

april 19 - 21
2024

granard

booktown

festival 2024

official programme

www.granardbooktownfestival.ie

Cár Aire Eilimhach
Creative Ireland
Programme



WELCOME



Faillte go Gránard!

You are very welcome to the second Granard Booktown Festival. For those coming from outside the county or the country, we welcome you to the town of Granard, the county of Longford and the heart of the midlands of Ireland.

As part of the Granard Booktown organising committee, thank you for coming to our beautiful town, and we hope you have a wonderful weekend with us.

After the success of our first year, we put our heads together last summer and began organising this year's festival. We are blessed by our committee members and their contacts that expand worldwide. Those connections have allowed us to cast a wide net and bring you a selection of exceptional speakers for this year's festival.

The booktown model is designed to bring books and literature to rural communities, and this year, I am so glad to say that we have done just that. Granard Booktown is more than just a local festival. It is an international one, showcased in the writers joining us from as far away as the USA to closer home from the UK. As always, there is a strong contingent of Irish writers. We live in a time when Irish writers and artists are blossoming worldwide. People are reading Irish writers from Paul Lynch, the Booker prize winner, to Patricia Gibney, who we are delighted to welcome to the festival this year.

We have expanded the festival this year and are delighted to welcome Noel Monahan as our first artist in residence and to hear his specially composed poem for the festival. We also want to thank our partners in the community for our expanded venue offering, which has allowed us to welcome more festival goers and see even more writers.

Booktowns and literary festivals are made over time, and it takes a team of people to pull off this weekend. Once again, our enormous thanks go to the people of Granard and County Longford. They make all this possible. So, to them, we thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

We are indebted to our festival patrons from Ireland and across the globe and our committee members who do all this voluntarily.

Granard is a special place, and we hope our booktown festival adds to that special feeling in our second year. To all our partners, from venues to the various funding bodies, thank you for helping us stage our second year.

Finally, a thank you to you, the festival goers. You make the festival a success and a treat to work on. We hope you enjoy the vast array of writers we have brought to the town. Enjoy the ideas, soak up the books and stay for the trad sessions.

On behalf of my co-director Ronan O'Toole and the organising committee, welcome to Granard. We hope you have a wonderful weekend.

John Connell, co-founder and co-director Granard Booktown Festival.

WELCOME

Granard Booktown Festival

My earliest poems belong to Granard.

Places and people come alive

Oxeye daisies open their eyes, summer looks down

From the Moat, school children's sunlit syllables

Murmur of prayer in the rain

Music in the gullies on Water Lane.

Mugs of tea talk, whisper ... roads and byways dream ...

Granard takes shape in my head.

I cross a bridge in time.

Granard Booktown Festival awakens:

White as first light, new ideas, new people ...

A whirlwind of purpose, throbbing with energy,

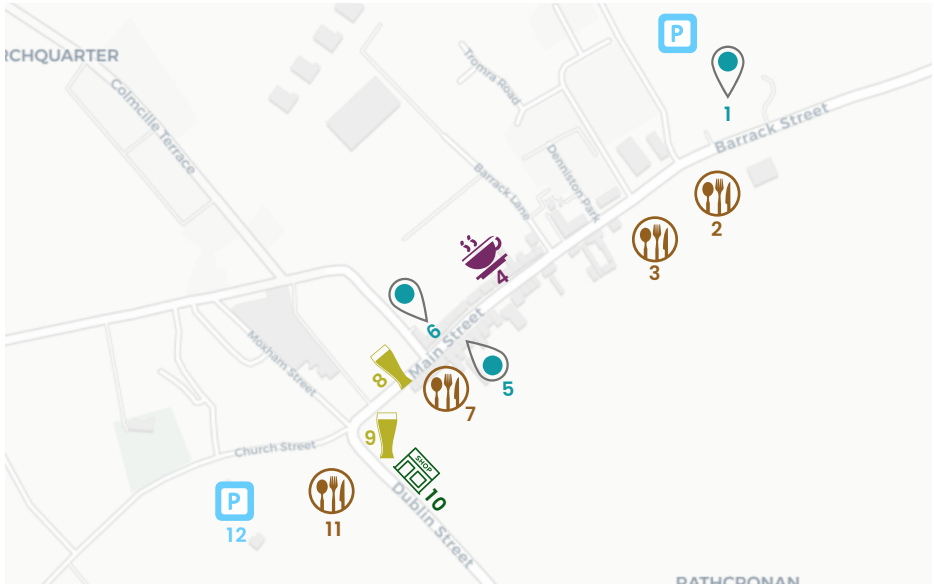
Inner voices, union of opposites

Doors and windows open to new life in the soul.

Noel Monahan

Poet | 2024 artist in residence

VENUES



- 1. Venue: Sacred Heart School
- 2. Food: Pizza Depot
- 3. Food: Belle's Kitchen
- 4. Cafe: Bean & Bread
- 5. Venue: Fay's Bar
- 6. Venue: Granard Library

- 7. Food: Nikki's Restaurant
- 8. Bar: Clancy's Bar
- 9. Bar: John V Donohoes
- 10. Second hand Book Store
- 11. Food - The Bailey Cafe
- 12. Free Parking



Sacred Heart School is located on Barrack Street in Granard. The Principal is Mr Francis Gray, and the Deputy Principal is Ms Carmel Shaughnessy.

The School Hall Venue is located at the rear of the school, and parking is available on-site. The family events will take place inside the school.



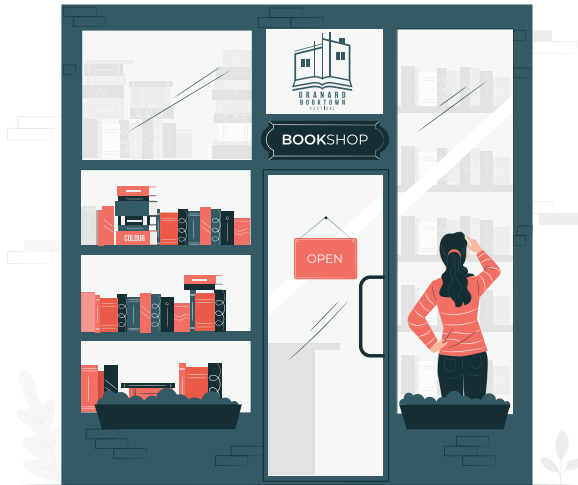
Granard Library is located in the old Market House building in the centre of the town. It offers a wide range of services, including books for adults and children.

