

Benedict Kiely (1919 – 2007)

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

Fringe Events Thursday 9th September - Free

8.00 pm **Beginner's Guide: Introduction and Discussion**

Conor McCloskey, English Literature teacher in the Christian Brothers Grammar School, will give a wonderful introduction to the type of writing with which Benedict Kiely is associated. Assisting him will be the Library Readers Group who will focus on and discuss the work of Benedict Kiely.

September/October 2010

The Shortest Way Home: The Exhibition From 10th September – 30th October 2010

The exhibition for the 9th annual Benedict Kiely Literary weekend has been selected from the collections of Allied Irish Bank and First Trust Bank. The exhibition has been curated by Mrs Terry Sweeney in consultation with Dr Frances Ruane art advisor to the Allied Irish Bank. There will be two dimensional work and sculpture on show in a wide range of media. Included in the exhibition are artists such as Gerard Dillon, Tom Carr, Arthur Armstrong, Kenneth Webb, Martin Gale, William Crozier, John Behan and Sean Hillen. The exhibition is also entitled, *The Shortest Way Home* and it explores issues such as memory, movement, distance, travel and the passage of time under the overarching theme of real and imagined journeys.

Saturday 11th September

Writing Workshops by Liz Weir

Liz Weir is the author of *Boom Chicka Boom* and *Here, There and Everywhere*, a collection of stories for children. She has also presented, *The Gift of the Gab*, a storytelling series for *BBC Radio Ulster*.

This workshop will explore poetry, stories and other aspects of language to direct participants in successful creative writing. Not to be missed!

2.00 pm Age 16 years and over
3.00 pm Age 12 to 15 years

Limited places are available, please ensure to book early.
A booking fee will be required if not a weekend delegate

Information

The Venue: The main venue is the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh. Access is via Bridge Street or High Street. The closest car park is at the Bus Station.

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

Cost: The fee for the event is £80. This includes attendance at all sessions, light refreshments on Friday, lunch and dinner on Saturday. It does not include the cost of accommodation. Rates are available for individual sessions. 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 struleartscentre@omagh.gov.uk

This event is organised by
Omagh District Council and Omagh Arts Committee



The Sunday Miscellany Live is organised in association with RTE Radio 1

RTE RADIO 1

The visits of Catherine Morris and Sinead Morrissey have been made possible by a partnership with Sligo County Council's Yeatsian Legacy Project. The Yeatsian Legacy Project is delivered by Sligo Arts Service, IT Sligo & partners. The project is supported by the PEACE III Programme, managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Sligo County Council on behalf of Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Partnership Committee.



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This initiative is being delivered as part of the Cultural, Heritage and Identity programme, in a partnership between Omagh District Council, Strabane District Council and Derry/L'Derry City Council. It is supported by the Peace III Programme and managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the North West Peace III Cluster.



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THE 9th BENEDICT KIELY LITERARY WEEKEND

The Shortest Way Home

9th -12th September 2010
Strule Arts Centre - Omagh

Friday 10th September

SESSION ONE

5.00 pm **Registration**

6.30 pm **Launch of Art Exhibition**

The exhibition for the 9th annual Benedict Kiely Literary weekend has been selected from the collections of Allied Irish Bank and First Trust Bank. The exhibition has been curated by Mrs Terry Sweeney in consultation with Dr Frances Ruane art advisor to the Allied Irish Bank. There will be two dimensional work and sculpture on show in a wide range of media. Included in the exhibition are artists such as Gerard Dillon, Tom Carr, Arthur Armstrong, Kenneth Webb, Martin Gale, William Crozier, John Behan and Sean Hillen. The exhibition is also entitled, The Shortest Way Home and it explores issues such as memory, movement, distance, travel and the passage of time under the overarching theme of real and imagined journeys.

8.00 pm **Welcome and Formal Opening**
Chairman, Omagh District Council.

8.30 pm **Reading by Conor O’Clery**

Born in Belfast and educated at Queen’s University Belfast, Conor O’Clery worked for The Irish Times, Ireland’s leading national newspaper, for over 30 years in various positions, including news editor and foreign correspondent based in London, Moscow, Washington, D.C., Beijing and New York City.

He wrote for The New Republic from Moscow, contributed columns to Newsweek International and has been a frequent commentator on BBC, NPR and CNN. He has won several awards, including Journalist of the Year twice in Ireland: the first in 1987 for his reporting of the Soviet Union, the second in 2002 for his reporting of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, which he witnessed from his office three blocks away.

O’Clery has written a number of books including his memoir, May You Live in Interesting Times (2009), The Billionaire Who Wasn’t, How Chuck Feeney Secretly Made and Gave Away a Fortune (2007), Panic at the Bank: How John Rusnak Lost AIB \$700 Million (2002), Ireland in Quotes (1999), The Greening of the White House: Clinton’s Secret Search for Peace in Ireland - published in the United States as Daring Diplomacy (1996), America, a Place Called Hope? (1993), Melting Snow, an Irishman in Moscow (1991) and Phrases Make History Here (1986). He is currently working on a new history of the fall of the Soviet Union, to be published on the 20th anniversary, 2011.

9.30 pm **Music and Entertainment**

Saturday 11th September

SESSION TWO

10.00 am **Catherine Morris**

Catherine Morris is a post-doctoral research fellow at UCD, guest curator at the National Library of Ireland and Writer in Residence at the Writer’s Centre, Parnell Square Dublin. Her book Taking up the torch: Alice Milligan and the Irish Cultural Revival will be published by Lilliput Press in September 2010. This study will also include a Selected Works of Alice Milligan. The exhibition Discover: the Life and Times of Alice Milligan will open at the National Library in May 2010.

