





LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL 2020

15–25 OCTOBER

Bringing Liverpool
and Ireland closer
together using arts
and culture.



    /LIVIRISHFEST



Liverpool
City Council

Culture
Liverpool



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme
An Bórd Éireannach Éimhreacha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



#LIF2020 – FAILTE

Welcome to the eighteenth *Liverpool Irish Festival*, aka **#LIF2020**. This year's theme "exchange" might seem a peculiar thing to consider when all focus has swung to minimise exchange by eradicating contact, creating barriers and preventing movement. Nevertheless, exchange has been at the heart of how many of us have kept ourselves sane during lockdown; be it using *WhatsApp* calls, *Skype* meetings or *Zoom* video chats, each creates an exchange; digital and social.

Arising from our previous theme of migration, exchange was selected to help us question how exchanges affect Irish lives. For instance, how do diaspora communities affect the places they inhabit and their hosts? It was to help us consider the effects of Brexit and probe how exchange might help us reconcile difference to create unity; all of which remains critical today.

A Festival is a sequence of exchanges. It begins with the team, swapping ideas about its aims and who it wants to reach, support and showcase. We work with artists, cultural partners and funders to implement our ambitions, before sharing a programme with press and audiences, who give their feedback through attendances, testimonials and, inadvertently, statistics. These are shared with everyone who contributed, so we can learn from the experience and implement it for the next cycle, where the exchanges continue or new ones begin.

Exchange forms the heart of storytelling; someone owns a story and someone must hear it to complete an exchange. Retelling it prolongs the exchange. To this end, we worked with *The Sound Agents*, who recorded the stories of several women and their families, producing an incredible film; *Liverpool Family Ties: The Irish Connection* (search *YouTube* to view). Developed as a response to the Irish Embassy's call for St Brigid's Day work -and an extension of our dual-heritage programme in **#LIF2019**- we held a sell-out premiere at *Bluecoat*.

Our next programme of work was to turn the city green for **#GlobalGreening**, our annual contribution to the nation's St Patrick's Day celebrations. You can read more about that on Page 6. Taking place at the start of lockdown, it was surprising how rapidly the nature of this annual exchange altered with priorities moving from celebrations to safety; from city focus to the domestic. And so began our journey to the virtual world many of us find ourselves in today.

Fundraising became tougher than ever – anything that was not emergency, Covid-19 related or 'frontline' was removed from national agency funding agendas. Exchanges between colleagues to keep peer groups informed and connected increased. The health of the arts and culture sector waned. *CARA* was formed, to help Liverpool Irish communities stay connected, linking Irish service providers in the city and people shifted from a belief in handshakes, to elbow taps, to no contact. Despite all of this, partners have rallied; artists have produced work and friendships have prevailed.

Since Christmas, the Festival had been planning a *Great Famine Voices Roadshow*, with partners *Irish Heritage Trust* and *Strokestown National Famine Park and Museum*. Its aim was to collect the migration stories of Liverpool Irish community members, to add to the bank of stories archived by *Great Famine Voices*. Very quickly, live events to record these became unthinkable and so ways of progressing the campaign developed. To date over 4,000 people have engaged with the presentations prepared for that day (available via liverpoolirishfestival.com/events/gfvr).

As arts and culture provision dipped in the UK, racism in America –following the brutal police murder of George Floyd- catalysed protests the world over. That needless, violent, seven+ minute exchange led to the death of an individual; a father, brother, son, citizen. We were shaken. Angered. Empathetic. *Black Lives Matter* erupted and we knew we had to improve our outlook on inclusion. We have committed to more programme, more representation and more accountability in this and started working with partner members of *Creative Organisations of Liverpool* (a.k.a. *COoL*) to make things happen. Watch out for *Writing on the Wall's Black History Month* programme (also in Oct 2020) in which we will feature with our *Mixed Heritage Mixer*, run by Lorraine Maher ahead of her *Irish Roots 2021* programme, in which we partner. These are all exchanges and collaborations, through which we will share stories, reject ignorance and seek equity and justice.

From the struggle to the sublime: in September we were asked to write a short song review for close Festival friends and previous song-commission artists, *Strength N.I.A.* If you have not already heard their number *The Mobile Shop* we highly recommend it for getting your groove on and raising a smile. As a set of exchanges goes, this has been fun from the off; first with a gig, then a song commission and now exchanging the roles with a review, which read:

"Like a brilliant Brian Ferry/Right Said Fred (Fairbrass not Cribbins) mash-up, *Strength N.I.A.* drop another treat of a song. Their recognisably chipper bass had me shoulder-shimmying before [...] I found myself laughing to the lyrics. Remembering scenes -akin to those *The Mobile Shop* [...] I wondered: what happened to *Tangy Toms*, hot *Vimto* and legs sticking to car seats. Those younger will have to add a grainy haze to their photo filters, before joining in dancing". Get on to *Bandcamp* or *Soundcloud* and have a listen; it really is a doozy!

So where has the 2020 journey left us? With a tight programme of 28 exchange-themed events and the newspaper you are a reading. This is the tangible, handheld version of the Festival, sent as a gift to 20,000 homes across the region. It is an encouragement to you to come in to the virtual space, share your stories and be part of this communal event. It is full of stories from across the Irish cultural scene and of people searching for peace through investigation, discussions about identity and answer-finding. In these exchanges, we see and find friendship, progression and artistry.

A couple of key highlights, in what we believe to be a significant programme, include *Hard Histories*, *Positive Futures* with Patrick Kielty and Northern Ireland's *Commission for Victims and Survivors*; *Lessons of War* with Matt McGinn and our *Cultural Connectedness Exchange*, a must for anyone promoting or generating Irish cultural products.

We know 2020 has been a hard year. **#LIF2020** will not to look directly at Covid-19 (haven't we all had enough of that by now?), but at the issues and creativity that continues regardless; at the identity politics, stories and excellence that Ireland and its diaspora produce. We also look ahead –hopefully- to what **#LIF2021** (21-31 Oct 2021) will have in store; fingers crossed it involves food, drink, dancing and merriment!

Thanks for sticking with us. We really hope you enjoy what we have produced and that you will take a punt on our virtual offer. We are looking forward to seeing you. In the meantime, gabh cúram agus fuirich sábhailte/take care and stay safe!

Use our handle **@LivIrishFest** or hashtag **#LIF2020** on all platforms to get in touch or comment on the Festival as we go along.

We are proud to carry the *We're Good to Go* standard. This means we have been risk assessed for our Covid-19 preparedness and have been deemed 'Good to Go' by *Visit Britain*.

About: The *Liverpool Irish Festival* is governed by a volunteer board, chaired by John Chandler, an original founder. The organisation is a registered charity (1100126). We receive regular funding from Liverpool City Council's *Culture Arts Investment Programme* and the Irish *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Emigrant Support Programme*. In 2020, we have also received emergency funding and *Reconciliation Funds* from the Irish Government, in support of our work with communities. To each of our funders, we are extraordinarily grateful. Go raibh maith agat/May you have goodness.

FESTIVAL PLAYLIST

It's always good to have something new and varied to listen to isn't it? So while you're cooking today's dinner, or settling in to your new group of six, why not stick on a playlist? We've asked some friends to create one for you on **Spotify**, which you can find by searching "Seafoam Green Liverpool Irish Festival by Dave O'Grady" or entering: **<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2fk5A0yhzAePi1yxiCwnlg?si=mtgH0wtVTY-nwzvlCynWBg>**

Seafoam Green are Irish song-writing duo Dave O'Grady and Muireann McDermott Long, they've played at the Festival with **Mellowtone** a number of times. This playlist, curated specially for the **Liverpool Irish Festival**, features a range of their influences, inspirations, friends and peers, with Irish selections from the traditional to the contemporary. Based in Liverpool, and working with **Mellowtone Records**, their debut LP **Topanga Mansion** was met with critical acclaim.

"Stunning...9/10" **Classic Rock Magazine**
 "Instant Classic...9/10" **Hot Press Magazine**
 "Gutsy Americana with a heart of gold..." **Clash Magazine**
 ★★★★★ **Country Music Magazine**

See **mellowtonerecords.com/artists/seafoam-green** for more.

MELLOWTONE PRESENTS...

7pm, 16 Oct, **Facebook**
 (**facebook.com/LivIrishFest**),
 Free/pay what you feel



Don't forget to visit our website to find out more about this year's programme!



Exchanges begin with introductions. A chance meeting at a funding session led the Festival to be introduced to the **Commission for Victims and Survivors**, who -interested in the Festival's work with dual heritage Irish lives, women and other marginalised groups- opened complex discussions about trauma and reconciliation. Ultimately, this introduction has opened an ongoing exchange in which we will learn how to work together to continue important reconciliation work. This, and our event **Hard Histories, Positive Futures** with Patrick Kielty, mark the first step in that exchange.

THRIVING AFTER THE TROUBLES

Exchange. A word with a relatively simple definition of giving and receiving. We hear it often when speaking of gifts, trade and currency. But what does “exchange” look like for a country recovering from over 30 years of conflict?

At this year's **Liverpool Irish Festival**, the comedian Patrick Kielty and Northern Ireland's **Commission for Victims and Survivors** explore notions of identity and recovery after adversity. They will consider why building dialogue, exchanging views and understanding the many complexities of the human experience can help people not just heal, but pave the way for a more inclusive and compassionate society.



For the **Commission for Victims and Survivors**, exchange is at the heart of all of its work. They are different from the **Victims Commission** in England and Wales. Northern Ireland's Commission is founded in law specifically for those impacted by the Northern Ireland Troubles, no matter where they reside.

Patrick has been no stranger to hurt and loss resulting from the violence in Northern Ireland. Having lost his father just days before his seventeenth birthday, Patrick has spoken often of his vision for a more reconciled Northern Ireland. At a time when discussing the difficulties and nuances of life in Northern Ireland was still treated with trepidation, Patrick was a leader in using the subject as material for his comedy work. In 2018 Patrick also presented a documentary, **My Dad, the Peace Deal and Me** to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

In 1998 Northern Ireland was a very different place to today. Governments internationally had committed to helping broker peace on the island of Ireland, which culminated in the Agreement. Only following 10 years of the peace process and the learning that generated, was the Commission established to start addressing victims' needs at government level. At the time, such an undertaking was still in its infancy. This was to be a new era of learning and teasing out issues; psychological and social. The decade between 1998 and 2008 prioritised a new and relative peace, addressing 'the new normal'. This peace was to be the foundation upon which to build economic prosperity and a thriving tourist industry; victim's needs had not yet been seen as central to that process.



In the spirit of 'nothing about us without us', the Commission established a **Victims and Survivors Forum**. This group of individuals -harmed in different ways, by varying aspects of conflict and The Troubles- embody the generosity of exchange needed to better understand the experiences of “the other”. They guide the Commission in its policy and research work.

For the Commission and its Forum, exchange is about such generosity and dialogue. It is hearing and understanding complex views -about a past much contested- and finding a way to mediate political ideologies and lived experiences to pave a way forward that benefits social cohesion. This is no mean feat as the issues they deal with go right to the heart of identity and culture – issues often at the root of division. The Commission and its Forum are deeply committed to the importance of that dialogue, no matter how uncomfortable, and to making compromises to find the common ground they can all stand on. In the words of one Forum member 'it's no good waiting for perfect, we have to do what we can here and now'.



So, why do these issues still matter over 20 years from the Good Friday Agreement? And what relevance do they have to the Irish here in Liverpool? In the discussion, Patrick Kielty and two members of the **Victims and Survivors Forum** explore the many facets of Irish identity, culture, heritage and belonging. Of what it is to people to be Irish, Northern Irish, British and the other “ish-es” that make up the essence of “us”. Of how victims can have a positive impact on inclusivity, of shaping public spaces and ensuring that arts and culture are used to create a thriving environment, which can simultaneously mark the past and indicate a brighter future.

They will consider how the unaddressed needs of truth recovery can stymie growth and transition from victim to survivor and 'thrivor', delving into the notion of untold identity stories beyond “neat” conflict narratives.



Amongst lesser heard stories is the English perspective. When the governments of Ireland, Northern Ireland and England first sought to deal with societal issues arising from the conflict, the approach centred greatly around those from or resident in Northern Ireland. But what of the British Army veterans -or their widows- who served in Northern Ireland? Or those in Warrington, Manchester, London and Birmingham whose lives were shaped by events that unfolded as a result of Northern Ireland's conflict? What are the prejudices faced by Irish people, and the children of Irish people, in Britain today as a consequence of The Troubles and memories -or received understanding- of the conflict?

The Commission's passion for understanding this rich tapestry of different needs and experiences boils down to one simple factor: when dealing with human beings, no two experiences are the same. In understanding this, the Commission can better fulfil its objective to represent all victims, and ensure a better future for the children and grandchildren of victims and survivors.

Today Northern Ireland still enjoys relative peace, but the past's impact can still very much be felt in the present. Political power-sharing still relies on very traditional nationalist/unionist allegiance amongst Northern Ireland voters. Education, housing and even sport are still very much segregated, whilst issues like Brexit amplify many pre-existing tensions. These are issues that remain difficult to address despite with the passage of time. The people of Northern Ireland are deeply committed to a long and lasting peace, but with the world's gaze now diverted from Northern Ireland, are they yet able to pave this new road alone?

HARD HISTORIES, POSITIVE FUTURES; WITH PATRICK KIELTY
2pm, Sat 17 Oct, **Zoom** online (book **liverpoolirishfestival.com/events**), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential



CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE
2pm, Thurs 15 Oct, **Zoom** online (book **liverpoolirishfestival.com/events**), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential



Across the Festival, we have asked our partners, collaborators and artists to consider “exchange”. It is a means of connecting the programme to provide a cohesive message, whilst also demonstrating the benefits of coming together, even during times when this cannot be physically so. In the following article, Dr Ó Donghaile illustrates why Oscar Wilde was so ahead of his time, when it came to views on exchange and the benefit of art and culture to society. As Deaglán’s work on Wilde expands, we aim to continue sharing his research, looking more deeply in to Wilde’s enduring legacy, the lessons he left us with and how such a man might be received today.

OSCAR WILDE: ART, CULTURE, DEMOCRACY, AND EXCHANGE

Dr Deaglán Ó Donghaile; British Academy Research Fellow, Liverpool John Moores University

Throughout his life, Oscar Wilde believed passionately in the importance of cultural and artistic exchange. He argued that art and literature were part of the common human heritage and that they should be shared among everyone. At a very early stage in his career, and long before his most famous literary works were published, Wilde set out his ideas on literature’s centrality to culture when he gave his first lecture in the United States. In this talk, entitled *Our English Renaissance* (first delivered in New York City, January 1882, and then at different venues across the US), Wilde told audiences that Aestheticism –the literary and artistic movement of which he was a leading figure- was not an exclusive club. It was a movement dedicated to the sharing of artistic, cultural and literary ideas. He believed that the enjoyment of beauty should be experienced and enjoyed by all and widely exchanged.

In his lecture, Wilde pointed out that similar ideas and theories had already been proposed by poets, philosophers and painters from antiquity to the nineteenth century. His long list of international figures included Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Geoffrey Chaucer, Dante Alighieri, Michelangelo, Albrecht Dürer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Giuseppe Mazzini, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Lord Byron, William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Walter Scott, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth and John Keats. He also included more recent writers, artists and critics, such as John Ruskin, Algernon Swinburne, the Pre-Raphaelite painters, Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman and William Morris.

Wilde described Aestheticism’s renewal of culture as ‘our English Renaissance’. As an Irish writer he was clearly stating that art and culture could be shared outside limiting national boundaries. This, he insisted, could democratise art because it represented ‘a new birth of the spirit of man’ resembling the Italian Renaissance in its promise of ‘a more gracious and comely way of life’. With its modernisation of ideas of beauty and form, it promised ‘new subjects for poetry, new forms of art, new intellectual and imaginative enjoyments’.

Wilde believed that Aestheticism provided ‘a nobler form of life’ and ‘a freer method and opportunity of expression’. Cultural exchange was critical to this, as it imbued art with its essential ‘vitality’ in ‘this crowded modern world’. For Wilde, the world was a global community in which everyone should participate in art and culture. This made his views on culture explicitly political, as he felt that the best art was both historically engaged and socially conscious. Through the exchange of artistic and cultural ideas, every rank in society could experience the best that was offered by a broad, constructive and collective culture, without sacrificing the individuality of anyone.

This idea of the importance of mutual exchange within art and culture was a radical, democratic and republican notion. Wilde explained that Aestheticism, with its ‘passionate cult of pure beauty, its flawless devotion to form, its exclusive and sensitive nature,’ drew its inspiration from the French Revolution because democracy was ‘the most primary factor of its production’ and ‘the first condition of its birth’. Because it was democratic and transnational, art could transmit ideas about the possibility of a better life through ‘noble messages of love blown across the seas’.

Social and cultural exchange was the ‘definite conception’ of art because democracy was its ‘root and flower’. The artist could present ‘a vision at once more fervent and more vivid, an individuality more intimate and more intense’, fully charged with culture’s ‘social idea’ and its ‘social factor’. Wilde argued that culture’s potential lay in this shared reality. In it was found ‘that breadth of human sympathy which is the condition of all noble work,’ allowing it to express shared ideas, ‘as opposed to... merely personal’ ones. Art’s capacity to change people and society lay in its potential to convey ‘the love and loyalty of the men and women of the world’.

Wilde believed art should connect and transform people; he regarded it as a social practice that countered the alienating and privatised logic

of competition and separation being imposed by modern capitalism. Exchange was culture’s ‘method of its expression’ because art conveyed the reality of the world. This had political implications for Aestheticism. As an internationalist and an Irish republican, Wilde was very conscious of the need to share and exchange cultural and artistic ideas across borders: ‘All noble work is not national merely, but universal’ he declared; ‘the political independence of a nation must not be confused with any intellectual isolation’. For Wilde, art, literature and culture were forces for human unity and expressions of ‘perfect freedom’.

He felt that ‘devotion to beaut and to the creation of beautiful things’ was ‘the test of all great civilised nations’. Through its constant exchange of artistic and social ideas, and sharing of literary and political thought, Aestheticism could contribute to the cause of international peace because ‘national hatreds are always strongest where culture is lowest’. His lecture also emphasised that art and culture could unite artists with the working class: ‘between the singers of our day and the workers to whom they would sing there seems to be an ever-widening and dividing chasm, a chasm which slander and mockery cannot traverse, but which is spanned by the luminous wings of love’. Wilde would return to these ideas about global peace and the urgent need to remedy class conflict nine years later in his famous essay *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*.

