



Upcoming Events

Become A Member

About Us

June at the Museum!



June at the Museum – Solstice, Birthdays, Homecomings and Celebrations!

It's June again and in my soul I feel the filling joy!

June will be a busy month here at the Museum, with several anniversaries being celebrated with events. We will celebrate Pride Month on our social media, by highlighting a different LGBT Irish and Irish-American person daily on Twitter.

June 13th is the birthday of William Butler Yeats. A poet, dramatist, prose writer and one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature, he was a pillar of the Irish literary establishment, and a founding member of the Abbey Theatre. In his later years served two terms as a Senator of the Irish Free State. We will host a birthday party for Yeats on Sunday the 13th - all are welcome to come down and listen to a poetry reading to celebrate his birthday.

June 16th is immortalized forever as "Bloomsday" and the day is observed annually internationally. This is the day James Joyce's novel Ulysses takes place in 1904, and is actually the date of his first outing with his wife-to-be, Nora Barnacle. It is named after the novel's protagonist Leopold Bloom. Joyce always liked to say that Nora had come "sauntering" into his life out of the Dublin hotel where she worked as a waitress. Nora had only a grammar

school education, but when Joyce spouted his literary dreams to her and then declaimed: "Is there one who understands me?," Nora understood enough to say yes. She eloped with him to the Continent (they were not married until 27 years later) and he swore to "try myself against the powers of the world." The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice (NYSSV), a private organization with a state charter empowering it to pursue obscenity eventually banned the sale of the novel in the U.S., which lasted until 1933. We will commemorate the event and the novel with dramatic readings of several passages.

John F. Kennedy was sworn in as the 35th president on January 20, 1961, to great delight among the people of Ireland. Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on May 29, 1917, Kennedy was the first Catholic U.S. president. In June, 1963, Kennedy visited Ireland, the first sitting U.S. president to do so until Ronald Reagan visited in 1984. Kennedy visited New Ross and stood on the place where his great grandfather Patrick Kennedy last stood before he boarded a ship to America. For Irish people, Kennedy was a hero, an idol; he embodied the ultimate Irish success story - Great Hunger emigrant to the most powerful man in the world, all in just three generations. The President promised that he would return to Ireland in the springtime. It was not to be. On November 21, 1963, Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Kennedy himself referred to his Irish visit as "the best four days of my life."

Finally, the Summer Solstice and St. John's Eve are celebrated in Ireland in June, on the 21st and 23rd respectively. Both nights were traditionally marked by lighting large fires throughout the countryside as the sun went down. The fires had to be watched and tended until long after midnight. Prayers were said to obtain God's blessing on the crops, gardens, and for good weather. In most fishing districts, St. John's Day was important as it was the day the boats and nets were blessed. On the rivers, anglers eagerly anticipated the arrival of sea trout which came up the rivers at this time of year.

The fire itself was thought to have magical powers. Burning weeds in its flames would prevent arable fields from becoming overgrown, while scattering its ashes on the fields would guarantee the land's fertility. In some places the young men would march through the fields with lighted branches from the bonfire to protect the crops from disease and pestilence. In others the young men walked through the fields with lighted torches and then cast these into the fire to bring a blessing on the fields and protect the crops from harm. It was considered lucky to bring some ashes home to light the kitchen hearth. People gathered to dance and sing, stories were told, and young men proved their bravery by leaping through the flames.

Another custom was that broken or worn out rosary beads, little statues or scapulars were destroyed without disrespect by being burned in the Midsummer Fire. Traditionally, women gathered herbs on St. John's Eve. These vary from area to area, but on the Feast of St. John, it is customary to gather the perennial herb St. John's Wort, which flowers at this time and has many uses. The herb is hung over windows and doors for protection. Yarrow is also in flower and has been used since ancient times for healing wounds, and its essential oil has anti-inflammatory properties. Yarrow was also used as a ward against evil, and traditionally it was burned on the Eve of St John's Day.

Overall though, it was a time of optimism, with farmers hoping they'd get a period of wet weather before St. John's Day and dry weather afterwards to ensure a good harvest.

Finally, enjoy this June-themed poem by Belfast poet and playwright, Louis MacNeice, *June Thunder*. It was published in his 1938 poetry collection *The Earth Compels*.

