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*Kilkee Civic Trust*

## Summer Schedule for 2022

*Kilkee Civic Trust, (KCT), is a non-profit organisation working to enhance the quality of life in Kilkee, and its hinterland, by preserving and promoting its cultural heritage, and so making it a more attractive place to live, work and invest.*

### **Talks - Arts in Focus - Music**

*Foreword: Page Nos. 2 & 3*

*KCT Summary of Events - 2022: Page No. 5*

*Arts in Focus: Page No. 7*

*Music: Page Nos. 21 & 22 and 27 & 28*

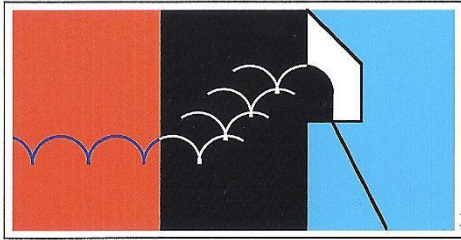
*KCT Heritage Projects: Page No. 29*



*All of our events are recorded by Raidió Corca Baiscinn for subsequent broadcast on 92.5 & 94.8 fm streaming & later podcast on [www.rcb.ie](http://www.rcb.ie)*



*Bandstand Kilkee - © Ruth Wood, Artist*



# *Kilkee Civic Trust*

## *Foreword*

By Chairman of Kilkee Civic Trust  
John Williams

On behalf of the members of Kilkee Civic Trust I would like to warmly welcome you to our 2022 summer programme. We are delighted to again present an excellent variety of talks, music and art after the three-year pandemic hiatus.

For the 2022 programme we have an eclectic mix of speakers dealing with a huge variety of subjects and most speakers having some connection to Kilkee or Co. Clare.

We have this year introduced a variation on the one speaker model which we had in the past.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> July we have three nationally recognised speakers discussing the *Art of Place* which will interest anyone with a connection to their own place.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August three speakers from the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group will talk about the latest technology listening to whales and dolphin ‘singing’. Intriguing!



*John Williams*



*Ocean Rower’s Memorial ~ Beyond Dunlickey Castle overlooking Illaunonearaun / Healey’s Island*

As chairman of Kilkee Civic Trust I want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their input into the work of the Trust. I especially have to thank our secretary Joseph McCloskey for the Trojan work on putting this excellent programme together.

Lastly, we look forward to seeing our old and new friends over the summer months and assure them that the Sweeney Memorial Library is a safe place to visit.

*Continued overleaf.*

# James C. (Jimmy) Furlong

## An Appreciation

Our enthusiasm for the re-start of our summer programme is tempered by the fact that we lost one of our founding members Jimmy Furlong who died last November.



Jimmy was a stalwart of Kilkee Civic Trust.

When the Kilkee Civic Trust was getting off the ground he took on the job of secretary and treasurer at the same time.

Prior to the start of any event, you could be guaranteed that Jimmy Furlong would be the first on the premises to make sure that the sound system, seating arrangements and stage layout were shipshape and afterwards he was the last to leave having made sure everything was in its place.

Not only was Jimmy the backbone of Kilkee Civic Trust his commitment to many other organisations in the town was no less dedicated.

We will miss Jimmy.

*Jimmy Furlong R.I.P.  
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dilis*



*Diamond Rocks, Kilkee ~ © William Glynn, Photographer*

# KCT Talks 2022 will be hosted at Cultúrlann Sweeney, O'Connell St., Kilkee V15 P960

**Entry to all KCT Talks, Arts in Focus & Music events is Free of Charge for 2022**

All of our speakers give of their time and energy on a pro-bono basis.  
The appreciation of the audience & KCT is expressed by way of presenting each speaker  
with a Book Token, or similar, at the end of each KCT Talk.

A Donations Box is provided at all Talks / events  
to assist us in defraying necessary expenses.

**Covid-19:** All Health & Government Guidelines will be followed at Cultúrlann Sweeney.  
Patrons are welcome to wear face masks, if they so desire.  
Hand sanitiser is located throughout the building.



*Kilkee Cliffs - © William Glynn, Photographer*





*Kilkee Civic Trust*

## **KCT - Summary of Events 2022**

*All events are on Wednesdays;  
except the two highlighted on Fridays & the two Bands.*

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> July

Rosita Boland

- Breaking a Silence about Ann Lovett's life and death after 34 Years

**Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> July**

*Arts in Focus*

Annual Gala Concert – 2022

Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> July

Peadar King, Rachael English & Thomas Lynch

- The Art of Place: People and Landscape of County Clare

Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> July

Dr. Síle Ní Choincheannain

- Brian Ó hUiginn: Who was he and why is he featured on the famous mural in the O' Curry Irish College?

Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> July

Rita McCarthy

- Children of a Lesser God:  
The story of the County Clare Mother and Baby Home 1922-1932

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August

Dr Simon Berrow, Mags Daly & Richard Collins  
Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

- The Wonderful Wildlife of West Clare

Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August

J. J. Hickie

- Pictorial Record of Kilkee since 1865 – Part Two

Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> August

Neale Webb

- Sir Ernest Shackleton and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration

**Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> August**

Martin Bourke

The Jussi Björling Story

Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> August

Yvonne McGann

- If the walls could talk, what tales would they tell? The story of Clár Ellagh

Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> August

Michael Nolan

- The Kilkee Skripal?

July & August (two visits)

Boherbuoy Brass & Reed Band

Details later

July or August (one visit)

Ennis Brass Band

Details later

**Date:** Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 8pm

No. 1 of 9 Talks

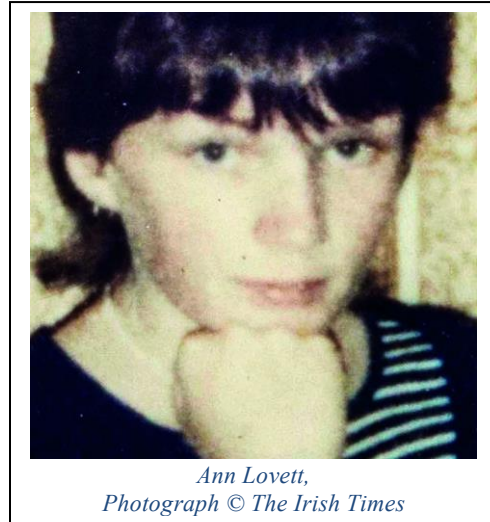
**Speaker:** Rosita Boland

**Talk Title:** Breaking a Silence

**Talk Description:**

Breaking a Silence about Ann Lovett's life and death after 34 Years - Rosita Boland will talk about her interview with Ricky McDonnell, Ann Lovett's former boyfriend.

Ann Lovett, aged just 15 Years, died on a school-day, on a Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 1984, after giving birth to a boy at the Grotto in Granard, Co Longford – a tragedy that continues to resonate across the decades.



In 2018 - Ann's former boyfriend Ricky McDonnell spoke publicly for the first time. Rosita Boland will explain how she got the interview everyone wanted, and will provide an insight into the weeks spent investigating Ricky McDonnell's story, and the process of collaborating it prior to publication.

Then, she will explore and expand on the public reaction after the interview was published.

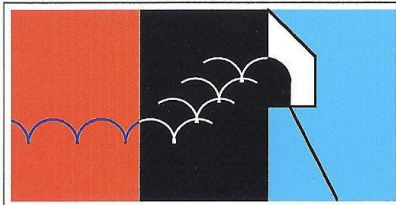
It is undeniable that hearing Ricky McDonnell 's voice - through Rosita Boland's 2018 article - changed an Irish narrative that had stayed static for 34 years.

The interview was published in The Irish Times on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and, for Rosita Boland, it won her both the "Scoop of the Year" & "Journalist of the Year in 2018".

**About the Speaker:**

Rosita Boland is Senior Features Writer with The Irish Times, where she specialises in human-interest stories. Rosita has won several awards for her Journalism, including "Journalist of the Year in 2018". She is also the Author of two essay collections, Elsewhere (Doubleday), and Comrades (Penguin). Originally from Ennis, Co. Clare, she now lives in Dublin.

# *Arts in Focus*



*Kilkee Civic Trust*

## **Annual Gala Concert - 2022**

Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 8pm

Cultúrlann Sweeney,  
O'Connell St., Kilkee V15 P960

An Evening of Music, Song, Dance, Poetry, Film & More!



A Celebration of all Artistic Talent

KCT Coordinator for *Arts in Focus* is Fionnuala Murnane

A special "Thank You"  
to all our *Arts in Focus* participants  
who make this night possible every year!  
Full Programme available early July

**Date:** Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 8pm

No. 2 of 9 Talks

**Speaker:** Peadar King  
Rachael English  
Thomas Lynch

**Talk Title:**  
The Art of Place:  
People and Landscape of County Clare

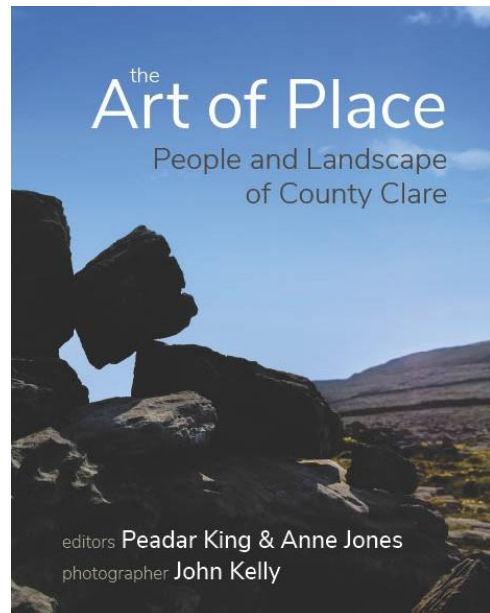
**Talk Description:**  
Writer and broadcaster Rachael English and poet and undertaker Thomas Lynch in conversation with Peadar King.

