

Writer in Residence

Local author Fiona Sherlock was recently appointed as Writer in Residence for 2021. Here she tells us what being the Meath Writer in Residence means to her: *I'm a crime writer, newspaper columnist, poet, and mummy to two delicious munchkins, living in Bective, Co Meath. I applied for the residency to work with the community, and engage with readers and writers on all areas of the written and spoken word. Publishing my books during the lockdown, it was hard not actually meeting people, and the variety of the groups the Writer-In-Residence engages with was*



hugely appealing. I'm thrilled to be appointed this year's Writer-In-Residence. Being born in Meath, I was a child of Navan library, and view the libraries as sacred spaces- hallowed halls of literature, newspapers and community spirit. During my residency, I hope to support the county's keen readers, by exploring books by new and unheard voices in mainstream and independent publishing. And for the children of Meath, I look forward to creating fun and memorable experiences, as we leave the pandemic behind us, from immersive mystery experiences to mindful story times, I have a jam-packed programme for the county's active and engaged community of library users. As a former mentee, I appreciate the value of knowledge sharing. The mentorship programme is one area I'm particularly looking forward to, where I hope to support and encourage emerging writers on their craft - and to meet their own writing goals, whatever success looks like for them. Through a series of creative writing classes, for beginners and those with an established practice, I hope to provide a toolkit and technical inspiration. It's also a time to celebrate one of the county's most revered authors, Mary Lavin, through a self-serve tour. Thank you to Creative Ireland and Meath County Council for funding the residency, and to Meath County Library Service for facilitating it.

Meath Libraries Growing It Forward

As part of the Government's Keep Well 2020 – 2021 campaign, library services participated in the Grow It Forward campaign. This positive action-orientated programme, in collaboration with the Grow It Yourself organisation, encouraged own food growing to empower people to a healthier, more sustainable life. 50,000 free seed kits were distributed nationwide. 25,000 of these were distributed by local libraries. The seed kits consisted of 5 packets of vegetable seeds (tomatoes, beetroot, carrot, peas and oriental greens), 10 gift labels (for sharing) and a growing guide. Our online registration was very successful with our allocation of 830 seed kits all requested within days. A programme of social media posts and email contact with our participants delivered support, tips and encouragement throughout the campaign. Meath Libraries ran two competitions for the GIF registrants with gardening books and other small garden goodies to be won. The prizes were sponsored by the Community section of MCC. Participants were also encouraged to send in photos of their vegetables from newly emerging seedlings right up to end produce. Feedback from the participants was extremely positive with many stating that the campaign was really beneficial for them during what was a difficult time in early 2021 with a prolonged lock down. It is hoped that there will be a follow-on campaign for 2022. Our Grow It Forward ambassador Yvonne Morrisson is pictured with seed kits ready for posting.



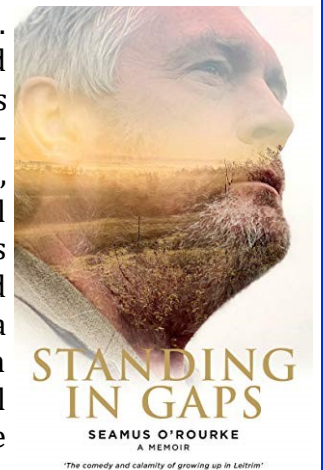
Rí na Mí

To celebrate World book Day 2021 Meath Libraries held a Design A Library Mascot competition for all primary school children in the county. We received hundreds of fantastic entries. The winning design Rí Na Mí was created by Arianna Keating from Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg- Dunboyne. Our new library family member can be seen in all library branches and he has also been used online in competitions and games. Arianna received a book voucher to the value of €50 and her school received a collection of books for their library to the value of €250. Congratulations and thank you to Arianna for creating such a wonderful library mascot for us.



Bealtaine At Home

A wide range of events were held this year to celebrate Bealtaine festival. Dr Liam McNiffe presented a five part Zoom series on the history and appreciation of European art. Actor, writer and director Seamus O'Rourke was interviewed via webinar about his recent memoir, *Standing In Gaps. Getting Hitched*, an online interactive wedding drama, presented by Carnation Theatre and sponsored by Meath County Council Arts Office, was a roaring success. Participants acted as wedding guests sharing memories, jokes and songs. The Big Bealtaine Sew Along, offered an opportunity for crafts people to engage in the production of a community wall hanging project. The completed wall hanging will go on display in all Meath libraries later in the year. We also held our annual Big Book Quiz and Teresa and Louise Carley performed *Whispering Hope – Songs for Bealtaine* musical event.



Online Summer Fun

All of our summer events for children are being broadcast on our YouTube channel this year. We have had some great events in July and we have plenty more to come in August. We have clay modelling master classes with Clayotic, Little Known Tales from County Meath with storyteller Niall De Burca, fashion up-cycling with award winning designer Saraden Designs, arts and crafts with Tarsila Krüse, Harry Potter crafts with Aoife Munn, puppet making with Julie-Rose McCormick and Go Fly Your Kite Mary Poppins Literacy Workshops. We also have Covid Conjuring from Master Magician Billy Bubbles, illustration workshops with RTÉ's Tina Mation, as well as storytelling & yoga with Deirdre from YoYo Yoga, and Irish myths & legends with Candlelit Tales. All our videos are available to watch online until the end of August. There is still time to join our annual and very popular Summer Stars Reading Adventure and be in with a chance to win a Kindle Fire tablet, passes to Tayto Park and outdoor games and toys like swingball and scooters.



For more information go to <https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/libraries/online-summer-fun>

Cruinniú na nÓg

Hundreds of families, children and young people joined in our national day of creativity on June 12th. Children across the county had the opportunity to try their hand at Baking & Cooking, Designing & Flying Kites, Crafts & STEAM Crafts, murder mystery drama and fun music workshops for little ones and their families. The Cruinniú Schools Programme brought fun into the classrooms with animation workshops, coding and music trí Gaeilge and an author/illustrator session with Susannah Lloyd and Paddy Donnelly. We still have lots of wonderful creative content on our Meath Cruinniú na nÓg YouTube channel with the animated short 'Bóinn -the River Goddess', the performance of the newly-composed song Bóinn by the Meath Music Generation Youth Choir, a dramatised reading of 'Me & Molly & Moo' by Deirdre Kinahan, the art entries in the RTÉ/Creative Ireland 'This is Art' competition and some really gorgeous songs for the Early Years in the 'Meath Musical



Mystery Tour' by Kids' Classics, many signed and captioned. Ireland is the first, and *only*, country in the world to have a national day of free creativity for children and young people under 18. Cruinniú na nÓg is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme's Creative Youth Plan and in Meath is managed by the Library and Arts departments of Meath County Council. Pictured are The Meath Music Generation Youth Choir.

Produced by Meath County Council Library Service,
Railway Street, Navan, County Meath, C15 A279
Phone 046 9021134 Email libraryhq@meathcoco.ie
www.meath.ie/library

