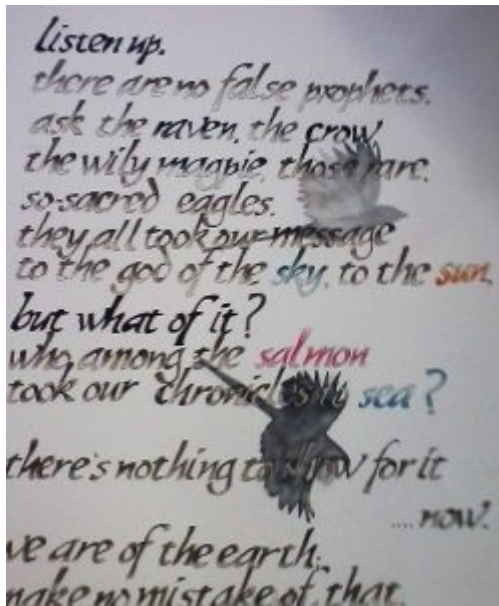


Cirque des Oiseaux: Artists & Augurs



Are Artists Augurs? asks the exhibition which opened in the *Higher Bridges Gallery* on the 7th of April and runs to the 29th. *Cirque des Oiseaux* is French for *Circus of Birds* or rather the circling of birds in flight, something we notice particularly at this time of year as new migrants begin to arrive.

Just as we look for signs of Spring, the Augurs of Ancient Rome used to interpret the will of the Gods through observing the flight and the calls of birds. The association of birds and poets is even older than that; it goes right back to the origins of writing itself. According to legend, Palamedes invented eleven letters of the Greek alphabet from the shapes that migrating cranes make in flight.

The exhibition is based around the closely-observed bird poems of Enniskillen-born poet Maria McManus, two of which – [Peregrinations](#) and [Corncrakes](#) are reproduced with permission elsewhere in this issue. They are re-interpreted and complemented through the work of eight other artists in photographs, paintings, sound, video, and sculpture. This gives the whole a pleasing unity, and a diversity that is not normally seen in one-person shows. The works speak to each other, sometimes using the same words and images, but none dominates. There is no predetermined path through, an effect heightened by excellent exhibition notes which, though they number each piece sequentially and map them clearly, do not list them in numerical order but by artist.

The connection with augury is perhaps most plainly seen in the work of Helen Sharp. What at first sight appeared to be silhouettes of birds in flight *The Jackdaws of the Newtown Butler Spar* are seen on closer inspection as shapes pierced in white cloth – literal rendings of the veil. The same image is used on a set of 'Oracle Cards' laid out like a Tarot reading on a table in the middle of the room.

Others are more oblique. Catherine Gaston's mysterious oil paintings contain

no birds at all (one is even titled *No Birds Here, Winter, Lough Erne*) except for the one titled *Murmuration for Maria*. Bernarde Lynn's photographs *Caged Birds of Hong Kong 1-6* and *People of Hong Kong* invite comparisons between the brightly coloured soft-focus close-up of the birds and the invisible people – represented by several floors of the facade of a massive block of flats – as neat and regular as a repeating pattern, yet no two exactly alike.

Some of the poems are presented in handwritten form. *Emigrés* is written in a tiny book perched on a swallow's nest and protected by a bell jar, *Corncrakes* on an accordion-fold set upright so that only a few lines are visible from any one position. It is accompanied by Simon Walters sound installation in which two recordings of the poem weave together in a sort of fugue, reflecting the tenuous lives of the birds themselves.

Others are meant to be handled (white gloves are provided) most notably Irene Uhlemann's massive handmade book *In Principio Erat Verbum* (In the Beginning was the Word) which with its illustrated excerpts stands somewhat in the tradition of the *Book of Kells* and evokes some of its reverence. *Home* is a collage of handwritten letters and poems contained within a folded map, as if remembering the journeys for which it was consulted, and *Peregrinations* is typewritten on luggage labels, one per line – a device that McManus also uses in her [Label Lit](#) project.

It is strange and somewhat delightful to experience poetry in such an indirect fashion, but does that mean that poets and artists are akin to augurs? Perhaps. As with all forms of divination, augurs relied on observations that were somewhat predictable (with a good knowledge of natural history you know what to expect expect from birds)

but never entirely so. They wove a story out of commonplace and overlooked details, always keeping a eye open for the extraordinary moments that give them special significance.

