est ainsi plutôt discrète, centrée sur un réseau personnel de connaissances. Sur le corpus d'images examinées plus haut, quatre images seulement, figurant sa pratique du surf, ont recueilli plus de cent de mentions « j'aime », la moyenne d'engagement se situant entre 10 et 20.

Aaron Reid quant à lui possède deux comptes privés, l'un sur Instagram, l'autre sur Facebook. Il est peu actif sur ce dernier, où il partage essentiellement du contenu personnel et quelques photographies de sa pratique du surf. Celle-ci fait plus largement l'objet de publication sur sa page privée sur Instagram, sur laquelle il compte 1036 abonnés. Il s'y définit ainsi : « Surfer. Ireland. Living in Bundoran ». Il n'y est cependant pas très actif : seules 19 photographies ont été publiées en cinq ans, parmi lesquelles 11 ont pour élément central sa pratique du surf et le montre niché dans un tube ou effectuant une figure aérienne. Ces images ont recueilli entre 66 et 371 de mentions « j'aime », et sont des photographies professionnelles. Il y tague généralement les marques dont il utilise le matériel sur l'image en question telles que WaxOn Surfboards, ou Emerald Surfwear ainsi que la personne ayant pris le cliché. Les hashtags<sup>27</sup> qu'il utilise le plus fréquemment incluent des tags généraux tels que #surfer, #surfing, #surfingphotography ou #wildatlanticway. Le compte d'Aaron semble faire d'office de vitrine de sa pratique du surf, vitrine cependant peu travaillée et peu fournie dont le contenu iconographique est finalement très

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26 Un *timelapse*, ou vidéo accélérée, est une technique photographique qui consiste à prendre un certain nombre d'images avec un intervalle de temps régulier entre chaque, puis d'en créer une vidéo standard de 24 ou 30 images par seconde afin de donner un effet accéléré au sujet choisi. La technique du *timelapse* est fréquemment utilisée afin de montrer, de manière esthétisée et souvent spectaculaire, des événements rarement visible à l'œil de nu comme l'éclosion d'une fleur, le passage du jour à la nuit ou encore le mouvement des nuages ou de la Voie Lactée dans le ciel.

27 Un hashtag est un mot-clé précédé du symbole # utilisé sur les réseaux sociaux, et particulièrement sur Instagram, afin de permettre aux autres utilisateurs d'accéder au contenu faisant usage de ce mot-clé sans nécessairement être « ami avec » ou abonné au compte publiant ce contenu. Il permet ainsi d'accroître la visibilité du contenu en question au-delà des contacts et abonnés du compte.

largement centré sur sa pratique ; il reflète ainsi le positionnement du jeune homme qui, tout en étant un surfeur passionné, ne cherche pas à se promouvoir activement afin d'obtenir éventuellement des sponsors.

Seamus McGoldrick possède une page Facebook et un compte Instagram personnels, ainsi qu'une page Facebook et un compte Instagram dédiés à son école de surf Sligo Surf Experience. L'observation de l'activité sur ces réseaux s'est concentrée sur les comptes Instagram ; le compte personnel de McGoldrick y est moins régulièrement alimenté que celui de son école, avec moins d'une publication par semaine (36 publications sur la période d'observation de mai 2019 à mai 2020). Le compte est clairement centré sur la pratique du bodyboard et du surf – la sienne avec 13 publications, ou celles d'amis surfeurs ou de célébrités (7). Le lieu est souvent mentionné : 11 publications mentionnent Strandhill, où McGoldrick réside, travaille et surfe régulièrement, 10 mentionnent le comté de Sligo et 2 mentionnent l'Irlande en général, ce qui semble dénoter l'attachement du bodyboarder à sa région natale, ainsi qu'un objectif certain d'augmenter la visibilité des publications par la mention du lieu. McGoldrick est connu pour son engagement auprès d'organisations caritatives telles que Clean Coasts Ireland ou North West Hospice, qui font l'objet d'une publication chacune sur la période d'observation. Les images sont généralement prises par des photographes ou vidéographes professionnels, que McGoldrick prend soin de nommer et taguer dans ses publications, ou dont il partage les clichés. Il participe ainsi à l'activation et l'animation d'un réseau de contacts (bodyboarders, surfers et/ou photographes), qui nourrit en retour l'engagement constant suscité par ses publications, images ou courtes vidéos (environ 260 mentions « j'aime » par publication sur la période d'observation). Le recours à un grand nombre de hashtags est également fréquent, avec les mentions régulières de l'activité #bodyboarding, de son sponsor #sciencebodyboards et des lieux #sligo, #ireland et activités localisées en Irlande : #surfingireland, #bodyboardingireland, #photographyireland. Ce profil personnel est bien celui d'une personnalité publique, même si le nombre d'abonnés est somme toute modeste (2 835 abonnés au compte de McGoldrick, contre 5 604 pour O'Flaherty et 6 577 pour celui de Findabhair Ni Fhaolain, qui sont décrits plus loin dans ce sous-chapitre dans la catégorie pages professionnelles). Contrairement à la page d'Aaron Reid, le souhait est ici de maintenir une visibilité et une popularité constante, et en prise avec l'actualité (actions environnementales notamment).

Olga Dragon possède quant à elle une page personnelle sur les deux réseaux sociaux observés. Sa page Instagram est liée à sa page Facebook, qui partage automatiquement le contenu qui y est publié. Olga se définit ainsi sur son compte Instagram : « FILM editor, coffee drinker & Ocean Lover, Living in the west of Ireland ». Sous cette description figure le lien vers le sixième épisode du podcast *Daoine na Mara – Tales from the Green Shores* dont elle est le sujet<sup>28</sup>. L'activité d'Olga sur son compte Instagram est plutôt modérée : sur la période d'observation de mai 2019 à mai 2020, 40 images ont été publiées, à une fréquence d'une publication toutes les deux semaines en moyenne. Parmi ces photographiques, 15 ont pour élément central l'océan, et 13 images ont pour élément central le mode de vie (*surfing lifestyle*) incluant promenades sur la plage, baignades, couchers de soleil à Lahinch ou sorties entre amies surfeuses. 11 de ces quarante publications sont centrées sur sa pratique personnelle du surf, et sont des photographies généralement prises depuis l'eau par des amateurs, sauf une (Clem McInnerney, hiver 2018), les autres images étant des photographies à caractère personnel. Une relative variété iconographique ressort donc de l'observation globale de ce compte ; la grande majorité de ces images sont centrées autour de l'océan et du mode de vie surf, et sont des clichés amateurs ou des selfies. Près de 650 personnes sont abonnées au compte d'Olga, lui assurant ainsi une visibilité modeste mais relativement constante au vu de l'engagement provoqué par ses publications, qui recueillent une moyenne de 60 mentions « j'aime ». Le lieu est presque toujours mentionné, à l'exception d'une image pour laquelle le lieu n'est pas indiqué : 12 photographies sont situées à Lahinch, 11 dans le

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28 Lien : [m.soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/episode-6-olga-dragon](https://m.soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/episode-6-olga-dragon)

comté de Clare plus généralement, et 11 sont localisées à l'étranger (Indonésie, États-Unis et Australie). Les hashtags les plus utilisés sont #westcoast, #clare, #lahinch, #ireland, #wildatlanticway, #homies, #friends, #ocean, #west, #ireland ainsi que #surfers, #surfgirls, #surfgirlmag et #atlanticocean. Le compte traduit ainsi une personnalité dynamique et une aspiration de *soul surfer* étroitement liée à la pratique et à son partage avec ses proches, et à l'exploration de la côte ouest irlandaise.

### **2.3. Tableau synoptique (Fig. 31) : observation des publications professionnelles des surfeurs interrogés sur Instagram :**

<b>Période d'observation : mai 2019-mai 2020</b>	<b>Giles CAREY videography</b>	<b>Ollie O'FLAHERTY</b>	<b>Seamus McGOLDRICK</b>	<b>Sligo Surf Experience</b>
Nombre de publications	84	28	36	54
... dont photographies	67	20	25	48
... dont vidéos	17	8	11	6
Publication de <i>stories</i>	rare	rare	rare	fréquente : de 1 à 4 par jour
Biographie	. G i L e S c A r e Y . « Film Maker, Photographer, Surfer, Husband & Dad » . « Facebook : gilescareyvideography, Owner of @pocketsfullofwater » . « www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvfoeun3Ec-HskdG4 kQErg »	. Ollie O Flaherty . « Irish Big wave Surfer, Ollies Surf Academy, Wild Atlantic Surf Co » . « C-Skins Wetsuits, Cassette Company, Coded Surfboards, Surfears » . « www.redbull.com/int-en/sessions-conor-maguire-rileys-big-wave »	. Seamus Mc Goldrick . Titre court métrage ayant pour sujet McGoldrick et sa pratique du bodyboard, disponible sur Youtube: « Shambles Moment Bye Moment »: <a href="https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=xJZohFjHguo">https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=xJZohFjHguo</a>	. Sligo Surf Experience . Lien vers le site internet de la boutique en ligne de l'école: Sligo Surf Experience online store : <a href="https://sligo-surf-experience.teemill.com/">https://sligo-surf-experience.teemill.com/</a> . Affichage de l'association avec le site d'impression et de commande de t-shirts en ligne Tee Mill Store : « with @teemillstore - leading the way with ethical fashion » . lien vers le site internet de l'école : <a href="http://sligosurfsurfexperience.com">sligosurfsurfexperience.com</a>
Nombre d'abonnés	365	5604	2835	1655
Surf : pratique personnelle	12	15	13	
Surf : célébrités ou autres surfeurs			7	
Surf : matériel	1	2	2	
Surf : événement sportif		1	1	
Mode de vie : vagues, océan	4	8	3	1
Mode de vie : plage, baignade				3
Mode de vie : nature	27	2		4
Mode de vie : plantes, animaux	28			
Mode de vie : alimentation				

Mode de vie : alcool, cigarettes, etc.	1			
Mode de vie : tatouages	1			
Mode de vie : marques de vêtements ou autres produits				
Mode de vie : création artistique	7	1	1	
Autres pratiques sportives / <i>lifestyle sports</i> skateboard, snowboard ou yoga				
Transports : van ou camion aménagé				
Lieux : spot de surf dont le sujet est un habitué / où l'école de surf est située		12	11	38
Lieux : comté où le sujet est résident			10	4
Lieux : autres comtés et Irlande en général	6	8	2	
Lieux : étranger	1	3	4	
Social : famille	12			
Social : amis	4	1	3	
Social : relation amoureuse	6			
Industrie : logo/promotion		20	1 : partage d'une image et mention du photographe Conor Flanagan 1 : promotion de l'interview donnée dans le cadre du podcast <i>Daoine na Mara</i> 1 : court-métrage <i>Reminiscence</i> 1 : cause environnementale 1 : cours de surf donné dans le cadre d'une levée de fonds pour l'association caritative North West Hospice	3 : poster promotionnel des stages d'été de l'école « Ocean Warrior summer camps » 3 : poster promotionnel de l'école de surf 1 : photographie de McGoldrick posant devant son camion marqué du logo de son école 1 : les activités de l'école de surf sont mentionnées dans une vidéo promotionnelle réalisée par l'office du tourisme du comté de Sligo, qui présente les activités touristiques proposées aux visiteurs
Industrie : produits dérivés ou activité de l'entreprise				Cours et élèves de l'école : 45
Industrie : partenariats	3 autres photographes tagués sur les images : stevenbencole, conorconlon sethughes		1 : Jones – Help Hanoi's Homeless charity 1 : sponsor Science bodyboard Company	1 : partenariat avec Clean Coasts Ireland
Hashtags les plus utilisés	#surfphotography, #surfingphotography,	#surf, #surfing, #bigwaves, #slabs,	#bodyboard #bodyboarding	#sligosurfexperience #cleancoasts #leavenotrace

	#surfireland, #surfing, #photographylovers, #photographer, #wildlifephotography	#wildatlanticway, #ireland, #lovewhatyoudo	#sciencebodyboards #sligo #ireland #adventuresligo #surfingireland #bodyboardingireland #photographyireland #waterphotography #ireland #waves #surf #surfphoto #photooftheday	#sligo #surfing #surfschoolstrandhill #surfschoolsligo #surfireland #strandhillmoments #gostrandhill #strandhillsurf #lovesligo #surfstrandhill #thingstodoinsligo #surfschool #learntosurf #surfcamp #surfcoach #ireland #sligo #strandhill
Engagement moyen :	65	412	267	180

## 2.4 Objectivation des données :

Giles Carey possède un compte professionnel sur Instagram, lequel relaie automatiquement les publications sur une page Facebook associée. Ce compte s'intitule Giles Carey Videography, et c'est sur celui-ci que l'observation s'est concentrée ; en effet, au début de la recherche Giles maintenait un compte professionnel au nom de sa société de productions Pockets Full of Water, consistant essentiellement en la documentation de la pratique des surfeurs locaux ou de la sienne. Un changement de perspective a cependant mené Giles à donner à sa société son nom afin de clarifier et augmenter sa visibilité personnelle. Le compte Pockets Full of Water demeure sur les réseaux sociaux cependant, afin de maintenir le réseau de contacts existants, mais Giles concentre désormais son activité de création visuelle sur sa nouvelle page, créée début 2019, et sur laquelle l'observation a porté.

Le compte Instagram Giles Carey Videography présente une variété iconographique centrée sur la représentation de l'étendue des sujets abordés dans le cadre de la pratique photographique et vidéographique de Giles. La pratique du surf n'est pas un élément central de représentation, le choix est clairement fait de montrer la variété des sujets et des compositions. Une majorité de ces images sont des compositions riches, et consistent en des expérimentations en matière de cadrages et d'effets visuels. Il s'agit d'une page artistique donc, à visée professionnelle étant donné l'utilisation des hashtags ; il ne semble pas y avoir de volonté de se distinguer en tant que photographe et/ou vidéographe spécialiste de surf (à titre de comparaison, le compte professionnel de Clem McInerney, photographe, réalisateur et surfeur originaire de Sligo, propose 35 publications sur une période d'un an mai 2019-mai 2020, ayant toutes pour élément unique ou central la pratique du surf de surfeurs professionnels ou semi-professionnels). Sur le compte professionnel de Giles, il publie occasionnellement des *stories*<sup>29</sup>, classées en 4 thèmes : vidéographie promotionnelle (événement muxical) (Abstract Source), Cali Conference (documentant une conférence liée au surf à laquelle Giles a assisté à San Diego, États-Unis, en avril 2019), Gimbal (où il présente des expériences vidéo réalisées à l'aide de cet instrument), Film Fest (sur lequel il relaie des informations relatives aux festivals de films auxquels il participe).

Ollie O'Flaherty, surfeur de grosses vagues semi-professionnel, possède quant à lui une page

<sup>29</sup> Une *story* est une photo ou une courte vidéo qu'un utilisateur publie sur son compte Instagram, Facebook ou Snapchat, et que ses abonnés ou « amis » peuvent consulter pendant 24 heures – au-delà, le contenu disparaît. L'intérêt de ce type de contenu est qu'il permet de publier plus, et de tester les réactions des abonnés, l'utilisateur pouvant consulter le nombre de vues du contenu en question, sans ternir son image grâce au caractère éphémère de la *story*. Sur Instagram, l'utilisateur a la possibilité de sauvegarder ces courtes vidéos afin de les faire apparaître sur la page d'accueil de son compte, et de les classer par thèmes. A titre d'exemple, sur le compte Instagram de Ni Fhaolain figurent 11 thèmes de *stories*, classées sous les catégories de voyages (Londres, Venise, Islande), consommation durable (conseils pour les voyages (« travel hacks », mode...)) ou encore recettes de cuisine.



Facebook ainsi qu'un compte Instagram, qu'il maintient tous deux à la manière de comptes professionnels, ne publiant que du contenu lié à sa pratique du surf. Sa page Facebook semble relayer automatiquement le contenu publié sur Instagram, ainsi que des messages publiés par des amis le mentionnant. L'observation s'est concentrée sur le compte Instagram, sur lequel Ollie se définit ainsi : « Ollie O Flaherty, Big wave Surfer », avant de mentionner le nom de son entreprise de coaching de surf : Ollies Surf Academy, ainsi que ses sponsors : Wild Atlantic Surf Co (nom abrégé du *shaper*<sup>30</sup> Wild Atlantic Surfboard Company, établi à Lahinch, co. Clare), C-Skins Wetsuits, Cassette Company, Coded Surfboards et Surfears. Sous cette description figure un lien vers la dernière vidéo promotionnelle en date réalisée par la marque RedBull, sponsor de Conor Maguire, un autre surfeur de gros originaire, lui, de Bundoran, co. Donegal, et avec qui O'Flaherty partage régulièrement le line-up dans les grosses vagues de Mullaghmore<sup>31</sup>.