**About the Three Speakers:**

**Peadar King**

Originally from Kilkee, Peadar King is a documentary filmmaker and non-fiction writer. For the past two decades, he has filmed in over fifty countries across Africa, Asia and The Americas for the award-winning RTÉ Global Affairs series *What in the World?*.

Peadar King regularly contributes to *World Report* (RTÉ Radio One) as well as other radio stations. He has written for a number of other publications including *Being Irish* (2021).



*Peadar King*  
*Photo Credit ~ John Kelly*

His book *War, Suffering and the Struggle for Human Rights* was described by *The Irish Times* as: 'A call to humanity in a world full of atrocity.'

Along with Anne Jones he is co-editor of *The Art of Place: People and Landscape of County Clare* (2022).

Peadar King is currently Adjunct Professor of International Relations in University College Cork.



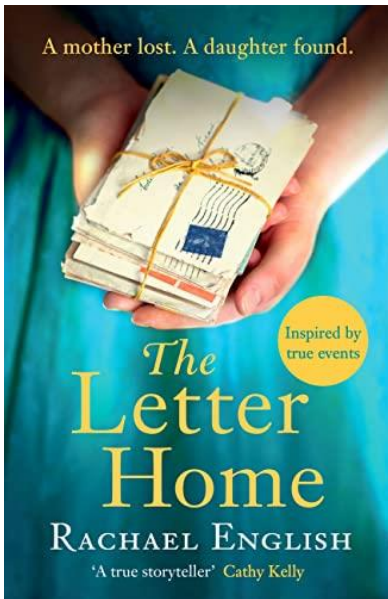
## Rachael English

Born in Lincolnshire in 1969, broadcaster and writer Rachael English grew up in Shannon, Co. Clare. Her broadcasting life began on Clare FM and from there she moved to 2FM and RTÉ Radio 1.

As presenter of *Drivetime*, she was the recipient of a PPI Award for her coverage of the September 11 attack in the United States and since then as presenter of *Morning Ireland* has covered all the major domestic and international events.



Rachael English  
Photo Credit ~ John Kelly



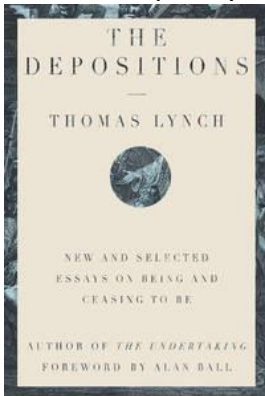
An enthusiastic reader, she started writing only seven years ago. Her first novel, *Going Back* (2013), was shortlisted for the most-promising newcomer award at the Bord Gáis Irish Book Awards and spent two months in the Top 10. Her subsequent books include *Each and Every One* (2014), *The American Girl* (2017), *The Night of the Party* (2018), *The Paper Bracelet* (2020).

On her own writing she has said: “Sometimes, I find myself thinking that I’m not suited to writing. I tell myself I’m an imposter who should stick to what she knows. More often I wonder how I managed for so long without it”.

*The Letter Home* is her most recent book.

## Thomas Lynch

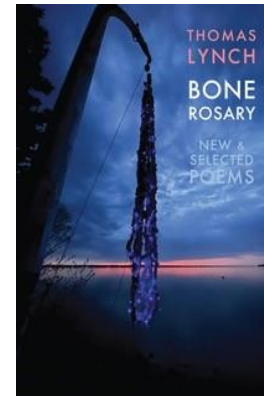
Essayist, Poet, and Funeral Director - Thomas Lynch has written five critically acclaimed volumes of poetry, four books of essays and a book of short fiction.



His most recent collections include,

THE DEPOSITIONS  
NEW & SELECTED ESSAYS (Norton, 2019)  
&  
BONE ROSARY  
NEW & SELECTED POEMS (Bloodaxe UK, 2022)

A novel is forthcoming.





*Thomas Lynch*  
*Photo Credit ~ John Kelly*

Thomas Lynch has written for the New York Times, the Times of London, The Irish Times, Newsweek, and Harper's.

His book *The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade* (1997) won the Heartland Prize for Non-Fiction, the American Book Award, and was a finalist for the National Book Award.

He has taught at Wayne State University Department of

Mortuary Science, University of Michigan Graduate Program in Writing and Emory University Candler School of Theology. His work has been the subject of two documentary films, PBS Frontline's "The Undertaking" and Cathal Black's "Learning Gravity." He divides his time between his home on Mullett Lake in Northern Michigan and his ancestral home in Moveen, County Clare.



*Kilkee Strand - © William Glynn, Photographer*

Date: Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 8pm

No. 3 of 9 Talks

Speaker: Dr. Síle Ní Choincheannain

**Talk Title:**

Brian Ó hUiginn: Who was he and why is he featured on the famous mural in the O' Curry Irish College?

