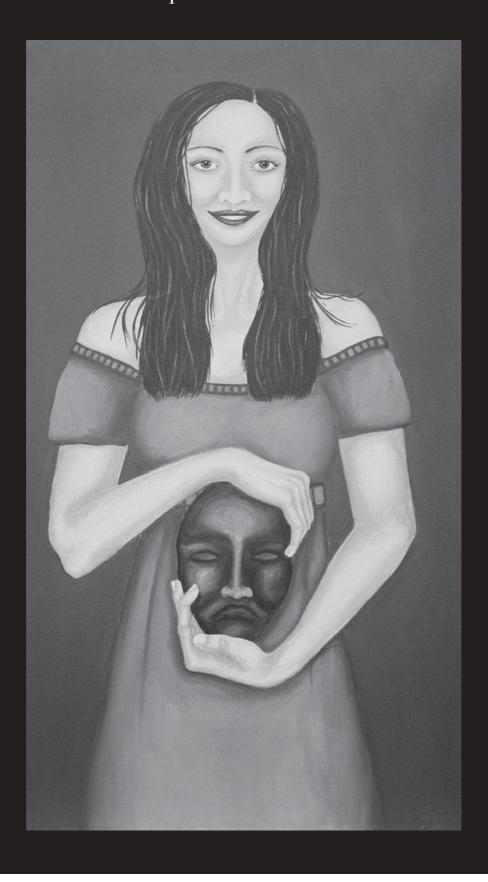
# Bray Arts Journal

Issue 1 September 2007

Volume 13



#### FDITORIAL

#### Please Sir May I Have Some More

Once again we went through the annual ritual of applying for a grant from Wicklow County Council. We do it every year and for a while, back in 2004, we thought we were making real progress when we got a Euro 1,500 grant.

Since then we have been going backwards and we were offered a mere Euro 500 this year. At the risk of alienating the powers that be, this is an affront to the volunteers who keep Bray Arts running and it's not simply the committeee members who organise the arts evenings and the publication of the journal; it's the wonderful artists who perform free of charge, particularly those many professional performers who make their livlihood from their art and still give of their time and talents so generously. Why discourage this type of community involvement? Why discourage the writers who contribute poetry, short stories and art, book and film critiques to the Journal. What possible rationale or criteria have the grant adjudicators used that allows them to disregard such widespread voluntary and community based art activity.

We are not the only ones who have had their budgets cut; The Space Inside (Bray Arts equivalent in Wicklow town) have been treated similarly. It would appear that the grant adjudicators were particularly not in favour of funding the journals of either Bray Arts or The Space Inside. Why? We need to know.



#### **Press Release from The Space Inside**

#### Arts groups up in arms over recent cuts

There are a number of very irate people in County Wicklow these days following the allocation of arts funding by County Wicklow's Arts Office. Despite an increase in arts funding allocated to the County, some well established groups, including The Space Inside, Bray Arts Club and Wicklow Writers, have had their grants ruthlessly cut back. "It is a scandal that certain voluntary groups have been treated so badly by the

Council, particularly as these organisations have been major players in developing the arts in Wicklow," says Carol Boland, chair of The Space Inside. The group runs free monthly arts evenings and a free arts journal with a distribution of over 1,000 copies. "Our quality journal, which is an important networking publication, is now under threat," she adds.

**Dermot McCabe** of Bray Arts is also very angry following this year's cuts. "The allocation of 500 Euros to our organization that provides a performance platform for 40 to 50 artists each year, produces an Arts Journal that publishes up to 100 writers per year (poetry, short stories, critiques etc), and is distributed free to the local community is surely worth more than a derisory investment of €500." The Arts organization also maintains a website with links to local artists and arts organizations.

Labour Deputy Leader, Liz McManus T.D. has also raised her concerns with Wicklow County Council about the cutbacks in Arts funding for certain projects. "I'm extremely concerned that major Arts Organisations in Co. Wicklow have seen their budgets slashed severely. The Space Inside, the Bray Arts Club and Wicklow Writers have all been affected by cuts of up to 40% on last years budget by Wicklow County Council. The future of two regular publications has been put at risk as a result." She continues, "It is insupportable that well established Arts Projects are being undermined in this way. The local communities in Bray and Wicklow have benefited enormously from the voluntary effort put in by these Arts Organisations. It is time to rally to their support and I am determined to support these groups vigorously."

If your arts group has also been effected by recent funding cuts, the **Space Inside** would like to hear from you. You can contact them by email at <a href="mailto:spaceinside@hotmail.com">spaceinside@hotmail.com</a> or on 0851138367.