Seamus McGoldrick, dont le profil personnel puis le compte Instagram personnels ont été présentés précédemment, anime une page Facebook et un compte Instagram dédiés à son école de surf Sligo Surf Experience. L'observation de l'activité sur ces réseaux s'est concentrée sur le compte Instagram, les publications sur ce dernier étant très majoritairement relayées automatiquement sur la page Facebook. Le compte Sligo Surf Experience est plus régulièrement alimenté que son compte personnel, avec une moyenne d'une publication par semaine et le partage très fréquent de *stories* (entre 1 et 4 par jour). Parmi ces dernières, McGoldrick a sauvegardé des *stories* à visée pédagogique et à destination de ses élèves, classées en 4 thèmes : « Rip currents » (bâines), « Spring/neap tide » (marées de printemps, ou de vives-eaux), « Wave height » (lecture de vagues), et « Surf forecast » (*stories* quasi-quotidiennes décrivant les conditions du jour, soit à partir des prévisions du site WindGuru commentées par McGoldrick, soit à partir de courtes vidéos qu'il réalise sur la plage de Strandhill, assorties de conseils et de l'annonce des horaires de ses cours). La grande majorité des vidéos et photographies (à l'exception, notamment, de 2 vidéos réalisées par l'office du tourisme du comté de Sligo, mentionnant Sligo Surf Experience et que McGoldrick relaie sur son compte dans un objectif de promotion) sont réalisées par le bodyboarder lui-même, qui filme ou photographie ses étudiants du jour, pendant ou après les sessions, pour promouvoir les activités de son école. Le taux d'engagement est relativement constant (en moyenne 180 mentions « j'aime »). Le nombre d'abonnés au compte est en augmentation modérée mais constante (d'un peu plus de 1 000 abonnés au début de la période d'observation à 1 655 en fin d'observation), et McGoldrick fait régulièrement recours à des hashtags tels que #sligosurfexperience, #surfing, et particulièrement les hashtags faisant mention de la localisation de l'école (#surfschoolstrandhill, #surfschoolsligo, #surfireland, #gostrandhill, #strandhillsurf, #lovesligo, #surfstrandhill ou encore #thingstodoinsligo) ou les hashtags à portée plus générale (de type #surfschool, #learntosurf ou #surfcamp).

Le site internet de l'école, auquel la biographie du compte Instagram fait directement référence en incluant un lien, met en avant la personnalité de McGoldrick, et son profil atypique – bodyboarder renommé, titulaire d'un diplôme en physique et chimie, musicien et passionné d'arts, de musique traditionnelle irlandaise et de folklore – ainsi que son attachement à l'histoire et à la culture de sa région natale, son « endroit favori sur terre<sup>32</sup> ». La présentation du propriétaire et principal instructeur de Sligo Surf Experience accorde une large place à l'expérience de pratique de

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30 Voir glossaire.

31 Ce court-métrage de RedBull, intitulé « Ireland's bravest surfers score an epic swell at Riley's big wave slab », montre Maguire, O'Flaherty et d'autres surfeurs de grosses vagues de renommée nationale sur la vague de Riley's, co. Clare. Il a été mis en ligne sur le site de la marque le 6 mai 2020. Lien : [www.redbull.com/int-en/sessions-conor-maguire-rileys-big-wave](http://www.redbull.com/int-en/sessions-conor-maguire-rileys-big-wave)

32 « My passion [for surfing] lead me around the globe but I ended up back under the shadow of Knocknarea in my favourite place in the world, County Sligo. » Le site de l'école de surf Sligo Surf Experience présente McGoldrick entre autres comme ayant grandi sur les terres de la mythique Reine Maeve : « Seamus grew up beneath the shadow of Queen Maeve's grave on Knocknarea in Strandhill, County Sligo ». Repéré à : <https://www.sligosurfexperience.com/about/seamus/>.

McGoldrick, fort de plus de vingt ans d'expérience en tant que bodyboarder et surfeur amateur et compétiteur de haut niveau, et relate en particulier ses exploits sur la périlleuse vague Aileen's, comté de Clare (ainsi que le grave accident qui l'immobilisé pendant près de six mois, et sa détermination à retourner dans l'eau malgré tout à sa sortie de convalescence) et sur les vagues géantes de Mullaghmore. La part du légendaire dans la mise en récits et en images de la figure de McGoldrick, emblématique sur la scène surf irlandaise, a été mis en évidence dans les chapitres 6 et 7 de ce travail, qui ont présenté une lecture interprétative des mises en narration personnelles et commerciales des images et récits des surfeurs irlandais.

Le recours à des hashtags faisant référence au site de l'école ainsi qu'à des thèmes de recherches plus généraux permettant d'augmenter la visibilité de Sligo Surf Experience dans les recherches réalisées par les utilisateurs du réseau social explique que l'engagement des abonnés aux publications sur le compte Instagram de l'école soit régulier. Le compte s'appuie aussi amplement sur la notoriété de McGoldrick lui-même, personnalité publique et reconnue dans le monde du surf et qui n'hésite pas à personnaliser ses publications en s'incluant dans la quasi-totalité de ses images (soit visuellement, soit en commentant ses publications). Il est certain que l'implication de McGoldrick dans la mise en images et la stratégie de communication de son école a grandement contribué à la popularité croissante de Sligo Surf Experience depuis sa création en 2018.

# Annexe 7

## Propositions de partage des données de la recherche :

### Podcast

### *Daoine na Mara, Tales from the Green Shores*

The screenshot shows the SoundCloud profile for 'Daoine na Mara - Tales from the Green Shores' by Frederique. The profile features a circular profile picture of a woman and a banner with the text 'DAOINE NA MARA TALES FROM THE GREEN SHORES'. Below the banner, there are navigation tabs for 'Tout', 'Titres populaires', 'Titres', 'Albums', 'Playlists', and 'Reposts'. The main content area displays four podcast episodes with their respective cover art, titles, and audio waveforms. The right sidebar shows statistics for the profile, including 'Abonnés' (31), 'Albums' (8), and 'Titres' (7). It also includes a bio for 'Hi, I'm Fred.' and a list of tracks that have been reposted by other users.

**Daoine na Mara - Tales from the Green Shores**  
Frederique  
PRO UNLIMITED

**DAOINE NA MARA**  
**TALES FROM THE GREEN SHORES**

Tout Titres populaires Titres Albums Playlists Reposts

Abonnés 31 Albums 8 Titres 7

Hi, I'm Fred.  
I live in Sundown on the west coast of Ireland. I am into everything from swimming, longboarding, camping and half a dozen mugs of tea a day. I share my life between north Connal and Dublin.

Afficher plus -

5 mentions J'aime Tout afficher

Scott Buckley  
The Things That Keep Us Here (CD...  
25,6k 1.413 1.966 372

AER@HEAD  
Somewhere Down The Line  
2k 226 1.261 160

Daoine na Mara - Tales from the Gr...  
Episode 3: Rory O'Deed  
112 4 11 3

3 abonnements Tout afficher

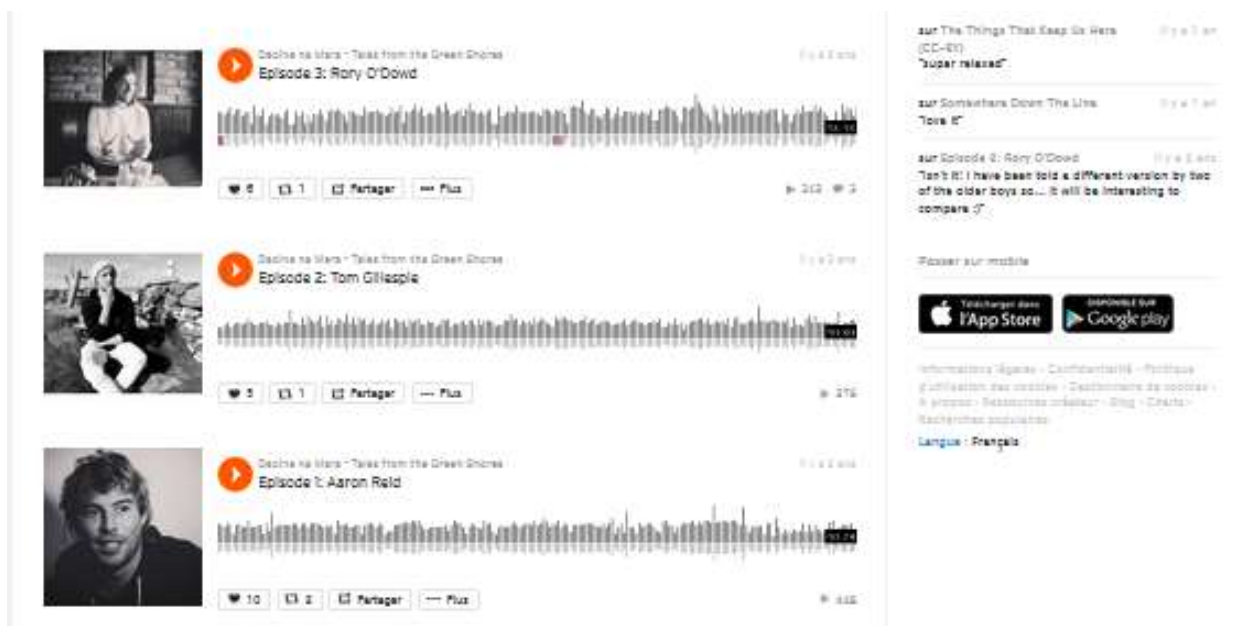
Scott Buckley  
14,7k 428 Suivre

Audio Library  
220k 246 Suivre

AER@HEAD  
10,4k 25 Suivre

3 commentaires Tout afficher

sur The Things That Keep Us Here 10 1 on



III. 151 : Titres disponibles à l'écoute du podcast *Daoine na Mara, Tales from the Green Shores*. Source : capture d'écran de la plateforme Soundcloud<sup>33</sup>.

## 1. Épisode 1 – Aaron Reid : présentation et structure de l'épisode :

A very friendly likable character on the west coast of Ireland, Aaron Reid cuts quite a distinctive figure in the Irish surf community. Embedded in the surf scene from a young age, Aaron has brought nothing but style and finesse to surfing in Ireland. As an accomplished competitive surfer he has a relaxed, modest and chilled attitude on the land that translates into an uncanny explosive energy in the water, where he is known for his versatile and fluid style, and for his mastery of a great variety of maneuvers.

We sat down out the back of Cosy Joe's in Bundoran on a (mostly flat) Sunday morning last December and had a little chat. Here Aaron tells Giles and myself good stories about chasing the buzz, flying kites in gale-force winds on the Cliffs of Moher, the good vibes around the skate parks in Ireland, and how he has been thinking about taking up wingsuit flying or fishing instead of surfing... as well as some good old tales about some of Ireland's surfing legends and some of his favourite waves in the country - although, as he says: "Don't bother lads, it's cold, wet, rainy and dark!"

I hope you will enjoy this first interview to be released as part of the "Daoine na Mara - Tales from The Green Shores" podcasts series! Feel free to leave any comment if you relate to any of our stories, or to get in touch if you would like to share yours!

Thank you for listening!

Fred x

Contents:

Aaron Reid, from Sligo town.

1. My first memorable wave, my first board that was my own, and going surfing with my Dad. 00:50
2. The Strandhill surf community and early influences ("Yeah, that was a cutback, man."). 03:28
3. My first competitions in Rosstownlagh. 05:16
4. Comps, the bit of craic... and the pressures of it. 07:17

Surfing and "sh-tyling".

5. A technical surfer with a skating background. 08:54
6. A few bad wipe-outs, and my first tow wave at Riley's. 10:32
7. "The "heaviest air drop I've ever seen at the Peak!": some waves by G-man, and one of my Dad's. 12:54

33 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/tracks>



Surfing in Ireland.

8. My favourite waves in the country. 15:40

9. My favourite section on a wave: "I'm more of a man for my shallow waves than my deep ones any day". 17:17

10. Having a little break, skating, and the fear barrier. 18:23

11. Local legends. 22:17

12. The hardest thing about surfing in Ireland (and no, not the cold: "The cold's grand, you know, it's fresh, good for ya!") and the best. 25:02

13. Surfing in Ireland and where it's going. 26:18

14. The dark in Ireland. 27:45

And now for something completely different...

15. Getting blown around in Lahinch. 28:52

16. "Let's go fly a kite on the cliffs of Moher." 31:21

More stories about...

17. By the way, why do you surf? 33:30

18. "Like sh-liding down the sh-steps, but on water, and you're standing": a little dictionary of surfing. 35:05

19. To the (many) surfers out there. 37:37

20. The west coast of Ireland: a little history of migration by Aaron Reid (and a lad from Clare called Billy). 38:09

**Ill. 152 : Episode 1 – Aaron Reid<sup>34</sup>.**

## **2. Épisode 2 – Tom Gillespie : présentation et structure de l'épisode :**

I first knew about Tom Gillespie after viewing Mickey Smith's "Tommerline" edit during Shore Shots Irish Surf Film Festival in 2016 ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRECUJO6CMM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRECUJO6CMM)), where it took home the "Best Bodyboard edit" prize: the heavy, dark barrelling waves you see Tom tearing down on will give you an idea of where his reputation for being a fearless bodyboarder comes from!

"Tom has been leading the way in Irish heavy wave bodyboarding, pushing the boundaries on the slabs... When others scamper for the shoulder, Tom gets his head down and goes for it when waves get heavy and serious." (Giles Carey, Pockets Full of Water Productions.)

We sat with Tom in a field by the waves in Lahinch, co. Clare and had a little chat on a sunny September afternoon back in 2017. (As you'll find out at some point in the audio, we were soon joined by a few curious neighbours who decided to move their grazing activities (and some others...) closer to keep an ear on us... This is one of our first interviews and also one of my first experiments with audio editing, please excuse the poor audio! If you're missing out on some of the questions, check the "Contents" section below :))

Tom shared some cool stories about bodyboarding and some of his best waves - plus one of his worst wipe-outs; he told us how "being uncool" is actually quite cool, about the pull to ride bigger, heavier waves, and how surfing standards in Ireland have been pushed really high over the last decade under the impulse of a dedicated few, as well as various bits of surfing and bodyboarding history!

I hope you will enjoy this second interview to be released as part of "Daoine na Mara - Tales from The Green Shores" podcasts series! There will be more to come soon! Feel free to leave any comment if you relate to any of our stories, or to get in touch if you would like to share yours!

As always, a big thank you to Pockets Full of Water for your help :)

Contents:

"I suppose I'm a bodyboarder as well, like...": meet Tom.

1. "Picture or Playground": doing a PhD. 00:00

2. First waves, and my Mum's Sunday day trips driving us from Dublin to Bundoran and back. 01:40

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34 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/episode-1-aaron-reid>

Of waves, being "uncool" and art.

3. "Mickey Smith started coming over": the pull to ride bigger waves, how it all started. 03:28
4. "I'm not that good at surfing small waves!": competitions. 05:31
5. "It was just like paddling into a surf movie": my first memorable wave. 06:29
6. My best wave recently. 07:57
7. A tribe: "As Mickey Smith says, 'It's cool because it's uncool'". 08:40
8. Artistic sports: turning waves into a canvas. 10:48

More waves, bodyboarding and Ireland.

9. "Jumping on the wave like it's a train and riding it all the way": Tom's little dictionary of surfing. 12:29
10. It's "quality" and "rugged" and "cold": of travelling... and what's special about surfing in Ireland. 15:44
11. If you look down on bodyboarders you're either of two things... and the story of how bodyboarding was made to look lame. 18:20

Of wipe-outs and boards and hunting waves.

12. That time I hit the reef face first": bad wipe-outs and scars and dodgy-punk looks. 21:03.
13. Sometimes it's "Man, don't look for the footage": remembering good waves. 23:20.
14. "They're handy, they fit in boots in cars, if you ever bring one on a plane you can say they're paintings...": Tom's Little Guide of Bodyboards for Dummies. 25:00.
15. Bodyboarding in Ireland and where it's going. 27:03.
16. A good bodyboarder. 28:47.
17. "A lot of the really good surfers around here will surf Riley's on a bodyboard when it's big and when it's heavy": riding different crafts. 29:48.
18. Getting barrelled. 31:47.
19. "The bar is set up here now and it's not going now, it's up there": changes in the surf scene in Clare. 34:04.
20. "You have to drive anyway so you always pick the best option": hunting for waves and dealing with flat. 37:00.

III. 153 : *Episode 2 – Tom Gillespie*<sup>35</sup>.

### **3. Épisode 3 – Rory O'Dowd : présentation et structure de l'épisode :**

"He is not the best bodyboarder in the world, but he might turn out to be the best bodyboarder-musician in the world!" That is the answer Seamus McGoldrick gave me when I asked him what he knew about Rory O'Dowd, before adding: "Ever since I knew Rory as a young grom, he had really stylish equipment and a real focus on style in his bodyboarding... He was a metalhead, he was 14, had long hair and could play any Iron Maiden, Metallica or Thin Lizzy solo you could care to name - who was going to mess with a kid like that! So far, Rory has done an excellent job of balancing his love of music with his love of the waves (and the Guinness). He is a talented surf coach by day and a busy musician by night. And it seems to me that Rory is just getting into the groove with both music and surfing, and the future is bright for this man."

We met with Rory O'Dowd on a cold September day in 2017 at the Strand Bar, in the heart of Strandhill, co. Sligo. The bar is run by the Byrne brothers, the local surfing legends, and was bustling shortly before lunch time so we sat with Rory in a cosy corner to chat about surfing, bodyboarding, his love for Ireland's waves and legends both in the water and on the land.

"Born and raised in Strandhill", Rory is a very friendly and easy-going young bodyboarder, and a talented musician! He has been bodyboarding since a young age, free surfing and travelling for waves for nearly 10 years now and representing his sponsors Gul Watersports and Action Sports Distribution, while remaining strongly attached to his Sligo roots. I have also seen him quite a few times out on some of Donegal's fiercest slabs and something tells me he has plans to go bigger!