**Talk Description:**

Brian Ó hUiginn (1<sup>st</sup> July 1882 – 10<sup>th</sup> March 1963), also known as Brian na Banban, was an Irish Revolutionary, Poet, Gaelic Revivalist, Sinn Féin Politician and a founding member of the organisation. He was President of Sinn Féin from 1931 to 1933.



Born in Meath his ghost resides mostly in the history of West Clare. After attending an Irish-language summer college at Ballygeary, Co. Cork, O'Higgins received a Language Teacher's Certificate in 1906 and began work as a Múinteoir Taistil (Travelling Teacher) for the Gaelic League.



*Brian Ó hUiginn*

During this time, he was one of the founders of Coláiste Uí Chomhraidhe, an Irish Language College in Carrigaholt, County Clare and in 1917 he became the College Secretary.

In May 1918 he was arrested and deported to Birmingham Jail on suspicion of German conspiracy. While he was in prison, he was elected Sinn Féin candidate for West Clare during the 1918 General Election.



*Coláiste Uí Chomhraidhe ~ Carrigaholt, Co. Clare*

It is said that because of Brian's republican affiliations and involvement with the Irish College that the Black and Tans paid a visit to the college in 1920 and burnt half of the building down.

This talk hopes to shed some light on Brian Ó hUigínn, this lesser-known Republican, and his connection to West Clare, particularly Carrigaholt.



*O'Curry College, better known as Coláiste Uí Chomhraidhe, was named in honour of Doonaha native and renowned Irish scholar, Eugene O'Curry.*

*Eugene O'Curry 1794 ~ 1862*



**About the Speaker:**

Dr. Síle Ní Choincheannain is currently working as a full-time Irish Lecturer in Mary Immaculate College. She spent time lecturing in the University of Limerick and spent two years (2017-2019) in Canada as an Irish Canadian University Fellow at the University of Ottawa.

Síle also spent the academic year 2013-2014 on a Fulbright Scholarship in the University of Montana. Síle also has experience working on Raidió na Gaeltachta and TG4.

Her current research deals with modern Irish historical fiction, the role of women in this genre, and the O' Curry Irish College. She recently held a conference commemorating local scholar Eugene O' Curry, 160 years after his death in Mary Immaculate College.



*Mural at: Coláiste Eoghain Uí Chómhraidhe : The O' Curry Irish College*



*Picture:  
Kilkee Cliff Walk  
In May, with Sea Pinks in bloom*

*Picture:  
Kilkee's Road Train*



**Date:** Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 8pm

No. 4 of 9 Talks

**Speakers:** Rita McCarthy

**Talk Title:**

Children of a Lesser God:  
The story of the County Clare  
Mother and Baby Home 1922-1932

**Talk Description:**

This is the story of the County Clare Nursery, a Mother and Baby Home, that was housed in Kilrush Workhouse from 1922 - 1932.

This Institution was set up as part of the County Clare Amalgamation to replace the Poor Law in the County. It also became the facility for unmarried pregnant women and their children as well as acting as an Orphanage.



*County Clare Nursery (Mother & Baby Home) Memorial ~ Kilrush*



*County Clare Nursery (Mother & Baby Home) Memorial ~ Kilrush*

Upwards of 400 children were born there - but the poor condition of the building - and the lack of adequate provisions for the women and children - meant a horrendously high death rate.

This talk will explore the reasons why a “high death rate” was the case - and why little or no provision was made to improve the lives of the women and children.

**About the Speaker:**

Rita McCarthy is a Social Historian whose area of interest includes Ireland in the post 1922 period; particularly the lives of women and children in the Free State. She works in Adult Education where she teaches Irish History and Heritage Studies.

Rita McCarthy is also an Independent Researcher and has produced and presented Radio Documentaries and Podcasts. Whilst researching her MA she uncovered the existence of the County Clare Mother and Baby home (1922 – 1932) and she has written and presented an Exhibition on the topic. Rita is currently writing a book on the County Clare institution.



*County Clare Nursery (Mother & Baby Home) Memorial ~ Kiltrush*



*Seats at West End, Kilkee*



*RESCUE 115 ~ in the Sky over Kilkee*

**Date:** Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022 at 8pm

No. 5 of 9 Talks

**Speakers:** Dr Simon Berrow  
Mags Daly  
Richard Collins

**Talk Title:** The Wonderful Wildlife of West Clare

**Talk Description:**

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, (IWDG), was formed in December 1990. Success quickly followed, when six months later, on the 7th of June 1991, the Irish Government declared Ireland an Irish Whale and Dolphin Sanctuary. This was a remarkable first achievement of the newly formed group. Throughout the intervening thirty plus years; the IWDG strived to make Ireland an “Effective Sanctuary”.