A special meeting of the local Granard writer's group will be held on April 20th at 10 a.m. Please do join us for this wonderful local celebration of literature.



Fay's Bar is a friendly, atmospheric bar in the heart of Granard. Call in and watch the live sport of your choice on their big screens. They cater for all occasions, large and small. They also have a picturesque beer garden and BBQ area.

BOOKSHOP



This year, we are excited to announce the Granard Booktown second-hand bookstore opening at John V. Donohoe's outdoor area, accessible via the side gate on Dublin Street. The bookstore offers a great selection of affordable books, ranging from classic novels to the latest bestsellers. If you're looking for bargain books during the festival weekend, come by and say hello.

The store will be open from April 20th to the 21st from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
All books are €2. Please note that we accept cash only.

Event Tickets

Tickets for all events can be purchased through our website. Please note - tickets are also needed to attend free events.

the arts
council
an chomhairle
ealaíon

funding
festivals

ARTS COUNCIL IRELAND

The Arts Council acknowledges the rich variety of artform practice areas presented by festivals and their critical role in broadening public access to the arts. Festivals are often central to communities exploring and expressing their local identity, providing access to the arts and creating opportunities for artists to develop their practice. The Arts Council's role is to advocate for a diverse and varied arts festival ecology and to provide a chain of funding supports that encourage: models of national and international significance and best practice, models that increase opportunities for public engagement or develop the work of an artist/artform, support for small festivals to deliver quality arts experiences for audiences and festival programmes engaged with, and relevant to the local community.

Often festivals are the highlights on cultural calendars in communities large and small across Ireland. The Arts Council provides financial support to a number of single artform festivals (e.g. theatre, dance, film) and such festivals are supported within the policy context of those artforms. We also support many multidisciplinary arts festivals, meaning those festivals that programme across different artforms, including literature, music, street arts, theatre, visual arts and different areas of arts practice.

For more information please visit www.artscouncil.ie



Irish Deaf Society

At Granard Booktown Festival, we are working towards making the festival as accessible as possible.

Irish Sign Language interpreters will be available at every event for people from the deaf community.

We hope to include more accessibility features as we move forward.

The Irish Deaf Society seeks to achieve and promote the Equality and Rights of Deaf people in Ireland. On the grounds of the Irish Constitution and Human Rights and international legislation, the ambition of full access to citizenship and society is sought through the empowerment and mobilisation of the Deaf community. With an awareness of their identity and their rights as individuals, Deaf people in Ireland are enabled to celebrate their culture and continue to ensure the upholding of Irish Sign Language recognition and break down the barriers of discrimination.

For more information please visit www.irishdeafociety.ie/about

FESTIVAL PATRONS



SHAUNAGH CONNAIRE

Journalist | Filmmaker | Festival Patron

Shaunagh is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker and was previously the Director of Communications and Media at the Clooney Foundation. She was nominated for an Emmy award and won a duPont-Columbia award for her PBS Frontline documentary about the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. She has reported on LGBTQ rights and conversion therapy, covered the refugee crisis in the Middle East, reported on women's rights in Ireland, and investigated the role of Wall Street in the opioid crisis in the US.



RICHARD FLANAGAN

Writer | Festival Patron

Richard Flanagan is an acclaimed novelist, born in Longford, Tasmania in 1961. He is the author of many remarkable books, including *Death of a River Guide*, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, *Gould's Book of Fish*, *The Unknown Terrorist*, *Wanting*, and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. These novels have received critical acclaim and have been published in 42 countries around the world, cementing Flanagan's reputation as a truly global literary figure.

In 2014, Flanagan was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize for his novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. This powerful and poignant book tells the story of an Australian doctor caught up in the horrors of the Burma Death Railway during World War II.

FESTIVAL PATRONS



RICK O' SHEA

Broadcaster | Book Club Founder | Festival Patron

Rick O'Shea is an experienced radio presenter with RTE since 2001. He began his career on RTE 2FM before moving to RTE Gold, where he presents weekday mornings and The Gold Lounge jazz show. He is also a former presenter of The Book Show and The Poetry Programme on RTE Radio 1. Rick is a prominent figure in the Irish literary scene. He is the founder of The Rick O'Shea Book Club, which is the largest book club in Ireland with almost 40,000 members.

Rick's contributions to the Irish literary scene have been widely recognized. He has received numerous accolades, including the Best Irish Book Blogger award in 2015 and the Best Arts and Culture Blog award in 2017. He is also a regular contributor to various newspapers and magazines, including the Irish Examiner and the Irish Times. He has served as a judge for the Bookseller UK and Ireland Young Adult Book Prize and the Costa Book Awards and became one of the festival's patrons in 2023.



MARY REYNOLDS

Former County Librarian | Festival Patron

Mary Carleton Reynolds is the former Longford County Librarian and former Head of Creative Ireland Longford. She has a long history of supporting arts and literature across the county.

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



CREATIVE IRELAND

Creative Ireland is a programme that connects people, creativity, and wellbeing. We are an all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme that inspires and transforms people, places and communities through creativity. We are committed to the vision that every person in Ireland should have the opportunity to realise their full creative potential. Established in 2017, Creative Ireland was born out of Ireland 2016, the hugely successful state initiative to mark the hundredth anniversary of the Easter Rising.

The Programme drew inspiration from the extraordinary public response to the Centenary and the thousands of largely culture-based events exploring identity, community, culture, heritage and citizenship issues. Through partnerships with local and national government, cultural and enterprise agencies and local enterprises, we create pathways and opportunities for people and communities to unlock their creative potential.

We believe in the power and creative potential of people, organisations and government departments working together to share expertise to catalyse ideas and action. Through our focus and coordination, we will forge an eco-system of creativity. The Programme is built around key themes: Creative Youth, Creative Communities, Creative Places, and Creative Nations.