Rory told us some good stories about what it is like to be living, surfing and gigging on one of Ireland's iconic beaches and about some of Strandhill's surfing legends; he made some inspiring connections between his music and his surfing and told us a wealth of stories about battling "The Cold" and about Ireland's waves and her many other treasures!

35 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/tom-gillespie>



I hope you will enjoy Episode 3 of "Daoine na Mara - Tales from The Green Shores"! Feel free to leave any comment if you relate to any of our stories, or to get in touch if you would like to share yours! Again a big thank you to Pockets Full of Water for your help ;)

Contents:

Rory O'Dowd, "born and raised in Strandhill".

1. "There was a good bodyboard sitting on the rocks": the funny story of how I started bodyboarding. 00:11

2. My first memorable wave. 02:15

3. "A good song is like a good wave": playing different instruments, surfing different crafts: of surfing, music, and inspiration. 03:07

Ireland and her waves.

4. "There's a bit of a line here in Strandhill": local surfing legends. 07:54

5. Hunting for gems: the story of how Lizzie was found. 11:07

6. "Slab pioneers": Mickey Smith and other legends. 12:28

7. Rory's Little Guide to the west coast of Ireland. 14:06

8. "Like naming a boat": how a wave gets its name. 16:12

Rory's waves.

9. The perfect wave. 17:35

10. "Jeez, that's the longest I've ever caught!": my most memorable waves of recent. 20:18

11. "That wave I got busted on". 22:58

12. "The wipe-out is also a part of surfing". 23:45

Surfing in Ireland: the good, the hard, and the very best.

13. In Ireland, "those who are patient are rewarded quite well". 34:15

14. Of knights in armour, injuries in battle and cold monsters. 27:36

15. The Cold - the mythical monster. 31:46

"It's different", and "it's for the dedicated": surfing in Ireland and the future.

16. Surfing's contribution to the community, and what the region needs. 34:14

17. Of weather and pints: the stuff of conversations in Irish line-ups. 38:15

18. "The west coast of Ireland chooses its people", and the story of Jeff the Sailor. 39:41

19. "A wealth of stories": people of the sea, legends of the land. 40:48

20. What is keeping me here... 42:53

**154 : Episode 3 – Rory O'Dowd<sup>36</sup>.**

#### **4. Épisode 4 – Ollie O'Flaherty : présentation et structure de l'épisode :**

He has been unanimously called one of Ireland's most talented big-wave surfers, chasing the island's heaviest waves, and he is without a doubt one of the standard figures in today's Irish surfing. Ollie O'Flaherty has really built a name for himself and created a legacy for people to follow, while matching his own definition of a good surfer as an all-round and nice person in and out of the water! The last time we met he was getting in for a quick surf in Lahinch before heading up to Doolin Surfest and picking up the trophy for Best Shortie he and Kev L Smith were awarded for their epic little film "Le Chéile"!

A keen waterman and a gifted surfer in shortboarding and longboarding, Ollie surfs them all – but he loves his big waves and will keep on chasing them for, in his own words, "If you're just in your own comfort zone the whole time then you're not really living"!

We met on another windy day in Lahinch in September 2017, and while keeping an eye on the waves and a swell that did not seem to make up its mind, Ollie told us some really good stories about his love for the big stuff; the big wave surfing community and its "godfathers"; getting rag-dolled under a massive set; and he also pointed out some of the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in Ireland to give surfing the recognition as an actual sport it so well deserves.

<sup>36</sup> Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/rory-odowd-1>

I hope you will enjoy Episode 4 of "Daoine na Mara - Tales from The Green Shores"!  
Do leave any comment if you relate to any of our stories!  
A big THANK YOU to Pockets Full of Water Productions :)

Contents:

"Ollie O'Flaherty, from Lahinch, county Clare":

1. "I just really like the good waves..." 00:00
2. "Like I was going 100 miles an hour": my first memorable wave. 00:42
3. Being competitive: "If you're just in your own comfort zone the whole time you're not really living." 01:13
4. "I'd be rather be here for the good days than travel around the world surfing 2 foot beach breaks": of competing and traveling around the world. 02:02

The competitive scene in Ireland.

5. Juniors ("it's the best it's ever been") but... we need more. 03:29
6. "When I started competing": then, now, funding issues and the need to recognize surfing as an actual sport. 06:10

Big things.

7. Big wave surfing in Ireland, and the industry. 10:20
8. Idealizing portraits of big wave surfing in Ireland: "it's not all nice and perfect slabs and offshore, there's plenty of downtime, there's plenty of windy days... it can be onshore for a month, you're just sitting there going like, 'what am I doing here?'" 11:41
9. So what am I doing here? Of plenty of opportunities, Nazare, XXL Tube nominations, and Mullie. 12:54
10. Toeing a tricky line: the big wave surfing business, the need for sponsors and publicity vs wishing for uncrowded line-ups. 15:46

Of big wave surfing and role models.

11. "I just thought, the whole world is looking at these waves and they're on my doorstep!": Ollie's first big waves. 17:45
12. "The first really crazy wave I rode." 19:16
13. Role models: "not only are they good surfers but they're nice guys you know." 20:35
14. "A mental game": of dedication and fitness: "I don't think you can be unfit and surf in Ireland in the winter." 22:13
15. "Quietenng down that chat in your head": in Ollie's head on a big wave. 25:32
16. "It was horrendous.": that time I got caught inside by the biggest set of the day. 26:42

Legends of men and waves.

17. "Bouncing ideas off of them, getting advice off them and just seeing them putting their heads down and charging": The "godfathers" and the big wave surfing community in Ireland. 28:08
18. "The dragon or the beast is more inside you than it is on the wave." 30:02
19. "The most addictive thing I've ever come across in my life, over any woman or alcohol": Ollie's Little Dictionary of Surfing. 32:40
20. What Clare needs in the next few years. 35:31

*Episode 4 – Ollie O'Flaherty*<sup>37</sup>.

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37 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/ollie-oflaherty>



## 5. Épisode 5 – Owen Murphy : présentation et structure de l'épisode :

We met with Owen Murphy, aka "Murf", one evening in September 2017 on the hilltop overlooking Tullan Strand just after he had closed and packed up his surf school. Murf has been surfing in Bundoran since an early age. He is a talented and powerful surfer who really knows how to make the most of long peeling waves. He is well-known and loved in the local community, always happy to spare a bit of his time for a chat and also to give a hand or a piece of advice to the young groms and push them to their best levels. (On my own end of things he is also known for not really to be trusted whenever my man bumps into him at the local pub, but sure enough: there are usually too many waves to talk about on those evenings to cover over just "a couple" of pints!) I also know he scored a couple of heavy waves out at Mullaghmore last winter so something tells me despite what he told me here, he has plans to go bigger!

Murf told us some good stories about his beginnings as a surfer and then as the owner of Murf's Surf School, and what it is like to be living, surfing and operating a surf business in Ireland's "surfing capital". He laid out very clearly how the surf and tourism industry works in the region, while describing what, to him, needs to be done to improve the area and promote the younger generations of surfers. We also had a lot of fun when I got him to speak about himself as a surfer, and he told us some very good stories about what he's been told surfing back in the days in Ireland was like, and some of the region's iconic waves!

I hope you will enjoy Episode 5 of "Daoine na Mara - Tales from The Green Shores"! Please leave me any comment if you relate to any of the stories, or get in touch if you would like to share your own!

Contents:

Introduction.

1. Introducing Murf (or trying!): 00:00.
2. "I just loved it so I kept at it and ended up working in it": surfing: 00:42.
3. "I was frothing on that": first memorable wave, and competitions: 02:30.

Working around surfing.

4. "Instead of lending stuff for free, we just started charging them!": the little story of how Murf's surf school and rentals started: 06:27.
5. "Really supportive": the surf school and rental business landscape in Bundoran: 09:35.
6. The pros and cons of having your business set up on the beach: 10:51.
7. "I'm kind of hoping to just do the same thing": where you see your business in 5 years: 14:14.

Of surfeconomics, the tourism industry in Donegal, and even Brexit.

8. "Kind of following the pound": the surfing industry and the tourism flow in Bundoran: 15:43.
9. "People from the north would still come to Bundoran, it's been such a long tradition": 18:00.
10. "More direct public transport, ...": what "Ireland's surfing capital" needs: 19:53.
11. Bundoran's surf club: 23:48.

Of waves, favourite manoeuvres, and surfing back in the days.

12. "I had, like, this old single fin in the house, it's an old board of my dad's...": that one wave that just blew my mind recently: 28:34.
13. "That's why they're so sweet": favourite surfing manoeuvres, and why actually do them at all??: 32:05.
14. "He said they were surfing in the white water for years like, thinking they were doing exactly what they were supposed to": back in the days: 37:05.

One gangly seagull, a couple of definitions, a pinch of local legend and a blend of reflections on addiction.

15. "Gangly", a seagull trying to ice-skate and yellow: Murf describes himself as a surfer and talks heavy waves: 39:31.
16. Murf's little dictionary of surfing: 43:36.
17. Of battling the winds, travelling for waves, glassy water and better climates... but still being a homebird: 46:53.
18. A little story about the Peak... and pigeons: 48:54.
19. "A godsend", and "why so many people have ended up living here": 50:57.
20. Defining and talking addiction: surfing as addictive, and a passion: 53:15.

Making of: taking picture... and stealing the light: 58:07.

### III. 156 : *Episode 5 – Owen Murphy*<sup>38</sup>.

38 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/episode-5-owen-murphy>

## 6. Épisode 6 – Olga Dragon : présentation et structure de l'épisode :

Olga – quite a special lady to be the first surfer girl to be portrayed in our series! A bubbly friendly girl, always up for a chat and a laugh, she did not grow up by the sea and took up surfing not so long ago, like me. She has since fully fallen in love with the ocean and with the Irish waves especially, and embraced the wild, salty lifestyle on the west coast of Ireland. She has an appetite for all kinds of waves as surfing, for her, is really about the joy of being in the water, although I know for a fact she has her eyes set on bigger waves, too! Olga did her first competition last year in Lahinch at the Annual Kenny's Open surf contest, and got the girls on board as well – as she says: “the girls around here surf well but are shy to compete!” We sat with Olga in September 2017 at Randaddy's in Lahinch, and she told us how she got into surfing and about “shredding white water” for a year; how surfing generally has changed her life for the better, and how Ireland, through her waves, has now truly become her home. She told us about being a girl in the line-up, and how surfing the Peak “semi drunk” may not be the best idea; we also talked addiction, travelling for waves, and Olga's love for the Irish coastline.

Olga got involved in the farm at Moy Hill as well when she arrived in Clare, so she told us about the surfer farmers' inspiring dedication and their love for both the earth and the ocean! We will be heading down to Moy Hill in a few days so hopefully will be able to share some of their stories here soon, too! (Apparently, according to Olga, Fergal Smith & co. are “really cool people, just like us; they just shred bigger waves!”)

I hope you will enjoy Episode 6 of “Daoine na Mara – Tales from The Green Shores”! Please leave me any comment or get in touch if you would like to share your own!

A big thank you to Pockets Full of Water Productions, as always, for your help! :)

Contents:

Introduction.

1. “I feel like this is my home”: meet Olga: 00:00.
2. “For a year I was shredding white water!”: how it all started: 00:44.
3. Of getting addicted, travelling, big wave surfers, and moving to Lahinch: 04:41.
4. “I think you're too old to start surfing.” of learning surfing late, mistakes, judgement and challenges: 06:01.

Of learning, experimenting and scary waves that make you smarter.

5. “Probably from the shore I look like an idiot but it feels amazing!”: favourite manoeuvres, “experimenting”, and “that jittery kind of feeling”: 10:39.
6. Challenges: 13:34.
7. “Before I knew it, a massive lip was coming right on top of me”: semi-drunk on the Peak: my scariest wave recently: 13:57.
8. “It makes you a bit smarter maybe”: of fear, and getting back out after a fright: 16:55.

Surfing in Clare.

9. Being a girl in the line-up, and the community in Lahinch: 17:30.
10. “It's just having respect, you know”: being a local: 19:19.
11. What is special about surfing in Ireland... and a “kind of a funny cult” in Lahinch: 20:52.
12. The Farm: of bringing it back to what it used to be, dedication, and how my Mum was right about gardening: 22:00.

Getting back to Earth, appreciation, and challenges: surfing therapeutics.

13. It's like meditation”: how being in the water brings you closer to the earth: 26:44.
14. “Chilling, watching, appreciating... or just trying to survive and have fun!”: what's on my mind when I'm surfing: 27:26.
15. My first time seeing the Cliffs and Aileen's working: 29:36.

Surfing, water connections, and colours.

16. “Anything you can literally ride your board on is a wave and is fun for me”: Olga's little dictionary of waves: 30:58.
17. “If anything, it's probably put me back on the trail I probably should have walked in the first place”: how surfing has impacted my life: 33:44.
18. An emotional relationship with surfing? The feminine take on surfing: 34:58.
19. A little colour-map of the waves in Clare: 35:37.

To be continued...

20. Myself in five, ten years from now: 37:00.

**Ill. 157 : Episode 6 – Olga Dragon<sup>39</sup>.**

39 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/episode-6-olga-dragon>



## 7. Épisode 7 – Seamus McGoldrick : présentation et structure de l'épisode :

I met with Seamus McGoldrick, a.k.a. Shambles, in Sligo at the end of the Ocean Human Health event hosted by Dr. Easkey Britton in May, after a day spent listening to eye-opening and inspiring talks about ocean conservation and how our marine environment can benefit us, mentally and physically, and needs care and preservation so badly in return. Shambles and I sat in the main hall of the Model museum - together with baby Lugha, who made a point to take his first babbles into posterity and the podcast... now I am no sound editing genius so despite my efforts I am afraid you will hear some whinging here and there! "A proud member of the Irish surfing community": Shambles, I am sure, could have gone on for hours but that day we tried and kept it to his love of the ocean and bodyboarding, and to how, back when he was hanging out with Mickey Smith &co., "being an Irish bodyboarder was the best thing you could have been"! He also told me how his last gnarly experience in the water, while keeping him out of the ocean for a while, actually led him to fulfil his dream and even give back to the founder of his sport, and how surfing is an amazing brother- and sisterhood.

We also discussed life choices, issues of localism and the old bodyboarders VS surfers thing, and talked about those forward-thinking farmer surfers leading the way in bringing the soul surfing back to Ireland... and, most importantly, what to do on your birthday in Strandhill!

Contents:

1. A little introduction to collecting surflore.
2. Shambles in a few words: 00:01:47.
3. "A proud member of the Irish surfing community": 04:07.
4. The dictionary definition of surfing, being a surfer, being a bodyboarder: 05:03.
5. Of bodyboarding, surfing, and the surfers VS bodyboarders thing: 05:33.
6. My first memorable wave: 06:48.
7. "Surfing has the same effect on people, no matter who you are": of infatuation, passion and addiction, and turning people into ocean children: 08:16.
8. My first near-death experience... and a dead bird: dealing with fear: 11:00.
9. My last big injury - "a gnarly experience in a lot of ways, but [it] had an equally amazing effect on my life": 13:27.
10. "An amazing brother- and sisterhood", and us European surfers being a bit of a tribe: 16:02.
11. "I said, 'Ok, I'm gonna go surfing...': of life choices, and a surfing career VS an academic career: 18:25.
12. "Being an Irish bodyboarder was the best thing you could have been, because it was such an exciting time": of discovering the waves, and how Mickey Smith "just let the art speak for itself": 26:41.
13. "Surfers are horizon gazers, always looking forward" (Easkey Britton): of nostalgia, soul surfing, and the power trio at Moy Hill Farm... plus some wise words from Fergal Smith: 29:23.
14. "I don't see localism as bad, it's the way it's perpetrated": of saving the goose, and the importance of the surfers' code: 33:21.
15. "A special place for all of us": my favourite wave, and friends: "When we get out in the surf it's half to catch waves and half to catch up with all your friends": 40:03.
16. "Ireland has a great media profile for surfing... but it can be deceptive": the hardest thing about surfing in Ireland: 43:11.
17. "The swings in Nature's playground": Shambles's Little Dictionary of Surfing: 44:18.
18. "Having more surfers in society is probably a good thing": surfing from fringe to mainstream, a selfish act... and growing as a human: 47:17.
19. "I was Seamus before I went on that trip, and I was Shambles when I came back!": the body board that gave me my nickname, and what I love about Northern Irish surfers: 53:28.
20. A beach clean, a bite to eat, a good gig and a few pints: what to do on your birthday in Strandhill! 57:02.

III. 158 : *Episode 7 – Seamus McGoldrick*<sup>40</sup>.

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40 Lien : <https://soundcloud.com/frederique-pnt/episode-7-seamus-shambles-mcgoldrick>

8. *Daoine na Mara* – Série documentaire en cours : affiche & logo :



Ill. 159 : *Daoine na Mara*, affiche et logo. Création originale : CAREY, Frederique, 2018.



