

Kilkee Civic Trust

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Festival September 2023

Charlotte Brontë's Kilkee Honeymoon

Friday, 15th September & Saturday, 16th September

Cultúrlann Sweeney, O'Connell Street, Kilkee V15 P960



Charlotte Brontë



*Commemorative Plaque
on the former Westend Hotel, Kilkee
Kilkee Honeymoon accommodation ~ July 1854*



Arthur Bell Nicholls

First Kilkee Civic Trust Festival

Honouring

Charlotte Brontë's Kilkee Honeymoon

Programme of events:

- Our Festival MC is Yvonne McGann
- Early arrival is advised as the events are not ticketed and admission is on a first come, first served basis



Yvonne McGann

Friday, 15th September

- 7:30 pm Official Opening Dr Ivana Bacik TD
- 8:00 pm Talk by Dr Michael O'Dowd
- Charlotte Brontë - An Irish Odyssey
 - Q & A
- Later: Join us for light refreshments in the foyer at Cultúrlann Sweeney

Saturday, 16th September

- 11:00 am Heritage Walk led by John Williams
- Walking in the footsteps of Charlotte & Arthur
- 2:30 pm Talk by James Scully
- Arthur Bell Nicholls, (c.1819 - 1906)
Husband of Charlotte Brontë and Citizen of Banagher.
 - Q & A
- 3:45 pm Musical presentation by *The Gúnas*
- Rhoda Clery - Musical Director
 - Anne Cullen - Accompanist
- 4:15 pm Join us for light refreshments in the foyer at Cultúrlann Sweeney
- 4:45 pm Talk by Joanne Wilcock
- Through the Eyes of a New Bride on Her Honeymoon
Charlotte B. Nicholls (née Brontë)
 - Q & A
- 6:00 pm Official Closing

*Welcome to the First Festival
in September 2023
honouring
Charlotte Brontë's Kilkee Honeymoon*

Introduction by Shay Hynes, Chairman of the Brontë Festival Committee.

On behalf of all members of Kilkee Civic Trust, I am delighted to warmly welcome you to the inaugural *Charlotte Brontë's Kilkee Honeymoon Festival* to be held on Friday, 15th and Saturday, 16th of September 2023.

We are very grateful to Dr Ivana Bacik TD who has kindly agreed to formally open the festival on 15th of September.

We are also very fortunate to have sourced the following three specialist speakers who will make presentations during the festival, Dr Michael O'Dowd, Mr. James Scully & Ms. Joanne Wilcock. Further details on the speakers and their talks can be found on the following pages.



*Shay Hynes
Chairman – Brontë Festival*

The talks will be complemented by a heritage walk titled: *Walking in the footsteps of Charlotte & Arthur*. It will be led by renowned local historian John Williams. We will also be treated to a Brontë themed musical presentation by Killaloe based singers *The Gúnas*.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their input into making this festival happen. We look forward to seeing you all for this exciting inaugural festival in Kilkee.

Festival Committee

Shay Hynes
Daithí O'Connell

Yvonne McGann
Jenny Bassett

Michael F. Nolan
Joseph McCloskey

John Williams



All of our events are recorded by our local Community Radio Station *Raidió Corca Baiscinn* for subsequent local broadcast on 92.5 & 94.8 FM, online streaming & later as podcasts available on www.rcb.ie

Festival September 2023
Charlotte Brontë's Kilkee Honeymoon
Official Opening: Dr Ivana Bacik TD



We welcome Dr Ivana Bacik TD to officially open our inaugural Brontë Festival in Kilkee.

Dr Ivana Bacik was first elected to serve in Seanad Éireann in 2007. Later; in July 2021, following a bye-election, Ivana was elected to Dáil Éireann to serve as TD for Dublin Bay South. Since March 2022; she has been serving as leader of the Labour Party.

Our choice of Ivana is informed by her maternal family connection with Kilkee, Co. Clare.

Of crucial interest to West Clare and the Loop Head Peninsula is the fact that her mother Rina is a Kilkee native and one of the Murphy Family from Kilkee, Co. Clare.

Ivana grew up in the Rathgar / Terenure area where her mother Rina still lives and she now lives down the road in Portobello with her family.

KCT Events 2023 will be hosted at Cultúrlann Sweeney, O'Connell Street, Kilkee V15 P960

**Free of Charge Entry to all KCT Talks, our annual Arts in Focus evening
and our Brontë Festival in September.**

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 KCT Talks / events
to assist us in defraying necessary expenses.

Covid-19: All Health & Government Guidelines will be followed at Cultúrlann Sweeney.