For more information please visit www.creativeireland.gov.ie



LONGFORD CO. COUNCIL

Longford County Council provides essential public services in County Longford and aims to make it a desirable place for living, working, and visiting. These services include Economic and Community Development, Housing, Planning, Regeneration, Roads, Water, Library Services, Local Enterprise Office, and Local Sports Partnership services.

The Longford Arts Office collaborates with artists, organizations and agencies to support and promote the arts in the County. Its core activities include providing information and advice, initiating and developing projects, administering grants, and drafting plans and strategies.

For more information please visit www.longfordlibrary.ie/arts/



IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS LONGFORD TOURISM

The Hidden Heartlands offer exceptional opportunities to embrace nature and explore off-the-beaten-path destinations. A network of lively waterways and numerous walking trails make this region remarkable.

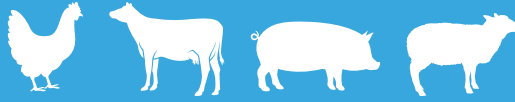
This area is packed with intriguing hidden treasures – people, places and experiences – waiting to be discovered at your own pace. You can explore the communities, tastes, and textures as you go and immerse yourself in a unique, authentic, local visitor experience.

The Hidden Heartlands is known as Ireland's best-kept secret. It is an ideal destination for visitors looking for a refreshing and immersive journey that takes them away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Longford Tourism beckons you to visit Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and discover the beauty of County Longford. You can go boating and fishing in the lakes, the Royal Canal, and the River Shannon. This county is rich in history, literature, and culture and offers fine food and dining options. You can also be active and enjoy the walking and cycling trails in the Woodland, bogland and alongside the water's edge. Come and uncover the many treasures of Longford.

For more information please visit www.longford.ie

SPONSOR



B U D D Y K I E R N A N M I L L I N G

ENCOURAGING GROWTH...

KIERNAN MILLING

Kiernan Milling has been 'encouraging growth' with animal feedstuffs for over 30 years. The Mill was established in 1979 and is located in Granard, Co. Longford. The state-of-the-art Mill is one of the largest of its kind in Ireland, producing a wide range of products for the Agricultural Industry. During this time we have built and maintained a reputation with our customers for producing quality animal feeds.

In June 2007, Kiernan Milling purchased Stewarts Animal Feeds, based in Boyle, Co. Roscommon. Like Kiernan Milling, Stewarts Animal Feeds have a long tradition in the animal feed market with a strong market share in Connacht, the Midlands and North-East.

Our Mill is registered for HACCP and is also independently audited by UFAS (Universal Feed Assurance Scheme). All these quality standards are audited annually and help ensure that Kiernan Milling maintain the high quality feed customers have trusted for many years.

Along with a range of Pig, Poultry, Ruminant & Extruded products we also have an 'in-house' Veterinary Service and a Retail Animal Health store, both services have been approved and is regularly audited by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

Kiernan Milling Stewarts Animal Feeds is the only Mill in Ireland to have an 'in house' Veterinarian. Since 1981 there has been a licensed retail animal remedies outlet located beside the Mill. This retail outlet was branded Kiernan Animal Health in 2012.

For more information please visit kiernanmilling.ie

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY | APRIL 19

5:45pm	Ciaran Mullooly	The Library
7:15pm	John Murry	Fay's Bar
8:35pm	Sinéad Gleeson	The Library
10pm	Trad Session	Fay's Bar

SATURDAY | APRIL 20

10am	Granard Writer's Reading	The Library
11am	Manchán Magan	Sacred Heart School
11:30am	Noel Monahan	The Library
1pm	Fashion Panel	The Library
2:15pm	Martin Doyle	Fay's Bar
3:45pm	Patrick deWitt	Fay's Bar
5pm	Publishing Workshop	Fay's Bar
6:30pm	John Romero	Fay's Bar
7:45pm	Patricia Gibney	The Library
9pm	Paul Lynch	Sacred Heart School
10pm	Trad Session	John V Donohoes

SUNDAY | APRIL 21

11am	Benji Bennett	Sacred Heart School
11:15am	Anna Neima	The Library
12:15pm	Mark Wormald	Fay's Bar
1:45pm	Dani Gill & Jessica Traynor	Fay's Bar
3pm	Gary O' Hanlon	The Library
4:15pm	Black & Irish Podcast	Fay's Bar
5:30pm	Ciarán Murphy	The Library
7:35pm	Fergal Keane	Sacred Heart School
9pm	Post Festival Drinks	Clancy's Bar

Friday

April

19

"The sea is steady for now. The land readies itself. What can be done with the woman on the cliff?"

Hagstone - Sinéad Gleeson

Ciaran Mullooly in conversation with Mary Reynolds

We kick off this year's festival with a wonderful conversation between former RTÉ correspondent and writer Ciaran Mullooly and former County Librarian and Festival Patron Mary Reynolds as they discuss Ciaran's book *The Future Is Now* and his new role promoting tourism within the county.



CIARAN MULLOOLY

Former RTÉ midlands correspondent | Writer

Ciaran Mullooly is a journalist and the author of three books. His first book, "Death on Holy Thursday: The Shooting of John Carthy in Abbeylara," was published in 2008. In 2016, he published his second book, "Back to the Future: Reflections on a Career in Journalism".

His third book, "The Future is Now: Life after RTÉ and the challenge facing the midlands," was published in 2023. He has worked as a former RTE News correspondent, enterprise worker, tourism officer, and community development worker with Ballyleague Village Renewal and multiple rural groups and communities. He is married to Angela and has two sons, Bryan and Eoghan. Mullooly currently resides in Ballyleague, Lanesborough.



MARY REYNOLDS

Retired County Librarian | Festival Patron

Mary Reynolds is the former Longford County Librarian and former Head of Creative Ireland Longford. She has a long history of supporting both arts and literature across the county.

John Murry in conversation

American musician and songwriter John Murry sits down with Victoria Mary Clarke to discuss his career, what inspires his music, his family connection to William Faulkner, and how he found his way to Longford.



