



LISTOWEL INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL 2025

SEPTEMBER 18 – 21

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS





WELCOME



Friends, Guests, and Fellow Lovers of Story,

Fáilte romhaibh go léir – a warm welcome to you all – to the 7th annual Listowel International Storytelling Festival here at Kerry Writers' Museum, in the literary heart of County Kerry.

As the evenings grow longer and the air turns crisp with the promise of autumn, we gather once again under the spell of a tradition as old as time: the telling of stories. Inspired by the Irish Rambling House of old – where neighbours and strangers alike came together to share songs, recitations, tales, and laughter – we are proud to revive that spirit of community, creativity, and connection right here in Listowel.

Over the next four days, our festival will host storytellers, musicians, poets, artists, and dreamers from near and far. Our stages, our pubs, our streets – even our castle – will come alive with stories that cross generations, borders, and languages.

We begin our festival with something deeply special: a tribute to Kerry's own Sonny Egan – a man whose voice has entertained and educated, whose door was always open, and whose rambling house became the kind of place that lives on in the memories of all who entered.

We are delighted this year to partner with the World Storytelling Café and Marrakech International Storytelling Festival to bring enchanting Moroccan tales to our audiences.

This year's programme is rich and varied. Whether you're here for a workshop on body language in storytelling, an exploration of bee folklore and Brehon Laws, or simply to lose yourself in a tale told under the stars, I invite you to take part fully. Speak, Listen, Share, Laugh, Cry, and above all – Connect.

On behalf of our team at Kerry Writers' Museum, our volunteers, supporters, sponsors, and everyone who helped bring this festival to life, I thank you for joining us. Let the stories begin.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh, agus bainigí taitneamh as an bhféile.
Thank you, and enjoy the festival.

Cara Trant, Festival Director





THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18TH



OPENING NIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO SONNY EGAN

There has never been anyone before quite like Sonny Egan. He is not just a champion storyteller, he is a musician, a singer, a podcaster, an actor and an expert on many subjects. He is generous with his talents and for years opened his door to everyone in his famous rambling house.

On the opening night of our festival, we pay tribute to Sonny, one of Kerry's cultural icons. Featuring music, song and dance with Lixnaw Comhaltas, of which Sonny is a member, with storytellers Frances Kennedy, Daisy Kearney, Conor Cox and other special guests.



Kerry Writers' Museum

Time: 8 pm

Tickets: €10

(Refreshments served)





FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19th



LUCKY LEGENDS: EXPLORING IRISH FOLKLORE & GOOD FORTUNE

This interactive folklore workshop delivered by historian and local educator Tom Dillon will explore the rich world of Irish folklore with a particular focus on good luck traditions.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 9.30 to 11.30 am** **Tickets: €25**

STORYTELLING IN SCHOOLS

Storytellers Maria Gillen & Seosamh Ó Maolalaí (Ireland), John Row (UK) and Omar Belaarej (Morocco) will visit local primary schools to share exciting tales about faraway places, funny characters, brave heroes, and magical adventures. Children will get to listen, imagine, and enjoy stories from different cultures and traditions. Guaranteed to be a fun and exciting way to learn, laugh, and travel the world through words.

 **Local Primary Schools** **Time: 10 am to 1 pm** **Free Event**

ART EXHIBITION: CLOSING THE CIRCLE

In this art exhibition Priscilla Donovan is closing the circle as she started it, with visual art, celebrating a return to her first love. She explores and experiments with styles, mediums and any idea that pops into her head. Priscilla prefers oil paints and never gets tired of recreating the human face, particularly women. The launch will include the story A VOICE FROM ABOVE, and a 10-minute play THE NURSING HOME BLUES starring Christopher Fitzgerald, Tom Stack and Noelle McGibney.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 11 am** **Free Event**

CÚ RÍ MAC DAIRE (THE DRUID OF MANY FACES)

