



Dialogues Through Literature

Aim

Using the common interest of books and reading to make connections and develop contacts between existing reading groups and communities affected by the conflict.

Goals

- To challenge stereotypes and develop respect and mutual understanding on a cross community basis.
- To build sustainable cross community relationships.

Project Time Period

From Jan 2012 to August 2013.

Participants

Reading Groups in Counties Cavan, Leitrim, Fermanagh and Tyrone in conjunction with Public Library Services. Participation is not limited to library book groups but open to any book group in the project area. Adult Irish language Reading groups are also welcome.

The initiative is addressing a range of themes including:

- Identity and Belonging
- Rural and urban life
- Community dynamics and cultural clashes
- The voices of other (women, young people etc)
- Looking North - Looking South
- Looking West - Looking East

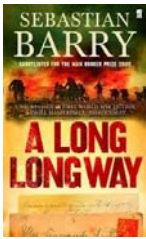
Key Dimensions

- Development of a Shared Reading List
- Delivery of copies of selected books to Reading Groups involved
- Inter Group meetings
- 2 Reading Symposiums – taking place in Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim in Aug 2012 and 2013

Here's a taste of what we are reading!

Sebastian Barry

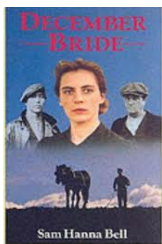
A long, long way



Barely 18, Willie Dunne leaves Dublin in 1914 to fight for the Allied cause, largely unaware of the growing political and religious tensions festering back home. Told in Barry's characteristically beautiful prose, it evokes the camaraderie and humour of Willie and his regiment, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, but also the cruelty and sadness of war, and the divided loyalties that many Irish soldiers felt. Tracing their experiences through the course of the war, the narrative brilliantly explores and dramatises the events of the Easter Rising within Ireland, and how such a seminal political moment came to affect those boys off fighting for the King of England on foreign fields - the paralysing doubts and divisions it caused them.

Sam Hanna Bell

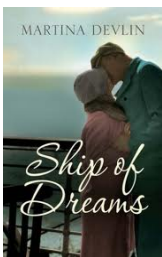
December bride



Timeless love story -- an eternal triangle involving two brothers and their love for the same woman Sarah Gomartin, the indomitable servant girl on Andrew Echlin's coastal farm, bears a child to one of Andrew's sons. But who is the father? Her steadfast refusal over many years to "bend and contrive things" by choosing one of the brothers reverberates throughout her strict Scotch-Irish Presbyterian community. Her willfulness alienates both clergy and neighbors, hastening her mother's death and casting a cold shadow on the life of her children.

Martina Devlin

Ship of dreams



This novel evokes the physical devastation the sinking of this lavish, 'unsinkable' ship caused, and the long reaching human consequences for generations to come. The eventful year for the survivors that follows in New York is gripping and heartbreaking in equal measure. This is a wonderful novel you can certainly sink into.

Siobhan Dowd

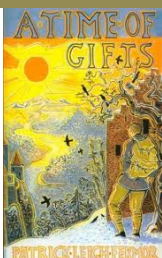
Bog child



Finished three months before the author's death from cancer, "Bog Child" won the Carnegie medal, the most prestigious prize in children's literature. It is a truly outstanding novel that can be enjoyed by adults as well as young adults, 13 and over. It has a particular resonance for readers living in the Border region and conveys both an extraordinary sense of place and a vivid picture of adolescence in early 1980's Ireland. It deals sensitively but also realistically with a pivotal period in recent Irish history.

Patrick Leigh Fermor

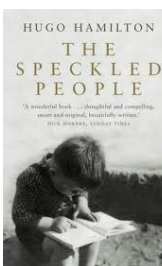
A time of gifts: On foot to Constantinople



A travel writing classic, first published in 1977, regarded by some as the best travel book ever written!. Author once described as a cross between Indiana Jones, James Bond and Graham Greene! An account of the first part of the author's journey on foot across Europe.