And so do these artists: go see for yourselves.

The Artists:

[Maria McManus](#) [Tom Hughes](#) [Pearl Kinnear](#)

[Helen Sharp](#) [Simon Waters](#) [Irene Uhlemann](#)

[Bernarde Lynn](#) [Catherine Gaston](#) [Rosie McGurran](#)



Corncrakes

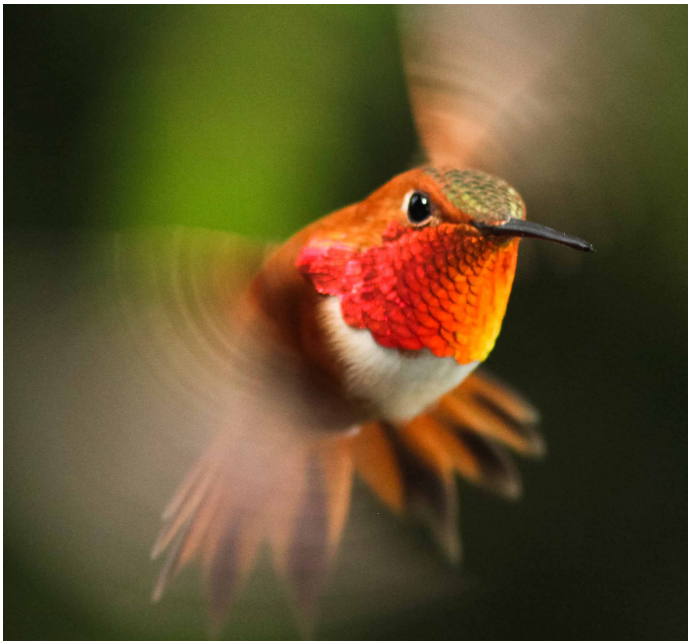
Not one among the rushes
 None in the meadows
 None where the farmer dropped to his knees
 Lamenting the crumpled nest its requiem
 wringing his hands
 like a chaplain
 bringing bad news
 to the door
 in the night time
Them's rare wee things – them's rare!
 ... and rarer still
 the small clutch
 a universe among the rushes
 Small planets grounded in troubled heavens.
 These scaplings scurry in frantic sorties
 To grub in the undergrowth
 amongst the brackens.
 It is the night, it is the stars impress
 Africa, Africa, Africa
 Opening the night
 terra incognita –
 There is no way
 only opening the night

Listen, first intently;
 closely – no further than at arms length
 and then, when everything is detailed,
 clocked & inventoried & only then,
 double the circle
 Listen, double the circle, Listen
 sense unreachable places,
 calm places at the eye

of hurricanes.
Flee your fever
and with unholy impetus
hurl
Into the nomadic sky,
into severe places
into unspeakable theatres of ablation,
Into mystery, uncertainty, doubt,
and tell everything
when
you
return.

[Maria McManus](#)

[Peregrinations](#)



If you took a chance

And let those plates stop spinning,
Stuck your hands in your pockets
Or your fingers in your ears
And stepped back –
What would happen then?

After all that clatter
And when the shreds –
All the broken pieces
Were shovelled up
Wrapped away carefully
And left somewhere for landfill
What then?

All that falling, can only happen once,
And then it's over. Done with.

As an alternative.
You could gather in those plates
Stack them neatly, one on top of the other
File under 'something for someone else
Another time', and let them sit there.

Or you could just watch the wobbly poles
Come to their inevitable standstill and decide
Whether to break them, so that puts
A stop to this, forever.

One way or another – you could choose
Silence, choose stillness, stop playing.

You choose.

II

When Nuria tells me
The Robin died
Because it flew into the glass
I know it is true.

It thought
That what it saw
Was endless sky –
That this reflection of sky
And the Bay of Biscay was reality.

Its neck has broken
And it lies supine on the steps.
I dare say
Death was instant –
I hope so, and that it didn't suffer.

III

I know this one
And will share with you
Two stories of my own –
Near-misses, if you like.

IV

The first was a dream
Of the Hummingbird
In all its shimmering brilliance, battering
On the window of my smallest most under-used room.
Outside, I'd made a garden, full of colours,
Into it, I planted tame versions of my dreams

Underneath the wild flowers
That greeted everyone who beat their path
To my front door,

But it was the illusion of the garden
Brought the Hummingbird
To beat itself to death upon the glass.

