

LISTOWEL

LITERARY FESTIVAL



presented by



SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM



Listowel
Writers' Week



ST. JOHN'S
THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE
Listowel

28th May - 1st June, 2025

**FESTIVAL
PROGRAMME**

...where stories begin...again!





Listowel
Writers' Week



FESTIVAL 2025

WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Fáilte an Chathaoirligh

Tá lúcháir an Domhain orm, mar Chathaoirleach Sheachtain na Scribhneoirí, fáilte is fiche a chur romhaibh go Lios Tuathail ársa, álainn do Sheachtain na Scribhneoirí 2025, Féile Liteartha Lios Tuathail.

It is my great pleasure, as Chairman of Writers' Week, to welcome you all to our lovely town for the Listowel Literary Festival 2025. This year's programme provides an eclectic and exciting choice of events and my fellow Directors and I hope that you will enjoy it to the full.

We in Writers' Week are very conscious of the great debt Listowel owes to our founding authors, Drs John B. Keane and Bryan MacMahon, and the founding committee and it is our privilege to continue what they started and develop it as they would have wished.

Our theme this year is Strength in Unity. We are pledged to be inclusive and open and we welcome the involvement and support of the entire community.

This year we are breaking new ground. The festival is being presented as a collaborative effort by ourselves, Seanchaí, Kerry Writers' Museum and St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre, with all three participant bodies sharing the design and delivery of the programme.

We are very thankful to our partners for their involvement and in particular we wish to thank Seanchaí, Kerry Writers' Museum Chairman, David Browne and his fellow Directors and Museum Manager, Cara Trant for assisting us in funding many of the events. Ar scath a cheile a mhaireann na daoine.

Thanks also to our wonderful Curator, Maire Logue, Festival Manager, Katie O'Brien and both their teams. They have worked day and night to deliver what we think may well be our best Festival ever.

We could not have achieved this without the very generous support of our many sponsors and patrons, old and new, and we are so very grateful to them all.

Finally, a big thank you to all our magnificent volunteers. They are motivated only by their great love for the Festival. Many of them have given decades of service and we applaud them in a special way this year. So, enjoy the Festival, enjoy Listowel and, most of all, enjoy yourselves.

Ned O'Sullivan - Chairman, Listowel Writers' Week

WELCOME FROM KWM CHAIRPERSON



We at Kerry Writers' Museum are delighted to welcome you to Listowel Literary Festival. This initiative has been made possible through funding awarded to Seanchai, Kerry Writers' Museum under the Literature to Listowel Grant Scheme, administered by Kerry County Council and the Arts Council.

As a result of a successful collaboration between Listowel's three leading cultural institutions - Seanchai, Kerry Writers' Museum, Listowel Writers' Week and St John's Theatre & Arts Centre, Listowel Literary Festival will deliver a compelling programme that celebrates the written and spoken word. This partnership demonstrates the enduring strength of Listowel's cultural community. It reflects Listowel's popular image with a proud literary tradition and a commitment to supporting writers and artists at every stage of their journey.

Curated by Maire Logue, this year's festival showcases the best in contemporary literature, hosting an array of distinguished Irish and international writers, offering readings, lectures, discussions, book launches, walks, and workshops across Listowel.

A cornerstone of Seanchai, Kerry Writers' Museum's mission is to support and nurture local literary talent. The festival will spotlight voices from the region through readings workshops and networking opportunities for writers and readers alike.

I would like to thank Listowel Writers' Week Chairman, Ned O'Sullivan for his vision to make the festival an inclusive and collaborative event and also for his advice and stewardship.

A special thanks to the dedicated organising team led by Festival Producer, Cara Trant and Festival Manager, Katie O'Brien. They have worked tirelessly to deliver a diverse and exciting programme. To our fantastic volunteers who are generously giving their time to ensure a seamless roll out of the Festival.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board and staff of Kerry Writers' Museum who have given their unwavering support to Cara and me in this groundbreaking collaborative initiative.

Wishing you a most enjoyable Festival.

*David Browne, Chairperson
Seanchai - Kerry Writers' Museum*



WELCOME FROM THE CURATOR

Curating this year's Listowel Literary Festival has been both an honour and a joy as my love for this Festival has never diminished. As I began shaping the programme back in January, I held close the spirit that has always defined this special festival, a celebration of words in all their forms, and a gathering place for readers, writers, and thinkers who believe in the power of story.

My approach to curating this year's events was guided by a desire to reflect the diverse voices and experiences that make contemporary literature so vibrant and to reconnect with writers who down through the years have supported and received support from the Festival. I wanted to create space for conversation, challenge, and connection - between genres, generations, and global perspectives. From debut authors to established literary figures, from poetry to memoir, fiction to spoken and performed word, every event has been selected with the aim of sparking something - be it curiosity, reflection, or sheer delight.

Listowel is a town steeped in literary history, and this Festival carries that legacy with pride, but it is also a Festival that looks forward, it is never too late to *'Begin Again'*. This year's programme includes exciting new formats, collaborations, and opportunities for audiences to engage in fresh and meaningful ways and opportunities for emerging writers to showcase their hard work and devotion to their craft.

I'm deeply grateful to the writers who will be joining us, the small but passionate team behind the scenes and to my right arm who is always there, Sinéad McDonnell. Special thanks to the Ned O'Sullivan and the Board of Directors who gave me this very unique opportunity and most importantly to Listowel, a town that continues to support and inspire the Festival year after year. This community recognises the importance of 'ní neart go cur le cheile', there is only strength with unity. It is wonderful to see the coming together of Listowel Writers' Week, Seanchai, Kerry Writers' Museum and St. John's Theatre to present this year's Festival. Listowel Literary Festival is more than a series of events - it's a celebration of imagination, empathy, and the written word's enduring power to bring us together.

I hope you find moments during this week that stay with you long after the final page is turned or the last line spoken. Welcome - and enjoy every single word.

Tá an-áthas orm an clár seo a chur ós bhur gcomhair. Go n-éirí go geal leis.

Máire Logue - Programme Curator 2025





WELCOME FROM US

Tá an-áthas agus sceitimíní orm clár na féile 2025 a chur os bhur gcomhair.

It is with immense pride and great excitement that I introduce the 2025 festival programme. I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity by our Chairman, Ned O'Sullivan to work alongside such a tenacious and deeply passionate board for Writers' Week on this incredible project. Bringing this year's Festival to life has been a journey of transformation - one shaped by resilience, collaboration, and a powerful sense of renewal. After a period of change, both publicly and behind the scenes, we move forward with a revitalised team, a dedicated new board and a spirit of open collaboration. It truly feels like Writers' Week has found its way home.

Where Stories Begin... Again - a fitting reflection of this moment in time. But underpinning this year's work is a deeper guiding principle: *ní neart go cur le chéile* - **there is no strength without unity**. It speaks to our journey of rebuilding and reconnecting - not just internally, but through new partnerships with fellow arts organisations, writers, audiences, and the wider creative community. This festival is a living example of what can happen when people come together with a shared vision.

This year's programme is the result of months of creativity, connection, and hard work, brought to life under the careful and inspired guidance of our Curator, Máire Logue. Máire has been a long-standing pillar of Writers' Week, and her return as curator has been nothing short of transformative. Every artistic venture should be lucky enough to have a Máire Logue at the helm - her vision, dedication, and deep care for this Festival have been invaluable.

2025 brings together a remarkable constellation of writers, artists, and thinkers, each offering unique insight into themes that resonate across time and borders - community, displacement, conflict, identity, and the crises shaping our world.

This Festival is more than a celebration - it's a statement of intent. We're reaffirming our place in the community, for the community, and as part of the wider literary world. Our hope is that these few days of connection, creativity, and conversation will leave you inspired, challenged, and more deeply connected to the power of story.

To our sponsors, our tireless volunteers, our generous supporters, and to every person who helped bring this programme to life - thank you. Your belief in Listowel's Literary legacy is the reason these stories continue.

It's a privilege to walk this new path with you. Welcome to *Listowel Literary Festival, 'Strength in Unity'*. Let's begin...again.

Katie O'Brien - Festival Manager of Writer's Week 2025



WELCOME FROM CARA TRANT

Fáilte ó chroí romhaibh Féile Liteartha Lios Tuathail.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Listowel Literary Festival 2025, a celebration of storytelling, creativity, and the enduring power of the written word.

As Executive Director of Seanchaí, Kerry Writers' Museum, I am especially proud to see this Festival bring new life to the ancient art of storytelling. The word Seanchaí holds deep meaning in Irish culture – it refers to the traditional bearer of stories, the keeper of memory, and the voice of community. This Festival continues that legacy, inviting us to share in the timeless power of words that entertain, challenge, inspire and connect us.