Today, at a time when questions of cultural inclusion and national belonging are being raised in Ireland, and elsewhere, we can still learn much from Oscar Wilde’s thoughts on the importance of sharing and exchange. Describing this practice as ‘the correlation of art’, he spent the rest of his life writing about the connections that drew people together in the hope that unity and understanding would ‘sweep away’ the barriers of class and empire that separated people from one another.

Dr Deaglán Ó Donghaile is a *British Academy* Research Fellow at the Department of English, *Liverpool John Moores University*. His latest book, *Oscar Wilde and the Radical Politics of the Fin de Siècle*, will be published by *Edinburgh University Press* in November. He is currently writing a critical biography of Oscar Wilde entitled *Revolutionary Wilde*.

Image Credit: Publicity photograph of Oscar Wilde, taken in New York by Napoleon Sarony in 1882, used under creative commons licencing from the website *Oscar Wilde in America: A Selected Resource of Oscar Wilde’s Visits to America* oscarwildeinamerica.org/sarony/sarony-photographs-of-oscar-wilde-1882.html accessed 24 Sept 2020.



MY AUNT AND I

6pm, Tue 20 Oct, **Zoom** online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events). Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

CÚ CHULAINN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

3pm, Sun 25 Oct, **Zoom** online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events). Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

MRS SHAW HERSELF

8pm, Wed 21 Oct, **Zoom** online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events). £5, booking is essential

#GLOBALGREENING

In recent years **Liverpool Irish Festival** has co-ordinated **#GlobalGreening** across the city, in partnership with **Tourism Ireland**. Using St Patrick's Day as a date for action and celebration, organisations -civic and independent- shower themselves in green light to mark the impact and influence of Irish people on Liverpool's communities, businesses and structures.

This year several key buildings took part, the most notable being the Liver Building, which not only turned emerald, but also produced a light-show.

Occurring just as lockdown began, the monuments took on a serene quality, in the quieter streets, promising to endure and remain strong whilst we battered down the hatches to get past Covid-19. Six months has passed and lockdown prevails for many of us. Let's hope that in another six months, we can be back out on the city streets, honouring our Irish ancestors, current Liverpool Irish communities and those yet to enjoy and encounter the city.

We would like to thank our colleagues at the Liver Building, **Campanile Hotel**, **Liverpool Naval Club**, School of Engineering at **University of Liverpool**, Liverpool Town Hall, **Sefton Park Palm House**, George's Dock Building, **FACT**, Wallasey Town Hall, Liverpool Central Library and Hamilton Square for taking part in **#GlobalGreening2020**.

Those interested in the city and its architecture may be interested in any of Greg Quiery's History Walks or Terry Clarke-Coyne's *Whistle Walker* event and tour trail (see his event page on our website), which passes many of these buildings.



An explosion of podcasts has seen everything from cuddles to unsolved murder cases examined and presented in the audio world. Flying high amongst them is *The Irish Passport*, an exemplar model of long-form, multi-voiced, thought-provoking documentary, which invites listeners to consider the many voices and experiences of Ireland and the Irish. Whilst Coronavirus thwarted plans to bring the team over for #LIF2020, it doesn't stop us sharing their views on exchange or how exchange influences the shape and nature of the programme.

THE IRISH PASSPORT PODCAST, AND WHY IRELAND IS A “CONVERSATION”



In the context of exchange, *The Irish Passport Podcast* brings together three major aspects of the island's identity: culture, history, and politics. Hosted by Naomi O'Leary, European correspondent for *The Irish Times*, and Tim Mc Inerney, lecturer in cultural history at the *University of Paris at Saint-Denis*, each episode takes on a theme that forges links between these three dimensions of the Irish experience. As a series “about” Ireland, the podcast has always aimed to recognise that national identity is not a static phenomenon; on the contrary, it is dynamic by definition, only existing through constant engagement and conversation. Ireland, of course, boasts its fair share of national clichés, but the reality of Irishness in any period has always been complex and changeable. As with any country, whatever Irish people do becomes part of their national story, and this narrative is continually being revised and reconstructed by each of us every day.

The podcast has sometimes highlighted how a failure to recognise the importance of exchange can create significant and often harmful gaps in understanding. Perhaps most redolent, in this regard, was the turbulent political moment in which the podcast was founded. Just a few months previously, the Brexit referendum result had unearthed a host of urgent questions about the island's political future. [On the island of Ireland], the UK's land border with the Irish Republic was now on course to become the only frontier between the United Kingdom and the world's biggest trading block. Here, too, the hard-won peace that followed thirty years of bombings and paramilitary conflict was suddenly being undermined. [It fast became clear] that two territories –one which voted overwhelmingly for the UK to remain in the EU, and the other which did not vote at all– might bear the greatest brunt of the Brexit fallout. And yet, despite these incredibly high stakes, the topic of Ireland had been almost entirely absent from political debates in Britain before the Brexit vote. Instead, as we discovered on the podcast, there persisted a longstanding and seemingly systemic knowledge gap about the island of Ireland, even among some of the most senior politicians in Westminster. Where there might have been meaningful exchange, superficial assumptions were all too often made; in place of solutions, it followed, there seemed to be room only for successive crises.

Such communication failures, of course, have not been confined to the clumsier machinations of Brexit. Across the vast Irish diaspora, outworn ideas of Ireland as a pious, conservative, and arch-traditionalist society have long been at odds with the reality on the island itself. Conversely, suspicions or misunderstandings among the people who live in Ireland about the greater international Irish community are often rooted in reductive stereotypes. Even on the island itself, the two political jurisdictions are only now –twenty years after the Good Friday Agreement– really beginning to come to terms with the diverse political and cultural legacies that have made the country what it is today. Significantly, the recent centenary of the Easter Rising in 2016 was conceived not in a spirit of triumphalism or mindless flag waving, but rather in an atmosphere of self-interrogation and national reflection. It not only commemorated the achievements of the independent state over the last 100 years, but acknowledged its many failings. And it asked, in light of those last hundred years, what the people of the nation wanted their country to look like another century from now.

All this has provided rich subject matter for the podcast, which not only delves into the more complicated facets of what it means to be Irish, but endeavours to give voice to those whose perspective has been largely absent from established narratives. In the few years since the podcast began, Irish society has already transformed in ways which would have been unthinkable only a few decades ago. Two landmark referendums on equal marriage and abortion access were passed with resounding mandates, not only reflecting a younger generation no longer beholden to the old templates of authority, but also an older generation who have stood up and challenged the mores of their youth. On the podcast, we have heard voices from the Travelling community, who have recently gained ethnic minority status after centuries of persecution at home and abroad.

We have spoken to activists and protesters, challenging broken systems like public housing deficiency, healthcare, and systemic racism. We have travelled internationally to speak to those of Irish descent as far afield as Japan. And we have also spoken to people from across the political spectrum in Northern Ireland: nationalists who hope one day for a United Ireland, unionists who cherish the continued connection with the United Kingdom, and those who see themselves as something in between – with complex identities and allegiances that do not always fit neatly into grand narratives or eye-catching media headlines. It is here, in what has all too often been considered the “margins”, that the real essence of Irish society can be found. Indeed, it is only by listening to and engaging with all these diverse perspectives that we can begin to recognise the real face of this country.



While the podcast has aimed to narrow some of the more prevalent “knowledge gaps” about Ireland and its greater international sphere, it also recognises that knowledge at one point in time can only achieve so much. To really understand a place, a people -and what is contained in their culture, history and politics- one must become part of this national exchange. All countries are made and remade by their people and if Ireland, in the last few years, is anything to go by, it may only take the blink of an eye for those people to entirely reinvent their homeland once again.

Episodes of *The Irish Passport Podcast* are available on all major podcast providers, and via their website: **theirishpassport.com**. Extra content is also available on the podcast's *Patreon* page: **patreon.com/theirishpassport**

We hope we'll see the team at #LIF2021.

LIVERPOOL LAMBS: LISTENING PARTY

8pm, Sat 24 Oct, online
(listening link on event page
liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel

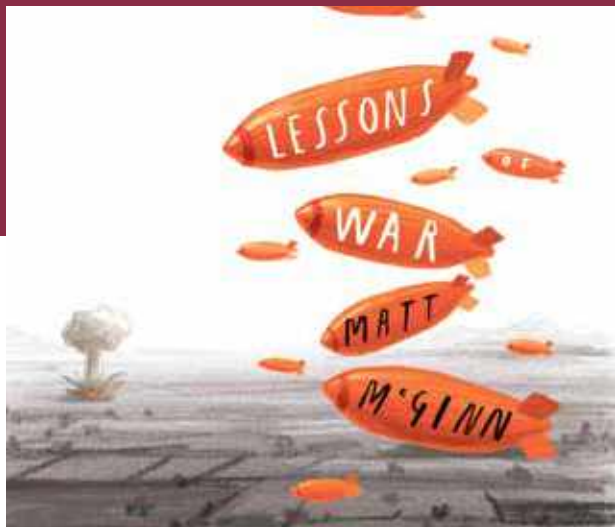


TRAD DISCO F DJ PADDY CALLAGHAN

From 10pm, 16 Oct, Facebook
(facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel



LESSONS OF WAR



One of the big lessons I will take away from ***Lessons of War*** is the recognition that how I grew up wasn't exactly normal... I'm from a small village in Co. Down, in a place sometimes referred to (even by myself) as Ireland, Northern Ireland, the north of Ireland... How I name it depends really on who I'm talking to. Sometimes it's to make a point about who I am. Sometimes it's to make the person I'm talking to feel at ease. Sometimes it's just the easiest way to say it so it doesn't require any further explanation.

And there was another lesson... When you grow up in an environment of conflict, it can lead you in a few ways. One way might be to make you hard; make you staunch and immovable. Your opinion is pretty much 'the right way', no 'ifs' or 'buts'. I think I went a different way; I moved and shaped myself into my surroundings and adapted to suit whoever's company I might be keeping. Was this the right thing to do? Probably not, but neither was the former. It was a matter of making life a little easier for myself. Survival, I suppose.

Don't get me wrong, though; the little nook nestled into the Mourne Mountains was a lovely place to grow up, and was pretty sheltered from The Troubles compared to other parts of Northern (let's just call it that for now) Ireland. I think it was my ability to adapt that gave me a keen knack for empathy. Empathy comes in handy for writing songs in general, but for this project ***Lessons of War*** I think it allowed me to access the experiences of other musicians and artists, from areas across the world, also divided or affected by conflict. That's what ***Lessons of War*** is about.

I come from a family of hard workers and I realised that if I wanted to pursue something personal, it was probably best to involve it in my work, or else it'd forever find itself at the bottom of the list. I knew I had issues that I wanted to address and found that by connecting with artists facing similar issues across the world, it might help me learn a little about myself.

It was probably no coincidence that -around the same time- I had been feeling stirred-up by what was happening in Syria and with the refugee crisis. I had bought my first smartphone. Avoiding the six o'clock news all my life was my means of escapism. All of a sudden, world news was smacking me in the face thanks to social media. It awoke an anger in me that I hadn't felt in quite a while. As international powers bombed Syria, I realised that people in power seem to never learn from the mistakes made by their predecessors. Listening to a radio show, a caller wondered "would it not be better to send in a negotiating team and figure it out"? The host of the show simply laughed at the caller's suggestion as "unorthodox". was raging, but you know he was probably right.

How many times have we witnessed the first act of a government entering conflict be 'strong' and heavy handed? Negotiation is often overlooked when it should be the first port of call.

...But then, I suppose to negotiate you need charm; and not the smarmy, sickly, schmoozey, charm of most politicians. Proper charm. The Irish have it. And I tell you what, the people of Liverpool have it. It's the charm of the courageous. It's the charm that allows you to stand in the middle of a knife-fight armed only with a smile and a gallon of wit. It's the same charm that allowed four lads from Liverpool take over the world. It's not something that's taught. It's a vibe...it shakes through a community. It's a precious thing that I'm so proud to say we share.

So back to 2017. I took a simple idea to the **Arts Council of Northern Ireland**. The plan was to assemble artists from areas of conflict across the globe. We would create a music video, each of us performing to a song I would pen that spoke to the futility of war. After trawling through the internet for days most artists I approached were very open to the idea, namely Haris from Bosnia and Herzegovina; Seydu from Sierra Leone; Yazan Ibrahim from Golan Heights and ***The Citizens of the World Choir***, based in London and made up of refugees and their carers. The easy part was now to write the song. Every time I sat down to write, I couldn't. Fear stopped me each time as I knew it was opening parts of my brain that I thought I had welded shut, and in procrastination I wrote and released a full album titled ***The End of the Common Man***.

I had to return to my original project, though, and get it finished. I had to get my eyes opened and so interviewed as many people as I could who knew conflict first hand. There was Tommy Sands, a man who has sung for peace for many decades. Richard Moore, lost his sight when he was hit by a soldier's plastic bullet on the streets of Derry as a child (and as a result created the charity ***Children in Crossfire***). Mark Kelly, a music manager and audio specialist who lost his legs to a UVF bomb in his youth (and helped develop the ***WAVE Trauma Centre*** in Belfast). Elke Rost, from a town in Germany called Mödlareuth that was split in two overnight by the Berlin Wall, cutting of a generation of families and friends.

I finally got the song written: ***Lessons of War***. Each artist did their part amazingly. But now that I had opened the flood gates, the songs kept coming, and as word got out about the project, other Irish songwriters wanted to try their experiences. Before long I had a full album of anti-war songs with contributions from Mick Flannery, Ciaran Lavery, ***Malojian*** to name a few.

Of all the musicians I had used on the first song, Yazan Ibrahim was incredible, a young virtuosi Flamenco guitarist from the Golan Heights that borders Syria. I brought him to Ireland. We locked ourselves away for a week with some of Ireland's best session musicians.

The album was finished, and with it a documentary; local film maker Colm Lavery shadowed us most of the way and created a very powerful short film as a result. Win!

I was so excited to be taking ***Lessons of War*** to Liverpool this year for the prestigious ***Liverpool Irish Festival***. Some of the players I had gathered together were some of the most amazing talents I know. And with you people of Liverpool cheering us on, it would have been a glorious show. Unfortunately, as Covid-19 hit it was not to be. It's the right choice, the safe choice, and we know we'll meet again. Both you and I are very lucky that your festival is run by one of the most generous and hardworking people I've come across in my many years of playing music. We will work together to best whet your appetites for 2021 by giving you a unique online version of ***Lessons of War***. Hopefully it means that we all can come over there next year and take the roof of the place. Until then, you beautiful people of Liverpool, keep yourselves safe and well. When we land once again in your beautiful city, we'll make sure to have a night off booked and have a proper session, too. Slán, Matt McGinn

As Matt alludes above, working with the ***Liverpool Philharmonic***, we were all set to bring Matt and Friends over to do a ***Lessons of War*** live music night. Sadly, in 2020, this was not to be. Instead, we will watch his beautiful documentary, which covers the making process of the album and join him in a ***Zoom*** to discuss the music, the experience and the opportunities that can be found in sharing, collaborating and putting a little generosity out in the world. Fingers crossed, we can see him in person during ***#LIF2021***.

Thanks go to Matt McGinn, Richard Haswell (***Liverpool Philharmonic***) and Terri O'Brien for a lot of behind the scenes work that will never see the light!

Matt McGinn's Lessons of War track Bubblegum has been longlisted for the Northern Irish Music Prize.



LESSONS OF WAR: MATT MCGINN

8pm, Thurs 22 Oct, **Zoom** online (book ***liverpoolirishfestival.com/events***), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

MELLOWTONE PRESENTS...

7pm, 16 Oct, **Facebook** (***facebook.com/LivIrishFest***), Free/pay what you feel

Kabosh were introduced to the Festival by the *Commission for Victims and Survivors*. Our original intention was to bring a production to Liverpool, but “the best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men, gang aft a-gley”, as Robert Burns famously stated. Instead, we take a look at how arts exchanges can inspire, provoke and confront reconciliation principles, rated to conflict resolution.

THEATRE TO PROVOKE CHANGE

Founded in 1994, *Kabosh* is a Belfast-based theatre company that creates original work -for performance- in a range of spaces. Each project is inspired by the people, spaces and places in the north of Ireland and most of the work addresses the legacy of our violent conflict. We aim to humanise those we perceive to be 'other', thereby challenging preconceptions. We aim to create work of high quality that provokes informed discussions around sensitive themes of reconciliation. It is theatre for positive social change.



The *Kabosh* canon is commissioned from professional Irish playwrights, but the method of gathering source material varies. On each project the company works with a community organisation to provide introductions. They assist with identifying source material, developing grassroots partners, co-facilitate post-show discussions, liaise with community gatekeepers to maximise engagement and provide long-term support to audiences.

Often a project is the result of a playwright creatively responding to an oral archive undertaken by a community agency. The archive then becomes the catalyst for a fictional drama. The gathered stories are not presented verbatim. This ensures both the original keeper of the story -and those who have never heard the narrative before- are challenged and encouraged to engage with it.

Individuals exchange their memories with artists, who reimagine these narratives and exchange them with audiences. This motivates informed reassessment. Attitudinal change is measured.



Arts in the aftermath of conflict is essential in opening dialogue between communities. It bears witness to those we perceive to be 'other', challenging perceptions and building bridges through education and shared histories. Staging an alien narrative in a community setting allows for safe conversations that examine volatile issues around lack of integration.

Difficult subject matter can be explored by professional actors, as they are perceived to be neutral, outside of the community. They can embody controversial characters, give voice to polarised thoughts and aggressively challenge what is considered acceptable, because the public don't consider them to be from a specific community, with an inbuilt loyalty or even carry personal baggage.

Many of the projects also serve to become catalysts for new stories. Audiences recognise that their voice is under-represented and feel motivated to share. *Kabosh* is constantly adding to its canon of post-conflict work motivated by community interest.

In recent years *Kabosh* has toured work about the conflict in the north of Ireland to Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda, Belgium, Germany and France. As with local performances, the performances led to informed, emotive conversations about the legacy of conflict, personal impact and hope for the future. Experiencing human narratives involving international conflict resolution provokes a reassessment of personal context. We remind audiences that memories are fluid, malleable; making positive change possible. In addition, methodology is transferable across borders. It is empowering to exchange the role artists can play in challenging myths; confronting prejudice, representing trauma and ultimately assisting individuals process the legacy of conflict.