V

The second is the story of an interview.
I faced a four-strong panel. They were back-lit
With the afternoon sun
And the scene outside was rich and wonderful –
A river tumbled down a small green glen – all ferns and damp
And luscious. I could hear the sounds of water
Breakthrough the stultifying must inside.
The vigour of the river had, at one time,
Channelled a mill – the force of it ground millstones.

I remember I wore funereal black –
Considered smart and fitting
For such occasions; an indication
I was serious, reverential,
Intentional about the task –
It was a tailored form of knee-
Bending, a genuflection to authority, to formality –
A message that I would
Concede, submit, serve,
Toe-the-line, fit in.

Then, just as I gathered
My first breath, to lift
The register of my voice,
A summer Swallow flew
Full tilt into the image
Of that garden paradise
And was lost,
After it slammed hard against the glass
And fell into Montbretia.

VI

At The Gower when we walked
We looked skywards. You could
Tell the difference between Swifts
And Swallows, House-martins and Sand-martins.

They're all beautiful to me.
I find that I am mesmerized and gaze
Always into the blue of where they are –
And it's enough.

VII

This past year or so,
I've tracked the Swallows too,
From Ireland, to Wales,
To Spain and Portugal, to Hungary,
And all the way to Cape Town
And back again.

VIII

Was it you I told the stories of the Hummingbirds to?
I've talked about it recently again, I know.

I heard Attenborough
Talk about them on the radio – of how,
Amidst the chaos of this world, and the catastrophic,
Devastation of our earth,
There is one small hopeful story, and it is this –

How people have laid a corridor of sweetness
All the way from Costa Rica to the North of North America
And how in this symbiosis
The Hummingbirds flourish against all odds–
How they reward the wilderness
Of our grey lives,
Gem-like and shimmering
Captivating the available light
And give it back to us
As they migrate
North – South – North –South –
North.....

They are delicate and tiny in the dying of this light.

IX

And then, there is another story–
In the poem of Sah-Sin. Tess Gallagher tells us,
It is the Native American name for Hummingbird
And she tells how, when she found one,
In torpor, in the cold – she lifted it
And slipped it in under her breast
Next to her heart, to warm it,
In the hope it would revive again.

X

Finally, here's my last message
to you, for now.

I found a montage
Of Hummingbirds with the 'mirror in the mirror',

And I'll play that for you sometime, but –

Between here and there
Between now and then
Don't fear anything.

XI

And, if you decide
To stop catching those spinning falling plates

And, if you need something for your hands to hold –
Here's mine.

You might.

And if you take that chance,
Just think –

Then maybe, just maybe,
We could dance instead.

[Maria McManus](#)



[Two Poems by Teresa Kane](#)

HORIZON

I have a daughter with eyes as wide and blue as the sky
what advice can I give as she stands before me, smiling
set to fly? There will be days when clouds come in
when rains pour down hard but don't worry,
I've packed your boots, you can sing and splash

dance the dance you learned here in your own back yard.

When you face each new day with dreams in one hand and trust in the other
and in return the world gives you disillusionment and disappointment
when the wind has been taken completely out of your sails
and you've been knocked so hard in the solar plexus
that you can't even breathe, believe me when I say
those will be the days when you will know the sweetness of air
as each breath enters your lungs. I want you to put the star into
starting over and over and over again, put the free into fall and as you do,
spread your wings, swoop and glide and when you land, girl you stand tall.

Tonight I'm unfurling a kite, it will fly with Cassiopeia and the Milky Way,
keep your eyes fixed on it and, if at times it moves out of view, don't worry,
it has gone beyond where your eyes can't see, it will always be there for
you.

I've made a map and now I'm letting you go because you know this map off by
heart.

It's got names old and new and names from beyond the order of time.

It's got touch stones and place names too

*Craghan, Trory, Friday's Land, Coa
Enniskillen, Newcastle, Belfast, Kilcar
Downings. Bundoran, Chang Mai, Lacoste
Teelin, Pubble, Elswick, Swad.*

Slip this map into the back of your book
the one you're writing with the new chapter.

Oh and by the way I've packed a multi-coloured pen

Write the next chapter big, write it bold and my restless seeker
from this place within my heart, I shall watch it unfold.