We are proud to be involved in this new initiative, which brings together the energy, vision, and talent of three of Listowel's most cherished cultural institutions – Listowel Writers' Week, St. John's Theatre and Arts Centre, and ourselves – to present a programme that reflects both the richness of our literary heritage and the vibrancy of contemporary writing.

This year's Festival offers a unique opportunity to engage with some of the most acclaimed voices in Irish and international literature today, as well as beloved local talents. Over the coming days, I invite you to explore a rich offering of readings, talks, performances, workshops, and community events. Whether you are a seasoned writer, a passionate reader, or simply curious, I hope you find inspiration and connection in the conversations and experiences that unfold.

Listowel has long held a special place in the literary landscape of Ireland, and it is our mission at Kerry Writers' Museum to continue nurturing that legacy by supporting and promoting writers of all backgrounds – especially emerging voices from our own community. With the generous support of Kerry County Council and the Arts Council through the Literature in Listowel Grant Scheme, we are building a platform that honours the past while creating space for the future of literature in Kerry and beyond.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the Festival team, led with dedication and creativity by our Curator Máire Logue, whose vision and passion have shaped this programme. I also extend deep gratitude to our volunteers, partners, and supporters, whose generosity and hard work make every event and encounter possible. Their efforts are the beating heart of Listowel Literary Festival.

I invite you to immerse yourself in the Festival – in its conversations, performances, readings, and moments of connection. May it remind you of the magic that stories hold.

*Cara Trant, Executive Director
Seanchaí - Kerry Writers' Museum*



OPENING NIGHT FESTIVAL 2025

Official Opening of Listowel Literary Festival 2025

STRENGTH IN UNITY



Listowel Writers' Week, Seanchaí, Kerry Writers' Museum, St Johns Theatre & Arts Centre make history this evening as we warmly welcome you to celebrate the glory of creative connection in lovely Listowel. **Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media, Mr. Patrick O'Donovan T.D.** will officially open the festival. Our Master of Ceremonies will be our very own **Rhona Tarrant**, Executive Director with CBS News.

The presentation of literary prizes showcases the very best of contemporary Irish writing with many memorable high points including **The Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year**, **The Pigott Poetry Prize** and **The John B. Keane Lifetime Achievement Award**.

KERRY

**Mark Pigott KBE &
The Pigott Family**

Prepare to be charmed by **Music Generation**, **Ard Chúram Community Choir**, the soulful sounds of **Linda Galvin** and **Ian O'Shea** and his daughter **Hannah**.



SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM

 *Listowel*
Writers' Week



ST. JOHN'S
THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE
Listowel

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

LISTOWEL
LITERARY FESTIVAL



SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM

 *Listowel*
Writers' Week



ST. JOHN'S
THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE
Festival

Tony Guerin is the worthy recipient of the 2025 John B. Keane Lifetime Achievement Award for *'his masterful literary insights and his distinctive, honest portrayal of life in Ireland as it was and is'*. A playwright, novelist and former Kerry footballer, Tony has penned several plays including *Cuckoo Blue*, *Solo Run*, *Hummin'*, *The Laird of Doon* and a novel entitled *Tomorrow is a lovely day*. Tony's latest novel *Quilt* is a patchwork of disparate and connected stories and will be launched at this year's festival.

Tony's life tends to read like a drama itself. This popular Listowel native is a retired Garda Detective who was based in Dublin for most of his career. He is also a gifted raconteur. *'I was forever a runaway talker and thirsty listener – words' quick riposte excited me'*. He currently resides in Ballybunion and Dublin and has championed the arts throughout his life.

Past recipients include President Michael D. Higgins, Brendan Kennelly, Joe Murphy, Danny Hannon, Stephen Rae, Edna O'Brien, Anthony Cronin and The Reverend Anthony Gaughan.

Tony will be presented with The Stoney Road Press and Listowel Writers Week Hope Portfolio. This specially commissioned limited edition portfolio contains prints of the words of Eavan Boland, Anne Enright, Jennifer Johnston, Brendan Kennelly and Colm Toibín. Accompanying these five exclusive signed works is a limited edition etching by artist Donald Teskey. The Hope Portfolio is for sale at reception for €1000.



LITERARY AWARDS 2025

IRISH NOVEL OF THE YEAR AWARD 2025

KINDLY SPONSORED BY KERRY GROUP PLC

KERRY

PRIZE FUND €22,000

The adjudicators of this year's award were Paul McVeigh & Carol Drinkwater



The Shortlisted Novels are:

Donal Ryan '*Heart be at Peace*'

Niall Williams '*Time of The Child*'

Christine Dwyer Hickey '*Our London Lives*'

Joseph O'Connor '*The Ghosts of Rome*'

Colm Tóibín '*Long Island*'



FESTIVAL 2025

LITERARY AWARDS 2025

PIGOTT POETRY PRIZE 2025

KINDLY SPONSORED BY MARK PIGOTT KBE
& THE PIGOTT FAMILY

Mark Pigott KBE & The Pigott Family

PRIZE FUND €14,000

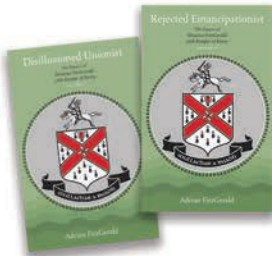
The adjudicators of this year's award were **Peter Sirr & Moya Cannon**



The Shortlisted Poetry Collections are:
Mary O'Malley 'The Shark Nursery'
Kerry Hardie 'We Go On'
David McLoghlin 'Crash Centre'



THURSDAY EVENTGUIDE



10.00^{am} Listowel's Living Legacy: A Stroll Through Song, Story & History

A literary and historical walking tour of Listowel, including poetry readings and performances of a selection of the iconic songs of the town. Presented by Jimmy Deenihan and local historian Vincent Carmody.

Departs: Outside The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: Free Event

10.00^{am} Exhibition Opening: Our Land, Our Story by the Listowel Visual Artists' Collective

Listowel Visual Artists' Collective presents Our Land, Our Story, a powerful collaborative exhibition uniting local artists, poets, and writers. Launching during Listowel Writers' Week Festival 2025, this unique showcase celebrates the deep connections between art, literature, and place. Official opening by Billy Keane.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: Free Event

11.00^{am} Knight of Kerry, Sir Adrian FitzGerald - Disillusioned Unionist & Rejected Emancipationist The Papers of Maurice FitzGerald Volumes I and II

Sir Adrian FitzGerald, the 24th Knight of Kerry is the last hereditary Knight in Ireland. Also called the Green Knight, the Knight of Kerry is one of three Anglo-Irish hereditary knighthoods which existed in Ireland since feudal times. He presents the papers of his ancestor Maurice Fitzgerald (1772-1849), the 18th Knight of Kerry.

Maurice FitzGerald was from Ballinruddery, a few miles east of Listowel and following the death of his father in 1781, Maurice and his brother and sister were brought up by their widowed mother, Catherine. He studied at Trinity College Dublin and Lincoln's Inn, but preferred the lure of politics to the practice of law. He developed the huge slate quarry on Valentia Island and regularly returned to Ballinruddery in North Kerry during his 35 years as a member of the College Green and Westminster parliaments.

Sir Adrian FitzGerald is in conversation with Mike Lynch.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: €15.00



12^{noon}

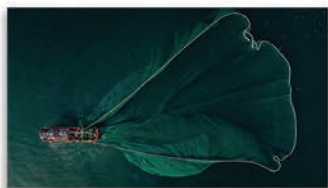
Book Launch: Disillusioned Unionist & Rejected Emancipationist The Papers of Maurice FitzGerald Volumes I and II

Sir Adrian FitzGerald, The 24th Knight of Kerry will launch Disillusioned Unionist & Rejected Emancipationist The Papers of Maurice FitzGerald Volumes I and II.

Published by the Very Rev. Anthony J. Gaughan, the volumes will be officially launched by Maurice Brick and moderated by Dr. Declan M Downey.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free



12^{noon}

Stage Reading: Dic Walsh - Rud in Easnamh

Ger moves to the Gaeltacht to make a film about his brother, who died by suicide 10 years earlier. As he learns about struggles in the local fishing industry and his brother's role as a fisheries inspector, Ger begins to suspect the community of foul play. Adapted from his novel, Dic Walsh will present a staged reading of this new work with two actors, their abbreviations and interpretations in an experiment in sharing and storytelling. Is léiriú dátheangach é bunaithe ar théacs dátheangach forbartha fara aisteoirí dátheangach. Sa Scríobhta sa Diseart sa Daingean, le tacaíocht ó Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí agus Amharclann Naomh Eoin.