Although he chose to live the majority of his adult life in London, MacNeice frequently returned to the landscapes of his childhood, and he took great pride in his Irish heritage. His poetry is characterized by its familiar, sometimes humorous tone and its integration of contemporary ideas and images. In addition to his poetry and radio dramas, MacNeice also wrote the verse translation *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus* (1936), translated Goethe's *Faust* (1951), and collaborated with Auden on the travelogue *Letters from Iceland* (1937).

June Thunder

The Junes were free and full, driving through tiny
Roads, the mudguards brushing the cowparsley,
Through fields of mustard and under boldly embattled
Mays and chestnuts

Or between beeches verdurous and voluptuous
Or where broom and gorse beflagged the chalkland-
All the flare and gusto of the unending
Joys of a season

Now returned but I note as more appropriate

To the maturer mood impending thunder

To the matured mood impending thunder
With an indigo sky and the garden hushed except for
The treetops moving.

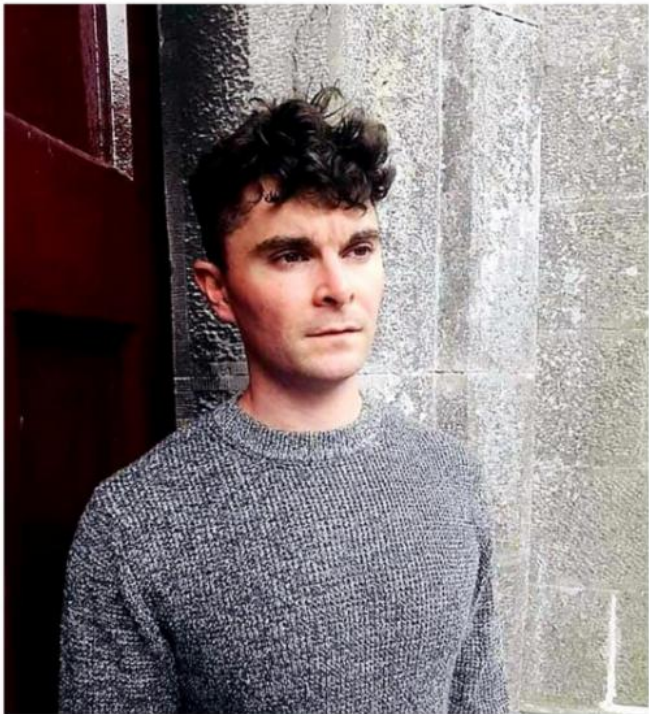
Then the curtains in my room blow suddenly inward,
The shrubbery rustles, birds fly heavily homeward,
The white flowers fade to nothing on the trees and rain comes
Down like a drops scene.

Now there comes catharsis, the cleansing downpour
Breaking the blossoms of our overdated fancies
Our old sentimentality and whimsicality
Loves of the morning.

Blackness at half-past eight, the night's precursor,
Clouds like falling masonry and lightning's lavish
Annunciation, the sword of the mad archangel
Flashed from the scabbard.

If only you would come and dare the crystal
Rampart of the rain and the bottomless moat of thunder,
If only now you would come I should be happy
Now if now only.

Recovering an Irish Voice from the American Frontier
Patrick J. Mahoney (Pádraig Fhia Ó Mathúna)
Wednesday June 2nd 7pm Zoom/Live on Facebook.



**Recovering
an Irish Voice**



**from the
American
Frontier**

**The Prose
Writings of
Eoin Ua
Cathail**

Patrick J. Mahoney, translator and editor

Foreword by Richard White

Writer and historian Patrick J. Mahoney will discuss the life of 19th-century Limerick emigrant Eoin Ua Cathail, whose writings are published for the first time in a new bilingual volume, *Recovering an Irish Voice from the American Frontier* (UNT Press, 2021). Based on his experiences in the southwestern and upper midwestern United States, Ua Cathail harnessed the richness of the Irish language to describe a wide range of topics - from fierce clashes with Native American tribes and a chance encounter with a runaway slave to the environmental impact of

the midwestern timber industry and the emergence of the Gaelic Revival.

Patrick J. Mahoney, or Pádraig Fhia Ó Mathúna, is a Caspersen Fellow in History and Culture at Drew University and a former Fulbright Scholar at the National University of Ireland Galway. His writings have been published widely in both Irish and English. Most recently, his story 'Cuimhní na Cille' was awarded first prize in the Manchester Irish Language Short Story Competition (November, 2020). He is also the co-author of *From a Land Beyond the Wave: Connecticut's Irish Rebels, 1798-1916*, which was awarded the Connecticut League of History Organizations' Publication Prize in 2018.