Important questions

The language of conflict and post-conflict is universal. We are dealing with the same issues: how can we move on without betraying the memory of a loved one or our community? How do we avoid passing bitterness on to the next generation and repeating a cycle of violence? Is it possible to draw a line under the past or must we forgive? Does that mean forgetting? How can we reconcile oneself with the terminology of 'post-conflict' e.g., as victim, survivor, perpetrator, etc.? Can we reimagine new possibilities for policing, justice or social structures? Conflict can seem parochial, but is easier to consider your own history by engaging with another's?

Theatre is an ideal live, humanised, communal medium for this exchange. *Kabosh* projects seek to assist communities deal with the legacy of conflict through provoking new conversations.

Paula McFetridge, Artistic Director, *Kabosh*
www.kabosh.net



Liverpool Irish Festival sincerely hope to bring *Kabosh* to Liverpool in future years to experience, first hand, the fruits of their work, understanding and commitment to truthful storytelling, reconciliation and care.

To see an example of how *Kabosh*'s work takes effect, go to the online version on this article (liverpoolirishfestival.com/news), to see a case study example of *Green & Blue* worked.



HARD HISTORIES, POSITIVE FUTURES;
WITH PATRICK KIELTY

2pm, Sat 17 Oct, **Zoom** online
(book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you
feel, booking is essential



A TRIP HERE A TRIP THERE – A CORRESPONDENCE



Last year, **Art Arcadia** and the Festival tag-teamed a residency to create *Watch me grow/a trip here a trip there*, an installation spanning the duration of the Festival from its base at **Sefton Park Palm House**. Paola Bernadelli fuelled a visual dialogue with Locky Morris, an artist living in Derry (Paola's usual home) creating a series of images, which we printed daily as part of the exchange. It was an exchange of ideas, spaces, talents... and the results are charming, funny and unexpected. We've set up a gallery of the images here liverpoolirishfestival.com/a-correspondence. Impressed with the imagery and concept, Gregory McCartney (**Art Arcadia** residency alumnus) reviews the work.

Everything eventually becomes black and white. Grand narratives get replaced by other grand narratives and we are seemingly always placed in somebody's political, economic or social taxonomy. Even the democracy and fragmentation that the internet promised has failed to live up to expectations. Subtlety is a threatened species in the online eco-system. It's a place where everyone shouts. Even in an art world that supposedly embraces diverse approaches it's the overblown and loudest work that often get all the attention. Which isn't to say I have any objection to bombast. Anyone who has encountered anything I do can confirm that I have a taste for the epic. However, the epic can be found in the most subtle, fragile, ephemeral thing. The biblical passage in which God appears to Elijah as a breeze is a classic metaphor for beauty and awe in the gentlest of circumstance.



And **Art Arcadia**/Paola Bernadelli and Locky Morris's *Watch me grow/a trip here a trip there* residency work is epic in the classic and contemporary sense of the word. Each day, Paola Bernadelli would wander around Liverpool producing a photo, to which Locky Morris would respond with one created in Derry. The result is fascinating; an abstract, subtle, sometimes sensuous dance of form and formlessness.

Another thing about contemporary existence is that it is not abstract. You'd think that we'd be exhausted from the on-the-nose directness of our lives and perhaps dive into a mysterious abstraction, but we don't for the most part. We just try to shout louder than everyone else. What I love about Bernadelli and Morris's correspondence (and it is a correspondence, if not the traditionally textual variety) is its epic quietness combined with a bubbling vitality. This isn't an easy thing to create or even maintain. Think of all those paintings, those studies in form and expression slowly fading in modern art museums; the air and light seemingly draining any vitality they originally possessed from them. They actually look better in photographs. I'm doing some of these artists an injustice of course; Yves Klein's paintings look as vibrant as ever, for instance.



Bernadelli and Morris's photographs -whilst in the same painterly tradition- expand and update it to a wonderful degree, including the detritus, vibrancy and humour of contemporary Liverpool and Derry's everyday existence. Every part of these photos is important and the content -though of 'everyday stuff'- is certainly not banal (to use a word favoured by dodgy philosophers and unimaginative curators). These photos are however political (with a small 'p') in the sense that they do reflect the forces that shape their and our world. They don't preach or offer any definite answers though. This would limit them. Art, to paraphrase James Thurber, doesn't always have to be first at the barricades.

I've always been a bit conflicted about residencies. On the one-hand they are brilliant in generating experiences of new and unfamiliar places and people. I had a great residency in New York a few years ago. On the other hand, it's pretty much impossible to go on a lengthy residency if you have a job, or a family, these days. I like the snapshot nature of this residency: a few days intervention in Liverpool culture for **Art Arcadia** resulting in work for Locky Morris to respond to. Perhaps there's a prescience to it; we now find ourselves corresponding remotely and often obsessing over the minutest of details. In fact, it is somewhat ironic that it's such a tiny, invisible to the naked eye, virus that has caused such a massive upheaval in our daily lives, leaving us grasping for familiarity and often at odds with one and other.

There's joy, sadness, pathos in these photos. In a time in which we literally cross the road to avoid people it's important to remember we still are human. In a time where connection is potentially life threatening these photos show the power and the poetry of connecting.

I've liked Locky Morris's work for a long time, in particular his (for want of a better word) 'post-Troubles' practice. Those little humorous interventions in the everyday brim with warmth and power. If I can show you 'fear in a handful of dust' I can also show you love, hate, sadness, joy. In other words, I can show you humanity and what it is to be human. We need this more than ever these days. Similarly, I have liked the 'process' that is **Art Arcadia**; its questioning of the concept of the residency; its integration of the internet and social media, in particular into this concept. Locky can take part in a residency without leaving home; I was part of **Art Arcadia**'s excellent *Lockdown Residencies* series (artarcadia.org) without leaving my sofa.

One thing tragedy does is make the world a bigger place and at the same time a smaller one. The pandemic is raging across the world making it strange and distant, but we are confined to our home towns and to our computer screens. It doesn't mean we can't come up with powerful, beautiful things though. As this project proves: we can find meaning and indeed new meaning in the smallest of things and in the most familiar places. This is vital, particularly these days.

Gregory McCartney is editor of *Abridged abridged.one*

Paola Bernadelli is Founder and Director of **Art Arcadia** (Derry, Northern Ireland) with whom the Festival have an ongoing partnership. Resident in Liverpool for the duration of **#LIF2019**, acting as artist, communicator, curator and set builder! The Festival is indebted to Paola for her determination to battle the difficulties, take opportunities and collate an insightful, competent and humorous body of work. Locky Morris's unique perspective on collective identity, experience and humour played a witty hand in the final exhibition and exemplifies his wry eye, compositional skill and ability to forge open dialogue. For **#LIF2020** we are bringing Edy Fung in as a digital resident, so hope there will be much more to this Derry-Liverpool exchange and conversation. Edy will take over our Instagram account ([instagram.com/LivIrishFest](https://www.instagram.com/LivIrishFest)) from 1-14 Oct 2020.

EXHIBITION: IN THE WINDOW.
FEATURED ARTIST MIKE BYRNE
Wed-Sat, 11am-4.30pm,
1-31 Oct, *Bluecoat Display*
Centre, Free



Kids Section Rannóg Lennai

Simple recipes for happy hands and mouths!

With an adult, the soda bread recipe could be managed by a 5 year old+ and Boxty, by a confident 10 year old, assuming they are supervised.

Kitchens are sometimes tricky places to be when you are young, but if you have got an adult or skilled young person who is willing to help you, we hope you will enjoy making these recipes to add to plates at meal times.

The first recipe makes a small loaf of soda bread. The second makes something called Boxty, which is common in the Midlands of Ireland and up towards Ulster. It is a great addition to a fry, but also good as a starter (with a dollop of your favourite sauce). Using mainly simple ingredients, we hope you will have a go during the Festival.

Soda bread

Makes one small loaf

Ingredients

75g/3oz plain flour
100g/3½oz wholemeal flour
25g/1oz porridge or rolled oats
1½ teaspoon caster sugar
1½ teaspoon salt
1½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
2 tablespoon linseeds, sunflower seeds
or your favourite type of nut or seed. If you
cannot or do not have these leave them out
175ml/6fl oz natural yoghurt or buttermilk
Vegetable or cooking oil.

g = gram. oz = ounce.

Equipment you will need

Teaspoon
Tablespoon
Large bowl
Oven
Greaseproof paper
Clear work surface
Baking tray
Knife

This recipe is adapted from **BBC** website:
[bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/soda_bread_33805](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/soda_bread_33805) accessed 11 Sept 2020.

Method

1. Turn your oven on to 220C/425F/Gas 7 while you work. You may need to ask an adult for help
2. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper
3. Stir all of the ingredients, except the yoghurt, together in a bowl. Add most of the yoghurt or buttermilk and mix together until you have a soft dough. Add a little extra yoghurt if the dough is dry or a little more flour if the dough is very wet
4. Tip the dough out onto a floured work surface and knead (roll, stretch and roll) for a few minutes until the dough is smooth
5. Roll in to a big ball and place on the baking tray. We recommend using a little bit of oil on the tray and a fine sprinkle of flour to help stop it sticking
6. Flatten the ball a little with your hand
7. You or an adult should cut a deep X on the top of the dough using a knife. The knife should cut almost all the way to the bottom so the middle of the bread cooks all the way through
8. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes or until the outside is golden. Try not to open the oven until you think the bread is ready
9. Serve warm, if possible, and add anything you like (or serve with your meal).



Kids Section Rannóg Lennáí

Boxty

Makes 6 drop-scone-style pancakes.

Ingredients

1½ cups grated raw potatoes
1 cup plain flour
1 cup left over mashed potatoes
1 egg
1 tablespoon of milk
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup vegetable or cooking oil.
A 'cup' is between 15 and 16 tablespoons.

Equipment needed

Large bowl
Bowl or jug
Large frying pan or skillet
Hob
Kitchen roll/paper towel.

This recipe was adapted

from the *All Recipes* website

www.allrecipes.com/recipe/161679/

irish-boxty accessed 11 Sept 2020.

Method

1. In a large bowl, place the grated potatoes and flour. Mix these together to coat the grated potato
2. Now add the mashed potatoes. Mix them together until the mix is even
3. In another bowl, beat the egg and milk
4. Add this to the big bowl and mix in with the potatoes
5. Add salt and pepper. Ask an adult to guide you. If you add too much it will be horrible!
6. With an adult there, if you need one, heat some oil in a large frying pan or skillet over medium-high hob. Add more if needed and pour in to a heat proof bowl if you add too much
7. Drop in blobs of mixture to form round patties, a bit bigger than a ping pong or golf ball
8. Fry on both sides until golden brown. This usually takes 3 or 4 minutes per side. This recipe should make about 6
9. Once cooked through to the middle, put your Boxty on a paper towel to drain any grease. Serve or keep warm, if using as a side dish
10. Serve warm.



Family Fun – out and about

Museum of Liverpool have an Irish trail you can follow through their collections. If it is safe for you to go out as a family, it might be worth asking at their customer service desk for a copy, or you can download a version here: www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events/self-guided-irish-trail/

#LIF2020 PULL-OUT GUIDE

EVENT DETAILS



EXHIBITION: IN THE WINDOW, FEATURED ARTIST MIKE BYRNE

Wed-Sat, 11am-4.30pm, 1-31 Oct, Bluecoat Display Centre, Free

Each year, the *Bluecoat Display Centre* and *Liverpool Irish Festival* -working with the *Design and Crafts Council of Ireland*- partner to find a new Irish creative to celebrate. We ask artists to respond to our creative brief -this year's being 'exchange'- and select work that a) best answers the questions we raised there and b) shows considerable skill. We are not prescriptive about the medium and have selected silversmiths, glassmakers and ceramicists from the submissions. For the second year in row, we have picked a ceramicist.

Mike Byrne hails from Limerick. His domestic ware has a sculptural quality, with surface embellishments akin to that of a printmaker's. With hard, thin edges like a distant horizon and outlines reminiscent of Hans Coper, Mike's matt glazes draw you closer to touch what seem to be mineral surfaces. Available for sale, we recommend going early in the run to see as much as you can. This exhibit is supported by the *Design and Crafts Council of Ireland*.



CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE

2pm, 15 Oct, Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

A cultural connectedness exchange designed to create links, support Irish arts in England and raise Irish creative visibility. Connecting leaders from Irish service providers in the UK and Irish makers, this *Zoom* session, led by the *Liverpool Irish Festival* and *Irish in Britain* will look at Irish representation, barriers to presenting cultural work and Irish arts and cultural activities ahead. We want this to be the first step in networking makers and providers to consider radicalising the provision of Irish arts and culture in England. It is a must for any Irish creative seeking to show, share or co-author work and meet those in championing Irish work in England. This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.



MIXED HERITAGE MIXER

6pm, Thurs 15 Oct 2020, Zoom online

(book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events),

Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

#LIF2020 begins today with a theme of 'exchange'. Following on from the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* session held at 2pm, Lorraine Maher -artist and founder of *lamIrish*- hosts a *Mixed Heritage Mixer*, to which we invite people of all dual and/ or mixed heritage Irish backgrounds to trade stories about

- racial assumptions and exchanges
- the lived experiences of mixed-race Irish people (at home or abroad)
- the additional pressures Covid-19 has placed on you as mixed-race individuals or communities; and
- what the role of culture has in helping you access all sides of your heritage.

This continues our dual-heritage work from 2019, whilst creating an important link between the north and south of England, through which we hope to learn more about the specific challenges posed in our communities. As a seasoned artist and mixed heritage forum host (not to mention *lamIrish* founder, which celebrates Irish Black lives), Lorraine is well placed to facilitate an active and thought-provoking debate, which will inform future projects we run together. For this reason, the Festival really wants to hear from you about your needs, experiences and hopes for culture here in Liverpool, in a real cultural exchange and we encourage people from all Irish mixed race heritages to be involved.

This is a *Black History Month* and *Writing on the Wall* partnered event, developed via *Creative Organisations of Liverpool*. It is supported by the Mayor's Fund (Liverpool).

MELLOWTONE PRESENTS...

7pm, 16 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel

Mellowtone have promoted songwriters -from the worlds of folk, blues and roots music in Liverpool- for over 15 years. *Mellowtone Records* was established in 2014 to progress this mission further. A shared cultural history has entwined Liverpool with Ireland. One of the dominant strands in the city's development was Irish immigration and this event features a range of Liverpool-based musicians from Ireland -and of Irish heritage- with live recorded performances and music videos from *Seafoam Green*, Simon Herron, *Only Child*, *Kingfast*, and *Motel Sundown*.

DIGITAL LAUNCH EVENT INC. POETRY FILM AND LOCKDOWN LIGHTS

From 8pm, 15 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel

Join other *Facebookers* in a general digital watch party over on our *Facebook* channel. Featuring glimpses of the Festival, exclusive films and previews, it provides a great showcase for the days ahead.

Covid-19 has changed how we can be together. Between 8pm-10pm, we will host a *Facebook* watch party on our page, on which we will share project films and stories, comments, images from previous festivals, links to articles and updates about the Festival.

We also invite you send in memories, comments or launch wishes on the night, so you can share in the opening of #LIF2020.

A full schedule will be broadcast closer to the time, but will include digital-

- variety
- films -especially LGBTQIA+-
- supported by the *London Irish Film Festival*
- poetry readings
- *Lockdown Lights* stories.



FROM HERE... UNEMPLOYABLE PROMOTIONS PRESENT...

8pm, 16 Oct, Facebook
(facebook.com/LivIrishFest),
Free/pay what you feel
Unemployable Promotions are a PR company and record label in Cork, representing a number of independent artists and bands. Tonight, they will showcase their roster, providing a flavour of Cork's music scene and setting up what we hope will be a great exchange between Liverpool and Cork for the future. Think *Mellowtone*, but Co. Cork Irish...



TRAD DISCO FT. DJ PADDY CALLAGHAN

From 10pm, 16 Oct, Facebook
(facebook.com/LivIrishFest),
Free/pay what you feel
Live trad DJ set from *Comhaltas* favourite DJ Paddy Callaghan. Coming from Paddy's DJ residence in Glasgow and livestreamed in to living rooms globally, this looks set to be lots of fun. Share with friends and create a sense of the 'trad night out' by getting a glass of something you love and taking to the floor in your best togs (or pyjamas, as you prefer!).

This event is brought to #LIF2020 by *Comhaltas in Britain* with support from *District*.



SOUTH LIVERPOOL WALK

10am, Sat 17 Oct, Meet at the Irish Famine Memorial, St Luke's Gardens, £7/£5 conc/booking essential, (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events)

One of few physical events in 2020, this two hour walk, popular in recent years, visits the remarkable architecture of the Hope and Rodney Street areas, to discover their connections to the history, politics and culture of Liverpool's vibrant Irish community. Led by historian Greg Quiery, we advise you book early to avoid disappointment.

Anyone interested in this may also like the *City of Hunger; City of Gold* walk (Sun 18 Oct) and the *Scotland Road walk* (24 Oct).

This is an outdoor walk; please be weather prepared, comfortable and hydrated. We will observe Covid-19 regulations as at the date of the walk. Walkers should act responsibly, including wearing a mask if streets or locations are busy. We will do all we can to maintain social distancing, but need your active co-operation in this. See booking *Eventbrite* booking notes for more.

This year's walks are held in memory of Vin Finn, Festival volunteer and Irish community champion.



HARD HISTORIES, POSITIVE FUTURES; WITH PATRICK KIELTY

2pm, Sat 17 Oct, Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

Patrick Kielty knows a thing or two about the devastating effects of The Troubles. His father was killed by paramilitary gunmen in 1988; he's told jokes about both sides. In 2018, Patrick made the programme *My Dad, The Peace Deal and Me*, for the *BBC* (available on *YouTube*, watching recommended), which looked at how the Good Friday Agreement was holding up 20 years on.

Born of the same treaty, to address the need for reconciliation and meeting the needs of victims of violence, Northern Ireland's *Commission for Victims and Survivors* was founded in 2008. As an "arm's-length" government organisation, it retains some independence from government, but is its direct link for promoting the needs of everyone impacted by The Troubles.

Serving as an inclusive organisation that listens to the varying needs and experiences of victims, the Commission advises government on the best way forward with policy, law and practice affecting them. At the heart of this work is the voice of the *Victims and Survivors Forum*, a group of individuals -convened by the Commission- who represent the breadth of differing experiences. The Forum works together to find common ground for the betterment of all.