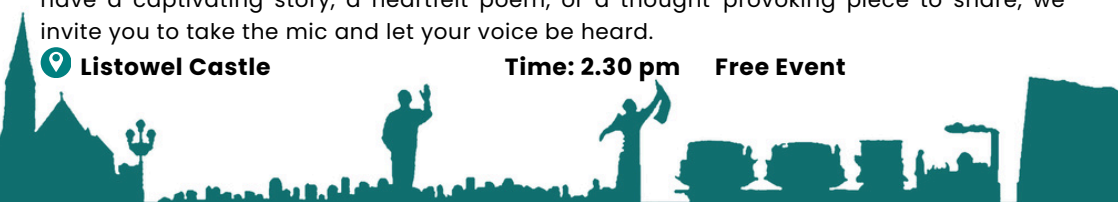
Not many warriors have ever got one over on the most lauded of warriors Cú Chulainn. But there was one giant and sorcerer who not only beat, but buried Cú Chulainn to his armpits, cut his luscious locks and smeared his head with dung. So brutal was the humiliation Cú Rí Mac Daire laid upon the hero of Ulster that Cú Chulainn dared not show his face for a whole year. Written & presented by *Foinse*.

 **St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre** **Time: 1 pm** **Tickets: €15**

STORY & POETRY ON THE BAWN

Join poet John McGrath for our first Story & Poetry Swap of the weekend. Whether you have a captivating story, a heartfelt poem, or a thought-provoking piece to share, we invite you to take the mic and let your voice be heard.

 **Listowel Castle** **Time: 2.30 pm** **Free Event**





FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19th



FOCAIL, FONN IS FILÍOCHT

Bí linn d'tráthnóna álainn lán le healaín na Gaeilge – áit a dtiocfaidh focail, fonn agus filíocht le chéile go beo bríomhar! Beidh an file mór le rá Gabriel Fitzmaurice i mbun an tí mar Fhear an Tí, agus é ag treorú na hócáide le croí, greann agus ceol na bhfocal le aíonna speisialta. Beidh deis ag lucht féachana páirt a ghlacadh chomh maith – mar sin tabhair leat do scéal, do dhán nó d'amhrán más mian leat, nó tar go simplí chun éisteacht agus taitneamh a bhaint as an ócáid.

 **St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre** **Time: 4.30 pm** **Free Event**

BOOK LAUNCH: UNVEILED

Unveiled is the debut poetry collection by poet Sandra Behan. This compelling collection invites readers to look beneath the surface of their emotional lives, to the significant if not immediately visible feelings below. Remarkably varied for a debut collection, *Unveiled* includes warm recollections of childhood and family, thoughtful reflections on world events, and intimately personal poems that speak to the complexities of relationships.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 6 pm** **Free Event**

STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD


On Culture Night we celebrate diverse oral traditions passed down through generations, with storytellers Inés Álvarez Villa from Spain, Omar Bellaarej from Morocco, John Row from the United Kingdom, Godfrey Copping from the USA & Seosamh Ó Maolalái from Ireland. . Featuring fairy tales, myths, and folktales across various cultures, but with universal themes. With Bean an Tí Maria Gillen.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 7.30 pm** **Free Event**

LATE NIGHT POETRY & STORIES

Listowel Writers' Week Poets Corner

We are delighted to collaborate with Listowel Writers' Week on Culture Night for a lively Open Mic night where anything could happen! Feast on plenty of courage, culture and the craic at Christy's Bar. Enjoy verses & stories from emerging and established voices, paired with a pint and good company in the heart of literary Listowel.

 **Christy's 'The Well' Bar** **Time: 9 pm** **Free Event**





SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20th



THE STORYTELLERS TRAIL

Join John Keane on this story walk and discover the birth places of literary greats, Bryan McMahon and John B Keane, the doyen of Sculptural stuccos, Pat McAuliffe and ending in the Small Square where in May 1951, Tom Doodle, president of the Independent Coulogeous Party made his only public appearance.