*Modern-day Currach Racing at Kilkee - © William Glynn, Photographer
The Brontë Honeymoon Hotel is in the background above The Alley Walls.*



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
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**National
Heritage Week**
A Heritage Council programme

Date: Friday, 15th September 2023 at 8 pm

No. 1 of 3 Talks

Speaker: Dr Michael O'Dowd

Talk Title:

Charlotte Brontë - An Irish Odyssey

Talk Description:

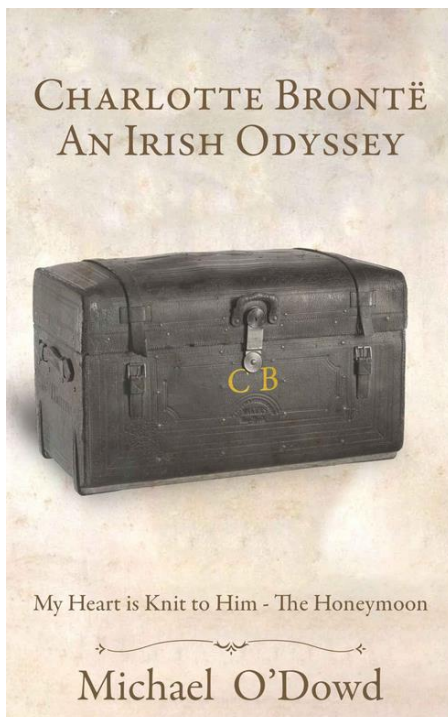
This illustrated presentation relates the story of Charlotte Brontë and the Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls who married in her home town of Haworth, Yorkshire, in June 1854, and is a celebration of their wedding trip and Irish Odyssey.



The newlyweds' four-week honeymoon was spent in Ireland after a stop-over in Wales. Their romantic interlude in Kilkee was a highlight of their trip.

This talk is based on the non-fiction book by Dr Michael O'Dowd *Charlotte Brontë. An Irish Odyssey* (2021).

About the Speaker:



Charlotte Brontë. An Irish Odyssey by Dr Michael O'Dowd was published in 2021.

Academic medical books by the author are *James Marion Sims: The Facts*, *The History of Medications for Women*, and *The History of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* which was co-authored with Dr Elliot Philipp, London.

The fictional *The Scarlet Ribbon Series* was co-authored with his daughter Katy as Derry O'Dowd and follows the historically based but imagined life of a surgeon man-midwife in the eighteenth century. *The Scarlet Ribbon* (first book in the series), *The Map of Tenderness*, *The Bella Donna*, *The Ghost Gene*, and *Mother Quinn's Recipes* complete the historical series.

Continued overleaf.

Doctor Michael O'Dowd graduated from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

He is a consultant specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and holds a research Doctorate in Medicine, a PhD in History, and other post-graduate qualifications in Anaesthesia and Paediatrics.

Formerly National Chair of The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Dublin, he is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Dublin, Fellow Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists London, Fellow Royal Society of Medicine London, and Honorary Fellow Indian College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.



The Brontë & Nicholls Kilkee Honeymoon Accommodation, in July 1854, at the former Westend Hotel, Kilkee, can be seen on the left, just above the Sea Wall, of this Lawrence Collection picture.

*The Lawrence Collection is a collection of photos from 19th Century Ireland.
The photos range between the years of 1870 – 1905.*

Date: Saturday, 16th September 2023 at 11:00 am

Heritage Walk: Walking in the footsteps of Charlotte & Arthur

Historian: John Williams

Heritage Walk Details:

Assemble at Cultúrlann Sweeney, O'Connell Street, Kilkee at 10:50 am.



The Walk will depart at 11:00 am.

As required; Kilkee Road Train will be available.



*John Williams,
Chairman, Kilkee Civic Trust*

Event Description:

This Heritage Walk led by one of our local historians, John Williams, will bring you back in time to the Kilkee of 1854 and tell you the story of the streetscape from that time.



Whilst looking seawards is very much as Charlotte & Arthur would have experienced it, John will tell you about the Sea Wall and buildings that were already there in 1854.

*A Lawrence Collection photo
Showing the striking difference between the
attire of the local woman
and the well-to-do visitors.
The photos range between the years of
1870 – 1905.*

At that time. Kilkee was frequented by many visitors. On this walk you will hear about their journey to Kilkee, long before the days of the motor car.

