



February Newsletter.

WELCOME!

Welcome to the February (and 1st) Kildare Writing Centre Newsletter. I hope this finds you all well and coping in these times. This time last year the latest short story course was up and running here in the centre and plans for weekend courses were underway, and then it all stopped.

I probably took longer than most to adapt to the virtual way of conducting things, but I got there and am happy to report that the January online courses were successful, and so courses will continue online for the foreseeable future.

Also, I plan to issue a bi-monthly newsletter.

In this issue you will find information on April courses at the centre, competitions with February/March deadlines, County Council grants details, festival news, and some tips on how best to present your work.

And a regular feature will be me highlighting something good in the world of words, entitled, 'In Praise of'.

NEXT COURSES AT KWC.

<https://kildarewritingcentre.com/courses>

Creative nonfiction/memoir courses will run from Wednesday, April the 7th to Wednesday, April the 28th.

Short Story course runs from Tuesday April the 6th to Tuesday April the 27th. (Note that this is a change from a Monday night to Tuesday.)

I am currently working on a short story course, part 2, which will be a follow on from the one currently on offer. This course will suit participants from the first course but as it is a stand-alone course, you will not have to have completed the first course to be eligible to attend.

April 2021						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

In praise of independent bookshops.

There are lots of things happening in the literary world that I want to tell you about, but before that I want to share what has been one of my highlights of this lockdown. And it involves a local independent bookshop, Woodbine books in Kilcullen.

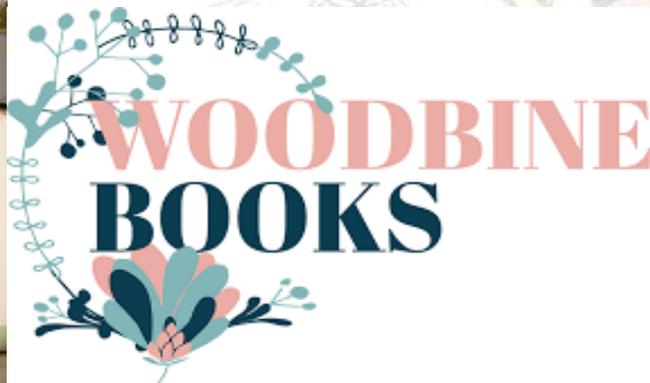
My daughter lives in Dublin and so we don't get to meet up, but we chat on the phone and our chats often revolve around the books we are reading. We recommend books to each other constantly and discuss the best way of engaging with them, as in listening to them, reading on a device, or buying a physical copy, and almost always we conclude that the physical copy is the best, there is something about the smell of and heft of a book in your hand that demands attention, that beckons to be read.

But this is where it gets interesting. Although my daughter lives slap bang in

the heart of the city centre, where it is all supposed to happen, well, it took 3 days and 3 trips to the post office holding centre (their postman only rings once and does not hang around) and even then, only 1 of the 3 books she ordered online was delivered. (from a Dublin based bookshop, but not an independent one.)

In the meantime, I put in an online order with Woodbine books for 4 books at around 2.30pm on what we will call day 1 of our dual mission, and by 6pm the same day, they had been delivered (with bookmarks in every book) to my front door. Now that is what I call customer service.

So, my big shout out for this month is to Woodbine Books in Kilcullen <https://www.woodbinebooks.ie> and to all independent bookshops, who are keeping us well stocked and well read.



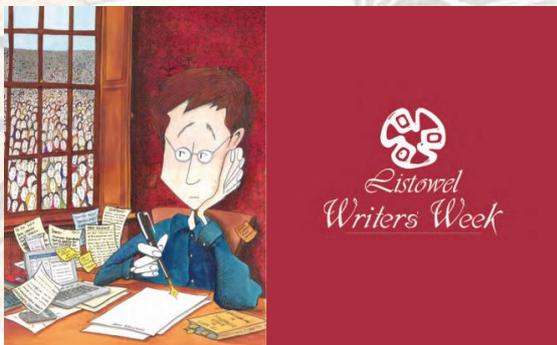
Competitions

It is always a good idea to give your work a deadline and a way of doing that is aiming to enter competitions. A great source for accessing these competitions is by going to the Words Ireland website, as they provide a list of other websites that feature these competitions.

<https://wordsireland.ie/competitions/>

Here are some with closing dates in the next few weeks:

1. <https://www.fishpublishing.com/competition/flash-fiction-contest/>
2. <https://writersweek.ie/competitions/>
3. <https://www.storyawards.org/shortstoryaward>



County Council Arts Grants

It is that time of year again, time for all artists to gather your thoughts around what you do creatively, what it will take for you to do it in terms of time and finance, and then see what ways you could be aided by the grants and bursaries available from your local County Council. It is always worth the application, and just a note of caution on that...do not wait until the deadline, start working on your application now, it can be more involved than you would anticipate.

One of the bursaries which I have been fortunate enough to receive in previous years was a retreat at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, where you can work on your latest project in this peaceful setting on the lake.

Here are the links to two that may interest you:

- <http://www.kildare.ie/artsservice/grantsandopportunities/>
- <https://laois.ie/departments/arts/grants-schemes/arts-act-grants-2017>

(Laois closes February 25th!)

Upcoming Events

One nice thing about these COVID-19 days is the number of events and festivals that have moved online, thus making it easier to attend without moving off your chair. I know I am looking forward to a few events I have signed up at this year's Jaipur Literature festival! But we do not have to go that far, virtually speaking that is, here are some more local and national treats to look out for.

- <https://www.irelandreads.ie/>
- <http://limerickliteraryfestival.com/>
- <https://www.ennisbookclubfestival.com/>
- <https://mountainstosea.ie/>

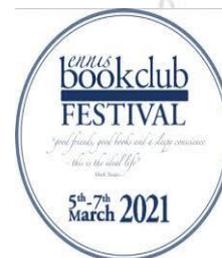
There are also events that have finished but are still available to watch or listen to, including:

- <https://festivalofwritingandideas.com/podcasts/>
- <https://wordsireland.ie/for-writers/lectureseries/>

February writing tips:

Seeing as some of you may be thinking about entering some competitions, I thought it timely to shine a light on how you present your work. My tips are what has worked for me, but always keep an eye on guidelines when you are submitting to competitions. Journals, publishers, as they may be different.

- If you are posting a manuscript it should be printed on A4, standard 80gsm white paper (not high gloss). The text should only be on one side. Do not have it bound in any way. I like the large paper clip! And do not have any signs of wear on the script as that means it has already been read by someone else and rejected.
- **12-point font and preferably Times New Roman** unless otherwise stated by the publishing house/agent/competition rules. *Do not use different fonts throughout like this as it only makes it*



harder to read. (Like this sentence!) Do not have fully justified margins.

- Use double spacing with one-inch margins. **New paragraphs should be indented, as should dialogue.** If it is a novel, start halfway down the page whenever you begin a new chapter. Do not have line breaks between paragraphs.
- No artwork or illustrations. No need to have 'confidential' on every page.
- Editors and Agents do not like question marks, particularly on the first page. They are not mad about exclamation marks or parenthesis either.
- Try to avoid affectations which might include the abundant use of foreign words or phrases; inappropriate use of fancy words; crude or vulgar language; and our old friend...the cliché.