This Talk will bring you on an exciting “virtual” sea voyage, when you will hear about the unique population of Dolphins in the Shannon Estuary, the amazing Humpback Whales,



*Humpback Whale Fluke ~ Just off Loop Head*

Basking Sharks and Porpoises, and much more, all only a short distance from our Western Shore at Kilkee on the Loop Head Peninsula. The IWDG speakers are passionate about their work.

This Talk will be enhanced with many marvellous photographs, unique video footage and the sound of Whales singing!

The core work of the IWDG involves Scientific Research, Marine Conservation Zones and, sadly, assisting with managing animal welfare when live strandings occur.

President Michael D. Higgins became the IWDG sole Patron in 2012.

IWDG undertook an Ireland to Iceland – Humpback Whale Expedition in 2018 – sailing aboard Celtic Mist.



*Humpback Whale Fluke  
Waters around Loop Head*



*Humpback Whale Fluke ~ Loop Head*

**About the Three Speakers:**

**Dr Simon Berrow** is Chief Executive Officer of the IWDG and lecturer at the Atlantic Technological University in Galway. He founded the IWDG in December 1990 and started the Shannon Dolphin Project in 1993. Simon has also worked on whales in the Antarctic and off west Africa and caught Shark Fever (basking sharks) at an early age, which is incurable. He has published widely on marine mammals, seabirds and basking sharks.



*Fin Whale off Baltard Cliffs, North of Kilkee ~ September 2021*

**Mags Daly** is the **IWDG Shannon Dolphin Project Officer** responsible for managing the long-term Shannon Dolphin Photo-ID Catalogue. The catalogue contains over 80,000 images of bottlenose dolphins collected in the Shannon and adjacent waters of Brandon and Tralee Bays and off Loop Head. In her role of as the IWDG SDP Officer she has been expanded the monitoring to include Loop Head and Brandon Bay, as the Shannon dolphin range increasingly includes these important areas.

**Richard Collins** has a great interest in wildlife in west Clare. Having fished and sailed the waters around Loop Head for years, spent hours watching from headlands and contributing extensively to the work of the IWDG and the Irish Basking Shark Project. He is founder member of the West Clare Wildlife Club which is very active in the area.



*Dolphins  
off Bishop's Island  
Kilkee*





**Date:** Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 8pm

No. 6 of 9 Talks

**Speaker:** J.J. Hickie  
Kilkee Historical Society

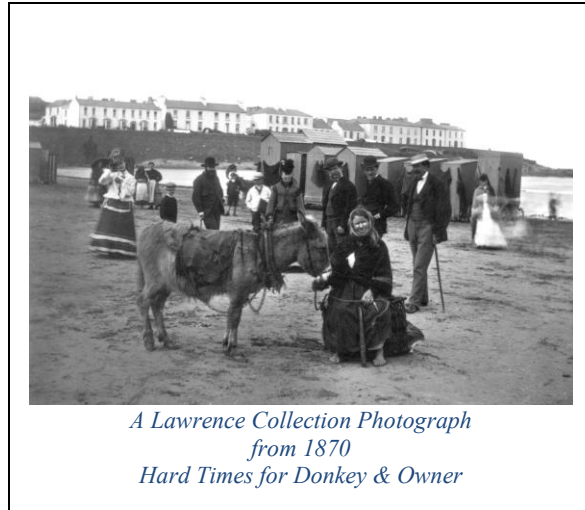
**Talk Title:** Pictorial Record of Kilkee since 1865 – Part Two

**Talk Description:**

A Treasure Trove of old photographs across not only decades, but two centuries; representing a lifetimes passion for all things Kilkee; has been assembled by well-known and greatly admired Kilkee man J.J. Hickie. So large is his collection; the great dilemma for J.J.

will not be what photographs to put in, but what ones to leave out!

Each photograph will be accompanied by J.J.'s insightful commentary, revealing many interesting historical facts, anecdotes and, perhaps, even a few surprising revelations.



**About the Speaker:**

An active member of Kilkee Historical Society & Kilkee Civic Trust; J. J. Hickie is a well-known Kilkee native, businessman, purveyor for many years of Hickie's Victualler Shop at O'Connell St. Kilkee; now in the safe hands of his son Shane.



*Photograph courtesy of - © www.westclare.net*

*Former RC Church at Kilkee  
Demolished after the present  
St. Senan's Church was opened in 1963*

Those who know him well say the accolade of "Local Historian" is more than justified.

J.J. Hickie has an encyclopaedic knowledge of Kilkee's life and times over recent centuries and his personal selection of photographs is certain to be memorable.





**Date:** Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 8pm  
**Heritage Week Event**

No. 7 of 9 Talks

**Speaker:** Neale Webb

**Talk Title:** Sir Ernest Shackleton and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration

**Talk Description:**

Desperate to conquer the frozen frontier, Ernest Shackleton (1874–1922) undertook four dangerous journeys to Antarctica, including his famous failure-turned-successful survival mission on the *Endurance*.

One hundred years after Shackleton's death, Neale Webb will provide a unique insight on the life and extraordinary times of his Explorer and Adventurer Relation Sir Ernest Shackleton.



