

The 15th Benedict Kiely Weekend

Omagh's Literary Festival

'And as I Rode by Granard Moat'

Frank Ormsby

Poet, Frank Ormsby was born and brought up outside Irvinestown in Co. Fermanagh and educated at Queen's University in Belfast. Now retired, he was Head of English at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution for thirty-four years. Frank was editor of the Honest Ulsterman poetry journal from 1969-89 and also Poetry Ireland Review. In 1992 he received the Cultural Traditions Award given in memory of John Hewitt and in 2002 received the Lawrence O'Shaughnessy Award for Poetry from the University of St Thomas at St Paul, Minnesota. He has previously published four collections of his poems: A Store of Candles (1977), A Northern Spring (1986) The Ghost Train (1995) and Fireflies (2009). His latest work Goat's Milk: New and Selected Poems includes work from his four previous collections, together with a substantial selection of new poems.

Thomas Kilroy

For fifty years Thomas Kilroy has been a leading cultural figure in Ireland, writing numerous plays, including Double Cross (concerning the trial of the Irish Lord Haw-Haw, radio propagandist for Nazi Germany), Talbot's Box and The Madame Macadam Travelling Theatre. His 1971 novel 'The Big Chapel' was nominated for the Booker Prize and won the Guardian Fiction Prize and the Heinemann Award.

He has a long connection with the Abbey Theatre, and is currently on its board of directors, whilst also being a board member of the influential Field Day Theatre Company in the 1980s. Thomas Kilroy has produced innumerable critical works and adaptations, and was Professor of English at Galway University. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including in 2008 The Irish National Pen Award. Guardian theatre critic Michael Billington commented after Field Day's 1986 production of 'Double Cross' - 'In a year of good plays, it stands out a mile for its biting and provocative intelligence a rich profusion of ideas a dense ironic play.' Thomas is a member of Aosdana, a member of the Irish Academy of Letters, a member of the Royal Society of Literature.

Martina Devlin

Martina Devlin is a bestselling author and award-winning journalist. To date she has nine books published including her number one best-seller Banksters, a co-written account of the Irish banking collapse with RTÉ's David Murphy. Her latest book, About Sisterland is set in the near future in a world ruled by women, which starts well and then goes horribly wrong. Other books include The House Where It Happened, a fascinating novel inspired by a true story about the last conviction for witchcraft in Ireland in 1711 and A Ship of Dreams, a novel about the Titanic. Martina won a Hennessy Literary Award for her first short story in 1996. She has been shortlisted twice for the Irish Book of the Year Awards and in 2012 won the Royal Society of Literature's VS Pritchett short story award. She was also awarded the title National Newspapers of Ireland columnist of the year in 2011. Now living in Dublin, Martina writes weekly columns for the Irish Independent and is a regular contributor to the Sunday Miscellany on RTÉ Radio 1 and is Vice President of the Irish Writers' Centre.

John Quinn - "Ballads with Ben"

An illustrated talk by former RTE Radio Producer John Quinn, with excerpts from his series "Travels with Ben", based on Ben Kiely's book "And As I Rode By Granard Moat".

John Quinn was a radio producer/presenter with RTE for 25 years. His programmes won awards at home and abroad [New York, Tokyo] He is also a writer of children's fiction and various non-fiction works, many of them based on his radio work. His latest book "This Place Speaks To Me", to be published in Autumn 2016, will include a chapter on Ben Kiely's memories of growing up in Omagh. John Quinn lives in Clarinbridge, Co. Galway.

Little John Nee

Little John Nee is widely regarded as one of Ireland's leading solo theatre performers. His songs have been praised by John Prine and his theatre shows have received critical acclaim internationally. He is widely regarded as one of Ireland's leading solo theatre performers. His performances combine lyrical comic storytelling with original music and songs. He received an Irish Times Theatre Award for Best Sound Designer for his show "Sparkplug" and the subsequent radio broadcast of that show won a prize at the prestigious Prix Italia in 2013. "Small Halls and Potholes" is a show of eccentric songs and strange stories. It is a show that celebrates all that is weird and wonderful about summer in this part of the world. According to John, "there are parts of Ireland that are less explored than the moon and that's where I go to get my songs". Little John was elected to Aosdana in 2016.

INFORMATION

The Venue

The venue is Strule Arts Centre, Omagh. Access is via Bridge Street or High Street. Parking at town centre car parks only.



Accommodation

Special rates are available for a limited number of rooms in the Silverbirch Hotel and can be booked through their booking line **028 8224 2520**. The hotel is situated just outside the Town Centre on the Gortin Road and has ample car parking.

