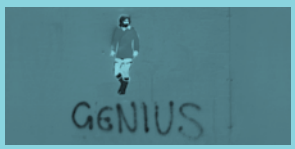
My NI






A hilarious one
of the
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GRAND OPERA HOUSE




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My NI

Welcome to a love story for Northern Ireland. We're passionate about our people, landscape, culture, arts and heritage. We also love the stories that bring that passion to life. Stories about our great achievements and intimate memories, beautiful scenery and unique traditions. Our stories, told with pride, warmth and humour by us, the people of Northern Ireland. Stories that inspire, enthuse and entertain, and most of all, help us share our passion for our country with each other and our many visitors.

The first book in this series was so popular that we've decided to add another chapter or two. There are so many great new stories to tell, like the centenary of Titanic's maiden voyage and the amazing new Giant's Causeway visitor centre. Also in Derry~Londonderry they're celebrating UK City of Culture 2013 and the 400th anniversary of their famous walls in the same year! New faces, new stories, same passion.

Welcome to My NI!

Find out more.
Click: **discovernorthernireland.com**

Contents

06/23
Arts that inspire
— Ulster Hall
— The MAC
— Ulster Museum
— Northern Ireland Rocks
— Brian Friel
— Armagh Public Library
— City of Song
— Belfast Zoological Gardens

24/45
Food that delights
— James St South
— Ditty's Bakery
— Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory
— Alan Coffey, Fishmonger
— Dulse
— Lough Neagh Eels
— Bushmills Distillery
— Finnebrogue
— Ulster Fry
— Home

46/59
A landscape that captivates
— The Walled City
— Mourne Mountains
— Finn McCool and the Giant's Causeway
— Fermanagh Lakes
— Marble Arch Caves
— Sperrin Mountains

60/73
A unique heritage
— Linenopolis
— Samson and Goliath
— Newforge House
— Morelli's
— Belleek Pottery
— Banks of the Foyle Hallowe'en Carnival

74/89
People to be proud of
— Saint Patrick
— Harry Ferguson
— Sir James Galway
— Mary Peters
— Martin Lynch
— George Best
— Seamus Heaney

90/111
Stories
— Titanic
— CS Lewis
— Cave Hill
— Rathlin Island
— Springhill House
— Florence Court
— How Setanta became Cúchulainn
— Major General Ross
— Fishing alongside seals
— Ulster American Folk Park

112/137
Your NI

"That's the beauty of our festivals – laid back but packing a mighty punch."

Northern Ireland rocks **14/15**

"We didn't have the biggest giants here, but they were the smartest."

Finn McCool and the Giant's Causeway **52/53**

"...he saw Titanic steaming out of the lough. He searched for his da waving back, but he couldn't see him on the great ship...he would never see his father again."

Titanic **92/93**

"I went for gold, I won gold and I brought it back for you."

Dame Mary Peters **82/83**

"I wish I could ask him where he got the idea for Aslan, because I think I know."

CS Lewis **94/95**

"Once a symbol of division the walls are now perceived as a unifying force, something we all cherish and can't wait to show off to the world in 2013."

The Walled City **48/49**

Arts that inspire

"To be honest, I never even went to the theatre, I just thought it would have been a waste of a good evening. Then my boyfriend dragged me to 'The History of the Troubles (Accordin' to my Da)'. I never knew theatre could be like that. It was better than a week's holiday."

MAURA
ENNISKILLEN

"Everyone should have their first gig at the Ulster Hall. That great moment you will never forget."



Ulster Hall

"Everyone should have their first gig at the Ulster Hall. That great moment you will never forget. It's been the initiation into rock and roll for thousands of people. One of the essential rituals of the Ulster Hall is to go down hours beforehand and stand in the queue and be part of that ceremony of waiting to get in, getting to know people in the queue. I remember standing there and seeing some of my first punk rockers, with multi-coloured hair, safety pins and badges. That was mind-blowing.

The Belfast Punk community emerged from a famous Clash gig at the Ulster Hall in 1977 that was cancelled at the last minute. They couldn't get the insurance and the show was called off. It provided a moment of solidarity. The Clash came back several times and in 1978 I was hanging around that same venue for the band's sound check. Then I took them for a walk around Belfast city centre, up Royal Avenue. They rocked the place in the evening."

STUART BAILIE
MUSIC JOURNALIST



The MAC

"Plans for the MAC really started taking shape in the early 2000s. By that time it was clear that Belfast needed a truly world class arts centre that could act as a flagship for the Cathedral Quarter, the city's fast developing cultural heartland, and meet the needs of our local artistic community.

The tender for design went to leading design companies around the world and was won by a young Belfast company, Hackett Hall McKnight, whose idea was for an iconic building that reflected its Belfast roots but which had an international context and facilities that could match those of any leading arts centre in the world. It's built of Belfast brick and clad in Antrim basalt and has already become one of the city's most striking landmarks already.

The process of creating the building was unique in that writers, artists, dancers, festival programmers and the like were involved in each step of design. No detail was overlooked. We have a climate-controlled gallery, for instance, that allows us to showcase works of art that couldn't have been shown in this country before.

I'm very proud of our three year partnership with the Tate, which kicked off with the acclaimed LA-based artist Robert Therrien. Our artistic programme is meticulously planned to appeal to a broad spectrum of people. We work with talented artists just beginning their careers right through to the world's finest artists, musicians, dance and theatre companies.

Since opening in April 2012, The MAC has truly been embraced by the people; in the first 18 weeks we have welcomed over 110,00 visitors, nearly as many as our prediction for the whole year. The building is designed to invite you in and encourage you to stay and we're delighted that many locals work here with their laptops, tapping into the building's creative energy (not to mention our free WiFi!)

From our very own opening show, Owen McCafferty's Titanic (Scenes from the British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry 1912,) we've had lots of momentous occasions but perhaps my highlight of the year so far is In the Court of... This is a unique festival were we ask a household name to curate a week of events and activities here at the MAC. The inaugural week was curated by Duke Special (AKA Pete Wilson), who chose an eclectic mix of artists and performers who are special to him, including the Blockheads and Cathy Davey, who hosted an enchanting musical evening.

Belfast people say they feel the MAC has been part of their lives forever. I don't think there could be a better compliment."

GILLIAN MITCHELL
ARTISTIC PROGRAMMER MAC

"built of Belfast brick and clad in Antrim basalt it has already become one of the city's most striking landmarks."



Ulster Museum

"The best thing in the new Ulster Museum is the largest real dinosaur fossil in Ireland. It's a skeleton of a dinosaur called an Edmontosaurus and is six metres long. That's about four times as big as me. There's also a replica of a Triceratops which lived at about the same time and the skull of a Tyrannosaurus. I really liked the films they have there, it makes you think you could walk into a dinosaur anytime."

PAUL
LISBURN
9 YEARS OLD

"My favourite exhibit at the Ulster Museum is a mummy called Takabuti. It's amazing to think she lived over two and half thousand years ago. She comes from a city in ancient Egypt called Thebes and would have been from a rich family because she was made into a mummy. Only rich families could afford that. I sometimes wonder what she would think if she knew she ended up in Belfast. She was the first mummy to be opened up in Ireland back in 1835 so people were really excited to see her in those days. Now the Museum has been restored they've made a sculpture of her face so you can see what she looked like. A lot better than she looks now anyway. Dad says she's known as the oldest bleached blonde in Belfast on account of her hair."

ORLA
BELFAST
12 YEARS OLD



Northern Ireland rocks

The sun is sinking over the rolling green hills around Tubby's Farm near Hillsborough. Giant soap bubbles hover before us, people are dancing like dervishes in the mud as the Rupture Dogs blast out their powerful grungy rock. Me, I'm sitting on a folding chair with a glass of wine, thinking, "if only life were like this!" I was here the year Tubby (Michael Magowan) and his wife Vanessa gave out armfuls of sunflowers grown on their farm to the thousand or so people assembled. Now there's five times that number.

It's for all ages (the kids are getting into the spirit in the Narnian enchanted glade Tubby has created – you should have heard them scream when the White Witch appeared) and tastes. There's drumming circles, crazy comic acts, massages and even a cocktail bar! It's about sharing, breaking down barriers and just having fun. You get the feeling the organisers are doing it for us, not them.

We get the same chilled vibe on the annual pilgrimage to Eagle's Rock. Sure I'm here to see the return of legendary rockers Therapy? but this is Glasgowbury - there's a stack of great acts, from total unknowns to emerging stars, like Fighting With Wire and LeFaro, getting the crowds going. Here in the beautiful Sperrins it feels like we've formed our own little nation. Maybe the facilities are better than its first year (you had to be there), but the 'small but massive' mantra still sums it up. Intimate but powerful.

We've been surfing through summer at festivals thoughout Northern Ireland. August saw us getting down to Thin Lizzy and the baggy trousered mayhem of Madness at the Custom House Square in the heart of Belfast for Belsonic. Then a dream come true, the mighty Foo Fighters at Tennant's Vital barely a mile or two away. No time for Pigstock in Killinchy this year, but we'll be back for next summer. That's the beauty of our festivals – laid back but packing a mighty punch. See you next year!

KATIE DOHERTY
DERRY~LONDONDERRY

"That's the beauty of our festivals – laid back but packing a mighty punch."

Brian Friel

"We wouldn't be celebrating the opening of the Brian Friel Theatre and Research Centre at Queen's if it weren't for a very distinguished Chancellor of Queen's in the 1960s. I'm talking about my foster father, the mighty Sir Tyrone Guthrie. Because it was he who took me under his generous wing and brought me with him to Minneapolis almost fifty years ago and initiated me into the cold and indeed cruel practicalities of theatre, but also into its trembling mysteries and profound joys. So I look on the opening of this wonderful theatre as the completion of a circle.

Because of that mighty Chancellor, that foster father, this opening is really a kind of homecoming for me. Thanks to Tyrone Guthrie, Queen's is a 'home place' for me.

Now Northern Ireland has the splendid new theatre and research centre at Queen's. We have the new, born-again Lyric and the huge enthusiasm and expertise in both places so there's no reason at all why Belfast shouldn't take its place as a major theatre city in these islands. So Belfast clearly has the talent and the passion and it now has the facilities and I hope it all happens."

BRIAN FRIEL
PLAYWRIGHT

"So Belfast clearly has the talent and the passion and it now has the facilities and I hope it all happens."



"Carved in stone above the Library's public entrance is the original Greek inscription, ΨYXHCIATPEION, meaning 'the healing place of the soul'."

Armagh Public Library

"Armagh Public Library was founded in 1771 during the city's 18th century renaissance. It was part of Archbishop Richard Robinson's vision of a university. Today it is a reference library and a museum, open to visitors and researchers, individuals and groups. Its collections include early printed books, illuminated manuscripts, prints, gems and coins. These are on display in the Library's Long Room and in No 5 Vicars' Hill, nearby. Carved in stone above the Library's public entrance is the original Greek inscription, ΨYXHCIATPEION, meaning 'the healing place of the soul'.

Built in 1772, No 5 Vicars' Hill once housed the Diocesan Registry, whose civic and church records are now held in PRONI. Following restoration, this deceptively large building has an unusual interior and displays not only historic diocesan records but also items from the collections of the Library, with interactive displays and interpretation.

The Library's most famous book is an early edition of Gulliver's Travels, which has Jonathan Swift's own handwritten corrections in the margins. Swift had strong personal links with Armagh. While staying with his friends, the Acheson family, in Markethill, he was known to run up and down the stairs to keep fit on rainy days. Their eccentric guest, however, was the author of one of the most remarkable contributions to world literature. He also wrote some of his satirical works and poetry while staying with them. Swift, no doubt, would have worshipped at St Patrick's Cathedral nearby, and so would have known this area well."

GREGORY DUNSTAN,
KEEPER, ARMAGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

City of Song

"I get so excited when I think about UK City of Culture 2013 I could walk on air! Art is part of our DNA. I was born into a house where my father played the piano and sang and my mother was part of a drama group. I got bunions walking the streets of Derry on tiptoes as I yearned to be a ballerina! This is a city of song, music and drama, which has given birth to great singers like Josef Locke and nurtured poets like Seamus Heaney and writers like Brian Friel. The Playhouse has taken on that Derry ethos of planting seeds and making the arts completely accessible.

In 2013 there will be amazing things happening as part of City of Culture. The All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil will see 250,000 people arriving in the city for ten days of non-stop dancing and music in August. As someone who was acting director of Derry's Orchard Gallery, the only gallery to win the Turner Prize, I am thrilled it is coming to Derry for the year, the first time the Turner Prize has left England.

At the Playhouse we have some fantastic projects scheduled for City of Culture. We kick things off in December 2012 with Farewell, a play by Claire Dwyer Hogg. It signals the return of the Field Day Theatre Company, founded here by Brian Friel and Stephen Rea, who is directing and acting in Farewell. Field Day has commissioned another play from Claire and one from Sam Shepard, who ran an actors' workshop at the Playhouse early in 2012, for City of Culture.

We have always fostered a peace-building role at the Playhouse and for 2013 we have commissioned two award-winning writers from both sides of the community. Belfast's Gary Mitchell is writing a sequel to his play Energy about a punk band, and Seamus Keenan is writing about the night the Maze burned down.
As part of our collaboration on youth projects with the National Theatre we're presenting an adaptation by Rosemary Jenkinson of The Beaux Stratagem by George Farquhar, whose 18th century theatre was next door to us.

Much of our work is with young people and we're delighted to be welcoming David Oddie and the Indra Congress whose ethos is conflict resolution through art. Young people from all over the world will be sharing experiences, performing and exploring their different cultures in a final celebration.

City of Culture will inspire people down the generations and we are really looking forward to playing our part!"

PAULINE ROSS,
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR
OF THE PLAYHOUSE THEATRE



> "The Playhouse has taken on that Derry ethos of planting seeds and making the arts completely accessible."

"In the evenings she would take Sheila for walks around the neighbourhood and at night she slept in the Austin's garage."