This is all part of reconciling divisions and handling the collective trauma waged by The Troubles. But who are victims and survivors? What is the value of the Commission 12 years on and how does it reflect a modern Ireland? What about people living in diaspora communities? What are its barriers?

Patrick leads an open, earnest and difficult interview with members of the Commission's Forum about the Commission's work, the issues arising 20 years on from the Good Friday Agreement and the road left to travel now the eyes of the world have moved on.

This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.



LIVERPOOL LAMBS: LISTENING PARTY

8pm, Sat 17 Oct, online (listening link on event page liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel

Liverpool Lambs is a play written by Liverpool Irish pals Peter King and Steve Nolan. Performed in 2016 at *The Unity* and *The Liverpool Irish Centre* (as part of the *Liverpool Irish Festival*). The duo told the story of 50 Liverpool volunteers involved in the Dublin Easter Rising 1916, three of whom were Peter's relatives. In 2019 the *Liverpool Irish Festival* introduced the authors to theatre company *Falling Doors Theatre* in the hope of mounting a touring version of the play, to premier at #LIF2020, before carrying on across the UK and Ireland. Sadly, this was not to be. However, undeterred, they're bringing you a podcast with insight into the writing of the play, the origins of the story and what to look forward to.

The King Brothers were raised in Kirkdale, by parents John and Mary who relocated from Blackwater (County Wexford, Ireland). Prior to WW1, the brothers enlisted in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret organisation working with the Volunteer Movement, beside many volunteers from the Liverpool branch. The play follows their journey to the deadly uprising in Dublin.



CITY OF HUNGER; CITY OF GOLD

2pm, Sun 18 Oct, Meet at the Irish Famine Memorial, St Luke's Gardens, £7/£5 conc/booking essential, (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events)

From St Luke's to *Central Library*, walkers will discover aspects of Liverpool's Irish history, encountering a vanished church, pubs, statues, a 200 year old school and some of Britain's finest Victorian architecture. Amongst it all, shipping magnates, street urchins, priests, politicians and a jazz legend. Walkers will visit St George's Plateau, the scene of many momentous events, and *St John's Gardens*, to reflect on the Victorians commemorated there.

In addition to the *South Liverpool walk* (17 Oct), readers may also like the *Scotland Road walk* (24 Oct).

This is an outdoor walk; please be weather prepared, comfortable and hydrated. We will observe Covid-19 regulations as at the date of the walk. Walkers should act responsibly, including wearing a mask in the event streets or locations are busy. We will do all we can to maintain social distancing, but need your active co-operation in this. See booking *Eventbrite* booking notes for more.

This year's walks are held in memory of Vin Finn, Festival volunteer and Irish community champion.

ADRIAN DUNCAN: EXCHANGING PLACES



5pm, Sun 18 Oct 2020, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest),
followed by Twitter Q&A (twitter.com/LivIrishFest) **search #LIF2020,**
Free/pay what you feel

How does living away from home impact your art? Does the experience of living abroad allow for an exchange of ideas? Adrian Duncan is a Berlin-based Irish visual artist whose debut novel, *Love Notes from a German Building Site* (2019) recently won the inaugural *John McGahern Annual Book Prize*, awarded by the *University of Liverpool's Institute of Irish Studies*, who co-present this event. Prior to his writing career, Adrian trained as a structural engineer. Join him as he discusses ideas of being an Irish artist abroad, how living in Berlin impacts his work and whether his background training has influenced his artistic view. He will also give a short reading from his most recent novel, *A Sabbatical in Leipzig*, which was published by *The Lilliput Press* in March. Followed by a live *Twitter* Q&A with Adrian; use **#LIF2020** to address your questions. *Twitter*: @adrian_duncan_ and @LilliputPress

Order books at lilliputpress.ie and use "LIF20" to receive a 20% discount during the Festival.

GREAT FAMINE VOICES ROADSHOW

8pm, Tue 20 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest),
Free/pay what you feel

Witness Famine and migration accounts of Liverpool's Irish community, recorded for the *Great Famine Voices* archive as part of an ongoing partnership with the *Irish Heritage Trust* and the *Strokestown National Famine Museum*.



STRAY DOG FOLLOWING: A GREG QUIERY BOOK LAUNCH/MEET THE MAKER

6pm, Wed 21 Oct, Zoom online (book.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), **Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential**
Stairwell Books presents Greg Quiery's new poetry book in another *Liverpool Irish Festival* exclusive. Hear live readings and ask questions. Part of our *Meet the Maker* series.

Greg Quiery is a well-known reader at poetry evenings in Liverpool. This collection of recent work is a miscellany of storytelling, observation and humour. Contemporary Britain and its past are explored with realism, affection, humour; occasionally with anger. Reflections of an Ireland which has passed, but remains alive in memory, are woven into this book.

Stray Dog Following is published by *Stairwell Books*. Copies will be available to event attendees, direct from Greg or *Stairwell Books* at a reduced price of £6. Alternatively, *News From Nowhere* (Bold Street, Liverpool) will stock this item.

This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.

MRS SHAW HERSELF

8pm, Wed 21 Oct, Zoom online (book.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events),
£5, booking is essential

This one woman play, adapted for the online space, depicts the life of George Bernard Shaw's overlooked wife, Charlotte Payne-Townshend. Charlotte was a remarkable woman who was a wealthy Irish heiress as well as a suffrage supporter, philanthropist and Fabian. She met and married the famous playwright when they were both in their early forties; a marriage lasting until her death. Explored through her diary entries and letters -as well as those of Shaw, Beatrice Webb, T.E. Lawrence and Mrs Patrick Campbell- this is an unconventional Irish love story, accompanied by Celtic harp.

This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.



CÚ CHULAINN AND RÉAMONN Ó CIARÁIN

6pm, Thurs 22 Oct, Zoom online (book.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events),
Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

Meet Réamonn Ó Ciaráin, a leading expert in Cú Chulainn and Gaelic translation. In our Meet the Maker series, he discusses his work and the influence these stories have on Irish culture, his exchanges and what folklore means to us, in a modern world.

Cú Chulainn is a mythic Ulster man, whose powers -and stories of conquest- equate to those of the ancient Greek and Roman deity stories. Adopted by different parties through time, the folkloric stories are embedded in to Irish history.

This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.



LESSONS OF WAR: MATT MCGINN

8pm, Thurs 22 Oct, Zoom online (book.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), **Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential**
Lessons of War documentary film followed by in person Q&A with music artist Matt McGinn. A **#LIF2020** exclusive.

Matt McGinn is a seasoned Irish musician with a number of albums under his belt (and more in production!). He has collaborators the world over. Having grown up during The Troubles, music was a way for Matt to engage in expression and find peace. He wondered if he could create peace through music and, working with artists in war torn environments, created *Lessons of War*. Tonight we watch his beautiful documentary, which covers the making process of the album, before joining him to discuss the music, the experience and the opportunities that can be found in sharing, collaborating and putting a little generosity out in the world.

The Q&A section will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.



WHISTLE WALKER

6pm, Fri 23 Oct, Zoom online (book.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), **Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential**
Continuing our *Meet the Maker* series, Terry plots his musical development via a series of locations in Liverpool, first in a short documentary and then with a live chat.

Visitors will watch a short documentary Terry has compiled, looking at his internationally acclaimed music progression, via the Liverpool locations that brought him to where he is today. Afterwards, join us for a *Zoom* where you can ask questions about Terry's life, music, Irishness, career and experiences. Trade stories, hear others or simply watch a maker talk about his world.

The Q&A section will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.

CELTIC ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

7.30pm, Sun 18 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest),
Free/pay what you feel

A programme of short animations, curated exclusively for the *Liverpool Irish Festival*. Beginning with us in 2017, the *Celtic Animation Film Festival* celebrates and encourages new and emerging Celtic and international animators to forge an ongoing global community to share practice, tell stories and reflect on Celtic culture and concerns. It's themes have tracked with the Festival's, with awards for Best Celtic Animation Film, Best International Animation Film and Best Student Animation Film, judged by an industry and practitioner panel. In 2020, Directors Kate Corbin and Eleonora Asparuhova look back over their three year run to curate an evening of film, which bears witness to diaspora stories and contemporary approaches to animation. Join the watch party and social media Q&A that follows.

This is not suitable for under 15s and will contain films alluding to or depicting difficult subject matter. Trigger warnings will be given.

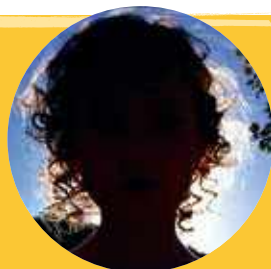
INDIECORK

8pm, Mon 19 Oct, indiecork.com

A shorts film programme, curated exclusively for the *Liverpool Irish Festival* from submissions to *IndieCork Festival* in 2020. *IndieCork* has partnered with the Festival for many years now, bringing a wealth of new Irish filmmaking talent to our screens. We have found *IndieCork's* programmes to be a dynamic showcase for emerging Irish voices, demonstrating the current preoccupations of the makers. Historically it has revealed subject trends and new genres and styles arising from Ireland. Mick Hannigan, Director of *IndieCork*, hand-picks a selection from this year's competition films, exclusively for the *Liverpool Irish Festival*, which can this year be enjoyed from your home armchair. Thanks Covid-19!

MY AUNT AND I

6pm, Tue 20 Oct, Zoom online (book.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events),
Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential
Carmen Cullen, biographer, is the first in our *Meet the Maker* series.






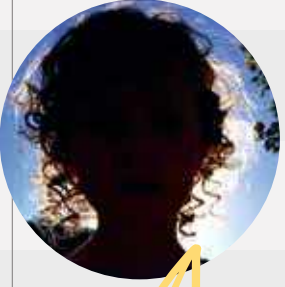








Words, images, music and voice, to entertain and cajole. Draw up a vertical chair to view and listen to the enthralling poetry videos of Carmen Cullen. Experience the songs of her famous aunt, Delia Murphy (as sung by Carmen), and hear how their different artistic worlds merge.

Delia Murphy was Ireland's Ballad Queen in the 1930s to the 1950s and the unrivalled singing star of her day with such hits as *The Spinning Wheel*. Be intrigued by two successful, creative women, their family links and common difficulties. Carmen's poetry is from her Pandemic Poetry, still ongoing, and her answer to the Covid-19 lockdown. Images are by Deirdre Ridgeway. Original music is by Gerry Anderson.

This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL 2020 EVENT PLAN

| | THU 15 OCT | FRI 16 OCT | SAT 17 OCT | SUN 18 OCT | MON 19 OCT | TUE 20 OCT |
|------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| 10AM | | | SOUTH LIVERPOOL WALK 10am, Sat 17 Oct, <i>Meet at the Irish Famine Memorial, St Luke's Gardens, £7/£5 conc/booking</i>  | | | |
| 11AM | | | | | | |
| 12PM | | | | | | |
| 1PM | | | | | | |
| 2PM | CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE 2pm, Thurs 15 Oct, <i>Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential</i>  | | HARD HISTORIES, POSITIVE FUTURES; WITH PATRICK KELTY 2pm, Sat 17 Oct, <i>Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential</i>  | CITY OF HUNGER; CITY OF GOLD 2pm, Sun 18 Oct, <i>Meet at the Irish Famine Memorial, St Luke's Gardens, £7/£5 conc/booking essential, (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events)</i>  | | |
| 3PM | | | | | | |
| 4PM | | | | | | |
| 5PM | | | | ADRIAN DUNCAN: EXCHANGING PLACES 5pm, Sun 18 Oct 2020, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), followed by Twitter Q&A (twitter.com/LivIrishFest) search #LIF2020, Free/pay what you feel</i>  | | |
| 6PM | MIXED HERITAGE MIXER 6pm, Thurs 15 Oct <i>Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential</i> | | | | | MY AUNT AND I 6pm, Tue 20 Oct, <i>Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential</i>  |
| 7PM | | MELLOWTONE PRESENTS... 7pm, 16 Oct, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</i>  | GET YOUR TICKETS | | GET YOUR TICKETS | |
| 8PM | DIGITAL LAUNCH EVENT INC. POETRY FILM AND LOCKDOWN LIGHTS From 8pm, 15 Oct, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</i>  | FROM HERE... UNEMPLOYABLE PROMOTIONS PRESENT... 8pm, 16 Oct, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</i>  | LIVERPOOL LAMBS: LISTENING PARTY 8pm, Sat 24 Oct, <i>online (listening link on event page liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel</i>  | CELTIC ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL 7.30pm, Sun 18 Oct, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</i> | INDIECORK 8pm, Mon 19 Oct, <i>indiecork.com</i>  | GREAT FAMINE VOICES ROADSHOW 8pm, Tue 20 Oct, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</i> |
| 9PM | | | | | | |
| 10PM | | TRAD DISCO F DJ PADDY CALLAGHAN From 10pm, 16 Oct, <i>Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</i>  | | | | |
| 11PM | | | | | | |
| 12PM | | | | | | |

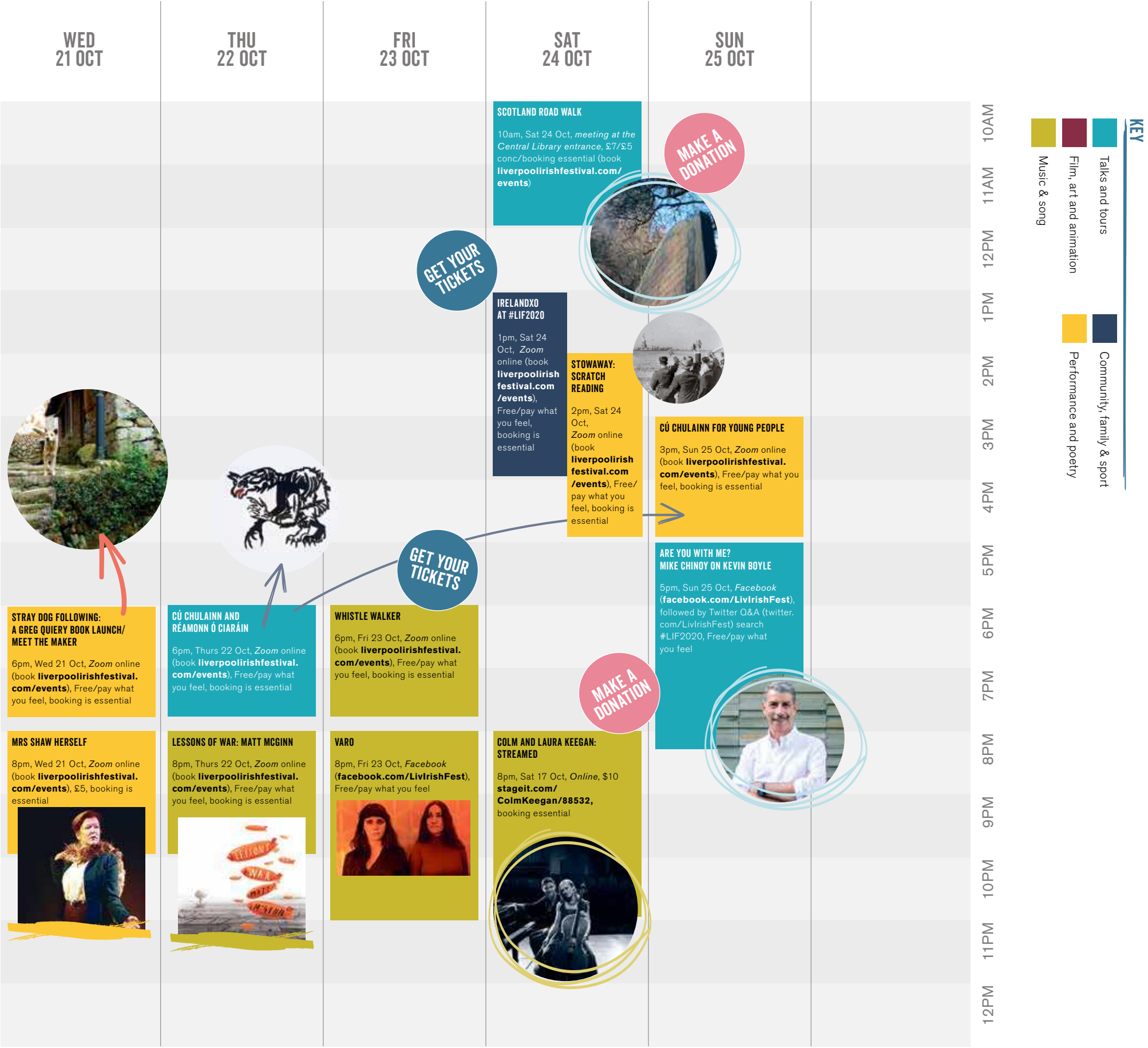
EXHIBITION: IN THE WINDOW, FEATURED ARTIST MIKE BYRNE
Wed-Sat, 11am-4.30pm,
1-31 Oct, *Bluecoat Display Centre, Free*

MAKE A DONATION



EVENT INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW





Here are 20+ events linked to our theme: 'exchange'. Ranging across art forms, they are mostly online. Unless a venue is provided, please visit liverpoolirishfestival.com/events to make your booking.

Most events are free. Where booking is essential it ensures we create an exclusive event, just for you, and we can keep you updated with the right links. This is important for keeping online events safe and inclusive. To book, visit our website and click the 'Book now' link, which will take you to **Eventbrite** for processing. Where available you can pick 'Free' or 'Donation' tickets. If you register and can't attend please return your ticket.

Pay what you feel donations are welcomed. General proceeds come to the Festival (charity number 1100126); when donations are given via tickets to an event a share

will be given to the artists. If you can share the cost of a coffee, a slice of cake or a pint, we would be very grateful.

Our primary sites, for live events, will be **Zoom** and/ or our **Facebook** page (facebook.com/LivIrishFest). Please download **Zoom** as soon as you make your booking (zoom.us/download) and follow our handle on **Facebook**. Both are free to use.

Coronavirus has affected our ability to arrange and host events for four reasons:

- social distancing
- arts funding (we received 35% less arts funding in 2020 compared to 2019)
- sponsorship, advertising and ticket sales (we have lost 98% of this income compared with 2019)
- what we can expect from visitors at computers over 10 days.

Covid-19 has forced us to use a different structure to previous years. It misses key activities that we have always championed, such as local Irish dance and seisiúns. When it is safe to return to these, we promise we will. We sincerely hope you will join us this year and enjoy our new iteration of the **Liverpool Irish Festival**.