11.00 am **Sinéad Morrissey**

Sinéad Morrissey has published four collections of poetry: There was Fire in Vancouver (1996); Between Here and There (2002); The State of the Prisons (2005), and Through the Square Window (2009). Her awards include the Patrick Kavanagh Award, an Eric Gregory Award, and the Michael Hartnett Poetry Prize. Her last three collections have all been shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize. In 2007 she received a Lannann Literary Fellowship and was also the winner of the UK National Poetry Competition. She is currently Lecturer in Creative Writing at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry, Queen’s University, Belfast.

12.00 pm **Tea/Coffee**

SESSION THREE

12.30 pm **Keynote Address: Anthony Glavin**

Boston-born Anthony Glavin is the author of a critically acclaimed novel, Nighthawk Alley (1997) and two short story collections, One for Sorrow (1980) and The Draughtsman and The Unicorn (1999), many of which are set in Co Donegal where he lived for a time. Currently based in Dublin, he served as editor of New Irish Writing in the Irish Press from 1987-88 and as an editor for New Island Books since 1994, for whom he commissioned and edited Nuala O’Faolain’s international best-seller, Are You Somebody? - The Accidental Memoir of a Dublin Woman (1996) and her posthumous selected writings, A More Complex Truth (2010).

1.15 pm **Book Launch - Cards of the Gambler**

Imaginative, mythical, fantastic yet real, Benedict Kiely holds the reader as only a great storyteller can, weaving the ordinary and everyday with the gleaming threads of Irish folklore. The Cards of the Gambler is the story of a doctor who loses everything through gambling and thinks he is damned. When he meets God in one pub and Death in another, a pact is made...

“An astonishing book” *Thomas Flanagan, author of The Year of the French*

1.45 pm **LUNCH**

3.00 pm **Sunday Miscellany**

For thousands of radio listeners, the perfect combination of words and music is central to this programme’s lasting appeal. Its eclectic mix of new radio essays and occasional poetry is selected from commissioned and open submission writing. The spoken contributions specially written for this event will be enhanced by highly acclaimed professional musicians. Sunday Miscellany is delighted to host this live event which will be subsequently broadcast on RTE Radio 1.

5.00 pm

Bus Tour around Kiely Country
Commentary by Stephen McKenna

Stephen McKenna is a retired teacher who for the past forty years has been writing a satirical column in the Ulster Herald newspaper. A graduate in English Literature and history from Queen’s University, Stephen was a close friend and confidant of Ben Kiely for over forty years. He is steeped in the history, literature and folklore of Omagh. A thoughtful, entertaining and stimulating tour is guaranteed.

8.00 pm **Drinks Reception in Silverbirch Hotel**
Hosted by Chairman, Omagh District Council

8.30 pm **Gala Dinner in Silverbirch Hotel**

Sunday 12th September

SESSION FOUR

11.00 am **Eugene McCabe**

Irish playwright, novelist and short story writer Eugene McCabe was born in Glasgow, educated at Castleknock, Dublin and University College, Cork. A full time farmer all his life he has become one of Ireland’s most talented, if least prolific writers. King of the Castle (1964), his powerfully realistic play about a barren marriage and the corrupting effects of wealth in rural Ireland won the first Irish Life Drama Award. This was followed by the unremarkable Breakdown in the Gate theatre (1966) and then Swift (1969) at The Abbey, directed by Tyrone Guthrie. In 1974 The Victims Trilogy of published stories was adapted for television by RTE. The first of the three, Cancer, won the Prague International Award for the best screenplay, the second, Heritage, the Prix Italia and the third, Victims, [in novella form] The Holtby Award from the Royal Society of Literature.

McCabe’s novel, Death and Nightingales (1992), set in rural Ireland in 1883 with Parnell during the all powerful ascendancy offers a disquieting evocation of the violence of rural existence and a sense of foreboding about Ireland’s future. It was voted last year in The Examiner by Nuala Ni Dhommail, Myles Dungan and Theo Dorgan as among the ten best Irish novels of the last hundred years. He will be reading from this novel and briefly from his most recent novella, The Love of Sisters (2009 New Island, now reprinted [April] in hard back). His collected stories are entitled, Heaven Lies About Us (Vintage 2007). He is at present writing screen plays for King of the Castle with Gerry Stembridge and Heaven Lies About Us to be directed by Louis Lentin.

11.45 am **Tea/Coffee**

12.15 pm **Joe Mahon**

In 1996, Joe Mahon formed his own production company, Westway Film Productions, where he continues to write, produce and direct a number of series for BBC NI, UTV, Channel 4, RTE and TG4. His interests and therefore his output, stretch across a range of genres, including drama, education, local history, culture and Irish Language. Since Westway was formed, it has won a number of awards, including a Royal Television Society Award, Celtic Film Festival Prize, a Clarion Award and two Bafta nominations.

Currently Joe is best known as presenter of the popular UTV programme, Lesser Spotted Ulster, now entering its twelfth series.

1.00 pm **Farewell**

To book a place on the ninth Benedict Kiely Literary Weekend please complete the form below and return it to Strule Arts Centre, Townhall Square, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, BT78 1BL along with the booking fee. If paying by cheque, please make payable to Omagh District Council.

Further information from www.omagh.gov.uk

Name of Delegate

Address

Tel No.

Email:

Accommodation required? Yes No

Details of Accommodation requirements

Signed

Date

PROGRAMME MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE