



Summer 2021 Newsletter.

Welcome!

Welcome to the Kildare Writing Centre Summer Newsletter. I hope this finds you all well, enjoying the growing freedom as lockdown lifts, restrictions ease and our favourite places, like bookshops and libraries, theatres and museums are once more open.

This is the season of literary festivals, and while some remain online, others are taking brave, tentative steps to lift the latches on real doors, throw open glass windows, raise the tents, arrange the chairs, and tap test mics, 'one, two, one, two'.

And with these festivals come competition opportunities, so pens at the ready.

As well as attending festivals my summer is going to be about the final stages in the process of readying my novel, *Charlotte & Arthur*, published by Merdog Books for its October 1st launch. I have also started the research for my next novel concerning the relationship between W.B. Yeats and his wife, George Hyde Lees, and I am incredibly grateful to Kildare County Council and Arts service for choosing me as this years recipient of the Dennis O' Driscoll Literary bursary for a Professional writer. As well as the honour of receiving this reward, the funding affords me time and the means to get stuck into the research.

In this issue of **Kildare Writing Centre Newsletter**, you will find:

- The 'In Praise of...' section for this issue is a shout out for the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annamakerrig, County Monaghan
- Competitions with Summer deadlines.
- Festival news.
- Tips on the use of time in a story.

[Next Courses at KWC.](#)

I haven't set any dates yet for Autumn courses due to a busier schedule with the book launch but as soon as I have them finalised and know the courses I will be offering, I will issue interim flyers with the details.

In Praise of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annamakerrig.



The Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Annamakerrig, County Monaghan, a place where the Arcadia and Mount Helicon of Greek mythology merges, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It is a creative space, where artists from all disciplines retreat far from the madding crowd for work reasons. I have been privileged to have stayed there on numerous times, twice thanks to a Kildare County Council bursary. There are two ways of staying at the centre, being accommodated in what is called the ‘Big House’, the name being self-explanatory, or in the cottages. On my first trip to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, I stayed in the ‘Big House’ but since then I tend to stay in the cottages which are converted stables. You have an entire cottage of bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and living/working area all to yourself. There are no distractions from the outside world, no traffic sounds, no television voices, this is Yeats’ Lake Isle of Innisfree with the added occasional rat-tat-tat of a tractor in the summertime.

An artist friend and I have the same debate every time we return about when we first met in Annamakerrig. It was not that long ago so it’s worrying that we can’t decide if it was 2014 or 2015. I know there are easy ways to find out and end the debate but where is the fun in that! What I do remember is I arrived on a Friday evening shortly before dinner which is served at 7 o’ clock and regardless of what else you do in the Tyrone Guthrie Centre you have to show your face for dinner, that is the one golden rule stipulated by Tyrone Guthrie himself, all guests must have dinner together around the long kitchen table. There is a gong in the hall that announces when it is ready. Usually, the first guest to arrive down to the kitchen will be asked by the cook to give it a bang. I think the belief is that we are all in a timeless zone of creativity and so only the percussion sound echoing through the corridors will let us know that we are hungry...it never worked that way for me, like a Shakespearian lover I always ran before the clock and so got several turns at gonging.

That first evening I met writers and visual artists and musicians from Ireland, England, Spain, Australia and America and because everyone was so friendly, the imposter syndrome demon I had hauled with me all the way from Kildare was not long about being

exorcised. That is the thing about this special place, it doesn't matter where you are on your artistic journey, whether you are the number one bestselling author, the most sought after composer, the artist currently displaying in the national gallery, or the 'me', unpublished and unknown but serious about her craft and yearning to make writing her full time job, in Annamakerrig you are taken seriously and accepted for who you are and what you do while there. For the first time ever, when other guests asked what I did, I said, I write. And I did write but I also walked through forests, and along country lanes, I stared at lakes like Michael Harding, I chatted, sometimes into the early hours, I laughed and cried (when leaving), I whispered secrets, tittered like a schoolgirl, met the loveliest people, especially the staff, made the best friends, shared my work with the kindest, most appreciative audience, and grew in confidence and belief in a 'me' that could always be who I was for those two weeks in the Big House.

On the many occasions that I have been back since that first time in 2014 or 2015, I have always stayed in the cottages, which are self-catering, but you still can visit the Big House daily for chats and cuppas and after dinner soirees in the evenings. At these gatherings you get to hear the first, shy sounds of new music, poetry, prose, and drama or visits are made to an artists' studio, a behind the scenes peep into, what for me is a magical world of colour and canvas. Everyone is so generous in their feedback, so encouraging, so supportive.

My heart is always heavy when I am punching in the code at the gate to make the two-hour journey home, but so too is the word count in whatever manuscript I was working on, and as the hedgerows of Monaghan and Cavan whirr past the car, I make sure to check my rear view mirror, and like a pilgrim sailing away from Lough Derg Holy Island, I always look back and vow to return.

Now under the new direction of Dr Eimear O' Connor there are exciting times ahead for the centre and you can follow all the latest news here on their Facebook page and YouTube channel.

<https://www.facebook.com/tyroneguthriecentre.annaghmakerrig>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TyroneGuthrieCentreAnnaghmakerrig>

And to apply for a residency visit the website: <http://www.tyroneguthrie.ie/apply>

Competitions

1. The first competition I want to highlight is <https://www.michaelmullancharityfund.com/writing-competitions>
This competition is very close to the heart of Kildare Writing Centre, as Pat Mullan, founder of the competition and father to Michael Mullan (RIP) has attended courses here at KWC, and another past student, Helen O'Leary was winner of the short story award in 2019. Sadly, Michael died last November from his illness which makes this year a very special year in which he is fondly remembered as the charity fund continues to raise much needed capital for cancer research. Kildare Writing Centre is delighted to be sponsoring the flash fiction competition with writing course places for 1st and 2nd winners.

The closing date for this competition is **July 15th**. With the exception of the flash fiction, which is confined to Kildare based writers, all competitions are open.

You can read Helen's winning story here: <https://www.michaelmullancharityfund.com/southern-hospitality-by-helen-o-lea>

2. **The Molly Keane Creative Writing award** and the **Write by the Sea, Kilmore Quay Writing Competition** have deadlines of **June 25th**. I am cutting it fine for you with these two, but I also know that a lot of you will have a back catalogue of stories that you can choose from. The Molly Keane competition is confined to Irish residents and the prize is €500. Here is where you enter: <https://waterford.submit.com/show/56>

My understanding from their rules is that the Write by the Sea competition is open to anyone other than those involved in the festival and their relatives.

<https://writebythesea.ie/writing-competitions/>

3. **The Moth** short story competition has a retreat in a French Writing centre, Circle of Misse with a travel stipend as the top prize. The word limit is 5000, the entry fee is €15, and the closing date is **June 30th**.

. <https://www.themothmagazine.com/a1-page.asp?ID=8227&page=25>

4. The **Seán O'Faoláin International Short Story Competition** has a deadline of **July 31st**. This is a very competitive international competition with super prizes but always well worth an entry, even though I have some misgivings at the entry fee of €18. <http://munsterlit.ie/SOF%20Page.html>

Writing opportunities for emerging and established writers.

There are some exciting opportunities for emerging writers that are always worth applying for.

1. The National Mentoring Programme with Words Ireland. <https://wordsireland.ie/national-mentoring-programme-2021/>

2. The John McGahern Award is open to emerging writers residents in Ireland. <https://www.ironmountainfestival.ie/john-mcgahern-award>

Events and Festivals.

It is very encouraging to see that festivals are beginning to make some noises about the possibility of 'in person' events happening a little later this year.

- The West Cork Literary and music Festival runs from July 9th to 16th.
<https://www.westcorkmusic.ie/literary-festival/programme/>
- After a hugely successful inaugural festival in 2019, it is wonderful to see that the Power of Words Festival in Abbeyleix, Laois, is back this August, Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd.
<https://powerofwords.ie/>
- The Hinterland Literature and Arts Festival in Kells is back the 10th to the 12 of September.
<https://www.hinterland.ie/>
- The 5th annual Write by The Sea festival in Kilmore Quay runs from September 22nd to the 26th
<https://writebythesea.ie/programme-2021/>
- The Kildare Readers Festival will run from the 1st to the 17th of October, where there will be events all over the county for the fortnight with the main festival being held on the final weekend, hopefully live in the Riverbank Arts Centre in Newbridge.
<http://www.kildareadersfestival.ie/>
- Although no official announcement has as yet been made, at least to the best of my knowledge, I believe that The Leaves Festival held in the Dunamais Arts Centre in Portlaoise in association with Laois CoCo Arts services, will take place the first weekend in November. <https://leavesfestival.ie/>



WEST CORK LITERARY FESTIVAL



Summer Newsletter writing tips.

Time in the short story.

One of the main blocks when it comes to the structure of the short story is 'time'. You must make a decision as to where to start and where to finish your story.

- Time establishes the **present** in the story.
- By referring to events that happened before this present the **past** is established.
- By the passing of time there is a sense of a character moving towards a **future**.

Readers believe in the fictional world if there is that sense that it existed before the start of the story and it will continue when the story finishes.

The Dramatic present.

When choosing a time-scheme for a particular story you will need to establish a **dramatic present**. This acts like a fulcrum around which the backstory and any forward movement can be organised.

Your **dramatic present** is located at the '...and then one day' aspect of the short story and therefore will often begin with an action that is repeated on a daily, monthly, yearly basis, making it '**habitual time**'. The dramatic present is all to do with the establishment of time and place and is often achieved through showing rather than telling.

Starting stories in medias res.

It is always, as far as possible, a good idea to begin a story in the middle of an action, this heightens the sense of walking into a pre-existing world for the reader. Dialogue is often a good way of doing this. When you start like this, in the middle of an action there will usually be backstory to deal with later in the narrative. Maybe you will have to explain how the character got to be in that place at that time.

Backstory.