*A Lawrence Collection photo
The Beach & East End towards George's Head; much as it
would have looked at the time of the honeymoon in 1854.*



Date: Saturday, 16th September 2023 at 2:30 pm

No. 2 of 3 Talks

Speaker: James Scully

Talk Title:

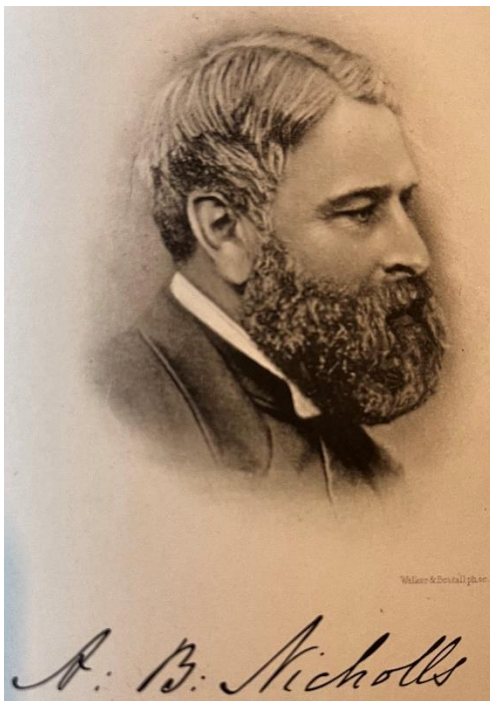
Arthur Bell Nicholls, (c.1819 - 1906),
Husband of Charlotte Brontë
and Citizen of Banagher.



*James and Eoin Scully
in The Martello Tower pop-up bookshop during
this year's 10th That Beats Banagher Festival.*

Talk Description:

The illustrated talk will trace the early years and education of Arthur Bell Nicholls in Banagher, his years in Trinity College Dublin prior to his ordination and appointment as curate to Reverend Patrick Brontë in 1845.



The presentation will then relate his sixteen years in Haworth culminating with his sudden return to Banagher in 1861 where he lived for forty-five years with his aunt, Harriette, and his second wife, also his step first cousin, Mary Anna. During these decades he lived as a small landlord-cum-farmer and involved himself as a concerned citizen in local events.

In conclusion the speaker will make a brief allusion to another of Banagher's major literary associations, Anthony Trollope, who was based there between 1841 and 1844.

Arthur Bell Nicholls of Banagher, (c.1819-1906)

About the Speaker:

James Scully, born 1952, is native of Tullamore, County Offaly and has resided at Meelick-on-the-Shannon, County Galway, a few miles downstream from Banagher, County Offaly, for the last thirty-six years.

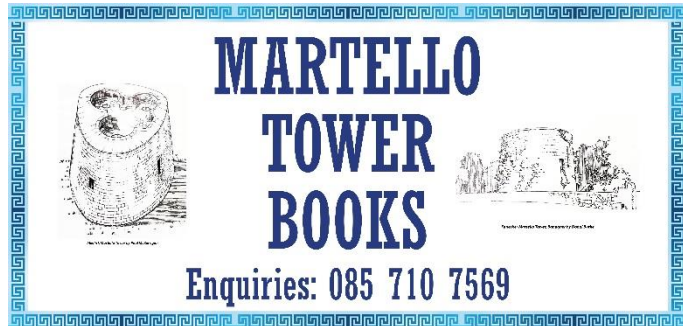
Continued overleaf.

A lifelong member of Offaly History Society he has written and spoken on several topics including the following: The Grand Canal in Offaly, 1715 -2015; Napoleonic Fortifications on the Mid-Shannon, especially the only two inland Martello Towers in Ireland at Meelick and Banagher; Banagher's Literary Associations: Sir Mathew De Renzy (1577-1634), Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) & Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855).

He is a retired primary school teacher having taught in Banagher from 1977 to 2012 and currently represents Offaly History Society on the Offaly Heritage Forum.

Martello Tower pop-up bookshop:

James Scully has run a pop-up bookshop (500 to 1,000 volumes) for the last 9/10 years and has a small exhibition on the Banagher Brontë connection which acts as a backdrop to the bookshop ... both of which he will bring to Kilkee for the inaugural Charlotte Brontë Honeymoon Festival.



Bishop's Island on the Coast Road, from Kilkee, towards Dunlickey Castle and Loop Head, much as it was in 1854 when Charlotte & Arthur were on their honeymoon. ~ © William Glynn, Photographer

Date: Saturday, 16th September 2023 at 3:45 pm

The Gúnas

Rhoda Clery - Musical Director & Anne Cullen - Accompanist



The Gúnas are an all-female choir based in Killaloe, Co Clare. This small initial gathering of seven voices began as an intimate acapella group. From those humble origins *The Gúnas* have flourished into a successful and motivated musical ensemble and have become widely recognised as an important contributor to the musical and cultural life of the Killaloe, Clare and Limerick Areas.