Venue: St. Patrick's Hall

Price: Free Event



1.00^{pm}

The John B. Keane Memorial Lecture with Jimmy Murphy

This lecture will be an annual event with the inaugural focus on John B. Keane himself and his profound contribution to Irish theatre and literature. John B. Keane's legacy is not only one of artistic achievement but also of cultural advocacy. He understood the power of literature and theatre to shape society, challenge norms, and preserve the essence of Irish identity. Jimmy Murphy is a Dublin-based playwright with a string of works to his name, not least *The Kings of the Kilburn High Road*.

Venue: St John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €15.00



1.30pm **The County Exchange**

The County Exchange is a residency that brings experimental performance makers from both Ireland and New York to Listowel for two weeks with a return week in New York hosted by the Irish Arts Center. Kelly Copper and Pavol Liska of Nature Theatre of Oklahoma will be mentoring the group which consists of Ilan Bachrach, Kate Heffernan, Nóra Ní Analuain Fay, Lisa Fagan, Kristina Wong, Cerys Coburn and Colm Thomas Higgins. Join us for a sharing and discussion of their experience over the two weeks. This has been supported by funding from the Arts Council of Ireland, Kerry County Council, the Irish Arts Center, and St. John's Theatre.

Venue: Christy's Bar

Price: Free Event



3.00pm **Trio of Poets featuring Mark Granier, Peter Sirt and Enda Wiley**

A sumptuous poetic treat with three well-established poets. Mark Granier, author of five collections of poetry and recipient of three Arts Council Bursaries, the Vincent Buckley Poetry Prize and a Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship. Peter Sirt, whose nine collections of poetry have been published by Gallery Press and awards include the O'Shaughnessy Award for Poetry and the Michael Hartnett Award. Enda Wiley, author of five collections of poetry, and recipient of numerous Arts Council Bursaries, the Vincent Buckley Poetry Prize, and the Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: €15.00



4.30pm **Fiction: Searching for Home**

Roisin Meaney talks to Sophie Grenham about her new novel *Moving On*, structured around her protagonist's relocations. In addition to writing 22 books, Roisin has moved house more than 20 times herself. Born in Listowel, reared in Limerick, Roisin has lived in Zimbabwe, London, San Francisco and Dublin, Roisin discusses her many house moves and the ones which meant the most to her. Roisin is currently house hunting and considers the concept of "home" - Is it where you're from or is it what you make it?

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15.00



5.30pm

Fiction: Stories That Stay

Join Paul McVeigh and Andrew Meehan as they discuss their latest works with Carol Drinkwater. The power of storytelling, its diverse genres, and everything from dark humour and deep emotion to gripping tales of mystery and personal discovery will be explored by the trio.

Paul McVeigh's *I Hear You* is a collection of short stories, written especially for BBC Radio 4. The moving short stories are brave, honest, raw and funny and feature the ten-part sequence, 'The Circus', set around Cliftonville Circus, where five roads meet in North Belfast.

Andrew Meehan's much-anticipated *Best Friends* explores the depth of a relationship between two friends and the complexities of their bond in a world full of uncertainty.

Carol Drinkwater, known for her evocative memoirs and fiction, will share insights from her new book, *Summer in Provence* which will be published in July, but will be available in Listowel.

Venue: St John's Theatre & Arts Centre**Price: €15.00**

6.30pm

Fiction: From Beara to Brazil - How the search for belonging shapes our stories.*In association with Irish PEN.*

Cauvery Madhavan and Patrick Holloway introduce their new novels discussing the shared themes of personal identity and the search for a sense of belonging.

Cauvery Madhavan's fourth novel, *The Inheritance*, set in the Beara Peninsula, weaves the past and recent history into a tale of love, acceptance, forgiveness and belonging.

The Language of Remembering by Patrick Holloway is a deeply moving novel that explores the bonds between a mother and son as they reconnect through memory and past traumas.

Cauvery and Patrick will be in conversation with Marie Gethens.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel**Price: €15.00**



7.30pm

Poetry: Pádraig Ó Tuama & John O'Donnell

John O'Donnell and Pádraig Ó Tuama weave rich, intricate poetry that examines the human condition. They read from their recent works and discuss the loss, healing, and the transformative power of language that resonates through their poems.

Pádraig Ó Tuama's latest collection of poetry, *Kitchen Hymns*, is a collection of returning, of letting go, and of forgiveness. As a poet and theologian, Ó Tuama's work delves into the human psyche through the lens of history, religion, spirituality, and identity.

John O'Donnell's *Sunlight: New and Selected Poems* draws on his three previous collections, adding a number of new poems which, among other things, record the loss of the poet's mother in some of his most moving poems to date.

In association with Poetry Ireland.

Venue: The Plaza Centre

Price: €15.00



8.00pm

Theatre: Sharon's Grave

Athea Drama Group presents *Sharon's Grave* by John B. Keane. This deeply lyrical folk play, set on an Atlantic headland at the mercy of wind and rain, tells the tale of Trassie Conlee's fight to protect both herself and her brother Neelus from the menace of her ruthless cousin 'Deezie' Conlee, one of Keane's most extraordinary theatrical creations. The devious and menacing paraplegic 'Deezie' has locked sights on inheriting a farm at all costs, leading to tragedy.

Venue: St John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €20



8.00pm

Rambling House:

Join us for Listowel Rambling House where stories are shared, music is played, and everyone's welcome. This much-loved evening celebrates Irish culture through live traditional music, storytelling, and the kind of humour that brings people together. It's a celebration of community, heritage, and the joy of a good yarn or a lively tune. Bring a friend, bring the family, or come as you are for a night that honours the old ways and keeps them alive.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free Event



8.00pm **Live Music: Scullion**

Scullion are an Irish folk rock band that formed in the 1970's featuring Sonny Condell, Philip King and Robbie Overson. They recorded their first album in the early 80's called "Scullion" which led to them becoming one of Ireland's most innovative, original and brilliant live bands over the last 30 years.

Venue: Mike The Pies

Price: €25



9.00pm **Poets' Corner with Seán Lyons**

Christy's Bar in The Square, is the venue for the friendliest and best open mic poetry session in Ireland! Chancers, charmers, and chanters are all welcome. Bring your read and unread poems. First-time readers and seasoned veterans of the spoken word are welcome, 'to inspire, entertain, intrigue and intone.'

Venue: Christy's Bar

Price: Free Event



9.30pm **Words and Music of Clare**

Booker-nominated author Niall Williams and acclaimed musician Mike Hanrahan come together for an unforgettable evening of readings and music.

Niall will read from his new novel *Time of the Child*, while Mike, former member of Stockton's Wing, author, and Clare man, will weave his musical magic throughout the event. Set in 1962 in County Clare, *Time of the Child* follows a baby found after the annual cattle fair and the profound changes it brings to Dr. Robert Troy and his daughter, Ronnie.

This special evening blends literature, music, and storytelling in a way only Niall and Mike can deliver.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €20.00



FRIDAY EVENT GUIDE



10.00^{am} **The Storyteller's Trail : A Guided Walk Through Listowel's Tall Tales, Poets & Political Pranks**

Join John Keane as he passes by the birth places of literary greats, Bryan McMahon and John B Keane and examines the work of the master of plaster; the doyen of Sculptural stuccos, Pat McAuliffe. The tour will end in the Small Square where in May 1951, Tom Doodle, president of the Independent Coulogeous Party made his only public appearance. The man who promised to drill for oil off the coast of Ballybunion and who secured gravel rights on the moon for Listowel will be celebrated. No spoofers please!

Departs: Outside The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: Free Event



10.00^{am} **Ciorcal Comhrá - Conversational Irish**

Bí linn don ócáid mhiosúil seo lán le caint, craic agus ceol faoi stiúir Gabriel Fitzmaurice & Aidán Ó Murchú. Ócáid saor in aisce agus cuirfear na mílte fáilte romhat.