JOHN MURRY

Songwriter | Musician | Composer

John Murry is an American musician, singer-songwriter, composer and producer. His debut album, "The Graceless Age", gained critical acclaim in 2013. He collaborates with artists like Bob Frank and Chuck Prophet, and his music blends country, rock, and folk influences.

He released his latest album, "The Stars are Gods Bullet Holes," in 2021, and a documentary documenting Murry's life, "The Graceless Age – The Ballad of John Murry", was released in 2023. Murry's music is a must-listen for anyone who appreciates great music that speaks to the heart and soul. He is also William Faulkner's second cousin through adoption and has spent time living in Drumlish Co. Longford.



VICTORIA MARY CLARKE

Journalist, Writer

Victoria Mary Clarke is an Irish journalist and writer who has written for newspapers and magazines in Britain and Ireland; she is also an Irish artist/designer specialising in vibrational art for healing and uplifting spirits.

Sinéad Gleeson in conversation with Shaunagh Connaire

Join us for this special conversation between Sinéad Gleeson, the critically acclaimed writer and editor and Shaunagh Connaire, the award-winning journalist and filmmaker as they discuss Sinéad’s debut novel and storied career in the arts.



SINÉAD GLEESON

Writer | Editor | Artist

Sinéad Gleeson is a critically acclaimed writer and editor who has received numerous accolades for her contributions to the literary world. Her collection of personal essays, *Constellations: Reflections from Life*, has been recognized with the prestigious Non-Fiction Book of the Year Award at the Irish Book Awards and the Dalkey Literary Award for Emerging Writer.

In addition to her award-winning work, Sinéad has edited several anthologies and collaborated with artists and musicians on groundbreaking projects. *Hagstone* is her debut novel.



SHAUNAGH CONNAIRE

Journalist | Filmmaker | Festival Patron

Longford native Shaunagh Connaire is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker and was previously the Director of Communications and Media at the Clooney Foundation. She was nominated for an Emmy award and won a duPont-Columbia award for her PBS Frontline documentary about the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

She has reported on LGBTQ rights and conversion therapy, covered the refugee crisis in the Middle East, reported on women’s rights in Ireland, and investigated the role of Wall Street in the opioid crisis in the US.

Saturday

April

20

"and the prophet sings not of
the end of the world but of
what has been done and what
will be done and what is being
done to some but not others..."

Prophet Song - Paul Lynch

Manchán Magan reads *Wolf-Men and Water Hounds*

The ever-spellbinding writer and gaeilgeoir Manchán Magan reads from his second children's book, *Wolf-men and Water Hounds*. In this magical book, Manchán travels province by province through Ireland, telling stories about the beasts and creatures from legend and highlighting a magical word or phrase in Irish.

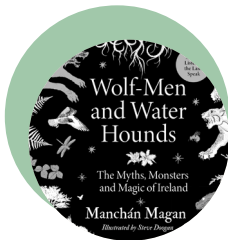


MANCHÁN MAGAN

Writer | Gaeilgeoir | Filmmaker

Manchán Magan is a writer and documentary maker. He has written books on his travels in Africa, India, and South America, as well as two novels. He writes occasionally for *The Irish Times*, reports on travel for various radio programmes, and has presented dozens of documentaries on issues of world culture for TG4, RTÉ & Travel Channel.

His books *Thirty-Two Words For Field and Tree Dogs*, *Banshee Fingers and Other Words For Nature* are acclaimed best-sellers. His latest Children's Book, *Wolf-Men and Water Hounds* sees Manchán uncover the secrets of our island through magical landmarks across the country.



WOLF-MEN AND WATER HOUNDS

The Myths, Monsters and Magic of Ireland

Traveling province by province through Ireland, Manchán outlines the stories most closely associated with each site, focussing on a specific beast or creature from legend and highlighting a magical word or phrase in Irish alongside.

Discover the *dobharchú* or water hound of Achill Island; the enchanted sow *Cailcheir* of Sligo's Keash Caves; the Burren's *ollphéist* or great serpent; the *Caoránach* or hairy worm of Lough Derg; the one-eyed salmon of Ballyshannon; and the man wolves of Ossory, County Kilkenny, amongst many others.

2024 Artist-in Residence Noel Monahan

Granard native and renowned poet Noel Monahan reads from his upcoming collection of poetry, *Journey Upstream*, where he navigates mythic landscapes to country towns and urban living.



NOEL MONAHAN

Poet | Artist In Residence 2024

Noel Monahan is a native of Granard, Co. Longford, and is now living in Cavan. He has won numerous awards for his poetry and writing. He has published seven collections of poetry with Salmon Poetry. An eight collection, *Celui Qui Porte Un Veau*, a selection of French translations of his work, was published in France by Alidades in 2014. A selection of Italian translations of his poetry was published in Milan by Guanda in November 2015: *“Tra Una Vita E L’Altra”*. His poetry was prescribed text for the Leaving Certificate English, 2011- 2012. His play: *“ Broken Cups”* won the RTE P.J. O’Connor award in 2001, and *Chalk Dust*, a long poem of his, was adapted for stage and directed by Padraic McIntyre, Ramor Theatre, 2019. During the COVID-19 lockdown, Noel had to reinvent his poetry readings, and he produced a selection of Short Films: *“Isolation & Creativity”*, *“Still Life”*, *“Tolle Lege”*, and *A Poetry Day Ireland Reading for Cavan Library, 2021*. Recently, he edited *“Chasing Shadows”*, a collection of poetry for Creative Ireland. Salmon Poetry will publish his ninth poetry collection, *“Journey Upstream, ”* in 2024.

Journey Upstream is Noel Monahan’s ninth collection of poetry. Here, Monahan navigates mythic landscapes to country towns and urban living. Monahan loves to interrogate our past, our heritage and the poet’s place in today’s world of rapid change. The final section of the collection, *Maynooth Calling*, deals with the poet’s short stay at Maynooth’s Seminary, once the largest seminary in the world. This is another of Monahan’s long prose poems, now familiar to many, and this finely wrought poem, both lyrical and satirical, comes alive with enthralling dramatic effect on the page.

