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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 4

January 2012

Volume 17



## Feb 2012 - Leap Year

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June and November;  
February has twenty eight alone  
All the rest have thirty-one  
Except in Leap Year, that's the time  
When February's Days are twenty-nine

When the rules of courtship were stricter, women were only allowed to pop the question on one day every four years. That day was February 29th.



buy her 12 pairs of gloves. The intention is that the woman can wear the gloves to hide the embarrassment of not having an engagement ring.

It is believed this tradition was started in 5th century Ireland when St. Bridget complained to St. Patrick about women having to wait for so long for a man to propose. According to legend, St. Patrick said the yearning females could propose on this one day in February during the leap year.

In many European countries, especially in the upper classes of society, tradition dictates that any man who refuses a woman's proposal on February 29 has to



### Front Cover:

Self Portrait by Mary Duffy  
see Review next column

## Bray Comedy Club at Bray and Dalkey

Andrew Maxwell returns with his new show on Wednesday Feb 8 in Bray and Thursday Feb 9 in Dalkey. We haven't had him on in nearly two years, can you believe it!! Star of the Panel, Mock The



Week and Edinburgh Award nominee, Andrew has performed his unique blend of comedy all over the world at various festivals and clubs and runs his own festival on the snowy peaks of Mirabelle.

Andrew Stanley will be MCing and there will be a supporting act.

Tickets are available from each of the venues or you can get them online too:

The price includes a 25% discount on a future gig at the clubs (details to be announce at the gig).

Bray:

<http://www.eventelephant.com/andrewmaxwellbraycomedyclubfeb>

Dalkey:

<http://www.eventelephant.com/andrewmaxwelldalkeycomedyclubfeb>

## Review of January Arts Evening

**Katie Kelly** on vocals and **Aoife Hester** on guitar opened the proceedings with a lively set of cover songs. Katie has a rich, mellow voice that has an impressive range and expressive quality. It was clear that we were in the presence of a great voice that is



*Aoife Hester*

*Katie Kelly*

worth watching for the future. Her interpretation of "Man Eater" was delivered with quiet strength which was exactly what was needed. "Cold Water" by Damien Rice was a more moving turbulent song and Katie's modulation supported by Aoife's steady guitar arrangement was a moving experience. The well-known "Time after Time" by Eva Cassidy set a mellow tone that called for a rich guitar backing ably supplied by Aoife to offset the softness of the low singing voice. Katie handled the increased vigour of the refrain with impressive skill and smoothness. "The last piece, Belle" was played by Aoife in a very interesting Blues style in which she was able to display her ease with the guitar as a solo instrument. Katie and Aoife finished to well-deserved rapturous applause.

**Shane Harrison** took the floor with extracts from some of his short stories. He has a quirky, humorous style that makes clever use of imagery to reveal interesting traits in human nature. "The Apartment Officer who wants to be someone else" immediately draws the listener into an awareness of the person and their hopes for other achievements. Making clever Use of evocative words and phrases, Shane quickly builds a complex scenario that holds the attention of the reader or, in our case, the listener. The expression: "Opening into an empty bottle of an urban clearing" conveys the idea in a few words of the discovery of a confined space within buildings with litter all around what should have been a lung to freshness. Shane's current writing is available in the bookshops and well worth a read.



**Mary Duffy** artist followed with a visual display of her wide range of artwork. She recounted her stop-start beginnings as she sought to find her personal life expression. Settling, finally, on visual art she experiments with a wide variety of paint media using her left foot to hold brushes, daub paint and do all that a person's arms can do. Mary's work was admired by all who enjoyed her portrayal of



Mary Duffy

sea sky and the square mile around where she lived. Her work is complicated by the technology which is determined by whether she is standing or sitting. She likes painting in the winter rather than summer because it is drier and flatter with fewer shadows. Mary showed how she uses acrylic in big, dripping washes. Her canvasses are very large with aqua paint applied with large brushes. She pointed out that she always lets the work on site be the finished product. Mary paints very quickly

but the painting can take up to three years to dry. Interspersing comments on the various subjects of each painting with revelations of her many techniques and ideas Mary continued to enthral her audience. As a closing gesture, she brought along copies of her published 2012 Calendar and donated the proceeds of their sale to Bray Arts as a personal gift.