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

Sunday Stroll - "Streets of Listowel - Where Stories Begin." ***Listowel Writers' Week Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations*** **Sunday June 6th 1pm EST - LIVE on YouTube**



Ireland's oldest literary festival, Listowel Writers' Week celebrates its 50th festival this year.

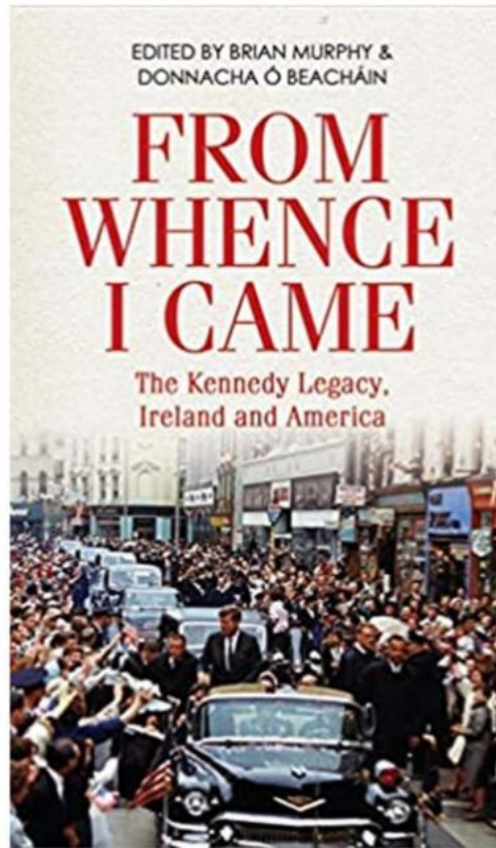
Listowel is a picturesque heritage town situated in County Kerry in the southwest of Ireland. The annual literary festival is famed for promoting writing and all its genres throughout the literary community, and creates an environment in which literature can be appreciated by the widest possible audience and where writers and readers celebrate the written word, together. This year, we are delighted to present our first virtual festival. Although it will be difficult to recreate the magical atmosphere of the festival, we are thrilled to be able to reach out to the diaspora and provide the opportunity to join us on a virtual tour of Ireland's literary capital, Listowel.

Join us on this special online tour of the streets and square of Lovely Listowel, where the past fuses with the present to create a vibrant literary environment. Meet the people, view the landmarks and relive the historical

present to create a vibrant literary environment. Meet the people, view the landmarks and relive the historical events that have made our town such a special place.

Register Here for the Virtual Walk

From Whence I Came: The Kennedy Legacy, Ireland and America
Brian Murphy, PhD and Donnacha Ó Beacháin PhD
Tuesday June 8th, 5pm on Zoom/LIVE on FACEBOOK



Elected in 1960 as the 35th President of the USA, John Fitzgerald Kennedy remains to this day the office's youngest incumbent and he was its first Roman Catholic. His term in office was short, but arguably no US President has inspired more people around the globe than JFK. Even today, for generations born decades after his death, President Kennedy's legacy has an enduring appeal. This insightful book contains specially commissioned pieces by a range of respected academic and political figures, including former Obama speechwriter, Cody Kennan, the President of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights organization, Kerry Kennedy, and former senior adviser to Bernie Sanders, Tad Devine. With the presidency of Joe Biden seeing a renewed focus on broader themes within Irish, American and global politics, *From Whence I Came* is a fascinating and timely collection that offers a fresh perspective on the Kennedy legacy and the politics of Ireland and the United States.

Dr. Brian Murphy B.A., Ph.D. [NUI], PGDip is a lecturer in the College of Arts and Tourism, Technological University Dublin. Brian earned his doctorate in Modern Irish History from the School of History and Archives, University College Dublin. Brian's monograph *Forgotten Patriot: Douglas Hyde and the Foundation of the Irish Presidency* was published in 2016 by the Collins

Press. He previously co-edited *Brian Lenihan: In Calm and Crisis*, the 2014 best-selling book on the public career of the former

Irish Minister for Finance. Brian's latest book, *From Whence I Came: The Kennedy Legacy, Ireland and America*, co-edited with Professor Donnacha Ó Beacháin, was published in 2021 by the Irish Academic Press. Brian is a director of the Kennedy Summer School, New Ross, and a director of the John F. Kennedy Trust.