*Sir Ernest Shackleton*

2014 to 2017 marked the Centenary Years of the *Endurance* Expedition. The Centenary of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration has given rise to much research, analysis and reflection about this human endeavour, survival and achievements in the harshest of conditions. Sir Ernest Shackleton was one of the heroes of that age.

Although there were some occasional claims for Kilkee, Co. Clare - Shackleton was actually born in Kilkea, Co Kildare, in 1874. Neale Webb's Grandfather was a cousin of the



great Irish Explorer and Neale himself has been to the Antarctic on three occasions. He will discuss Shackleton's background, career and legacy and his interaction with Scott, Amundsen and other characters of the age.

The *Endurance*, the lost vessel of Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, was crushed by sea-ice and sank on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1915, forcing Shackleton and his men to make an astonishing escape on foot and in small boats.

*Endurance – Final Sinking 1915*



The wreck of Endurance was found on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022, nearly 107 years after she sank, at the bottom of the Weddell Sea,

Endurance rests at a depth of 3,008m.

*Endurance as found in March 2022*

Video of the remains show Endurance to be in remarkable condition.



*Shackleton sets out with others to find relief for the stranded crew, in the 'James Caird'.*



*Tom Crean ~ Annascaul, Co. Kerry  
Irish Seaman & Antarctic Explorer*

### **About the Speaker:**

Neale Webb lives in Dublin and has a family connection to Shackleton!



*Neale Webb visiting  
Shackleton's Hut at Cape Royds*

He first travelled to the Antarctic in 2005 and the intervening years have been marked by several invitations from Local History Societies and Event Groups for Neale Webb to tell the story of his travels in Polar Regions. Webb says his most spectacular trip was in 2006 when he travelled on a Russian Icebreaker all the way to the Ross Ice Shelf - and McMurdo Sound - where the Huts of the Heroic Age are situated. Webb was even more fortunate to be afforded the opportunity to fly by helicopter to Shackleton's Hut at Cape Royds, then, Scott's Hut at Cape Evans, and the Discovery Hut beside the US McMurdo Base.

Neals Webb says he is particularly chuffed that the BBC are, in more recent times, describing Shackleton as 'Anglo-Irish' rather than the traditional 'British'.

In January 2012, Neale Webb delivered his Talk to the *Kildare Street and University Club*. A Review said: *“It was a virtuoso performance by Neale and enjoyed by the huge attendance. He reclaimed Shackleton as a genuine Irish hero”*.



*Neale Webb ~ Outside Shackleton's Hut*



*Neale Webb ~ Inside Shackleton's Hut*

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A Much-Loved Swimming Place - The Pollock Holes  
on the Duggerna Reef, at West End, Kilkee  
with George's Head as the backdrop.



*Photograph courtesy of - © www.westclare.net*

# Kilkee Civic Trust - Music - 2022

**Date:** Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 8pm

**Heritage Week Event**

**Compère for the evening:** Martin Bourke



**Music Event Title:** The Jussi Björling Story

**Venue:** Cultúrlann Sweeney, O'Connell St., Kilkee V15 P960

## Music Event Description:

Each year in the weeks leading up to Christmas, on RTE Radio 1, Ronan Collins plays the Christmas carol, "O Holy Night" sung by various singers from pop to classical. On the classical side the most popular rendition is by Jussi Björling even though it is not sung in English or the language of its composer Adolphe Adam, French, but in Jussi Björling's own tongue Swedish. It is a powerful ringing rendition but never forced.



Jussi Björling was a remarkable musical artist for a number of reasons. He was born in 1911 but was dead before his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and yet he had a recording career of over 40 years. He inherited a musical gene from both his parents and which he shared with his 3 brothers and passed on to his children.



Tragically, Björling lost his mother when he was 8 and 6 years later, he and his brothers were orphans following the sudden death of their father.

He battled with heart disease and the demon drink leaving a number of skeletons in the cupboard some no doubt true, some with a grain of truth and some downright false.

Generally, he led a simple life unaffected by fame or wealth. He spent most of his holiday time with his family on the small island of Siarö in the Stockholm archipelago.

*The Jussi Björling statue,  
on the square named after him in  
Borlänge, Dalarna, Sverige.*

He possessed a glorious Italianate tenor voice yet he was born of true Swedish stock. Universally admired for the high quality of his live and recorded legacy his voice changed little even after it 'broke' from boy alto to tenor. He sang professionally with his father, his brothers, his wife and all the internationally renowned singers of the day in all the great opera houses and concert halls around the world including Ireland. Superbly schooled it had a tremendous range over four octaves, a beautiful lyrical tone which he could spin out with breath taking control. He was regarded as the finest tenor of his day an honour he disliked but had to accept when compared with his contemporaries such as Gigli and di Stefano, by the renowned pianist Ivor Newton. He was principally an operatic tenor with a repertoire of the lead role in 32 Italian and French operas which he could perform at a moment's notice.