Belfast Zoological Gardens

"The story of Sheila the baby elephant and her guardian angel, sums up the close relationship between keepers and animals at the Zoo. During the Second World War when Belfast suffered terribly from bombing raids, there was great concern for the animals. With so many men away at war, the Zoo saw some of its first female keepers, and one of these was Denise Austin, who lived in a house in North Belfast. Not wanting the young elephant to be alone in the evening, when the danger of bombing raids was greatest, Denise walked Sheila the short distance to her home on the Whitewell Road after work. In the evenings she would take Sheila for walks around the neighbourhood and at night she slept in the Austin's garage.

In the morning Denise walked Sheila back to the Zoo. Sometimes on the way she would stop at Thrones Stores, near her house, to get some stale bread for her charge.

The Austin family all came to love Sheila. She was given hay from the family farm, which, with the rationing, was a much better quality than the Zoo could give her. The funny thing is the other staff at the Zoo didn't find out about Sheila's second home until she chased a dog into a neighbour's garden, breaking the fence. The neighbours complained to the head keeper, Dick Foster, and Sheila was grounded. But Denise's concern for Sheila didn't end. She would come in at night during the air raids and rub her ears to keep her calm."

LINDA FREW
ZOO KEEPER

Food that delights

"I'd been out of Northern Ireland for ten years, living in the States. When I got back I wanted something that told me I was home for sure. I asked my mum to put an Ulster fry on the pan. The smell of the rashers and sausages frying, the egg and tomatoes sizzling, the potato bread, made fresh by my mother. I knew I really was home."

JEAN
STRABANE

James St South

"I grew up loving food. For me the simple things are the most beautiful, just smelling the aroma of the succulent organic tomatoes John McCormick grows at Helen's Bay, inspires me.

I believe Belfast is one of the UK's top three food cities. It might not be about Michelin stars but we have so many great chefs. I worked for Paul Rankin for five years and learned so much from him. He was a catalyst for everything that has happened in Northern Ireland and the first to realise the importance of the incredible produce we have here. 75 per cent of everything we use at James St South is produced within thirty miles of us. In this country we have the finest grazing ground, wonderful milk and great meat. So much has happened here in the last decade, we're really making the most of what we have. Like the amazing D rump we cook here.

It's hung for 55 days and just melts in the mouth. We have a Josper grill at our new Bar + Grill. It seals in the flavour and moisture of the steaks so you're really doing justice to the quality of meat we have here. Our local produce gives us a fantastic advantage.

As a chef you mature, constantly trying things but one thing you learn is that when you have produce of that quality, you don't mess with it. Keep it simple. There are so many great suppliers now. For instance, we get fantastic wild duck from John Bell at Lissara outside Downpatrick, superb pigeons from Hayley, Ireland's only female gamekeeper at Rademon Estate in Crossgar and Ireland's only hand-churned butter from Will and Allison at Abernethy.

We set up the cookery school here to pass on our passion for cooking. Recently John McCormick came in with a box of organic vegetables and as we talked, I cooked some dishes with them, letting people experience the flavours, such as the sweetness of the beautiful carrots. One woman turned out to be an American food analyst who was blown away by what we have in this country. So were the people from MTV who were in Belfast for the MTV EMA awards and had some parties here. They loved the friendliness of the people and the quality of the food and hotels. We need to shout about it more."

NIALL MCKENNA,
JAMES ST SOUTH



"In this country we have the finest grazing ground, wonderful milk and great meat."



Ditty's Bakery

"I'm the second generation of family bakers. My father started this bakery in Castledawson and now my nephews have joined me. When I was growing up the bakery was much smaller and it was very hard work. My parents were real grafters, starting at 3am every morning. I remember sometimes going out at 9am with my father in his van and we wouldn't be back until 10pm. He took the weekly newspapers too. It was a different way of life then. It wasn't uncommon for a housewife to buy 24 soda farls, and that would be supplemented by home baking too.

People around the world have a great response to our breads. I did a demonstration of our Northern Irish breads in Jersey, using buttermilk from local cows. I baked the breads in an old wood-fired oven there and the reaction was amazing. The chef who ran the restaurant said they had never made bread before, it was too time consuming, but he could turn our breads around in 40 minutes. It's something we need to hold on to and protect. It's so important.

All these traditions can be reinvented. It's what Northern Ireland should be trying to do - thinking backwards but with a modern approach. That's what we are doing with our oatcakes, which we've always made here. We use dulse in one variety, there's very few regions of the world where you can eat sea vegetables. We also use smoked oats, smoked on a flyscreen in the smoke house. It's a fantastic smell in the bakery when they're cooking. I can look for flavours all over the world but why bother when they're here?"

ROBERT DITTY
TRADITIONAL BAKER



"I can look for flavours all over the world but why bother when they're here?"

Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory

"Aunt Sandra was my mother's sister. Her friend, Donny, started his own candy shop on the Albertsbridge Road back in 1950 and they worked together making sweets there for thirty-five years. Donny had lost three fingers in a machine used to cut sticks of rock and he used the compensation to open the shop. People in East Belfast still talk about Donny's; generations of kids would have gone there. I've still got the hook on our factory door which they used to twist and stretch the Yellow Man and where Donny would leave me dangling from if I was naughty!

Aunt Sandra always talked of Donny's recipe book but I never saw it. I learned by watching her, a dollop here, a dollop there. Me and my brother had a grocery shop on the Castlereagh Road, and after Donny retired Aunt Sandra came to work for us. Everyone knew her and kept asking why were there no sweets, so we made space for her to make and sell them. In the end she was selling more sweets than we were selling fruit and veg. So we opened the Candy Factory, which is exactly how it would have looked in her and Donny's time.

Things have come full circle and people want to know how these old sweets are made again. There's a second and third generation of people who would go to Donny's who bring their grandchildren in to see the eighty minute old time candy and chocolate making show we put on here, so kids can see what they enjoyed in their childhood. People ask me why not move, but I wouldn't work anywhere else. East Belfast is coming again, we've got the interest in Van Morrison, CS Lewis and Georgie Best (who loved his sweets). People come from all over the world here. We've become so popular we have had to extend our premises to accommodate the numbers of individuals and groups who come here."

DAVID MOORE
AUNT SANDRA'S CANDY FACTORY



"You have to focus in this job. Many is the time I would take a phone call when making honeycomb and it would boil over and I'd have to scrape it off the floor with a hammer and chisel."



Alan Coffey

"It was always going to be fishing for me. I did think of the Merchant Navy but my grandmother wouldn't let me go, she said I was too young.

Our fish are very special. We're an island and the waters are so clean. The Irish Sea is emptied twice a day with the tides. The Atlantic is the same. The whole of the British Isles wants our fish. The fish is so fresh too, never more than two days on the boat and when it comes to us in Portavogie, (I'm now a wholesaler) we whisk it off to market in a day.

I have a stall in St. George's Market on Fridays and Saturdays. It's a fantastic place. It's a social thing too, you get to know the customers. It doesn't feel like work. The range of quality food there is unbelievable now. The good thing is there's a much greater awareness of what we have now. People are crying out for good quality fresh fish. Scallops and prawns are walking out.

The future for fish in this country is very bright. The stocks will recover and the boats that are still going will be in a very good position."

ALAN COFFEY
FISHMONGER





"If you've been celebrating in the pub at the fair, dulse will settle your stomach in the morning, or give you the thirst to go for the cure!"

Dulse

"I grew up here and as a child I would have gathered dulse from the rocks at low tide to sell to stallholders at the Auld Lammas Fair. It's a tradition in Ballycastle. Certain families have always gathered from the same places and they could tell you where the dulse was gathered from the look and taste. From Rathlin Island, for instance, the free flowing currents create a quite different taste. I vividly remember my mother frying dulse. It's a purply brownish colour when dry but when fried it turns bright green.

If you've been celebrating in the pub at the fair, dulse will settle your stomach in the morning, or give you the thirst to go for the cure!"

PETER MOLLOY
BALLYCASTLE MUSEUM

Lough Neagh Eels

"You might ask how a recipe can be a story but actually it's two stories. The first is the story of the amazing natural produce on our doorstep - Lough Neagh eels are probably the finest anywhere for smoking and in demand all over the world. The second story is the way something as traditional as eels from Lough Neagh can be easily combined with good, fresh ingredients to make a thoroughly contemporary dish. If you don't have access to Lough Neagh eels, good Northern Irish smoked mackerel or herring are the ideal alternatives. Two stories, one great, edible, ending. Happy eating!"

SIMON DOUGAN
THE YELLOW DOOR

Ingredients

- 100g pancetta or streaky bacon, thinly sliced
- 300g smoked Lough Neagh eel, skinned, filleted and cut into 3cm pieces
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 good handfuls of mixed baby leaf sharp salad leaves, such as chicory or frisée
- ½ bulb of fennel, very thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- 20 cherry vine tomatoes, halved
- 2 tbsp crème fraîche
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp finely grated fresh horseradish
- 2 tsp chopped dill

Method

Preheat the grill on high. Lay the pancetta or bacon in a grill pan or tray and cook under the grill until crisp. Turn off the grill and add the eel to the pan to warm slightly. Leave under the grill until the salad is ready.

For the crème fraîche dressing, mix the crème fraîche with the lemon juice, horseradish, dill and seasoning and set aside. Place the fennel and salad leaves in a bowl. Dress lightly with the olive oil, a squeeze of lemon juice and seasoning.

Divide the dressed salad among four plates. Add the pancetta or bacon, eel and cherry tomatoes. Drizzle a little of the crème fraîche dressing over the top and serve immediately.

Recipe from 'The Yellow Door, Our Story, Our Recipes' by Simon Dougan
published by The Blackstaff Press.









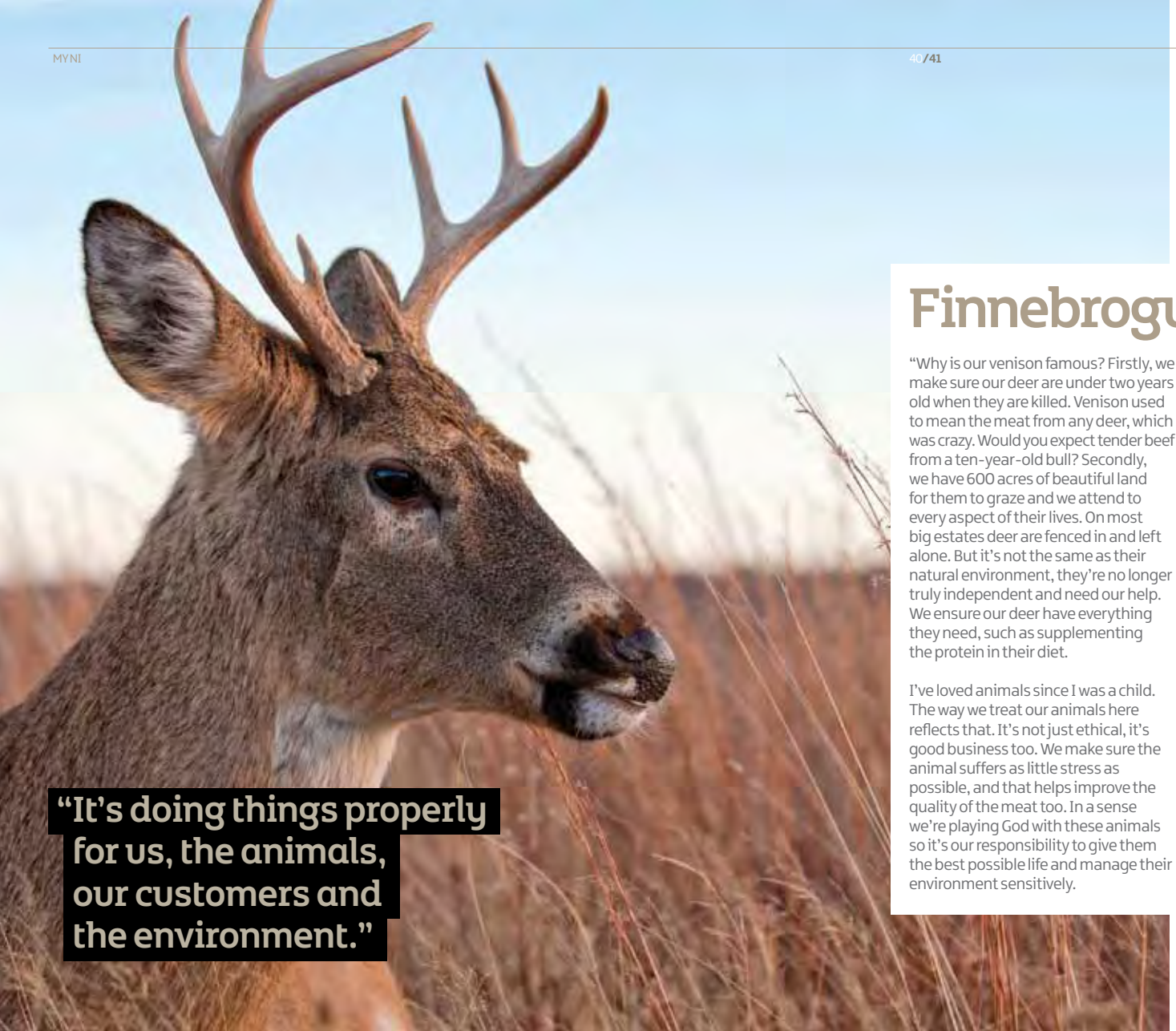
"People from the village are so proud of this place they always bring their visitors here."

Bushmills Distillery

"It was my fate to work here. I came here first a few years ago as a visitor with my girlfriend who comes from Ballycastle. People from the village are so proud of this place they always bring their visitors here. I fell in love with the Distillery, the old whitewashed buildings and the atmosphere of the place, especially when I heard the water they use for the whiskey is sourced from St Columb's Rill, my name. It had to be a sign. My girlfriend is now my wife and my favourite photo of us is taken that day at the bar in the Visitor Centre.

My favourite place to drink whiskey is the Giant's Causeway, which is just two miles from the distillery. I like to go at sunset with friends and toast the giant and tell stories about Finn McCool. It's a truly unique experience and a great combination. Not least because the water we use to make Bushmills runs on the same stretch of basalt rock that makes up the Giant's Causeway."

COLUM EGAN
MASTER DISTILLER
BUSHMILLS WHISKEY



"It's doing things properly for us, the animals, our customers and the environment."