Join us for a morning of coffee and conversational Irish. From beginners to advanced, all are very welcome to come along, join in and enjoy the craic.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: Free Event



11.00^{am} **History: Joseph Dillon: The Newspaperman Who Befriended Kings, Presidents and Oil Tycoons by Kevin Rafter**

Emile Joseph Dillon witnessed some of the most dramatic events the world has ever seen including, the assassination of a Russian Tsar, the Dreyfus Court Martial and bloody massacres in Armenia. This is the previously untold story of a life that transferred from the slum streets of Victorian Dublin to the sumptuous salons of Tsarist Russia, from high politics in European capitals to the American oil rush in Mexico in the 1920s. Kevin Rafter is Full Professor of Political Communication at Dublin City University and a specialist in the politics and media of modern Ireland. In conversation with Mike Lynch.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: €15.00

**11.30^{am} Film Screening: Culture v War**

Antytila is a famous Ukrainian band whose members changed their musical instruments for weapons from the first day of the full-scale invasion. During their service, they were directly involved in the battles for Kyiv and Kharkiv. Through international media, they called on the world to actively support Ukraine and collaborated with U2 and performed online with Ed Sheeran. These are the stories of the war that the members of Antytila witnessed and participated in.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free Event

12^{noon}**Book Launches: Elizabeth Scanlan, Gaelic and Free: The Memoirs of Pádraig O'Callaghan & Matt Mooney, The Moon and Báinín**

Elizabeth Scanlan edited her grandfather's memoirs from school copybooks describing a Kerry childhood in times past, the bitter Irish civil war, internment in Kildare, imprisonment in Cork, and resistance to the decline of the Irish language. Pádraig O'Callaghan's account is a reminder of the struggle and tragedy of those who went before us, who gifted us today's *Ireland: Gaelic and Free*.

The Moon and Báinín, Matt Mooney's latest collection is a series of thoughtful, beautiful and outraged poems that reach across decades and continents in their focus and breadth. Sitting alongside poems of family and memory, of a childhood in rural South Galway and of the transcendence in nature and concerns for the natural world, are powerful condemnations of war and elegies for the people of Gaza.

Venue: Listowel Library

Price: Free Event

12.30^{pm} Fiction: Daily Debuts John Patrick McHugh and Lynda Marron in conversation with Neil Hegarty

Fun and Games by John Patrick McHugh is a stunning, darkly comic and deeply moving debut novel following a teenage boy as he comes of age on the west coast of Ireland. It takes in social class and its firm borders, manhood and its frailties, family and, of course, love.

Lynda Marron grew up in a small town called Prosperous in County Kildare. She moved to Cork when she was nine and lives there still. Her stories are about long-held love, friendship, and second chances. Her novel *A Bridge to Always* is a story about identity and place, about finding out who you are, who your people are, and what it means to be a family.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15





1.00pm **Lunchtime Theatre: Nora & Jim**

Written by Nora Connolly, *Nora and Jim* intricately tells the enchanting tale of literary genius, James Joyce and his beloved, lifelong muse Nora Barnacle. Featuring Julie Hale as Nora Barnacle and Rúaidhrí Conroy as James Joyce and is directed by Ronan Wilmot.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €15.00

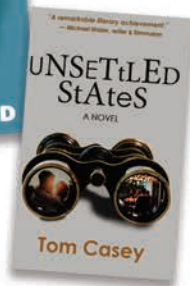


1.30pm **Poetry: Poetry on the Bawn**

An open mic session devoted exclusively to your poetry. No songs, no stories, just three minutes to present your poetic masterpiece to an appreciative audience of fellow poets on the steps of Listowel Castle when the sun shines, or indoors in the Seanchaí if it rains. MC John McGrath.

Venue: Outside Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free Event



2.00pm **Crime: Suspicious Minds with Jess Kidd and Tom Casey**

Join us for an hour of thrilling crime writing entertainment with Jess Kidd and Tom Casey.

Jess Kidd has made the leap from literary novel form to a life of crime writing with *Murder at Gull's Nest*. Introducing former nun, Nora Breen who has lost her faith and is hankering after the calling of a private investigator.

Tom Casey's third novel *Unsettled States* is a page-turning whodunnit. A small Connecticut coastal town is shaken by a set of seemingly random tragedies and a gripping investigation of facts and fabrications ensues.

Jess and Tom will be in conversation with Sophie Grenham.

Venue: The Plaza Centre

Price: €15.00



3.00pm **Viva Mary!**

Scannán faisnéise iontach de chuid TG 4 is ea **Viva Mary**, scéal Mary Lamb Waugh atá 92 bliain d'aois, scéal ina bhfuil feimíneachas, imirce, ealain agus oideachas taobh le taobh. Nuair a d'éirigh sí as bheith ag obair sheol sí an Mheánmhuir ina haonar.

'**Viva Mary**' is the captivating TG4 documentary, telling the story of 92-year-old Mary Lamb Waugh.

Mary will be in conversation with Gabriel Fitzmaurice.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €10.00

3.30pm **Wellness: Laugh, Live & Grow**

A transformative and humorous event of wellness, self-discovery and connection to nature with Marianne Power and John Connell.

Journalist, TedX speaker and author of *Help Me!* and *Love Me!*, Marianne Power truly believes that self-help will not change your life.

John Connell, playwright, journalist and farmer discusses a meditation on the rituals of farming life as he reads from his new book, *Twelve Sheep: Life Lessons From A Lambing Season*. Together they explore what it really means to live well in the modern world.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15.00





5.00pm **Fiction: Between Ghosts and Wildelings**

David Park and Lisa Harding present their latest novels of friendships, personal growth, and the complexities of human connection.

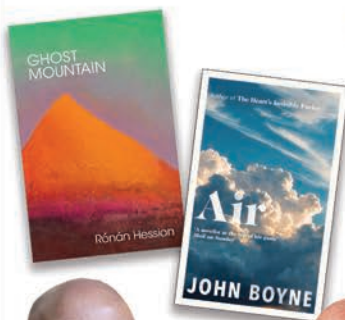
Lisa Harding's *The Wildelings* is a powerful exploration of the turbulent friendship between two girls who, shaped by the bitterness of betrayal and abandonment from those they trusted most, cling to each other.

David Park's *Ghost Wedding* is a beautiful novel following two troubled men, separated by nearly a century, bound by the ghosts that haunt an imposing Irish manor. In this masterful portrait of love and betrayal, David Park reveals the many ways the past seeps into the present.

David and Lisa will be in conversation with Anne O'Neill.

Venue: The Plaza Centre

Price: €15.00



6.30pm **Fiction: Where Mountains Breathe and Air Speaks.**

An Evening with Rónán Hession & John Boyne

Join author of *Ghost Mountain*, Rónán Hession and John Boyne, author of *Air* in conversation with Rhona Tarrant.

Following the successes of *Leonard* and *Hungry Paul and Panenka*, Rónán Hession's third novel, *Ghost Mountain*, is a fable that examines the reaction of a small town when a mountain appears overnight.

In a career spanning more than 30 years, John Boyne's final book in the Elements sequence, *Air* has just been published. *Water*, *Earth*, *Fire* and now *Air* follows the redemptive story of a father and a son on a moving journey to mend their troubled lives.

Rónán and John will be in conversation with Rhona Tarrant.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15.00



LISTOWEL

LITERARY FESTIVAL



presented by



SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM



Listowel
Writers' Week



ST. JOHN'S
THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE
Listowel

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE 2025

...where stories begin...again!

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY 28TH MAY

| TIME | EVENT | VENUE | COST |
|--------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| 8.00pm | Opening Night Ceremony & Awards | The Listowel Arms Hotel | Free |

THURSDAY 29TH MAY

| TIME | EVENT | VENUE | COST |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|------|
| 10.00am | Literary Walk | The Listowel Arms Hotel | Free |
| 10.00am | Exhibition Opening: Our Land, Our Story | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | Free |
| 11.00am | Knight of Kerry, Sir Adrian FitzGerald presents the Papers of Maurice Fitzgerald | Kerry Writers' Museum | €15 |
| 12noon | Book Launch: Disillusioned Unionist & Rejected Emancipationist | | |
| | The Papers of Maurice FitzGerald Volumes I & II | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 12noon | Stage Reading: Dic Walsh - Rud in Easnamh | St. Patrick's Hall | Free |
| 1.00pm | The John B. Keane Memorial Lecture by Jimmy Murphy | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |
| 1.30pm | The County Exchange Residency Performance | Christy's Bar | Free |
| 3.00pm | Trio of Poets: Enda Wyley, Peter Sirr and Mark Granier | Kerry Writers' Museum | €15 |
| 4.30pm | Roisin Meaney: Searching for Home | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 5.30pm | Stories that Stay, with Carol Drinkwater, Paul McVeigh and Andrew Meehan | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |
| 6.30pm | From Beara to Brazil with Cauvery Madhavan, Patrick Holloway and Marie Gethens | Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 7.30pm | Poetry: Pádraig O'Tuama and John O'Donnell | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 8.00pm | Theatre: Sharon's Grave | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €20 |
| 8.00pm | Rambling House | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 8.00pm | Live Music: Scullion | Mike The Pies | €25 |
| 9.00pm | Poet's Corner with Seán Lyons | Christy's Bar | Free |
| 9.30pm | Niall Williams & Mike Hanrahan: Words and Music of Clare | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €20 |