Please note all web addresses are highlighted and indicated by the use of **.com** or other hyperlink ending (such as **.org**, or **co.uk**). To use a provided web address, first type **www.** in to your browser followed by the address provided.



VARO

8pm, Fri 23 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest),
Free/pay what you feel

Enjoy an evening of traditional tunes with Dublin based trad/folk duo **Varo**. "Varo is the name of a river that, centuries ago, used to represent the border between France and Italy. Over time it wrestled between being French or Italian, as though it couldn't really choose a nationality, like the two of us. We come from two different countries and have found ourselves falling in love with the Irish music and its culture" - Lucie Azconaga and Consuelo Nerea Breschi.

Varo are singers and fiddle players Lucie Azconaga (France) and Consuelo Nerea Breschi (Italy) who perform Irish traditional songs and tunes, with arrangement influences from the Folk, Baroque and Classical traditions; weaving melodies with harmonies, drones and counter melody. The duo met in 2015, having moved to Dublin to pursue their love for Irish traditional music, and immediately started a fruitful collaboration. They travelled to Ireland along different musical paths, Lucie from jazz, classical music and French folk; Consuelo from Irish trad, folk and world music.

Over the years, Lucie and Consuelo have had the pleasure of working in various other projects, such as **Landless**, Lisa O'Neill's Band, **Ye Vagabonds**, **The Morning Tree**, **Alasource** and **The Nomadic Piano Project**. They have now assembled a phenomenally talented group for a new collaborative album and video series, which they will premiere videos of and discuss as part of this exclusive live stream event.



SCOTLAND ROAD WALK

10am, Sat 24 Oct, meeting at the Central Library entrance, £7/£5 conc/booking essential ([book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events](https://liverpoolirishfestival.com/events))

This two hour walk –led by historian Greg Quiery- explores the dense history of a world famous district. Featuring the stories of heroic men and women; footballers and rock stars; two hidden statues; a graveyard and the legends of Dandy Pat and James Carling. The walk ends at **St Anthony's church**, a short bus ride from town.

As with the South Liverpool and Irish Heritage walks, places are limited so we advise you book early to avoid disappointment.

This is an outdoor walk; please be weather prepared, comfortable and hydrated. We will observe Covid-19 regulations as at the date of the walk. Walkers should act responsibly, including wearing a mask in the event streets or locations are busy. We will do all we can to maintain social distancing, but need your active co-operation in this. See booking **Eventbrite** booking notes for more.

This year's walks are held in memory of Vin Finn, Festival volunteer and Irish community champion.

IRELANDXO AT #LIF2020

1pm, Sat 24 Oct, Zoom online ([book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events](https://liverpoolirishfestival.com/events)),
Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

Join a live webinar to learn about some interesting historical characters from Liverpool's Irish Diaspora. With roughly 50% of Liverpool's population having Irish ancestry, that's quite a pool to draw from.

Using the **XO Chronicles** to learn about some fascinating Irish Liverpudlians and their connection with Ireland, we will also discuss the close relationship between Liverpool and Ireland and the connection has shaped our customs, cultures and languages, throughout history. The **XO Chronicles** are a free feature on the **IrelandXO.com** website. It works by enabling all people of Irish ancestry, both in Ireland and around the world, to add to the heritage of every Irish locality by recording what they know about our ancestors, the places they lived in and the events that shaped their lives.

Travel may be off the cards right now, but we can still connect our Global Irish Communities and learn about our shared ancestry, especially the special bond between Ireland and Liverpool. The Webinar will run for 30 minutes on **Zoom**.

STOWAWAY: SCRATCH READING

2pm, Sat 24 Oct, Zoom online ([book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events](https://liverpoolirishfestival.com/events)),
Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

They wanted a better life in a brave new world. He stowed her away to pursue their dream. Off they sailed into the sunset with their secret. However, it was the song in her heart that set her free. See how Fortune threatens to overwhelm wannabe singer Kathleen. Will she survive waves, war and stormy love affairs, only to flounder in marriage or might those newly found airwaves waft her to success? Watch this **Stowaway** strive to exchange the inequalities of her times for her worldwide musical message of love.

Barbara Marsh's new play is aired for the first time as part of **#LIF2020**. Watch this scratch reading of a new work, directed by Zara Marie Brown. Detailing an Irish journey between Liverpool and New York, witness the exchange between actors and page; story and dreams. Q&A follows with the play's writer and director.



COLM AND LAURA KEEGAN: STREAMED

8pm, Sat 24 Oct, Online, \$10 visit our events page for booking ref,
booking essential

This is an online broadcast and watch party of Colm and Laura Keegan: Live, allowing people from around the world to join in and celebrate their musical talents. Virtual audiences are invited to shape live elements with interactive comments, which Colm and Laura will react and respond to.

Colm and Laura Keegan are international stars, running Scots-Irish castle tours and large music tours of the USA. Multi-award winning Irish singer and musician Colm Keegan is best known as one of the principal singers in **PBS's** sensation show: **Celtic Thunder**, which led to him meeting his soon-to-be musical partner and wife, Glaswegian cellist Laura Durrant. Some might say a far cry from their days of personal invitations to play at the Pentagon, Colm and Laura join us to present an intimate live event direct to you at home.

This event is held in partnership with the **Liverpool Irish Centre**.

Tickets are available on **Stagelt**, which requires you to create a log in. We recommend doing this ahead of the event to avoid any delays or disappointment. Proceeds go directly to the artists.

CÚ CHULAINN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

3pm, Sun 25 Oct, Zoom online ([book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events](https://liverpoolirishfestival.com/events)), **Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential**

Listen as Réamonn regales you with stories from Cú Chulainn, 'Ireland's greatest source of psychic inspiration'. Especially good for older children, illustrations from Dara Vallely will also be shown. This is the first time this story will have been read aloud, in English. This event will be recorded and shared online with subtitles within 48 hours.



ARE YOU WITH ME? MIKE CHINOY ON KEVIN BOYLE

5pm, Sun 25 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), **followed by Twitter Q&A** (twitter.com/LivIrishFest) **search #LIF2020, Free/pay what you feel**

What are the parallels between Northern Ireland's troubled history and its status now, during the Brexit upheaval? How can lessons of the past inform our world view today, especially during the turbulence of 2020? Award-winning former **CNN** correspondent Mike Chinoy addresses these topics and more in his discussion of **Are You With Me? Kevin Boyle and the Rise of the Human Rights Movement**, his new biography of Kevin Boyle.

Boyle, co-founder of the **Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA)**, helped create the intellectual underpinning for the agreement that ended The Troubles. He was chief advisor to Mary Robinson, during her tenure as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and played a crucial role in advancing international protections for human rights. Followed by a live **Twitter** Q&A with Mike, use **#LIF2020** to address your questions. **Twitter: @mikechinoy** and **@LilliputPress**.

Are You With Me? Kevin Boyle and the Rise of the Human Rights Movement by Mike Chinoy is available via lilliputpress.ie and use "LIF20" to receive a 20% discount during the Festival.

Kids Section Rannóg Lennai

Origami game

Suitable to make from 8+.



- 1.**
Using scissors cut the template on Page 21 along dotted line



- 2.**
Fold the square in half, diagonally, along the yellow lines (number 1) and unfold again



- 3.**
Turn your square over so that the back of the page is facing you (not the game side) and fold each corner so the tip points in to the middle of the folded lines you made before. You will make a smaller square. You can also fold along the green lines (number 2), but remember to turn your folds back the other way, otherwise your game will be inside out! When complete you should have a grid facing you (the game is on the other side)



- 4.**
Keeping your square with the folded corners on top, take the new corners and repeat the process; folding them in so the tips meet the middle. All four coloured sections should now be in the middle and on top of your square



- 5.**
Turn the square over. For the last time, turn the corners in so they meet in the middle. Eight tasks should face you



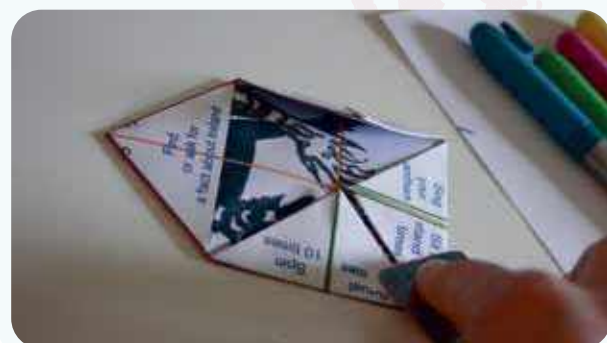
- 6.**
Fold the square in half one way to make a rectangle. Unfold and do the same again across the middle the other way



- 7.**
Now for the fiddly bit. Turn your square over. You should be looking at four coloured sections. Lift the tips from the middle and push your fingers into the pockets they make



- 8.**
Using your thumbs and index fingers in each rectangular side of the square, you should be able to push one way then the next to make the game work.



- TIP**
Use the edge of a ruler to fold your edges as flat as you can.

The rules

1. Ask a friend to pick one of the corner colours
2. Pushing and pulling to open and close the game, spell out the colour; one letter per move
3. Where the game opens after spelling the chosen colour, ask your friend to select a task
4. Once they have done the task open the tab it was on. Underneath is another thing to do. Do this together and share the result
5. Swap who has the game and play again.

Kids Section

Rannóg Lennai

Wordsearch

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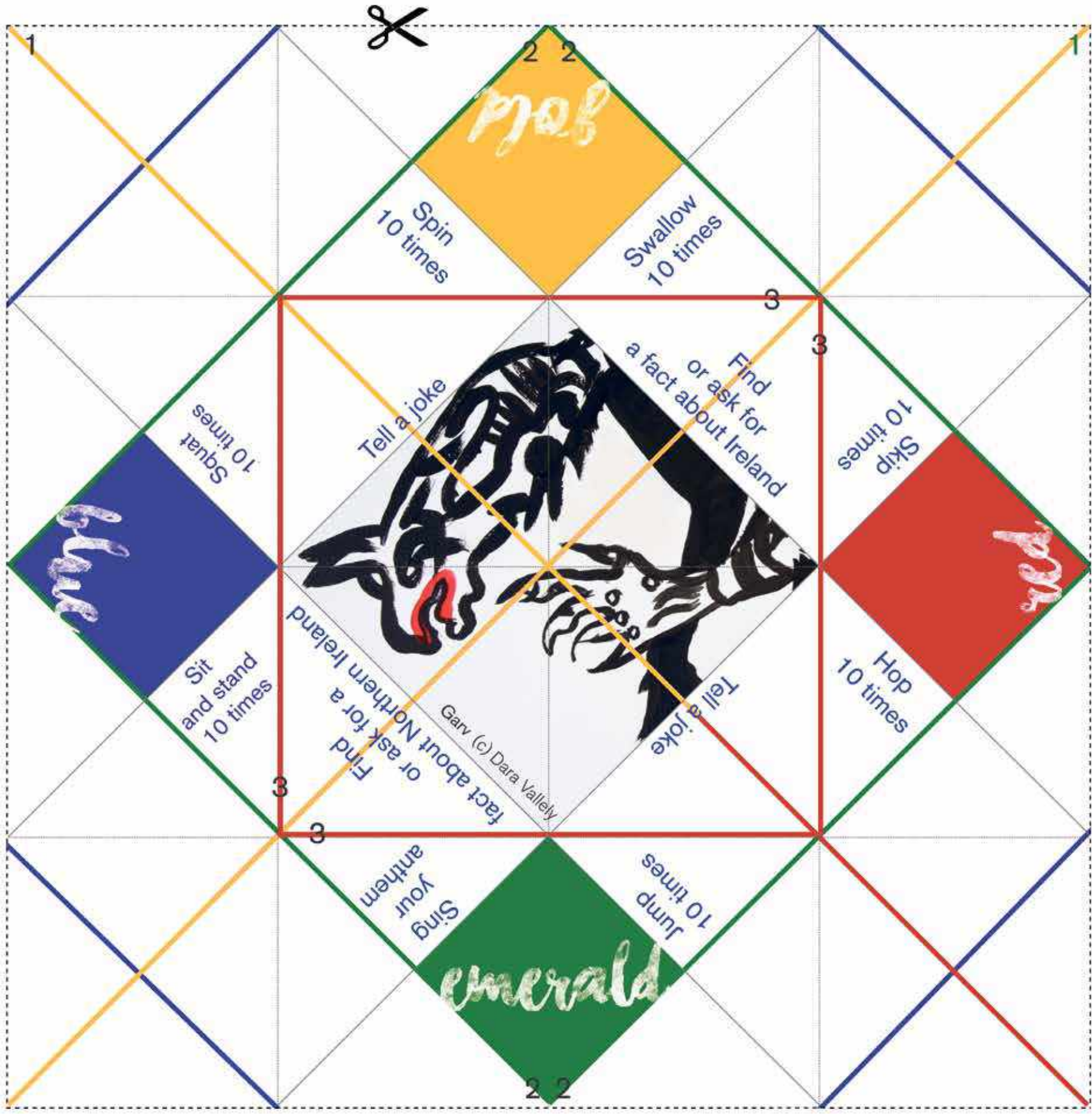
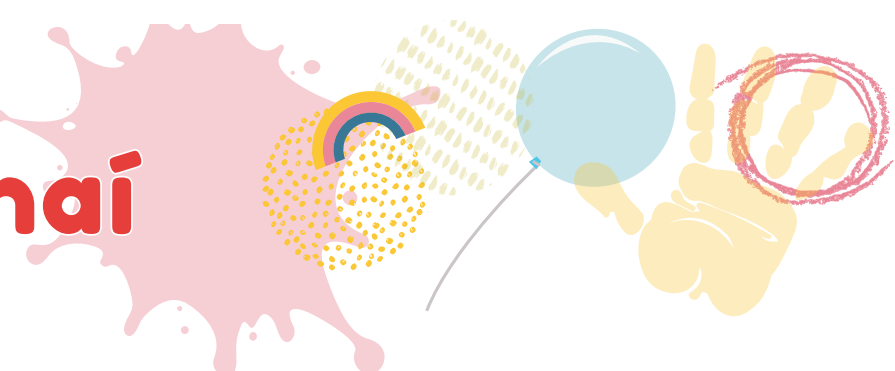
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MUSIC
THEATRE
PLAYS
EXHIBITIONS
DANCE
FILM
ANIMATION
PERFORMANCE
ART
LITERATURE
TOURS
TRAILS
POETRY

Kids Section Rannóg Lennai

Origami game

Cut out with scissors



Kilkelly is a project lead by Irish singer-songwriter Conor Kilkelly, based in Berlin. With collaborators from the city's thriving "Dark Folk" music scene, *Kilkelly* released debut album *The Prick & The Petal last year*, which was showcased in full at **#LIF2019**, with accompanying art book by collaborating artist and *Kilkelly* vocalist, Stephanie Hannon. This year we catch up with Conor and Stephanie, plus the character narratives conveyed in the concept album, centred on "depravity, desperation & desolation" of Old Catholic Ireland, following The Famine. Combining a piece written by Conor -portraying his personal struggles within his musical themes- Stephanie interviews Conor and poet, Ciarán Hodgers, who hails from the same Irish town as Conor; Drogheda on the East Coast of Ireland.

KILKELLY: A VIEW FROM WITHOUT



The most severe punishment given in our prison system is social isolation. When an inmate is considered too dangerous, too volatile within the highest securities prisons they are confined to a room; sometimes for 23 hours a day for the remainder of their imprisonment. Similarly, a tribe's most severe punishment is banishment. In a death sentence, the punishment ends as soon it is instigated; by definition it is short-lived In isolation and banishment the punishment is sustained and so is –arguably- greater.

In *Kilkelly's* debut album *The Prick & The Petal* we met the characters Joe and Mary; unhappily married, marred by addiction and poverty. In the album we heard how they isolated from each other; viewing the traumas of their day whilst aimlessly traversing through old Catholic Ireland with vague hopes of finding solace somewhere across the seas.

This self-banishment to ostracise oneself through emigration is at the heart of Irish cultural identity. Historically it was a last ditch attempt at survival, but the path is a punishing one. Those who leave today are not doing so to ensure they can feed themselves. What, then, drives them to consider dropping everything, cutting ties with their homeland? For artists, is it a case of the survival of their craft?

As James Joyce said, contemplating his own emigration is Ireland "the sow that eats its young?"

Conor's Story

When asked why I moved to Berlin, I never had a good answer. I truthfully didn't know. The most I could muster with any sense of conviction was "on a whim". The vagueness of my answer eased the inquisitive look on the face of whoever asked, and appeased something in me, too. "A whim"; why not? People find nothing more romantic than falling in love at first sight; why not the same for falling in love with a city? When you fall in love it's only a matter of time before you move in together, after all.

Granted, my first love was always Galway, on the West Coast. I'd an on-off, hot-cold relationship with my hometown of Drogheda and became enthralled with Galway once I moved away for university. Cobble streets; charm; sea; rivers and countless pubs of all sorts and sizes... a thing of beauty. But, after five years, we split ("it's not you, it's me"); I sought the greyer pastures of Dublin, somewhere bigger; where "the action was". And I loved Dublin, too. What pained me was her price. "How can anyone afford to do anything here?", I scowled in thought of forking over 20 euro to the taxi-man at the end of another night out in the city. The buses stopped at around 11.30pm. The good music didn't stop till 1am. Hence my problem. A big one. In my last year of education my part-time job was as a campus tour guide at *UCD*; money was tight to the point of asphyxiating.

When visiting friends for a few days in Berlin that year, I simply couldn't fathom how good they had it.

Their beautiful high-ceiling apartment was chockablock with what could be described as "artsy types" and political radicals; the types my friends would mock and I would salivate over when we caught sight of them out in the wilds of Dublin city, usually over at *The Workman's Club* (a local hipster hangout).

"What do you do, Conor?", a strikingly beautiful lady asked me, perched on the stairs to a bed hanging from the high ceiling. "Philosophy. And I tour guide at a university in Dublin. You?". "Tour guide? Yes, I've done some of that, but at the moment I'm helping out setting up art installations, in between exhibits. I have one of my own coming up shortly." An actual artist; I never met one before. Sounds ludicrous. Sure, I'd met many a-dabbler, but a working artist? Unheard of!

The party's tone turned as the anarchists laid out the plans for the following day. The friends I'd been visiting were caught up in some trouble at the hostel they'd worked at. The trouble being: they worked for two months, and now the owner has fobbed off all payment simply stating he hadn't the money to pay. I asked Laura, my Irish friend, what exactly happened.