The Tourist Information Centre can arrange accommodation in other venues in the area if required. Details of all accommodation in the district are listed on the website www.fermanaghomagh.com.

The telephone number for the Tourist Information Centre is **028 8224 7831** or **048 8224 7831** from the Republic of Ireland.

COST

Full Weekend Ticket: £85 or Euro equivalent.

Cheques in sterling/euros payable to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. This includes attendance at all sessions, light refreshments throughout, buffet supper on Friday, lunch and buffet supper on Saturday and the bus tour. **It does not include the cost of accommodation.**

Individual sessions: £8.00 or Euro equivalent

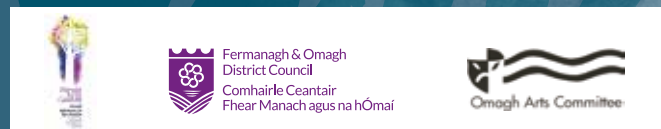
Concession: £5.00 or Euro equivalent

Friday Night & Sunday Morning (2 consecutive sessions): £10.00 or Euro equivalent

BOOKING

To book contact Strule Arts Centre Box Office on **028 8224 7831** or **048 8224 7831** from the Republic of Ireland, or e-mail using: info@struleartscentre.co.uk
To buy tickets online go to: www.struleartscentre.co.uk
See www.facebook.com/KielyWeekendOmagh

This event is organised by Omagh Arts Committee with funding from Fermanagh And Omagh District Council.



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OMAGH'S LITERARY FESTIVAL



'And as I Rode by Granard Moat'

Friday 9th – Sunday 11th September 2016
Strule Arts Centre, Omagh

Ecclesville Printing Services Ltd | 028 8284 0048 | www.agsai.com

Benedict Kiely, one of the most distinguished figures in twentieth century Irish literature, was born near Dromore, Co Tyrone in January 1919 and spent his formative years in Omagh, the county capital. He moved to Dublin in the late 1930s to study at the National University and while still an undergraduate was engaged as a journalist on *The Standard*, a now defunct Dublin newspaper. He was later to join the staff of the *Irish Independent* and later still to write for the *Irish Press*.

His first novel *Land Without Stars* (1946) was the first of ten novels. He was also a prolific writer of short stories, several of which first appeared in periodicals such as *The New Yorker*. *The Collected Short Stories*, 49 in all, appeared in 2001. His works of criticism have included *The Poor Scholar*, his study of fellow Tyrone writer, William Carleton, *Modern Irish Fiction*, a review of the novel in mid 20th century Ireland and *Raids into Dark Corners*. Travel books include *Ireland from the Air* and *All the Way to Bantry Bay*.

Benedict Kiely was familiar as a broadcaster, largely through RTE's *Sunday Miscellany* radio feature, on which he was a stalwart for a quarter of a century from the 1970s to the 1990s. He made his home in Dublin from 1940 on but he frequently came back to his native Omagh and immortalized it in his fiction. The author died in Dublin in February 2007 and is buried in Omagh's Dublin Road cemetery not far from the centre of town.

Stephen McKenna

Official website: www.benedictkiely.info

Memory in Focus An Exhibition by Omagh Photographic Club

Benedict Kiely sees places in terms of people, animals, landscape, sounds, stories, poems and songs. Places imprint themselves in his memory which is layered with an amalgam of inter-connected thoughts, images and emotions.

In his book, *And As I Rode By Granard Moat*, Kiely attributes a desire to visit Tyrrellspass to stories he read in the Christian Brothers publication "Our Boys" about the heroic exploits of Richard Tyrrell in the 16th century and recounted them at the home of his aunt Kate, on a farm at Claramore near Drumquin. A neighbour, Paddy McCillion argued with him that Tyrrell never really existed. The debate was heated until Kiely realised that the older man was jesting. Writing about the incident Kiely said, "So the name of Tyrrellspass has a Proustian effect on me, and when I hear it I see first of all not that handsome little town on the road from Dublin to Galway, but the farmhouse at Claramore and the steep hill called Con's Brae. And I see the two deep lakes of Claramore like the eyes of a giant buried in the bogland..... And Paddy McCillion's moustache. And I hear the chirping of crickets."

Members of Omagh Photographic Club have been busy working on the production of an exhibition of images based on their own memories.

FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER - STRULE ARTS CENTRE

- 10.30am** Schools' Poetry Day with Frank Ormsby
- 5.00 pm** Registration
- 6.30 pm** Welcome Official Opening and Launch of Exhibition
- 7.30 pm** Travelling On - Panel discussion with Paul Clements, Geoff Hill and Michael Fewer.
- 9.00 pm** Aisling Ghear Theatre Present, "Alice Milligan, A Girl of Genius"

SATURDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER - STRULE ARTS CENTRE

- 10.30 am** Sara Baume
Reading from "Spill Simmer Falter Wither"
- 11.30 am** Tea/Coffee
- 12.00 pm** Frank Ormsby - Poetry Reading
- 1.00 pm** LUNCH
- 2.00 pm** Thomas Kilroy
"The Captain With The Whiskers"
- 3.30pm** Bus Tour featuring Martina Devlin
Reading from her short story on Alice Milligan
- 8.00 pm** Drinks Reception in Strule Arts Centre
Hosted by Chairman of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- 8.30 pm** Dinner in Strule Café with Entertainment

SUNDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER - STRULE ARTS CENTRE

- 11.00 am** John Quinn - Ballads with Ben
- 11.45 am** Tea/Coffee
- 12.15 pm** Little John Nee "Small Halls And Potholes"
- 1.00 pm** Farewell

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Poetry Day

Friday 9th September - 10.30am-3.00pm

For Year 13 students of English Literature

The Poetry Day is designed for Year 13 English Literature students and is designed to enhance poetry appreciation skills in advance of studying prescribed poets in Year 13 and Unseen Poetry in Year 14. Frank Ormsby will introduce set poems for the day and teachers will work with small groups to discuss the poems. Frank Ormsby will chair a plenary feedback session.

Paul Clements

Paul Clements is a journalist, writer and broadcaster. He is the author of four travel books about Ireland and has written works of biography and criticism. A former BBC assistant news editor, he is now a freelance writer and contributes to three guidebooks to Ireland. His latest book, *Wandering Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way: From Banba's Crown to World's End* (2016) is based on a journey along the west coast by car and bike, on horseback and on foot. His three earlier travel books on Ireland. *Burren Country*, *Travels through an Irish limestone landscape*, *The Height of Nonsense* and *Irish Shores: A Journey Round the Rim of Ireland* are highly regarded. Paul's acclaimed biography on the travel writer, actor and singer Richard Hayward, *Romancing Ireland*, was published in 2014 and adapted for BBC television. He has written and edited two books about the travel writer and historian Jan Morris. In 2012 he edited an anthology, *The Blue Sky Bends Over All*, a celebration of ten years of the Immrama Festival of Travel Writing. A regular contributor to the *Irish Times*, he has written numerous Irishman's Diaries on culture and heritage and reviews Irish local history books and features. He is a Fellow of Green Templeton College, Oxford, a member of the Society of Authors and of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

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Geoff Hill

Living in Belfast, Geoff Hill is an author, journalist and long-distance motorcycle rider. He is a critically acclaimed author and award-winning feature and travel writer. His first travel book *Way to Go*, published in 2005, was the Mail on Sunday's Book of the Week and was nominated for UK Travel Book of the Year. A columnist for the *Sunday Times*, he has either won or been shortlisted for a UK Travel Writer of the Year Award nine times. He is also a former Irish Travel Writer of the Year. Geoff's other published works include *The Road to Gobblers Knob: From Chile to Alaska on a Motorbike*, *Anyway Where Was I?* and *Geoff Hill's A to Z of the World*.

Michael Fewer

Retired architect Michael Fewer had an academic post in the Dublin School of Architecture for many years, and was a Fellow of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland before taking an alternative career path in the year 2000. He began writing about his travels on foot with his interest in the landscape, the history and the people he met along the way. Michael's first book, a walking guide for families, was published in 1988. He has since had a further eighteen books published which initially were about walking but went on to deal increasingly with other interests such as history and architecture. Michael writes for magazines and has produced over 400 illustrated articles, writes book reviews, illustrates books and has contributed to television and radio programmes.

Sara Baume

Born in Lancashire in 1984, Sara Baume is a critically acclaimed young author. She won the Davy Byrne's Short Story Award in 2014 and the 2015 Hennessy New Irish Writing Award. Her debut novel *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*, which is narrated by a lonely 57-year-old man to his misfit of a dog, was the first title to make it onto the longlist for the Guardian First Book Award after being nominated as a contender by readers. Her short stories have been published in the *Moth*, the *Stinging Fly* and the *Irish Independent* as part of the Hennessy New Irish Writing series. Her reviews and articles on visual art and books have also appeared online and in print. She was selected to take part in the International Writer's Programme in Iowa last year, one of only 15 writers chosen from around the world. Sara, who studied fine art at Dun Laoghaire College of Art and Design and completed the MPhil in creative writing at Trinity College, Dublin, is currently working on her second novel.