#### Press Release from Bray Arts Committee

Shock and disappointment have been experienced by the Bray Arts Club, Bray's premier arts organisation, at the €500.00 grant allocation they received for funding from Wicklow arts Office this year.

Chairperson , Zan O'Loughlin, feels that this sum is totally in adequate to meet the Club's needs and implies a lack of support for the invaluable role this vibrant, voluntary organisation plays in the community , in organising arts evenings and producing monthly arts journals. Bray Arts Club hosts a rich and varied programme of artists performing and showcasing aspects of their own work in the Martello Bar each first Monday of the month for ten months of the year. On these evenings, a large audience is entertained by artists renowned in their field, writers, musicians, visual artists and more, as well as newcomers, young people and gifted amateurs. All this is organised by a hardworking committee who give of their own time to make sure it is organised and run smoothly.

An allocation of €500.00 is insufficient to meet the administration and other costs involved in such a massive undertaking. It is even more inadequate when the production of the Bray Arts Journal is taken into account; a glossy, prestigious

magazine with reviews, previews, poetry, stories, comment and high quality visuals and photographs. The Journal comes out ten times a year and, again, the work going into it is all voluntary. It is of a very high standard and beautifully produced. The printing costs alone are on average  $\leqslant 300.00$  per issue and a grant of  $\leqslant 500.00$  does not meet this cost in any way.

The Bray Arts Club also maintains its own comprehensive web site involving considerable cost.

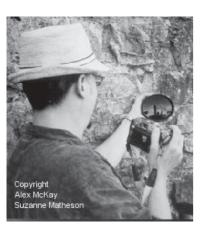
The main shock to the committee, however, is the lack of recognition that a organisation that is so undeniably community based is not given the support and recognition it should have from our own County funding agency - the Wicklow Arts Office. The implication, the Chairperson, Zan O'Loughlin says, is that community arts in Wicklow is considered to be unimportant

Over the years, both in their arts evenings and through the Journal, Bray Arts has given a platform to the likes of Lee Dunne, Tomas Macanna, Ronnie Drew, O. R. Melling, Eamonn O'Doherty and Redmond O'Toole to name but a few. Surely this shows the significance of the club as a vibrant community organisation and one that should receive the full support of the Arts Office with adequate funding to make sure it stays and flourishes?

Front Cover: The Tragic Mask by Emma Doyle Acrylic on Canvas (94 x 52 cm). Upcoming exhibition in Signal Arts ( see page 7)

#### MESSAGE FROM CANADA

Alex McKay, artist and visual editor of The Windsor Review sent a letter to Bray Arts Journal to point out that the article on the Claude Mirror in our May 2007 issue failed to mention, in reference to the Claude Mirror installation at Tintern Abbey, that this installation project was created by himself and Suzanne Matheson. We are more than happy rectify this and take this opportunity to congratulate Alex and Suzanne on a very imaginative project using the latest technology to highlight an older technology used by landscape artists.



The photograph on the left is Alex himself, demonstrating how the mirror is used. He writes that he makes Claude Mirrors and would be happy to discuss a project in County Wicklow with any interested parties

If you want to see and read more about the Claude Mirror project you can log onto www.uwindsor.ca/claudemirror.

Alex has also extended an invitation to anyone who would like to make a submission to The Windsor Review. You can email him at amckay@uwindsor.ca for more details.

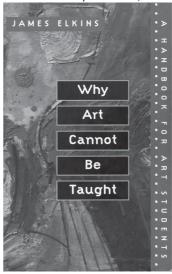
#### **BOOK REVIEW**

#### Why Art Cannot Be Taught

by James Elkin (published by University of Illinois Press)

James Elkin is a professor in the Department of Art History, Theory and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Basically Elkin holds the view that art schools are really in the dark when it comes to understanding what they are actually doing when they profess to teach art. The bottom line as far as Elkin is concerned is that art cannot be taught.

One can take the view that technique can be taught but art cannot. This assumes that technique and art are separate and distinctive things. In a contemporary art teaching environment where technique may be dismissed as practically irrelevant then the difficult question is, what is being taught?



NCAD for example makes the statement that "within contemporary fine art practice, theory has become increasingly important." Does this imply that contemporary art cannot be made if it does not have a theory associated with it? Does a visual artist have to have a theory before he/she can be considered a contemporary artist? Is this emphasis on the importance of theory in contemporary art practice simply there because it is something that can be taught and this legitimises the claim of teaching art?

Elkin's conclusions on the teaching of art are rather pessimistic. He makes four clear statements on the subject: -

- 1. The idea of teaching art is irreparably irrational. We do not teach because we do not know when or how we teach.
- 2. The project of teaching art is confused because we behave as if we were doing something more than teaching technique.
- 3. It does not make sense to propose programmatic changes in the way art is taught.
- 4. It does not make sense to try to understand how art is taught.

Despite these conclusions Elkin states "Teaching in an art department or an art school is the most interesting activity that I know, because it is the furthest from anything that makes sense - short of psychosis."

Tom Conroy

## Widening Water

for Eoin by Lorcan Byrne

We gleaned the foreshore for flight-feathers, razor shells and straws of sun-bleached bone then waded the widening water to a spit of sand ribbed like the August sky, a blade scything into blue, cutting off what we knew from what was as yet unknown: beach beyond, sea behind and distant boats balanced on a knife-edge of horizon.

Older now, I can decode those omens and sound the dept of that moment my fingers reached down and hooked your hair: how you surfaced silently with staring eyes as distant as those landed fish, how I shook sand from the tasselled rug while the death-rattle of an outboard motor was absorbed into the sunlit afternoon.

In the car the smell of sun-baked leather reassured and allowed our tears to come. We shivered into the damp-locked gloom of the holiday home where you built an altar for an ocean offering of shells and bones. Thirty years on, as you tack into the wind, I envy your deep friendship with the sea, the way it anchors you and makes amends.

#### After the Flood

by Hugh Rafferty

The rain is finished and the water slides dark slow down its new double bed. I am tired now and the river looks lazy but what a night we had how we both struggled neither willing to submit, how the river surged against the barriers I raised pushed powerful, tireless, until it had its way. Now we lie close like lovers almost touching and I could brush my fingers over its little whorls, that seem to come and go like nervous tics, small aftershocks of passion while it seeks with softened lips along the curves and crevices of the new channel it has won. This is dangerous water. It will rise again.

#### The Fisherman

by Jack McCabe

Far and wide he casts upon the water, delights in spurt and plunge of falling lead into the whispering amnion, he alters the pull and lure of the unseen thread.

He feels with trembling fingertips the thrum and distant music, echo in the deep ocean of his hearts own fleshy drum enticing him to sink in aqueous sleep.

By tidal flood in starlight he will wait to catch the sacred words that swim and fly about the tattered soul adrift like bait, no fish he seeks but god of sea and sky.

### Creek Tragedy

by Bernie Alexander

Please don't take *the music* from me Jesus. My strummin' hand's jus' fallen to the floor. This leprosy's againin' on me Jesus Now I can't pluck ma geetar anymore.

I'm holed up in this creek fir se'f pretection. Aint seen no beer nir vittles fir a week. If I had a rattle snake dear Lord I'd woof im, If I had a tongue I'd stick it in ma cheek.

Big Daddy please, take pidy on this sinner, I need to 'spress the music in my heart.

An' ifin y'all could stretch to it ol' pardner, I' be 'bliged if you'd restore some vital parts.

I need somebody rootin' fer me big guy.
There's no one here on earth this man can trust,
My woman has been sleepin' wid ma granpa
Ever since ma manhood fell into the dust.

Sides that Lord I'm missin' ma ol' hound-dog, Sleepin' peaceful like a baby on ma porch. Why would daddy want to burn ma house down? How could mama cry, I wanna light that torch?

'Spose I can't keep lookin' on the brite side My one eye's got to see the dark as well I still aint got no fingers left to pluck with I ain't even got a kidney I could sell.

'Haps I'll em-ul-ate ol' Jimi Hendrix And wrap ma holey molars round ma strings. Hear ma music, rattlin' through ma ribcage, Feel my spirit *rise and soar* on *angel* wings,

So don't pay me no niver mind dear Jesus, I'm happy to be dwindlin' and displaced I'm gonna keep my chin up while I have one, An' keep smilin' on the *good* side of my face.

#### A WALK IN THE AZORES

By Breandan O' Broin

One could not but be suspicious of the sausages. They were tasteless, textureless, and were being slowly served at 38,000 feet. Cabin crew on SATA Airways are trained to move in a leisurely fashion. On a two-thirds empty plane, the trolley takes twenty minutes to wend its way from front to back. The no-choice menu features sausages. We wangle two small bottles of Portuguese Red Wine and tuck in. A few forkfuls later, we are hoping the in-flight food is not a precursor of Azorean cuisine. Bland is too strong a word for it. The wine is fine though, especially when blended with soluble Solpadine.