After the break, **Niwel Tsumbu**, guitarist and current musician in residence at the Mermaid Arts centre, took the floor and began with a contemplative piece of his own composition employing a rich use of apoyando on the guitar with a suggestion of Flamenco technique. A specialist in African rhythms Niwel created syncopated rhythms in rapid flowing lines with a mixture of playing styles. He added his voice to an underlying rhythmic base using rapid dialect words in an African song accompanied by



Niwel Tsumbu

percussive slaps to the sound board of the guitar. His second piece was a Love song in which he played a mixture of rapid melodic

notes on the guitar with a slower base percussion. His rich, softly ululating voice resonated to a simple swing base accompaniment. Although African in origin, this song was almost Latin American in sound. His next piece was a lively Calypso dance displaying expert use of the treble register set off against a complex rhythm base. He invited all to join in and share the rhythmic experience. His next choice



Nora Hickey Niwel Tsumbu

was a song about the great Congo river sung in his own African language. Niwel startled all by inviting **Nora Hickey**, Director of the Mermaid, to come and join him! Nora proved to be an adept singer in this African language and went on to improvise with Niwel in a stunning performance in a authentic African style. Niwel brought the evening to a magnificent close with brilliant technique and with his unique, friendly manner that won the hearts of all.

## from *The Crockett Almanacs*

### *Sunrise in His Pocket*

One January morning it was so all screwen cold that the forest trees were stiff and they couldn't shake, and the very daybreak froze fast as it was trying to dawn. The tinder box in my cabin would no more ketch fire than a sunk raft at the bottom of the sea. Well, seein' daylight war so far behind time I thought creation war in a fair way for freezen fast: so, thinks I, I must strike a little fire from my fingers, light my pipe, an' travel out a few leagues, and see about it. Then I brought my knuckles together like two thunderclouds, but the sparks froze up afore I could begin to collect 'em, so out I walked, whistlin' "Fire in the mountains!" as I went along in three double quick time. Well, arter I had walked about twenty miles up the Peak O'Day and Daybreak Hill I soon discovered what war the matter. The airth had actually friz fast on her axes, and couldn't turn round; the sun had got jammed between two cakes o' ice under the wheels, an' thar he had been shinin' an' workin' to get loose till he friz fast in his cold sweat. C-r-e-a-t-i-o-n! thought I, this ar the toughest sort of suspension, an' it mustn't be endured. Somethin' must be done, or human creation is done for. It war then so anteluvian an' premature cold that my upper and lower teeth an' tongue war all collapsed together as tight as a friz oyster; but I took a fresh twenty-pound bear off my back that I'd picked up on my road, and beat the animal agin the ice till the hot ile began to walk out on him at all sides. I then took an' held him over the airth's axes an' squeezed him till I'd thawed 'em loose, poured about a ton on't over the sun's face, give the airth's cog-wheel one kick backward till I got the sun loose—whistled "Push along, keep movin'!" an' in about fifteen seconds the airth gave a grunt, an' began movin'. The sun walked up beautiful, salutin' me with sigh a wind o' gratitude that it made me sneeze. I lit my pipe by the blaze o' his top-knot, shouldered my bear, an' walked home, introducun' people to the fresh daylight with a piece of sunrise in my pocket..

*Davey Crockett 1786-1836*

### *Mike Fink Trying to Scare Mrs. Crockett*

You've all on you, heered of Mike Fink, the celebrated, an self-created, an never to be mated, Mississippi roarer, snag-lifter, an flatboat skuller. Well, I knowed the critter all round, an upside down; he war purty fair amongst squaws, and cat-fish, but when it come to walkin into wild cats, bars, or alligators, he couldn't hold a taller candle to my young son, Hardstone Crockett. I'll never forget the time he tried to scare my wife Mrs. Davy Crockett. You see, the critter had tried all sorts of ways to scare her, but he had no more effect on her than droppen feathers on a barn floor; so he at last bet me a dozen wild cats that he would appear to her, an scare her teeth loose, an her toe nails out of joint; so the varmint one night arter a big freshet took an crept into an old alligator's skin, an met Mrs. Crockett jist as she was taken an evening's walk. He spread open the mouth of the critter, an made sich a holler howl that he nearly scared himself out of the skin, but Mrs. Crockett didn't care any more for that, nor the alligator skin than she would for a snuff of lightnin, but when Mike got a leetle too close, and put

*Contd on page 5 —>*

## Inscribed

by James O'Sullivan

From the ground it crept  
upon that creaking plain –  
the progeny of life's toils  
inscribed upon that which  
would bear it – forever.  
The mother, quite green,  
knew her offspring –  
purple, yellow and black –  
but she knew not where  
it was she thread, though  
that creaking plain  
knew her every step.