Dr. Donnacha Ó Beacháin is Professor of Politics at the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University where he lectures on the post-Soviet region, unrecognized states, foreign policy and Irish studies. His books include *Destiny of the Soldiers: Fianna Fáil, Irish Republicanism and the IRA 1926–1973*, *Political Communication in Ireland* (co-edited with Mark O'Brien) and *From Partition to Brexit: The Irish Government and Northern Ireland*, which is the 2019 recipient of the Brian Farrell book of the year award from the Political Studies Association of Ireland.

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

William Butler Yeats Birthday Celebration **Sunday June 13th, 2pm MUSEUM/LIVE on FACEBOOK**

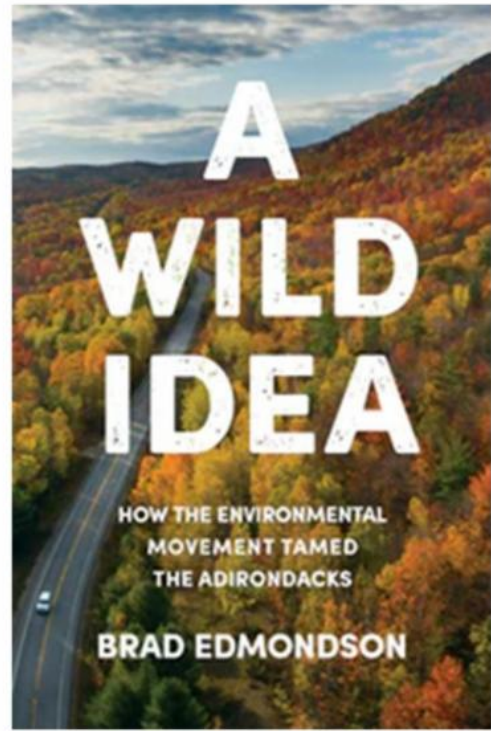
Celebration of William Butler Yeats



Join us at the Museum, as we hear some of the world's best loved poems by William Butler Yeats to celebrate his 156th birthday! If you have a favorite poem and would like to share it, you are welcome to read it. We will have several readers perform personal favorites as well as classics, while others will sing the ones that were set to music. Dr. Margaret Lasch-Carroll will give a brief introduction to his life and works, as we celebrate some of the most famous poems in literature.

A Wild Idea: How the Environmental Movement Tamed the Adirondacks **Brad Edmondson**

Monday June 14th 7pm on Zoom/LIVE on FACEBOOK

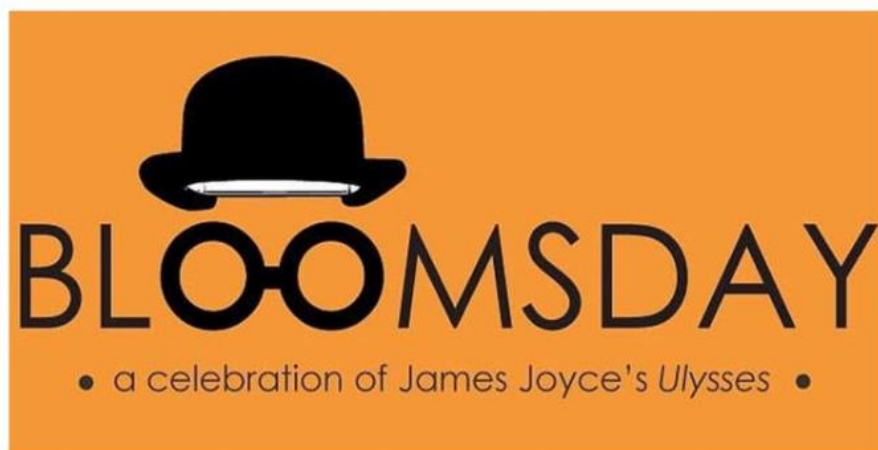


A Wild Idea shares the complete story of the difficult birth of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The Adirondack region of New York’s rural North Country forms the nation’s largest State Park, with a territory as large as Vermont. A Wild Idea is based on in-depth interviews with five dozen insiders who are central to the story. Their observations contain many surprising and shocking revelations. This is a rich, exciting narrative about state power and how it was imposed on rural residents. It shows how the Adirondacks were “saved,” and also why that campaign sparked a passionate rebellion.