What were we doing on our way to Sao Miguel, largest of a chain of nine Azorean islands lost in a paelartic ecozone in the middle of the Atlantic, way out west of the Canaries but almost equally far south? The volcanic Azores are the visible tips of the tallest mountains on earth, or so they say

Our holiday choice was the result of a Wiki-webcrawl fuelled by a late dinner and a bottle of wine. How could one resist when the look of a place is described as 'somewhere be-



Sir Richard Grenville

tween Ireland and Hawaii'. Such is the joy and the terror of the web. You wake up not remembering the name of wherever you booked yourself into and wonder if you will lose all respect as a result. This trip was a bed and breakfast baby resulting from a one-night stand. Unplanned. Could we grow to love it? The next week would tell. Now, we're two hours out from Ponta Delgada and the fall-in-altitude shudders have set in. Time to belt up and log off.

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay, And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away. 'Spanish ships of war at sea! We have sighted fifty three!'

The Azores are an autonomous region of Portugal, fought over by France, Spain and Britain (inevitably), and rhymed over by Shelley and Longfellow. The archipelago is named after the *Acor*, the goshawk, mistakenly so as that particular bird never set up coop anywhere in the locality. In someways similar to Ireland of the 1950's, the Azores are Catholic with a Capital 'C'. The modern airport, utterly unbusy with one other plane, is named after Juan Paulo 11 who kissed tarmac here during his pontifical jauntings. Lesser mortals who crave an instant tobacco/tar hit after four hours in-flight abstinence spark up outside the entrance to the lavatories under censorious eyes of non-smokers rushing for relief.

Except for ourselves and a Greystones mother and her Trinity post-exam-tense daughter, everyone else seems destined for Ponta Delgada delights.

Us non-city types climb into a mini-bus heading further afield, up over the coastal hills, down into the volcanic valley of Furnas and the three-star joys of the art-deco Hotel Terra

Nostra. It is dark as we arrive, and drizzling. The welcome is as equally dreary with a team of receptionists determined to keep their heads down in a "I didn't take a Masters Degree in Tourism to wind up in a job like this' kind of way. Far from spring chickens ourselves, the queue of half-boarders shuffling towards dinner features many who might soon be sitting down to their last supper.

We escape uptown, but uptown is dunta. As is downtown, midtown, and out-of-town. Craic seems a concept foreign to Furnas. We eat in Tony's 'world famous' restaurant, but there's no sign of Tony. The fish is fresh however, swordfish the size of a Shanahan's steak drowning in a whirlpool of vegetables that brings one back to the Mammy's posh Sunday fare of Batchelor's Macedoine of Tinned Vegetables. In case that isn't enough, there is also a carbo-mountain of chips and rice. Four other diners are tucking in; a damp UK couple and a fat man and his younger slender wife who confines herself to an almost Posh Spice-like repast of soft cheese, breads, sweet cakes and wine. Far from starvation, we ask for the bill. It comes to 22 euro, all in. Wine included. Some mistake surely? Was there a two-for-one offer on the table? No, twenty-two euro is the total damage, including service. That same morning, I had coughed up 14 euros for coffees and croissants in Dalkey. Throwing caution to the winds, I call for a big brandy to celebrate. All of two euro it costs; outrageous, do these people think I'm a tourist made of money?

The Botanical Gardens of Terra Nostra are the glory of Furnas. Acres upon acre of handcrafted woodland walks, first laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the American Consul. Fern type trees flourish in the humid air, like our own Glasnevin Botanical Gardens but without the need for greenhouses. Centre-



piece of the garden is an ornamental pool fed by an iron-rich river. The water is brown, and hot. Not warm, hot like Irish tea when the milk is added. You could blister your skin under the gushing inlet pipe. We breast stroke our way around in blissful procession, languidly letting the warmth penetrate our chilled Irish bones. Children sport in the arms of watchful parents, nervous that if their offspring slip they might be lost forever in the opaque shallows. Testosterone-filled teenagers stand erect, up to their necks in hot water, females wrapped around males, snogging each other's faces off. At least one hopes they are only snogging; what stirrings may be taking place in the nether regions could be anyone's cause for confession.

