

CELBRIDGE • CO. KILDARE

SWIFT & VANESSA FESTIVAL



PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Programme of Festival Events 2026

THURSDAY 9TH JULY

Full Stops & Comments Writers' Group: Book Launch

8pm · Kildrought House Pub (upstairs), St.Patrick's Park

Free Entry

Book launch. Full Stops and Comments Writing Group invite you to the launch of their new anthology of short stories, reminiscences and poems, "Bees Make Honey". Presented by Eoghan Corry.



FRIDAY 10TH JULY

The Great Celbridge Table Quiz

8pm · McMahon's Pub, Celbridge

Entry €10 per person at the door

A fun multiple-choice table quiz to warm up for the festival, four per table. Topics span Gulliver's Travels, local history, music, current affairs and celebrity gossip. Funds raised go towards the festival.



MONDAY 13TH JULY

Clare Embroidery Workshop – from the Time of Swift

2pm – 4pm · Celbridge Library

Free Entry

In the 1700s a collection of embroidery patterns called Dublin Core were printed. In this workshop we will work one of these patterns in Clare Embroidery, the unique Red, White and Blue heritage embroidery from Co. Clare.

Suitable for beginners. All materials provided. Maximum 10 attendees.

This workshop is hosted by Christina Kearney, a local lacemaker and promoter of Irish Heritage Embroideries.

Register now:



TUESDAY 14TH JULY

World-Building & the Power of the Journey: A Gulliver's Travels-Inspired Writing Workshop

10am – 12pm · The Acre Project, Maynooth Road, Celbridge, W23W0XK

Tickets: €20

With Krystal Sweedman. A two-hour workshop using prompts inspired by Swift's world-building satire and journey narrative to spark new creative work, whatever you are writing.

Book now:



TUESDAY 14TH JULY

Swift: Blackout Poetry Workshop

2pm – 3.30pm · Celbridge Library

Free Entry

Blackout poetry is a process where you make a poem from any printed material by blacking out the words you don't want to use. In this workshop we will be using the writing of Jonathan Swift.

Suitable for beginners. All materials provided. Maximum 10 attendees. This workshop is hosted by Christina Kearney, a member of the Swifter's Writing Group.

Register now:



TUESDAY 14TH JULY

Performance Workshop for Writers

7pm – 9pm · The Slip Hall, Celbridge

Free for festival performers

Actor and playwright Stewart Roche leads a performance workshop for writers taking part in the festival.



WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY

Gulliver: Bricks & Scripts Workshop for Children

4pm – 5pm · Celbridge Library

Free Entry

In this workshop we will teach children about Universal Design through building scenes for a play or film using Lego. The theme of this workshop is Gulliver's Travels.

Register now:



The workshop is a collaboration between Celbridge Disability Access Group, Celbridge Library and HP Enterprise volunteer programme.

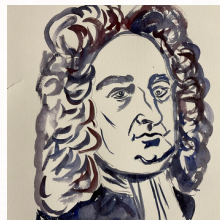
Maximum 15 attendees. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY

Abbey Art Exhibition & Sculptor Jarlath Daly Exhibition

Launch Wed 15 July, 7.30pm – 9pm · Exhibition daily 11am–5pm, Thurs 16 – Sat 18 July · Hunting Room, Castletown House, Celbridge

Free Entry



WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY

Art Workshop: The Art of Letting Go

Two sessions: 4pm–6pm or 7.30pm–9.30pm · The Slip Hall, Christ Church Castletown.

Ticket: €20

A relaxed, guided creative session with Jackie Lohan, no experience needed. Play with acrylic inks, switch off the inner critic and leave with your own piece. All materials and a welcome drink provided.

Book now:



THURSDAY 16TH JULY

Literary Evening: In Conversation with Mary O'Donnell & Martina Murphy

6.30pm – 8.15pm · Castletown House, Celbridge

€15 | Concession €10 | Children free

An evening with two best selling authors: Martina Murphy in discussion with Geraldine O'Brien, and Mary O'Donnell in discussion with Dr. Shauna Gilligan.

Book now:



THURSDAY 16TH JULY

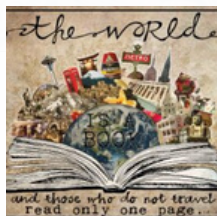
Travel the world with Celbridge Library

11.30pm – 12.30pm · Celbridge Library

Free Entry. Drop in. No registration required.

People are drawn to books about other cultures for many reasons. Maybe you are interested in the travel experience, the textiles, the local cuisine or just a general interest in a country. Do you prefer to escape into a fictional new world?

In this roundtable event we will have a casual discussion about some of the more famous travel writers like Dervla Murphy, Paul Theroux, Bill Bryson and Elizabeth Gilbert. Or fictional travel writers like Tolkien, Steinbeck and Jonathan Swift to name a few. There will be a selection of books available at the library in advance of this event if you are looking for inspiration.



FRIDAY 17TH JULY

Swift, Vanessa & The Sluttery by Cathy Conlon: Author Reading & Conversation

5.30pm – 7.15pm · Hunting Room, Castletown House, Celbridge

€15 | Concession €10 | Children free | 25% off with Festival Pass

Join us for a reading and discussion with Cathy Conlon about her new book *Swift, Vanessa & The Sluttery*. A historical novel, it explores the intrigue between Jonathan Swift and Esther van Homrigh of Celbridge Abbey for whom Swift coined the name 'Vanessa'. This is a book of particular significance for Celbridge, where their relationship developed along the banks of the Liffey and was immortalised in their correspondence and his poem *Cadenus and Vanessa*.