## The Rose

by James O'Sullivan

It was well fed; never wanted  
for heat nor water nor light.  
Long it stood in the garden, haunted  
by parasites who crept, day and night.  
Along its stem, slugs slithered  
hungry to feed upon all her beauty –  
to suck upon her as they pleased.  
To them, this was their duty;  
though others sought to clear her leaves,  
the rose, once red, has withered.

## Human, Nothing More

by James O'Sullivan

No word should exist; they are not cattle  
to be branded by more civilised keepers  
whose cities are base, their world addled.  
They are human, nothing more.

Ostracised by the selective minds of preachers  
whose divinity rings throughout stolen chapels,  
enjoying the full pardon of timorous leaders,

they wait for hands not so idle, and facile  
voices stemmed from more articulate speakers.  
They have waited, but words remain babble.  
They are human, nothing more.

### Author Biography:

James O'Sullivan is a native of Cork city. His first collection of poetry, entitled *Kneeling on the Redwood Floor*, was published by Belfast-based Lapwing Publications in August 2011. Outside of his day-to-day work as postgraduate researcher, James attempts to write poetry and short fiction, and is continually striving to get better at both crafts. He also hopes to improve in his ability to write about himself in the third person.

James is a graduate of both University College Cork and Cork Institute of Technology. His work has appeared in numerous periodicals and anthologies, including *Revival Literary Journal*, *Bray Arts Journal*, *Wordlegs*, *Holly Bough*, *Motley Magazine* and *The Southern Star*. He has given a number of public recitals, including at the Irish Writers' Centre. He is the founder and Editor of *The Weary Blues*, an electronic journal of literature and visual

art. Further information on James' work can be obtained from [josullivan.org](http://josullivan.org).

The three poems are from his collection *Kneeling on the Redwood Floor*.



## Epitaph

by David Butler

These are not days, they are shadows  
flitting over too familiar ground,  
dry and rubble-strewn  
where our choices are buried.

These are not days, these shades,  
tremulous, mere changes of light.  
Quiet as thieves, as witnesses,  
they slip past in silent legion.

Count them up and they come to years,  
but years empty of substance.  
They are the dry husks of our lives,  
the whispers inside the hourglass.

Days are not the coinage of will,  
as once we imagined.  
One day they rise like locusts,  
to devour us.

This poem is from David's collection *Via Crucis* published by DOGHOUSE.

"Here is a voice and poetic strength to be heartily welcomed ..." John F. Deane

—> *Contd from page 3*

out his paws with the idea of an embrace, then I tell you what, her indignation rose a little bit higher than a Mississippi flood, an she throwed a flash of eye- lightnen upon him that made it clear daylight for half an hour, but Mike thinkin of the bet an his fame for courage, still wagged his tail an walked out, when Mrs. Crockett out with a little teeth pick, and with a single swing of it sent the hull head and neck flyin fifty feet off, the blade jist shavin the top of Mike's head, and then seeing what it war, she trowed down her teeth pick, rolled up her sleeves, an battered poor Fink that he fainted away in his alligator skin, an he war so all scaren mad, when he comes too, that he swore he had been chawed up, and swallered by an alligator.

### *Sal Fink, the Mississippi Screamer How She Cooked Injuns*

I dar say you've all of you, if not more, frequently heerd this great she human crittur boasted of, an' pointed out as "*one o' the gals*"—but I tell you what, stranger, you have never really set your eyes on "*one of the gals*," till you have seen Sal Fink, the Mississippi screamer, whose miniature pictur I here give, about as nat'ral as life, but not half as handsome—an' if thar ever was a gal that desarved to be christened "*oat o' the gals*," then this gal was that gal—and no mistake.

She fought a duel once with a thunderbolt, an' came off without a singe, while at the fust fire she split the thunderbolt all to flinders, an' gave the pieces to Uncle Sam's artillerymen, to touch off their canon with. When a gal about six years old, she used to play see-saw on the Mississippi snags, and arter she war done she would snap 'em off, an' so cleared a large district of the river. She used to ride down the river on an alligator's back, standen upright, an' dancing *Yankee Doodle*, and could leave all the steamers behind. But the greatest feat she ever did, positively outdid anything that ever was did.