## Annexe 8

### Enjeux pédagogiques de la recherche :

#### Exemples d'études de cas menées dans le cadre des cours de Master L.E.A. à l'université Rennes 2

##### 1. Études de cas marketing, Master 1 : septembre – décembre 2017 :

De septembre à novembre 2017, j'ai proposé aux étudiants des programmes de Master L.E.A. de l'Université Rennes 2 de participer à un projet de recherche dans le cadre de mes enseignements d'Anglais Langue Professionnelle. L'objectif de ce projet était double : il s'est tout d'abord agi d'associer les étudiants de Master 1 à mes travaux et de les initier à un travail de recherche de terrain et d'analyse en leur proposant de réaliser une étude de cas auprès d'entreprises liées directement ou indirectement à la commercialisation de la pratique du surf le long du littoral irlandais. Les données relevées et les analyses des étudiants devaient permettre d'obtenir une vision d'ensemble, bien que partielle, de la diversité des activités entrepreneuriales associées au surf et de leur contribution à l'économie locale, voire nationale.

Une deuxième finalité était davantage centrée sur les objectifs pédagogiques des enseignements de langue dans le cadre d'une formation professionnalisante, et de permettre aux étudiants de consolider leurs savoir-faire en matière de gestion de projet en équipe et de renforcer leurs compétences linguistiques en anglais : compréhension écrite (recherche documentaire) et orale (entretiens réalisés en visio-conférence avec des acteurs du secteur en Irlande), et expression orale (entretiens, présentations orales en TD faisant état de l'avancée des travaux et des résultats obtenus) et écrite (rédaction d'un rapport de recherche). Deux exemples d'études de cas sont reproduits dans cette annexe, dans la version originale que m'ont remise les étudiants, que je remercie de leur contribution. Ils sont précédés du document suivant qui présente les consignes qui ont été données aux étudiants.

LEA M1S7 - Frederique PENOT

BUSINESS ENGLISH

### **Assignment:**

#### **Company case study**

**Documenting the contribution of surfing  
to local and regional economies in Ireland**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Instructions for study**

1. **As part of the final assessment for the course:** choose a company (or a brand) in one of the six counties assigned to your M1 group:

. **Group 1 M1 ALPI:** choose a company based either in: Donegal / Sligo / Leitrim / Mayo / Clare / Galway.

. **Group 2 M1 MMI:** choose a company based either in: Clare / Kerry / Cork /

Waterford / Wexford / Wicklow.

. **Group 3 M1 PECO:** choose a company based either in: Donegal / Derry / Antrim / Down / Louth / Dublin.

2. → **The company to study must be either directly or indirectly related to surfing:** a surf school, a surf shop, but you can also choose a retailer of sports apparel located in a surfing town, a hotel, a pub, a restaurant, and even a supermarket or a grocery store located in a surfing town.

**YOUR GOAL is to study the company's business and marketing strategy, mix marketing, and business environment, with a focus on how the company benefits from the surfing activity in the area (local surfers and tourists, ...).**

3. **Gather as much information as you can about the company:**

- **Documentary research:**

- . visit the company's website if there is one,
- . research in the press (specialized or mainstream),

- **Fieldwork:** interview staff or local actors of the industry...

4. **Study and report on the firm's past, present and future situation** on the basis of the information available on the website and from any other sources.

→ *You must include these sources in your study within a bibliography section.*

5. Use all the tools and methods you know: analysis of the company's marketing mix, carrying out a SWOT analysis, examining the business environment of the company (PESTLE), etc... to both:

- . **assess the company's marketing and business strategy,**
- . **assess how much the surfing sector / activity / surfers has been contributing to the company's activity and is set to contribute to it over the next few years.**

6. Report your findings and **analysis in a final research paper** (about 5-6,000 words ~ about 10-15 pages), **to be submitted during the last TD** (or the end of November, 2017).

\* \* \* \* \*

**Please note:**

- \* Please choose a company in any of the six counties assigned to your group!
- \* Once you have chosen a company, email me to let me know and for me to confirm that you can go ahead with your research.
- \* I will post and regularly update an Excel document here on Coursus to recapitulate who studies what business in which county, so that everyone knows who is doing what, and so that all the counties bordering the coastline in Ireland are covered.
- \* **Bonus:** for a bonus on your total mark, include transcripts/extracts of interviews or email exchanges with the company's owner or some of the company's staff.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Checklist:**

The following is a checklist of items you might like to consider to structure your paper:

### **I. Historical background.**

- . Location of the company, founder, date and circumstances of establishment.
- . Products made / services provided at its beginning (if relevant).
- . Partnerships, mergers, takeovers and the like in the development of the company, if applicable.
- . Any other reliable information.

### **II. Corporate philosophy and culture.**

- . Message conveyed to customers by the company's slogan, logo, or motto.
- . Any ethical credo or principles regarding environmental protection that the firm / brand may stand by.
- . Any working habits that would be different from other companies.
- . Any rites or practices that may help the company maintain good working relationships amongst employees.

### **III. The Marketing Mix - the four Ps: product, price, promotion, place (etc).**

- . Products made / services provided now, and their image.
- . Image of the company / brand itself, and how it is promoted + → offer a brief analysis of the market and the brand's main competitors.
- . Prices of the products / services and how they compare in the market; are they the same everywhere or do they vary from one area to another (give details if possible)?
- . How and where each product / service is advertised.
- . The channels through which the products are distributed.
- . The points of sale: where, accessibility to customers, layout specificity...

### **IV. SWOT analysis - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.**

#### **1. Strengths and weaknesses:**

- *Management and organisation*: management quality; staff quality; experience; structure; planning; information and control systems...
- *Finance*: turnover; profit margin; return on capital; risks; costs...
- *Marketing*: market share; advertising; effectiveness; channels of distribution; customer satisfaction; service reputation; sales force turnover.
- *Operations*: location; capacity; age of facilities; purchasing; quality management; efficiency...
- *Human resources*: skills and qualifications; labour relations; turnover; job satisfaction; grievances...
- *Research and development*: basic research; development capabilities; research programmes; new product introductions; process innovations... (if applicable)

#### **2. Opportunities and threats** the firm / brand currently faces in the market or that it might meet in the near future. Consider the following:

- trends in demand
- labour supply and demand
- competition from business rivals, or from other geographical areas
- competition from transnational companies
- technological innovations
- growing customer awareness of price and quality
- lower price or higher quality imported goods...

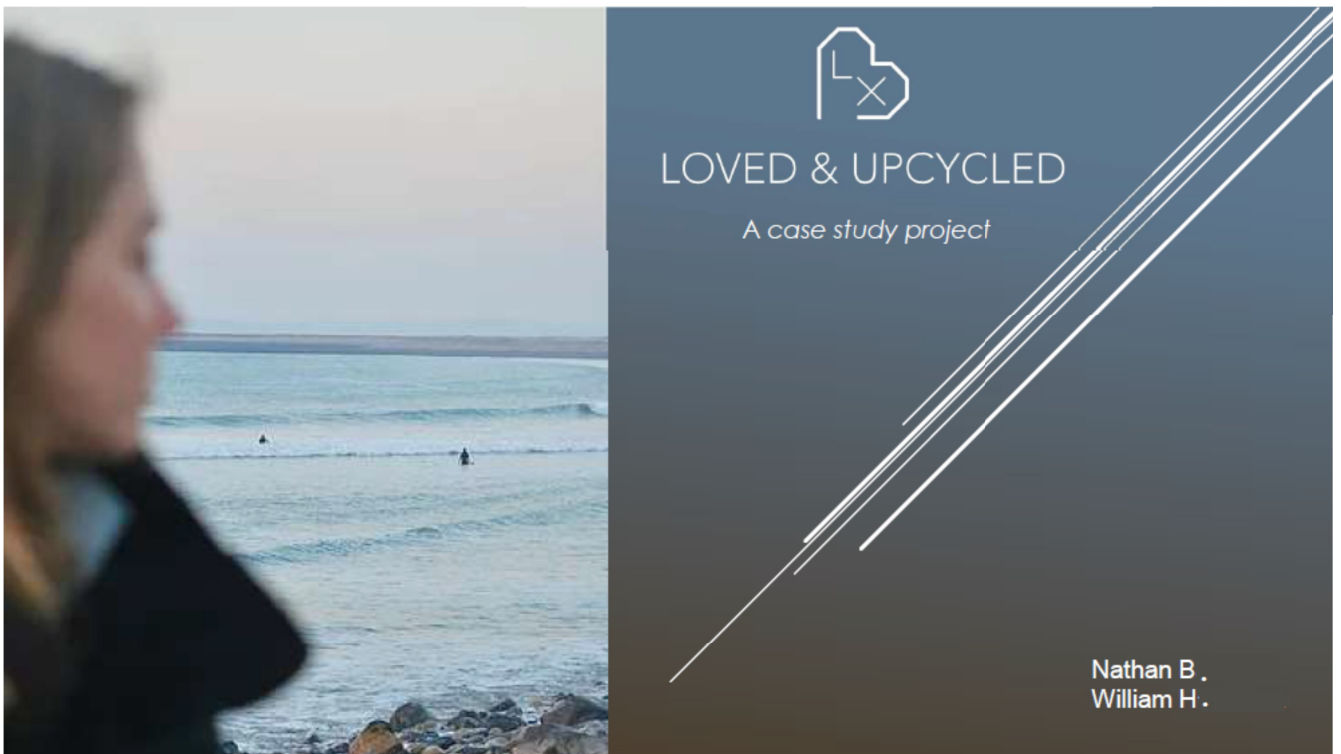
### **V. Analysis of the company's environment: PESTLE analysis:**

- . What is the political situation of the country/region and how can it affect the industry?
- . What are the prevalent economic factors?
- . How much importance does culture has in the market and what are its determinants?
- . What technological innovations are likely to pop up and affect the market structure?
- . Are there any current legislations that regulate the industry or can there be any change in the legislations for the industry?
- . What are the environmental concerns for the industry?

**V. Conclusions: contribution of the surfing sector / activity or surf tourists to the company's activities, and prospects.**  
+ **possible recommendations.**

**VI. Bibliography.**

**A. Étude de cas, exemple 1 : entreprise Loved & Upcycled (Nathan B. et William H., Master 1 MMI) :**



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# LOVED & UPCYCLED

The great pacific garbage patch -a spread of plastic waste so big that it earned the 'continent' terminology- was named as such after sailors discovered how big and disgusting the ocean turned out in just a few decades. Fortunately, people have been considering ways to tackle this problem. In one of the most publicized efforts in dealing with this environmental disaster, Boyan Slat, a Marine debris entrepreneur from the Netherlands came up with 'The Ocean Cleanup' project, which specialises in designing and developing the first feasible method to rid the world's oceans of plastic. Although it faced strong criticism, the moonshot scale of the project highlights the growing efforts to fix this problem before the fish in the oceans across the world cannot see the sun any longer. Large scale industrial waste combined with careless governmental regulations on waste processing, results in having huge quantities of plastic drifting at sea. As growth in consumption rises across the world without changing consuming habits (i.e lots of non-degradable packaging including plastic, one-time-use products..), the trend is not seeing any improvement in the near future.

However, rising awareness among members of communities around the world are paying more and more attention to the impact they have on their environment. As an example, the surfer's community is quite the kind to love the ocean, to be at one with nature and are keen to sustain this everlasting relationship they have with their waves and beaches. They understand that these ideals will cross generations and that the legacy they intend to leave behind should be inspiration and a clean environment rather than plastic waste.

This tendency has not gone unnoticed among actors linked to the surfing activity, who have clearly come to realise how much these environmental concerns matter and that they ought to include it in their marketing strategy.

For instance, some surf schools set out to educate people and explain why everyone should be concerned about the ocean.

Some tourism agencies are capitalising on the ecotourism trend, offering more targeted services for people willing to experience more environmentally-friendly trips.

Our case study subject is no exception, as the company specialises in recycling outdoor sports gear -into fashionable accessories such as bags, wallets, or laptop sleeves-, thus promoting their contribution in keeping the environment clean.

Note that throughout this essay, we shortened Loved & Upcycled 'L&Ud' to prevent the redundancy of the full name. In order to fully appreciate the extent of L&Ud's involvement in this sector and all their decisions in terms of marketing, we asked ourselves a few questions to which we will try and answer throughout this assessment.

First, in which way does L&Ud thrive along with the development of the surfing tourism/industry/activity?

Additionally, how did L&Ud position themselves as a contribution to the environmental effort through their upcycling process?

Finally, in which way does L&Ud strive to align themselves with their target audience's ideals and philosophy?



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In a first part we shall work on describing as thoroughly as possible the company's environment, then in a second part we shall undertake an analysis of our findings and bring to light Loved & Upcycled's links to surfonomics through a strategic positioning of the brand:

## I - Description

A - Historical background

B - Marketing mix

C - SWOT

D - PESTLE

## II – Analysis

A - In which way does L&Ud thrive along with the development of the surfing tourism/industry/activity?

B - How did L&Ud position themselves as a contribution to the environmental effort through their upcycling process?

C - In which way does L&Ud strive to align themselves with their target audience's ideals and philosophy?

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## A - Historical background



Loved & Upcycled was founded in October 2015 in Sligo, Ireland, by Veronika Kisela, who describes herself as a surfer, environmentalist, digital nomad and fashion design student.

The company revolves around the owner, a marketing and social media employee, a chief photo and videographer, a graphic designer and 4 ambassadors.



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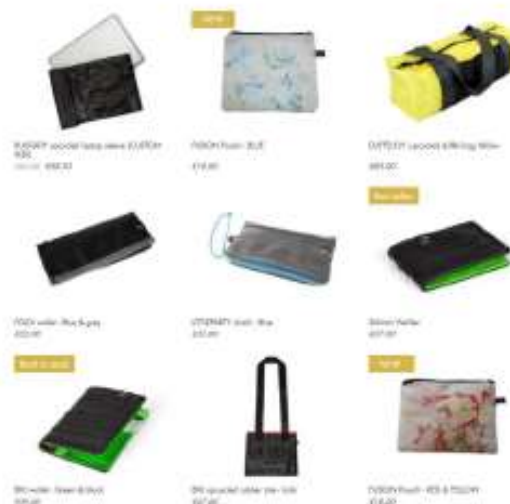
Loved & Upcycled has 6 partners and supporters.

- **Pockets Full Of Water Productions:** a production company presenting surfing, music, culture and lifestyle through film. Surfing is what brought the members together, and they are currently working on the upcoming *Wet Dreams* productions, a surf film which will showcase surfing and the surf culture in Ireland. The production also keen to promote local businesses, create community events, and bring together Irish artists and musicians.
- **Surf Around Ireland:** an Irish Surfing website, publishing surf-related content and news from around Ireland.
- **TurfN Surf:** a hostel and activity provider based in Bundoran, Ireland. The family run business aims to provide accommodation, surfing, sea-kayaking and blo-karting for people willing to appreciate the rich features of the coast and countryside in Bundoran.
- **Tadáis:** a high-quality cycling apparel brand designed in Donegal, Ireland. The creator of Tadáis, Thomas McLaughlin, helped with designing the first products.
- **Irish Gap Year:** a small Irish company based in Bundoran, providing opportunities for young people thanks to thoughtfully designed teen, internship and programs.
- **Local Enterprise Office:** a company providing specialised help for people interested in starting up or expanding their business.

## B - Marketing mix

As L&Ud is unlike any other companies, it is interesting to see how they structure their commercial activity. To best describe it, the four Ps is the go-to method.

First, starting with the *products*. L&Ud sells wallets, laptop cases, bags, purses and pouches. The products are unique because they are handmade and are made from recycled materials. The fact that the sourcing of the materials is not controlled by the company implies that their products are not made according to a standardised process and do not require specific fabrics or thread. The production process adapts to the materials available and therefore so does the products. They are durable products and come with a service of a lifetime guarantee -a free repair service, which means that the products are not designed to have a limited lifespan. We can even talk about high-end products made to last. The whole design around the theme of surf and eco-friendliness makes it unique and justifies the price.





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Second, the *price*. The price of wallets for instance is set at 37€ for the small sized version and 52€ for the large one. Bags can vary from 67€ for a shoulder bag to 85€ for duffel bags. Laptop cases come in handy at 49€ and tablet sleeves at 37.80€. Overall, the prices are very high compared to similar regular non-recycled products that fulfil the same needs. This positions the company not only as sellers of pricy products but also as producers of everyday products with the certification that the price includes the dimension of ethics, environmental care and local manufacturing.

Third, *place* (or distribution). L&Ud has a workshop along the coast of Strandhill beach but does not possess a brick and mortar shop. To sell the products, the company has an Internet website where customers can overview all the products and shop online. Deliveries are free within Europe or when orders exceed 150€, -10€ otherwise. L&Ud also participates in some local markets like the Dublin flea market occasionally to reach out to locals and not just to the surf enthusiasts.

To conclude with the 4 Ps, the *promotion* of the company. L&Ud promotes itself through many different channels. L&Ud has a lot of partnerships with other complementary companies like Pockets full of Water who shoots pictures for them or Turf'n'Surf who makes foreign tourists discover Ireland and the Strandhill beach, potentially showcasing L&Ud. L&Ud is in touch with a lot of small business owners who help each other out and communicate to their audience in exchange. Adding up to that, being present on social media and being active means that people can get in touch directly with the company from any parts of the world. The website is the main platform for any customer nowadays really, anyone can easily reach the company and learn about novelties all while being just a few clicks away.

L&Ud has a specific strategy in terms of operational marketing: the products are meant for surfers and ocean lovers who can afford quality products fulfilling an ideology around environmental care. To do so, L&Ud uses as many distribution and promotion channels they can possibly use -considering their small size as a business.

## C - SWOT

A 'Swot' is like taking a picture of the company at a given time: it helps understanding how it is doing internally -strengths and weaknesses, and what influences the activity of the company externally -opportunities and threats.