The best place for lunch involved a stroll out to the greenblue lake where your food had been simmering in underground geysers (calderas) ever since dawn. Furnas is home to the 'cozido', a melange of meats slowly stewed in pots sunk deep into the volcanic earth. Menu choices feature beef/pork/lamb but you can have a fish cozido or even a vegetarian variant offered by one enterprising cozido cooker. Slowly stewed cabbage and cauliflower do not make for an appetising-looking plate. If you do choose cozido, remember that just like a problem, a cozido shared is a cozido halved. Order one each and you're in serious doggy-bag territory.

There seems little art but much craft on the islands. The dividing line is often difficult to discern, but carved wooden ornaments of flat-faced men hewing wood and buxom girls milking Friesians come close to souvenir territory. A handsome youth called Ronaldo ('like the Man U soccer player', he boasts) tells us Ponta Delgada has a music conservatoire and a small symphony orchestra to help while away the winter nights. Ronaldo is a violinist and will be playing the solo part in a Bartok piece the following week. His Mammy does not much like Bartok. "Too complicated" she says in a perfect Canadian accent, "I prefer the Handle"

It is too hilly to cycle so we cut bamboo staves and set out on our feet, staffs-in-hands, like medieval pilgrims on the Way of Saint James to Compostela. Age-old walkways link sea-locked villages, wending their vertiginous ways along the indented cliff-face, but only tourists use them now. If an islander wants to take his milk to market on the back of a donkey (as many still do), they usher the beast along the hard-shoulder of the new-laid tarmac - it is not only Ireland that counts its Euro deontas-money in miles of fresh asphalt. The stunning far-off views were everywhere. But like old churches in Italy, after the first dozen or so, one is inclined to be impressed only by the five-star wonders. The close-ups were more rewarding. Bugs and beetles and flowers; with wild hydrangeas showing up startling blue in the deepest of green crevices. Concentrating on looking down rather than out had an added advantage as it saved this vertigo-freak from seeing too much of the plummet to certain death only a foot or two to our right.

Over five days we walked our socks off. Back at the hotel the night porter kept his head down as we slept well.

Breandan O' Broin Mean Fomhair 2007

#### **VIDEO VOYEUR**

Harold Chassen

Curse of the Golden Flower is a Chinese film in the same style



as Crouching Tiger and Flying Daggers but it is a much more visually sumptuous film like those Biblical epics of the 50s and 60s but in Chinese with subtitles. The plot is surprisingly too complex to relate here. The small screen of television may take something away from the grandeur of a large screen version. This is what cinema is meant to

be like, taking you to where you sit open mouthed with awe. Also worth seeing are Blood Diamond and 300 an animated version of the battle of Thermopylae.



# Congratulations to Mermaid Theatre from Bray Arts on its Fifth Birthday.

An exciting programme of free events from Thursday 20 - Sunday 23 September will celebrate five years of remarkable achievement by everyone involved in Mermaid Theatre. Children's workshops, pottery demonstration by Geoffrey Healy, Film, street theatre, Mundy and Prey Trio and a lot of surprises are in store for anyone who pops in during the weekend.

Maureen Kennelley and her staff are doing a tremendious job in making Mermaid relevent and accessible to young and old in North Wicklow. We wish them every success and our full support for the future.

#### **FLASH FICTION**

Flash fiction is fiction characterized by its extreme brevity, as measured by its length in words. While there is no universally accepted exact word limit, generally a short story is considered to constitute flash fiction if it is less than 1,000 words long, and most flash-fiction pieces are between 250 and 1,000 words long.

So what do we call a piece of fiction with less than 200 words. Well Stan Regal has sent in two very short pieces of fiction titled Desperation (22 words) and The Promise (4 words).

#### Desperation

"Hurry, send a pigeon," Captain Patton screamed. "We need reinforcements."

Every trench watched the bird fly.

"Leg, or breast," Corporal Hitler asked?

#### The Promise

Sex?

Headache!

Tomorrow?

Maybe.

#### SIGNAL ARTS PRESENTS

# An exhibition of new work by artist Emma Doyle.

From Tuesday 28th August to Sunday 9th September 2007

Emma is a self-taught artist. Influenced by Klimt, Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo amongst others, colour plays an important



Mongolian Performer

role in Emma's work. She starts painting with light shades and gradually adds more intense colours. Emma's work is mainly based on a stylised version of the solitary human figure.

Emma has previously exhibited her work at The Whole Shooting Gallery in Bray and Java Coffee Shop in Galway. Her current work is inspired by her travels throughout Europe and a trip she took on the Trans-Siberian railway.

Art, to Emma is "a form of escapism, a process to delve

into my subconscious mind to por-

tray my philosophies on life, my emotions and the world as I see it".

