



Dr Simon Jackson, chief scientific officer,  
and John Murray, managing director,  
Modern Botany



Conor Hyde, Hibernia Distillers; left: Diane Crean, Honest Fuel

Cathal Noonan

# Meet the entrepreneurs

Next month, up-and-coming business people will have the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs, thanks to the Entrepreneur Experience and Cork BIC. Here, **Tom Lyons** profiles some of those taking part

**T**he Entrepreneur Experience provides unique advice and access to 24 emerging entrepreneurs who get to work with 24 leading business people over 24 hours to discover their company.

The event, which is now in its seventh year, takes place in Ballymaloe, Co Cork, on April 7 and 8.

The Sunday Business Post is the media partner of the event, and this week it profiles the first 12 of the 24 emerging companies that will be taking part in this year's Entrepreneur Experience.

## Awesound

Mark Moriarty

Physics and applied maths graduate Mark Moriarty set up Awesound to help audio creators to publish their content and earn more revenue. Moriarty previously worked as a software developer for Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley.

Prior to founding Awesound, he worked as a consultant with McKinsey & Co in London and he also has previous start-up experience. He worked as a predictive analytics software developer with Mountain View-based Claritics. Awesound gives podcasters more detailed analytics about their audience, and helps them target individual listeners with advertisements.

It also makes it easier to sell audio books or any premium content. Silicon Valley venture capital firm Y Combinator has invested in the business. Millions of listeners already download audio from Awesound every month.

## Veri

Ann-Marie McSorley

Founder Ann-Marie McSorley is a 15-year management veteran in the public and private sector in Ireland and Britain.

She previously founded Kilkenny-based iResource Education and Training, which specialises in developing and delivering customised training and education programmes with clients including the Ombudsman for Children and the Oireachtas communications department.

Her new company Veri offers online training in compliance for businesses and organisations.

Veri has developed a cloud-based dashboard to reduce the time and cost of quality assurance. Veri is already in use in multiple industries and sectors ensuring compliance for Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and Pre-Hospital Emergency Care (Phecc) accredited training.

## Honest Fuel

Diane Crean

Honest Fuel founder Diane Crean worked in the commercial property business in London and Dublin before founding her new business. As an associate director with Savills in Dublin from 2012, she worked with clients such as Irish Life, Nama and Lonestar. She studied nutrition part-time which gave her the idea to set up her new company.

Honest Fuel makes nutritious high protein wraps for busy health-conscious consumers. The Tralee-based company makes wraps using premium ingredients including chia seeds and flax seeds. It hopes to sell through cafés and delis initially and the business plans to product launch this summer. It is sourcing a manufacturer to help it increase production volumes and is seeking an angel investor.

## Luvguru

Louisamay Hanrahan and Liam Grant

Luvguru is a matchmaking and dating platform that allows users find love by placing the onus on their closest network. The business was founded by Hanrahan, who previously worked with the Web-summit and helped launch Deliveroo Ireland, along with her cousin, Liam Grant and best friend Niamh McCabe.

Luvguru creates trustworthy validated matches and has over 1,000 unique users. It has just finished the NDRC accelerator programme and is raising a seed round. It believes it can build a product that can scale to millions of users. The current global market for mobile dating is valued at \$5 billion.

## Simply Go Travel

Mark Stratford

Founder Mark Stratford grew up in South Africa where he developed a passion for the outdoors and wildlife experiences. He recently moved from Saudi Arabia to Ireland after spending 15 years there as country marketing manager with Ikea.

Simply Go Travel aims to solve unmet global travel needs in real time. It helps clients before, during and after their holidays create their itineraries, with consultants available online to assist if necessary. Stratford's new business aims for 24/7 real-time information, geolocation services and two-way communication.

## Yeloblade

Liam Hanley

Yeloblade supplies wind energy solutions that can be used in urban locations. Based in Galway city, Hanley found that traditional wind technologies were in-

compatible with city locations because of their size, noise and planning stipulations.

Using his background in aerospace engineering, Hanley developed quieter, more efficient engines suitable for city use. Installation of its equipment is easy and low cost. Hanley is a first class honours graduate in materials science from the University of Limerick. He has previously worked in highly-regulated industries including aerospace, semi-conductors and medical devices.

## Blume Labs

Gerry Conlon

Blume makes sustainable LED light bulbs with top-class light distribution and high-function switch-dimming that can last 70 years or longer.

By operating at a much cooler level than its competitors, customers can get 20 times the lifetime from their bulbs. Chief executive Gerry Conlon has worked as EMEA director of sales at iWatt, an award-winning lighting company. An experienced salesman, Conlon co-founded Blume to bring high reliability lighting to market.

## Expert Software Test

Fergal Hynes

A 23-year veteran of the software development industry, Fergal Hynes has previously worked for Nortel, Baltimore Technologies, System Dynamics, Exaxe and Sabeo. Expert Software Test is a business-to-business software test automation provider that has worked profitably with software development teams since 2015.

It has developed a software-as-a-service-based artificial intelligence-powered product to test its customers products, eliminating the need for them to hire human test analysts. Its customers include globally trading businesses including Limerick-based waste software company AMCS and IPscape in Australia.

## Helixworks Technologies

Nimesh Pinnamneni

Helixworks was founded by Indians Nimesh Pinnamneni and Sachin Chalapati, who became friends eight years ago when studying for a masters of science in industrial biotechnology in the University of Borås in Sweden.

The two business partners want to make it easier to get access to cutting-edge biotech tools. Helixworks has developed a set of tools to chemically synthesise DNA for various applications. It has designed and engineered protocols, software and apparatus for hands-free

DNA synthesis.

## Hibernia Distillers

Conor Hyde

Conor Hyde, the founder of Hibernia Distillers, has worked in the Irish food industry for two decades. Since founding the Hyde Irish Whiskey brand in 2014, he has achieved over €1 million in sales per annum and managed to export his whiskey into 26 countries. Hyde has used social media, premium packaging presentation and a unique taste to grow its brand internationally. Hyde has won over ten awards for the quality of its whiskey, including the San Francisco Award for best single malt Irish whiskey in the world, 2016.

## Mirai Medical

Dr Declan Soden

Dr Declan Soden is the founder and chief executive of Mirai Medical, a medical device company working on commercialising an energy technology called electroporation for use in the treatment of cancer. Soden previously worked for 15 years in cancer research.

He is general manager of the Cork Cancer Research Centre where he manages an annual budget of over €2 million and employs a staff of 25 researchers.

Clinical studies of his new technology are ongoing at Copenhagen University Hospital in patients with colorectal and oesophageal cancer. Mirai is working to offer cancer clinicians a minimally invasive treatment with a family of disposable probes designed for both internal and external (skin) application.

## Modern Botany

John Murray and Dr Simon Jackson

Modern Botany is a natural product cosmetic company that was founded in 2015 by its managing director John Murray and chief scientific officer Dr Simon Jackson.

It aims to produce unisex 100 per cent natural luxury skincare preparations using the best ingredients from the natural world.

It sources its biologically active ingredients from around the world using their more than 20 years of experience in the sector. Its 'hero' product is called Modern Botany Oil.

The Entrepreneur Experience is sponsored by Bank of Ireland, Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Grant Thornton, HOMS Solicitors, and The Sunday Business Post

Entrepreneur  
experience



Liam Grant and Louisamay Hanrahan, founders of Luvguru



Mark Moriarty, founder of Awesound

Clare Keogh



Declan Soden, founder and chief executive of Mirai Medical

Tomas Tyrner