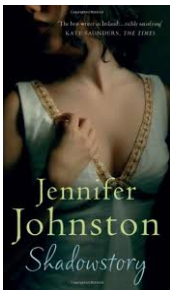
Hugo Hamilton,

The speckled people



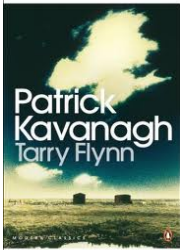
Shortlisted for the Bord Gais Irish Book Awards Book of the Decade.

The childhood world of Hugo Hamilton is a confused place. His father, a brutal Irish nationalist, demands his children speak Gaelic at home whilst his mother, a softly spoken German emigrant who escaped Nazi Germany at the beginning of the war, encourages them to speak German. All Hugo wants to do is speak English. English is, after all, what the other children in Dublin speak. English is what they use when they hunt down Hugo (or "Eichmann" as they dub him) in the streets of Dublin, and English is what they use when they bring him to trial and execute him at a mock seaside court. Out of this fear and confusion Hugo tries to build a balanced view of the world, to turn the twisted logic of what he is told into truth.



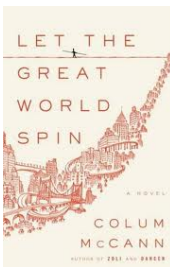
Jennifer Johnston
Shadowstory

A compelling novel of complicated love, from one of Ireland's greatest living writers. It is the Second World War, and tragedy strikes many families in Ireland. But it is also a thrilling time in which to be a child and Polly, spending months at her grandparents' house by the sea, barely notices the adults' grief and their efforts to escape the tyranny of religion and family expectation. However, in time Polly too will have a secret. No one else knows the location of her beloved uncle, Sam, barely older than Polly herself, who is meant to be in Cambridge but is dreaming of Communist Cuba, while his decimated family fears losing another son. And, as Polly shyly approaches womanhood, her love for Sam turns into something more explosive.



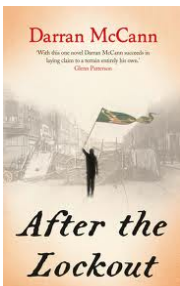
Patrick Kavanagh
Tarry Flynn

Patrick Kavanagh (1904-1967) is best known as an Irish poet, but he also dabbled in fiction. Tarry Flynn, first published in 1948, is perhaps his most popular and most famous novel. It is set in rural Ireland in the 1930s and tells the story of a young farmer's day-to-day desires: women, nature and poetry, not necessarily in that order.



Colum McCann
Let the great world spin

Set against a time of sweeping political and social change, from the backlash to the Vietnam War and the lingering sceptre of the oil crisis to the beginnings of the Internet - a time that hauntingly mirrors the present time - these disparate lives will collide in the shadow of one reckless and beautiful act, and be transformed for ever. Weaving together themes of love, loss, belonging, duty and human striving, Let the Great World Spin celebrates the effervescent spirit of an age and the small beauties of everyday life. At once intimate and magnificent, elegant and astonishing, it is a lyrical masterpiece from a storyteller who continues to use the wide world as his canvas.



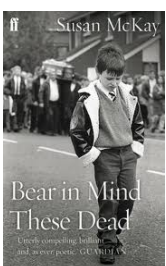
Darren McCann
After the lockout

Set in 1917, soon after Victor Lennon, a veteran of the General Strike lockout (1913), and a Citizen Army participant in the 1916 Rising, is released from Frongoch internment camp in Wales. He is anti-capitalist, anti-clerical and a demagogue. Lennon suspends his class war in Dublin to return to Co Armagh to rescue his father, Pius, from the demon drink, restore the family farm to its pre-eminent economic position in the community, and revive a dormant romance. Treated as a hero by the youth of his native village, Lennon spouts his Communist catchphrases and inevitably clashes with his doctrinaire parish priest, Stanislaus Benedict. Verbal and literal fireworks ensue.