One day when she war out in the forest, making a collection o' wild cat skins for her family's winter beddin, she war captered in the most all-sneaken manner by about fifty Injuns, an' carried by 'em to Roast Flesh Hollow, whar the blood drinkin wild varmits detarmined to skin her alive, sprinkle a leetle salt over her, an' devour her before her own eyes; so they took an' tied her to a tree, to keep till mornin' should bring the rest o' thar ring-nosed sarpints to enjoy the fun. Arter that, they lit a large fire in the Holler, turned the bottom o' thar feet towards the blaze, Injun fashion, and went to sleep to dream o' thar mornin's feast; well, after the critturs got into a somniferous snore, Sal got into an all-lightnin' of a temper, and burst all the ropes about her like an apron-string! She then found a pile o' ropes, too, and tied all the Injun's heels together all round the fire,—then fixin a cord to the shins of every two couple, she, with a sudden jerk, that made the intire woods tremble, pulled the intire lot o' sleepin' red-skins into that great fire, fast together, an' then sloped like a panther out of her pen, in the midst' o' the tallest yellin, howlin, scramblin and singin', that were ever heerd on, since the great burnin' o' Buffalo prairie.

*Most Americans know Davy Crockett as a 19th-century folk hero, the heroic soldier and rugged frontiersmen with a coonskin cap, thanks mostly to television and movie portrayals. The real Davy Crockett preferred to be called David, dressed elegantly and was a passionate defender of Indian rights.*

## Preview of Bray Arts Evening

Mon Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 8:00pm Martello Adm. €5 / €4 conc.

### Art

**Frances Brosnan**, staff artist in Signal Arts Centre, was awarded the Mill Cove Award for ceramics in 2010. Using a combination of decals, wire and other materials, her 3D constructions are inspired by the shanty dwellings she saw first hand during her travels in Asia. Her work is an aesthetic reflection on home and space within the most poverty stricken societies. Frances has lived in both the UK and Australia and is now resident in Bray where she has her own studio.



*Frances Brosnan at work in her studio*

### Theatre

**Ciaran Taylor** is the new Theatre Artist in Residence at Mermaid Arts Centre for 2011/12. Ciaran is in the process of planning the year which will include a range of audience development activities for theatre, as well as development of his own artistic projects leading to some work-in-progress presentations.

Ciaran has a broad range of theatre interests and studied



*Ciaran Taylor*

directing at University before studying performance at Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Since 2002 I have been developing his own company, called Carpet Theatre, devising theatre in movement-based styles. Ciaran will explain his plans for the Mermaid Residency during which he hopes to engage with a range of different groups within the community. You can contact Ciaran at:

(01) 874 8977  
(086) 367 9342  
[www.carpettheatre.com](http://www.carpettheatre.com)

## Poetry

James O'Sullivan is a (novice) author of poetry and short fiction. He is also a journalist, researcher, science fiction aficionado and devout Pastafarian. James is a proud native of Cork City, Ireland, where he studied English literature at University College Cork. His first collection of poetry, entitled *Kneeling on the Redwood Floor*, was published by Belfast-based Lapwing Publications in 2011. For more information and a sample of James's poetry see pg. 4.



James O'Sullivan

## Music

In Padraic Pearse's play 'The Singer', the young girl Sighle speaks to Maire, the mother of MacDara.

"MacDara stooped down and lifted me on to his knee — I was only a wee shy child. He stroked my hair. Then he began singing a little song to me, a little song that had sad words in it, but that had joy in the heart of it, and in the beat of it; and the words and the music grew very caressing and soothing like, ... like my mother's hand when it was on my cheek, or my mother's kiss on my mouth when I'd be half asleep."



MacDara

These words of Sighle could well describe the singer and the songs of **MacDara O'Conaola**.

MacDara has sung at Bray Arts before and proved a real hit with the audience with his captivating music and charming personality.

Writing in the *Calgary Herald*, Alberta, Andy Donnelley said of MacDara's CD 'The Love Token',

"this is truly one of the loveliest albums that I have heard in years and brings a breath of fresh air to Celtic music. Beautiful songs, simply sung make this a stand out CD, and, from toe tappers to lullabies that pull at the old heartstrings, MacDara has it all."

## Yanny Petters



Saturday workshops at Festina Lente, Old Connaught Ave. Bray. Every 1st Saturday of the month up to June, 11am to 4pm. Drawing and painting from nature.

Bring your own brushes and a pack lunch. Refreshments available.

€60 per session. Booking and further information: Phone 01 2819282 Text 087 3111620

Email: [yannypetters@gmail.com](mailto:yannypetters@gmail.com)  
[www.yannypetters.net](http://www.yannypetters.net)

## Signal Arts Centre

### Passing Through

Event Exhibition by **Hilary Williams**

From Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012

'Passing through' is the work of Artist Hilary Williams who will be doing a performance artist piece which will culminate in a solo exhibition in the Signal Arts Centre Bray. The concept behind the show is the idea of 'Passing through life.'



This show will be the results of site specific work on The Cliff Walk from Bray to Greystones. The walk was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> October, Sunday 2011. This was documented by the artist and will be seen in the exhibition space.