MOON KEEPER

There's a beat in this night
that rises from the heat of the rain-drenched streets
there are eyes in the beams
raining tears on the beer garden of the pub
where you stood and asked about love from every passer-by
and they told you through smoke rings and wedding rings
of love that sings and catches the heart in the part where it hurts
of love that cries and dies and phoenixes itself up
from the ashes of the soul
and the woman at your side holds the moon in her arms.

Some spoke of stars and scars
and a beauty within that scorches the mind
and dances to danger with a stranger holding its hand
some told of the broken, the unspoken
a man who was leaving stopped to say
that he had found love in the place
where the lonely go to dream. A girl with green eyes

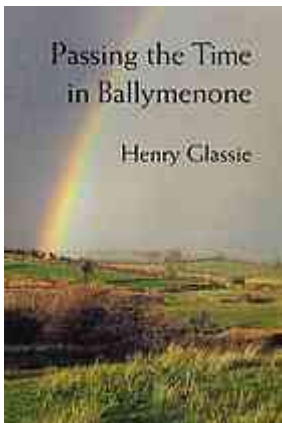
said love was a sentence without a full stop
a passage rite into salty waters in a boat with glass sides.

And still you asked and still you stood
and still you wondered why, yet no answers found
until it did seem as you leaned into the night under those beams
that held up the sky that love had indeed lingered with you
and then passed you by while you were blowing smoke rings at the stars
and the woman at your side holds the moon in her arms
the moon in her arms
the moon in her arms.

Moon Keeper was shortlisted for the 2017 Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing.

Teresa Kane has worked as a freelance journalist for the BBC and has a long history of working with children in their poetry writing. She is currently Principal of Magherlough Primary School, Trillick.

Fermanagh Time



This time of year the days lengthen, the clocks go forwards, and busy people have for once an excuse for being late. Not so in Fermanagh. Here the rhythm never changes; it is constant all year round. Summer or winter, you may wait half an hour for someone to turn up – and if you chance to wonder aloud what is keeping them, then people wag their heads and say, “Ah, Fermanagh Time.”

Fermanagh Time gives us the dark winter mornings that keep us in our beds, and the long summer evenings that keep us out of them. A hundred years ago, when British Summer Time was new, there was New Time, Old Time and Fermanagh Time – or as some called it *God’s Own Time* – when the sun was always highest at noon. Old Time – Greenwich Mean Time – was then not all that old. It came with the railways, and most people who didn’t need to catch trains still went by God’s Own Time. Fermanagh is seven and a half degrees West, so here by Greenwich Time the sun rises and sets half an hour later than it should.

Time is a strange thing, like manna in the wilderness. We each get it at the

same rate – twenty-four hours each day, neither more nor less, and if we are lucky, that happens maybe three thousand times in our lifetime. We may measure it in different different ways and spend it in different ways, but we cannot save it for 'later'. 'Later' is just more time that must be spent. Of course, it makes no sense to spend time doing things that we neither enjoy nor profit from. If such things need to be done, we can always pay other people to do them. But then we have to spend time working to pay them, and time waiting for them to show up. What is the point in working at something you don't want to do, in order that others should work at something they do not want to do?

Time has to be spent, and if life is worth living then it has to be spent in a way that allows us to live all the time. Perhaps we in Fermanagh have always known that, because of the weather. The grass will grow when it grows, the turf will dry when it dries – probably later than we expect, but that's Fermanagh Time for you. We may be glad when it's early, but we can not rely on it. In the meantime, there is time to be passed. To get an idea of how we used to do that, read some of the books [Henry Glassie](#) wrote about his time here in the 1970's – many of which are available in Enniskillen Library.

Perhaps we are beginning to catch ourselves on; to appreciate once again the value of slow: [slow food](#), [slow reading](#), [slow gardening](#), [slow streets](#), [slow architecture](#). Four or five times each summer I give hospitality to passing cycle tourists – people who have travelled slowly through all corners of the world, sometimes for months, even years at a time, and on a budget of perhaps £5 a day. From them too I have learned how little we need to pass the time well: clean water, decent food, dry clothes, and most of all, a safe place to rest and make friends. There is no reason why anyone should be denied these things. With just this much secure, the poorest person is willing to freely give of their time, because they will have more time tomorrow. From that time, freely given, has come all the art and culture in the world.

People don't just like to do things that are easy and fun. If there is no great penalty for failure, most want to challenge themselves, to try something that might just possibly work until they succeed. Once in a while they may produce a genuine and original work of art. It's not so much a matter of making as of growing. This being Fermanagh, it will probably take longer than you might have expected, but that doesn't matter. There is all the time in the world.