"We've been shafted of two month's pay. We've been given nothing since we arrived!". Okay, I thought –turning on a heel- maybe Berlin isn't so great.

The next morning there I was: placard in hand, amidst a parade of anarchists, confused and excited. The majority of us derived from a group called *Basta*, who provided free legal aid and served as foot soldiers to picket the hostels and other dubious organisations, when their services were needed. Eventually the protest was effective enough to bring down the whole business, making headlines nation-wide, and leading to legal proceedings and an out of court settlement.

For the time being, we -a 70-strong group- marched and howled and roared and ranted, in and about the building. It seemed to have endless nooks and crannies; we darted in and out of rooms, getting lost and seeing absolutely nobody –all the while and demanding our rights– well, Laura's and Daragh's, anyway.

When the fuss was over, and placards dropped, I asked Laura how we'd get home, as our marching brethren dissipated away. "You're never more than ten minutes from the underground. Don't worry Conor, we'll get home". "What time does public transport stop?" I asked, "Stop? It doesn't." she replied. And, so, then and there, my fate was sealed. I was a Berliner. No more 2am taxis sapping my funds. I would be anarchist, artist, Berliner! Not so much a whim then, as an economic and cultural necessity, or so I thought. And that seemed to be the truth of it until a friend, who came to visit, asked me the simple question: "If you could have been an artist at home, would you have stayed?". The question irked me -as all do that touch a vital nerve- especially one you've not addressed yourself. Stephanie (SH) suggested we prod further into the discomfort...



Interview with Ciarán Hodgers (CH) and Conor Kilkelly (CK)

Ciarán Hodgers, Liverpool based poet from Drogheda, Ireland, remembers the day he arrived in the UK: “I remember [thinking] ‘there is no one I know touching this earth’. The land beneath my feet touches no one I know ... it was the right balance of terror and [liberation]”.

SH asks CK and CH about Drogheda their experiences of hometowns:

CH: [It was] a post-industrial working-class town with the symptom of being next to the capital city. It's not good enough; it's the second child... it gets a bit ignored.
CK: Both my parents were from the west of Ireland, so they didn't have the Drogheda accent. When I went outside, everybody had a Drogheda accent, but when I came inside, and it wasn't the same... And the telly had a different accent as well... my childhood experience of my surroundings was confusion... I kinda always felt like I was an intruder.
CH: Imposter syndrome is a working-class pandemic. [It] affects us forever. I don't think we ever really get over it. I think that adds to our sensitive dispositions [making] us feel like we don't belong.

SH: Do you feel compelled to escape a sense of “Irishness”?

CK: I didn't know what Irish was. It was just 'Drogheda', I wanted to escape that. Maybe Irishness too. ... I remember kind of choosing the accent I wanted. And it was the telly accent. I thought 'if I talk like them, I can blend in with [the Americans] once I go there'. It was a conscious choice, except from a 6-year-old.

SH: What is Irishness?

CH: I think Irishness is hugely changing now. Being Irish wasn't cool when I was growing up, which might have led to some of those escapist tendencies. One thing that really defines the Irish experience is the church and state conversation. It's becoming unpicked and in that gap is the new Ireland of young activists. Non-religious... I don't think we can understand Ireland until we leave it.

SH: Were you aware of all of those things (church and state) when you decided to leave?
Did those things contribute to your decision?

CH: Growing up queer, I wasn't welcome or safe inside religious spaces. That was the confirmation I needed to say 'thank you and goodbye'. So, I have an interesting perspective of watching it improve. Watching religious ground become more queer friendly, or anti-racist or more welcoming for refugees, that's really exciting for me. That's new Ireland.

SH: But how do you feel looking on from a distance?

CK: When I left I instantly became very protective of Ireland. I didn't fall in love with Ireland until I left. I had time to reflect; how lucky I was to live somewhere so beautiful and the kindest souls I ever met were all Irish. I didn't know any of this, because I just took it for granted. [I] fell in love in Galway by being away from Galway; and then I was like an evangelist for Galway. It took me moving to Berlin to find the same pride for Drogheda. I still had mixed feelings about my home town. If someone is convinced that where they have lived their entire life is the best place on earth, they aren't qualified to give that opinion.

SH: Has Irishness been present in your creative work?

CK: I can't write a song without Ireland somehow creeping into it. It's almost as though “Irishness” is my muse. I have other muses, but that one is always there. It's so fundamental and foundational to what I do. Now I'm proud that my songs are considered Irish folk songs. It's actually an honour to do something that's considered remotely Irish Folk. That feels great to me. It's a badge of honour.
CH: Because my art form is spoken, I think I can get away with quite a lot because I have a different voice. [laughs].

SH: Is 'leaving' intrinsic to Irish culture?

CK: During the famine, half the country either died or left. There's millions of songs that talk about loved ones gone away. In a way, I'm just carrying that tradition.
CH: It's like it's in the DNA... there's science on this regarding the children and children's children of concentration camp survivors having different DNA because of the mental health trauma their ancestors experienced. It has to affect the family tree moving down.

So leaving is literally in our blood?

Conor's Story (continued...)

It wasn't until I was writing my debut album *The Prick & The Petal* showcased at #LIF2019 that I did a second take on my practical assessment of leaving my mutterland, as the Germans say. The sense of loss was blatant in the songs; omnipresent throughout the ballads and laments coloured throughout the album.

I never set out to write anything in particular when I write. If I do I find the end result plagued with pretension. The last thing you want -when delivering something meant to encapsulate a truth, an emotion- is pretence. All you can hope, for when you take your pen from the paper, is that the ink set within your notepad won't make you wince in years to come. The only way you can ensure this, is by not lying to yourself. Like a teen diary trying to sound cool, instead being utterly insecure. You're only hope in song-writing is that you can decipher your innards: heart and gut. I let the gurgles and thumps speak for themselves.



Half way through my crafting *The Prick & The Petal* I realised this compilation of songs about my life - my troubles, my loves, my losses- was in fact, not really about me. Well, not, solely about me anyway. It was set in Ireland. There were characters that re-emerged. They held addictions I've never faced directly; fears I've never had materialise. Though all true somehow, they gurgled and thumped out, without me having to undergo the specifics. There were two characters: Joe & Mary, two star-crossed lovers (it seemed to me), within the songs. When ordered the right way, the songs played out like a story - one of isolation, migration, depravity, religion & loss. It was an utterly Irish story - written in parts of Germany, Ireland, London, but truly Irish nonetheless. But it was someone else's story. What right did I have to speak it? Who were Joe & Mary? I'm still not entirely sure. But, I know -looking back at it- I don't feel the wince on my face I feared I would. It rings true for me still when I play it live. There is something in the album that is about Ireland's story of emigration. There's something in it true to my story, too. Above all, there's a longing for home in it. Why then did I leave home? It couldn't be just a whim. It couldn't be something as trivial as economics, could it?

A year on, I am reeling with this question. I still don't know for sure, but the gargles and thumps of the laments of the two star-crossed lovers, who again and again, persist in these songs; they had no choice. “The jobs dried up and my nerves grew thin”, something in it -that line from the open track of album- still touches a nerve. Like the truth always does.

The *Liverpool Irish Festival* would like to sincerely thank Conor Kilkelly, Stephanie Hannon and Ciarán Hodgers for their contributions. We asked a lot of them to self-question, commit to paper and share their feelings, skillsets and experiences, with us, at a time of great difficulty for everyone unable to get home. We're very keen to bring *Kilkelly* back to another Festival and hope you will follow their story with us.

We highly recommend the album and art book (with beautiful art works by Stephanie Hannon, as well as the CD album), available here: **kilkellymusic.bigcartel.com** (search products for album) along with Ciarán's poem *How to be an Irish Emigrant* (**youtube.com/watch?v=3oe9y8HO1go**) and *Kilkelly's* new video for *Anywhere But Here Will Do* (**youtube.com/watch?v=WQltcd7OQi0**) made to reflect migrant's eyes in a new land. Use this link for their lockdown documentary: **Kilkelly Live Insideyoutube.com/watch?v=3hgHisazZBg&t=758s**

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| <p>LESSONS OF WAR: MATT MCGINN</p> <p>8pm, Thurs 22 Oct, Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential</p> | <p>ADRIAN DUNCAN: EXCHANGING PLACES</p> <p>5pm, Sun 18 Oct 2020, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), followed by Twitter Q&A (twitter.com/LivIrishFest) search #LIF2020, Free/pay what you feel</p> | <p>FROM HERE...UNEMPLOYABLE PROMOTIONS PRESENT...</p> <p>8pm, 16 Oct, Facebook (facebook.com/LivIrishFest), Free/pay what you feel</p> |
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Nigel Baxter is a Liverpool Irish stone mason. Liverpool has a ubiquity of stone; from the smooth Asian slate of *Liverpool ONE*, to the warm red local sandstone of the Anglican cathedral; the corbels of St Nicholas's Church and the Irish granite of the dock kerbstones and Irish Famine memorial. Interesting for us then that Nigel's most recent work has revolved around two creative men, of Irish lineage, where an exchange of respect has generated legacies for each. Nigel tells us why.

CHANGING FACES: IMMORTALISING THE DESERVING

There were three main factors that set me on a course of discovery about Seamus Murphy and Robert Tressell. Part 1: Seamus Murphy arrived in my life by chance, whilst - as an enthusiastic and eager stone carver's apprentice- I stumbled across his semi-autobiography *Stone Mad* in my local London library. Dwarfed between large art reference volumes, its insignificant size was compensated by its title. It was a book that transpired to inspire one's life and it became my personal bible. We had a lot in common. Although from different generations, our training and experience were mirrored in such ways that I came to conclude, much later, we shared an affinity only craftsmen identify with; a sort of mutual bonding. Even though we never met (he died two decades before) I felt connected through his writing and -indeed later- this was substantiated when meeting his children during the project.

Whilst talented and recognised as one of Ireland's great sculptors, Seamus was a quiet reserved character and (indicative of many creative people) very modest about his skills. This was demonstrated by a visit to his native city, Cork, where despite many examples of his work I found nothing to identify the man himself. It was as if he had dissolved into obscurity, leaving a trail of ghost-like artwork. So, who better than I to carve -in stone- his portrait, thus immortalising an important craftsman who had influenced my creative development? I was determined to dig deeper.

My first port of call was his art college. Among my findings was a list of short films and documentaries, relating to Seamus and his craft. This finding developed in to a friendship with a film director, who had aired a life documentary on Irish television. Our meeting was overwhelmingly successful and a deal was struck to film my project. Additionally, I was offered a residency at the art college, with full workshop facilities. This was the opportunity I had hoped for and, armed with this encouragement, I sought approval from Seamus's immediate family, seeking examples of images of him. On producing a limited number of photographs it was collectively agreed to opt for a posed publicity shot and an editorial photograph, each taken in mid-life, which we felt showed his finest qualities, both for age and imagery.

The carving of stone is an intense experience, not to be hurried. Indeed each craftsman has their own pace and relationship with the material. For me, I find that speed is not a requisite to final accomplishment; my technique is relatively quick and therefore the carving of a full size bust, depending on the stone, averages between 120 and 150 hours. In Seamus's case the procedure took longer, to allow for lighting and camera angle adjustments, working from just two images.

We had a number of inquisitive visitors, due to press and college publicity. Among them was one of Seamus's daughters. Whilst not unaccustomed to being in a carving workshop, she viewed the developing image of her father with a mixture of trepidation and relief; although it had been some years since his death (she was in her eighties), and with recognition fading, there was delight to finally witness an immortal reminder of her father's greatness, for me the ultimate accolade.

Part 2: Hastings (East Sussex) is the quintessential English south coast town. It has predominately retained its quirky late-nineteenth century seaside characteristics, still attracting a colourful hotchpotch of inhabitants, mirroring the social backdrop described in (possibly) one of the most poignant political/social stories to ever be written. Its title was not unfamiliar to me, having an odd ring of eccentricity about it, so it was only natural for me to pick up a copy of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* whilst browsing in an alternative book shop nearby.

Robert Tressell was an Irishman, born in Edwardian Dublin. He lived such a life of diversity that only someone with his experience, coupled with that talent, could reiterate -so succinctly- the life of the working classes of the time. There were so many positive testimonials, by some very learned people, arising from this book that I needed to pursue the man behind the pen. My investigations took me on a journey to Dublin, uncovering the complexities that fashioned his fascinating mind; from child to man.

When creating a bust the challenge is not just about the physical execution, but interpreting characteristics...this can only be done when you are aware of as much of that person's history as is possible. Indeed, it's not unusual for the features to appear from the stone block, to catch me in conversation with them, expounding theories and unanswered questions for which I know there to be no answer. This only encourages my drive to illicit and expose as much about the person as possible from the inanimate stone.

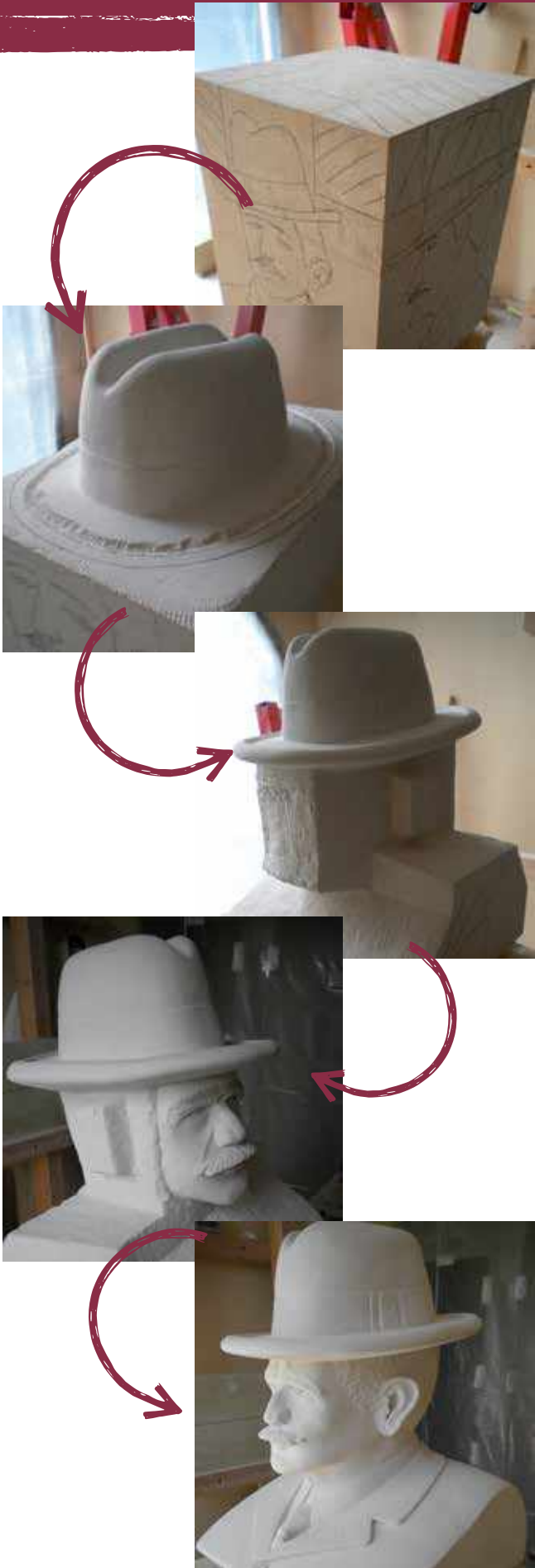
Discovering quality images of Tressell was even harder than of Murphy. In the literature about him, only one grainy black and white full frontal image appears, used repeatedly. Additionally, one crowd photograph -an aerial shot from behind- depicts Tressell among 200+ people wearing his very distinctive Homburg hat, which he wore unfailingly. My use for this was to capture his hairstyle, which he wore thickly as opposed to the favoured short back and sides of the times.

Sadly, there was little interest from local authorities or dedicated Tressell followers, despite radio and press coverage. This I've come to accept when an artist undertakes a project that hasn't been officially recognised or commissioned. In both my Murphy and Tressell projects there has been little recognition from those claiming an overall interest in their causes. To this I'm quite resigned; these projects are my personal statements that demonstrate there are people past who deserve recognition and immortal recognition.

Part 3: This brings me to my third layer of inspiration: the links between these two men. Initially it wasn't obvious to me, but soon I became aware of the similarities. Along with their Irish heritage, Murphy and Tressell's lives run in parallel. For the most part their lives correspond to creative skill development and use; each sharing a literary talent born out in their books, written with dedicated passion on their respective subjects.

Whilst Seamus died in his home town of Cork, Robert sadly died here in Liverpool, attempting to earn his and his daughter's passage to Canada. There's similarly little significant remembrance of either. I now reside both in Cork and Liverpool. As for our notable characters of creation? They still hide behind a cloak of obscurity in storage in their respective cities, waiting for public recognition that they both so rightly deserve.

Nigel has a project page for his Seamus Murphy work, which you can access here: fundit.ie/project/the-carving-of-sculptor-seamus-murphy



EXHIBITION: IN THE WINDOW,
FEATURED ARTIST MIKE BYRNE
Wed-Sat, 11am-4.30pm,
1-31 Oct, Bluecoat Display
Centre, Free



I WANT TO BE ALONE: READING RECOMMENDATIONS

During lockdown we've kept chatting with **Sefton Park Palm House**, continuing from our fundraiser last year, through **#GlobalGreening** in March to today. Over that time, the **Palm Readers** group has taken on new meaning; connecting readers and friends and providing opportunities for people to escape in to other worlds via the book selections they make. Consequently, they asked us to provide a reading list for them to make a selection from, which we thought might be of wider interest.

The following is a compilation of the writers and authors who have been influential over -or within- the **Liverpool Irish Festival** over the last five years, either as direct contributors, the focus of creatives we've worked with or in catalysing other work. It is not a comprehensive list, but a start point from which to explore aspects of Irish writing, across form and subject, time and class.

Sefton Park Palm House Palm Readers group selected books 6 and 20 to read and discuss in their group.