Finnebrogue

"Why is our venison famous? Firstly, we make sure our deer are under two years old when they are killed. Venison used to mean the meat from any deer, which was crazy. Would you expect tender beef from a ten-year-old bull? Secondly, we have 600 acres of beautiful land for them to graze and we attend to every aspect of their lives. On most big estates deer are fenced in and left alone. But it's not the same as their natural environment, they're no longer truly independent and need our help. We ensure our deer have everything they need, such as supplementing the protein in their diet.

I've loved animals since I was a child. The way we treat our animals here reflects that. It's not just ethical, it's good business too. We make sure the animal suffers as little stress as possible, and that helps improve the quality of the meat too. In a sense we're playing God with these animals so it's our responsibility to give them the best possible life and manage their environment sensitively.

What inspires me? Money isn't the motivation. It's innovation and excellence. It's working with leading chefs like Heston Blumenthal, who orders regularly from us and who describes our venison as the best he has ever tasted. I've really enjoyed developing an award-winning range of outdoor bred pork sausages with Paul Rankin. We also make all M&S top tier sausages – lamb, pork, venison and beef.

We're working with university research teams to create healthier sausages and softer skins for our sausages, we're looking at ways to lock in succulence and collaborating with an Indian spice expert to grind spices at the very last minute so they are as fresh and flavoursome as possible. Our ethos is about healthy, pure food from animals who live good lives and sustainable materials for packaging. It's doing things properly for us, the animals, our customers and the environment. We're starting small but aim to grow big, doing the right thing."

DENIS LYNN
FINNEBROGUE

Ulster Fry

"I think the tradition of the Ulster fry must have come about from the farmhouse. People were thrifty. The soda bread was made with buttermilk, a by-product of butter. You'd put in a mix of flour and the reaction of the flour to the buttermilk gave it a lift and flavour. But a soda farl would last about three days. So come the third day the soda bread would be cut in half and then into quarters and fried with the bacon. Again, the potato bread was a by-product of a meal of potatoes. And the bacon? My two uncles on the home farm would take the knives they kept on top of the dresser and then you'd hear the squeals of the pig and the dogs barking and that evening there was the carcass of a pig hanging in the hay shed. They made their own bacon, wrapped in linen, salted and stored in my grandmother's bedroom. So there were the breads, the bacon, eggs, tomatoes if you grew them (the sausage, that would have been a luxury then). In a way it came from thriftiness, but it was a great cooked breakfast and now it's a world famous breakfast."

ROBERT DITTY
TRADITIONAL BAKER



Home

"When we opened Home in Callender Street it was Northern Ireland's first pop-up restaurant. The Merchant Hotel had hosted some candle-lit gourmet dinners in the drawing offices of the old Harland & Wolff headquarters, but Home was the real thing. The pop-up ethos is to find a vacant, low rent site and a flexible landlord and set up a restaurant for a fraction of the normal budget and with twice the imagination. It might be for a few days, a few weeks or a few months, but it gives you freedom to experiment and creates a unique atmosphere.

In May of 2012 we moved Home into a semi-permanent site in Wellington Street but the ethos remains the same. Much of our furniture still comes from Jill O'Neill's Re-Found, a network of artists who re-craft old furniture as lovely handcrafted pieces. If customers like what they're sitting on, they can buy it! Jill now has a pop-up space across the road, which will have rolling tenants of all kinds. Our front area will be totally renovated by a local artist every couple of months to keep that pop-up feel.

As far as possible everything is Northern Irish here, including the paintings and photographs on the walls. We've sold quite a few framed photos by a superb local photographer called George Pennock, including a beautiful shot of Titanic Belfast lit up by fireworks. We don't charge commission; after all they're helping dress our walls. Customers can also buy our beautiful wooden bowls, which are handcrafted from fallen trees in Tollymore Park.

We think it's important to tell the story of the produce we use, from the wonderful beers we serve from the Whitewater Brewery in the Mournes to the amazing organic carrots grown by Drew Fraser in Killinchy. In the evenings we use our deli counter to feature the produce of a particular supplier, such as the award-winning Kearney Blue Cheese from a new artisan cheese maker in Portaferry, James McClean. Pop-ups suit Northern Ireland. They're informal, relaxing, fun and generate a really sociable atmosphere. I love the way you get a guy in a suit eating a gourmet burger and chips next to a guy in jeans and T-shirt eating lobster. Since we moved here I've had quite a few calls from other restaurant owners, asking about the pop-up idea. I hope we'll inspire a whole new generation."

STEVE HALLER
HOME





"We think it's important to tell the story of the produce we use, from the wonderful beers we serve from the Whitewater Brewery in the Mournes to the amazing organic carrots grown by Drew Fraser in Killinchy."

A landscape that captivates

"I wanted somewhere special to propose to my girlfriend, so I took her to a little beach I love by Strangford Lough. The sunset there would take your breath away. As I felt in my pocket for the ring, she looked over at Slieve Donard standing out in the red sky, 'That has to be the most beautiful place on earth', she said. I put the ring back. The next day we climbed to the top of Slieve Donard.

As I was taking out the ring box, she saw Spelga Dam shimmering in the distance. 'Doesn't it look magical?', she said. The ring went back. We drove through the Mournes to Spelga Dam. We were totally alone. I took out the ring. 'Of course', she said, 'I thought you'd never ask'."

PETER
NEWCASTLE

The Walled City

"I remember visiting Derry as a child and being overwhelmed by the sheer magnificence of the walls – the most complete set in Ireland. Now I live here and am lucky enough to be curator of the Museum Service at the time we are celebrating their 400th anniversary.

Because Derry~Londonderry is the last walled city to be built in Europe, the walls are different in nature to those anywhere else. They also played a central role in events that changed the course of Irish history. They were used as defences in two major sieges, turning the fortunes of the Williamite War, and became the symbol of the plantation of Derry, which itself would become the template for the settlement of America. Though the city was founded by Saint Columba, who spread education and Christianity throughout Europe, the building of the walls saw the foundation of the modern city and our link to London.

I believe the 400th anniversary is so significant it was one of the reasons Derry~Londonderry was chosen as UK City of Culture 2013. There will be many events celebrating that incredible history held on the atmospheric walls themselves, while we will be staging the History of Derry in One Hundred Objects at the Tower Museum. This will include artefacts such as the city sword, which was given by The Honourable The Irish Society in 1616, and the name plate of the Minnehaha, one of the city's famous clipper ships that took emigrants to America. There will also be a comprehensive exhibition on the history of the Plantation at the Guildhall, just beneath the walls, when Derry's most important building is restored to its former glory.

Once a symbol of division the walls are now perceived as a unifying force, something we all cherish and can't wait to show off to the world in 2013."

CRAIG MCGUICKAN
THE WALLS

"Once a symbol of division the walls are now perceived as a unifying force, something we all cherish and can't wait to show off to the world in 2013."



Mourne Mountains

"The Mournes have been a beautiful backdrop to my life. I grew up in Rostrevor, on the edge of Carlingford Lough, and they would be the first thing I'd see when I got up in the morning. I would have played a lot by 'Fairy Glen' as a child and I still love to walk there. My father instilled a love of the Mournes in me. We'd go fishing, cycling, walking there together. He would get me up early and take me to 'Fiddler's Green' for a picnic. It's a clearing amongst some of Ireland's oldest oak trees, where people have always gone for entertainment.

I think part of their magic is because they're so accessible, you can walk them easily enough, there's no sheer drops or stark peaks. They seem to roll, invite you to come in and let your imagination run free.

I can't see a time when I won't paint the Mournes. They are an amazing playground; you can walk, hike, fish, do so many things, but they are much more than that. I have in my mind a painting I want to do. A childhood memory, of standing on the 'Cloughmore Stone', looking out at the Lough and jumping off into the light, following that mystery of the Mournes."

COLUM MCEVOY
ARTIST

"I can't see a time when I won't paint the Mournes. They are an amazing playground; you can walk, hike, fish, do so many things."

"We didn't have the biggest giants here, but they were the smartest."



Finn McCool and the Giant's Causeway

"The most exciting thing about going to the Giant's Causeway was seeing it come into being right in front of my eyes as the volcanic eruptions created these amazing steps over millions of years. You see it all on these big screens at the visitor centre. My little sister Eva watched the one about Finn McCool over and over until we dragged her away, but then she's not into science like me. It was good though, seeing how Finn McCool's wife tricked the Scottish giant who'd come to get him and was way bigger than him by dressing him as a baby. The Scottish giant saw him and thought if the baby's that size I'm not hanging around to meet his da. We didn't have the biggest giants here, but they were the smartest! So, the Scottish giant ran all the way back to Scotland smashing up the path Finn had made of rocks so he couldn't follow him. The little bit that was left is the Giant's Causeway. That's what Eva thinks anyway. She got a big surprise when she was peeping through the spyhole to see Finn and the Scottish giant growling at her. We also made these brilliant pictures rubbing crayons over the relief sketches of the famous characters and sights of the Causeway.

It was really cool standing on the grass roof of the visitor centre looking out over the coast and sea. You wouldn't believe anything was underneath it. We took this audio-guide which had photos and all, which told us what to look for and how to follow the trail down to the steps. Eva wanted to look for the clues like smoke coming from Finn's chimney. I won't spoil it by telling you what it really was.

You don't realise how incredible the Causeway stones are until you get up close. Watching Eva jump when I told her the Scottish giant was coming out the water was pretty good too."

JAMES (9),
COLERAINE

Fermanagh Lakes

"I've been angling since I was a kid, it's in the blood."

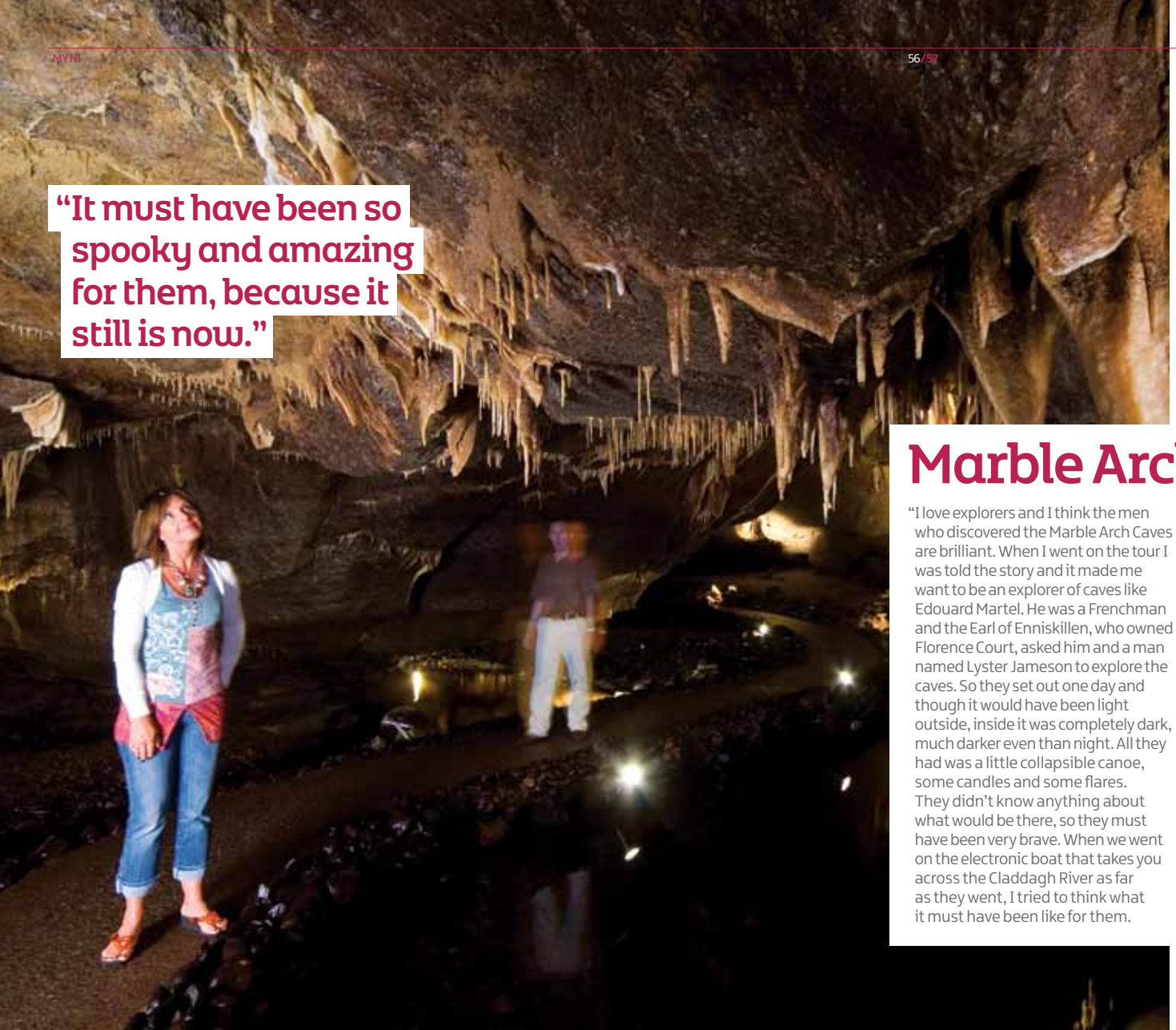




"I've been angling since I was a kid, it's in the blood. My dad would take me on a Saturday morning, first thing, to fish for brown trout. When we got a catch, he'd gut and clean it and take it to my granny's, where she'd grill it for a big family lunch. When we have visitors, I like to take them out on the boat on Lough Melvin. We use a 'Green Peter' fly pattern, which can take a brown trout, gillaroo or sonaghen; the other unique fish you get there. The gillaroo will put up a fight, but it's worth the sport because it's so tasty, and, believe it or not, you'll only find it in Lough Melvin. My dad told me the story why and I tell it to visitors now. The gillaroo has a gizzard which you'd usually only get in a fowl. The reason for this, is in the early Christian times here, a local pagan chief invited St. Brigid for dinner. He didn't really want her around so, as he knew she should only eat fish on a Friday, he served her chicken to annoy her! She threw it out into Lough Melvin, where it turned into a fish; the gillaroo. The only one of its kind in the world."

CIARAN SANDS
ANGLER





"It must have been so spooky and amazing for them, because it still is now."