Fashion Panel

Chaired by Longford native Anne-Marie Tomchak, three leading voices in the fashion world come together to discuss industry issues, from the environmental impact of fast fashion to the barriers people with disabilities face..



ANNE-MARIE TOMCHAK

Writer | Broadcaster | Entrepreneur

Anne-Marie Tomchak is a writer, broadcaster and entrepreneur focusing on technology and sustainability. She has senior experience at the BBC, Mashable, and Vogue. She founded ShareJoy, a non-profit that resells pre-loved fashion to support Pieta, a mental health charity, and DesignTracker, a service for eco-friendly homes. Anne-Marie has been featured in TIME, Forbes, The Drum, and Allbright. She is a columnist for the Irish Independent, a contributor to Glamour UK, and a TV presenter. Her documentary "Game Changer: AI and You" premiered in November 2023, and her digital wellbeing work is a Junior Cycle resource.



ESHITA KABRA-DAVIES

Founder & CEO By Rotation

Eshita Kabra, a former investment analyst, founded By Rotation in April 2019. After witnessing textile waste firsthand in Rajasthan, India, Eshita launched By Rotation in the UK and US to create a global community for the world's largest shared wardrobe. She's a Forbes 30 Under 30 and established tastemaker in the fashion and sharing economy.



LOTTIE JACKSON

Disability Activist | Writer | Editor

Lottie Jackson is a disability activist, writer and editor who redefines what it means to be disabled. She was featured in the Sunday Times Style's Women of the Year 2020 list and has written for numerous publications including British Vogue and the Guardian. In 2020, she was selected for Penguin Random House's award-winning WriteNow programme. **Lottie will be joining us via zoom.**

Martin Doyle in conversation with Hilary White

Martin Doyle, discusses his new book *Dirty Linen* with journalist and writer Hilary White. *Dirty Linen* is a personal, intimate history of the Troubles seen through the microcosm of a single rural parish, the author's own, part of both the Linen Triangle – heartland of the North's defining industry – and the Murder Triangle – the Badlands devastated by paramilitary violence.



MARTIN DOYLE

Journalist | Writer | Editor

Martin Doyle is Books Editor of *The Irish Times*, where he has worked since 2007. He is a former Editor of *The Irish Post* in London, where he worked from 1992 to 2001, and also worked for *The Times* in London from 2001-2006. He is the author of *Dirty Linen: The Troubles in My Own Place* which was shortlisted for Irish Nonfiction Book of the Year.

He has essays in *The 32: An Anthology of Irish Working-Class Voices*, ed. Paul McVeigh and *A Handbook of the Northern Ireland Troubles and peace process*, eds. Laura McAtackney and Máirtín Ó Catháin. He edited *A History of The Irish Post* in 2000 to mark the newspaper's 30th anniversary. He was also an extra in *Father Ted*.



HILARY WHITE

Journalist | Writer | Sparviter

Hilary White is a writer, arts journalist and conservationist from Dublin. He is a regular contributor to the *Sunday* and *Irish Independents*, and *RTE Arena*. His writing has featured in the *Irish Times*, *Irish Examiner*, *The Dublin Review*, *Winter Papers*, and *Tolka*.

He is a recipient of the Literature Bursary and Agility awards from the Arts Council of Ireland, and was chosen for the inaugural Paul McVeigh Residency 2023.

Patrick deWitt in conversation with Dani Gill

Patrick deWitt, the author of the critically acclaimed *Ablutions: Notes for a Novel* and *The Sisters Brothers*, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, chats with Longford Poet and Curator Dani Gill. His new book *The Librarianist* tells the story of Bob Comet, a man who has lived his life through and for literature, unaware that his own experience is a poignant and affecting narrative.



PATRICK DEWITT

Writer | Screenwriter

Patrick deWitt has written several acclaimed books, including *The Sisters Brothers*, *Ablutions*, *Undermajordomo Minor*, *French Exit*, and his latest work, *The Librarianist*, released in 2023. *The Sisters Brothers* won the Governor General's Award and was shortlisted for the Booker and Walter Scott prizes.

It was also adapted into a film by Jacques Audiard, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Joaquin Phoenix, Riz Ahmed, and John C. Reilly, and was released in 2018. *French Exit* was shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize and also adapted into a film released in 2020. Originally from British Columbia, Canada, deWitt now calls Portland, Oregon his home.



DANI GILL

Writer | Producer | Curator

Dani Gill is a writer, poet, educator and curator based in western Ireland. She has worked with various arts organizations since 2009, including Cúirt International Festival of Literature and Galway Theatre Festival. Dani is interested in promoting public engagement, cross-art-form collaborations, poetry advocacy, and supporting writers. She is a published poet and also writes reviews for *The Irish Times*.

Her first poetry book, *After Love*, was published in 2017 and her second, *Lessons in Kindness*, will be published in April 2023. Dani is currently the Performing Arts Curator for the Bealtaine Festival, Director of The Lighthouse Project and Co-Director of Match in the Dark.

Publishing Workshop

For writers, getting published can often be a complex maze to navigate. Join us for this invaluable workshop on the publishing world where three editors from leading publications - Granta, Stinging Fly and Paper Visual Art - discuss their submission policy and review process.



LUKE NEIMA

Granta Magazine

Luke Neima is the managing director and deputy editor of Granta magazine. His writing has appeared in the Times Literary Supplement, Prospect and the White Review. He has contributed to two documentary films, A City Is an Island and Britannia.



LISA MCINERNEY

Stinging Fly

Lisa McInerney is a celebrated author of three novels that have won numerous awards, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Desmond Elliott Prize, and the RSL Encore Award. Her writing has been featured in publications such as Granta, The Guardian, and Vogue, and has been translated into 11 languages. She was appointed editor of The Stinging Fly in 2022.



ADRIAN DUNCAN JR.