First things first, let's start with the **internal aspect of the company**:

Marketing wise, L&Ud has a very coherent brand positioning. In fact, producing upcycled products, promoting the protection of the environment and the attachment to the sea all combined makes the communication strategy consistent. We can consider this as a strength as the company has a guideline to follow: communicate around the surfing activity, the environment and market products fulfilling it all.

According to the description of the 'team', associates and people working for L&Ud are illustrated as having business and artistic skills as well as having a sensibility towards nature. This is a strong asset as the company is in good hands and this helps customers trust the company, as their representatives have a reliable image.

In terms of finance, because of the confidentiality of the information and the early stage of the company, it is hard to bring analysis in terms of accounting management. The only thing we know is that the company is not even yet. This is neither to be considered a strength or a

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weakness as most companies need time to be in the black. It is especially true when it comes to a niche market as projects need time for research and development before starting a viable business model.

The products the company offers are overall good and fit in what their customers would want but there is one downside that impacts the possibility for growth in turnover: the variety of products. As a matter of fact, the company has a limited variety of products, and offering more products could meet a demand that doesn't exist yet. Of course, considering the young age of the company, L&Ud doesn't have the production capacities to cover a potential burst in demand for its products.

This applies to the sourcing of the materials as well. In fact, the company sources its materials from donations and could experience a shortage which could block the production and hurt the amount of sales.

Now that we have an idea of what the company is good at and what they could work on, let's focus on the external aspect of the company:

The first great opportunity that comes in mind is the growing demand for environmentally-friendly products that do not fall under the 'green-washing' category. The demand for these products can only grow as people come to realize their consumption habits have a strong negative impact on the environment. A fraction of consumers wants to be sure their purchase means they can take a part in protecting the environment and keeping the ocean clean: this is what L&Ud succeeds in doing as this is their brand image.

However, with the potential growth in demand, this would mean L&Ud will need more hands to sew and manufacture the products. As the products are very specific, they require qualifications and time to adapt when first coming in the company. The labour cost is very high in Ireland when compared to eastern countries or Asia. Naturally, finding someone that is qualified in sewing and able to adapt to these very particular products can be hard and need some time before finding the new collaborator. A growth in demand would require more investments to increase the production capacities -that isn't always riskless.

Market-wise, L&Ud is in a situation of monopoly. After research on the Internet in Ireland or abroad, it is impossible to find a similar company that sells products directly competing the laptop cases made from upcycled wetsuits. The concept is too new. This is very interesting for the company as this gives time to innovate and discover new possibilities in terms of upcycling before competitors come on the same market.

## D - PESTLE

There is increasing recognition of the benefits provided when using a circular economy for businesses and governments alike, such as environmental protection and maximising resource efficiency, which are more and more appealing and accessible as technological progress keeps opening up new recycling opportunities and facilitating the process along the way.

Political efforts at a EU level have been invested in the circular economy, as the European Commission's 2015 plan entitled *Closing the loop: An EU action plan for the Circular Economy* aims to help European businesses and consumers make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a sustainable way.



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Ireland is also moving towards a large scale circular economy, as the *Draft National Planning Framework, Ireland 2040: Our Plan*, includes a vision for Ireland to have a 'capacity for sustainable self-reliance based on a strong circular economy and significant progress towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient society' (Government of Ireland, 2017).

Consequently, the whole principle of using the circular economy as a business model is a very good long-term strategy. Building expertise now, as public awareness regarding environmental protection is growing, as political and corporate interest in the circular economy is accelerating, means that Loved & Upcycled can capitalize on the increasing global interest in its market on the long run.

Loved & Upcycled is much more than a company producing recycled fashion items: the brand strategically positions itself as a contribution to the environmental conservation effort, and manages to align itself with their target audience's interests.

## II - Analysis

Now that we went over what characterizes the company -its assets, opportunities and limits, our intent here is to understand how does a company evolve along the activity of surf and all the spirit behind it.

*"In which way does L&Ud thrive along with the development of the surfing tourism/industry/activity?"*

"Overseas tourist visits to Ireland in 2016 grew by 8.8% to 8.742 million." According to the Tourism Fact (see bibliography), we can almost observe a two-digit growth in tourism in Ireland. That does have an impact on the surf tourism as well. One-time Ireland visitors might not have planned to go and surf in Ireland in the first place but are likely to come back to try it out after they discovered it during their first tour to beautiful places like Strandhill or Lahinch. The whole world of surf is directly benefiting from the communication campaigns focusing on the landscapes of Ireland, including the coastline and its activities. Behind the economic activity that surf represents, that is to say surf schools, surf gear retailers, hotels and restaurants along the coasts, we can observe a growing interest in preserving the beauty of nature that the isle of Ireland has to offer. It is promoted by the tourism agency of Ireland itself.

Following the trend of eco-friendliness and nature caring that thrives amongst surfers or wilderness lovers -which are what tourists can find in Ireland, minds of younger generations tend to be more responsible in terms of consuming habits. As education on environment protection is being widely taught these days, awareness is becoming a natural behaviour. People question the products of any type they buy and know better than ever what is behind it, the labour it needs, the materials it requires, the conditions of production and so on. Some decide to ignore it and have a bargain, yet some seem to change their consuming habits and lean toward a more sustainable way of consuming. Because of the image Ireland tries to give to the country by showcasing the great green landscapes and the nature-friendly culture, the latter type of tourists is basically the target audience of Irish tourism. As demonstrated before, tourism is growing since communication is successful and flights of overseas travellers are more and more affordable.

This is the whole economic dynamic the sector experiences that helps small businesses like L&Ud to start up. Basically, L&Ud surfs on the new opportunity which all that positive externality of growth in tourism provides. Not only does it thrive along with it, it also helps contributing by spreading and highlighting the image of Ireland tourists and surfers enthusiasts want to witness.

Now that we have an idea on what environment L&Ud evolves in, we shall demonstrate what actions does the company undertake to contribute to it.

*"Additionally, how did L&Ud position themselves as a contribution to the environmental effort through their upcycling process?"*

The keyword to answer that very question is the economic model that the company follows: the circular economy. Ms Kisela explained to us during the interview that sustainability is what matters the most to her. Both her personal beliefs and her observation of unnecessary waste produced by the surfing activity made her think of what could be made to shift the negative impact into something new and environmentally responsible. When asked if she felt sometimes limited by the materials obtained through donations because of their nature (wetsuits, kites or sails ...), she straightforwardly answered *"I find it is pretty much my brand, using these materials. If I were using many different materials I guess I would be starting a different brand."* We can say that the nature of the company is to both offer fashion products and to fulfil the need consumers have to leave a positive impact on the environment. This



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would sum up how L&Ud positions itself and communicates around its ability to craft great products through the upcycling process. What would have been usually seen as waste and undesirable materials is now fashion and respectful to nature. We could say in a way that the big competition of brand such as H&M or Zara and their poor policies in material sourcing and manufacturing localisation favours the position of L&Ud because it is the complete opposite.

As said before, the circular economy truly is a subject large audience hear about. When L&Ud presents its work, it is easy to identify the nature of the company and their business model. It is not just about buying a L&Ud product, but also make the choice to support a mode of production. All in all, the upcycling process of re-purposing old loved wetsuits is both an asset for the branding and the impact the company has on the local environment.

What truly matters then is to faithfully construct the brand of the company around the mindset of the target audiences.

*"In which way does Loved & Upcycled strive to align themselves with their target audience's ideals and philosophy?"*

As we have seen in part II.B/ of our case study, Loved & Upcycled strategically positioned themselves as a passionate contribution to preserving the environment. That being said, it is interesting to look into how the brand lays particular stress on their corporate identity to connect with their target audience.

A quick look at the Loved & Upcycled website tells us they've successfully identified themselves as environmentally friendly, by promoting the manner in which their products are manufactured, their esthetic vision, and their personal connection to the sea and the environment.

If we look at how they communicate the positive impact of their recycled products, they are essentially promoting the benefits of using a circular economy, thus focusing on their contribution in tackling waste: they're translating selling their products into keeping the environment clean.

A good example of this can be seen on their instagram feed for instance:



lovedandupcycled We are turning one year today. We've so far salvaged 4 sails, 20 kites, about 10 big bin-liners of bike-tubes and a 2 tonnes of wetsuits. Big thanks to all our donors and customers! #birthday #upcycling #salvage #salvaged #wetsuits #kitesurf #surf #biketubes #reuse #recycle #creativebusiness #madebysurfers #wallet #bag #handmade



54 likes

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Through this simple yet effective communication technique, they are quantifying their sales in terms of salvaged waste material.

The connection the company shares with nature is also reflected in the products design, as they point out that their collections are *inspired by the dark and rugged beauty of the Irish coast line*.

Again, this is a good example of how they are building this image of close connection of their products with the environment, a connection materialized through the design of the products, right down to their material.

Not only are they showcasing their product's relationship with the environment, but they are also keen to underline their own personal sensibility towards nature, aligning themselves with their target audience: on the website, the Loved & Upcycled team is presented as a group of friends, presented notably as surfers, adventurers, explorers and a marine biologist.



This has the crucial benefit of facilitating the identification process the consumer has with the company's products.

What we've seen throughout this assessment is that L&Ud has a clear understanding of the economic environment it is evolving in and as a matter of fact, the company successfully managed to convince the client that buying their authentic products means consuming in a way that supports the ideal of reducing our negative impact on the environment. Using the circular economy model as much as possible to run a business in the long run is the logical solution for any company. Marketing the products around it? It is even better.

Specials thanks to Ms Penot for hooking us up on an interesting subject to study and naturally to Veronika Kisela for sharing her time, her story and her vision.

## Contacting the company & the interview

We have been in touch with Veronika Kisela, the business owner of Loved & Upcycled. We first sent her an email telling her what we're doing and asking her if she was up for an interview to answers a few questions.

This is our first mail we sent her (loads of screenshots ahead!) :

Greetings from the other side of the channel!

We are a group of two students -William Hawthorn and Nathan Baudry, and we are conducting a research on your company Loved & Upcycled and its link to surfonomics in general.

We are writing to you because we would like to learn more about the marketing strategy of Loved & Upcycled and your overall experience as a business owner.

Do you think it is possible to have an interview through a phone call or a skype? We have plenty of questions to further develop our final assessment.

Our questions would be for instance :

- What is the story behind the creation of Loved & Upcycled?
- Do you have any plans for new products/innovations?
- Do you have a sufficient amount of raw materials given through donations to keep up with upcycling your products?

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

To which she replied a few days later :

Hello William and Nathan,

sorry for a mild delay in my reply. Sure, no worries. Would Wednesday or Thursday suit for the call?

Skype is not working for me too well (Apple has issues with it) do you want to try Whatsapp? My number is +353 (0) 857195439.

Let me know if that suits.

Have a nice weekend!

V.

Veronika Kisela

So we tried to set a day and time to have the interview:

Dear Ms Kisela,

Thank you for your reply. Whatsapp is perfect.

Wednesday would be best as we are available all afternoon, would 3pm be ok?

Best regards,

William & Nathan

To which we agreed considering our schedule:

Hello,

yes Weds 3pm is perfect. Talk soon!

Best,

Veronika

Veronika Kisela

We went through some trouble trying to reach her via whatsapp and to be able to record the interview at the same time getting us panicked and a little late... to only realize we forgot about the time zones:



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Dear Ms. Kisela,

We've been trying to figure out a way to record our whatsapp conversation on the desktop but it seems the simple way to do it would be to have the voice call via Facebook, is that ok for you?

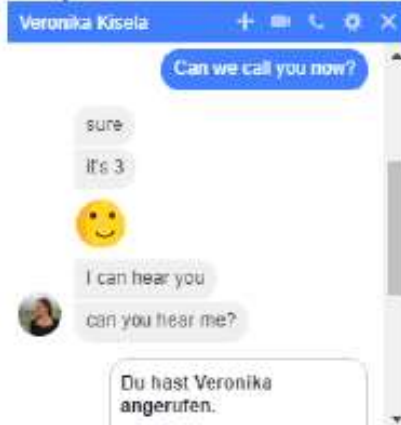
Regards,  
Nathan & William

After a few tricks on the computer to be able to record the interview we decided it was easier to contact Veronika via a voice call on Facebook:



Veronika Kisela Nachrichten ...

Only then were we able to have our call with the usual microphone struggle coming along:



After the little trouble and stress, we finally managed to start the interview which brought us a lot of information and a very interesting story to hear!

## Interview

*William & Nathan → W&N*  
*Veronika Kisela → VK*

W&N : Thank you very much for your time, we just have a few questions to help our research.

VK : Hopefully, I'll be helpful (laughs).

W&N : Maybe we can introduce ourselves first, what we are doing. I'm Nathan and (William) I'm William. So basically, what we've been doing is that we have a case study on a company that is involved with the surfonomics. This is what Ms Penot has assigned us to do. We have to go over the marketing strategy and to study the work of a company. So we've chosen Loved & Upcycled.

VK : Awesome!

W&N : We've found a lot of things on your website, it's actually amazing and really well made. We saw you made so congratulations. To complete our research, we just have a few questions. Maybe we can start with a simple question: how did it all start, what made you start this business?

VK : There kind of wasn't a whole clear strategy behind it. It was more like I quit my job which was three years ago and I did a lot of free-lancing, building website and doing google advert. Well it actually goes a few years back, I was surfing in Ireland and I destroyed my brand-new wetsuits because I landed on a rock so the wetsuit was gone and I wondered what to do with it because it was one of the nice one with the nice colours, the materials were good, it was a lot of material to throw away. In my previous job there were those laptop cases made with neoprene and I thought well this is what I could do with my wetsuit so I hand stitched the first one. It was a simple thing, not made on machine and fell apart soon after that because the thread wasn't that good of a quality. But you know I just tried and thought this is what should be done with all wetsuits but it demanded a lot of work so I didn't really think about it until two years ago when I was free lancing/unemployed so I was taking some time off. I had time to think and this idea came back to me when I was sitting at my friend's surf school and he was ordering new wetsuits for the new year so I was asked him 'what are you doing with the old ones?', 'yeah we just have to throw it in the bin'. So I was like okay now ... there we go. So I wanted to do something about it. It started as a project to find a way what to do with old wetsuits because they are made with neoprene, which is made with very toxic materials that are made to last and some can stay in nature for 200 years. That motivated me, I thought surfing shouldn't be toxic. We see how bad nature is polluted, how bad our water is polluted and I thought we should not be adding to this problem. From there I started my research. I was working on products and with different designers and makers because I had no machine. This all part of the project, to see how to make it, how much it costs to make one and what are the materials we can use. So I added new materials: kites, bike tubes, sails and people even started giving me tents. That's when we could make different products with colours. That's when I thought this would work because we can have a wider portfolio range, not only laptop cases but wider portfolio with more materials. So a year ago (nov 2016) we launched the website and we've been going since then. That's the start of it.



# LOVED & UPCYCLED

W&N : Okay, quite a story!

VK : Yes! If you're looking for some clear concise strategy and also a business model, I'm afraid you won't get this from me because it's been trials and errors, trials and errors. It's part of a research. I thought there needed to be something done about it. I'm a strong environmentalist and I believe that when we consume or make something it should be made in a way that is good quality and made from sustainable resources or resources that have already been used so it's kind of a personal belief as well.

W&N : We'd also like to know what is your preferred target audience and why?

VK : There are various groups and this changed over time. My main target audience was first cosmopolitan millennials who travel and have a certain income and that are aware of environment issues. Mainly people who are able to travel and see the world a little bit. 22 to 35 I'd say. However my recent research have made me realise that the audience of people interested in my brand are older as well. The facebook analytics show me I'm targeting two groups, the 25-35 and the 35-45. I was surprised when discussing about it with people around me in Strandhill because it was unlikely I had two groups. You may have noticed I made a rebrand recently. A reason for the rebrand was to target the older audience. It makes sense because generally it means it is the people who would have more stable income and more time to look at environmental issue and so on. The rebrand I did had them in mind as well. It's usually people who are watching 'planet blue' from David Attenborough and those that are willing to do a good bit for the planet. So to sum up, people from 25 to 45, this is a wide enough range of people. This is what facebook analytics says.

W&N : Aside from the website, I just wanted to know whether Loved & Upcycle had a brick and mortar shop or was it all online?

VK : I do not have a brick and mortar shop and I do not plan on having one because that's not sustainable. I have it all online and I have all information about the company (address and details) on google plus because it helps a lot in terms of SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

W&N : Is there a way for L&Ud to be visible along the beach of Strandhill, can people see it?

VK : My workshop is on the main road to the beach so if I wanted it to be visible I could make it visible but it's a rent house so it's desirable to have an opened workshop, it is not part of my strategy. It's pretty much all online really.

W&N : We've seen the team online, we wanted to know who actually makes the sewing, who works on the products?

VK : That evolved over the last year and over the research phase. I was working with a very talented designer who was helping me out. He did the first design for me. Then I was working with one lady here in Strandhill and one in Dublin, they were making products with me. So now it's me and my friend.

W&N : We saw on the website there are ambassadors. What are their role in the business?

VK : Gile for instance, most of the photograph on the website is his work. Gulia is a graphic designer, she did the logo for instance. Some have helped me reach new audiences, for instance by posting on their accounts. Maybe I haven't used my ambassadors as much as I

should be but these are the people interested in the brand and help in exchange for products. It works in a small scale, the way small business works in Ireland is nothing corporate, it's about people knowing people and being friends. It is much different from my background because I've worked in Google for instance. It is totally different to work in the remote area of western Ireland compared to the narrow function you have in a big corporation. Here it is about helping each other. Gulia helps me with the logo and I help her with her website. It is all about sharing the audiences.

