

Louth science communicator to retrace the steps of Ireland's "Arctic Fox" in the Arctic Circle **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/116223>)**

Science communicator Niamh Shaw to retrace the steps of Ireland's "Arctic Fox" in the Arctic Circle expedition next month

Science communicator, writer, engineer, performer and Louth native Dr Niamh Shaw will head to the Arctic Circle next month to retrace and research the tale of Ireland's "Arctic Fox", Leopold McClintock. Leopold McClintock, known as the Arctic Fox, was born in Dundalk in 1819 and achieved fame as an Arctic explorer who discovered the fate of the failed 1845 expedition to the North American Arctic led by Sir John Franklin.

Dr Shaw is participating in *The Arctic Circle* (<https://theartcticcircle.org/>) *Summer 2025* Expedition, an annual expeditionary residency programme for international scientists and artists of all disciplines, which will see Dr Shaw and several other participants explore the high-Arctic Svalbard Archipelago and Arctic Ocean aboard a specially outfitted expedition vessel.

Just over 200 years since Leopold McClintock was born in Dundalk, Dr Shaw and Louth County Council's Environment Office are seeking to bring his story to life as part of a climate action initiative. Dr Shaw will be researching the Arctic Circle and will bring her learnings back to develop an interactive walk in Louth to commemorate Leopold McClintock and his achievements in exploration. McClintock was tasked with and was successful in discovering the fate of Sir John Franklin and his 129 crew who disappeared in 1845 while trying to find the North West Passage through the Arctic Ocean.

As part of her involvement in *The Arctic Circle* Summer Expedition, Dr Shaw will also be honouring Irish women of science whose stories have been forgotten by bringing the "Forgotten Women" Quilt with her – a quilt with 12 panels commemorating trailblazing Irish women in science. She will be conducting a number of engineering and human physiology experiments in partnership with Dundalk IT, and carrying a specially commissioned Dundalk flag designed by the media department at DkIT and sponsored by Engineers Ireland NE Region and Dundalk Chamber of Commerce to commemorate the town's engagement with her expedition.

Speaking today, Dr Shaw said: "I am honoured to have been chosen to participate in *The Arctic Circle* Summer Expedition. In a few short weeks we will be dropping anchor and spending two weeks between the ice of the Arctic and our expedition vessel to explore, research and communicate the importance of this habitat, how it is being impacted by climate change, and why we must protect it. I am aware that most people will never have the opportunity to visit the Arctic so the purpose of my trip is to communicate and share my learnings and experiences to bring this part of our planet to life so that we will feel a shared responsibility for protecting its future, and ours.

"I am also incredibly excited to retrace the steps of my fellow Dundalk native, Leopold McClintock, and to witness firsthand the difficult environment he navigated to discover the fate of the lost Franklin expedition some 180 years ago. I'm looking forward to bringing my experiences to life for the people of Louth and to share McClintock's story with a wider audience on my return."

Louth locals encouraged to send a postcard to the Arctic

Dr Shaw has commissioned a number of postcards freely available to the public in Louth Library, Dundalk Credit Union and in Louth County Council and is encouraging Louth locals to share a message, or write their hopes and dreams for the future. She will bring these to be stamped in Svalbard, and will be brought back to Ireland and then on her future expeditions.

Dr Shaw will leave Ireland for the Arctic Circle on 5th July. For more information on Dr Niamh Shaw, visit: <https://niamhshaw.ie/> (<https://niamhshaw.ie/>)

Further details about The Arctic Circle Science Art Residency Programme: <https://theartcticcircle.org/> (<https://theartcticcircle.org/>)

Region
Louth

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