Marble Arch Caves

"I love explorers and I think the men who discovered the Marble Arch Caves are brilliant. When I went on the tour I was told the story and it made me want to be an explorer of caves like Edouard Martel. He was a Frenchman and the Earl of Enniskillen, who owned Florence Court, asked him and a man named Lyster Jameson to explore the caves. So they set out one day and though it would have been light outside, inside it was completely dark, much darker even than night. All they had was a little collapsible canoe, some candles and some flares. They didn't know anything about what would be there, so they must have been very brave. When we went on the electronic boat that takes you across the Claddagh River as far as they went, I tried to think what it must have been like for them.

It is impossible to know the exact age of the caves, and some may go back millions of years, but a number of individual formations are estimated as being around 400,000 years old. These two would probably be the first people ever to see things like the stalactites, glistening in the candlelight, that hang from these massive chambers. It must have been so spooky and amazing for them, because it still is now. You'll never see anything like it. Martel said he thought the caves were so incredible they should be showcaves. He even named one chamber, the Grand Gallery, after the gallery in the Louvre in Paris. But it wasn't until 1985 that they were opened to everyone."

DANIEL
OMAGH
11 YEARS OLD



Sperrin Mountains

"When I was very young, I remember my grandfather and grandmother coming to visit us in a horse and trap. His name was Peadar Joe Haughey and he was the last Irish speaking shanachie (storyteller) in his parish, Termonaguirk. He himself would have spoken English as his second language, though his own mother would not have had a word of English. Until the 1940s, this part of the Sperrins, near the Creggan, would have been like the Gaeltacht of Donegal today. My grandfather would have had many people come to learn the local Irish dialect and sayings from him and listen to his stories.

These visitors would include great scholars. It would be a céilí house and there'd be music with the stories too. I started the Peadar Joe Haughey summer school, which is held in his old cottage, to continue those traditions. We have lectures on the native Irish speakers, from the area, and there are sessions of traditional music and dance and storytelling. My grandfather was known for the heartiness of his welcome and I want to extend that to all parts of the community."

FRANCIS CLARKE
AN CREAGÁN VISITOR CENTRE

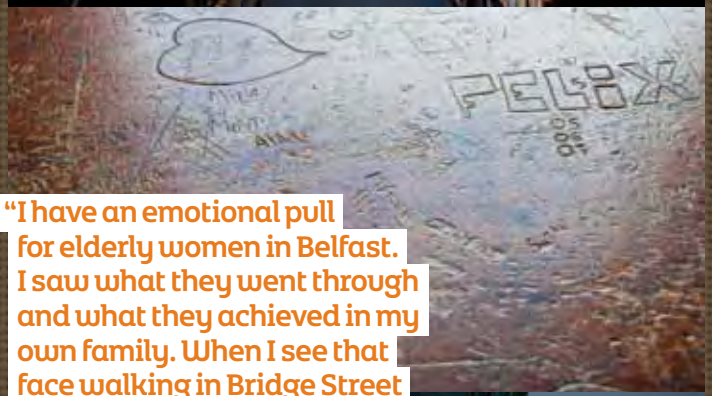
"...there are sessions of traditional music and dance and storytelling."

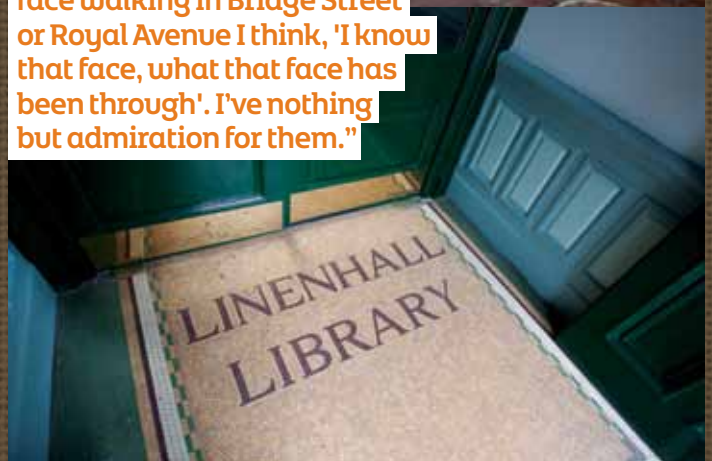
A unique heritage

"We had the biggest shipbuilding industry in the world, the largest tobacco and linen manufacturers, the biggest rope works and much more besides. Then there's Harry Ferguson, a genius if ever there was one, and Samuel Davidson, whose inventions meant ordinary people, throughout the world, could afford to drink good tea for the first time. I'm just telling you a small part of the story. We have some heritage here and it's time we let people know about it more."

JOHNNY
BANGOR, CO DOWN







"I have an emotional pull for elderly women in Belfast. I saw what they went through and what they achieved in my own family. When I see that face walking in Bridge Street or Royal Avenue I think, 'I know that face, what that face has been through'. I've nothing but admiration for them."

Linenopolis

"My play, 'Lay Up Your Ends' is about the women of Belfast's linen industry. The linen mills were by far the biggest employer of women in Belfast for over a century and my entire family, going way back, would have worked in them. In a sense Belfast, grew up around the linen industry, with terraces of housing created for the workers and much grander homes for the owners. There are also many important buildings in Belfast, like the Linen Hall Library, which were once linen warehouses. That's why Belfast was called 'Linenopolis'. But it's the women who worked in the mills we owe it to. They worked in the harshest of conditions, 6 days a week, 10 hours a day. On opening night at the Grand Opera House, I brought down 30 women who had worked in the mills, most in their 80's, one was 92.

I insisted they come on stage at the end. I wanted to pay tribute to these women who had given 40 to 50 years of their lives to the mills. They deserved to be in the spotlight for once. When they came out, the emotion was astonishing. They were given a prolonged standing ovation. People in the audience were crying, seeing these elderly women who had given so much and never been thanked for what they had done for this city.

I have an emotional pull for elderly women in Belfast. I saw what they went through and what they achieved in my own family. When I see that face walking in Bridge Street or Royal Avenue I think, 'I know that face, what that face has been through'. I've nothing but admiration for them."

MARTIN LYNCH
PLAYWRIGHT



"All you could see in the whole of Belfast were the tops of the two cranes."

"One of my most vivid memories as a child growing up was looking out of my bedroom window in North Belfast, which is higher than the rest of the city, and there was this thick, grey fog. All you could see, in the whole of Belfast, were the tops of the two cranes, Samson and Goliath, standing high out above the fog. It was an extraordinary sight. I always used to wonder what it was like on the top.

I was a young apprentice, just 18, when I went up to the top of Goliath, which is slightly the smaller of the two cranes at 96 metres.

Samson and Goliath

I would like to see them use the cranes as a tourist attraction, when they are no longer working. It's part of a unique heritage after all. It would be great if visitors could actually get up there and see what I saw that day.

It's great to see that the cranes are still being used by Harland and Wolff and what they are doing today. People don't realise they still have the largest docks in Western Europe and are doing some cutting edge work in marine design engineering and renewables construction. The tradition continues."

PETER CREE
HARLAND & WOLFF

Newforge House

"The house was built in the 1780s and six generations of my family have lived here since around 1840. We've named our six guest rooms after the wives from each generation, from Spence (my great, great, great grandmother) to Beaumont, my wife Lou's maiden name. It was an idyllic childhood growing up here, with 50 acres of grassland and gardens to play around in. The only downside was the lack of heating. When my mother had the Aga in the kitchen reconditioned they had to replace a lid cover which I had sat on so much for warmth it had the imprint of my bottom!

I have a passion for cooking and trained with Roisin Hendron and Simon Dougan at the Yellow Door in Gilford but a period of illness put paid to plans of opening my own restaurant. In 2003, I decided to convert Newforge to a country house to ensure it remained in the family by way of paying for itself. Even though we have had the house totally redecorated it was essential we kept its architectural and historical integrity. People who knew the house originally say it has hardly changed. They mean it still feels like a family home. Now we're bringing our own children up here too.

I've also been able to return to my love of cooking. Irish country house cooking should be about great produce, simply cooked. We have our own chickens and the guests love to feed them and know where their eggs come from. We also have a vegetable garden, which my dad looks after in return for the occasional glass of wine, and an orchard. It's a family affair. Lou makes all the desserts and delicious traybakes, cakes and biscuits for our afternoon teas, which are going down a storm.

I cook breakfast and dinner and make sure we only use the best local produce. We get eels from a lady who lives in a little house on the shores of Lough Neagh. She catches the eels in the traditional traps and has them wriggling in buckets when you arrive to buy them. I smoke them with my own smoker. We also have an all-Irish cheese board, something that is still too rare. One of my many favourites is Creeny, made in County Cavan with ewe's milk from a farm in Tryone. There may be easier ways to make a living but we get great satisfaction from the feedback. I think the key to our success is attention to detail and those Northern Irish qualities of genuine warmth and interest in people."

JOHN MATHERS
NEWFORGE HOUSE



"...the key to our success is attention to detail and those Northern Irish qualities of genuine warmth and interest in people."



"Virtually all the Italians who came to Ireland arrived from this beautiful area, looking for work. With them they brought their love of food and fish and chips and ice cream were their specialities!"

Morelli's

"We celebrated the 100th anniversary of the family business in 2011. It was at the turn of the century that my ancestors first left the tiny hamlet of San Andrea in the Liri Valley, about 60 miles from Naples. Virtually all the Italians who came to Ireland arrived from this beautiful area, looking for work. With them they brought their love of food – fish and chips and ice cream were their specialities.

My great uncle, Peter Morelli, opened a fish and chip shop in Coleraine, followed by the Ice Palace in Portstewart in 1929. My grandfather, Angelo, arrived from Italy around this time to work for Peter, eventually plucking up courage to buy the ice cream shop from him. He returned to Italy to marry my grandmother. Their eldest son Nino, my father, ran the family shop in Coleraine until I was seven, when we came to live above the Portstewart shop when Angelo retired.

Some of my earliest memories are of working for my grandparents, helping to make the ice cream. In those days my grandmother would make the ice cream with this very basic apparatus on the shop counter in front of the customers. It was hard work and time consuming churning and mixing before removing with a spatula to freeze but for the customers it was the freshest ice cream they could taste. It was hard work. My grandparents would spend every waking hour in the summer making ice cream or working in the shop.

Portstewart was a wonderful place to grow up in. I still love spending a day fishing by the rocks in the harbour, taking a boat out to fish or playing golf. My mother would never live where she couldn't see the sea. I know what she means.

The Morelli family has always taken holidays in San Andrea each year. My grandfather, who died in 2007 just short of his hundredth birthday, retired there, so has my father, Nino. Wherever you go you still hear Irish accents, including the Fusco family from Belfast who are also famous for fish & chips. Like me they are the descendants of those who left a hundred years ago and many are distant relatives. Now my children too love it there. They are still young but who knows, maybe they will become the fifth generation of my family to work in the ice cream business."

DAMIAN MORELLI
MORELLI'S



Belleek Pottery

"When I was a young boy growing up in the village of Belleek, we were always aware of the Pottery – and the time! Every weekday, the Pottery horn would sound at 8am, 1pm, 2pm and at 5pm.

There has always been a great local pride in Belleek Pottery. Most of the people in the surrounding area have either worked there themselves – or had friends or family working there. As observant children, we were amazed that people came from all over the world to see the Pottery.

What went on in the building remained a bit of a mystery for us children. Many years later when I joined the company, I learned more about its humble beginnings.

How one day, local Landlord John Bloomfield saw a man brushing his cottage wall with whitewash that seemed brighter than usual. He found that the whitewash mix was made from a rock which, when analysed, was Feldspar – a major ingredient in the production of Porcelain.

On Thursday 18 November 1858, Mrs Bloomfield laid the very first foundation stone – and by 1872, Belleek had won many awards and established a worldwide reputation for crafting fine porcelain china and its iconic lattice flowered baskets. In the years since, the unique craftmanship continues and the factory has become a major tourist destination in Ireland, often in the top three visited places in Northern Ireland."

FERGUS CLEARY
HEAD OF DESIGN,
BELLEEK POTTERY



"We would see Americans in strange shirts and sunglasses, carrying cameras, arriving in buses or by car."



"So it isn't surprising that Londonderry now has the biggest Hallowe'en celebrations in Europe, maybe even in the world."

Banks of the Foyle Hallowe'en Carnival

"I tell my kids that the story of Hallowe'en isn't an American one like they think. It comes from here. It goes back to the ancient Celts and their festival of Samhain. They believed the barrier between the dead and the living dissolved on October 31st. They would have had bonfires and costumes even back then as they prepared to meet their ancestors. Later, children would carve hollowed out faces from turnips and put candles in them. There was even a kind of early trick or treating. Then when the Irish emigrated to America, they bought their traditions with them and turnips became pumpkins. So it isn't surprising that Londonderry now has the biggest Hallowe'en celebrations in Europe, maybe even in the world. The grand finale is an unbelievable sight, when as many as 30,000 party goers are thronging the streets, dressed in their spookiest costumes and fireworks light up the skyline over the Foyle."

MARIE
MAGHERAFELT

People to be proud of

"I wasn't born when George Best was around, but my dad told me that when he played, it was like an electric current went round the crowd that has never happened before, or since. When I play I wear a George Best shirt. I would give anything to play like him. My dad's from Belfast and he says that Belfast people have a saying, 'Pele good; Maradona better; George Best."

ROBERT
ROSTREVOR
12 YEARS OLD



Saint Patrick

"When Saint Patrick was a boy, he lived with his family in Roman Britain. His dad was quite rich and he had a good life. But when he was 15 he was kidnapped as a slave and taken to Ireland, where they made him work as a shepherd on Slemish Mountain. He had to work really hard and it was very lonely. One night he had a dream where an angel told him to escape, so he ran away and escaped back home with some Irish sailors. Then he had another visit from the angel who told him he had to go back to Ireland to bring Christianity. Everyone here was a pagan then. We walk to the top of Slemish Mountain every Saint Patrick's Day. It can't have been much fun just looking after sheep but he had a brilliant view. You can even see to Scotland."

ALAN
BALLYMENA
10 YEARS OLD

"It can't have been much fun just looking after sheep but he had a brilliant view."



"In 1909, he became the first Irishman to build and fly his own plane..."

