

work on such large projects. When she left college initially, she worked for many years as a silversmith. But some of her work is even more large-scale, and is monumental in scope.

In fact, she reveals, *Lost Sailors*, is the only sculptural project that is small enough to fit in a gallery. Others, such as *Theatre*, (pictured) which is a series of monumental faces that somehow evoke Easter Island, required an open space, and is in fact, located in a public park in Cabinteely, Co Dublin.

But, Agnes says, she has always wanted to work in sculpture. Growing up, she explains, she was fascinated by the old Greek and Roman sculptures pictured in her father's old encyclopedia. And then, she adds, there were statues all over the place.

"One of my first memories was of a big statue in front of the school. I remember looking at the feet and thinking somebody made those feet," she says.

For a number of years, after leaving college, she held off from doing the big pieces she really craved, concentrating instead on teaching, on silversmithing, on wax-working for bronze.

"Then I started working with concrete. I wanted to do large pieces but I couldn't afford bronze so I learnt how to cast in concrete," she explains.

An off-shoot of that was that Agnes got to know concrete manufacturers and began designing concrete paving



Newcastle West Arts Committee members Carmel O'Mahoney, Anne Lenihan-Keane, Mary Mackey, Vicki Nash, James Lawlor, Rose Liston and Ann Byrne were pictured at the opening of 'Lost Sailors' at the Red Door Gallery

Pictures: Marie Keating



Mayor Kevin Sheahan and John Cussen with Mike Fitzpatrick who launched *Lost Sailors*



Close up of the 'Lost Sailors' exhibition by Agnes Conway



Dr Paul Finucane and Limerick Arts Officer, Sheila Deegan



Agnes Conway with some of her former classmates, Mary Liston, Ann O'Donnell-Kelly, Mairead O'Flynn, Noreen Heffernan and Eileen Moran

At one point, Agnes admits,

"There is a sacredness to it, even before you read the text"

Mike Fitzpatrick

Director Limerick European City of Culture Bid 2020

she was considering bringing *Lost Sailors* down to the beach and creating a funeral pyre of it, in a roundabout circular way bringing it all back to the shore where it began.

Thankfully, for her Limerick audience, she didn't act on that idea. Now, she would like to see if a more permanent home can be found for it, possibly somewhere near water. Otherwise, the work will return to a shed.

"I am gobsmacked by what I have seen," was Mayor Kevin Sheahan's reaction when he attended last Thursday's launch and paid tribute to the Newcastle West Arts Committee for hosting the exhibition. And he urged as many people as possible to visit and experience it for themselves.

Lost Sailors can be viewed in the Red Gallery, Newcastle West this Thursday, Friday and Saturday between 11.30am and 4.30pm and again at the same times on May 28, 29 and 30.

been trying to make the ideas that come into my head come alive on the page," he says.

Nigel is the son of Eddie and Mary Quinlan and much of his early writing and reading was done while minding the petrol pumps at his father's garage in Murroe.

Each month Dubray Books pick a new children's book that they think "stands out from the herd", a book that is destined to become a classic for this generation and generations to come, and in May they chose *The Maloneys' Magical Weatherbox* which is aimed at readers aged from 10 to 12 years. They say: "This fantasy adventure is a wonderful mix of humour - watch out for the Shieldsmen with their wild Cork slang - beautiful fantasy, and traditional Irish folk tales. Highly recommended for both boys and girls!"

Neil and Liz Maloney live in the midlands, and their father is the weatherman. He is not the kind of weatherman you see on television after the news, talking about high pressure and rainfall; this weatherman is the gatekeeper of the seasons. The story begins when autumn fails to arrive. Can Neil and Liz stop the chaos before it's the end of the world?

Inspired by the telephone kiosk in Murroe (a thing of the past now although perhaps it will be reinstated as an attraction for literary tourists in years to



Nigel Quinlan with a close up pictured of the cover of *The Maloneys' Magical Weatherbox*

come), this novel is based on an idea Nigel first developed in a short story over 20 years ago, and he wrote and revised most of the novel after moving to Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary with his family, where he also founded the Cloughjordan Writers' Group, which meets on Sundays in Sheelagh na Gig bookshop in Cloughjordan.

Although this novel is Nigel's first, he is no stranger to publication. His short stories for adults have been published in the magazine *Albedo One* and *This Way Up*, an anthology of Irish science fiction/fantasy writing. He has also contributed to *Sunday Miscellany*, most recently with the poem *January Rises*, which was broadcast earlier this month. He is currently working on his second novel for Orion Books.

Nigel blogs about writing and books at *The Weatherbox*: <http://nigelquinlan.tumblr.com>.

Glenstal to launch jewellery line inspired by Lady Barrington

GRAINNE KEAYS

A NEW jewellery collection inspired by the former mistress of Glenstal Abbey, Lady Mary Rose Barrington, is to be launched early next month with an operatic performance by leading soprano Cara O'Sullivan.

Lady Barrington became chateleine of Glenstal Castle on February 14, 1895 when, as Mary Rose Bacon, she married Sir Charles Barrington in London. She was the daughter of a baronet, Sir Henry Hickman Bacon, and his wife, Elizabeth (nee Beckett).

As a wedding gift, Sir Charles presented his wife with a diamond and ruby pendant and ring, symbols of eternal and passionate commitment, and so began a long and happy marriage. The new jewellery collection replicates this set.

Over the years, Lady Barrington became one of the most respected ladies of her class in County Limerick, famed as a gracious hostess, enthusiastic sportswoman and generous benefactress.

Lady Barrington divided her time between Glenstal and London. Her coming and goings were recorded very succinctly in the social media of the time, the *Social* and *Personal* columns of the national newspapers: "Lady Barrington has left Glenstal for London" or "Lady Barrington has returned to Glenstal from London". Thus, her friends and acquaintances knew to which address to direct their correspondence.

Under Lady Barrington, Glenstal Castle became a renowned centre for high society entertaining and her guests included the Lord Lieutenant and

his wife, Earl and Lady Cadogan, who stayed there in 1898 as did Lord and Lady Dunraven from Adare.

The Barringtons also hosted numerous garden parties and other events on the grounds. The Irish Industries Association held its show at Glenstal in July 1900. The various exhibits included fruits, vegetables and poultry. Lady Barrington was commended for the "graceful manner" in which she distributed the prizes.

The Barringtons were frequently to be found on the society-wedding guest lists. In 1908, when one Mr. W.L.A. Goulding married a Miss Wright at Bray the newspapers reported that Sir Charles and Lady Barrington's gift was a dessert service. A good china dessert service in those days would have included a pair of sauce tureens

with covers and stands, twelve dishes, twelve plates, and perhaps three large serving dishes.

Lady Barrington was a keen sportswoman, being a good shot and fisherwoman. She was also a renowned dog breeder. It has been noted that her Irish water spaniels were kept as much-loved family pets and not just as sporting dogs. Inevitably, Lady Barrington acted as hostess to many shooting parties and these were reported upon in the press.

Lady Barrington seems to have been a loving and attentive mother, supported in that role by a nanny. Her younger son, Fitzwilliam, recalled that his mother taught him to read while he was still at the nursery stage. "After the lesson had finished, I was allowed to draw trains in the exercise book, except on Sundays when only churches were permitted."

In the *Old Limerick Journal* (Vol 24), Fitzwilliam Barrington described a typical Saturday afternoon's outing to Limerick city with his parents. After shopping "my father retired to the Country Club and my mother to the Ladies' Club - in Bedford Row I think - to play bridge. I was sent off with the nanny to Miss Smith's tea room, and in later years occasionally to [the cinema]".

Glenstal Abbey Gift Shop will launch the Lady Barrington Jewellery Collection on Saturday, June 6 and will mark the occasion with afternoon tea at the castle followed by a performance by the renowned Cara O'Sullivan, beginning at 3.45pm. Tickets are €35 and as places are limited booking before June 2 is advised to avoid disappointment. Contact 061 386103 (ext 4 monastery) or email margaret@glenstal.org.



To launch a new collection of jewellery inspired by Lady Mary Rose Barrington, above, Glenstal Abbey will host a special launch event on June 6 with a performance by operatic singer Cara O'Sullivan

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