Backstory is an account of something that happened to a character before the events of the main narrative of the story. You would not do this at the start of the story, get the character introduced, let the story be up and running, and then introduce some relevant details of the earlier life of the character. These details should help explain the character's present behaviour.

You do not provide these details just to flesh out a character although they will do that too.

Remember as the writer of the story you should know the **backstory** of the character even if you do not provide the details to the reader. This thorough knowledge of your character will keep them consistent. It is always worth doing out a profile for your character.

Do not overuse **backstory** as it will interrupt the main narrative too much and might become confusing or tedious for the reader. It only needs to hold up the main narrative for a short period of time.

Foreshadowing.

As well as establishing present and a past, sometimes you will want to leap ahead in your story. This is called **foreshadowing**. It might be that you let the reader know that something bad is going to happen to a character, you just do not say what so that the reader can be imaginatively engaged trying to figure it out.

A classic example of foreshadowing is Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the prologue we are told:

A pair of star cross'd lovers take their life;

Whose misadventured piteous overthrows

Do with the death bury their parent's strife.

Shakespeare gives it all away, but the reality was probably that the story was already well known to his audience and what they were interested in was witnessing the drama.

This **foreshadowing** then, this dropping hints as to what will happen later in the story is a great way of creating expectation and suspense for the reader.

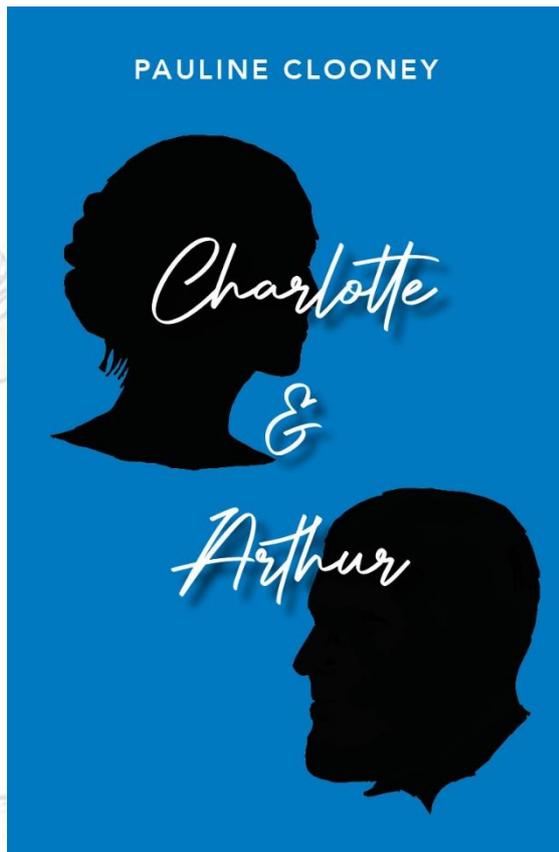
Warnings in a story can sometimes act as **foreshadowing**. The mother warning the little girl in *Little Red Riding Hood* to take care in the woods.

Apart from suspense the other reason for **foreshadowing** is to prepare the reader for what will happen so that it does not come out of the blue and then seem implausible. Even with what we call the "twist in the Tale" short story the surprise or twist must be foreshadowed otherwise the reader will feel that it is too arbitrary or coincidental.

Flashback

When a story makes a backward leap in time, we call that a **flashback**. These flashbacks are usually associated with a character or a narrator's memory. Some stories rely almost entirely on flashbacks.

What, you may ask, is the difference between **flashback** and backstory? While backstory provides details perhaps from a period in a character's life, flashback relates only to a single incident.



Charlotte & Arthur by Pauline Clooney

It is the morning of June 29th, 1854, here is the groom coming up the cobbles in Haworth, for his nuptial appointment with Charlotte Brontë. Only a handful of guests have been invited, and you, dear Reader, are one of them ...

Charlotte Brontë, the celebrated author of *Jane Eyre*, has married her papa's Curate, Irishman, Arthur Bells Nicholls. At thirty-eight years of age, and the unlikelihood of there ever being further proposals, Charlotte's dread of the lonely life of the spinster has convinced her that this is a calculated risk she must take.

For the month of July, the couple's itinerary brings them from the castles of Wales to the most popular tourist attractions in Victorian Ireland, spending some time along the way with Arthur's family in Banagher, on the banks of the River Shannon. Set against the backdrop of the recent famine, their tour exposes the contrasting lives of the poor and the privileged of Irish society.

Charlotte & Arthur, invites the reader into the heart and mind of the revered author, and it allows that reader to walk beside her as she realises that to have Arthur as her husband was in her own words '...better than to earn either Wealth or Fame or Power.'

Available to pre-order at
[http://merdogbooks.com/product/charlotte-arthur/...](http://merdogbooks.com/product/charlotte-arthur/)

Book News!



BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT - COMING
SOON

Charlotte & Arthur by Pauline Clooney,
October 2021

Wishing you all a lovely

Summer and early

Autumn, hope to see you

soon.

Pauline.