FRIDAY 30TH MAY

| TIME | EVENT | VENUE | COST |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|------|
| 10.00am | Literary Walk | The Listowel Arms Hotel | Free |
| 10.00am | Ciorcal Comhrá | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | Free |
| 11.00am | Joseph Dillon: The Newspaper Man with Kevin Rafter | Kerry Writers' Museum | €15 |
| 11.30am | Film Screening: Culture v War | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 12noon | Book Launch: Elizabeth Scanlan & Matt Mooney | Listowel Library | Free |
| 12.30pm | Daily Debut: John Patrick McHugh & Lynda Marron | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 1.00pm | Lunchtime Theatre: Nora & Jim | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |
| 1.30pm | Poetry on the Bawn | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 2.00pm | Jess Kidd & Tom Casey: Suspicious Minds | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 3.00pm | Viva Mary! Mary Waugh chats to Gabriel Fitzmaurice | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €10 |
| 3.30pm | Marianne Power & John Connell: Live, Laugh & Grow | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 5.00pm | David Park & Lisa Harding: Between Ghosts & Wildelings | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 7.00pm | Ronan Hession & John Boyne: Where Mountains Breathe and Air Speaks | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 8.00pm | Poetry Trio: Lindsey Hilsum, Gail McConnell & Jo Slade | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 8.00pm | Theatre: Mr Bergmann of Deadman's Point | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €20 |
| 9.00pm | Poets's Corner with Seán Lyons | Christy's Bar | Free |
| 9.30pm | Paul Durcan, 80 at 80 A Celebration of his Poetry | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €20 |

SATURDAY 31ST MAY

| TIME | EVENT | VENUE | COST |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|------|
| 10.30am | Sean Roynane: Nature Boy | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |
| 11.00am | Poetry Ireland Launch of Review Issue 145 with Victoria Kennefick | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 12noon | The Frank Hayes Memorial Event - Memory and Forgetting with Fergal Keane & Panel | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 1.00pm | Daily Debuts: Seán Farrell & June O'Sullivan | Kerry Writers' Museum | €15 |
| 1.00pm | Theatre: Baby by Lianne O'Hara | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |
| 2.30pm | Cúirt Filíochta | The Listowel Library | Free |
| 2.30pm | Christine Dwyer Hickey: Our London Lives | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 3.00pm | Tony Guerin: A Retrospective | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €10 |

SATURDAY 31ST MAY

| TIME | EVENT | VENUE | COST |
|--------|--|----------------------------------|------|
| 4.00pm | Nathan Thrall : A Day in the Life of Abed Salama | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 5.00pm | Kerry Writers' Event celebrating Kerry Voices | Kerry Writers' Museum | €10 |
| 6.00pm | Julian Borger: I Seek a Kind Person | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 7.30pm | Rita Ann Higgins at 70 - A Celebration | The Plaza Centre | €15 |
| 8.00pm | Theatre: The Beauty Queen of Leenane | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €20 |
| 9.30pm | Music & Memories: Fergal Keane & Andy Irvine | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €20 |

SUNDAY 1ST JUNE

| TIME | EVENT | VENUE | COST |
|---------|---|----------------------------------|------|
| 11.00am | Fintan Drury - Catastrophe: Nakba II | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 11.30am | Festival Mass | St. Mary's Church | n/a |
| 12noon | Youth Theatre: Sive | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €10 |
| 12.30pm | The Healing Session | John B. Keane's Bar | Free |
| 12.30pm | Daily Debuts: Jack Fennell & Maggie Armstrong | The Listowel Arms Hotel | €15 |
| 12.30pm | Book Launch: Godfrey Coppinger | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 1.30pm | Francesca Simon: Salka Lady of the Lake | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |
| 2.30pm | Doire Poets: Jennifer Horgan & Linda McKenna | Kerry Writers' Museum | €10 |
| 3.00pm | Film Screening: Poet Serhiy Zhadan and Natalya Korniyenko | The Listowel Arms Hotel | Free |
| 4.00pm | Maureen Beasley Poet's Corner | Kerry Writers' Museum | Free |
| 5.00pm | Book Launch & Concert: Breannán Ó Beaglaoich | St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre | €15 |

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8.00pm **Poetry Trio: Lindsey Hilsum, Gail McConnell & Jo Slade**

Gail McConnell and Lindsey Hilsum have a shared sensitivity to the deep emotional impact of war and conflict. They will be joined by artist and poet Jo Slade.

Over four decades as a foreign correspondent, poetry has helped Lindsey Hilsum make sense of the world. She will reflect on some of the poems collected in her captivating new book *I Brought the War with Me*.

Gail McConnell's debut poetry book, *The Sun is Open* (Penned in the Margins, 2021), looks at the trauma of her father's murder by the IRA. It won The John Pollard Foundation International Poetry Award and The Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize.

Jo Slade is the author of seven collections of poetry and two chapbooks of poems. She was joint recipient of the Michael Hartnett Poetry Prize 2014. Her most recent collection is *Once* (Salmon Poetry, 2025). In association with Poetry Ireland.

Venue: The Plaza Centre

Price: €15.00



8.00pm **Theatre: Mr Bergmann of Deadman's Point**

A mysterious and comic tale of Ireland's most famous unidentified man, brought by Nth Degree Productions. After three mysterious days in Sligo town involving fake names, non-existent addresses and a vanishing act for all his possessions, Mr Bergmann is found deceased at Deadman's Point beach, Sligo.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €20.00

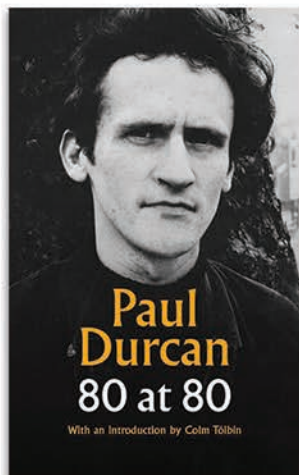


9.30pm **Poets' Corner with Seán Lyons**

Christy's Bar in The Square, is the venue for the friendliest and best open mic poetry session in Ireland! Chancers, charmers, and chanters are all welcome. Bring your read and unread poems. First-time readers and seasoned veterans of the spoken word are welcome, 'to inspire, entertain, intrigue and intone.'

Venue: Christy's Bar

Price: Free Event



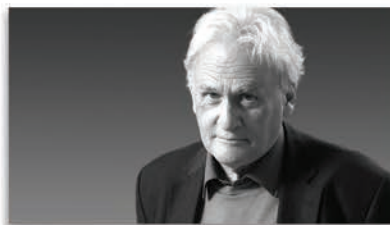
9.30^{PM} **Poetry: Celebrating the Poetry of Paul Durcan – An Evening of Music and Poems**

To mark Paul Durcan's eightieth birthday and the publication of *Paul Durcan 80 at 80*, edited by Niall MacMonagle with an introduction by Colm Tóibín.

Enjoy an evening of poetry and music with actor Mark O'Regan, former RTÉ weather presenter Jean Byrne with guest appearances by Christine Dwyer Hickey, Joanna Keane, Rita Ann Higgins, John O'Donnell and Enda Wyley.

Steeped in the goings-on of Ireland and preoccupied with its concerns, he has delighted, enriched and unsettled his readers. Durcan's output contains beguiling love poems, surreal liberating narratives, quirky memorable utterances and though his poetry is sometimes prompted by headlines – the Northern Troubles, the Divorce Referendum, the death of six nuns in a fire, the election of Mary Robinson, the election of Pope Francis – and sometimes by private concerns, complex relationships, joyous occasions – the breakdown of his marriage, his strained relationship with his father – Durcan's poetry is always courageously personal and passionately spiritual.

One of the most beloved Irish poets of the last half century, Durcan published his first collection, *Endsville*, with Brian Lynch in 1967. A winner of the Whitbread Poetry Prize and the Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award, his publications include *A Snail in My Prime*, *Crazy About Women*, *Greetings to our Friends in Brazil*, and *Cries of an Irish Caveman*. He also appeared on Van Morrison's 1990 album *Enlightenment*.



Paul was always a welcome visitor to Listowel.

The evening is curated and introduced by Niall MacMonagle and music provided by local jazz group, St. John's Trio.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €20.00

SATURDAY EVENT GUIDE



10.30^{am} **Nature Boy: Seán Ronayne**

Seán Ronayne is a Cork-born ornithologist, wildlife sound-recordist, award-winning author, and environmental activist who has spent a life immersed in nature. Following a childhood spent exploring the fields and woods of his hometown, he secured his first professional ornithology job in 2017, and in 2018 he moved to Barcelona with his partner Alba, a Catalan native, where he began recording birds and wildlife in earnest.