Book now:



FRIDAY 17TH JULY

SUSO Gospel Choir Concert

8pm · Christ Church, Celbridge

€15 | Concession €10 | Children free | 25% off with Festival Pass

SUSO Gospel Choir are no strangers to a festival stage and can't wait to bring all the good vibes at this year's Swift and Vanessa festival. Expect uplifting anthems that will bring all the good vibes, the high energy, the feel good factor and that contagious gospel sound. SUSO stands for SpeakUp SingOut – and this choir loves nothing more than doing just that.

Book now:



SATURDAY 18TH JULY

Writing Workshop: The Art of the Plot

10am – 12pm · Michelangelo's Restaurant, Main Street, Celbridge

Ticket: €20 | 25% off with Festival Pass

Best-selling author Martina Murphy tackles the problems writers meet when crafting a story, with simple, fun exercises to lift your writing to the next level.

Book now:



SATURDAY 18TH JULY

Swift's Salon

12.15pm – 1.30pm · Christ Church, Celbridge

€15 | Concession €10 | Children free | 25% off with Festival Pass

Saturday afternoon pass: €25

Best-selling *Between 1724 and 1734* Swift hosted writers' evenings in Dublin. In his honour, the Salon shares new writing interspersed with music.

Book now:



SATURDAY 18TH JULY

Gulliver's Children's Crafts Day

2pm – 5pm · Grounds of Christ Church, Celbridge

Free Entry

Explore Gulliver's travels through arts and crafts with The Craft Corner, face painting and entertainment. Bring your good cheer and lots of enthusiasm!



SATURDAY 18TH JULY

In Conversation with Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan

2pm – 2.45pm (book signing till 3.30pm) · Christ Church, Celbridge

€15 | Concession €10 | Children free | 25% off with Festival Pass
Saturday afternoon pass: €25

Best selling author, speaker and professor of psychology Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan in conversation about her writing and memoirs, with author Mary O'Donnell.

Book now:



SATURDAY 18TH JULY

In Conversation with Dearbhla Mescal

3.30pm–5pm · Christ Church, Celbridge, W23 TD37

€15 | Concession €10 | Children free | 25% off with Festival Pass
Saturday afternoon pass: €25

Poetry lover and curator of joy Dearbhla Mescal invites you on a journey of reflection through her first collection of poems and musings. Interviewed by novelist Dr. Shauna Gilligan.

Book now:



SATURDAY 18TH & SUNDAY 19TH JULY

Youth Art Exhibition

Sat 18 July 2pm–6pm · Sun 19 July 1pm – 5pm, The Slip Hall, Celbridge

Free Entry

Come along and support young artists in your local town. A space for young people to exhibit their artwork to the community of Celbridge. For all ages and all ranges of artwork, from paintings to photographs to handmade jewellery.



SATURDAY 18TH JULY

Deirdre Masterson & Ronan Tynan in Concert

8pm · Christ Church, Celbridge, W23 TD37

€25 | Concession €20 | Children free | 25% off with Festival Pass

A beautiful evening of music marking 300 years of Gulliver's Travels. Tenor Ronan Tynan and soprano Deirdre Masterson, with violinist Lynda O'Connor, accompanist David Wray and 15 ensemble members from the Irish College of Music Theatre.

Book now:



SATURDAY 18TH JULY



Saturday Afternoon Pass

Christ Church, Celbridge, W23 TD37

€25 - 3 events in 1 ticket (€20 OFF!)

- Swift's Salon, 12.15pm – 1.30pm.
- In Conversation with Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan, pm – 2.45pm (book signing till 3.30pm)
- In Conversation with Dearbhla Mescal, 3.30pm–5pm

Book now:



SUNDAY 19TH JULY



Gulliver's Travels 300th Anniversary Celebration

12.30pm – 3.30pm · HuntingRoom, CastletownHouse, Celbridge

Brobdingnag (standard) €20 | Lilliput (concession) €10 | Under 18 free | 25% off with Festival Pass

The festival will culminate in a celebration event to mark 300 years since the publication of Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift in 1726. Swift wrote Gulliver's Travels during the period in which he visited 'Vanessa' in Celbridge Abbey. Come along for a special afternoon of talks, readings, a launch of satirical cartoons, discussion, music and a reception.

Of the book, George Orwell said *'If I had to make a list of six books which were to be preserved when all others were destroyed, I would certainly put Gulliver's Travels among them.'*

Celbridge library will be stocking many copies of this satirical and entertaining book and it is also available as from the library's Borrow Box as an e-book. Come along to find out more and celebrate its anniversary!

The celebration includes an overview of the book and its humour and satire by Dr. Brendan Twomey; a performance of Telemann's Gulliver's Suite; the launch of four cartoons based on Gulliver's voyages created by Harry Burton for the festival; and a reading of a short story by Eamon Burke 'Donald and the Dean'. These will be followed by a discussion on "Gulliver @ 300; still relevant after all these years?" led by Dr. Twomey and Professor Daniel Carey, President of the Royal Irish Academy. The event will be followed by a reception from 3.30-4.30pm.

Book now:



SUNDAY 19TH JULY

Purple Lama Market

11am – 4pm · The Slip Hall, Celbridge

Free Entry

A vibrant market of the best in local artisan foods and crafts. Pop in to meet the vendors and pick up tips on their unique offerings.



SUNDAY 19TH JULY

Dara Mini Market

Dara The Hub, MainStreet, Celbridge

Free Entry

A mini market at Dara The Hub as part of the festival.



Sponsors

Thank you to all of our sponsors - we are incredibly grateful for all your support.

Funded by Kildare County Council and Celbridge Leixlip Municipal District Local Property Tax.

With thanks to all Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District Councillors for grant allocation.

A very warm thanks to festival sponsors Celbridge Tidy Towns, Intel and CiviQ. Thanks also to Kildare Library Service for support and engagement.



Contact

For questions, to learn more, or to discuss accessibility requirements please contact us at:

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