Opening Reception: Thursday 30th August 7pm.-9pm

## My World is ... by the artist Helen Pullen.

From Tuesday 11th to Sunday 23rd Sept. 2007

Helen says "My World is...... The sea and all that floats, flies and surfs in and around it. I grew up beside the sea in a small town land called Tara Hill in County Wexford, and I have lived most of my Life beside the sea. I am now living and working in Wicklow Town, Wicklow has a large tidal harbour, which I love to paint. I love the sea in all its moods and



especially when it is wild and windy.

The varieties of birds you find around shorelines are lovely to watch and paint. I was on holidays in New Zealand and Australia recently and I came back with lots of sketches and photographs of seagulls and pelicans, which I have depicted in my exhibition."

Opening Reception Friday 14th Sept. 7pm - 9pm.

Gallery Open: Tue to Fri: 10 - 1pm and 2 - 5pm Sat to Sun: 12 - 5pm

# PREVIEW OF FIRST ARTS EVENING OF THE 2007/2008 SEASON

ABSOLUTELY EVERYONE WELCOME.
MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER
8:00 PM HEATHER HOUSE HOTEL, STRAND ROAD
ADMISSION 5 / 4 EURO CONC.

**Joanna Boyle** fresh from her solo exhibition Vasalisa at Signal Arts Joanna will show and talk about her artwork. In her artist's statement she explains "in these works are echoes of vague constructions, frames, and vessels. The im-



portance of the space explored on the canvas surface has expanded to become an exploration of the medium of painting itself. The desire to capture space, time, emotion and experience cannot be neatly captured on a canvas, with the result that the works are suggestive rather than representational.

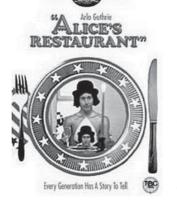
Colour is used to create a strong emotional charge. There is a suggestion throughout of flux and a

strong sense that the journey towards an image; rather than the creation of a fixed, specific representation is key."

Joan Conway had her first novel Cereal Lover published in 2000 followed a year later by Buny Girl. She finished her third novel in 2003 but put it in a drawer to concentrate on her two most important creations Felix and Myles her sons. Joan left the third novel in the drawer and wrote a fourth because she wanted to change her style. It's with her agent at present. We will have the pleasure of being the first to hear Joan's new style when she reads from her latest work.



In 1965 Arlo Gutherie and his friend Rick Robbins vistited



friends Alice and Ray Brock for thanksgiving. Alice and Ray lived in an old church in Stockbridge Massachusetts. Arlo and Rick decided to help Alice and Ray clear some rubbish from the church and were caught dumping illegally. The famous and hilarious recitation with chorus called Alice's Restaurant was inspired by that incident. We have the pleasure of presenting **Liam Young** performing Alice's Restaurant. This is one not to be missed.

#### REVIEW OF JUNE ARTS EVENING

Geoffrey Healy has a quiet but intense passion for his work and listening to him at our final Arts Evening of the 2006/2007 season would make you want to take up pottery immediately. He brought along some of his exquisite work to show to a captivated audience.

Frank O'Keeffe and Justin Aylmer (AKA The Old Codgers) provided another delightful comic piece. This time Patsy has put an ad in the paper for some female company and tries to hide the fact from Ned. As a consequence two feisty but different wimmin (Maureen O'Donovan and Mary Higgins) shatter the curmudgionly harmony of the Old Codgers lives. Great fun to see this fine quartet performing. The evening was beautifully rounded off by Cearbhall O'Meadhra playing Flamenco music on the guitar.

#### Submission Guidelines

Editor: Dermot McCabe: bacj@eircom.net

Creative Writing Prose/Fiction Editor: Anne Fitzgerald:

afitzgerald3@ireland.com

Poetry Editor: Eugene Hearne: poetrybray@yahoo.ie

Email submissions to any of the above or post typed

submissions to

The Editor BAJ 'Casino',

Killarney Rd. Bray,

Co. Wicklow

Visual material: Photographs by Post. Digital Images by

Email or CD in JPEG format.

Deadline 15th of each month.



Arts Evening Monday 3rd September 2007 at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm 5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.

Joanna Boyle: Painter fresh from her solo exhibition in Signal Arts

talking about and showing her Art.

Joan Conway: Reading from her upcoming 4th Novel. A witty and

humerous writer.

**Alice's Restaurant:** Arlo Gutherie's wonderful classic recitation/song performed by

## Liam Young

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Bray

Co. Wicklow