John McGahern
Memoir

At the heart of the Memoir is a son's unembarrassed tribute to his mother. His memory of walks with her through the narrow lanes to the country schools where she taught and his happiness as she named for him the wild flowers on the bank remained conscious and unconscious presences for the rest of his life. A classic family story, told with exceptional restraint and tenderness, Memoir cannot fail to move all those who read it.



Susan McKay
Bear in mind these dead

This book explores the difficult aftermath of the violence for families, friends and communities. By interviewing those who loved the missing and the dead, as well as some who narrowly survived, McKay gives a voice to those who are too often overlooked in the political histories. She has found grief and rage, as well as forgiveness. Some long to forget, others cannot rest until they find out the truth. Some demand a measure of justice. They face formidable odds, for there are those with strong interests in keeping parts of the history of the Troubles in the dark. The devolved government in Northern Ireland is working towards a new future for all the people.

Belinda McKeon

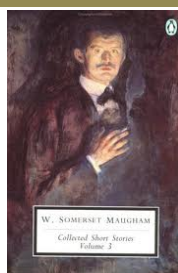
Solace



As tender as it is heartbreaking, this is a brilliant debut from an exciting new voice in Irish fiction. Mark Casey has left home, the rural Irish community where his family has farmed the same land for generations, to study for a doctorate in Dublin, a vibrant, contemporary city full of possibility. To his father, Tom, who needs help baling the hay and ploughing the fields, Mark's pursuit isn't work at all, and indeed Mark finds himself whiling away his time with pubs and parties. His is a life without focus or responsibility, until he meets Joanne Lynch, a trainee solicitor whom he finds irresistible. Joanne too has a past to escape from and for a brief time she and Mark share the chaos and rapture of a new love affair, until the lightning strike of tragedy changes everything.

W Somerset Maugham

Collected Short Stories Volume 3



This final classic collection reveals Somerset Maugham's unique talent for exposing and exploring the bitter realities of human relationships in tales of love, infidelity, passion and prejudice. The stories range from "The Lotus Eater" where a man envisions a life of bliss in the Mediterranean, to the astringent tales of "The Outstation" and "The Back of Beyond" in Malaya and South East Asia.

Brian Moore

The lonely passion of Judith Hearne



The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne is an unflinching and deeply sympathetic portrait of a woman destroyed by self and circumstance. Judith Hearne is an unmarried woman of a certain age who has come down in society. She has few skills and is full of the prejudices and pieties of her genteel Belfast upbringing. But Judith has a secret life. And she is just one heartbreak away from revealing it to the world.

Nuala O'Faolain

A More complex truth



Edited and selected by Tony Glavin, with an introduction by Fintan O'Toole, A More Complex Truth is a timely selection of Nuala O'Faolain's non-fiction from the mid-1980s to shortly before her death in 2008. Hailed as 'one of the greatest columnists ever to inhabit the English language', her wide-ranging essays cast a canny eye on all matters Irish – from sex, contraception, old age, the Border, and the rights of the marginalised, to Charlie Haughey, Mary Robinson, John McGahern and U2. Gifted with a unique capacity to look at issues from all sides, her cutting-edge commentary – whether on our latter-day materialism or the duties of citizenship – remains as topical today as when first penned.

Maggie O'Farrell

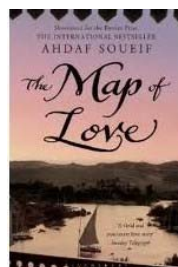
The hand that first held mine



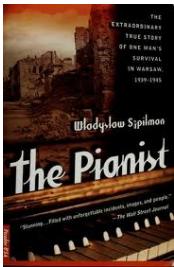
A gorgeously written story of love and motherhood, this is a tour de force from one of our best loved novelists. When the sophisticated Innes Kent turns up on her doorstep, Lexie Sinclair realises she cannot wait any longer for her life to begin, and leaves for London. There, at the heart of the 1950s Soho art scene, she carves out a new life. In the present day, Elina and Ted are reeling from the difficult birth of their first child. Elina struggles to reconcile the demands of motherhood with sense of herself as an artist, and Ted is disturbed by memories of his own childhood that don't tally with his parents' version of events. As Ted begins to search for answers, an extraordinary portrait of two women is revealed, separated by fifty years, but connected in ways that neither could ever have expected.