His career was principally played out in his native Sweden and America. He did an afternoon recital in Dublin while his wife went shopping for quality Irish tweed, so the papers said!

He made records in the pre-electric (1924) era right up to the stereo age in 1960. It is a voice to cherish.



*Martin Bourke*

Martin Bourke's Profile about Jussi Björling was originally planned for the KCT Summer 2020 Programme to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his untimely death, aged forty-nine. However, Covid-19 intervened, and the 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of his death is on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

This audio-visual presentation will include a generous selection of photographs and recordings.

It will take place on:

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022, at 8.00 p.m. at Cultúrlann Sweeney**

The series of Life Stories / Profiles, over recent years, have all been devised, researched, scripted and presented by Martin Bourke, in aid of Kilkee Civic Trust projects. Martin has had a lifelong interest in the career and vocal art of classical and light classical singers, and collecting recordings and biographies of these artists.

This is the Eighth Profile presented by Martin for the benefit of Kilkee Civic Trust.

**Date:** Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 8pm

No. 8 of 9 Talks

**Speaker:** Yvonne McGann

**Talk Title:**

If the walls could talk, what tales would they tell?  
The story of Clár Ellagh.

**Talk Description:**

The land at Seapoint was acquired by Edward Cruise in the late 1840's / early 1850's and he built 2 semi-detached lodges on the site. In the early 1860's he sold one of the lodges and rented out the 2nd one which was held in trust for his daughter.

In 1920 Kitt Desmond acquired one of the lodges and a few years later she purchased the 2nd lodge and ran a very successful hotel business until 1943 when she put the hotel up for sale.



*Yvonne McGann*



The Desmond Hotel was purchased by a group of Methodists, who hailed from Cloughjordan and its environs.

Clár Ellagh was the brainchild of Rev. Samuel Crawford, who wanted to offer reasonably priced holidays in a

Christian environment with a view to young people expanding their social circle and making new friends. It was under the auspices of The Christian Endeavour Movement. With the addition of a 2nd floor in the 1960's - it could cater for 100 guests at any one time.



*Clár Ellagh*

It closed its doors for the last time in 2006.

In 2007 it was purchased by the late Martin Cullinan and in 2014 it changed hands once again and was later converted into three private houses.



**About the Speaker:**



Born and reared in Tipperary Town, Yvonne got her love of local history from her father. Her lifelong ambition was to be a secondary school teacher and after attending U.C.C. she graduated with a degree in History, Spanish and English.

Yvonne's 1st teaching job was in Kilrush, then Salesians in Limerick and finally she spent 28 very happy years teaching in Salesian College, Pallaskenry.

Having retired in 2019 - Yvonne now resides permanently in Kilkee and is a member of both Kilkee Historical Society and Kilrush & District Historical Society.

Yvonne is also our newest Kilkee Civic Trust member.



*West End, Kilkee - © Ruth Wood, Artist*



**Date:** Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 at 8pm

No. 9 of 9 Talks

**Speaker:** Michael Nolan

**Talk Title:** The Kilkee Skripal?

**Talk Description:**

Seán Aloysious Bourke (1934–1982) was born in Limerick.

A petty criminal, who became internationally famous when he sprung George Blake, a fellow inmate, from the Wormwood Scrubs prison in 1966. Blake was a notorious spy for the Soviet Union.

Our speaker – Michael Nolan – has an intriguing account to tell of Bourke’s life and times, particularly, the Kilkee aspect of the Seán Bourke story.



*Seán Bourke*



*George Blake ~ Double Agent*

After escaping Wormwood Scrubs; Bourke & Blake made their way to East Germany. Once in Soviet territory it was comparatively easy to get to Moscow, where both Bourke and Blake were treated Royally - given accommodation and a pension. However; Bourke did not like the Soviet Union with its bureaucratic institutions and society - so after a couple of years he returned to Ireland.

Once back in Ireland; Seán Bourke faced an extradition charge from the United Kingdom authorities - but the Irish Supreme Court rejected the application on the grounds that the Jailbreak was a Political Offence; and therefore, exempted under Extradition Law.

During this time, Bourke wrote an account of the Jailbreak – *The Springing of George Blake* - which was a best seller. The proceeds from the book were soon spent as alcohol had taken over a lot of his life. He ended up penniless.

In 1981 - Seán Bourke moved to Kilkee and lived in a caravan in Percy French Estate.

To discover all the intriguing parts of this Spy Story; simply, you will have to attend Michael Nolan’s Talk!