Harry Ferguson

"I became interested in Harry Ferguson through his tractors. I'm mechanically minded and do a lot of work with classic cars. Here was a genius from Northern Ireland, who had such a huge effect on the world through his inventions and yet so few people here realised the extent of his achievements. He changed the farming world big time and people here should be very, very proud of him!

His mind was set on designing. It took him some years but eventually he perfected the hydraulic three-point-linkage which allowed the plough to operate without pulling the tractor up.

What he did was no less than revolutionise farming. He always wanted to help farmers right around the world, to make it easier, cheaper and quicker to feed people. He changed farming forever and that is recognised around the world.

Even today no one has come up with anything better after 70 odd years. With a few modifications, Harry's three-point-linkage is used on every tractor in the world for ploughing.

He was a genius but he couldn't rest. In 1909, he became the first Irishman to build and fly his own plane, which we've just celebrated the centenary of. In the early 1950s, he designed a car called the R5, which, believe it or not, had electric windows, an early form of ABS braking and was a four-wheel drive. All these developments in motoring we owe to him. He also designed the first racing car with a four-wheel drive, but sadly he died not long before Stirling Moss drove it for the first time."

BILL FORSYTHE
HARRY FERGUSON
CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

Sir James Galway

"I grew up in a small house with two bedrooms and a front room in North Belfast, near where Yorkgate is now. Like a lot of families in Belfast it was a very musical house. My father James, a riveter with Harland and Wolff, was a talented piano-accordion player and had learned the flute from his own father, also called James.

People were always there for each other. People made their own entertainment. It was typical of Belfast. They told stories, played music and sang songs. There was no babysitting in those days so we just went along and absorbed the atmosphere. It's part of the culture.

Prodigies didn't come from where I lived. I had no more ambition than to play in a local street band and I joined the Onward Flute Band at the age of nine. We used to meet at Duncairn Gardens.

I went to Sinclair Seamen's Church for Sunday School. I loved that, partly because the church was so beautiful and because it was so nautical, but also because I got to stop at my favourite fish and chip shop on the way home.

After I won three gold medals in the Irish Flute Championships, which were held near Sandy Row, I think my father realised I had a talent. He called me Mozart then.

I believe that growing up in Belfast was a good preparation for a successful life. For me Belfast was a wonderful place to grow up in and is a great place for visitors. I still have extended family in Belfast and love coming back to visit."

SIR JAMES GALWAY
MUSICIAN



"After I won three gold medals in the Irish Flute Championships, which were held near Sandy Row, I think my father realised I had a talent. He called me Mozart then."





Dame Mary Peters

"I was so thrilled by the celebration marking the 40th anniversary of my Olympic gold medal at the Grand Opera House. To hear those tributes 'to the Golden Girl' in the company of people like Sir Steve Redgrave, Daley Thompson, David Hemery, Dame Kelly Holmes and Lynn Davies was overwhelming. It made me deeply proud to hear that I had bought joy to my adopted country in such difficult times too. It was also lovely to meet up again with local athlete Katie Kirk, whom I had chosen to pass the Olympic torch to at the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics, a magical moment! Another fantastic memory was the unveiling of the Flybe airplane bearing my name.

Though I was born in Liverpool, Northern Ireland became my home when my family moved here, first to Ballymena, then Portadown. I'll never forget my first impressions of Northern Ireland, sailing into Belfast Lough and seeing Cave Hill and Belfast Castle.

It was Donald Woodman, the headmaster of Portadown College, who first saw my potential as an athlete. My father always encouraged me too; he created equipment for me to practise with like high jump stands made of broom handles and bamboo. I moved to Belfast to train as a home economics teacher at Belfast Tech in 1958, not long after the death of my mother. Belfast made me welcome at a time in my life when I needed love very badly.

"I went for gold, I won gold, and I brought it back for you."

To train I would get two buses into Belfast city centre and another to the pot-holed track, carrying my shot and starting blocks. One of the achievements I am proudest of is raising funds for that track to be developed as the City of Belfast Mary Peters' Track to help our talented young athletes.

To win the Pentathlon gold medal in Munich in 1972 I had to achieve a series of personal bests. Even so, coming to the last event, the 200 metres, I knew I had to run the fastest race of my life to clinch gold. I did, just one tenth of a second inside the required time! The welcome I received when I returned is impossible to describe. Tens of thousands of people lined the streets of Belfast. "I went for gold, I won gold, and I brought it back for you", I told them. I meant it too. I had offers of work in other countries after that but I wasn't going to leave the place I love."

Martin Lynch

"I grew up near York Street, when it was a big, bustling thoroughfare, with big factories all around, and I played football against the wall of Gallagher's tobacco factory, once the biggest in the world. I remember the sounds of horns going off in the morning, factory horns or ship horns from the docks where my father worked nearby.

I was deeply influenced by the community I grew up in. Obviously there was poverty and hardship, but I recall that community with great fondness. I knew as a writer there was as much to explore from the people on my street, their stories and humour, as any other in the world. Belfast has a great wealth of characters to explore, then and now. The people are the city's greatest asset.

I think one of the things that has made Belfast theatre what it is, is that most of the writers have working class backgrounds - myself, Marie Jones, Gary Mitchell, Graham Reid and others. Poverty, pain and humour have been juxtaposed in our backgrounds and in our work.

There was a period when I was at Turf Lodge when the Group Theatre at the Ulster Hall was used by different community theatre groups. This was during the Troubles. There was a tradition that you left a message on the dressing room mirror for the next group, 'Break a leg'. We didn't know this was a theatrical way of saying, 'good luck', so when we saw, 'Turf Lodge, break a leg, the Belvoir Players', we thought it was provocation. 'Where are these people 'til we sort them out'."

MARTIN LYNCH
PLAYWRIGHT





"Every waking moment was football, football, football. It was his whole life."

Pele good; Maradona better; George Best

"Every waking moment was football, football, football. It was his whole life. I have vivid memories of him kicking the ball in the streets around the Cregagh estate where we lived. When his mates went home at night Mum and Dad had to go and look for him. Usually, they would find him in the street kicking a tennis ball up against the kerb and hitting it every time."

"When George came back from Manchester that first time he gave Dad a note from the club, who wanted Dad to ring them. So Dad went to the phone box around the corner and they said, 'we like the boy, we think he has talent, we're very disappointed he didn't stay'. Dad promised he'd speak to George but wouldn't make a big deal of it. George wanted to know what they said and Dad just put his newspaper down and said, 'they don't want you back.' George's face dropped through the floor. Then Dad said, 'yes, actually they do want you'. And that was it. Away he went. In two years he had signed professional terms for one of the biggest clubs in the world. That was in 1963. By 1966 he was 'El Beatle' and by 1968 he was player of the year and had won the European Cup. And he was still just 22!"

"Now the family home has been renovated and people can rent the house for their holidays. They can sleep in George's room, eat where he ate and see where he kicked that tennis ball. All profits will go into regeneration projects in east Belfast. George would have loved that."

For information visit www.georgebesthouse.com

BARBARA MCNARRY
GEORGE BEST'S SISTER

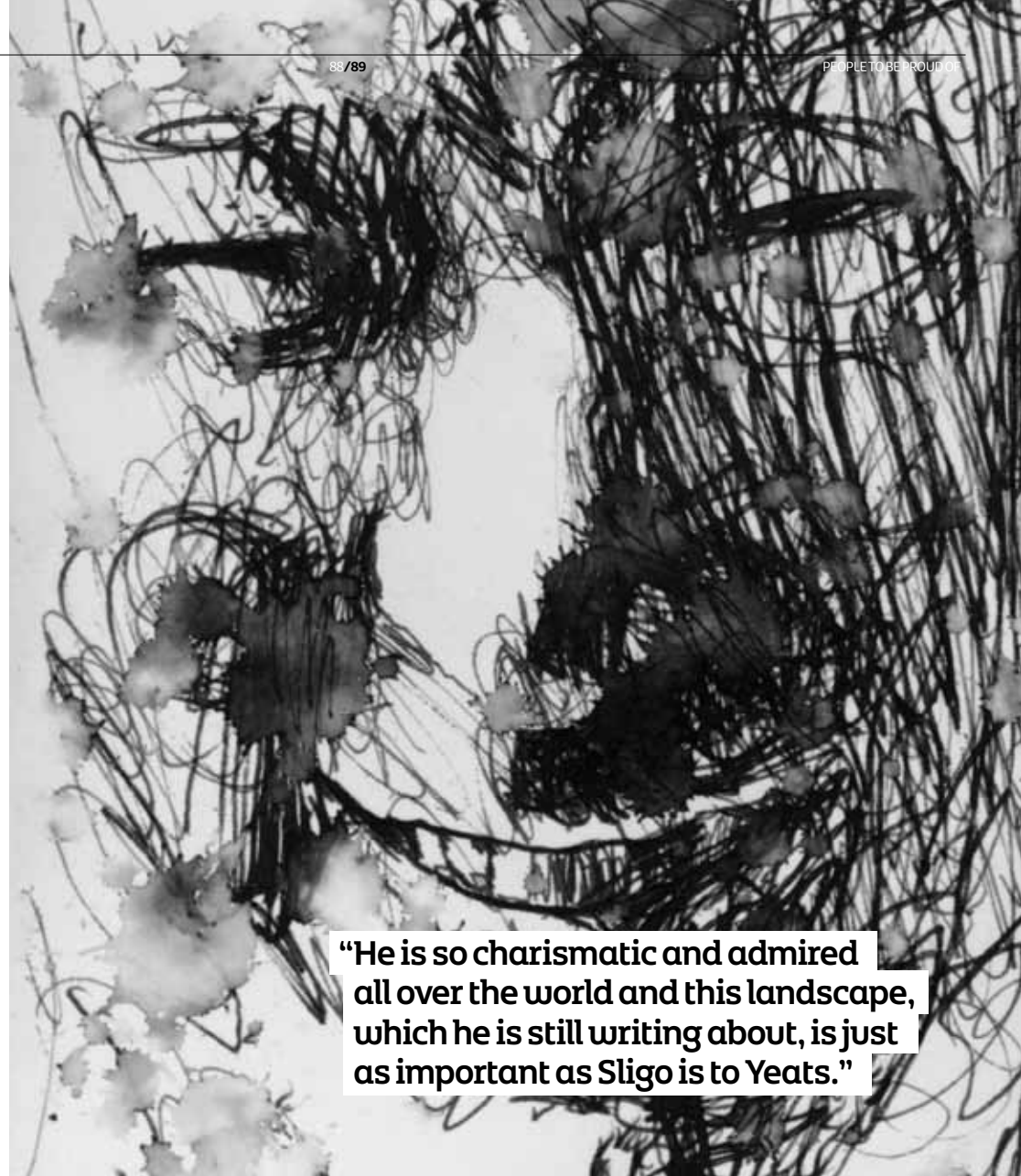
Seamus Heaney

"My keen interest in locally-born poet Seamus Heaney began in the 1970s when I went to a reading of his in Magherafelt. He wasn't a household name back then but he was that bit special and he had this extraordinary rapport with the audience. You felt he was speaking to each and every one there. I feel very fortunate to live in an area that he has chronicled so beautifully and faithfully in his writings. I think what a lot of people like about Seamus Heaney is that fame hasn't changed him at all and he most certainly does not live in an ivory tower. I have been collecting his work for a great many years and guests can view our exhibition on him. We hold regular poetry readings here and we feel really honoured that Seamus Heaney himself did a reading here.

I take bespoke tours of Heaney Country which I call 'A Hoke in Heaney Country'. The tour provides context and gives people an added insight into his poems. He always seems to come back to this area in his poems. We go to places like the forge at Hillhead, which he wrote about in The Forge. Visitors will have heard of places like Anahorish and Lough Beg ... now they have the chance to 'walk the ground'. In Bellaghy they can see a life-size bronze figure called The Turf Man. This is a stunning representation of his best-known poem, Digging. The figure bears a close likeness to the man himself.

People in Northern Ireland are only now beginning to realise what an extraordinary international figure he is. He is so charismatic and admired all over the world and this landscape, which he is still writing about, is just as important as Sligo is to Yeats."

EUGENE KIELT,
LAUREL VILLA TOWNHOUSE,
MAGHERAFELT, CO DERRY



"He is so charismatic and admired all over the world and this landscape, which he is still writing about, is just as important as Sligo is to Yeats."

Stories

"When I was growing up in the country, before television, we seemed to spend so much time telling stories to each other. Ghost stories, funny stories and stories about local characters. Even the fields around us had stories about them. I sometimes go into my grandkids' school to tell them these stories and they lap them up."

DERMOT
BELFAST

Titanic

"When my grandfather Ruddick was four years old, he and his elder brother went to see their father Tommy Millar off on Titanic. As a Harland & Wolff employee he had helped build the ship and now, as a deck engineer, working for the White Star Line, he would be sailing on her.

It must have been a bittersweet parting for Tommy. The boys had lost their mother in January of that year. Now he was leaving them with his widowed Aunt Mary in Boneybefore, just outside Carrickfergus, while he established himself in New York. The plan was he would then collect them and take them off to a new life in America. My grandfather recalled Tommy pressing two shiny new pennies into their hands. "They are this year's", he told them, "don't spend them until I come back. I kept them out of my last wages specially for each of you."