Upon returning to Ireland in 2021, he embarked on a mission to document the vocalisations of every Irish bird species, a daunting task revealing the precarious state of Irish ecology. He has now just three species left to record, out of almost 200, and has amassed a collection of over 12,000 recordings of Irish birds and other wildlife. In spring 2024, *Birdsong*, a documentary about Seán's recording project, was released to great acclaim.

His first book *Nature Boy*, won Irish Biography of the Year, and was also shortlisted for overall Irish Book of the Year. He is currently writing his second book.

Expect laughter, expect tears, and expect the unexpected. Not to be missed – you will never look at the world around you in the same way again.

Seán will be in conversation with John Connell

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €15.00



P Poetry
Ireland
Eigse
Éireann

11.00^{am} **Poetry: Poetry Ireland Review Issue 145**

Join us as we launch Poetry Ireland Review Issue 145, Ireland's pre-eminent poetry journal. Edited by Kerry resident, poet Victoria Kennefick, the launch will feature readings by some of the contributors including Victoria herself. The issue features exciting new poems from Aoife Lyall, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, Liz Quirke, and Dillon Jaxx, among many others. A wide variety of books are reviewed and featured prose includes an essay from Fran Brearton remembering Michael Longley.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free Event



12 noon

The Frank Hayes Memorial Event:

Memory and Forgetting - The Use and Abuse of The Past

Fergal Keane and his guests consider whether memorialising the atrocities of the past makes any difference in preventing such events in the present. Are those who forget really doomed to repeat? What if remembering becomes a justification for contemporary abuses? Joining Fergal, who is a veteran of reporting numerous conflicts for the BBC are Lindsey Hilsum, Diplomatic Editor of Channel 4 News, an eyewitness to the Rwandan genocide and dozens of conflicts around the world; Conor Brosnan, author of a new work on the 16th century massacre by English forces at Smerwick in County Kerry, and the grandson of a famous North Kerry IRA guerrilla, Con Brosnan, and Gail McConnell, celebrated poet from Belfast, and daughter of a prison officer who was murdered by the IRA during the Troubles. In an area steeped in the legacy of past violence from old conquests to the Irish Revolution in the 20th century, this promises to be a stimulating and enlightening event.

Venue: The Plaza Centre

Price: €15.00



1.00pm

Fiction: Daily Debuts Seán Farrell and June O'Sullivan

Frogs for Watchdogs is a dark, funny, tender and raw read from Seán Farrell. Told in the unique voice of a wild boy with a ferocious imagination, this gripping debut tells of a young man who will stop at nothing to protect his family from the darkness on the edges of their unstable rural life.

June O'Sullivan's *The Lighthouse Keeper's Wife* is a heart-breaking story of motherhood, survival and resilience set on the isolated island of Skellig Michael. This poignant and vivid debut sensitively explores the depths of the human spirit and its ability to deal with loss, grief, greed and the enduring power of hope.

Seán and June will be in conversation with Neil Hegarty.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: €15.00




**FRINGE
LAB**
1.00pm
Lunchtime Theatre: BABY by Lianne O'Hara

Winner of the Dublin Fringe Little Gem Award, BABY is a dark comedy about baby envy and unsolicited advice from strangers. Camilla is 36 and she wants a baby. With dark humour and honest vulnerability, BABY delves into baby envy and pretend pregnancies, while journeying into a landscape of fertility clinics and assisted human reproduction. *'A breathtakingly vulnerable portrayal'* - Irish Times

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre
Price: €15.00

2.30pm
Cúirt Filíochta: Irish Language Poets read their work

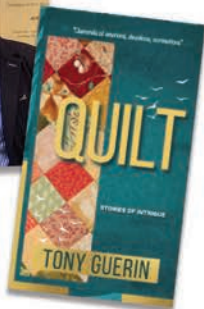
Tráth teagmhála do lucht labhartha, léite agus scríofa na Gaeilge, ag ceiliúradh Cúirt Lios Eiltín agus Traidisiún Chiarraí Thuaidh. I measc na bhfilí a bheidh ag reacaireacht beidh: *Róisín Sheehy, Ceatí Ní Bheildiúin, Séamus Barra Ó Súilleabháin, Cormac Mac Gearailt, Paddy Bushe, Bríd Ní Mhóráin, Pádraig Mac Fhearghusa, Simón Ó Faoláin, Ciarán Ó Ceallaigh, Matt Ó Maonaigh, Liam Ó Ceallaigh*. Eagraithe do Sheachtain na Scríbhneoirí ag Matt Ó Maonaigh, Cléireach na Cúirte, i gcomhar le Glór na nGael Lios Tuathail agus le tacaíocht ó Oifig na Gaeilge, Comhairle Chontae Chiarraí.

Venue: Listowel Library
Price: Free Event
2.30pm
Fiction: Our London Lives

Multi-award winning author of six novels including Tatty, which was chosen as UNESCO's Dublin One City One Book, Christine Dwyer Hickey will discuss her latest epic literary novel, *Our London Lives* with Niall MacMonagle.

It follows two Irish outsiders in the vast and often unforgiving London in 1979. Teenage runaway Milly and young boxer Pip seek refuge in each other but over the decades their lives follow different paths, interweaving from time to time, often in one another's sight, always on one another's mind, yet rarely together. Dark and brave, this epic novel offers a rich and moving portrait of an ever-changing city, and a profound inquiry into character, loneliness and the nature of love.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel
Price: €15.00

3.00pm **Tony Guerin, A Retrospective**

A reflection on the life and writings of Listowel author Tony Guerin. Amongst his works are six full length plays, two one act plays, three novels, a TV series and two commissioned film scripts. Tony's latest novel, *Quilt* which is a patchwork of disparate yet connected stories, is to be launched at this years Listowel Literary Festival.

A thirty-minute film produced in association with Writers Week, is being screened as part of this retrospective. There will be a question-and-answer session with Tony after the film, a reading from his new novel *Quilt* and a scene from his new play *The Yank Invention* to be performed by the Lartigue Company. Tony's latest Novel, *Quilt* is set in Co. Clare. This novel reveals a disparate collection of intriguing and individual stories linked through location, circumstance and relationships.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

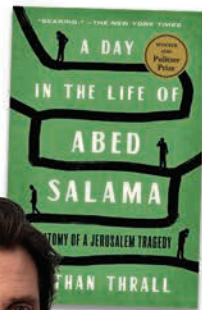
Price: €10.00

4.00pm **Non-fiction: Nathan Thrall - A Day in the Life of Abed Salama**

Nathan Thrall is an American writer living in Jerusalem. In 2024, he received the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction for *A Day in the Life of Abed Salama*. An international bestseller, it was translated into more than two dozen languages, selected as a *New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice*, and named a best book of the year by over twenty publications, including *The New Yorker*, *The Economist*, and *Time*. He is also the author of *The Only Language They Understand*. His reporting, essays, and criticism have appeared in the *London Review of Books*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The New York Review of Books*. He spent a decade at the International Crisis Group, where he was director of the Arab-Israeli Project, and has taught at Bard College.

Venue: The Plaza Centre

Price: €15.00



**5.00pm Literary: Kerry Voices**

A celebration of the Kingdom's rich literary tradition featuring esteemed writers rooted in the cultural and creative life of Kerry

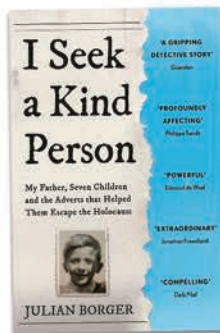
Eileen Sheehan's work explores the joys and foibles of human life and relationships viewed through the prisms of memory, dream, mythology and folklore. A winner of the Brendan Kennelly Poetry Award, her most recent collection is *The Narrow Way of Souls*.

Paddy Bushe is a poet, editor, translator in both English and Irish, and is a member of Aosdána. The primary and longstanding source of his work has been the land and seascape of his adoptive home in Waterville, especially the evolving culture inherent in it.

Lorraine Carey writes poetry, haiku and non-fiction with work published in *Magma*, *Spelt*, and *Poetry Ireland Review* among others. Her craft explores ecocentrism and the transformative power of nature, creativity and ornithology.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: €10.00

**6.00pm Memoir: Julian Borger – I Seek a Kind Person**

As an esteemed international journalist with experience covering the Balkan wars and the Snowden files, work which won him a Pulitzer, Julian Borger discusses his second book, *I Seek a Kind Person* which delves into his own family's history. A personal advertisement posted in a British newspaper led Julian down a path through his grandfather's and father's fate amongst millions fleeing the Holocaust. It read simply, 'I seek a kind person who will educate my intelligent boy, aged 11'.