Brad Edmondson an independent journalist in Ithaca, the author of *Ice Cream Social: The Struggle for the Soul of Ben & Jerrys*, and President of *The Cornell Daily Sun*.

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

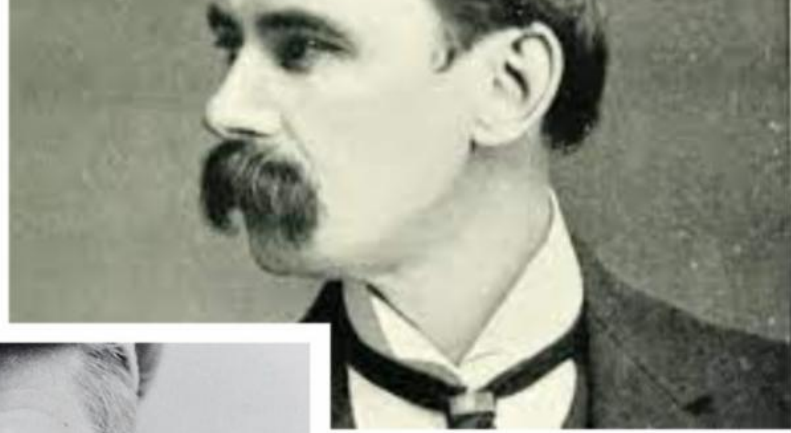
Bloomsday Celebration!
Wednesday June 16th 7pm Museum/LIVE on Facebook



Bloomsday is a world famous literary festival in honor of James Joyce and his famous novel Ulysses that was set in Dublin on 16 June 1904. The ensemble actors will perform extracts from this famous novel so that the stories and characters from Ulysses live and breathe. You'll experience the novel and follow in the characters' footsteps, from picturesque Sandycove, through Dublin's alleys and lanes, to panoramic Howth. Come to the Museum to hear some of the more popular passages and to sing some songs of the "Rare Auld Times!"

Four Irish Writers in America: Oscar Wilde, Douglas Hyde, WB Yeats and James Joyce

**Irish Ambassador to America, The Honorable Mr. Daniel Mulhall
Tuesday June 22nd, 7pm on Zoom/LIVE on FACEBOOK**



Irish writers have had a long association with America. Oscar Wilde visited in 1882 where he was well-received by Irish Americans on account of being a son of the patriotic writer Speranza. Douglas Hyde, Ireland's future president, spent seven months in America raising funds for the Gaelic League. During his four visits to America, W. B. Yeats spent a year of his life in this country. James Joyce never visited America, but his work was the subject of an important legal case in New York which led the way for the publication of *Ulysses* in America in 1934, 12 years after it first appeared. Ambassador Mulhall will talk about the four writers and their connections with America.

During his diplomatic career, Ambassador Mulhall has also held a number of positions at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including as Director-General for European Affairs, 2005-2009. He also served as a member of the Secretariat of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation (1994-95). From 1995-98, he was the Department's Press Counsellor and in that capacity was part of the Irish Government's delegation at the time of the Good Friday Agreement 1998. He had led the Irish diplomatic team in the United States since 2017. Ambassador Mulhall maintains a keen interest in Irish history and literature. He is the author of *A New Day Dawning: A Portrait of Ireland in 1900* (Cork, 1999) and co-editor of *The Shaping of Modern Ireland: A Centenary Assessment* (Dublin, 2016).

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

War of Independence Centenary Series: June 1921.
Elizabeth Stack PhD.
Thursday June 24th, 7pm on Zoom/LIVE on FACEBOOK

June 1921 War of Independence





The thirteenth lecture in our War of Independence Centenary Series continues with an in-depth look at the events of June 1921.

An ambush at Carrowkennedy, carried out by Michael Kilroy and the Volunteers of the West Mayo Active Service Unit, two weeks after their defeat at Kilmeena, was one of the most complete victories of the war for the IRA. Meanwhile, an editorial in the Belfast Telegraph welcomed the opening of the new Northern Ireland parliament by King George V on 22 June 1921: “Ulster turns her face eagerly and hopefully towards the dawn. She knows that the future is in her own hands. She means to shape that future to noble ends and the achievement of a happy destiny.” Attacks on civilians and their property strengthened the resolve of many to endure, although the appeal for peace from the King of England proved that even the powers-that-be desired a truce.

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

Irish American Heritage Museum

21 Quackenbush Square,
Albany, NY 12207
(518) 427-1916

[Email Us](#)