W&N : I wanted to know more about the finance section of the SWOT analysis but it's quite hard to find information such as profits, turnover or investments but I am sure this is confidential and totally understand ...

VK : It is, it is. I mean anyway I am in the first year so I know that I haven't come even yet. I do not want to disclose further information because it is very early days for me.

W&N : A question about sourcing, does L&Ud live on donations only or does it get materials from somewhere else? Adding up to that, do you have enough resources to keep up?

VK : Yes yes I do have enough. This is something I haven't struggled with, the materials. At some point I had to ask one of the surf school to wait because I couldn't take any more of the wetsuits. Often sport centres or individual are interested in giving because they are connected to nature and want to do their bit. As they don't want it to end in the landfill they often ask me if I can take it. It's been pretty good so far. Some materials are harder to get like kites but I've partnered with kites schools in Dublin so I'm getting what I need. It's all about contacting surf schools and sport centres. For them it is good because they get to save the environment and if they were to throw the materials in the bin they would have to pay more taxes and so on so it benefits both parties.

W&N : Do you have any plans for new products / innovation ...?

VK : Yes definitely, right now i'm working on new bags and new different wallets. It is like I'm trying to see what sells the most so I would have few products that will always be on such as the black laptop case which goes pretty well. When I have colourful products it is hard to make again the same product because it is hard to find the same colour of the kites. There will always be new products which were never there before. So sometimes there will only be 10 of certain products because of the materials because they might not repeat for a while. I have been starting fashion design myself so there will be more different products and I'm thinking of making jackets from tents and kites. Maybe some dresses but that's for the future.

W&N : Do you feel like sometimes you rely too much on the material you have and that it limits your products?

VK : No, I'm pretty happy with what I have. Sometimes it is limiting but the colours are amazing and combining them is nice. I find it is pretty much my brand, using these materials. If I were using many different materials I guess I would be starting a different brand. Yes I might be looking for new materials, my friend has a small business gave me a banner so I'm trying to use that. It's really all about using materials that would have otherwise been gone to waste.

W&N : A lot of students have been saying in their paper Brexit is a threat for companies in Ireland, so would you say that the Brexit is threatening the company in a way or another?



## LOVED UPCYCLED

VK : I don't know, not exactly because I'm targeting worldwide and online. Yes a part of my sales are coming from UK. I guess if there is an extra tax there I might get a loss on the UK market but you know I'm not totally dependent on that. Countries where I sell the most are of course Ireland, UK, US and Australia. Now that I come to think about it UK and US are in the same bracket. So yes it will impact because of import tax, but I've not been looking into it because Brexit is not happening yet.

W&N : Maybe with the upcoming Brexit and depending on what's going to happen, maybe are you interested in tackling new markets such as France or Germany?

VK : Yes in my ads I've been targeting Germany and France. I have however not been getting responses. Right now all I can do is online. In the future, once I'm retail ready I might target brick and mortar shops. However I'm not sure the strategy is going to be good because so far my researches are showing that my margins are very high and I would have to up my price a lot in order to be able to at least get a benefit from brick and mortar shops. I have a friend in Brazil and he says there are loads of nice shops where people would be interested in the products. It is just that I would need to be in a shop and it is not the strategy for me, I don't know. I would need to see how it goes in terms of prices, quantity and so on. It is something for me to investigate but so far brick and mortar is not sustainable for me. It is not profitable.

W&N : Well I think we covered everything we wanted to know.

VK : Feel free to email me if you have any questions, I hope it was helpful for you! I hope I can see your paper after you're done, it would be very interesting for me.

W&M : We also wanted to say that we think the company is really cool and it's been a lot of fun doing the research on your company compared to others who might have had boring companies.

VK : Thank you very much. It's different it's small, it's still in the kind of start-up phase. I hope I can tell more in a year or two so that's it. I hope I gave you enough information.

W&M : Yes it's very good thank you.

VK : Okay thank you have a nice day bye bye!

W&M : Bye!





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**B. Étude de cas, exemple 2 : Moy Hill Farm (Ophélie M. et Justine B., Master 1 MMI) :**

## Moy Hill Community Farm



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## INTRODUCTION

Today in Ireland the surfing activity is an integral part of Irish culture. It attracts a lot of surfers and also a lot of tourists. Therefore, the surfing activity clearly has an economic impact on Ireland. For our research, we focused on County Clare, where a group of surfers created a community farm called Moy Hill, which goal is to live and work as a community, but most of all to preserve the planet.

Moy Hill Farm is located in County Clare, near the city of Lahinch, a small town on the northwest coast of County Clare. We have chosen this company because it's not a common business. Indeed, it's an eco-friendly community farm run by volunteers. This farm was created in 2012 by three Irish professional surfers: Fergal SMITH, Mitch CORBETT and Matt SMITH. They started with half an acre community garden, and thanks to savings they purchased 17 acres in 2015. The farm is now run as a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) partnership.

⇒ So we can wonder: how has Moy Hill Community Farm shown a direct link between surfing and farming?

Moy Hill Community Farm is not known worldwide, but we can find a lot of interesting articles online. At the beginning, we sent an email to the company to have more information. Not having any answer, we did a lot of research on the Internet in order to fulfill the research paper about the company. Then Matt finally answered, which enabled us to have a Skype session with him. Thanks to the interview, we were able to ask him about further information.

During the Skype session, Matt took time to answer to us. We recorded the interview in order not to type everything down and interact better with him. When we listened to the conversation afterwards, there were some words we couldn't understand properly, but with the context we were able to understand the main idea.

## Historical Background

- **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Moy Hill Farm was originally established by Fergal Smith, Matt Smith, Mitch Corbett (all are professional surfers) and a few others, and it has been taken over by the community. They started with a back garden in 2012, then a ½ acre community garden, to a loaned one acre site. Then with work and savings they purchased 17 acres in 2015 and the farm is now run as a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) partnership.

The objects for which the company is established are to carry on the business of all kinds of farming, horticulture, dairy, gardening and of raising, breeding, improving developing, buying, selling, preserving and dealing in all kinds of product of such business and in particular, food grains, seeds, eggs, trees, plants, fruit, flowers and vegetables. At the farm the members practice organic farming, sustainable building and future foresting. Matt told us that the reason why they created the farm was because there was a need for him and for the other men and women to have a sovereignty over their food. They all felt like it was important to grow trees and to feed people with healthy food and it was the right time in their lives when they'd finish travelling.

They wanted to do something different about the information of the different scientists saying that the world's gonna end, the soil's gonna give up, the oceans are full of plastic, the icebergs are melting, all the fish are gone, all the animals are dead, we all hate each other. "It was like "What are we gonna do then?", just carrying on surfing and watch the world fall apart or is there something we can do?" he said. And the farm was what they thought they could do. Therefore the main activity

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is growing vegetables, but the main focus would be to care for the Earth. What they do most days is growing vegetables but what they do all the time is trying and care for the Earth.

- **PRODUCTS**

They run the farm as a CSA model, which means that both the consumer and the producer share a risk of growing food so the farmer doesn't have to be the poor farmer on his own, and the consumer has some commitment and security about where the food comes from. What it means for Moy Hill Farm is that at the start of the year, 50 people buy food from the harvest that Moy Hill has on the farm and they pay upfront. So they know they're getting food for the year and Moy Hill's volunteers know that the CSA members are paying them for it so they share. And if there's a crop failure, the farm gives the CSA members something else. Indeed, if everything fails they still have to pay because they've made a commitment but often it's not the case because the farm gives them more vegetables than they would pay for.

As for their products, they have 50 families with the CSA model that buy a box of vegetables each week, and they also do an event each month such as a gig or a workshop. And recently they crowdfunded and raised €100,000. Everybody that works at the farm works as a volunteer, so Matt included Fergal, Mitch and everybody else. They all have other jobs. Matt and Fergal are still professional surfers so they still make some small good amount of money from a company called Finisterre, which is an outdoor apparel company that design functional and sustainable products for surfers among other things. To conclude, they sell their boxes to the CSA members but they also use crowdfunding, and they sell what's left on markets. Moreover, when people come to the farm to visit, they can buy products as well.

- **PARTNERSHIPS**

Moy Hill Farm works with several other non-profit organizations including the Irish Heritage Council, Seed Savers and The Community Foundation for Ireland, with the common purpose to promote healthy and sustainable communities in Ireland.

## **Corporate philosophy and culture**

- **PHILOSOPHY**

"There is no ownership. It is totally the community's and it will be forever. That's the most beautiful thing." Matt Smith says. To be a volunteer at the farm, you don't need to have any particular skills; you only need to have an interest in what is happening in the farm. And what is happening in the farm is growing food, obviously, but also something much broader. This food is meant to feed people but with this kind of agriculture, it is impossible to feed everyone. Lots of farms like Moy Hill Farm would be needed in order to feed an entire population. But volunteers at Moy Hill Farm believe that a different future is possible, where people only grow organic food in small community farms. This is very important at Moy Hill Farm, as growing food is the main goal but the start of a movement is also an important goal. People integrate and collaborate; they work together using the local resources to make things happen. "Our mission is to feed local people, love earth and inspire" say the members. By linking experts with residents in nature, and giving people a responsibility; nature becomes more valuable to them. The community garden thinks that the media can play a large role in raising awareness about the value of nature and reconnecting people with nature. There are a few CSA farms that Moy Hill Farms has as models: CannelSide, CloughJordan and Stroud CSA.

- **WORKING HABITS**

**Monday:** Meeting in the morning (around two hours) and preparation of the jobs for the Tuesday.

**Tuesday:** They ask people to come and help, they start at 8 o'clock in the morning and they have a yoga session for one hour with an instructor. Then they have breakfast together and they work together from 9:30 until 1:30, when they have lunch for one hour, and then they work from 2:30 to 5. Then people go home and they take a bag of vegetables.

**Wednesday:** In the morning they have an off-time so they can rest after the busy Tuesday. In the afternoon they finish jobs that they didn't get to finish on Tuesday.

**Thursday:** They look after the land and they plant a little more vegetables.

**Friday:** They have a harvest day and they put all the fruit in the boxes for people to come and collect.

**Saturday:** They get ready for the market and clean up the farm.

**Sunday:** They have a rest day after the long week.

In order to organise all this, everyone has very specific roles on the farm. For example Mitch sows the seeds and looks after the infrastructure ; Fergal makes sure where the vegetables are going; and Matt makes the beds, looks after the woofers (people who come to volunteer in exchange for food), the people who volunteer and he emails the CSA members.

## The Marketing Mix – The 4 Ps

- **Product**

About the product, they propose a large range of vegetables and fruit and they sell two kinds of boxes of vegetables. Everything is eco-friendly and healthy. They also have animals in order to produce other product, thanks to their milking cow. Those products are only made for their own consumption. They are not selling it. As for the packaging of the boxes they sell, they put the products in biodegradable plastic bags. So it comes as a nice clean box but they don't use any special kind of packaging.

- **Price**

Regarding the price of the boxes, the farm sells a €15 box, which is a small box, and they also sell a €30 box which is twice the amount of vegetables. If people can't afford it, the farm gives 10% of its shares: 10% of the customers get it for free if they haven't got any money ; another 10% of the customers exchange work to the food ; and there's another 10% that pay half.

- **Promotion**

As for the promotion, Matt explained to us that they don't really do any kind of advertising. They mostly rely on word of mouth because they have the freshest food in this area, so they feel like that's all the advertising they need. However, they do a lot of events on the farm such as concerts or gigs and they have a lot of open days and tours : "In a way it's advertising, saying to people: come and see how the food is grown, come and touch it, you guys can be the critics, saying if this is good enough for you or not. We don't need an organic soil association to say that it's good because you can come anytime you want and check" Matt said. Moreover, they recently organised a huge crowdfunding. Thanks to this event, more and more people have heard about the farm and are coming to help them.

- **Place**

Finally, for the place, the CSA members come to the farm each week to get their boxes. Otherwise people can come to the farm and buy vegetables or they can get products at markets.



### PESTLE analysis

Political	In general, politicians don't make it easy for farmers. But Fergal SMITH has been asked to run as a Green Party candidate in Ireland in 2016. They focused their campaign on spreading the idea of connecting more and more people to nature and to teach them how to take care of it. They wanted to show people how rich an eco-friendly lifestyle can be.
Economic	Even if Moy Hill Farm is a non-profit company, they don't really have competitors in the area. They are the only ones selling eco-friendly products. Despite this, they still have €200,000 in debts, even after their recent crowd funding. Indeed, they just bought a 60-acre land to spread their crops.
Social	This community is based on one idea : taking care of the planet. The technological and ecological parts are based on this focus as well. The concept would be sharing both surfing and farming. While people are not surfing, they are farming, and vice versa. Even if nowadays, more and more people are coming to help the farm, without even being surfers, they all share the will to protect the nature in growing food in an eco-friendly way.
Technology	As an eco-friendly community, they are almost not using any technologies. Every harvest is done by hand. But they have a truck, which is only used to move heavy stuff around the land. In the buildings, they don't have power and everything works with natural forces. Even for the toilets, it works with compost.
Legal	Moy Hill Community Farm is a private company limited by guarantee. It is an alternative type of corporation used for non-profit organisations. They don't have any share capital or neither shareholders, but instead they have members who act as guarantors.
Environment	They don't use any fertilizers or any weed killers. They grow food in a small space, using agro ecological methods. To bring fertility, they make their own composts. They plant thousands and thousands of trees during winter and they are open to any ecological suggestions to improve their community. According to Matt SMITH, the main idea of the farm is "to listen to the plants and look after the nature".

## SWOT Analysis

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have a huge community support. new volunteers come each week, even the full-time members are working as volunteers. Breakfast and lunch are provided to helpers and this takes part of a strong community spirit where people work, eat, and also relax together. Every new arrivant is trained and take immediately part of the community.</li> <li>• The ways they grow their product is eco friendly and good for the earth. Indeed, they are not using any pesticides, or any weed killer.</li> <li>• Moy Hill organises open days : people can come and check the farm, they can even help for the work, or only visit. This enables the farm to expand its image because people can directly evaluate the quality of the products because they directly see them and see how they are made. So people can judge whether the products are good enough or not and that's a security for them, which can attract customers to come and check the farm and buy products.</li> <li>• Professional surfers use their image to promote the farm and eco-farming in general. Indeed, each of them are worldwide known and this has a bigger impact.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even if they have a lot of members, their production is limited and not a lot of people can benefit from their eco-friendly healthy products. That is why they would need more funds to provide more and more people.</li> <li>• The farm is a bit far from everything, from markets, from the town. It can be a weakness for their image, because less people are aware of what they are doing.</li> <li>• Even if there is a lot of articles online about Moy Hill Community Farm, they don't have their own website. We can only find Matt's blog, in which you can find his own personal articles, but also a lot about the Community Farm.</li> <li>• The farm has a very small workforce : currently, there are three persons working full-time 8 to 14 hours a day, six days a week ; with about 10 people providing help each week and they're still not making money. They would like to have more and more volunteers to reach their goals. Indeed, they have too much work for not enough workers. "Why should an organic grower work for nothing to feed people, to provide something they really need?" wonders Fergal Smith. However, there has been a steady increase in the number of volunteers helping at the farm.</li> <li>• The CSA model implies a commitment between the producer and the consumer so maybe some customers are not willing to be that committed to the farm. But this could also be a strength because for some customers, the CSA model is a proof of security and trustworthiness.</li> <li>• People working and living together obviously lead to conflicts because everyone doesn't think the same way. There is a new conflict everyday about how doing things right for the Earth, how to produce more efficiently while respecting the nature.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A part of what they produce is directly consumed by the volunteers so they don't have to buy any vegetables or fruit.</li> <li>• The farm is located close to a surf spot so this attracts a lot of surfers and tourists who love nature, which can lead them to go to the farm to check or even to volunteer. This way the farm is able to sell some products, or even just benefit from the volunteers' work.</li> <li>• Moy Hill Community Farm can benefit from the experience of volunteers coming to help them: they can give them new ideas or show them new ways to get things done.</li> <li>• There is a large range of options for their business model (partnerships with other non-profit organisations, crowdfunders, surf community...). By creating new relationships, they can develop new projects, such as the latest crowdfunding.</li> <li>• They have the freshest food around because they are no other organic farms in the area. Moreover, 70% of Irish food is imported so a community farm can be an alternative to supermarkets for better quality and better respect of the environment. "Nowadays, a movement has already started in order to find another option to produce healthy food, locally and sustainably" said Duncan Steward, jury member of the Get Involved competition (which Moy Hill Farm participated in).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If they extend their community too much with a modern structure, it would bring more pedestrians and vehicle traffic, which could harm the image and essence of the local community.</li> <li>• When surfing season is over, there are less surfers obviously but also less tourists, which can impact the number of volunteers.</li> <li>• Bad climate conditions can lead to a bad quality of the products, or a difference in the taste. Indeed, the growing process needs a lot of sun, and some specific climate conditions. In Ireland, it is raining a lot and there is not a lot of sun so crops take longer to grow. Moreover, when it's raining, there are less volunteers coming to help.</li> <li>• Not using pesticides may lead to a contamination of seeds and plants. Even if it is healthier and eco-friendly, plants can also be in a bad way.</li> <li>• The community can suffer from competition with supermarkets. Indeed, organic products are more expensive and less easy to get because people have to go directly to the farm.</li> </ul>



## Conclusion

Moy Hill Community farm benefits a lot from the surfing activity. Indeed, it was created by three worldwide known professional surfers. They found a way to bring surfing and farming together in order to spread the idea of eco-friendly farming. For this, they get help from a lot of volunteers. More than 20% of them are surfers and share the love of nature. Based in County Clare, the farm is really close to the cliffs of Moher, where we can find the famous Aileen's Wave, which is one of both Ireland and Britain's top surfing spots. So we can say that without the surfing activity, Moy Hill Farm would probably not exist.