 **Departs from Listowel Castle** **Time: 10 am** **Free Event**

CELTIC WARRIORS & LEGENDS WORKSHOP

Calling all young warriors! Sign up now for our action-packed Celtic Warriors & Legends Workshop. This interactive, hands-on storytelling & art workshop will transport young learners back to ancient Ireland, where fearless warriors roamed, druids cast their spells, and epic tales were told around roaring fires. Suitable for children aged 5 to 12 years.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 10.30 to 11.30 am** **Tickets: €10**

BEYOND WORDS: TELLING WITH MOVEMENT AND PRESENCE

A storytelling workshop with Inés Álvarez Villa

Whether you're new to storytelling or a seasoned teller, this workshop is a chance to explore new ways of connecting with your stories and your audience by bringing not just your voice, but your whole self into the telling.

 **St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre** **Time: 11 am to 1 pm** **Tickets: €25**

BOOK LAUNCH: GRIT

GRIT is the debut multimedia book by Kerry artist & writer Aidan O'Leary of weaving poetry, prose, photography and sound. It explores resilience, memory, and the quiet force of survival through layered storytelling. Each piece invites the reader to move between image, word, and sound — a tactile reflection on inner grit.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 11.30 am** **Free Event**

LUNCHTIME LECTURE: THE KEEPER OF BEES

Did you know that bees have been around for over 100 million years? Or that the Brehon Laws included judgments about the rightful ownership of swarms? In this lecture Eimear Chaomhnách, author of 'The Keeper of Bees' presents folklore and legend about bees and beekeeping in Ireland including St Gobnait's travels to County Kerry, the patroness of the bees!

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 1 pm** **Tickets: €10**





SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20th




MAGIC CARPETS: SHARED STORIES BETWEEN IRELAND AND MOROCCO

In this session Omar Bellaarej brings old Moroccan tales to life, sharing stories filled with wisdom, morals, and cultural traditions. Whether he is sharing exciting adventures or explaining the deeper meanings of old proverbs, Omar's storytelling crosses language barriers and shows the timeless value of stories. Omar will be joined by Maria Gillen who will share the ancient Irish story of Manannán Mac Lir which she has created as part of an Irish Moroccan cultural exchange project. Introduced by John Row, Artistic Director of the World Storytelling Café and Marrakech International Storytelling Festival.

 **St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre** **Time: 2.30 pm** **Tickets: €10**

CIRCUS SKILLS WORKSHOP

Have you ever wanted to join the circus? Now is your chance to learn a range of circus skills with juggling balls, juggling clubs, flower sticks, juggling silks, gymnastics ribbons, spinning plates, dragon staff, spinning staffs, balancing, poi, hula hoops, & diabolo. Join us for an afternoon full of fun with circus and fire artist Mira J. All ages are welcome. Children under 7 must be accompanied by an adult. Adults are welcome to join in too!

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 3 to 5 pm** **Tickets: €20**

STORY SWAP AT JOHN B'S

Step right up and share your tale at our Saturday Story Swap in Listowel's famous hostelry. Whether it's a personal experience, a fictional narrative, or a funny incident, we want to hear it. All stories are welcome, and participation is encouraged, but not required. Come listen, laugh, and be inspired! With Bean an Tí Frances Kennedy.

 **John B. Keane's Bar** **Time: 4 pm** **Free Event**

THE BRENDAN KENNELLY MEMORIAL LECTURE:

WINDING THE CLOCK: THE O'RAHILLY & THE IRISH REVOLUTION

Ballylongford native Michael Joseph O'Rahilly (1875 – 1916), known as The O'Rahilly was a founding member of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and served as Director of Arms. Despite opposing the action, he took part in the Easter Rising in Dublin and was killed in a charge on a British machine gun post covering the retreat from the Dublin GPO during the fighting. In this lecture Eunan O'Halpin, Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Irish History at Trinity College Dublin will explore The O'Rahilly's role in the Irish Revolution on the 150th year of his birth. *In association with NEWKD.*

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 7 pm** **Tickets: €10**





SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20th



P.J. MURRIHY & SEAMUS SHANNON IN CONCERT

P.J. Murrihy has been a firm favourite at Irish festivals in Europe and the UK over the years and continues to draw in the crowds around Ireland. He previously played with the Kilfenora Céilí Band and The Bannermen, and some of his most popular songs include 'Pat Murphy's Meadow' and 'There's Life in the Auld Dog Yet'.