Classics

1. Brendan Behan - *Borstal Boy* (1958)
2. James Joyce - *Ulysses* (1922)
3. Flann O'Brien/Miles Na Gopaleen - *The Poor Mouth/An Beál Bocht* (1941)
4. George Bernard Shaw - *Heartbreak House* (1928, play)
5. John Millington Synge - *Riders to the Sea* (1904)
6. Robert Tressell - *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914)

Contemporary (mostly!) fiction

7. Kevin Barry - *Beatlebone* (2015)
8. Sebastian Barry - *Days Without End* (2016)
9. Blindboy Boatclub - *The Gospel According to Blindboy* (2017)
10. Hannah Kent - *The Good People* (2016)
11. Henry McDonald - *Two Souls* (2019)
12. Lisa McNerney - *The Glorious Heresies* (2015)
13. Iris Murdoch - *The Black Prince* (1973)
14. Sally Rooney - *Conversations with Friends* (2015, writer of *Normal People*)
15. Colm Toibin - *House of Names* (2016)

Poetry

16. Eavann Boland - *Code* (2001)
17. Nick Laird - *Feel Free* (2018)
18. Stephen James Smith - *Fear Not* (2018)

History

19. Ray Rooney - *The Spirit of the Reels* (2019, about the internationally acclaimed *Liverpool Céilí Band*)
20. Greg Quiery - *In Hardship and In Hope* (2018, a history of the Irish in Liverpool)
21. Colin Cousins - *Cinderella Soldiers: The Liverpool Irish in the Great War* (2019)
22. Michael Pierse and Dr Feargal Mac Ionnrachtaigh - *Feile Voices at 30* (2018, about Belfast's 30 year unity festival)
23. Eamonn Hughes - *The Train and the River* (2018, about Van Morrison)
24. Shaun Harkin - *The James Connolly Reader* (2018)
25. Dr Sonja Tiernan - *Eva Gore-Booth: An Image of Such Politics* (2012).

Want to send us a review?

If you have read any of the above and would like to send us a review to publish on our website, please do so by emailing emma@liverpoolirishfestival.com

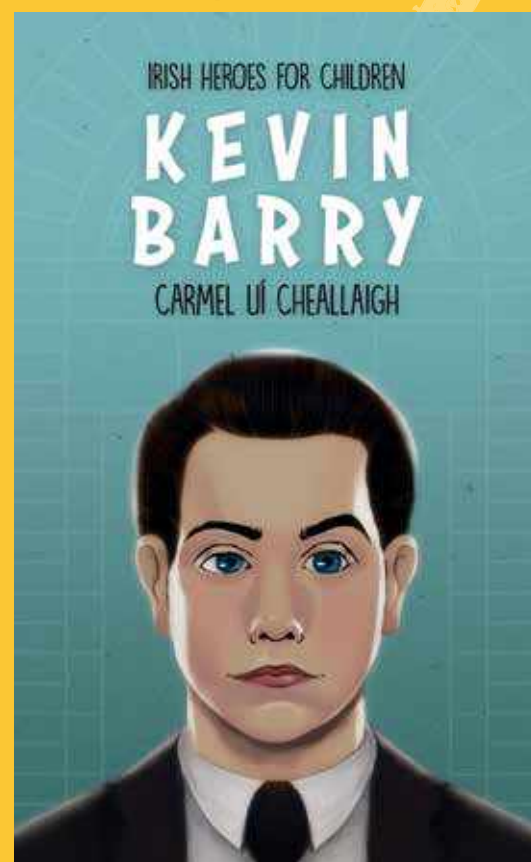
Kids

Kevin Barry: Irish Heroes for Children

Looking for something for children (8+)? Carmel Kelly's new book release, marking the centenary of Kevin Barry's death, tells the difficult but compelling story of his teenage actions, which changes the course of Irish history.

On a dark November morning in 1920, Kevin Barry, head held high, marched to his death in Mountjoy Prison. He was the first and youngest person hanged during the Irish War of Independence. Born the fourth of seven children, the family was split between Dublin and Carlow, after the early death of his father. He loved playing Gaelic football, Hurling and Rugby. A brilliant student, he won a scholarship to study medicine. Kevin also had another life, as a soldier in the Irish Volunteer Army with the sole purpose of obtaining a free independent Ireland. Then his two worlds collided and his part in the Monk's Bakery Ambush sealed his fate. By sticking to his principles and making the ultimate sacrifice, he instigated the move towards a truce that would change the course of Irish history forever. What led this teenager to forego his bright future for the gallows?

10EUR from bookdepository.com (free P&P).



We met Maz O'Connor in 2018 when we began discussions with her about being part of our *In:Visible Women* programme in 2019. Featuring as one of the guest performers at our *Visible Women* night at the *Liverpool Philharmonic*, Maz's gentle demeanour belies her determination, drive and tenacity. Maz is proof that femininity can be strong, skilled and intelligent; urgent, driven and cutting. It seems these are also aspects of the world she relishes in...

IN:VISIBLE WOMEN COME TO THE FORE...



In 1895, in a township called Ballyvadlea, near Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Bridget Cleary was burned to death by her husband, while her family watched. They believed her to be a fairy changeling: a creature that looked and spoke just like Bridget, but was in fact a sinister substitute bringing decay to the community. The family thought that if they could chase the changeling out with fairy potions and, eventually, fire, then the real Bridget would return to them. They buried her charred remains in a shallow, unmarked grave and awaited her return. Of course, it never arrived. She was twenty-six years old.

I came across Bridget's story in 2017 when I was approached by *The Finborough Theatre* to write a piece of music theatre. I've worked in theatre as a musician, with the *Royal Shakespeare Company* and with Liverpool playwright Lizzie Nunnery, and it had long been an ambition of mine to write something for theatre myself. As a singer-songwriter, I sometimes find the form I work in to be limiting. I was itching to tell a story in a longer form, as well as write for voices other than my own. After encouragement from *The Finborough*, I began looking around for a story to adapt. My two requirements were firstly, to find a story that suited my style of music and, secondly, to find a world in which singing was a part of everyday life. Of course, I thought of Ireland. My own experience is that an Irish family event isn't over until somebody sings and I was excited to tell a story through traditional Irish music; not the *Disney*fied version, but the dark, strange beauty of the real thing.

Bridget's story hit me like a train. Not only was I moved by the contemporary resonances with so-called honour killings and female genital mutilation (FGM), I was intrigued by the connection between superstition, Catholicism and patriarchy and how all of these forces work together to oppress, and even kill, women. Very quickly I could hear music. I had ideas for how I wanted to musically express the idea of the fairies, her husband's mania, violence and mass hysteria. Music is abstract; it takes us out of our everyday life, our everyday language and into a more intense, metaphorical space. It's in this space that I felt, instinctively, that the story of Bridget Cleary would have the most impact.

About a year after I started writing the piece, I realised I needed to take a research trip to Tipperary. I was surprised to discover that Bridget's home was only an hour's drive from my cousin's farm in Co. Waterford. I spent a week exploring the area, talking to locals and searching for clues about who Bridget was, wondering how the landscape might have influenced both her and the culture that killed her. My cousin kindly drove me to all the fairy rings that he knew of. He waited in the car while I bravely marched across the threshold and into the centre of each perfect circle of trees. I wasn't sure whether or not he was joking when he said that there was no way he'd step foot inside one himself. I closed my eyes and tried to hear what Bridget might have heard in 1895 when she took one of her frequent trips to the fairy ring near Ballyvadlea. I was struck by how alone I felt and how easy it might be to believe that there was some supernatural force inside those forts. More than once that week I spooked myself into believing that the fairies, or the spirits of Bridget and her husband, were haunting me. Luckily, I made it back to London unscathed, more committed to the project than I had been when I'd left.

Three drafts of the piece later, I felt that I could go no further alone. I needed to collaborate. I applied to *Britten Pears Arts* for a week's residency with them in Snape, Suffolk, working with a small group of musicians and actor/singers. It was an incredibly inspiring week, and the reaction from the group -and from *Britten Pears Arts*- told me that we definitely had something. I came away with a recording of five songs from the piece, giving a sense of the style of the music. I sent the recordings to theatres and the feedback I received was that I should get a book writer involved. Musical theatre has three elements: the music, the lyrics and the book (or script). Sometimes all three are written by the same person, as in *Hamilton* (Lin-Manuel Miranda) or *Hadestown* (Anais Mitchell), but commonly several artists collaborate across the elements. The piece, as it was, was around ninety percent sung through, but there were a few connecting scenes of dialogue needed. And that's where the *Liverpool Irish Festival* came in.

I sent the recordings to Emma Smith (Festival Director), to ask if the festival might be interested in developing the piece in some way, given our existing relationship, the style of the music, and the cultural relevance of the story. Emma was enthused by the idea, and offered to help me put together a brief to recruit a book writer, as well as sharing expertise in how to manage an arts project. Up until that point, early 2020, I had been working entirely alone as composer, lyricist and producer, so it was a great relief to receive some help, even just in the form of regular conversations about the project.

And so, thanks to the help of the *Liverpool Irish Festival* and a £2,000 *Alan James Bursary* from the *English Folk Dance and Song Society*, I have used this lockdown period to collaborate with Irish writer Alan Flanagan. He encouraged me to write the scenes myself, supporting me as a dramaturg. In September -Covid-19-allowing- I will be returning to *Britten Pears Arts* in Snape for another residency as part of their *Festival of New*, along with Alan, director Tinue Craig, movement director Martin Bassindale, six actor/singers and two musicians, to workshop what we have and get the first half hour on its feet. The plan is to have a full production to be performed at the *Liverpool Irish Festival* in October 2021. That's if the fairies don't get in the way.

The Festival sincerely hopes to bring Maz's full production to Liverpool for *#LIF2021* as part of our ongoing commitment to *In:Visible Women*. Bridget's story, sadly, is one that continues to chime the world over, with murderous practices and the misuse of education versus folklore commonly centred used to subjugate and diminish women. In supporting this piece, we not only hear a potent story for our times, but support conversations for equity and a brilliant artist progress her creative vision. Look out for this; it will be remarkable.

MRS SHAW HERSELF

8pm, Wed 21 Oct, [Zoom online](#) (book [liverpoolirishfestival.com/events](#)), £5, booking is essential



STOWAWAY: SCRATCH READING

2pm, Sat 24 Oct, [Zoom online](#) (book [liverpoolirishfestival.com/events](#)), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential



In:Visible Women have long been a focus of the Festival. We've seen many unveiled over the years; often the equally strong partner of a famous man (such as Constance Markievicz or Maude Gonne). Alternatively, they have had their light diminished because they did not fit the social-stereotype (Eva Gore-Booth) or threatened the patriarchal order (Kitty Wilkinson) of their time. Gradually they are coming in to the light. Here, **Helix Productions** offer some additional background to their play *Mrs Shaw Herself*, a production we are moving in to the digital arena for **#LIF2020** and hope you will attend.

THE STRANGEST OF IRISH LOVE STORIES



"I found that my own objection to marriage had ceased with my objection to my own death", George Bernard Shaw on his marriage to Charlotte Payne-Townshend in 1898.

Let's face it, this does not sound the most romantic start to a marriage; especially if you throw in that the groom and bride were both over 40 with a disdain for -if not downright aversion to- sexual activity. Add further that the groom was one of the most famous men in the world, at that time, and an avowed philanderer (albeit more on the page than in the sheets) and we can but wonder at how this marriage lasted over 40 years, ending with Charlotte's death. Shaw once said "I could never have married anyone else". So how is it that we know so little about her?

Creators and performers of *Mrs Shaw Herself* -Alexis Leighton and Helen Tierney- have found that after performances of the show, audience members frequently come up to tell them they were in fact unaware Shaw was married. Yet Charlotte's is a fascinating story. It was a mammoth achievement to stay married to the Nobel Prize and Oscar-winning Shaw, in itself, but Charlotte needs to be remembered and indeed celebrated for so much more.

Like Shaw, she played an active part in the early Fabian movement, but it was her money -and it is her name- which gave the **London School of Economics (LSE)** their beautiful Shaw Library. She gave financial assistance to many women who were studying medicine and supported the suffrage movement.

She not only assisted Shaw with secretarial work, but in his research for plays; notably *St Joan*. Shaw thanked her with a commission of a St Joan statue to grace their garden at Ayot Saint Lawrence. She read voraciously and enjoyed an intimate and frank relationship with T.E. Lawrence, taking on a quasi-maternal confidence with him in letters.

Shaw and Payne-Townshend's story is the most maverick of Irish love stories. Charlotte was born in Cork to an incredibly rich family; by coincidence George had worked briefly as a clerk in a land-registry office, owned by her family firm. She had given up on marriage, after failed love affairs, when she met Shaw and our show tells of the twists and turns of their courtship, noted by eagle-eyed Fabian Beatrice Webb. The marriage had its challenges. Shaw could not resist a pretty face and whilst it hardly ever led to physical contact, Charlotte sometimes felt the need to take him on long holidays abroad just to get him away, especially from actresses. Shaw's infamous affair with Mrs Patrick Campbell was a particular low point, but the marriage weathered it and if nothing else, *Mrs Shaw Herself* is a lilting (and sometimes keening) Irish song of praise to the long-haul of marital love.

The **Liverpool Irish Festival's** theme of "exchange" is embedded in the story of *Mrs Shaw Herself*. Both Payne-Townshend and Shaw exchanged Ireland for England, but never lost a sense of their roots. They were prominent in support of a united Ireland and of Roger Casement. As Irish Protestants in a sea of Englishness their outsider status brought with it an independent, if not downright maverick stance to life and matters; it is this element that many love in Shaw's plays.

Charlotte exchanged -as did George- a life-long suspicion of marriage for a compromise in what seems to be a celibate, but ultimately loving and supportive relationship. He did not exchange, however, her feminist stance and her determination to use her fortune -in part- to better the lives of women and, most importantly, to create systems for that. The care she took in supervising her scholarships at the **LSE** and the **London School of Medicine** is quite astounding. Whilst researching the play, Leighton and Tierney were given access to the wonderful collection at the **LSE** of photos taken by Shaw, which suggest a real sense of partnership and affection between these two very independent people.

Mrs Shaw Herself has been performed in many locations; cathedrals, theatres, libraries, centres and even at the wedding of Charlotte's great-great niece Elisabeth Townshend. It was good to hear Charlotte's words ring out in the Shaw Library for a conference on women at our **LSE** performance and at the church in Shaw's home village of Ayot at which the organ, which Shaw occasionally played, sounded at Charlotte's funeral scene as described in Shaw's letters. We have taken the show to various festivals including Bloomsbury, Edinburgh, Crouch End, Watford and Bury St Edmunds, but it is wonderful now to bring an online version of the show to the **Liverpool Irish Festival**. Do come and hear the voice of the woman who was not only *Mrs Shaw Herself*, but so much more.



MRS SHAW HERSELF

8pm, Wed 21 Oct, Zoom online
(book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events),
£5, booking is essential

IN THE WINDOW: MIKE BYRNE

Annually, the **Liverpool Irish Festival** sets a theme and a creative brief. We work with partners to develop work and engage artists. **Bluecoat Display Centre** has been a key player in developing design and craft in Liverpool, nationally and internationally, since the 1950s. Who better then to partner with each year to find an Irish talent? Supported by the **Design and Crafts Council of Ireland**, we make an open call for makers to respond to the theme and our panel makes a selection from the submissions. Last year we chose ceramicist Rory Shearer, whose Derry based work evoked the hills and turf of his country pottery.

Even during Covid-19, 2020s submissions were of a high quality. Ordinarily, we would try not to pick the same medium year-on-year, but Mike's application was tailored so well to the idea of exchange and he challenged notions of Irishness so well in his statement, he was the finalist. Below, Festival Director Emma Smith, quizzes Mike on some of the concepts raised, along with some probing questions in to the materiality of pottery, high and low culture and stars of the future. View Mike's full statement here: liverpoolirishfestival.com/mike-byrne/

ES: As I read through your submission statement, I noted your mention of Irishness as perceived via "the Irish/cottage/shamrock/American view". For some Irish people, these values are an intrinsic part of their Irishness, not to be besmirched by the likes of curators artists/'intelligentsia'. For them, these items depict levity, light and charm, drawing on Irish traditions that can be taught from these symbolic snippets. Seen as positive, transportable commodities, they help people feel 'at home abroad', triggering memories of hills and faces; times and places. For others, it represents a low-taste-level and a (mis)mannered caricature; a nonsense version of a nuanced and deeply emotional national character. I read your view of such items as 'tokenistic'; do you think there is a place for this or do they take or detract from an understanding of Irish people and their identity?

MB: I can see both sides of this argument; it does show levity, light and charm and appeals to Irish people abroad, particularly to those away a long time. It is an old fashioned, emotional look back at what they think they remember about Ireland. Apart from jumping around on a Saturday night in a 'Paddy hat', this is not a view taken seriously by Irish people at home and I do not think they represent contemporary Irish lives. The EU, sojourns abroad for work or holiday, the digital age and a new prosperity have made Ireland a changed place; the old woman in the bed is no longer sipping porter, she is checking her emails. I think these symbols/images are sort of harmless; there are new stories to tell and new ways to tell the old ones.

ES: Thinking through this brought to mind the William Morris idea that the destruction of capitalism would be necessary for art to flourish! This positioning of 'low' and 'high' art or culture seems frequently tied to concepts of Irishness, as demonstrated by shamrocks and novelty hats versus the written word, traditional fabrics and making methods. Ceramics often sits in that liminal space between 'crafts' and 'arts' with similar arguments surrounding it as having high and/or low cultural value. What are your thoughts?

MB: I think there is a place for this material. As you said, it is a bit of fun and I can't imagine it is taken too seriously. But take a new initiative, 'The Wild Atlantic Way' (wildatlanticway.com), a notion that comes from the same emotional gene pool as the other material is a great success, eagerly embraced by all. I think this is a fine example of a modern take on this question. If -when I was a tutor in Art school- a student expressed a desire to make products for the tourist trade (some explored niche ideas such as hill walking), I would advise them not to overlook the sentimental pull of certain ideas and clichés and to look at them from a slightly different angle adding a more contemporary slant to them.

I think a lot of the old representation of Ireland does not represent Ireland today, but I would not be beating my breast about it. It has changed from longed-for nostalgic memory to a bit of fun. There is a travel company here called **The Paddy Wagon**; it takes young foreign backpackers around Ireland. They wear the hats, sing the songs and they give them all the old blarney; they love it. On the other hand, the proliferation of shops in tourist spots -and in the major cities- selling **Guinness** merchandise (almost exclusively), little of it made in Ireland, can be disheartening.

