



The Seanchaí Project:

The Storytelling History of the Island of Ireland Continues

Discussions on ‘*The Experience of Being Irish*’ in 2023
Mar 18th, Apr 15th, Jun 3rd, July 8th, Sept 23rd, Oct 28th

Introduction

Our intention is to provide a space for people to come together and share their stories of being Irish, or their relationship with Ireland, in the current time. We have been sharing our stories with each other over the last few years and have found it to be very beneficial. We realise how many stories have not been heard and have a sense that we are all the poorer for that. We hope to offer an opportunity to connect with each other, to our complex history and to make sense of where we come from, what we’ve lived through, and where that might lead us. Together we will have the chance to share our personal and unique experiences and explore together what it means to be Irish today and/or what it means to have a relationship with Ireland if we were born elsewhere. Our ancestors knew the importance of knowing & sharing stories to keep us healthy in body and spirit– we believe this old tradition can bring forth new opportunities for us all. Through becoming more fully aware of the rich tapestry of the experience of being Irish, or rather the many versions of it, we hope to come away with a greater understanding and appreciation of ourselves, as individuals and as a collective.

Events in 2023

We are hosting 6 events this year. Two of these will be online and four will be in person. Of these four, two will be in Ireland and two in England. At each of the events, we will facilitate group-based discussions on different aspects of the experience of being Irish – and people’s relationship with Irishness - in 2023. This will focus on each of our lives in the present day but also how this has been affected by the past.

Background

A *Seanchaí* (shan-a-key) was a traditional Irish *storyteller*. In a literal sense, the word means ‘*bearer of old lore*’. The *Seanchaithe* (*plural*) were custodians of history and culture on the Island of Ireland for many centuries. Historically, they were highly valued by their local Chieftain and had a wide range of roles that involved dealing with legal issues, literature and genealogy. Following the English Conquests of Ireland - from the 1500’s onwards - the work of the Seanchaithe became more and more centred on storytelling and passing on Irish folklore, myth and legend. This rich and ancient way of being will guide the work of this project and the events hosted as part of it. Our hope is to bring an updated version of the spirit of the Seanchaithe to better understand ourselves.

Our Approach

The spirit of the Seanchaithe will guide the overarching approach of this work. We will fuse this with an approach to facilitated community dialogue that is grounded in Process Oriented Psychology (POP). If you are interested, you can find more information [here](#) but ultimately there is no requirement to have any interest or knowledge of this. These events are about telling, sharing and listening to each other’s stories.

Who are these events for?

These events are open to anyone (over the age of 18 years) who has a relationship with being Irish and the many different ways that this shows up in the world. No previous experience of such events is required. It is of note that these sessions are participative and experiential. Sharing and processing our experiences and stories in relation to these issues may involve people expressing different emotions and it is best to be prepared for that. However, this may mean very different things for different people. For some, it may involve sharing openly in dialogue and emotion whereas for others it may involve listening and contemplating in a quieter way. All are welcome.



When, where and how to book?

Date	Location	Times	To Register
Mar 18th	Online Link to follow	10am - 1pm	Click here
Apr 15th	London London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB https://londonirishcentre.org/	10am - 4pm	Click here
Jun 3rd	Online Link to follow	10am - 1pm	Click here
July 8th	Dublin Macro Community Resource Centre, 1 Green St, Dublin 7, D07 X6NR https://www.macrocommunity.ie/	10am - 4pm	Click here
Sept 23rd	Wicklow Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow, A98D635, https://glencree.ie/	10am - 4pm	Click here
Oct 28th	London Irish Cultural Centre Hammersmith, 5 Black's Road, Hammersmith, W6 9DT https://irishculturalcentre.co.uk/	10am - 4pm	Click here

Fee

These sessions are free of charge. They are being supported by the Jean Claude Audergon Memorial, ['The Far in, Far Out'](#) Project. Tea and Coffee provided.

The Facilitation Team



Paul Callery

Paul grew up in the northwest of Ireland but has spent most of his adult life in the Basque Country and in London, where he now lives. His background is in education where he focussed on developing generative and integral models using critical and reflective practices. He currently mentors and supports Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Minors. Paul is continuously engaged in learning and development within the field of Process Oriented Psychology, working in private practice with individuals, couples, and organisations. He has a deep interest in the Irish experience, how we live it and how it lives in us.

Dr Pádraig Cotter, D Psych Sc

Pádraig is a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS and member of the Research Society of Process Oriented Psychology United Kingdom (RSPOP UK). He has worked at the National Suicide Research Foundation in Ireland and in Adult Mental Health and Clinical Health Psychology in Ireland and England. Pádraig has an interest in how social, political, and economic issues arise within individual psychotherapy and individual psychotherapy within the processing of world issues. One such area is how this is relevant to the experience of being Irish.



We are hosting these sessions in association with The 'Far in, Far Out' Memorial for Jean-Claude Audergon, [CFOR Force for Change](#) and the Research Society for Process Oriented Psychology United Kingdom ([RSPOPUK](#)).

For Further Information

Please direct any queries to theseanchaiproject@gmail.com

A few words from previous participants

'Really appreciated the sense of belonging to a community that emerged.'

'It was a very welcoming forum where a feeling of safety was cultivated by the facilitators and space was offered for those who wished to share their experiences.'

'...this enabled me to speak from a deeper place of my experience of Irishness both here in Derry where I have lived through the Troubles but also of times when I have lived in England...'

'It was a very profound experience for me. It reached into a deep sense of shame, the shame of poverty, displacement and internalised oppression that I carry inside.'

'The sessions reminded me of my love for the Irish language and further empowered my resolve to keep learning an teanga.. I have go leor Gaeilge ach nil me liofa...'