The only recommendation that we can think of is that the farm could focus more on a marketing strategy (advertising, communication...). This would enable it to attract more people and sell more products. However, this wouldn't be part of the whole spirit of the farm, which goal is not to make profit. They want to help the most people possible by providing them healthy food and preserve the Earth by growing eco-friendly food, both things they already do.



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## Interview with Matt Smith

*Justine:* "What made you want to create Moy Hill Farm?"

*Matt:* "There was a need for me and for the other men and women to have a sovereignty over our food, to look at the food system and yeah there was a time in our lives when we all kind of felt it was important to grow trees and to feed people with healthy food and it was the right time in our lives when we'd finish travelling and to do something different and the information of the different scientists saying that the world's gonna end, the soil's gonna give up, the oceans are full of plastic, the icebergs are melting, all the fish are gone, all the animals are dead, we all hate each other. It was like "What are we gonna do then?", just carrying on surfing and watch the world fall apart or is there something we can do? And this was what we thought we could do."

*Ophélie:* "What is the farm's main focus?"

*Matt:* "The main activity is growing vegetables, but the main focus would be to care for the Earth. So that means to care for myself and yourself and the plants that we grow and the trees that we grow and the animals that we keep. What we do most days is growing vegetables but what we do all the time is trying and care for the Earth."

*Justine:* "How do you raise money for the farm?"

*Matt:* "We have 50 families that buy a box of vegetables each week, and they pay between €15 and 30, and we also do an event each month: it could be a gig or it could be like a workshop. And yeah recently we crowdfunded and we raised 100 000€, which is incredible. Everybody that works at the farm works as a volunteer, so myself included, Fergal, Mitch and everybody, we all have other jobs. Myself and Fergal are still professional surfers so we still make some small good amount of money from a company called Finisterre. And Mitch he grows vegetables in another farm. So yeah most of the money comes from selling vegs, events, and the crowdfunding."

*Ophélie:* "What is exactly the CSA model?"

*Matt:* "It's a good question, no one really knows ! It comes from a give and take (world of spiner) concept: both of the consumer and the producer they share a risk and reward of growing food so the farmer doesn't have to be the poor farmer on his own, and the consumer has some commitment and security about where the food comes from, from a farmer. So that's very basic, what it means to us is that at the start of the year, 50 people they buy food from the harvest that we have on the farm and they pay upfront so they know they're getting food for the year and we know that they're paying us for it so we share. And if there's a crop failure, we give them something else, and if everything fails they pay, they've made a commitment but often it's not the case and they get more vegetables that they would pay for."

*Justine:* "How do you set up the price for your product?"

*Matt:* "We have a €15 box, which is a small box and we have a €30 box which is twice the amount of vegetable. That is the price. If you can't afford it, we give 10% of our shares: 10% of our customers they get it for free if they haven't got any money. Another 10% of our customers they exchange work to the food. And there's another 10% that pay half."

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*Ophélie:* "How do you promote your product?"

*Matt:* "We don't really do any kind of advertising or anything, I suppose word of mouth, you know I think that it's the freshest food that you can buy in this area, and that's all the advertising we need."

*Justine:* "What is the packaging of the product?"

*Matt:* "We sell a box of vegs and other stuff like salad that we put in plastic bags, like biodegradable plastic bags. Yeah it comes as a nice clean box but we don't use any special kind of packaging. But we do a lot of events on the farm and we have a lot of open days and tours and like that in a way is advertising, saying to people: come and see how the food is grown, come and touch it, you guys can be the critics, saying if this is good enough for you or not you know. We don't need an organic soil association to say that it's good because you can come anytime you want and check. "

*Ophélie:* "What channels of distribution do you use?"

*Matt:* "People can come to the farm and buy vegetables or we also do a market. So that's it: CSA commitment, market and people can come to the farm."

*Justine:* "What resources does the farm need the most?"

*Matt:* "We couldn't do this without the help of volunteers, we couldn't do this without our community here, that's it. The biggest resource is that we have many many people coming on our Tuesday work day, this week we had 20 people who volunteered. We couldn't do it without ourselves volunteering, so the good will of people to want to help and connect and grow food and eat good food. That wouldn't be possible without them."

*Ophélie:* "Would you need more people to help?"

*Matt:* "Always yeah. I mean, the more people come the more we can do. So if there's enough people one day for the vegetables we can plant trees, we can look after the animals more, we can look after each other more, we can take time to care for ourselves. And if we're healthy and happy we can care for the Earth more."

*Justine:* "How do you spread the image of the farm?"

*Matt:* "We don't have any plan, but I suppose most of the time we just say yes: if anyone says can we do an interview, I say yes ; if anyone asks to come and stay, I say yes. We don't have any strategy about advertising/communication, we just do what feels right."

*Ophélie:* "What would be the biggest obstacles to the farm?"

*Matt:* "People. Although it's great to have a lot of people, but each new person comes with their problems, their history, their story, their needs... The way that they communicate sometimes it's not easy, the way that I communicate sometimes is not easy. I say I'll be here at 5 o'clock and I'm not here. People are challenging so every time you extend your community you're also extending the wish to have all of their problems, and if we don't find a way to deal with the problems and a way to talk about our conflicts, and resolve that conflict then we wouldn't have a community so yeah conflict resolution and communication skills that would be the biggest challenges."

*Justine:* "How do you deal with different people coming all the time? Do you have a specific schedule?"

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*Matt:* "It's a good question. Yeah we have very specific roles on the farm so Mitch he sows the seeds, Fergal makes sure where the vegetables are going, I make the beds, some look after the woofers, the people who volunteer, I email the members, Mitch looks after the infrastructure, Bryan does the cooking. So yeah we have very clear roles that we stick to."

*Ophélie:* "Do you feed the volunteers at lunch on work days?"

*Matt:* "Yeah Tuesday we ask people to come, that's the day that we say that we'd love help, and we start at 8 o'clock in the morning and we have a yoga session for one hour with an instructor, and then we have breakfast together and we work together from 9:30 until 1:30 when we have lunch for one hour, and then we work from 2:30 to 5 and then people go home and they take a bag of vegetables. So it's a good day, they eat well, they get healthier, they meet people, they do some work on the land and then they go."

*Justine:* "So that would be a typical day at the farm?"

*Matt:* "That would be Tuesday, and Monday we have a meeting in the morning for like 2 hours and then we prepare the jobs for the Tuesday. Wednesday morning we have an off-time so we can rest after the busy Tuesday. Wednesday afternoon we finish jobs that we didn't get to finish on Tuesday. Thursday we look after the land and we're planting a little more vegetables. Friday we have a harvest day and we put all the fruit in the boxes for people to come and collect. Saturday we get ready for the market and clean up the farm, and Sunday we have a rest day. It's a long week."

*Ophélie:* "Would you say that you have competitors in the area or in Ireland in general?"

*Matt:* "No there could be a thousand CSAs and there still wouldn't be any competition. We'd love to see one next door. We only feed 50 families, there's more than 50 families in Ireland."

*Justine:* "Would you say that the actual economy/legislation/politics in Ireland makes your job easier or harder?"

*Matt:* "I'm not sure, sorry. I don't know. They don't make it easy for us the politicians, but we also don't really listen to them. We are relaxed and institutes or insurances for health and safety, we're very healthy and we're very safe so if a man in Dublin wants to decide how we grow vegetables without coming to our farm, he can say what he likes."

*Ophélie:* "Fergal Smith ran as a candidate for the Green Party: what did he want to change in politics?"

*Matt:* "Yeah we're friends with the leader of the Green Party in Ireland, and he asked Fergal if he would run because there was no person in this county that was gonna even run. I actually was the manager of his campaign and it felt like it was everything we were trying to do, we had the opportunity to be on another platform speaking to more people and trying to connect more people with nature and trying our best to care for this land you know and all the lands so it was an opportunity to do what we're doing here every day and it was a yes, just like talking to you is a yes, just like growing food is a yes."

*Justine:* "Does everyone working at the farm share the same culture/philosophy?"

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*Matt:* "No definitely not. We all share a residence, we all enjoy each other's company, a little bit, not always. Yeah I suppose we'd be fairly like minded people but we have differences of opinion all the time. Probably around 300 or 400 times a day."

*Ophélie:* "Are there conflicts about the ecological aspect?"

*Matt:* "That's a conversation that we have lots and lots of times, what is best, what is worst, how do we look after the beds, the food, the animals, do we want to kill animal, are we hangry, do we want to import vegetables from other parts of the world, how do we best build our houses, what would it cause, are you taking holidays, are you visiting your family? We challenge on everything."

*Justine:* "What do you do exactly to preserve the planet?"

*Matt:* "How do we grow in a healthy way? We don't use any fertilizers, any weed killers, we grow in a small space, use agroecological methods. To bring fertility, we make our own composts. We plant thousands and thousands of trees in winter. We are learning all the time, we are open to suggestions and feedback. We try our best to listen to the plants and look after the nature, that's what we do, we do everything we can".

*Ophélie:* "Are you using solar panels or other ecological ways to produce your energy?"

*Matt:* " Well, we don't have any power, we are not on the grid, we don't have any water coming from government, we don't have electricity from the government, we don't have any ways tool. Toilets are composts. We have a tractor but we use it rarely, but we don't use it for the land, it's just for moving stuff around and everything is done by hand."

*Justine:* "Do you think you could have a new partnership, a relationship that would help you develop?"

*Matt:* "Yeah, we could have partnerships in many many ways, and we do. We often speak to people and ask the help of different areas, different people, different experts. I would love someone to look after the account, someone to look after the animals, look after the lake. I would love someone to do the buildings... Yeah, a lot of partnerships."

*Ophélie:* "Focusing on surfing, how is surf a part of the community ?"

*Matt:* "We all met from surfing, when we were young and enjoying the ocean. I met Fergal when I was in the sea, this is how we made our living for a long time, find jobs, find how to make money for the farm. So it's a big part of our history. Going to surf, sometimes it's good, sometimes it's once a week, sometimes it's once a day."

*Justine:* "Are the volunteers (who come to help you) surfers as well? Or at least are they in the area because of surfing?"

*Matt:* "Yeah I think maybe 20% would be surfers."

*Ophélie:* "Are there regular surfers or just some coming around? Tourists maybe?"

*Matt:* "Yeah sometimes maybe, it would be tourists coming to Ireland to go surfing and then when there is no waves, come up and help, or local people because they like surfing but when there is no



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waves just come and help for a few hours. But yeah, at the beginning it was mostly surfers and then less and less. And now it's more people who want to connect with the land."

*Justine:* "So some of you are not even surfing?"

*Matt:* "Yeah some are not even surfers yeah."

*Ophélie:* "But do you think that if the surfing activity in County Clare would come to disappear, it would have an impact on the farm?"

*Matt:* "I don't think it would disappear but if it did it would have a small impact... Well it would impact us just because we would be disgusted that we couldn't go surfing."

*Justine:* "But not from an economic point of view?"

*Matt:* "No."

*Ophélie:* "In those last few years, have you seen significant changes regarding people who are helping you?"

*Matt:* "After we did the crowdfunding campaign, a lot of people heard about it and wanted to help but they didn't have a lot of money so a lot of people would have come out because we were in the media then, and in the summertime, you get lots of people, or even in the spring. When it's sunny, that's when people come and help, whereas when it's raining, it's just us. But yeah it's been an increase each year in the amount of people to come, to help, they want to stay, they want to connect. So yes it's been a steady increase."

*Justine:* "About the surfing activity, if it would disappear in the county, what entity do you think it would impact? Like surfing schools? Like would it be bad for the economy of the county if there was no surfing?"

*Matt:* "Yeah! Think it would be really bad for a lot of people. A lot of my friends would be without jobs, lots of... hum... yeah, lots of members, people who buy vegetables from us would be without a job. Yeah it's a big part of Lahinch, not so much County Clare, but the town is significant to us."

*Ophélie:* "If you're willing to communicate it, we would like to know the farm's turnover? Are you making any profits?"

*Matt:* "Well, we make about.. well this year was different because we did a big crowdfunding campaign but we are not making a profit because we just bought over 60 acres and we were 300,000 in debts. And then we raised 100,000 so we have 200,000 in debts. But each year we make, well this year we made about €60,000 and because there is no way to use it they would get to go into the farm, we build another shed, we make a glasshouse, buy new stuff for the animals, we just keep putting the money back into the farm. If we stopped buying stuff, and stay where we were, the farm would make money."

*Justine:* "But you still have enough money to maintain your farm? Animals, to live decently..."

*Matt:* "We definitely have enough to live. We live a very basic life. Not well, yeah. Personally I live with a very basic life and so do the other people, we don't buy airplanes, we don't buy a lot of beer, we don't have many gadgets, we share cars, yeah, it's a fairly basic life but we are happy."

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*Ophélie:* "What do you imagine for the future at Moy Hill Community Farm?"

*Matt:* "I imagine more children, hum, an education place, I imagine a sauna ; I imagine flowers and trees and more animals, maybe more singing, maybe more group dinners, a big festival. Yeah, more animals."

*Justine:* "Ok, so you would like to become a little bit bigger and attract more volunteers?"

*Matt:* "Yeah, well, volunteers no, but I would like to ask this way dream of, we just bought an over 60 acres so there is more land, maybe with some more security, maybe I would like to live in a home, I would like my friends to be warm and dry and to have a space for volunteers to live comfortably, hum... yeah..."

*Ophélie:* "Otherwise, we heard on the news a few weeks ago that the hurricane Ophelia came in Ireland so did it damaged your crop or anything?"

*Matt:* "It wasn't great, well the summer has been really really wet, and, hum, it's really hard to grow vegetables in swatters, but we keep drifting away and growing food and Ophelia was not the biggest storm, but it was on the news because it went to the city of Cork, the city of Dublin, which is quite rare so... the city people they got scared but it happens every week."

*Justine:* "And we also saw that you participated in the Get Involved competition, so how did it go?"

*Matt:* "Hum, I think it went well, I think we won €1,000, but I can't remember really exactly what happened."

*Ophélie:* "Are you participating in this project every year or just once or sometimes?"

*Matt:* "This event has a feeling that everyone want to apply for the grant or some kind of award. Someone who has some spare time would do something like that, but no it is just hum... I don't even remember doing that."

*Justine:* "What was your biggest project about raising money?"

*Matt:* "We did a crowdfunding campaign so hum we just ask people if they believe in what we are doing and if they think it is worth showing few values with us. I would love to, we would love to... The more money we have, the more land we can care of, the more people we can feed, the less food mouths people have, the healthier they are, the more trees are planted, yeah you know, the more people we can help, the more hilling can be done. So we ask if people would have some spare euro , that they felt like giving, it would be great."

*Ophélie:* "We saw in some articles that you grew up on a farm, I don't know if that is right."

*Matt:* "Well Fergal did."

*Justine:* "Did it make him want to create his own farm?"

*Matt:* "Hum, I think it would have given him a really amazing, hum healthy life when he was young, hum and he came with a certain knowledge that he can grow food for himself. He is in this imaginary concept you know, you can go outside and you can grow it. You know you can feed yourself, you can take an hour back. Yeah it's a strong message."

**2. « The Save the Waves Costa Rica project » : Master 2, spécialité A.L.P.I. (Amérique Latine et Péninsule Ibérique) : septembre – décembre 2019 :**

De septembre à novembre 2019, un projet de recherche a été proposé aux étudiants de Master 2 A.L.P.I. dans le cadre de mes enseignements d'Anglais Langue Professionnelle<sup>41</sup>. L'objectif global était d'adapter une partie du contenu de ce cours aux spécialités des étudiants (langues étrangères, connaissances (historiques, géopolitiques, économiques) ciblées sur l'aire de spécialisation, économie, gestion, commerce international). Il s'est ici agi de décrire et analyser le paysage socio-culturel, économique, écologique et géopolitique de la région de Pavones, située dans la province de Puntarena au Costa Rica, et de cerner les enjeux liés à l'activité de surf dans la région qui représente un secteur touristique en pleine croissance, notamment à destination des touristes étrangers. Par des recherches documentaires et des enquêtes de terrain en distanciel, les étudiants ont eu pour mission d'évaluer la contribution de l'activité de surf à l'économie de la région ainsi que dans les domaines de la santé, de la culture et de l'écologie, et de replacer l'activité dans le contexte social, économique et politique plus large du secteur touristique du pays. Le document suivant présente les consignes qui ont été données au début du semestre, et précise le cadrage de ces travaux.