To paraphrase [David Graeber](#), the most productive thing to do with stuff is to help grow people: curious people, inventive people, kind people; the sort of people you would want to have around you in your old age. That takes a lot of time, the right sort of time.

Fermanagh Time.

Jenny Brien Editor



Ghosts

We set out that morning
Bright and determined
To make our mark
On this frozen place,
To capture
And claim it, make it
Our own, note the trees,
The glistening lake,
The bog-brown streams,
Assess its great potential
And create pointers for our return.

We had been so busy gauging
Distances and light patterns
From a low, watery sun
That it was sometime
Before we realised
We were following the path
Of a pair of foxes;
Overnight hunters
That in daylight had become
Ghosts of themselves
Leaving only an impression
Of survival and fierce parenthood.

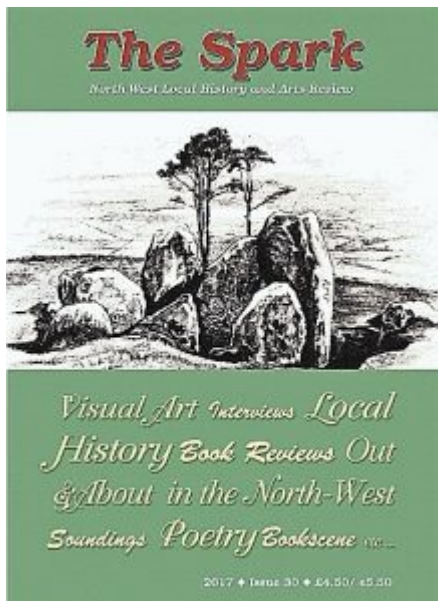
One branched off into the forest.
We followed the other
Up into the high plain
Where we lost him,
Or her,
Though they had only existed
In our imaginations

Like dreams.

We were silent
On our way back.
As silent as the ghosts
We too were destined to become.

Teresa Godfrey is a freelance writer with two children's dramas broadcast on Channel 4. Her Allingham Award winning story, The Jackdaw in the Attic, was broadcast on radio. She is the recipient of the EU New Media Talent Award for her screenplay adaptation of the novel Black Harvest by Ann Pilling and she has written five feature length screenplays on commission. She was the founder of the award winning TIDY Theatre Company, and has been co-ordinator for a number of television documentaries produced by Besom Productions. Teresa currently lives in Enniskillen and is working on a poetry collection and a stage play.

The Spark



For those of you not familiar with it, *The Spark* is a Local History and Arts Review magazine. It is published once a year in April and is distributed in seven counties of the North-West: Donegal, Tyrone, Monaghan, Cavan, Fermanagh, Leitrim and north Sligo.

The next issue (No. 30) has almost 30 articles and features that cover a wide spectrum of interests – local history, interviews, visual art and poetry as well as book reviews and other matters about books and publishing.

Some of the local history articles are: Richard Hayward's *North-West Connections*; *Out and About in the North-West*; *History in a Postcard – Aghalane Bridge*; *Folk Cures from Cavan and Fermanagh*; *The Savile Estate in Co. Tyrone*; *Sir David Storey – Tydavnet Knight*; *Carnaween and Disert in the*

Blue Stacks; History in a House – Aviemore House (Monaghan); Arthur Parry – the boy who went to war; Irish Neutrality – Sacred Cow or Myth?; Enniskillen and the Spanish Civil War; and Memories of the S.L.N.C.R. (Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway).

On the more literary and arts side there is a short piece on W.F. Marshall 'the bard of Tyrone.' Ted McCarthy has a beautifully written short piece on a personal connection with Robert Zimmerman (Bob Dylan) and Patrick Kavanagh.

There are two interviews:

Bobby Hanvey (the *Ramblin' Man* of Downtown radio for many years) and photographer of many famous people, talks to Michael McPhillips. Photographs of Heaney, Friel, De Valera (in coffin) and Lord Brookeborough, etc. are included.

Prof. Frank Shovlin talks about the writings of John McGahern. Shovlin was once taught by McGahern in Galway University. It is a very insightful interview (by Melanie Ward) about McGahern and much else to do with writing.

