

Merriman Summer School 17th -23rd August '08

The 2008 Merriman Summer School will take place in Ennis, Co. Clare and the School Director is **Brian Ó Dálaigh**, a native of the town.

At a time of reflection and readjustment in Irish society, the School's twin themes of continuity and change should prove both timely and topical. It is entirely appropriate that Cumann Merriman, after many years' absence, should return to the county town of Clare, where the Merriman School first began over forty years ago. The main proceedings will take place in the **Glór Theatre**, the town's premier entertainment venue, with ancillary activities being held in the **Clare Museum** building.

A stellar list of speakers will provide a stimulating focus for discussion. Topics to be explored include immigration and diversity, the future of the regional economy, the role of traditional music in an increasingly commodified society and modern sexuality. The main focus of the daytime lectures will be on the history of the **Thomond** region and on County Clare's various contributions to Irish society. As always, the Merriman Summer School is bilingual, with most of the proceedings in English.

Doctor Brian Maurer, medical director of the Irish Heart, Ireland's foremost heart surgeon and another native of Ennis, will officially open the School on the evening of Sunday the 17th. **Professor David Fitzpatrick** of the School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin will give the opening lecture, *Politics and Irish Life Revisited* at 8.30.

Other highlights of the programme include:

- * **Marc Coleman**, economist and media commentator, who will address the predicted recovery of Ireland's population to 8 million during this century and its regional implications in a lecture entitled *Back to the Future 2041*.
- * **Carmel Wynne** on *Using Neurolinguistic Programming to Re_story Merriman's Sexual Dream*
- * **Fintan Vallely** on the challenges facing traditional music with a lecture entitled *Taste Tourism and Tyranny: Is Clare the "special" place for traditional music at all?*
- * **Running Beast**, the Wednesday evening show, which explores the experiences of the Hugh O'Neill in Rome.
 - o This will be performed by award_winning actor/writer **Donal O'Kelly** to music by Celtic Music Prize winning composer **Michael Holohan** for uilleann pipes (Mick O'Brien), string quartet (Máire Bhreathnach, Steve Larkin, Simone Mendonca and Diane O'Keeffe), double bass (Dan Bodwell), harpsichord (composer Michael Holohan) and percussion (Robbie Harris).
 - o **Donal O'Kelly's** stunning one man shows (including the acclaimed *Catalpa*) have played to capacity audiences internationally. Running Beast is described as a *chamber_orchestra historical trad rap* and is much anticipated.
- * A special commemorative session on **Dr. Patrick Hillery** and his era. Dr. Hillery was patron of Cumann Merriman for many years.

1. **Dr. John Walsh** of TCD, his official biographer, will outline the main contours of the former President's life.
2. **John Feeney** of RTE will present and comment on his television programme *Dr. Patrick Hillery, President, 1976–1990*.
3. **Fiachra Ó Ceallaigh**, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin, will share his personal recollections of Dr. Hillery.

The Irish language strand of morning lectures will feature:

- * Méidhbhín Ní Úrdail, Vincent Morley, Stiofán Newman and Eilís Ní Dheá, who will give lectures on **Thomond literature**.
- * The “Cúirt an Mheán Lae” **poetry readings**, which have become a cherished part of the School. This year's readers are Colm Breathnach, Bríd Ní Mhóráin, Medhb McGuckian and Micheal O'Siadhail.
- * The regular “Renew Your Irish” **language classes**.

As usual, dancing will feature prominently at the School, with **set dancing classes** every day and Club Merriman every night.

The School will visit the recently excavated Bronze Age hill fort of **Mooghaun**, Quin Friary and the ancient inauguration site of the King of Thomond at **Magh Adhair**. The archaeologist **Eoin Grogan** will lead the tour and **Colmán Ó Clabaigh**, author of *Franciscans in Ireland 1400–1534*, will outline the history of Quin Friary.

Pauline Bewick's acclaimed exhibition *A Visual Translation of the Midnight Court* will be on display in the new Clare County Council Offices during the School.

Clare History and Society, by Geography Publications will be launched during the School. This long awaited book is perhaps the most important history of the county to be published since James Frost's History of Clare in 1893.

Further details about the 2008 Cumman Merriman Summer School are available at:

1. **Web:** www.merriman.ie
2. **Email:** eolas@merriman.ie
3. **Telephone:** 086 382 0671 (general enquiries)

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www.glor.ie

Clare Museum

www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/claremuseum