



***The John Steinbeck Festival
of Literature, Music, and Film (Limavady)
27th-29th February 2020***

The 2nd Annual John Steinbeck Festival (Limavady) celebrates the important connection the author John Steinbeck had with the village of Ballykelly. Steinbeck idolised his grandfather, Samuel Hamilton, who was born in the village on 7th October 1830 and Steinbeck's work clearly shows the influence his Irish roots had on his writing.

The Festival begins with a **'schools' programme'** taking place on the Thursday 27th and Friday 28th (9.30-1pm) and with over 400 school pupils attending. Schools from Coleraine, Derry/Londonderry and of course our local secondary schools, will be treated to a free showing of the film, **'Of Mice and Men'**. **Allan Nicholl** will provide live music from the Dust Bowl era. This will be preceded by 2 brief informative talks on 'Steinbeck's Local Connections', by historian and author, **Dougie Bartlett** and 'Of Mice, Men, and America.' by U.U. Lecturer in English Literature, **Dr Willa Murphy**.

The Festival proper opens to the public on **Friday 28th at 5pm** 'Upstairs in the Alex' (Alexander Arms Hotel Limavady), with **Sam Mc Bride the Political Editor of The Newsletter** talking about his bestselling book 'Burned', which investigates the R.H.I. scandal. Music will be provided by the talented duo of **Ashleen Allen and Shane McAteer**. A packed programme of talks, tours and music follows with a **free public showing of 'East of Eden' from 7pm on Friday 28th in the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre (bar/refreshments available)**. Tickets are free for this event, from the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre, but must be booked in advance.

On Saturday 29th there will be **free Minibus Tours**, guided by historian and tour guide Nigel Handforth which will visit **'Local and Steinbeck Landmarks'** leaving from Drumceatt Square, at **10am, 12 noon and 2pm**. Places are limited to a maximum of 48, with booking essential (free tickets available through the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre).

On Saturday 29th at 4pm Sorcha Pollak (Irish Times journalist and author) will be 'Upstairs in the Alex' bringing a major Steinbeck theme up-to-date and into the reality of the 21st century Ireland with an engaging and interesting talk on **'Immigrants in Ireland'**. The ever-popular **Paddy Nash** will provide the music.

On Saturday 29th from 8pm in the evening, the final Festival event sees the highly entertaining, challenging and sometimes controversial journalist and author, **Malachi O'Doherty**, take on the themes of **'God, War and Truth'** based primarily on his reading of two lesser-known Steinbeck novels, 'Once There was a War' and 'To A God Unknown'. **Allan Nicholl** will provide the **Dust Bowl Blues** with **Franck Le Ducq**, (graduate of the Sorbonne University, Paris) treating us to **'A French View of Steinbeck'**. **McCall Gilfillan** will read extracts from Steinbeck on the night, before the much-anticipated re-appearance of Ballykellyman **Boyd Gray** as John Steinbeck himself, brings the evening to a close.

In other events running alongside the Festival, **local primary pupils** are contributing to a week-long **exhibition** taking place in **Limavady Library**, beginning on **Monday 24th February**. **Row by Roe** have sponsored a 'Knit, Crochet or Stitch a Bookmark' competition, with entries open until 26th February. **The 'Dust Bowl Writing Award'** closed on January 31st with a substantial number of high-quality entries now with the competition's Judging Panel. A **unique ceramic Dust Bowl Award** has been specially created by American born **local artist McCall Gilfillan** and will be presented to the winner on the final night, by **Malachi O'Doherty** (Saturday 29th 'Upstairs in the Alex').

For further information visit www.steinbeckfestival.com and steinbeckfestival@gmail.com