Adhaf Soueif

Map of love



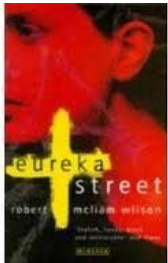
A vivid and passionate love story from the Booker Shortlisted author. In 1900, Lady Anna Winterbourne travels to Egypt where she falls in love with Sharif, an Egyptian Nationalist utterly committed to his country's cause. A hundred years later, Isabel Parkman, an American divorcee and a descendant of Anna and Sharif, goes to Egypt, taking with her an old family trunk, inside which are found notebooks and journals which reveal Anna and Sharif's secret.



Wladyslaw Szpilman **The pianist**

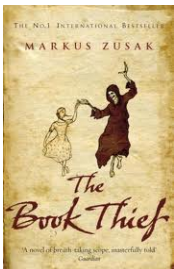
Originally published in Poland in 1945 but suppressed, this memoir of survival in the Warsaw Ghetto joins the ranks of Holocaust memoirs notable as much for their literary value as for their historical significance. The author brings realism and clarity to the banalities of ghetto life, especially the eerie normalcy of some social relations amid catastrophic upheaval.

Robert McLiam Wilson **Eureka Street**



Fat Protestant boy, Chuckie, says of his meeting with Max, the American girl with whom he falls in love: 'He hadn't told her too many lies and he hadn't looked exclusively at her breasts. That was good going. Relative honesty and looking at her face while she spoke was good behaviour by Chuckie's standards. For a moment he felt like a plump David Niven.' Chuckie, who goes from poverty to wild riches in Ireland, then America, thanks to his crazed entrepreneurial vision, is one of the great comic capitalist creations, almost akin to Milo Minderbender in *Catch 22* or William Gaddis's *JR*. He cons various Northern Ireland economic regeneration bodies into giving him hundreds of thousands of pounds for wonderfully daft projects. Perhaps the funniest is a balaclava manufacturing business to take advantage of the headgear's ubiquity in Ireland among terrorists of all persuasions.

Marcus Zusak **The book thief**



This work is narrated in the all-knowing matter-of-fact voice of Death, witnessing the story of the citizens of Molching: When nine-year-old Liesel arrives outside the boxlike house of her new foster parents at 33 Himmel Street, she refuses to get out of the car. Liesel has been separated from her parents - 'Kommunists' - forever, and at the burial of her little brother, she steals a gravedigger's instruction manual which she can't read. It is the beginning of her illustrious career. In the care of the Hubermans, Liesel befriends blond-haired Rudy Steiner, her neighbour obsessed with Jesse Owens, and the mayor's wife, who hides from despair in her library. Together Liesel and Rudy steal books - from Nazi book burning piles, from the mayor's library, from the rich people for whom her foster mother does the ironing. In time, they take in a Jewish boxer, Max, who reads with Liesel in the basement. By 1943, the Allied bombs are falling, and the sirens begin to wail. Liesel shares out her books in the air-raid shelters.

How to get involved...

- Everyone can get involved. Simply start reading!
- Read one or more of the books from the book list
- Join a Library Reading Group and explore 10 of the books over the project period with readers across 4 counties! New Reading Group members are always welcome.
- Get Blogging! www.cavanlibrary.ie
- Attend the reading symposium planned from 16th to 18th August 2012

Check out www.cavanlibrary.ie to find out more



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND



This project is being driven by Ballinamore Sean O'Heslin's GAA club in partnership with Leitrim County Library and in co-operation with Cavan County Library and Libraries Northern Ireland. A contact email for readers in Leitrim, Fermanagh and Tyrone is dialoguesthroughliterature@gmail.com