Ciaran Parker from Cavan gives off steam in the 'Soundings' feature, and Mary Montague, a poet born in Ederney, has a pageful of poems. Mary has her third collection coming out soon. She has been translated into at least three other languages.

Two final year students from South-West College show their paintings, and besides all that there are other bits and pieces to whet the historical and artistic appetites.

The Spark is on sale in all the main towns of those seven counties, and many smaller towns too.

Dermot Maguire Editor/Proprietor

[Poems and Places](#)

An Impermanent Path



a place of enforced solitude

a temporary surface
a washboard for a man's fortitude
a horizontal horizon drawn neatly
between the curve of the sea and the sky
two halves of a broken eggshell
brought together
to form a vista
to compel those eyes
toward a flat
featureless void
 a place where footfalls are silent
 transient
 quenched by inevitabilities
where priests and pagans
 and poets
traipse
in-between the flow and ebb
of a pitiless tide

The Naked King



Proleek Tomb

Four millennia has stripped more than
a pound of flesh from your bones
the naked king is exposed to all
 wanderers and weather
well-wishers and the wicked alike
bask in your ancient silhouette
 unmoved
by modernia
 unhindered
by the creep of crass chronologies
created by curious caretakers of faiths

The naked king reigns
the metaphoric monarch of imaginations
imagines all of us
our fleeting lives like dragonflies around
a stagnant pool
 still
as he has stayed and will stay
until the wanderers and weather
wear his form from bone to stone
from stone to memory
from memory to
 nothingness

[Steve Downes](#), photographer and poet, was born in Country Louth in 1973 and educated in NUI Maynooth. He holds a Degree in Classical History and a Masters in Anthropology, and is a published poet since 1996. These two paired poems and photos are from his most recent project.

Always Keep Your Pass



I could not believe my eyes. Could it be real? Was it a trick of my imagination? A mirage perhaps? What was before me was an Ulsterbus. But why on this road as it was not a bus route? Where was the driver?

Could this be the first chance ever to use my Bus Pass? It was the only concession I had been awarded two years ago after a lifetime of paid taxes and contributions. Free spectacles, free dental treatment, free chiropody and the rest? Forget it! All a futile socialist dream...

Now was my chance to hop on the bus for a free ride to Tempo. I fumbled for my wallet and fingered over the various plastic cards it contained. Damn! I had forgotten to bring it. Never mind, I still had the one I never leave home without: my Greater London Council Security Pass.

I had worked in County Hall, just across Westminster Bridge and a short stroll from The Houses of Parliament for eight years until it was abolished by Margaret Thatcher in 1986. She had condemned it as the '*Citadel of the Looney Left; the Trotskyite alternative seat of government, the Bolshevic Kremlin,*' but everyone in County Hall knew that Lambeth & Southwark Town Halls were where the Militant politburo really held sway.

My supreme political boss was Ken Livingstone. "Red Ken" worked in the main original building while my cadre was situated in the tacked-on gulag known as *The Island Block*. It was built on a traffic roundabout and entered from the second floor of the main building's South Block by an enclosed corridor bridge. From my desk I had a panoramic view that took in St. Thomas' Hospital, The Palace of Westminster, The former Lambeth Women's Lying-in Hospital, the metropolitan taxi's entrance to Waterloo Station, and The Florence Nightingale Pub, our team's watering hole.

Our work area, coded PILWASWOL – *People In London Without A Settled Way Of Life*, was positioned between the *Squatter's Liaison Section* and the *Grants*

Unit. From the latter, according to myths put about by the pro-Thatcher press at the time, Ken's staff dispensed unrestrained largesse to lesbian, gay and ethnic minorities and was even said to have channelled funds to Libya, Cuba, the IRA, and freedom movements world-wide.

The chair Ken sat on when visiting our Section was venerated with mock reverence and reserved for him exclusively. Between times, it held my Chairman Mao type overalls, *Class War* dungarees and a change of battle-fatigue style *Solidarity with Nicaragua* trousers. After Abolition I won the chair in a sweepstake. I brought it with me when I moved to Northern Ireland in 1997. Later, when I bought a vintage Ferguson tractor it became the driving seat.

The other token I retained was my GLC Security Pass. Colleagues had laughingly said to me that, armed with it, I would be able to enter any public building in the world: The Coliseum, The Tower of Pisa, you name it! They recalled the story put about by his opponents of when Ken Livingstone visited Russia:

Like all devout socialists, he decided to visit the Tomb of Lenin. Although the queue was nearly a mile long Ken was informed that, due to his status, he could bypass it, and found himself at the front. The guards demanded to see his identification. He duly showed his passport.