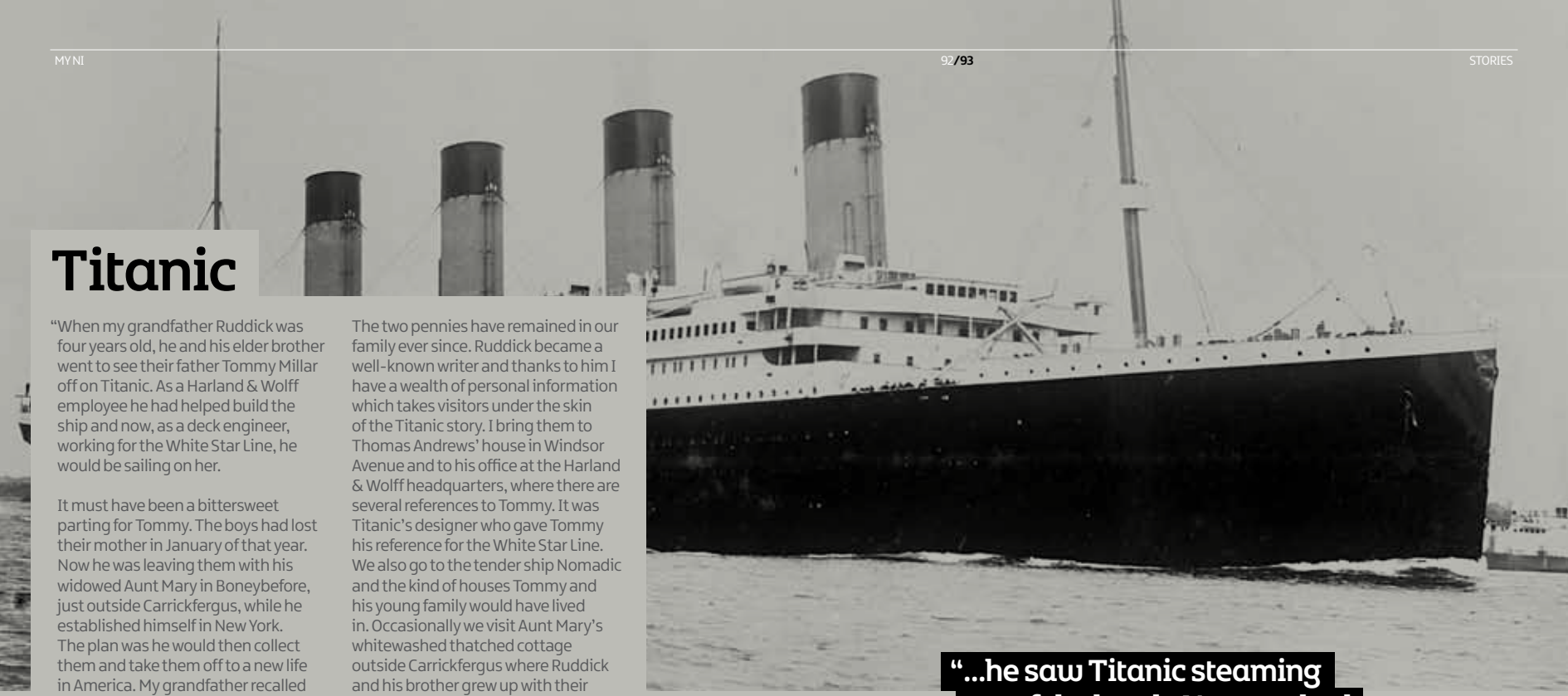
Ruddick was out on the beach by his aunt's house when he saw Titanic steaming out of the lough. He searched for his da waving back, but couldn't see him on the great ship. By coincidence he was standing on the same beach a few days later when his little cousin Ella broke the terrible news to him – Titanic had sunk and he would never see his father again.

The two pennies have remained in our family ever since. Ruddick became a well-known writer and thanks to him I have a wealth of personal information which takes visitors under the skin of the Titanic story. I bring them to Thomas Andrews' house in Windsor Avenue and to his office at the Harland & Wolff headquarters, where there are several references to Tommy. It was Titanic's designer who gave Tommy his reference for the White Star Line. We also go to the tender ship Nomadic and the kind of houses Tommy and his young family would have lived in. Occasionally we visit Aunt Mary's whitewashed thatched cottage outside Carrickfergus where Ruddick and his brother grew up with their eight cousins. Poor Aunt Mary!

In April 2012 I was asked to go as a lecturer on the Titanic Memorial Cruise. For me the most moving moment was early on the last morning as we sailed past the Stature of Liberty into New York. It felt like I had finally completed Tommy's journey."

SUSIE MILLAR,
WWW.TITANICTOURS-BELFAST.CO.UK

THE TWO PENNIES, A TRUE STORY
FROM THE TITANIC, BY SUSIE MILLAR



"...he saw Titanic steaming out of the lough. He searched for his da waving back, but couldn't see him on the great ship...he would never see his father again."

CS Lewis

"My mum read me the Narnia books when I was younger and the whole family went to see 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' when it was made into a film. I couldn't believe that CS Lewis who wrote it lived near where we do and he would have seen the same places when he was growing up. I wish I could ask him where he got the idea for Aslan, because I think I know. My class went on this tour of where he lived in Belfast. We saw the house where he grew up. It's a big house and really nice and he would have written his first stories about talking animals in the attic there with his brother. It was sad because that's where his mother died when he was my age. The man who took us said that is why he wrote about the mother being ill in 'The Magician's Nephew'.

Then we went to St. Mark's Church where his grandfather was rector and where he was christened. We were shown this stained glass window he and his brother gave to the church. But the exciting bit was when we went to the rector's house next door and I saw the doorknob made like a lion. That is where his mother grew up and where they visited his grandfather, who was a bit scary. I think this is what made him write about Aslan. He would have seen this lion every time he went to visit, because he would have been little and it would have been the same height as him. I think it's brilliant Narnia came out of here. Everyone should go on that tour. I tell people I'm from East Belfast where Narnia came from."

ANNA
BELFAST
10 YEARS OLD



"I wish I could ask him where he got the idea for Aslan, because I think I know."



"Sailors on ships coming into Belfast Lough claimed to have seen it glinting in the sun."

Cave Hill

"High above Belfast, Cave Hill has always been a place of mystery and intrigue. According to the poet Samuel Ferguson, one of the man-made caves from which it takes its name was once packed with treasure, though that has nothing to do with this story. As far back as the early 1800s, a legend grew of a fabulous diamond embedded somewhere in the face of Cave Hill.

Speculation grew and at least two ballads were written about it. Sailors on ships coming into Belfast Lough claimed to have seen it glinting in the sun. In the end it was a local boy who found the diamond, in fact a large lump of quartz. He sold it to John Erskine, who displayed it in his North Street hat shop in Belfast until the early 1900s. Then it seems to have vanished again. But in 2006, to the amazement of all, it turned up again, having been passed down the Erskine family and was eventually donated to the Linen Hall Library, where it now resides for all time. A Belfast cultural icon at a Belfast cultural icon."

JOHN KILLEN
LINEN HALL LIBRARY

Rathlin Island

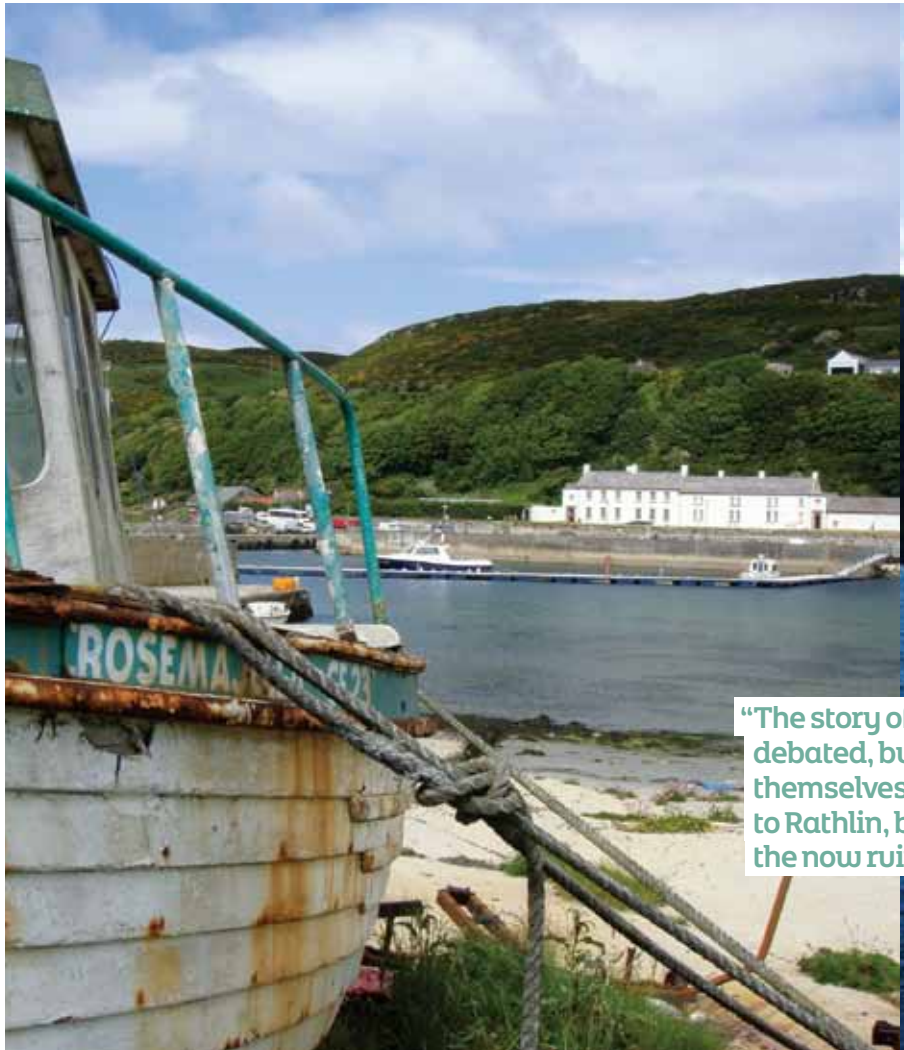


"As part of a project photographing caves along the Antrim Coast, I've made several trips to Rathlin Island, where the caves are not only remarkable but connected to famous stories too.

There's an old legend that Robert the Bruce and his warriors lie in an enchanted sleep in a cave beneath Bruce's Castle, and will one day rise up to unite the island to Scotland. Bruce's Cave lies under the East Lighthouse at Altacarry. The story goes that Robert the Bruce fled from Scotland in 1306 to regain his strength in this great cave. The story also tells how he was inspired to return to the battle in Scotland, and victory at Bannockburn, after watching a spider steadfastly spinning a web inside the cave. Each time the web broke, the spider started again and Bruce is said to have gained inspiration from this. The story of the spider is hotly debated, but the Bruce family themselves believe he came to Rathlin, basing himself at the now ruined Bruce's Castle.

East Lighthouse is also where Marconi successfully transmitted the first commercial radio signals across water, to Ballycastle on the mainland."

ANDY MCINROY
PHOTOGRAPHER





"The story of the spider is hotly debated, but the Bruce family themselves believe he came to Rathlin, basing himself at the now ruined Bruce's Castle."





"People have heard mysterious banging at night and they feel they are not alone when there is no one else around."

Springhill House

"When we went to Springhill House we were told some stories about Olivia, the ghost who still haunts it. She was the wife of George Lenox-Conyngham who owned it and it is thought she tried to stop him killing himself but wasn't able to. There are more reports on her than any other ghost in Northern Ireland. People have heard mysterious banging at night and they feel they are not alone when there is no one else around.

Some people say they have seen a tall dark lady in an old fashioned black dress with her hair up in a bun, who suddenly disappears. Afterwards we saw their collection of historic costumes, and I could easily imagine poor Olivia in her black dress. She is meant to be a friendly ghost and I like to think of her in happier times walking over their scented camomile lawn to her beautiful home."

CIARA
COOKSTOWN
14 YEARS OLD

Florence Court

"There's a great story about a tree we were told about at Florence Court. About 250 years ago a farmer found these two little yew trees in the Cuilcagh Mountains. He couldn't believe how elegant they were which is unusual for yew trees. He kept one for himself and he gave the other to Lord Enniskillen who owned Florence Court. After it was planted there it became really popular and people would come from all over Ireland to see this beautiful tree. It got so famous they bred it and eventually its children ended up going right around the world. If you see an Irish yew anywhere in the world today you'll know where it comes from. It's called the 'Mother of all Irish yew trees' and it's still there at Florence Court.

From Florence Court you can see Benaughlin Mountain, where a famous Irish chieftain, Donn Binn Maguire, was kept as a prisoner by faeries (fairies). He loved horses and went out to the mountain to try and catch one of the wild horses that roamed there. He found one he liked more than any other and followed, it but it was a trap. As he followed, the horse went through a door in the mountain and the faeries, who had been trying to capture him for a long time, finally imprisoned him. He's only allowed out on one night a year, Hallowe'en. Lots of people round here have said they have seen him. They dug a huge white horse into the mountain where the door was to warn people but it's covered with trees now, so you could still be in trouble!"

DAVID
ENNISKILLEN
13 YEARS OLD



"He's only allowed out on one night a year, Hallowe'en."



"Culann had a hound which was the most feared in Ulster and had the strength of one hundred men."

How Setanta became Cúchulainn

"When Setanta was a little boy he used to dream of becoming a great warrior. He wanted to join the Knights of the Red Branch belonging to his uncle, Conor, the King of Ulster, who had a castle at Navan. But the King told him he was too small. When King Conor saw how upset Setanta was, he invited him to a feast at the castle of Culann who made the weapons for Conor's warriors. Culann had a hound, which was the most feared in Ulster and had the strength of one hundred men. When Conor arrived at the castle, the hound bounded in front of him.

It was the biggest dog he had ever seen and his eyes were bright red. All Conor had to defend himself was his hurley (stick) and silver ball. He hit the ball between the hound's eyes and it fell dead at his feet. Culann was so upset at seeing his favourite hound killed Setanta offered to be his hound himself. That's how he became Cúchulainn, which means the hound of Culann. Culann made him a great sword and he defended Culann's castle against invaders and he was so fearsome the Red Knights asked him to join them. He became the most famous warrior in all of Ulster and stopped Queen Mebh attacking Ulster."

NIALL
ARMAGH
12 YEARS OLD

Major General Ross

"Over the last few years my research into Major General Ross of Rostrevor has unearthed some remarkable connections with a pivotal period in American history.

Born in Rostrevor in 1776, Ross was a gifted general who had served under his childhood friend, the Duke of Wellington, in several campaigns against the French. The climax of this glittering career was the War of 1812, when he was commander of an amphibious brigade which targeted cities on the east coast of the USA. In August 1814, he led Wellington's famous 'Invincibles' as they routed American forces at the Battle of Bladensburg, nearly capturing President Madison. Marching onto Washington, where his horse was shot beneath him, Ross burned down the White House and is said to have finished the lunch the recently departed president had left behind. There is evidence that the Americans were so incensed by Ross's actions that they considered sending a ship to torch Rostrevor in revenge!