Paper Visual Art

Adrian Duncan won the 2019 John McGahern Book Prize for his debut novel, Love Notes from a German Building Site. His second novel A Sabbatical in Leipzig was shortlisted for the Kerry Novel of the Year. He also published a collection of short stories, Midfield Dynamo, in 2021. His third novel, The Geometer Lobachevsky, was co-published in April 2022 by the Lilliput Press and Tuskar Rock Press. Adrian is an editor with Paper Visual Art.

John Romero in conversation with Ronan O'Toole

Legendary game designer, artist and programmer John Romero chats with festival co-founder and director Ronan O'Toole about his new book "Doom Guy," which chronicles his career, including co-founding id Software and creating revolutionary genre-defining video games like "Wolfenstein 3-D," "Doom," and "Quake."



JOHN ROMERO

Game Designer | Programmer | Artist

John Romero is an award-winning programmer, game designer and level designer and led the design and contributed to the programming and audio design of the iconic and genre-defining games Wolfenstein 3D, DOOM, Quake, Heretic and Hexen. Romero was also one of the earliest supporters of eSports and a professional-level DOOM and Quake player. To date, Romero has co-founded eight successful game companies including the likes of id Software, Gazillion Entertainment and most recently Romero Games in Galway, Ireland in 2015. His memoir DOOM Guy released in July 2023.



RONAN O' TOOLE

Festival Co-Founder & Director | Curator

Ronan O'Toole, together with John Connell, is the co-founder and director of the festival. He has over a decade of experience as a festival director and producer. He also curates programmes for both literature and cinema. Additionally, he has been an avid gamer all his life. Ronan works for Screen Ireland's National Talent Academy for Animation, upskilling and training animators for the screen industry.

Patricia Gibney in conversation with Anne Griffin

Best-selling author and Westmeath native Patricia Gibney sits down with Mullingar-based writer Anne Griffin to discuss her remarkable career, inspirations, and what drives her passion for writing.



PATRICIA GIBNEY

Writer

Patricia Gibney is a crime fiction author from Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, Ireland. Her debut novel, *The Missing Ones*, was published by London based digital publisher, Bookouture, in March 2017.

To date thirteen Detective Lottie Parker books have been published in the series as ebook, Print On Demand, and audio. Trade paperback editions are published by Sphere UK and Hachette Ireland. To date the Lottie Parker series has over two million sales.



ANNE GRIFFIN

Writer

Anne Griffin is the award winning author of three bestselling novels: *The Island of Longing*, *Listening Still* and *When All Is Said*. Anne has been awarded the An Post Newcomer of the Year, Irish Book Awards, 2019.

Her work has been shortlisted for the John McGahern Annual Book prize, Kate O'Brien Award and Christopher Bland Prize amongst others. She has been longlisted for the Dublin Literary Award. Anne's work is published in twenty-five territories including twenty-three foreign languages. Born in Dublin, Anne now lives in Mullingar.

Paul Lynch in conversation with Belinda McKeon

Join us as we welcome Paul Lynch, the winner of the 2023 Booker Prize for his novel "Prophet Song", for an in-depth conversation with award-winning author Belinda McKeon. This is an event not to be missed as we delve into the themes of political extremism and the plight of refugees explored in his inspiring work.



PAUL LYNCH

Writer | Journalist | Film Critic

Paul Lynch is the prize-winning author of the novels *Red Sky in Morning*, *The Black Snow*, *Grace*, *Beyond the Sea* and *Prophet Song*. His second novel, *The Black Snow*, won France's bookseller prize, *Prix Libr'à Nous* for Best Foreign Novel.

His third novel, *Grace*, won the 2018 Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year and the 2020 Ireland Francophonie Ambassadors' Literary Award. His most recent novel, *Prophet Song*, won the Booker Prize in 2023 and was Ireland's bestselling novel that year. He has been shortlisted for many international prizes, including France's *Prix Jean Monnet* for European Literature, *Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger* (Best Foreign Book Prize), *Prix Littérature Monde* and the *Walter Scott Prize*. He was born in Limerick in 1977, grew up in Donegal and lives in Dublin.



BELINDA MCKEON

Writer | Lecturer

Belinda McKeon is a novelist and playwright. She is the author of the novels *Solace* (Picador, 2011) and *Tender* (Picador, 2015), and editor of the collection *A Kind of Compass: Stories on Distance* (Tramp Press, 2015).

Her writing has been published in *The Paris Review*, *Winter Papers*, *A Public Space* and elsewhere. Originally from Co. Longford, she is director of the MA in Creative Writing at Maynooth University.

Sunday

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""If you were a gold ring, a gold watch, a gold chain, you could say "I am a ring, a watch, a chain", but these are temporary shapes. In truth, you are just gold - that is your essence, no matter how the shape changes.

After Love - Dani Gill

Adam's Cloud Reading with Benji Bennett

Join Benji Bennett, the author of the Adam's Cloud book series, as he shares his inspiring journey of creating the magical world of Adam's Cloud. This book series was born from the tragic loss of his son, Adam. Benji will read from his book Adam's Amazing Space Adventure and share stories of love, loss, and hope that will resonate with families of all ages.



BENJI BENNETT

Author Adam's Cloud Books

Living in Dublin with his family, Benji has dedicated his life to promoting "Adam's Message" of family time filled with love, hugs, and kisses. His life took a tragic turn when he lost his son Adam to an undiagnosed brain tumour. But, Benji found comfort in a positive thought he shared with his wife Jackie, which inspired him to establish Adam's Cloud to encourage other families to spend time together.

On Adam's first anniversary, Benji published his first book, *Before You Sleep*, and became a full-time author. Through his family's unwavering dedication, they turned a tragedy into something beautiful and continue to remember their son in everything they do. Benji's story inspires others to cherish their family time, hold their loved ones close, and turn adversity into something positive.



ADAM'S AMAZING SPACE ADVENTURE

Accompanied by his big brother Harry, join Adam and his trusty rocket on this never-to-be-forgotten educational interplanetary adventure.

Meet the planets, surf the cosmos with comet Halley and eat solar sassies in an interstellar cafe. Follow the clues to complete your mission to find out where aliens drive in their cars.