The Gúnas have had the pleasure of performing in many local events in Killaloe and Limerick regions, in addition to various fund-raising initiatives and Christmas events. The choir have recently performed for the Remembrance services for both Limerick Maternity Hospital and University Hospital Limerick. Recent performances include the Tuamgraney Arts festival and Killaloe Music Festival in June. *The Gúnas* were awarded 2nd place in the female choir competition at Navan Choral Festival and have collaborated with Limerick Choral Union for a performance of Karl Jenkins *Stella Natalis*. The choir has regularly performed at Limerick Sings Choral Festival and are looking forward to participating again next year. *The Gúnas* are busy preparing for their first overseas Choral festival, The Vienna Advent choral festival in December.

The Gúnas have come to share a deep connection between their repertoire and their audiences through the driving vision of musical director Rhoda Clery. During this inaugural Charlotte Brontë's Kilkee Honeymoon Festival, *The Gúnas* will perform a selection of various pieces from their extensive repertoire, to include *Days of Beauty*, a choral arrangement of Emily Brontë's poem.

At the heart of this choir is an abiding love for performance. *The Gúnas* love to perform and the ethos of the choir is to entertain and have fun whilst doing so.

Date: Saturday, 16th September 2023 at 4:45 pm

No. 3 of 3 Talks

Speaker: Joanne Wilcock

Talk Title:

Through the Eyes of a
New Bride on Her Honeymoon
Charlotte B. Nicholls (née Brontë)

Talk Description:

In 2022, accompanied by her Brontë travelling companion Alison, Joanne attempted to follow in the honeymoon footsteps of Charlotte Brontë and her husband Arthur Bell Nicholls after their Haworth wedding on 29th June 1854.



They travelled to North Wales and then crossed the Irish Sea to Dublin on to Banagher, Kilkee, Tarbert, Tralee, Killarney, and the Gap of Dunloe, Glengarriff, Bantry Bay, Cork and finally returned to Dublin and back to Haworth.

Joanne has written a blog about this journey.

It is available at <https://charlotteandarthurhoneymoon.blogspot.com/>

Joanne Wilcock has come to Kilkee to share her Brontë story.

About the Speaker:

Joanne Wilcock lives in a small village called Affetside on the Bolton/Bury boundary in Lancashire about half an hour from Manchester and only an hour away from Haworth in West Yorkshire.



Joanne is a Brontë fan and has travelled to just about every place the Brontës worked in, lived in or visited: from Edinburgh to London, Cambridge, Essex, Shropshire, Lancashire, North Wales, West Yorkshire, the East Riding of Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, the Lake District, York, Brussels, and Ireland.

*The Pollock Holes at West End, Kilkee.
Evidence of nature's magnificence and remaining as
Charlotte & Arthur would have experienced them.*

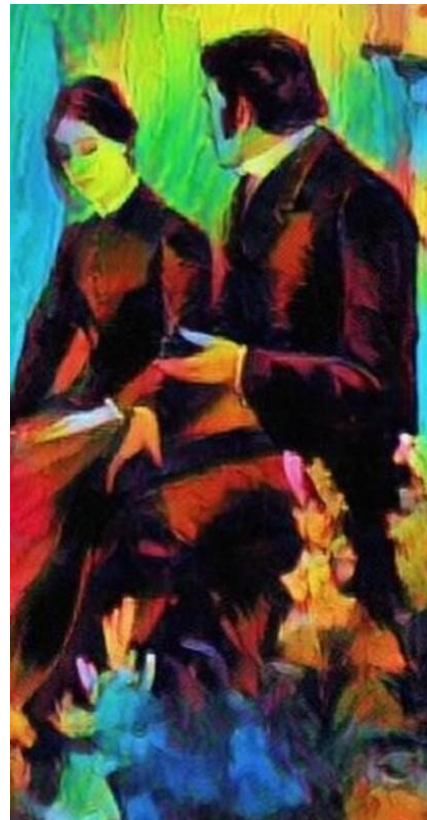
Date: Saturday, 16th September 2023 at 6:00 pm

Speaker: MC - Yvonne McGann Brontë Festival Closing Ceremony



Circa 1840: English novelist Charlotte Brontë (1816 - 1855), author of 'Jane Eyre' and sister to Anne and Emily Brontë

*“I ask you to pass through life at my side – to be my second self, and best earthly companion”
~ Charlotte Brontë, (Jane Eyre, 1847)*



*Former West End Hotel, Kilkee ~ in modern times.
Charlotte & Arthur's Honeymoon accommodation in 1854.*