During the subsequent attack on Baltimore, lawyer Francis Scott Key met Major General Ross on his ship in the harbour to request that he release an American prisoner, Dr Beanes. Key later witnessed the terrifying night time British bombardment of Fort McHenry. On seeing the American flag still flying high when the attack ceased at dawn, he was inspired to write the words of the Star Spangled Banner, which later became the American national anthem.

Ross was shot dead by snipers soon after. Had he lived, the course of American history might have been very different. Ross and his wife had already laid out a plot of land in Rostrevor, overlooking Carlingford Lough and the Cooley Mountains, to build their retirement home. Enjoying the beautiful view that Thackeray eulogised over and which inspired CS Lewis's Narnian books, the site now hosts instead a magnificent obelisk dedicated to Ross. From the steps at the rear of the monument you can just see the house belonging to Ross's widow, Rostrevor House, through the trees.

In researching my book on Ross, I have made many trips to America and discovered there is huge interest there in the man who indirectly inspired their national anthem and, consequently, in Rostrevor itself. With the bi-centenary of Ross's remarkable campaign to be commemorated in 2014 a wonderful opportunity exists to build on those links!

JOHN MCCAVITT
HISTORIAN BASED IN ROSTREVOR





"We were sitting there with the line in, fishing for mackerel when my son pointed out a seal bobbing around near the rocks, watching us!"

Fishing alongside seals

"I took my son down to a local place I like to fish, Mackerel Rocks. We were sitting there with the line in, fishing for mackerel when my son pointed out a seal bobbing around near the rocks, watching us! I thought it was being friendly, it was a lovely experience to see him there so close. Just then I got a tug on the line and started to pull a fish in. Suddenly my son said, 'watch out' and I saw the seal dive at the fish, take it off the line and devour it. That's why he was being so friendly! Needless to say he hung around to see if we could catch him any more food."

TYRONE PRIESTLY
BANGOR



Ulster American Folk Park

"We are in the process of bringing a plantation house over, brick by numbered brick, from Tennessee. It belonged to one Francis Rogan who became quite a big fish in middle Tennessee but the story starts with his father Hugh and makes 'Gone with the Wind' look mundane. Hugh, who was a linen weaver, left Strabane in 1775, with his brother-in-law Daniel Carlin, another weaver. Like many thousands of others from these shores, they sailed to America in search of 'free' available land on which to build a better life for themselves. Both left teenage brides and Hugh left a young baby son too. Initially both stayed with Daniel's brother who was working in a shop on the frontier of Southern Virginia. But Hugh went on further west, deep into uncharted territory.

He ended up living near a place called Fort Bledsoe in middle Tennessee. Eventually, after ten years, he was ready to return to Ireland and bring his family to their new home. But Daniel, who had married again in America, didn't want Hugh returning and spilling the beans about his bigamy so he had a letter forged as though from home saying Hugh's wife had married again and he shouldn't return.

Then, 20 years on, a letter from home reached Hugh in Tennessee, saying his wife was still waiting for him. So he sailed over as soon as he could and reclaimed his beloved Ann Nancy and his now 21-year-old son. Within a year in Tennessee, when he was fifty and she forty, they had another son, Francis whose house we have now acquired."

DR PHIL MOWAT
ULSTER AMERICAN FOLK PARK

"Then, 20 years on, a letter from home reached him in Tennessee, saying his wife was still waiting for him."

We would like to thank all the people who have given their kind permission to use their images throughout this book:

UrbanImage.tv
Adrian Boot
The Clash
Page 09

Seed Studio
Aunt Sandra's
Candy Factory
Page 31

John Murphy
Dulse
Page 35

National Museums
Northern Ireland
Titanic
Page 92

Stephen Paskins
Massey Ferguson
Page 78

Sam Prince
George Best
Page 86

©National Portrait Gallery,
London
Seamus Heaney
by Ross Wilson
Page 88

Belfast Zoological Gardens
Sheila the Baby Elephant
Page 22

For this new edition of My NI we turned to children to give us a real sense of the wonder and enjoyment that living in Northern Ireland can generate. We encouraged them to tell us in words and pictures what they love about where they live.

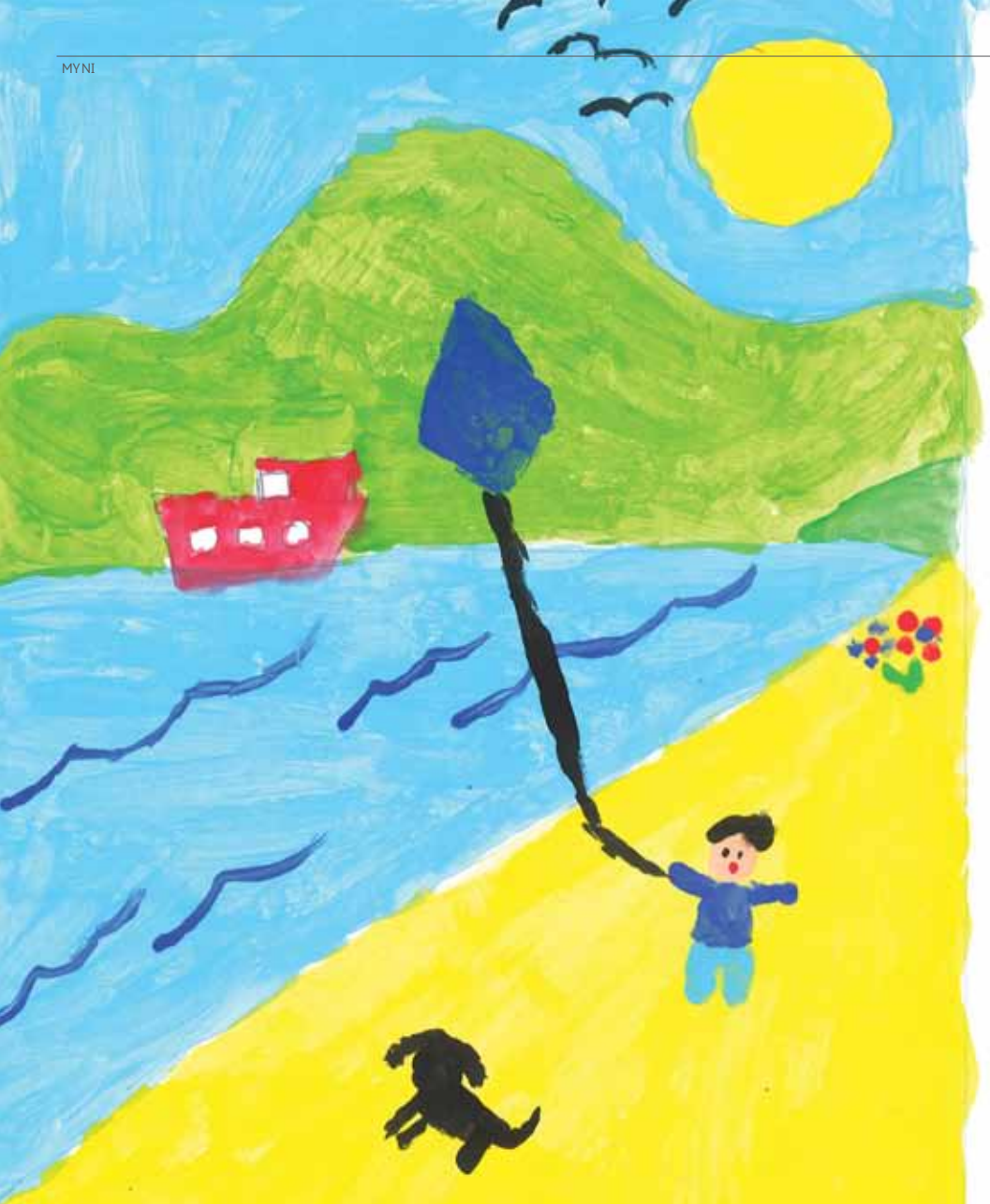
With the help of the Belfast Telegraph, children from all over the country were invited to enter the My NI competition and asked to describe in 100-150 words the thing that they like most about their home place – a favourite person, a cherished place or an unforgettable activity.

To accompany their description entrants created a drawing. The resulting series of colourful, energetic and uniquely vibrant interpretations of life in Northern Ireland is a tribute to the enthusiasm and awareness of our young people and the inspiring quality of their lives.

Twelve winners were selected to reflect the creative and geographical diversity of the competition and as a reward their work is published here. Our thanks go to the pupils who entered and also to the schools and individual teachers for their hard work and support.

We hope you agree that the next 24 pages of this book do justice to the excitement that our young generation feel about this place that is My NI.

Your NI



Dear Readers,

Co Down is a brilliant place to live because .....

* Mount Stewart *

Come visit Mount Stewart there is a big variety of things to do all year round!! Mount Stewart is lovely to take walks around the wonderful gardens!!!

* Ulster Folk and Transport Museum *

Everyone likes the Folk Museum there is lots of fantastic things to do like visit the Victorian houses and visit the sweet shop!!!

* Newcastle *

Tollymore forest park is a lovely forest park in Newcastle. Newcastle is also a great place to get a wonderful ice-cream!!!

from Zara Campbell P6 Ballynahinch Primary School Mr Eakin age (10)

Castlecaldwell

Castlecaldwell is one one of my favourite local places. I think the gateway looks like an old fairytale castle. The old castle itself is in ruins. It is set in three miles of scenic paths, through old woods. It has a scary dungeon with bars.

If you walk along the paths there are lots of things to do. You can climb up some of the old oak trees, with their big twisted branches or you could look for interesting birds and wild life. Some of the paths run close to the loughshore where it is fun to skip stones on the water.

It is lovely all year round but especially in Autumn when the leaves are changing colour. If you are quiet you might be lucky enough to see a deer, badger or mink.

Lots of people often moor their cruisers at the jetty there. You could meet people from all over the world, fishing on the jetty.

Sarah O'Connor (8)
St. John the Baptist PS, Roscor.





My Place!

Rachel Logue
(10) Sacred Heart

My name is Rachel I live in a wonderfull and beautiful city named Derry.

In 2013 Derry will become the UK city of culture. Last year in 2011 they built a new bridge called 'the peace bridge' which bring's Protestants and Catholics to one community.

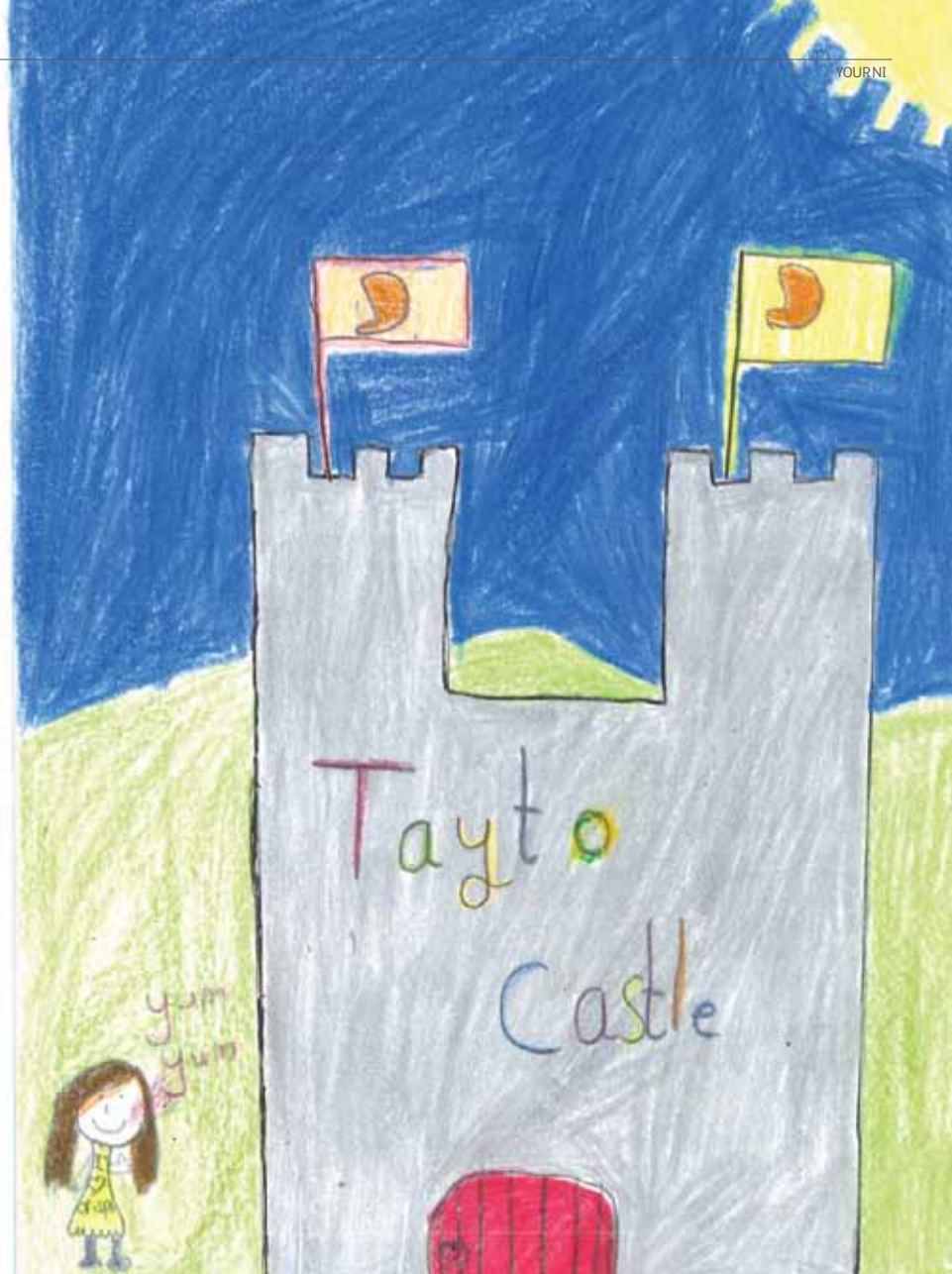
Derry is over flowing with history Here's one historical fact, The Apprentice boy's of Derry march around the walls every year. its called 'the Siege of Derry'.