Anna Neima in conversation with Ella McSweeney

Journalist and broadcaster Ella McSweeney chats with historical writer Anna Neima about her work documenting the wave of experimental communities that sprang up around the globe in the aftermath of the First World War.



ANNA NEIMA

Writer

Anna Neima is the author of two books – *The Utopians: Six Attempts to Build the Perfect Society* (2021) and *Practical Utopia: The Many Lives of Dartington Hall* (2002).

Together these tell the story of the wave of experimental communities that sprang up around the globe in the aftermath of the First World War. Anna completed her doctorate at the University of Cambridge and is currently a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Warwick.



ELLA MCSWEENEY

Journalist | Broadcaster

Ella McSweeney is an Irish journalist and reporter. She works across radio, television and print for various broadcasters and publications, including RTE, BBC, *The Guardian* and *The Irish Times*. She's presented a wide range of radio shows for RTE, including *Shanks Mare*, *Documentary on One*, *Into the Deep*, award-winning *Mind Matters*, *Future Tense*, *Nature's Web*, *The Green Light*, *Farm Week*, *Countrywide*, and she has also guest-presented *The Ryan Tubridy Show*.

For BBC, she has reported for and presented *Farming Today*, *On Your Farm* and *The Food Programme* on Radio 4, and documentaries on BBC World Service. She has presented RTE's food and farming television series *Ear to the Ground* since 2009.

Mark Wormald in conversation with John Connell

Festival Director and Co-Founder John Connell chats with renowned writer and fisherman Mark Wormald about retracing Ted Hughes's fishing journey across Britain and Ireland, using Hughes's poetry collection River and his fishing diaries as a guide.



MARK WORMALD

Writer | Fisherman

Mark Wormald has been fishing since the age of four. He won the Newdigate Prize at Oxford and an E C Gregory Award from the Society of Authors for his poetry, and has been a Fellow in English at Pembroke College, Cambridge, since 1992.

His first office was once the bedsitting room in which Ted Hughes dreamed of a burned fox. He edited Charles Dickens's The Pickwick Papers for Penguin Classics and more recently co-edited two collections of essays about Ted Hughes. The Catch: Fishing for Ted Hughes was Classic Angling Magazine's Book of the Year for 2022.



JOHN CONNELL

Writer | Journalist | Festival Co-founder & Director

John Connell is a journalist, author, playwright, documentary maker, producer and the festival's co-founder and director. He has earned a reputation for his exceptional work in creating insightful and impactful human rights documentaries that have been screened worldwide, drawing attention to important issues and inspiring meaningful change.

In addition, John is an accomplished author, having written the internationally acclaimed memoir "The Cow Book." This powerful book offers a vivid and deeply personal account of his upbringing on a small Irish farm. It has captivated readers worldwide with its raw honesty and heartfelt storytelling. John has earned many awards and honours and continues to work in journalism, literature, and documentary filmmaking.

Dani Gill & Jessica Traynor Poetry Reading

Join us for an exclusive event featuring two of Ireland's most celebrated poets, Dani Gill and Jessica Traynor. The poets will present readings from their collections and discuss each other's unique writing processes and the inspirations behind their works.



DANI GILL

Poet | Curator

Dani Gill is a writer, poet, educator and curator based in western Ireland. She has worked with various arts organizations since 2009, including Cúirt International Festival of Literature and Galway Theatre Festival. Dani is interested in promoting public engagement, cross-art-form collaborations, poetry advocacy, and supporting writers. She is a published poet and also writes reviews for The Irish Times. Her first poetry book, *After Love*, was published in 2017 and her second, *Lessons in Kindness*, will be published in April 2023.

Dani is currently the Performing Arts Curator for the Bealtaine Festival, Director of The Lighthouse Project and Co-Director of Match in the Dark.



JESSICA TRAYNOR

Poet | Editor | Critic

An award-winning poet, essayist, and librettist from Dublin, Jessica has written three poetry collections, including *Liffey Swim*, shortlisted for the Strong/Shine Award, and *Pit Lullabies*, a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. Jessica has also written libretti for several operas and essays for various publications. She has received numerous awards and commissions for her work and has held residencies at institutions such as the Yeats Society and Carlow College.

Jessica is also a critic for The Irish Times and has worked as Literary Manager of the Abbey Theatre and Deputy Museum Director of EPIC. In 2019, she co-edited *Correspondences*, an anthology calling for an end to direct provision in Ireland's asylum system, with actor Stephen Rea. She is poetry editor at Banshee Press.

Gary O' Hanlon in Conversation with Ella McSweeney

Hailing from Donegal but very much a Longford local, celebrity chef Gary O'Hanlon chats with Ella McSweeney about his career in cooking and how he ended up gracing our television screens as one of Ireland's most renowned chefs.



GARY O' HANLON

Chef | Broadcaster | Columnist

Gary O' Hanlon is Chef Consultant to the O Sullivan Group Paris and, before that, was Head Chef of The Condor at Chateau du Coudreceau from 2019 to 2024.

He was also head chef of Viewmount House, Co. Longford. Winner of the Georgina Campbell 'Best Restaurant in Ireland' 2014, Food & Wine Magazine 'Best Chef Leinster 2016, RAI Best Chef Leinster 2010 & 2017, & 'Country House of the Year 2017' .

Gary has been ever present on our TV screens since 2008 and made his UK debut in 2019 on BBC One's Saturday Kitchen.

Gary is a former columnist of The Irish Times and co-hosts the Podcast 'Dishing It Out'. Gary won the 2018 Georgina Campbell Hospitality Hero Award for services to Irish Food.



ELLA MCSWEENEY

Journalist | Broadcaster

Ella McSweeney is an Irish journalist and reporter. She works across radio, television and print for various broadcasters and publications, including RTE, BBC, The Guardian and the Irish Times. She's presented a wide range of radio shows for RTE, including Shanks Mare, Documentary on One, Into the Deep, award-winning Mind Matters, Future Tense, Nature's Web, The Green Light, Farm Week, Countrywide, and she has also guest-presented The Ryan Tubridy Show.