P.J. will be joined by the virtuoso accordion player Seamus Shannon for a special night in Listowel. Playing for several years at home and abroad, Seamus Shannon is well-known for his unique style of music. He has featured on many artists recordings including Christy Moore and Foster & Allen and was a part of Joe Dolan's showband.

With special guest Mary Conroy of Radio Kerry.



St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre

Time: 8.30 pm

Tickets: €20





SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 21ST



STORY & HISTORY BUS TOUR

Our story tour travels to the village of Ballylongford, birthplace of one of Ireland's best loved poets Brendan Kennelly and revolutionary leader The O'Rahilly. We will visit Finucane's Bar where The O'Rahilly was born, the majestic Carrigafoyle Castle and Lislaughtin Abbey, the final resting place of Brendan Kennelly.

 **Departs from Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 10 am** **Tickets: €25**

POETRY WORKSHOP: NATURE WRITING

Join poet Lorraine Carey for a creative writing workshop exploring the natural world. Using visual and written prompts as a guide to create new work, this inspiring session will invite reflection on the importance of nature writing today in a friendly, relaxed environment.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 10 am to 1 pm** **Tickets: €25**

TALES FROM SPAIN

Our guest international storyteller Inés Alvarez Villa tells traditional stories from Spain featuring fairy tales, folk tales and legends, some comical and some more atmospheric, including the tale of two young cow shepherds who had grown up in the mountains of Asturias and escaped to the sea for the first time. Suitable for all ages.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 12 noon** **Tickets: €10**

(Free entry to children aged 12 and under)


POETRY & STORY IN THE PARK

Mike Gallagher, haiku-shaman of North Kerry, welcomes us to open the circle, to share stories plucked from everyday wonder, with special guests Stephen Murphy, the "people's poet," and storyteller Joe Brennan, founder of the Killorglin Story Sessions. Voices old and new are welcome to share poems, stories, and memories in this relaxed and uplifting afternoon of community, creativity, and connection.

 **Kerry Writers' Museum** **Time: 2 pm** **Free Event (Donations welcome)**

SLÁN ABHAILE - A FAREWELL GATHERING

To close our festival, we move to the picturesque village of Finuge, just outside Listowel with a gathering of all our tellers and invited guests with our regular performers from Listowel Rambling House. With Fear an Tí Johnny McElligott.

 **Teach Siamsa, Finuge** **Time: 3.30 pm** **Free Event (Donations welcome)**





SEANCHAÍ
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM



KERRY WRITERS' MUSEUM TEAM

Chair of the Board: David Browne

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

Board Members: Bob Barkess, Bernie Carmody, Gabriel Fitzmaurice,
James Kenny, Colette O'Connor, Ian O'Shea,
Karen Trench, Marion Walsh

Executive Director: Cara Trant

Marketing Coordinator: Louise Lynch

Film Archive Curator: Ciarán Walsh

KWM Staff: Shane Batten, Pawel Bieszczanin, Vanessa Huchrak,
Ciara O'Connor, Patricia O'Flaherty, Maria Storan

SUPPORT OUR MUSEUM

An accredited museum under the Museums Standards Programme for Ireland, Kerry Writers' Museum is a not-for-profit cultural institution dedicated to preserving and celebrating Kerry's rich literary & cultural heritage highlighting the works of John B. Keane, Bryan MacMahon, and other Irish literary greats. The museum is more than just a repository of literary history; it is an active cultural space. For over two decades, Kerry Writers' Museum has been a beacon of literary excellence, offering cultural enrichment, artistic opportunities, and community engagement. Through literary & storytelling events, educational outreach, artist support, and tourism initiatives, the museum continues to be a cornerstone of Kerry's artistic and cultural landscape.

We invite you to support us in continuing our work to honour the writers of the past and support the writers of the future. For more information on how you can donate to Kerry Writers' Museum, go to www.kerrywritersmuseum.com/support-us/



LISTOWEL INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL 2025

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LISTOWEL INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL 2025

BOX OFFICE

Festival & ticket booking details available at
www.kerrywritersmuseum.com

Weekend Festival Ticket – €120

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