Her work is autobiographical with a Beckett like "every woman" inclusion. *Passing Through* will be an exhibition around the continuous movements of body, image and memory as we all pass through life. As a performance artist Hilary uses her body as a primary source material for the investigating qualities and dimensions of commitment.

Opening Reception: Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 3 – 5pm

### Bray Active Retirement Association Exhibition

From Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb to 26<sup>th</sup> Feb.

One of the most committed groups established in the Bray is the Bray Active Retired Association (BARA). Operating for several years now under the tutelage of Signal Society, the group has explored new ways of seeing the world around us through the media of painting and drawing.

Their exhibition is always well worth seeing because of the variety and scope of their work.

## Bray Arts Gala Variety Show Review

### Sunday December 18, 2011

Bray arts closed the year with its long-awaited Gala Variety Show in the Mermaid arts theatre on the last week before Christmas. Despite the heavy competition for activities in Bray on a day which carried so many major Choral events, an enthusiastic audience of some 74 persons arrived to cheer, laugh with and welcome a wonderful series of highly professional performances.



#### **Racker Donnelly**

The Irish Folk Poet, as Master of Ceremonies kept everyone going with His comic verses and reminiscences about the early days of bray arts as he introduced the chairman of bray arts who formally welcomed everyone to the evening's entertainment. Racker did a marvelous job of keeping up the momentum and linking the five acts throughout the event.

#### **Wyvern Lingo**

These three young women from Bray and Greystones set a lively tone as they sang in two and three -part harmony and played the Cajon, guitar and keyboard through five of their own compositions. They had technical melodies and a catchy upbeat chorus. On the Cajon, Caoimhe provided the groove with syncopated rhythms and steady beats. Saoirse sang the third part of the harmony and plucked arpeggios on the acoustic guitar while Karen sang with her blues-style vibrato over a very large vocal range.



#### **The Old Codgers Theatre Company**



Old favourites, Frank O'Keeffe and Justin Aylmer took the stage with "The Presidency" - a wide-ranging comic rant over many topics of the day leading up to a fantastic proposition that one of them could be President of Ireland at the next election. Seated at their usual table, they sipped glasses of whiskey as they let their imaginations flow.

#### **Rose Lawless**

This masterful presentation brought a cool, sophisticated cabaret performer to the stage. Accompanied on the keyboard by Julie Cruickshank who delivered the sound of cabaret from her skillful jazz-like tickling of the keys reinforcing the pathos, sexual tension and suppressed emotion of Rose Lawless. She held an audience of young and old in the palm of her hand as she coolly chided and bantered with one and all; finishing with the panache of a truly great performer.



#### **Reuben the Entertainer**

After the interval, Reuben took the stage with a magical solo performance of mime and characterisation without words in which he portrayed various life situations. Aiding the visual presentation with grunts and murmured sounds he had his enchanted audience rocking with laughter as he played various characters without props or costumes. This unique comedy act, based on body language and voice intonation was wonderful to see and was received with loud applause by all.



#### **Blind Yackety**

The closing act was a magnificent display of pure professionalism as this very popular nine-piece band took the stage. With a wide



range of instrumentation the sound was tightly controlled and delivered with tremendous energy that involved the entire audience. Blind Yackety played their hypnotic Millennium-Rock music which

never fails to dazzle. The band performed synchronised tempo changes and sequenced backing vocals in unison, Phrases like "Time time time time time time time, all the glorious time!" illustrate Kevin's unique songwriting. We can look forward to their album which will be distributed on vinyl records soon. Their unique sound and distinctive style succeeded in creating a wonderful musical experience that will be remembered for a long time.

We are indebted to **Derek Pullen** for his outstanding direction of the whole programme and to his efficient backstage support from **Darren Nesbitt, Spud Murphy, Michael Monaghan and Sean Leahy.**

Cearbhall E. O'Meadhra

#### **Bray arts is grateful to the following sponsors of the raffle:**

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## **Submission Guidelines**

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Email submissions to the above or post typed  
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# **Bray Arts Evening Mon Feb 6<sup>th</sup>**

Martello, Seafront, Bray Doors Open 8:00pm Adm: €5 /€4 conc. Everyone welcome.

Brilliant line-up of Irish talent in Art, Theatre, Poetry and Song

**Art : Frances Brosnan, ceramic artist presents her work**

**Poetry: James O'Sullivan from Cork reading his latest work**

**Theatre: Ciaran Taylor - Artist in residence at Mermaid**

**Music: MACDARA - "A breath of fresh air to Celtic Music"**

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