Derry has come a long way Since the troubles. Now there are fun things to do and see. I'm a very lucky girl to like in Derry

Newcastle is a spectacular place lots of things to do as a family especially coco's Adventure World, amusements, Waterparks but I recamend the Y.m.ca it is an outdoor education and residential centre set in a Beautiful 17 acre site on the slopes of Silver Donard with panoramic views over the towns of Newcastle and in particular Dundrum.

The Tayto Castle it is in ulster countryside is here the terrific Tayto crisps are made. The castle is over 500 years old and was originally the home of the O'Hanlon clans one of the mightiest and most powerful clans in all of Ireland. In 1614 King James I of England confiscated the castle from the O'Hanlons because they took part in a rebellion against Hugh O'Neill in County Tyrone. The castle was given to Sir Oliver St. John was shot through the head with a bullet while defending to the castles defence. In the raging battle that ensued the castle and the nearby church were burnt and destroyed. The ruins of the property then passed into the hands of other families and become the home of the Duke of manchester in the 1800's.

Mhia Cullen





Harland and Wolf

fast-workers
yellow-cranes
ship-builders
big-cranes
very-dangerous
sky-touchers
friendly-workers
giant-ships
speed-boats
protective-barriers
slow-boats
long-boats
short-boats

great-boats
samson-goliath

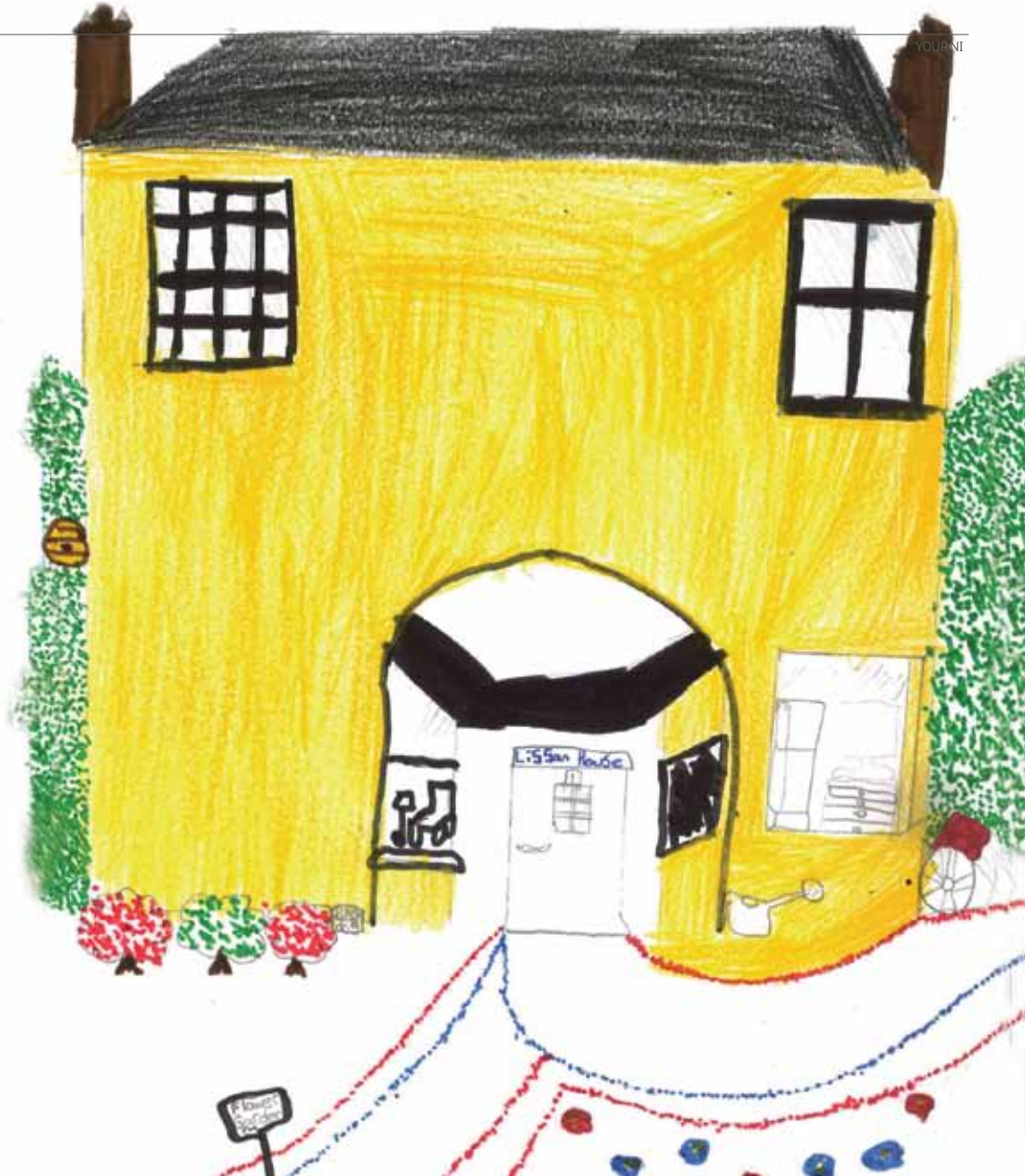
old-propellers nice-people

great-workers
strong-pulleys

Matthew O'Boyle
(6) P5
Ballygomartin P.S

In my local area I like going to Lissan House beacause it is very interesting. My Great Grannie worked in Lissan House. She was a cleaner and loved her job. She died before I was born but my dad told me all about her - how she travelled 4 mile on her bike just to get to work. Way back then there was no park, carpark or a trail to walk on, it was just a house where the Staples Family lived. Another thing about Lissan House is at the back forest their is a swing that me and my Sister go on every summer. My dad made it when he was 9. I know he made it beacuse BESSIE BELL is carved on the tree. Dad told me all about it how him and his Friends walked to the Shop and the to the forest. Daddy had so much fun and he has still got all of those memories. My family always go to Lissan House just for the sceanriy. We Feed the birds and go to the park to eat our picnic we have lots of fun at Lissan House and so will you. My favorite actives are walking, cycleing and looking for interesting creatures. I am very proud of where I live beacuse you couldn't ask for any thing better.

Adrian Bell (10) Lissan Primary School





Castle grounds, Antrim

My favourite place in County Antrim is the Castle Grounds in Antrim. It is a place where you can go and relax, or go for a nice walk around the gardens. I like to go there on my bike or sometimes on my roller blades. I usually go there with my mum and brother. There is a beautiful cafe down there where my friends and I (when) went for lunch one day. You can go up the mound (we call it a cake) and see down the dungeon, or have a yummy picnic by the Six Mile Water, just beside the bridge.
There are trees that swoop down in the shape of a hammock. I love to lie on them. Then sometimes I go for a walk down to the Lough. There you can feed the ducks, have an ice-cream, race round the track, watch the jet-skiers or go on a lovely walk through Ray's Wood and lots more.
You will never be stuck for something to do at the Castle Grounds Antrim.

Sara Lucas
Age nine
Loanends PS

Amelia Earhart

Amelia was born in Kansas. USA
As a child she had a great love for flying and her father was a great influence in her early flying career. Her first plane was a bright yellow plane which she nicknamed "The Canary"
She took off from Newfoundland in Canada in a bid to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. She intended to fly to Paris in her single engine Lockheed Vega. Mechanical problems and severe weather forced her to land in a small pasture in Culmore, Derry.
The landing was witnessed by Cecil King and he asked her "Have you flown far" she replied "From America.
A museum is set up close to the spot where she landed in Derry, it is known as the Amelia Earhart Centre.
This is an endorsement of the significant and lasting place that she holds in our community.

Alaina Kelly 191 Holly Bush P.S.





My Area Armagh

My favourite thing about Armagh is, I live so close to Armagh. My favourite thing to do in Armagh is, go swimming. I love Armagh because, it has great shops. Sometimes there is funfairs and The Circus comes to town There is a great Cinema, my family and I watch movies like Toy Story 3 and Sometimes I get a pik a mix and popcorn

My family supports the Armagh football team, and my daddy and my Sisters goes to the matches The county colours are orange and White My Auntie Marie was a member of the ladies county gaelic team. She won players of the year

Armagh has some very famous buildings like the old Jail, the Museum, the Planetarium and two Cathedrals. The Primate of Ireland lives in Armagh I like to go to the Mall. I get a treat on Saturdays when I have visited Scoopeys

Rachel McGeary age 9
St. Peters Callegeland P5

Crom Estate

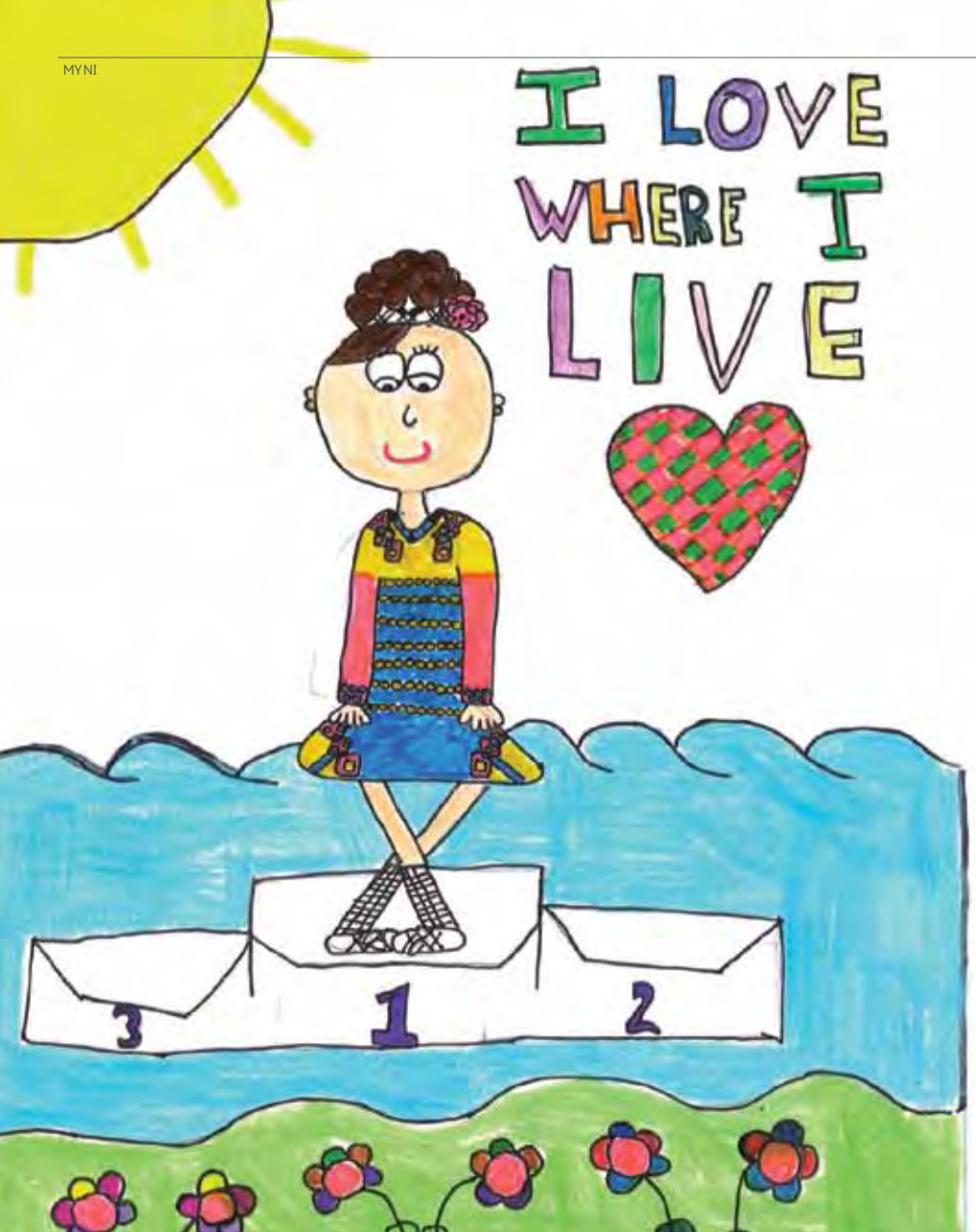
I live in Crom in Co. Fermanagh. Crom Estate is a brilliant place for picnics. You see lots of sheep, deer, birds, Foxes, cows, donkeys and the odd rabbit. It is a brilliant place for bird watching. When you go to the Visitor Centre you have to have your purse full, because it is full of delicious treats and toys, for eg. bouncy balls, chocolate mice, even bird houses! It is an amazing place to go to. You can climb on the Yew Trees, swim in the lake and collect conkers and fossils. Or, if you prefer, you can just go on a nature walk and take pictures. I love Crom.

By Ruby de Búrca Connolly (9) N.T.B. Primary School



Crom through the seasons!

By Ruby de Búrca Connolly (9) N.T.B. Primary School



I Love Where I Live!!!

By Éle Donegan

I love where I live. I live in a little town in Co. Down. It is a seaside town with beautiful views everywhere. I live in Bangor, Bangor is very special to me. I am an irish dancer and a swimmer. Swimming is popular as we are going to get an olympic size swimming pool.

My favourite thing about Bangor is my irish dancing. My irish dancing is special to me because I am very active kid and I need to let all that bouncy, active and lively attitude out I love to irish dance I love it. No one can understand the way I connect with irish dancing. All my friends do irish dancing so I always have fun no matter what. You can do feises, they are irish dancing competions. In fact on the 1st of November I am going the Ulsters Championships I can't wait. But the reason I love irish dancing and that's why I love where I live is the travling. Going everywhere seeing everything to see. especially in Down I've seen everything I've seen the Glens, Legananny Dolem and Tyrella beach. Antrim is very close to Down. I have a caravan there and I've walked across the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge. So finally Northen Ireland is very close to me but where I live is closer!

I LOVE WHERE
I LIVE!!!

Éle Donegan
(9)
St. Comgalls primary schod. Down

The old cross of Ardboe

and Lough neagh

I decided to choose two very important elements of Ardboe community. The old cross of Ardboe is a famous landmark and people come from all over the world to see it. this reminds me of how lucky I am to come from such a special place. Lough neagh is not far from my home. I love to watch the fishermen bringing home their catch of tasty fish in the evenings. I really enjoyed creating this picture and hope you enjoy it too!

cormac devlin P.5

