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*Creative Ireland
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Department of Tourism, Culture,
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FÉILE NA STAIRÉ FHINE GALL

2025

29th Meán Fómhair –
11th Deireadh Fómhair

FINGAL FESTIVAL OF HISTORY

2025

29th September –
11th October



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FINGAL FESTIVAL OF HISTORY

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Welcome to Fingal's Ninth Annual Festival of History which will run from Monday 29th September to Saturday 11th October 2025 throughout our library branches.

This year we have incorporated 13 exciting talks plus a heritage tour into our programme. Topics included cover Loreto Convent Balbriggan, Luttrellstown Castle, A culinary experience at Newbridge House and the history of Bremore Graveyard. Household names such as Myles Dungan (Land and the Irish Free State 1922-39), Turtle Bunbury (Vanishing Ireland) and Flor MacCarthy (From Ireland to the Stars) will also speak. The fascinating lives covered in the "Bad Bridget" podcast and book will be recounted in a lively discussion by the authors Dr Elaine Farrell and Dr Leanne McCormack, facilitated by Dr Derville Murphy.

History at the Library Day takes place on Saturday 4th October in The Carnegie on North Street Swords. Our four speakers will cover such diverse topics as the History of Swords Carnegie Library (10am), Gentours Holiday Camp, Skerries (11.30am), Using DNA test results to add to your Family History (2pm) and Dublin's last Theatre Royal (3.15pm).

This year we are again collaborating with **Clonsilla and Porterstown Heritage Society**. Join them on a 90-minute guided tour of St Mary's Church and Graveyard, Clonsilla. (Heritage Tour Sunday 5th October @ 3pm – meet at St. Mary's Church).

We hope that there will be something of interest for everyone. All events are free to the public, but places may be limited so booking is advised.

Catherine Keane
Senior Librarian
Fingal Local Studies & Archives

Monday 29th September @ 6.30pm

Location: Balbriggan Library

Speaker: Dr David Sorensen



"A High Class School" Loreto Convent Balbriggan 1857 - 2025: Pictures, Postcards & Photographs



Loreto Convent, Balbriggan has long been a landmark in the town. Since its foundation, it has attracted pupils not only from the locality but from countries all over the world. While the school itself was established in 1857, the building, which became its kernel and nerve centre for more than 120 years, can trace its origin back to the development of Balbriggan as an industrial town. This presentation discusses the history of that building - Gracefield House - and considers how it came into the possession of the Loreto order. Aspects of the development of the school, from a "dilapidated fishing lodge" catering for 12 girls to the current state of the art building, with an enrolment of 1,288 students, are presented through documents, photographs and illustrations.

Dr David Sorensen is a long-time Balbriggan local historian. He has given presentations on topics as diverse as the history of national schools in the town, Balbriggan's famed textile heritage, Balbriggan Harbour and Balbriggan Courthouse. Most recently, along with his colleague, Petra Skyvova, he has been involved in the establishment of Balbriggan Heritage Society and Heritage Trail.



To reserve a place please contact Balbriggan Library
at: 01 8704401 or email Balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie



Tuesday 30th September @ 6.30pm

Location: Blanchardstown Library

Speaker: Christine Moore



"Luttrellstown - A Castle with a Rich & Varied History"



The Luttrellstown Estate, in Clonsilla, has been in existence since the early 1200s. Luttrellstown has evolved over 800 years, but the castle still displays the imprint of its previous owners. From the Luttrells to the Guinnesses, this talk will bring to life the occupants (and guests!) of this very famous castle.

Christine Moore is the founder of the Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society (CPHS), which aims to promote the natural and built heritage of Clonsilla. Organiser of the annual Clonsilla Heritage Festival, Christine is passionate about local history. For the past year she has been the historian in Luttrellstown Castle.



To reserve a place please contact Blanchardstown Library
at: 01 8905560 or email Blanchlibrary@fingal.ie

Wednesday 1st October @ 6.30pm

Location: Malahide Library

Speaker: Turtle Bunbury



Vanishing Ireland



In 2001 Turtle Bunbury and photographer James Fennell began travelling around Ireland, their mission to interview and photograph people born in the first decades of the 20th century. **Vanishing Ireland**, the resulting publication is a unique collection of portrait interviews looking at the dying ways and traditions of Irish life and taking us back to an Ireland virtually unrecognisable to today's post-boom generation. Through their own words and memories, sixty-four men and women transport us back to a time when people lived off the land and the sea, when music and storytelling were essential parts of life, when a person was defined by their trade. In 2021, *Vanishing Ireland* was relaunched for a new generation as a podcast series in which Turtle interviews members of the older generation about their memories of time's gone by.

Turtle Bunbury is an award-winning Irish author, historian, broadcaster and podcaster known for documenting and preserving Irish history and heritage. Described as 'one of the most versatile authors of his generation,' his writing focuses on bringing lesser-known stories and characters from history to light, and he is recognized for his engaging storytelling style, wry humour and meticulous research. Turtle has also contributed to numerous media outlets and has undertaken projects to promote awareness and appreciation of Ireland's rich cultural heritage.



To reserve a place please contact Malahide Library
at: 01 8704430 or email malahidelibrary@fingal.ie



Thursday 2nd October @ 6.30pm

Location: Baldoyle Library

Speaker: Flor MacCarthy



From Ireland to the Stars



In 2026, Mayo native Dr. Norah Patten is scheduled to become the first person from Ireland to go to space. Patten, an aeronautical and bioastronautics expert, will join American and Canadian crew aboard Virgin Galactic Delta in a space mission organised by the International Institute for Astronautical Sciences. To commemorate this stunning accomplishment, Pegasus Media is developing a new RTÉ radio series and accompanying lecture tour. Presented by **Flor MacCarthy**, *From Ireland to the Stars* highlights our island's enduring connection to the cosmos, from ancient sites like Newgrange to modern breakthroughs including EIRSAT-1 and the James Webb Space Telescope.

Flor MacCarthy is an award-winning author and journalist whose first book *The President's Letters* was shortlisted for Best Irish-Published Book 2021. A former RTÉ News journalist and anchor, she presents political debates on Oireachtas TV, interviewing politicians, academics, and journalists both in Ireland and at the European Parliament in Strasburg.



To reserve a place please contact Baldoyle Library
at: 01 8906793 or email baldoylelibrary@fingal.ie



HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 4th October @10am

Location: The Carnegie, North Street, Swords

Speaker: Dr Declan Brady



The Carnegie Free Library, Swords



Between 1897 and 1913, Andrew Carnegie donated over £170,000 to fund the building of eighty libraries in Ireland, one of which was established in Swords in 1908 and has played an important role in the educational, political, social and cultural life of the town ever since. Visit the recently renovated library to hear of the extent of this historic contribution and the people involved, especially in its early years and the movement for Irish independence.

Dr Declan Brady is a research historian, educator, and professional genealogist. He is currently working on a history of politics and local government in North County Dublin for Fingal Local Studies and Archives.



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://CarnegieSwords.eventbrite.ie>



HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 4th October @11.30am

Location: The Carnegie, North Street, Swords

Speaker: Stephanie Bourke



Gentours School Camp, Skerries



Gentours School Camp was a holiday camp for school children which operated in Skerries for more than twenty years, from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Thousands of young people and their teachers spent time in Skerries during those years, exploring the environs, taking advantage of the coastline and making trips to Dublin and beyond. All trace of the camp has now disappeared. This paper celebrates those twenty odd years of camp and the people who made it happen.



Stephanie Bourke grew up in Dublin and holds a BA degree in History and Politics from UCD. A Fingal resident for the past thirty years, she is a long-time member and currently honorary secretary of the Skerries Historical Society.



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://GentoursSkerries.eventbrite.ie>



HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 4th October @2pm

Location: The Carnegie, North Street, Swords

Speaker: Claire Bradley, MA



Using DNA test results to add to your Family History



For years, family history has been researched with traditional records like the census and birth, death, and marriage records. However, DNA tests are now increasingly employed to add to paper-based sources. They are often the first port of call for adoptees or someone who has an unknown ancestor. Many people have taken a test and don't understand how to use it. This talk explains how DNA tests work, which one is best for your research and how to maximise their potential for your own family.

Claire Bradley is an Irish professional genealogist working with both traditional and genetic genealogy. She holds a Certificate in Genealogy from UCD and a Masters in History of the Family from UL. She is the creator and teacher of a beginners' adult education course now running for over a decade covering all major Irish sources in Dublin. She is also the Director of Irish Studies at the International Institute of Genealogical Studies and regularly gives lectures both online and in person. Claire is passionate about teaching people how to research their own ancestry.



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://FamilyHistoryDNA.eventbrite.ie>





HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY

Saturday 4th October @ 3.15pm

Location: The Carnegie, North Street, Swords

Speaker: Conor Doyle



Dublin's last Theatre Royal Remembered



Recapture the glory days of Dublin's last great Theatre Royal which opened ninety years ago this September. With photographs and rare archive newsreel footage, autographs, programmes some of which has not been available before. Enjoy stories about the "Royal" and many international stars like Judy Garland, Bill Haley and the Comets, Danny Kaye, Bob Hope, Roy Rogers and Trigger, Danny Kaye and Jimmy Durante too name just a few. Then there are the Irish stars such as Noel Purcell, Jimmy O'Dea, Maureen Potter, Jack Cruise, Cecil Sheridan, Frankie Blowers, the Royalettes, and Peggy Dell.

Conor Doyle's connection to the Royal is very strong as his Godfather Jimmy O'Dea was the last person to speak off the stage of the "Royal" and his Aunt and Uncle Ursula and Noel Doyle appeared there many times. He also led the successful campaign to have the new street across the Hawkins St site to be called "Theatre Royal Way".



Booking via Eventbrite link below:
<https://TheatreRoyal.eventbrite.ie>

Sunday 5th October @ 3pm – 4.30pm

HERITAGE TOUR

Speaker: Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society



Tour of St Mary's Church & Graveyard (Meet at St. Mary's Church)



Join Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society (CPHS) on a guided tour of St Mary's Church and Graveyard. St Mary's Church of Ireland is an architectural gem, with many interesting features inside, including a stained-glass window by Evie Hone. The current church dates from 1846, however, there has been a religious settlement on this site since 500AD. With lots of interesting graves and possibly the Irish Crown Jewels, you'll leave with many stories to share! Please stay for refreshments afterwards.



To reserve a place please contact:
cpheritagesoc@outlook.com



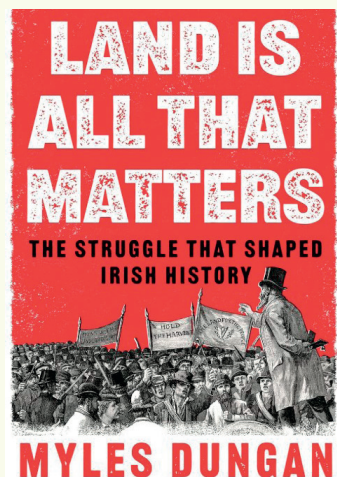
Tuesday 7th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Blanchardstown Library

Speaker: Myles Dungan



Land and the Irish Free State 1922-39



Myles Dungan's 2024 book, *Land Is All That Matters*, explores two hundred years of agrarian conflict from the famine of 1741 to the Land War of 1878–1909, which ended with the transfer of landlord holdings to their tenants. This talk centres on the Cumann na nGaedheal government's efforts to finish the process of tenant purchase; the first Fianna Fáil government's decision to end the practice of repaying annuities to the British government; and the subsequent economic war. The work of the Land Commission in redistributing land will also be discussed.

Myles Dungan is one of Ireland's best-known and most respected broadcasters on both radio and television for more than two decades. He is the author of a number of popular works including *The Stealing of the Irish Crown Jewels*, *The Great Irish History Book* as well as his latest *Land is all that Matters*.

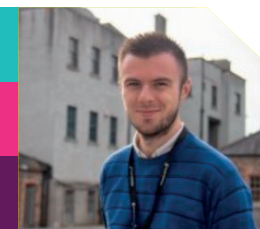


To reserve a place please contact Blanchardstown Library
at: 01 8905560 or email Blanchlibrary@fingal.ie

Wednesday 8th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Rush Library

Speaker: Cathal Dowd Smith



'Thriving in the land of Potatoes' – culinary experience at Newbridge House



Newbridge House was built in 1747 by Archbishop of Dublin, Charles Cobbe. Originally from Hampshire, Cobbe settled in north Dublin and built a house in the Palladian vision for his family, complete with orchards and later a productive walled garden. In 1755 his heir and sole surviving son Thomas together with his wife Lady Elizabeth 'Betty' Beresford, extended the house which included increased servants'

quarters and a large modern kitchen. In the early nineteenth century, Frances Power Cobbe revelled in the fresh, home-grown and uncomplicated food of her childhood at Newbridge. She celebrated her parent's sober and simple diet in contrast with the previous century. However, a recent discovery, a Georgian recipe book has revealed that the Newbridge diet was far from humdrum. This talk will explore the newly discovered Cobbe family recipe book, charting its trans-national influences, the network of inter-familial recipe sharing and the richness of ingredients available to north Dublin's inhabitants over 200 years ago.

Cathal Dowd-Smith is the Curator & Collections Manager of Newbridge House and Farm and Malahide Castle and Gardens. He holds a degree in the History of Art and Architecture and History from Trinity College Dublin. Cathal's current research interests are in the Irish country house, and the architectural and landscape histories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



To reserve a place please contact Rush Library
at: 01 8708414 or email rushlibrary@fingal.ie



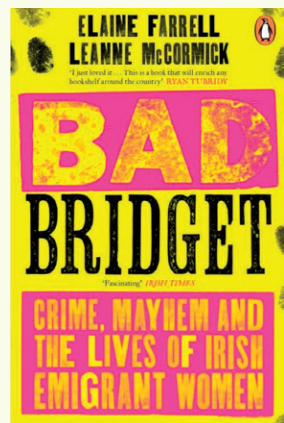
Thursday 9th October @ 6.30pm

Location: Malahide Library

Speaker: Dr Elaine Farrell and Dr Leanne McCormack with Dr Derville Murphy as facilitator



Bad Bridget: Crime, Mayhem and the Lives of Irish Emigrant Women



Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not a good place to be a woman. Among the wave of emigrants from Ireland to North America were many, many young women who travelled on their own, hoping for a better life. Some lived lives of quiet industry and piety. Others quickly found themselves in trouble - bad trouble, and on an astonishing scale. Dr Elaine Farrell and Dr Leanne McCormick, creators of the celebrated 'Bad Bridget' podcast, have unearthed a world in which Irish women actually outnumbered Irish men in prison. They reveal the social forces that bred this mayhem and dysfunction, through stories that are brilliantly strange, sometimes funny, and often moving. From sex workers and thieves to kidnappers and killers, these Bridgets are young women who have gone from the frying pan of their impoverished homeland to the fire of vast North American cities.

Dr Elaine Farrell is a Reader in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics at Queen's University Belfast, and co-creator with Leanne McCormick of the Bad Bridget project.

Dr Leanne McCormack is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Arts and Humanities at Ulster University and co-creator with Elaine Farrell of the Bad Bridget project.

Dr Derville Murphy was born in the UK but came to live in Ireland when she was 13 years old. She qualified from DIT as an architect in 1978 and then worked for over twenty years as an architect and art curator. At fifty-two, she went back to college and completed an MPhil in Irish Art History and a Ph.D. in art and architecture at UCD. Derville has worked as an art consultant. She is also an artist who has exhibited widely in Ireland and her works are in several art collections. Although she has written articles for academic journals, *The Art Collector's Daughter*, published in 2020 is her debut novel.



To reserve a place please contact Malahide Library
at: 01 8704430 or email malahidelibrary@fingal.ie

Saturday 11th October @ 11am

Location: Balbriggan Library

Speaker: Brian Kavanagh



The Graveyard Shift – from Bremore to SS Peter & Paul's

The Graveyard Shift



From Bremore to SS Peter & Paul's
by Brian Kavanagh

In this engaging talk Brian will explore the intriguing history behind the closure of the old burial ground at Bremore and the long journey to finding a new cemetery for the town. You will hear fascinating stories that bring the past to life while learning about the people and events that shaped the town's burial history.

Brian Kavanagh is a Library Assistant at Fingal Local Studies & Archives and is a dedicated history enthusiast with a passion for local history and genealogy. Through his work he helps preserve historical records and artefacts,

ensuring the legacy of local communities is maintained for future generations. As Vice Chairman of Balbriggan Historical Society, Brian promotes the rich heritage of Balbriggan by coordinating historical talks, events and initiatives, fostering a deeper appreciation of local history among residents and visitors alike.

BALBRIGGAN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



To reserve a place please contact Balbriggan Library
at: 01 8704401 or email Balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie



Fingal Local Studies

& Archives



Fingal Local Studies & Archives are based at 46 North Street, Swords. The service collects, preserves and makes available historic records relating to Fingal and Dublin generally. Outreach includes exhibitions, publications, talks, the Fingal Festival of History and participation in Heritage Week and Culture Night. The service is available to anyone interested in local, social or family history. All researchers are welcome and queries can be made by phone, post or e-mail. As many of our collections are stored offsite, we usually ask researchers to make an appointment in advance by e-mailing:

archives@fingal.ie or local.studies@fingal.ie.

The Local Studies collections are an important resource for the study of local history in Fingal and Dublin generally. We hold collections of photographs, postcards, maps and artwork. Additionally, there is an extensive printed collection of local history books, periodicals, directories, reference works and general genealogical and historical books. New publications are regularly added. There is also an ephemera collection comprising military medals, tram tickets, posters etc. The Archives contains records of local government in County Dublin from 1775 to the present day including archives from the Turnpike Trusts, County of Dublin Grand Jury, Poor Law Unions, Rural District Councils, Howth Urban District Council, Balbriggan Town Commissioners, Dublin County Council and a variety of private collections including the Hely-Hutchinson Papers, Holmpatrick Papers and Hone Papers.

Opening Hours	Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm
Location	46 North Street, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 F6Y3
Telephone	+353 1 8704486

Swords Carnegie

Free Library

Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish philanthropist, provided funding between 1897 and 1913 to pay for the building of about 80 libraries in Ireland. Swords Carnegie Library on North Street is one of the remaining 62 which have survived. Built in 1908 for Balrothery Rural District Council, it was designed by architect Andrew Scott. It featured one large room on the upper floor with timber trusses and timber-boarded ceilings to produce well-proportioned interiors.



Accommodation on the ground floor consisted of 2 rooms with a librarian's counter at the end of the hall, through which the building was accessed. These rooms comprised a reading room and a ladies room/smoking room. The large room upstairs was frequently used for meetings, dances, concerts and other community activities. Andrew Carnegie intended the library buildings he paid for to be well stocked with books and freely available to all.



Balrothery Rural District appointed a Library Committee on 9 November 1904 who had responsibility for the promotion and control of the libraries at Swords, Malahide, Skerries, Rush, Lusk and Garristown. They were also responsible for appointing a librarian. The first librarian appointed to Swords Library in 1908 was dismissed not long after when he failed to account for a donation of £10 given to him by a member of the public.

The Carnegie Library continued to provide a library service on a part-time basis to the people of Swords until a new, larger library was opened at Rathbeale Shopping Centre in early 1983. The building was also home to the District Court Office, Swords Boxing Club and to Swords Historical Society and Museum down through the years.

In 2023 the library underwent extensive renovation. It now features a new two-story extension which will enhance accessibility and services. This new space, managed by Fingal Arts Office, will serve as a hub for community engagement, public participation, supporting artists' growth, promoting arts awareness and encouraging innovation as Fingal County Council prepares for the delivery of the Swords Cultural Quarter.



Politics and Democracy in Fingal, 1924-39

Author: Dr. Declan Brady
Fingal Local Studies & Archives

Politics and Democracy in Fingal, 1924-39

Dr. Declan Brady



FINGAL POLITICS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERIES

Fingal Local Studies & Archives have commissioned Dr. Declan Brady to undertake a six-part book series on politics and local government in North County Dublin. This unique series will give a comprehensive political history of Fingal over more than 200 years.

The first book in this series, Politics and Democracy in Fingal, 1924-39, recounts the story of the struggle after Irish independence to build and consolidate the new Irish Free State, and the attempts by local politicians in Fingal to maintain their political independence and influence. It is a story of not just political division and personal animosity born in the divisions of the Civil War, but also of political and administrative competition between centre and periphery, national and local government, and the unresolved issues of poverty, class inequality and the land question.

The book will be launched on Monday, 22nd September 2025 at the Carnegie Library in Swords and will be distributed free-of-charge through Fingal Library branches and as an eBook on BorrowBox.

Dr. Declan Brady is a research historian, educator and professional genealogist. He completed his PhD, 'The Evolution of Local Politics in North County Dublin, 1870-1948', at Maynooth University, where he now teaches.



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DUBLIN FESTIVAL OF HISTORY 2025

26 September –
12 October

Tickets and info
dublinfestivalofhistory.ie

BIG WEEKEND

The Round Room at The Mansion House
27 – 28 September

Leabharlanna
Libraries



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Dublin City Council
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Cá bhfuil mo leabharlann is cóngaraí?

Where is my nearest library?

Balbriggan	01 870 4401	balbrigganlibrary@fingal.ie
Baldoyle	01 890 6793	baldoylelibrary@fingal.ie
Blanchardstown	01 890 5560	blanchlibrary@fingal.ie
Donabate	01 890 5609	donabate.library@fingal.ie
Garristown	01 835 5020	garristownlibrary@fingal.ie
Howth	01 890 5026	Howth.library@fingal.ie
Malahide	01 870 4430	malahidelibrary@fingal.ie
Rush	01 870 8414	rushlibrary@fingal.ie
Skerries	01 890 5671	skerrieslibrary.library@fingal.ie
Swords	01 890 5582	swordslibrary@fingal.ie
Mobile Library Service	01 890 6719	mobile.libraries@fingal.ie
Housebound Library Service	01 860 4290	housebound.library@fingal.ie
Local Studies and Archives	01 870 4486	Local.Studies@fingal.ie

Tá Leabharlanna Fhine Gall ar na Meáin Shóisialta

Fingal Libraries are on Social Media |    