LEA M2S9 - Frederique CAREY-PENOT

Anglais LETE

## The Costa Rica Research Project

### Instructions for study

#### 1. Mission statement:

This research project is to be conducted within the M2S9 Business English course (Anglais LETE) in **groups of 4 to 5 students**, over a 10-week duration. It will entail **team work** (with each team researching, analysing and reporting on a specific research object), regular **sharing** of knowledge and reporting on progress made by each team, and the submission of a **collective report** contributed to by each team, together with **oral presentations** at the end of the term. The stated objectives of the research project are:

- . to document and report on the social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental landscape of Pavones within the Puntarenas Province, Costa Rica;
- . to assess and report on the economic, social, cultural,... benefits of surfing on the local economy of Pavones, Costa Rica, and the economic value of the surf break of Pavones within the local economy;
- . to identify weaknesses and threats to local ocean-recreation and tourism industries as well as opportunities to be seized;
- . to offer a comprehensive overview and analysis of the economic and environmental stakes underlying the surf tourism industry in the area under study and to issue recommendations, with a view to contribute to environmental and ocean conservation programmes such as those undertaken by the Save the Waves coalition.

#### 2. Detailed instructions:

##### A. Introduction:

As 2<sup>nd</sup>-year Master's students specializing in the geopolitical regions of Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula, you will be involved in a pilot study that aims at supporting the Save the Waves coalition's research programmes documenting the economic contribution of surfing to the local economy of Pavones, Costa Rica. A town in the Puntarenas Province, Pavones is renowned as a surfers' haven with some of the best waves in the world.

Conducting a comprehensive study of the economic impact of ocean- and surf-related activities and highlighting the issues to be addressed, the research will be carried out in groups and lead to:

- . the submission of a **collective written report** at the end of the term (written individual mark for this course – coef.2);

<sup>41</sup> L'intitulé exact du cours dispensé est « Anglais L.E.T.E. : Langue des Entreprises Transnationales et Exportatrices ».

- . **oral presentations** of each team's research activities throughout the term (individual participation mark - *coef.1 = oral 1/2*)
- . final oral presentations presenting each team's activities, findings and recommendations at the end of the term (individual oral mark - *coef.1 = oral 2/2*).

→ **In particular, the research will entail:**

- . description of the region of Pavones, of the high quality wave it is renowned for and its natural coastal surroundings, as well as its social and cultural landscape;
- . documentation of the political, economic and social environment of the region and the country at large;
- . analysis of the economic, political, social and cultural forces acting on the development of businesses in the region, and of ocean-related and tourism-related businesses in particular.
- . review of the strengths and opportunities of the growing surfing industry and surf tourism offerings in the region of Pavones, and examination of the weaknesses and threats that need to be addressed;
- . laying the foundations for an economic valuation of the contribution of surfing to the area with a review and selection of the relevant methods, the designing of a survey and anticipation of results;
- . issuing recommendations as to what measures need to be taken to ensure raised awareness of the issues identified and of the need for sustainable coastal management, in the interest of preserving both the quality of the break and the growth of the local businesses, drawing from examples taken from other surf hubs in the country and from around the world.

→ **Research methods to be used will include:**

- . a review of the literature on the subject, with the elaboration of a collective bibliography to be included in the final report;
- . documentary research;
- . interviews of local and regional stakeholders (Skype, email...).

**B. Group work:**

→ Each team will research specific topics with a view to answer a set of specific research questions. Answers to those questions will be compiled into a final written report AND an oral presentation by each team on TD 10.

= All the final reports (*five teams = five reports*) will then make up the collective report to be compiled at the end of the term and submitted to stakeholders and the related conservation programmes.

→ **TEAMS will be organized in the following way:**

	<b><u>Team's mission</u></b>
<b><u>TEAM 1</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b><u>Surfonomics</u></b>: definitions, history of its development, how it works - methods used, examples of most notable studies; what is at stake: the benefits of running surfonomic study; more especially how Costa Rica and the region of Pavones might benefit from such study.</li> <li>- The <b><u>benefits of ocean recreation</u></b>, and more specifically surf-related activities (cognitive, mental, physical benefits...).</li> <li>- <b><u>Surfing, Latin America and Costa Rica</u></b> - a brief history; presentation of surfing as "a non-extractive coastal resource" (explain); a brief history of the development of surfing in the region; local legends, publicized events,...</li> </ul>
<b><u>TEAM 2</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b><u>Costa Rica</u></b>: general overview of the country - history, culture, economic and geopolitical situation within Latin America and in the world;</li> <li>- <b><u>Pavones</u></b>: presentation of the geographical, political, cultural... situation of the area/town under study;</li> <li>- Description of <b><u>the surf break</u></b> of Pavones (type, reputation, etc.); events and reputation (press review etc., interviews...),...</li> <li>- The area's <b><u>environmental (and other) assets</u></b> + and brief identification of environmental issues (among others) in the area.</li> </ul>
<b><u>TEAM 3</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. <b><u>A comprehensive PESTEL analysis</u></b> of the country with a particular emphasis on the region under study as a <b><u>surf destination</u></b> (PESTEL of the (surf) tourism offering);</li> <li>. <b><u>A comprehensive SWOT analysis</u></b> of the region of Pavones and its ocean tourism offering and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- your recommendations as to best seize each of the main opportunities and reinforce the strengths;</li> <li>- weaknesses and threats; among others, identification of the main threats to the marine environment and to the future of surfing in the area; first recommendations as to best avoid or</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	fight them.
<b>TEAM 4</b>	<p><u>Economic valuation of surfing's contribution to the economy of Pavones:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. review of the literature available on and relevant to the subject (<i>cf. Team 1's research</i>);</li> <li>. similar studies done in the area / Central America / Latin America?</li> <li>. interviews of local stakeholders;</li> <li>. definition of the most appropriate methods to be used;</li> <li>. designing of a survey to be run online as part of a follow-up study and how to analyse its results (<i>only as a project as time will not allow us to effectively run it</i>); anticipation of results, e.g. drafting of a profile of the average surfer living in and/or visiting the area,...</li> </ul>
<b>TEAM 5</b>	<p><u>Marketing/communication recommendations:</u> drawing from the other teams' activities, write up a structured report listing recommendations and plans for communication / marketing campaigns in the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. define the issues to be addressed;</li> <li>. define a variety of types of strategies to be used: locally/place marketing, online, social media strategies, tribal/relational/experimental/viral marketing, public education programmes, etc.</li> </ul> <p><u>Aim</u> = to raise awareness about / highlight the importance of addressing the issues identified in the research; place emphasis on sustainable approaches to the development of ocean- and surf-related tourism businesses, giving examples,...</p> <p>= devise clear and detailed step-by-step strategies of a number of actions and campaigns to be run. Draw from examples of similar actions run in other areas of the country and/the world.</p>

→ All sources and references used must be noted and included within a **bibliography** section of each group's report.  
→ This bibliography will be compiled into a collective bibliography, to be shared and added to over the term on the FB page of the research project

### **C. Reporting (TD):**

Every other week, each team will briefly report on their findings and partake in a Q/A session to foster communication and exchange of information among the teams and help advance the progress of the research.

### **D. Final reports:**

→ **Final report for each team to be submitted by week 10** (about 4,000 words ~ about 8-10 pages?) as a structured account + bibliography.

#### **→ NOTE:**

1. **Each member of the group must contribute to the writing** of the report on the basis of a fair and equitable division of tasks;

2. **Each student must clearly indicate within the report which part of the report they have written;**

3. Reports must be supported by a **bibliography**, following the standard formats of presentation for bibliographic references. References in your text must be closely connected to this bibliography with the use of **footnotes** when appropriate; all sources quoted in your paper have to be listed in the bibliography.

→ **Reports are to be submitted on week 10 (= November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019) or by December, 13<sup>th</sup> 2019.**

### **E. Collective oral presentations of each team's activities and findings:**

Starting TD 5, each team will report orally on the progress of their activities and discuss their results in a structured 5-minute presentation.

→ *More instructions to come as to how to structure your reports and your presentations (mission assigned, methods used, progress / findings and analysis, final results, discussion and conclusions.*

→ **See the presentations schedule listing all presentations for every TD from TD 5 (October 17<sup>th</sup>) to TD 10 (November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019).**

En raison du volume important que représente le document final associant les rapports des cinq équipes de recherche (243 pages), il ne peut être inclus ici. Les étudiants ont dans l'ensemble fait preuve d'une implication remarquable dans ces travaux, et ont ainsi posé les jalons d'une estimation du poids économique de l'activité du surf, locale et touristique, dans la région de Pavones. Le travail a reposé sur une revue de la littérature sur le sujet, sur des échanges d'informations et un dialogue continu entre les équipes de recherche, sur des études de surf économie similaires éventuellement conduites dans le pays ou les régions voisines, et sur une définition de la méthodologie à employer. L'objectif était ici de parvenir à une estimation quantitative de la contribution de l'activité de surf à l'économie locale de Pavones et de concevoir, entre autres outils, un sondage qui a été mis en ligne selon des modalités et une durée définies par les étudiants, et dont les résultats pourront être extraits et analysés par un futur groupe de recherche. La durée de mise en ligne du sondage excédant le temps imparti à ce travail, il est en effet envisagé d'en effectuer une analyse des résultats ultérieurement. Il a toutefois été demandé aux étudiants (équipe 4) d'anticiper les résultats de ce sondage, notamment par des entretiens avec des acteurs locaux du secteur d'activité. Malgré les erreurs de langue et les maladresses présentes dans les rapports des étudiants, ils illustrent un travail d'équipe bien mené par l'ensemble du groupe des étudiants du Master 2 ALPI 2019-2020, qui ont ainsi parfaitement rempli l'objectif de ce projet : poser les prémices d'une étude quantitative, proposer pour cela une méthode clé en main, et en anticiper les résultats sur la base des premières informations collectées.



# Annexe 9

## Glossaire du surf

**A-frame** : une vague en forme de « A », avec deux épaules (« shoulders »), l'une déferlant vers la droite et l'autre déferlant vers la gauche. Ces vagues ont l'avantage de présenter un nombre double de trajectoires, et deux surfeurs peuvent ainsi la partager en allant dans des directions opposées. Les épaules peuvent cependant ne pas présenter la même qualité de déferlement : Giles décrit ainsi la vague en A du Peak de Bundoran : « There's the Peak Right : it's a shorter, more intense ride with a barrel section and a turn section. And then there's the Peak Left : that's a long peeling wall with a (sometimes) makeable barrel on the section » (Giles Carey, entretien informel).

**Aerial, air** : figure exécutée dans les airs : le surfeur décolle au-dessus de la vague pour effectuer une rotation ou un « grab » (lorsqu'il attrape sa planche pour un effet de style).

**Aggro** : un surfeur ou style de surf agressif.

**Ailerons, dérives ; fins** : insérés sous la planche à l'arrière (au niveau du *tail*), les ailerons permettent d'assurer la stabilité directionnelle de la planche ; ils peuvent également être un facteur de maniabilité et de vitesse. Les montages varient en fonction des styles de surf et du type de manœuvres que le surfeur souhaite exécuter : single (un seul aileron, généralement pour les longboards), twin (deux ailerons), thrusters (trois dérives) ou quad (quatre ailerons qui augmentent la maniabilité et l'efficacité de la planche dans les manœuvres).

**Backwash** : vague de ressac, retour violent de vague.

**Barre** : zone de vagues qui déferlent que le surfeur doit franchir pour rejoindre le large (« passer la barre », « to paddle out » ou encore « to go out back »).

**Beach break** : vague qui déferle sur des fonds sableux.

**Board (surboard)** : planche de surf.

**Bottom turn** : virage exécuté en bas de vague, qui fait suite généralement au take off (« décollage »).

**Carve** : un virage rapide et puissant sur la face de la vague, permis notamment par l'efficacité du montage des ailerons.

**Close out** : une vague qui « ferme », c'est-à-dire se referme sur toute sa longueur, rendant impossible de surfer l'épaule à droite ou à gauche, ou du moins d'en sortir.

**Cutback** : virage intérieur puissant qui permet de revenir au contact de l'écume en enfonçant le tail de la planche dans la partie verticale de la vague et de repartir dans le sens du déferlement.

**Cross-shore** : vent soufflant le long de la côte (en travers des vagues).

**Droite, right** : vague qui déferle vers la droite du point de vue du surfeur sur la vague. Du point de vue d'un observateur situé sur la plage, la vague déferle vers la gauche.

**Drop** : après s'être mis debout, le surfeur se laisser tomber le long de la face de la vague ; c'est la première partie de sa glisse sur la vague.

**Drop in, taxer une vague :** partir sur une vague sur laquelle un surfeur est déjà engagé.

**Épaule, shoulder, face :** partie d'une vague qui ne s'est pas encore écrasée. Lorsqu'un surfeur attrape une vague, il se déplace de la zone de la lèvre, en direction de la zone dite ouverte de la vague, l'épaule. Celle-ci peut présenter une partie plus « courbée », appelée le curl, qui est très raide, similaire à une rampe de skateboard ; c'est la section où peuvent s'effectuer la plupart des manœuvres de haute performance (airs).



**Ill. 160 :** L'anatomie d'une vague.  
Source : site *Barefootsurftravel*<sup>42</sup>.

**Gauche ; left :** vague qui déferle vers la gauche du point de vue du surfeur sur la vague. Du point de vue d'un observateur situé sur la plage, la vague déferle vers la droite.

**Glassy :** conditions idéales, lorsque les vagues sont lisses grâce à l'absence totale de vent.

**Green room :** l'intérieur d'un tube.

**Grom, grommet :** un jeune surfeur débutant.

**Gun :** longue planche spécifique pour le surf de très grosses vagues.

**Kook :** terme péjoratif désignant un surfeur inexpérimenté et peu conscient ou peu regardant des règles de priorité et courtoisie.

**Impact zone, zone d'impact :** la zone où la lèvre s'abat au bas de la vague ; c'est là que les vagues atteignent leur pleine puissance. En ramant vers le large afin de passer la barre, c'est la zone qu'il faut éviter – voir notamment le récit qu'Ian rapporte de son *wipe out* à Mullaghmore, lorsqu'il s'est retrouvé pris dans la zone d'impact ([Ian, 9]).

**Leash :** cordon qui relie le pied arrière du surfeur à l'arrière de sa planche et qui lui permet d'y rester attaché lors des chutes.

**Lèvre :** partie supérieure de la vague qui est projetée vers l'avant lorsque la vague déferle. Une grande partie de la puissance de la vague est située dans la lèvre.

**Line up :** zone d'attente des vagues, où le positionnement des surfeurs détermine les priorités.

**Longboard :** planche de surf de grande taille (9 pieds, soit 2,5m, ou plus), généralement plus stable qu'un *shortboard* (plus maniable).

**Mini-mal, ou Mini Malibu :** longboard plus court que la moyenne (entre 7 et 8,6 pieds, soit entre 2 et 2,4m) offrant une bonne vitesse à la rame pour permettre de prendre un

42 Lien : <https://barefootsurftravel.com/fr/livemore-magazine/comment-lire-les-vagues>

maximum de vagues

**Mousse ; white water :** l'écume et l'eau vive que forme la vague une fois déferlée ; peut également désigner une vague difforme et mousseuse.

**Nose-riding :** figure classique du surf de longboard qui consiste à se positionner en équilibre sur le nez de la planche.

**On shore :** vent soufflant du large qui détériore la qualité des vagues et crée du clapot.

**Off shore :** vent de terre levant les vagues.

**Out back :** « derrière la barre ».

**Over the falls :** type de *wipe out*, lorsqu'un surfeur chute de sa planche et est entraîné dans le déferlement de la vague par la lèvre, la partie la plus puissante, vers le haut de la vague puis dans une chute libre contre la face.

**Party wave :** une vague que se partagent plusieurs surfeurs en bonne entente.

**Pic ; peak :** le point le plus élevé d'une vague. Discerner le « peak » est une des clés de la lecture des vagues.

**Point break :** site de fond rocheux ou sablonneux où les vagues déferlent toujours au même point, souvent indiqué par une pointe rocheuse ou une jetée (Tullaghan Right et Left, près de Bundoran).

**Reef break :** vague déferlant sur un fond rocheux ou de corail (The Peak, à Bundoran).

**Set :** série de vagues davantage formées ou plus grosses que la moyenne.

**Shape :** forme de la board, sculptée dans un pain de mousse par ponçage par le shaper (personne qui fabrique des planches de surf) lors des premiers stade de la fabrication.

**Shortboard :** petite planche de surf, moins stables que les longboards mais plus maniables et permettant d'exécuter des figures plus rapides.

**Slab :** vague qui s'abat avec puissance sous le niveau de la mer à fleur de dalles rocheuses, créant une différence de niveau d'eau sur la zone de déferlement (très peu profonde), ce qui rend ces vagues particulièrement dangereuses (Pmpa, à Bundoran).

**Spot :** zone géographique où déferlent les vagues.

**Swell :** houle, ou vagues surfables.

**Tail :** arrière de la planche de surf, où le leash est accroché. C'est sous le tail que sont insérés les ailerons, ou dérives (fins).

**Take off :** « décollage », lorsque le surfeur se met debout sur la planche pour amorcer l'acte de glisse sur la vague.

**Tube, barrel :** vague tubulaire, ou creuse, à l'intérieur de laquelle le surfeur peut entrer pour s'efforcer de rester aussi longtemps que possible. L'objectif est de s'y maintenir mais également d'en sortir avant que la vague ne ferme.

**Tow in :** surf tracté par jet-ski pour le surf de grosses vagues.

**Wax :** paraffine à appliquer sur la planche pour créer de l'adhérence.

**Wipe out :** chute.