Julian will be in conversation with Lindsey Hilsum.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15.00

7.30pm

Poetry: RITA ANN HIGGINS at 70 with Moya Cannon and Victoria Kennefick

A special event celebrating decades of wonderful writing by poet Rita Ann Higgins with readings of her work from award winning poets Victoria Kennefick and Moya Cannon and moderated by Gabriel Fitzmaurice.

Born in Galway, Rita Ann Higgins was one of 13 children in her family and left school at the age of 14, she began to write poetry in her twenties after being hospitalised with TB. She has published twelve books of poetry and prose, including *Sunny Side Plucked*, *An Awful Racket*, *Throw in the Vowels: New & Selected Poems*, *Ireland Is Changing Mother* and *Tongulish*.

Rita Ann's frank, wry poems often look squarely at economic and gender-based inequalities. Calling hers a "smart, sassy, unabashed, female working class voice in Irish writing" in a 2011 Irish Times review of *Ireland Is Changing Mother*, Fintan O'Toole observes that "the anger in her work is transmuted into invention and absurdity, and it rubs shoulders with other deliciously deadly sins, like lust and pride."

The first of a dozen poetry books by Rita Ann was published in 1986. Her work captures her as a gutsy, anarchic chronicler of Irish lives and foibles. In 2026 Bloodaxe will publish her *Collected Poems* to mark her 70th birthday. In 2021 she received The Living Poets Society Award. She was shortlisted for The Ireland Professor of Poetry in 2022 and is a member of Aosdána.

Moya Cannon won the Brendan Behan Award for the best first collection of poetry in 1990 for *Oar* and Victoria Kennefick's debut collection, *Eat or We Both Starve*, won the Seamus Heaney First Collection Poetry Prize and the Dalkey Book Festival Emerging Writer of the Year Award.

Venue: The Plaza Centre**Price: €15.00**



8.00^{pm} Theatre: The Beauty Queen of Leenane

Local drama group, Flavour of the Month Productions present Martin McDonagh's dramatic play set in the mountains of Connemara. It tells the story of Maureen Folan, a plain and lonely woman in her early 40s, and Mag, her manipulative, ageing mother.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €20.00

9.30^{pm} Music and Memories: Fergal Keane with Andy Irvine

Legendary folk singer-songwriter, Andy Irvine will chat to Fergal Keane about his life in music and perform some of his wonderful songs.

Throughout his extraordinary career, Irvine has remained an accomplished singer, storyteller and commentator of music and songs. One of the founding members of Planxty, the band schooled a generation of young people in the beauty of folk music.

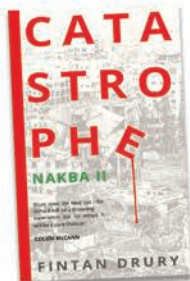
Fergal Keane was one such young man in Cork in the bleak Republican 70s, who was inspired by Irvine - a campaigner for the poor and downtrodden with songs fired by conscience.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €20.00



SUNDAY EVENT GUIDE



11.00^{am} History: Fintan Drury – Catastrophe: Nakba II

In *Catastrophe*, Fintan Drury offers an unflinching exploration of Israel's campaign and is a call to understand the unique suffering of the Palestinians. He argues that the Hamas attack on 7th October 2023 was the inevitable result of almost eight decades of violent oppression of indigenous Palestinians. Former journalist, Drury volunteered in a refugee camp in Athens in 2016 and is chair of SARI (Sport Against Racism Ireland).

Fintan will be in conversation with Mike Lynch.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15.00



11.30^{am} Festival Mass

Join us for our annual mass from St. Mary's Church which will be celebrated by Canon Declan O'Connor. Live streaming also available online at www.listowelparish.com.

Venue: St. Mary's Church

12^{noon} Youth Theatre: SIVE

'Shout Out Youth Theatre' present John B. Keane's classic masterpiece. Sive is forced into an arranged marriage with a much older man resulting in tragic consequences. Directed by Jo Jordan and Tara Downes, set design by Miriam Slemon and lighting by Joe Murphy.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €10.00



12.30^{pm} Book Launch: Godfrey Coppinger - What Comes to Mind

Godfrey Coppinger shows how prompts inspire her to create stories, poems, and drawings. These are stories of love, sorrow; serious poems, silly stories; fairy tales and haunted houses.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free Event



12.30pm **The Healing Session and the Laying of the Hands: Billy Keane**

Music, songs and stories led by Billy Keane. Everyone gets a turn. Now in its 33rd year, this afternoon of gaiety never fails to disappoint and there might even be a playing of a teapot!

Venue: John B. Keane's Bar

Price: Free Event



12.30pm **Daily Debuts: Lost Voices & Old Romantics with Jack Fennell and Maggie Armstrong**

Join two of Ireland's most exciting contemporary writers to discuss their recent publications, *Old Romantics* by Maggie Armstrong and the new addition to the *Recovered Voices* series, *Your Own Dark Shadow*, edited by Jack Fennell.

Maggie will discuss her stunning debut collection of short stories that explore the awkward spaces between expectation and reality, and Jack will take us through his work rescuing lost voices from Ireland's literary past. Together they will discuss their creative processes, the importance of literary recovery, and the ways in which Irish storytelling continues to evolve.

Maggie and Jack will be in conversation with Jackie Lynam.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: €15.00



1.30pm **Fiction: Francesca Simon Debuts Adult Novel**

The captivating world of Francesca Simon MBE, is unveiled to adult readers with her first novel, *Salka: Lady of the Lake*. In this exquisite retelling of a haunting myth, the age-old story of a tragic romance is a thought-provoking drama for our times. Francesca has written over sixty books, including the Horrid Henry series, which has sold millions of copies worldwide.

Francesca will be in conversation with Niall McMonagle.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €15.00

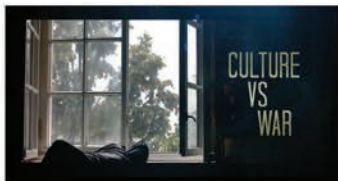


2.30^{pm} Poetry: Doire Press Jennifer Horgan and Linda McKenna

Jennifer Horgan was awarded a mentorship with Thomas McCarthy in 2023 through the Munster Literature Centre. She was shortlisted for the Yeats Thoor Ballylee Poetry Prize in 2023. *Care*, is her debut poetry collection. Linda McKenna won the An Post/Irish Book Awards/Listowel Writers Week Irish Poem of the Year in 2020 for the title poem in her debut poetry collection, *In the Museum of Misremembered Things*. *Four Thousand Keys* is her second collection.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: €10.00



3.00^{pm} Irish Premiere of Documentary: "Culture vs War. Serhiy Zhadan" and Discussion with Ukrainian writer Natalya Korniyenko

This poignant NEWKD Ukrainian cultural event delves into the profound intersections of literature, war, and resilience. A compelling documentary, Culture vs War. Serhiy Zhadan, chronicles the journey of the Ukrainian poet and novelist who has been actively supporting the Ukrainian army as a volunteer since the onset of the war.

Join journalist and author Natalya Korniyenko for an insightful conversation about her book, Words and Bullets, a compilation of contemporary Ukrainian writers and journalists who, amidst the realities of war, have taken up arms or volunteered to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine. These conversations shed light on the sacrifices made by cultural figures in times of conflict. Robert Carey from NEWKD will moderate the discussion with Natalya.

Venue: The Listowel Arms Hotel

Price: Free Event

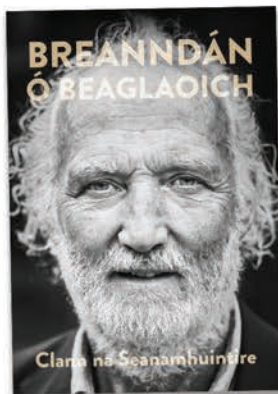


4.00^{pm} Poetry: Maureen Beasley Poet's Corner

A fitting finale to poetry at the festival, dedicated to the memory of Maureen Beasley who initiated this event over 40 years ago. An informal gathering of aspiring, established poets or indeed anyone with a lyrical inclination. Niall Beasley, a grandson of Maureen has generously sponsored a poetry prize, which will be awarded to the best performer at the event.