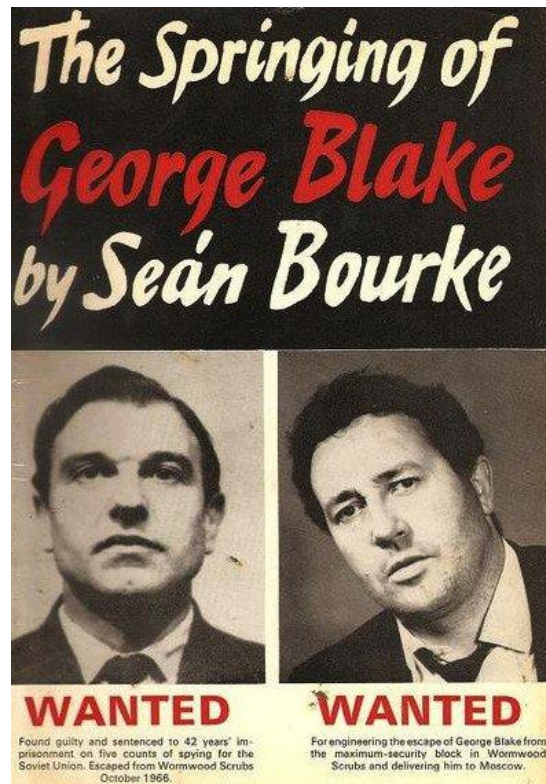
**About the Speaker:**

Michael Nolan is a Kilkee Native and a well-known West Clare Solicitor.

It is always rewarding to be in Michael's company as he effortlessly tells the story & history of so much about West Clare and, particularly, Kilkee, in an accessible and easy manner.

His knowledge and love of home place is considerable. Michael is passionate about the history & heritage of the Loop Head Peninsula area.

A member of several local organisations; Michael Nolan is a Member of Kilkee Civic Trust for many years and has delivered Talks several times over the years.



Two recent examples are as follows:

*Seán Bourke's Bestselling Book*

- In 2014 – Michael spoke on *“Kilkee and the Great War”*
- In 2016 – Michael spoke on *“Sinn Féin Courts in West Clare 1918 – 1925”*



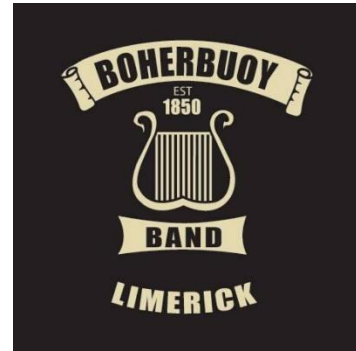
*Boat House at End, Kilkee - © Ruth Wood, Artist*

# Kilkee Civic Trust - Music - 2022

**Date:** On Two Weekends during July & August 2022  
Exact Dates - To Be Confirmed - later

## Boherbuoy Brass & Reed Band

Kilkee Bay Swim 2022 & Kilkee Civic Trust  
have joined forces to invite  
*Boherbuoy Brass & Reed Band*  
to enhance the annual Bay Swim.



## Event Details:

No. 1 Visit - Saturday or Sunday during July 2022 – Date - To Be Confirmed.

No. 2 Visit – Saturday or Sunday during August - Date – To Be Confirmed / Bay Swim Day

- Performances at Kilkee Bandstand to coincide with the timing of the Small Bay & Big Bay Swims.
- Exact Band performance day & times will be posted nearer the event as they are tide and weather dependant.



*Boherbuoy Brass & Reed Band at Kilkee Bandstand ~ Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017*

# Kilkee Civic Trust - Music - 2022

**Date:** On a Sunday in July or August 2022 Exact Date - To Be Confirmed - later

## Ennis Brass Band

Kilkee Chamber of Commerce & Kilkee Civic Trust  
have joined forces to invite  
*"Ennis Brass Band"*  
to perform at Kilkee.



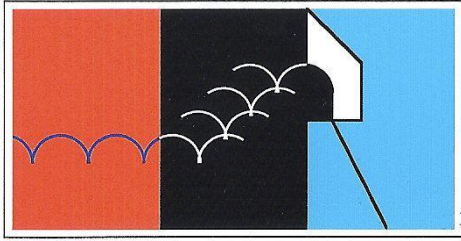
## Event Details:

- Venue: Kilkee Church & Bandstand
- The Band will participate by joining the Church Choir and playing during the 11am Sunday Mass at St. Senan's Church.
- Then; from Kilkee Church, (after 11am Mass), the Band will Play & March, via O'Curry St. to the Bandstand where the music will continue.
- As always; Kilkee Chamber of Commerce & Kilkee Civic Trust wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of our Parish Priest Fr. Gerry Kenny, and the Church Choir, with this annual event.



*Ennis Brass Band  
Marching down O'Curry St., Kilkee  
and performing at Kilkee Bandstand*





*Kilkee Civic Trust*

## Examples of Heritage Projects

*First World War Memorial in the  
Grounds of  
St. Senan's Church, Kilkee*



*Wall Plaque on the former holiday home of  
Richard Harris, at West End, Kilkee*



*Opposite Sykes House - Monument to the wreck of the  
**Edmond** ~ floundered 19<sup>th</sup> November 1850  
Photograph ~ Robert Brown  
Kilkee and West Clare Heritage and History Group*