The response was "Niet!"

He then showed his special visa documents.

"Niet!" was repeated.

He presented his return air ticket. "Niet!" once more.

Then Ken had a brainwave: he produced his GLC Pass. The effect on the guards was immediate.

"Da! Da! Da!"

He was escorted in with enthusiastic back-slapping. When he completed his visit and came out into Red Square an official car with outriders was standing by to escort him to his hospitality dacha. *Dastvedanya! Comrade Livingstone!*

The Ulsterbus was empty of passengers. Soon the driver appeared from behind a hedge. I bid him the best of the day and he explained that he was "...off route and out of service" before driving away. My bus-pass is still unused, but perhaps one day my ex-GLC pass will be of use – when I finally set off for that around the world in eighty days trip that I have been promising myself before I die.

Anthony Brady was born in Romford, Essex. Since his retirement he has had prose published in *Ireland's Eye* and *Ireland's Own*, and poetry in *The Guardian* and *The Spectator* blogs. He is a former Chair of Fermanagh Writers.

ComicFest 2017



After last year's very successful launch the Enniskillen ComicFest returns on 5th and 6th May 2017, bigger and better, to celebrate all aspects of storytelling and sequential art. *ComicFest 2016* proved that there was a great demand for an event of this type in the Enniskillen area.

Comics currently enjoy a very high profile with many titles regularly topping literary sales charts, and both television shows and films based on comics growing ever more successful. Related subjects like animation and computer games are booming industries.

Our schools programme last year was very popular as *Moving Image and Creative Media* attract more and more students who want to pursue a career in these industries and want first hand information in storyboarding, storytelling, digital art and character design. Primary schools and Enniskillen library also saw comics as a fun way of engaging children and encouraging them to read. The Library now has a special section for graphic novels and comic collections.

Over twenty Writers and Artists from across the UK and Ireland will be attending ComicFest 2017 and guests of honour include John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra, the creators of Judge Dredd; Steve MacManus, legendary editor of *2000AD*; and Marvel and DC artist Yanick Paquette. Also among the guests is Nigel Parkinson who draws Dennis The Menace and Minnie The Minx for the *Beano*.

The highly regarded British comic *2000AD* is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year. We are very proud to announce that the Enniskillen ComicFest has been awarded Official Status by *2000AD* publishers *Rebellion* and the Fermanagh Film Club will be having a special screening of the acclaimed documentary *Future Shock!: The Story Of 2000AD* on Wednesday 3rd May in Fermanagh House. Tickets will be available on the door. Friday 5th May features our Schools Programme with the attending professionals presenting a range of talks and

running workshops in Enniskillen Library. Then on Friday evening ComicFest is proud to present *A Celebration of 40 Years Of 2000AD* in the Ardhowen Theatre where all our guest creators will be interviewed and video material screened. The audience will also be able to put questions to our 2000AD Guests. Tickets cost £8 and are available from the Ardhowen.

Our main event is taking place on Saturday 6th May and this year our venue will be Enniskillen Castle. Yes, a Comic Convention in a Castle! The event will run from 10am until 6pm and no ticket is required. All our guests will be signing and sketching everything from Dennis The Menace to Batman throughout the day and there will be a programme of panel discussions and interviews. This is also Free Comic Book Day and free comics will be available, one per visitor. There will also be costumed characters in attendance for photo opportunities, as well as independent comic creators, exhibitors, merchandise and back issue dealers. As a special treat for our younger visitors we will periodically be running a Hero Academy and a Princess Academy, where any young apprentice hero or princess can receive training through fun activities and games.

ComicFest 2017 will conclude with a charity auction with all proceeds going to the *Horizon West Children's Hospice*. Last year we raised £2100 for this very important charity and we hope to increase on that this year.

Enniskillen ComicFest thanks the *Arts Council For Northern Ireland, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Fermanagh Lakelands Tourism, Enniskillen Castle and Enniskillen Library* for their support.

The Enniskillen ComicFest Team:

Chairman: Paul Trimble

Secretary: Aaron McVitty

Treasurer: Matthew Gault

Logistics: Chris Fawcett

Social Media Co-Ordinator: Stephen Trimble

Media Production: James Eames