Venue: Kerry Writers' Museum

Price: Free Event



5.00^{pm} Book Launch: Breannán Ó Beaglaoich

Bidh linn ar an 1ú Meitheamh aige Féile Scríbhnoireachta Lios Tuathail mar a seolfhaidh Breannán Ó Beaglaoich leabhar a bheatha dárbh teideal *Clann Na Seanamhuintire*. Sé cnamh droma an leabhair ná a shaol mar cheoltóir, ealaíontóir, gníomhaí pobaill, eagraitheoir féile ceoil, agus láithreoir teilifíse agus é ag cur síos ar a mhuintir roimhis agus na tréithe a shineadar chuige a dhein é mar áta sé inniú. Mar aon leis sin beidh sé ag seimint is ag canadh cuid de amhráin a mhuintire is ag léamh as an leabhar i mBéarla is i nGaeilinn mar chuid don ócáid. Lena chois beidh a mhac Cormac a bheidh i láthair don seóladh chomh maith. Sé Cormac Begley atá ag foilsiú an leabhair féna chomhlucht foilseoithearachta fhéin dárbh ainm “Airt”

Join us on the 1st of June at Listowel Literary Festival for the launch of *Clann na Seanamhuintire*, the autobiography of Breannán Ó Beaglaoich. The book traces his life as a musician, artist, activist, festival organiser, and television presenter, and explores his family roots and the traditions that shaped him. Both the Irish and English editions will be launched, with Breannán performing with his son Cormac, in a concert as part of the event.

Cormac Begley is publishing *Clann na Seanamhuintire* under his new printing press, *Airt*.

Venue: St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Price: €15.00





WORKSHOPS AND MASTERCLASSES

ESSAY WRITING IN THE 21ST CENTURY WITH JOHN MACKENNA. (3-DAYS €180)

Memory, gender, politics, religion, sexuality, sensuality, life, death, the hereafter, the here and now, childhood, growing older, lost love, found love, landscape – all of these offer possibilities in the essay form. (9.30am - 12.30pm).

FICTION IN THE SHAPE OF LOVE WITH ANDREW MEEHAN (3-DAYS €180)

This three-day workshop will look at the difficult decisions you make at the start of a project. (9.30am - 12.30pm).

MEMORIES & MEMOIR WITH MARIANNE POWER (3-DAYS €180)

Marianne Power will help you to explore your memories and play with different ways to write them in a vivid and engaging way. (9.30am - 12.30pm).

SHORT STORY CREATIVE KICKSTART WITH AINGEALA FLANNERY (3-DAYS €180)

Do you have a short story in your head that you're struggling to put into words? If so, this workshop is for you. (9.30am - 12.30pm).

POETRY FOR THE CURIOUS WITH MARK GRANIER (3-DAYS €180)

This course will encourage questions and ideas, and invite you to immerse yourselves in conversations about poetry. (10.00am - 12.30pm).

MASTERCLASS: HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY WITH OSCAR WINNER ALICE DOYARD (1-DAY €75)

A powerful Masterclass led by Oscar-Winning French director and producer. (10.00am - 12.30pm).

MASTERCLASS: SPOKEN WORD POETRY WITH ALL-IRELAND SLAM CHAMPION CORMAC MAC GEARAILT (1-DAY €40)

A Masterclass focused on the art of reading, writing and performing spoken word poetry. (10.00am - 12.30pm).

Workshops and Masterclasses information and bookings available online at writersweek.ie.

LITERARY AWARDS 2025



**Mark Pigott KBE &
The Pigott Family**



**Bill Walsh
& Family**



Foras na Gaeilge

The Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year Award

Sponsor: Kerry Group PLC
Adjudicators: Paul McVeigh & Carol Drinkwater
Prize Fund: €22,000

The Pigott Poetry Prize in association with Listowel Writers' Week

Sponsor: Mark Pigott KBE and the Pigott Family
Adjudicators: Peter Sirr & Moya Cannon
Prize Fund: €14,000

The Bryan MacMahon Short Story Award

Sponsor: Kerry County Council
Adjudicator: Serena Garavaglia
Prize: €1,000

The Single Poem Award

Sponsor: Bill Walsh & Family
Adjudicator: John McGrath
Prize: €700

Duais Foras Na Gaeilge

Urraitheoir: Foras na Gaeilge
Moltóir: Paddy Bushe
Duais: €1,000



Collection of Poetry Competition

Dedicated to the memory of Joni Costelloe

Sponsor: Tim Costelloe - Profile Developments
Adjudicators: Stephen Sexton
Prize Fund: €2,500

THE
NILSSON
FAMILY

The Nilsson Local Heritage Writing Competition

Sponsor: The Nilsson Family
Adjudicators: Tony Bergin
Prize Fund: €1,400



NORTHERN IRELAND
PRISON SERVICE

Writing in Prisons Competition

Sponsor: Irish Prison Service, Northern Ireland Prison Service & Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas
Adjudicator: Listowel Writers' Week Editorial Board
Prize: €2,250



Creative Writing for Adults with Learning Difficulties / Disabilities

Sponsor: SSE Thermal
Adjudicator: Listowel Writers' Week Editorial Board
Prize: €1,000

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

LISTOWEL

LITERARY FESTIVAL

presented by

SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM



Listowel
Writers' Week



ST. JOHN'S
THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE
Festival

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
Kerry County Council



Mark Pigott KBE &
The Pigott Family



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Bill Walsh
& Family



The Pen Place

FINE WRITING INSTRUMENTS & STATIONERY



THE
NILSSON
FAMILY

The
LISTOWEL ARMS HOTEL
The Square, Listowel, Co. Kerry, Ireland



An Roinn Coimíre Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

FESTIVAL 2025



Listowel
Writers' Week

SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM



ST. JOHN'S
THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE
Listowel

MEET THE TEAM

Listowel Writers' Week Chairman: Ned O'Sullivan

Listowel Writers' Week Directors: Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Joanna Keane O'Flynn, Mary Kennelly, Lisa O'Flaherty, Margaret Sheehan, Christy Walsh

Kerry Writers' Museum Chairman: David Browne

Kerry Writers' Museum Directors: Jimmy Deenihan, Sean McCarthy, Aidán Ó Murchú, Madeleine O'Sullivan, Paddy Regan

Kerry Writers' Museum Board: Bob Barkess, Bernie Carmody, Garbriel Fitzmaurice, James Kenny, Colette O'Connor, Ian O'Shea, Karen Trench, Marion Walsh

Listowel Writers' Week Festival Manager:

Katie O'Brien

Festival Producer:

Cara Trant

Festival Curator:

Máire Logue

Festival Admins:

Brid Mason, Pat Mulvihill

Marketing Manager:

Miriam Slemon

Marketing Assistant:

Michael Dowling

Cover Art & Design:

Shayne Mangan

Festival Coverage:

Mairead O'Gorman

Video Production:

Michael O'Gorman

Website Development:

SJS Web Design

Printing:

Listowel Printing Works

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Listowel Literary Festival would like to thank the community of Listowel for their help, sponsorship, patronage and support for this year's Festival.

SEANCHAI

Kerry Writers'

MUSEUM

LOCATED IN THE HERITAGE TOWN OF LISTOWEL
THE LITERARY CAPITAL OF IRELAND

Where Stories Come To Life



Discover Ireland's Storytelling Tradition in Kerry Writers' Museum, Listowel

An Authentic Irish Cultural Experience

Authentic Irish Experience – Explore Ireland's rich literary and cultural heritage through the works of John B. Keane, Bryan MacMahon, and other legendary Irish writers.

Unforgettable Entertainment – Enjoy live storytelling and traditional Irish music and song from renowned local entertainers.

Prime Location – Ideally situated near the Wild Atlantic Way, perfect for itinerary stops.

Culinary Delights – Indulge in locally sourced Irish food and beverages.





GENERAL INFORMATION

BOOKING INFORMATION

For full programme of events and tickets visit:

- Listowel Writers' Week - www.writersweek.ie **Tel: 068 21074**
- Seanchai, Kerry Writers' Museum - www.kerrywritersmuseum.com **Tel: 068 22212**
- St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre - www.stjohnstheatre.ie **Tel: 068 22566**

EVENTS

Programme and performers may be subject to change. All information in this programme is correct at the time of going to print. Events are approximately 1 hour in duration. For ticket enquiries during the Festival our bookings desk will be located in the Listowel Arms Hotel as usual, or visit us online.

RECORDING

The recording of events will not take place for live events on this year's programme. We ask participants to refrain from recording these live events.

REFUNDS

Once purchased, tickets cannot be exchanged or refunds given. Refunds will only be made in the event of a cancelled performance.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Listowel Literary Festival reserves the right to refuse admission or to remove persons on the grounds of public/online safety. All works, presentations, debates, interviews, contributions and like events produced and presented during Listowel Literary Festival by authors and contributors shall be the copyright of Listowel Literary Festival unless specifically otherwise agreed beforehand. In participating or speaking in any event organised by Listowel Literary Festival, whether as a presenter, speaker, contributor or attendee, you are granting to Listowel Literary Festival the copyright of the same and, without prejudice to the foregoing, the exclusive right to film, record, print, publish, broadcast, reproduce, sell, distribute, translate the same without fee or licence.



SEANCHAI
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM





*“Ní neart go
cur le chéile”*