Yes, Ceramics is in an interesting position. Somewhere in the half-light between craft, design, the decorative arts and art, but it is quite easy to position the various strands. Intent is all! The craft potter makes domestic ware; the designer designs for the industry; the decorative arts have their conventions and artists deal with many issues including social and aesthetic. The only common denominator is the material and the processes. Some see it as a kind of hierarchy. We all need someone to look down on!

ES: The materiality of ceramics seems to be part of what locates them. Would your work would be the same if you were making it with Mexican barro negro or Chinese kaolin? I don't just mean the overall finish or surface aesthetic, but in the forms it leads you to? One cannot do with terracotta what can be done with porcelain, so does Irish clay imbue the sculptural form innately and does its historic content play any part in the form you take it to? Is there an exchange in this process between artist and material?

MB: In my case, the concept comes first. The material is of course considered, insofar as it can do what the concept demands. Makers will choose a particular material like porcelain for what it will bring to the expressive outcome. As we don't have exploitable clay deposits here, I use clay from Northern Ireland, where it is made using imported materials from the UK and beyond. It suits my work process well. It is a robust utility body, ideally suited to forms I make and the low firing temp I require. I cannot say that this particular clay influences my work conceptually.

ES: Ceramics have a role in all lives. It is likely that the nationality of the item is less important than the value of its aesthetic, function or place in a user's world. Therefore, should Irishness play any part on the form and does it require such a connection?

MB: I never think of myself, or my ideas, as being Irish while I am making. Ideas come and develop as things get made and are appraised. It is a never-ending chain of exploration, frustration and a little joy. I live in a small city near the west coast of Ireland. I travel up and down the coast often. I draw the landscape, collect objects; manmade and natural. I feel close to Ireland and am happy to be Irish and I am sure that this life influences how and what I make. I think attempting to build Irishness into the form would be a contrivance and could possibly muddy the waters in the creative expression or interpretation of the concept.

ES: Are there any rising stars in Irish ceramics you think we/audiences ought to look out for?

MB: Frances Lambe (franceslambe.com), Sara Flynn (saraflynn ceramic.com), Mandy Parslow (parslowpottery.com), Grainne Watts (grainnewattsceramics.com), Alison Kay (www.alisonkay.ie), Nuala O'Donovan (portfolio.dccoi.ie/craft-maker/nuala-odonovan)

We would like to offer Mike our sincere thanks and congratulations for being involved in this year's **In The Window** and recommend any Irish maker look out for our new artistic call in 2021. See more of Mike's work here mikebyrne.ie or visit his work in the real world at **Bluecoat Display Centre** from 1-31 Oct 2020.

This exhibit is supported by the **Design and Crafts Council of Ireland**.



Brian Dalton is the CEO of *Irish in Britain*, a membership agency representing Irish communities across the country, at local and national level. In recent months, our organisational exchanges have been based on shared advocacy, cultural collaboration and having Irishness understood properly within the context of policy, funding and Black and Minority ethnic inclusion and representation. On a more personal level, the exchanges have been about sharing concerns, affirming the challenges and being positive with and for one another. Here, Brian sets out *Irish in Britain*'s Coronavirus responses and hopes for communities in times ahead.

IRISH IN BRITAIN

For so many of us, there is a sense of uncertainty as we adjust to new norms and practices in how we live and work. As a voluntary sector organisation, we have an obligation to promote a sense of hope and to imagine a future where our services are needed more than ever. We take comfort in the proud history of community organisations to know and meet the needs of their people and we at *Irish in Britain* salute the work of our member organisations during the crisis and beyond. Our priority now is to help ensure sustainable futures for these same organisations that made such a difference in keeping us connected and safe during the most trying of times.

Self-care and relatedness, conversation and kinship, the daily routines that keep us healthy and connected are made more difficult now; mental health will, without doubt, be the next public health challenge for providers, for services, for communities.



As an umbrella organisation for 120 Irish clubs, societies and centres across Britain, *Irish in Britain* has seen first-hand the impact the Coronavirus outbreak has had on the Irish community at large. Given that we have the oldest median age of any community here (53), the crisis has undoubtedly affected us disproportionately and as we mourn those who passed we also celebrate the incredible contribution of Irish organisations and the many Irish people in frontline and *NHS* care settings.



There is of course a wider debate now needed about the role of voluntary sector and community organisations to meet the needs of their community. Our value in a crisis is no longer a debating point. The crisis has reminded many, if they needed reminding, that grassroots organisations are best placed to respond and adapt quickly. Our job is to now ensure that the goodwill and sense of community endures and is properly resourced.

If we have learned anything through this it is that community cohesion and development is now a task in which we can all participate – indeed it is our sector that will lead the rebuild and recovery. *Irish in Britain* has waived membership fees for all its member organisations during the crisis and has extended an invitation to all groups who want to be part of a “coalition for recovery” to join us. We will need all comers to help in the recovery – we all have some capacity, maybe even an obligation, to be community champions now. For information on how you can help, how to be part of your local Irish network or volunteer contact info@irishinbritain.org or visit irishinbritain.org

CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE
2pm, Thurs 15 Oct, Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

MIXED HERITAGE MIXER
6pm, Thurs 15 Oct Zoom online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential

As Coronavirus swept the globe and organisations planned what their next steps would be, a new Liverpool network of Irish service providers emerged called **CARA**. Spearheaded by colleagues at **Irish Community Care**, numerous organisations came together to reach in to communities to make sure we and they were networked, supported and heard. The exchanges this network developed revealed opportunities to share skills, enormous compassion and friendship across the region. It has been exemplary and shows what can be achieved when we really communicate ideas with one another and collaborate.

CARA: IRISH COMMUNITIES TOGETHER



CARA, the Irish word for friend. What happens when friends all across the North West join together with an aim to keep their communities safe, well and connected during Covid-19? The answer, **CARA: Irish Communities Together**.

The **CARA** programme has brought Irish community groups throughout the North West, including **GAA** clubs, academics, Irish community centres, festivals, music clubs and more to join forces and help their communities through Covid-19.

The journey that lay ahead for all **CARA** partners was unknown, these were and remain unprecedented times. However, this did not phase an enthusiastic and passionate bunch of partners and volunteers, who knew many people within their communities would need a helping hand and a listening ear.

The programme set its sights on helping all community members, whether this was collecting prescriptions, shopping for groceries, or having a friendly chat over the phone with a likeminded volunteer.

CARA sought to recruit a team of volunteers to help with the tasks ahead and were blown away by the response they received! Volunteers came from all around, all ages, locations, interests and most importantly a shared aim; keeping their communities safe, well and connected.

The **CARA** programme has -to date- recruited over 70 volunteers, who are continuing to engage in weekly conversations or lively debates depending on the topic of conversation! Volunteers have also organised and delivered weekly shopping and prescriptions for over 45 isolated community members. The **CARA** programme didn't stop at just local community support, but reached further to work with prisons across the North West. Phone credit, stamped postcards and reading material were supplied to 140 Irish community members in prison.

CARA monthly newsletter reaches over 1,000 homes across the North West and many more online. Each newsletter is jam-packed with stories, updates, quizzes and important announcements. **CARA** partners have even managed to take the newsletter articles and turn them into an audio letter! Irish communities can listen to the newsletter articles at any time on social media, a fantastic way to experience the stories coming to life.

If you would like to receive the **CARA: Irish Communities Together** newsletter, contact admin@iccm.org.uk; +44 (0)151 237 3987 or follow us on social media: [@IrishCommCare](https://twitter.com/IrishCommCare).

A recipient of the **CARA** monthly newsletter got in touch to share her joy at learning new digital skills during the Covid-19 lockdown, a tale involving an **iPad**, weekly Mass and a bit of luck!

'Blessed is the iPad'

Bridie, from Cork, is a regular churchgoer who has missed attending weekly Mass since Covid-19 came along. She has lived in England for over 60 years and has a grown-up family, grandchildren and great grandchildren and was missing them even more. She was introduced to an **iPad** -bought by her family- and at first she thought she'd never get the hang of it! She persevered with telephone support from family members. Not a one to give up, she surprised herself and -not without a struggle- she discovered the magic of **Google** search engine. Well, with regular use for a few hours each day, Bridie is now attending Mass in every county of Ireland - you can imagine her delight. Bridie says if she types "live Mass in Ireland" or "RTE live Mass" into **Google** it gives her details of churches all over Ireland; you can take your pick of the priests!

This has given her great comfort, remembering too all the hymns she sang as a child growing up in Ireland. Bridie is delighted to be learning new skills, with all that new language. Some days she can't quite work her magic and other days she amazes herself and is often not sure how that happened! She regularly thinks "What did I press to get this information and will I find it again" She's a devoted fan of Joe Dolan and you can find her singing and dancing round her kitchen to his music on her **iPad**. She is proud to be digitally included and still flying the flag at 82 years young!

The impact of the **CARA** project is felt far and wide, from learning new digital skills to creating lasting friendships over the phone or during doorstep shopping deliveries.

A huge word of thanks to all **CARA: Irish Communities Together** partners; **Brian Boru Club** in Wigan, **Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann**, **GAA (John Mitchels and Wolfe Tones)**, **Institute of Irish Studies** at **University of Liverpool**, **Irish Community Care**, **Irish Community Care Manchester**, **Liverpool Irish Centre**, **Liverpool Irish Festival**, **Mersey Harps** and **Shenanigans** - their dedication to the welfare and empowerment of Irish communities is unwavering.

A note of thanks to all **CARA** volunteers and supporters, without your hard work, goodwill and compassion it would not have been possible to achieve the amazing community network that continues to grow. We are indebted to the many **GAA** teams across the North West for the tremendous support they have given to **CARA** and our communities since Covid-19. As well as volunteering their time to help the most vulnerable -from completing shopping tasks, collecting prescriptions to making befriending calls- they also found time to put on their running shoes!

St. Peters GAC, Liverpool Wolfe Tones GAA and **St. Lawrence's GAA** organised a sponsored 'Virtual Run' competition over the 2020 May Bank Holiday weekend. 80 runners took part, collectively running over 1300 miles. Members of **Liverpool John Mitchels GAA** organised a very successful July Sports Day. Collectively the teams raised over £3000 for **CARA**, what a fantastic achievement! We extend our sincere thanks to our funders the Irish Government's **Emigrant Support Programme Covid-19 Response Fund** and the UK Government's **Coronavirus Community Support Fund** (distributed by the **National Lottery Community Fund**). This support has enabled **CARA** to grow and develop and continue delivering services until early next year. We look forward to sharing exciting plans in the months ahead. If you would like to get involved as a volunteer or know someone who is isolated or likely to need a bit more support during the coming months, please help spread the word to them or contact us directly on +44 (0)151 237 3987 or admin@iccm.org.uk for further information.

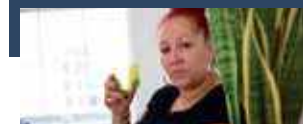
CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE

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MIXED HERITAGE MIXER

6pm, Thurs 15 Oct **Zoom** online (book liverpoolirishfestival.com/events), Free/pay what you feel, booking is essential





This is a paid
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Did you know that Irish Community Care (ICC) has its roots going back over 50 years?

We are a leading participant in the provision of support, information & guidance for all Irish, Irish Traveller and Gypsy Traveller communities. Our aim is to ensure well informed, empowered and vibrant Irish communities in the North West of England. Our team are active all across the Liverpool City Region and we host drop-in services in Liverpool, Wigan and Ellesmere Port. We also work in many of the prisons across the North West. We are a passionate and dynamic organisation, who are here to help you! We offer a range of services including:

- Reducing cultural and social isolation through befriending and community connection
- Welfare & benefit enquiries
- Training & employment
- Housing applications
- Passport & birth certificate advice
- Improving health & wellbeing
- Accessing community services and much more.

We work closely with local authorities, health services, schools, colleges and universities, accommodation providers, criminal justice system, *Department of Work and Pensions*, *Embassy of Ireland* and community and voluntary sectors.

We are embarking on an exciting journey in the months ahead. The *Irish Community Care* team is growing and so too are our services, we are reaching out and engaging with more people than ever before! Keep an eye on our social media pages and website to follow our journey and stay updated.

Twitter: [@IrishCommCare](#) | Facebook: [@IrishCommunityCare1](#) | Website: <http://iccm.org.uk/>

GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT/THANK YOU

#LIF2020 EVENT ARTISTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Eithne Browne | Patrick Kielty |
| Mike Byrne | Peter King |
| Graham Cantwell | Davy Jones |
| John Chandler | Nicky Larkin |
| Paddy Callaghan | Lorraine Maher |
| Mike Chinoy | Matt McGinn |
| Terry Clarke-Coyne | Steve Nolan |
| Carmen Cullen and Gerry Anderson | Réamonn Ó Ciaráin |
| Adrian Duncan | Greg Quieri |
| Michael Healy | Michael Starke |
| Helix Productions - Helen Tierney and Alexis Ward | Varo - Consuelo Nerea Breschi (Italy) and Lucie |
| Colm and Laura Keegan | Azconaga (France) and Louise Barker (manager). |

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Black History Month
Bluecoat Display Centre - Sam Rhodes
Celtic Animation Film Festival - Kate Corbin and Eleonora Asparuhova
Comhaltas in Britain - Patrick Morrison
Commission for Victims and Survivors - Nicky Cahill, Alana Fisher, Sheila Davidson and Holly Taylor
Design and Crafts Council of Ireland - Ciara Garvey
Falling Doors Theatre - Sarah van Parys and Nancy Msiska
Gael Linn - Réamonn Ó Ciaráin and Dara Vallely
Hannah Layton Associates - Hannah Layton and Steve Garland
IndieCork - Úna Feeley and Mick Hannigan
Irish Film Festival London - Kelly O'Connor
Irish In Britain - Brian Dalton, CEO and Judith Orr, Comms and PR
Lilliput Publicity - Amy O'Sullivan and Ruth Hallinan
Stairwell Books - Rose Drew
Unemployable Promotions - Michael Grace and Paul O'Shea
Writing on the Wall - Madeline Henegan.

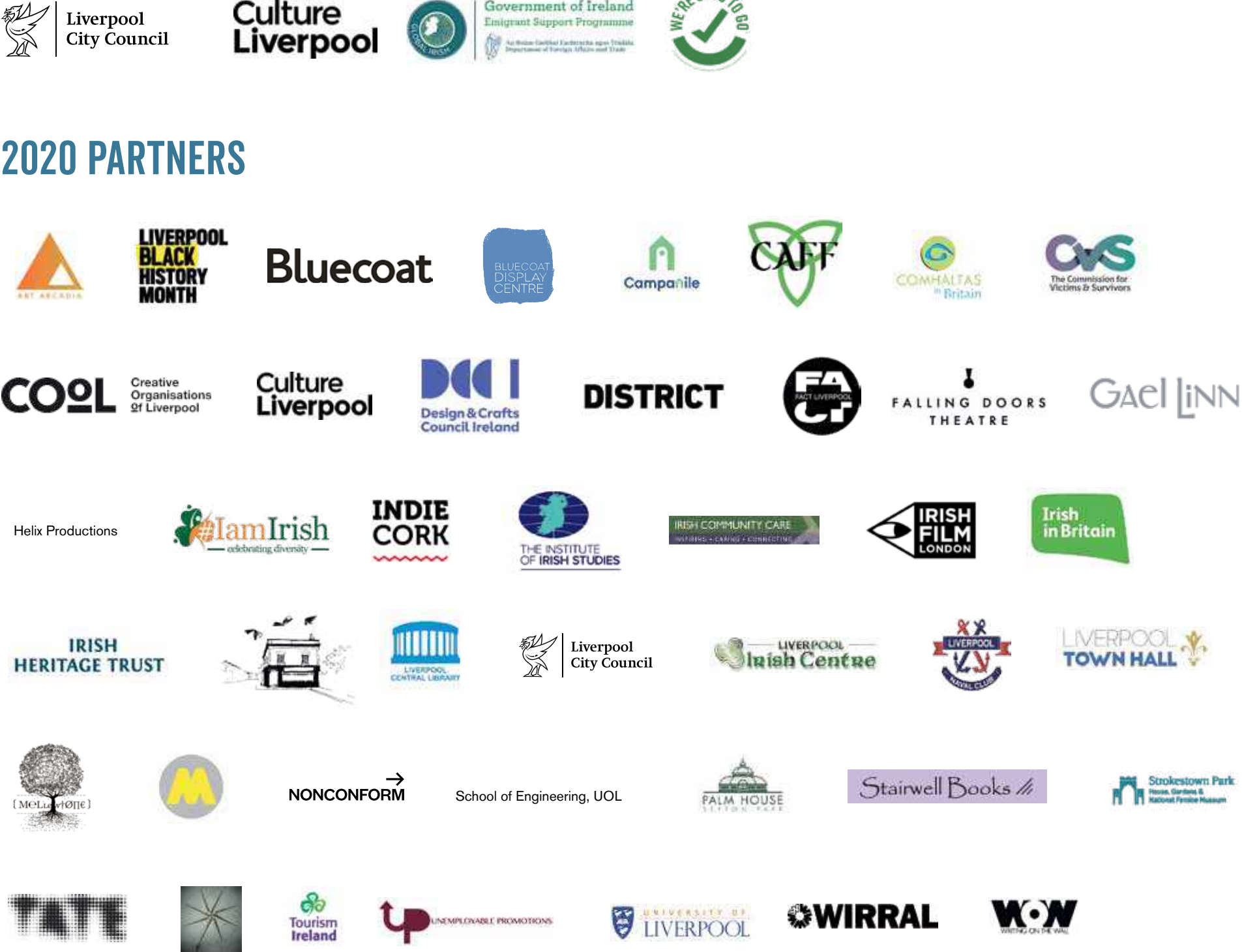
ARTISTS FEATURED IN ESSAYS

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Nigel Baxter | Naomi O'Leary |
| Stephanie Hannon | Gregory McCartney |
| Carmel Kelly | Paula McFetridge |
| Connor Kilkelly | Tim McInerney |
| Maz O'Connor | Locky Morris. |
| Dr Deaglán Ó Donghaile | |

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FESTIVAL FUNDERS



Liverpool Irish Festival is a registered charity (110126). We receive regular funding from Liverpool City Council's Culture Arts Investment Programme and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Emigrant Support Programme. In 2020, we have also received emergency funding and Reconciliation Funds from the Irish Government, in support of our work with communities. To each of our funders, we are extraordinarily grateful. Go raibh maith agat/May you have goodness.

Don't forget to visit our website to find out more about this year's programme!

liverpoolirishfestival.com