For BBC, she has reported for and presented Farming Today, On Your Farm and The Food Programme on Radio 4, and documentaries on BBC World Service. She has presented RTE's food and farming television series Ear to the Ground since 2009.

Black and Irish Podcast

This live recording of the Black and Irish podcast sees founder Leon Diop chat with Uruemu Adejinmi about making history as the first migrant, African and black female Cathaoirleach in Ireland.



LEON DIOP

Podcaster | Founder Black & Irish

Leon Diop is a 29 year old mixed race man from Dublin, Ireland. Born to an Irish mother and a Senegalese father, he grew up in a mixed ethnic and religious household. He studied Psychology in Maynooth University where he served two years as Students' Union President. He is the founder of Black and Irish, an organisation striving to transform Ireland into a global leader in equality and inclusion. He is a host of the Black and Irish podcast with RTE.

He is the co-author of the award winning book, black and Irish: legends, trailblazers, and everyday heroes.



URUEMU ADEJINMI

Councillor

Uruemu Adejinmi's political journey started in 2016 after she supported a local candidate during the general election. When her neighbour asked her to join Fianna Fáil, she soon engaged in the party's activity. In 2021, Cllr Uruemu Adejinmi made history. In a series of firsts, she was elected Mayor of Longford Municipal District as simultaneously the first migrant, African and black female to become Mayor in Ireland.

Now, she appeals to others to represent their communities.

Ciarán Murphy in conversation with Mickey Quinn

Second Captain's podcast co-founder Ciarán Murphy sits down with former Longford Captain Mickey Quinn to discuss his new book "This is The Life" about the places the GAA comes from, the places it can take a person and the things that make a local club worth fighting for.



CIARÁN MURPHY

Journalist | Writer | Podcaster

Ciarán Murphy is a host and co-founder of the Second Captains podcast, one of Ireland's most popular sports podcasts.

He has co-hosted the Second Captains Live television show, which ran for 5 series on RTE 2, as well as co-hosting the Second Captains Saturday RTE Radio 1 show, and he writes a weekly sports column for the Irish Times.

His book "This is the Life" is about the places the GAA comes from, the places it can take a person, and the things that make a local club worth fighting for.



MICKEY QUINN

Footballer | Pundit | Teacher

Mickey Quinn is a skilled and experienced Physical Education and Maths teacher passionate about sports and fitness. He has an extensive background in athletics, having played for both the Longford and Killoe GAA teams. Additionally, he has played professionally in the Australian Football League (AFL), where he honed his skills and gained valuable experience. He is also a brand ambassador for Benetti Menswear.

His extensive knowledge of sports and fitness and his teaching experience make him an ideal candidate for inspiring and motivating students to pursue their passions and achieve their goals.

Fergal Keane via zoom in conversation with Fran McNulty

Fergal Keane is one of the BBC's most distinguished correspondents, receiving multiple awards for his reporting. He will join us live from Gaza via Zoom to discuss the ongoing conflict and his own career with RTE Prime Time presenter and Longford native Fran McNulty



FERGAL KEANE

Journalist | Reporter | Writer

Fergal Keane is an award-winning journalist and author who has reported on genocide and conflict zones around the world. He has won several awards, including the Emmy, BAFTA, and the George Orwell Prize for literature. In January 2020, he stepped down from his role as BBC News Africa Editor to recover from PTSD.

He has appeared in an acclaimed documentary called 'Fergal Keane: Living with PTSD.' Harper Collins published his book on his experience of war trauma, 'The Madness,' in October 2022. Apart from his work, Fergal is also a proud father and has a passion for history, fishing, and his Labrador/Spaniel cross, 'Deilo.'



FRAN MCNULTY

Journalist | Reporter | Presenter

Fran McNulty is an award-winning journalist and television presenter. Fran presents the current affairs programme Prime Time on RTE Television. He has also presented leading radio programmes, Morning Ireland and This Week, and continues to pursue investigative journalism on television.

He has reported from all over the world and on stories as diverse as Papal Conclaves, the funeral of Nelson Mandela and tensions in the West Bank. Fran is a native of County Longford but now lives in Dublin.

BOOKTOWN TEAM



John Connell is a bestselling author and farmer. He is also the co-founder and director of Granard Booktown Festival.



Ronan O'Toole is the co-founder and director of the Granard Booktown Festival. He also works for Screen Ireland's National Talent Academy for Animation.



Belinda McKeon is the author of the novels Solace and Tender, which won and were nominated for awards including the Irish Book of the Year 2011 and the Encore Prize 2016. She is the head of Maynooth University's MA in Creative Writing.



James Cawley Jr. is the Business Development Executive with the Irish Centre for Diversity. He was the Policy Officer with a national Disabled Persons Organisation, a teacher and lectured on the Disability studies course at Maynooth University.



Vivian Huynh is a Social and Content Director with Folk Wunderman Thompson.



Turlough McGovern is a Granard native and local councillor. He was also the former Longford Cathaoirleach.



Uruemu Adejinmi is a Fianna Fail Councillor in Co. Longford. She was also the first female African Cathaoirleach in the country.

THANK YOU

The festival would not be possible without the contribution and support of so many. Thank you to all who have helped make Granard Booktown 2024 a reality.

Again, we thank all our partners and sponsors as well as Clement Wilson for the continued support this year.



Arts Council Ireland | Creative Ireland | Longford County Council

Longford Arts Office | Longford Tourism | Kiernan Milling

The Rick O' Shea Book Club | Clement Wilson | Granard Credit Union

Rosemary Gaynor | Martina Needham | Martin Morris

Déirdre Orme | Mark Kiernan | Shane Crossan | Sinéad Flannery

Mary Reynolds | Shaunagh Connaire | Rick O' Shea | Richard Flanagan

Piker's Lodge | Knights & Conquest | Belle's Kitchen | Castle Varagh Hotel

John V Donohues | Fay's Bar | Clancy's Bar | Sacred Heart Primary School

And, of course, a sincere thank you to all our volunteers, guests, attendees, writers, friends and everyone who visited Granard

Booktown 2024.

The Booktown Team



Find Us Online

www.granardbooktownfestival.ie | Instagram: @granardbooktown