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Portstewart writer launches new book

NORTH Coast writer Mary Farrell has launched 'Maybury,' her second book in The Circle Trilogy.

The talented 70-year-old Portstewart grandmother dedicated the book to her paternal ancestral family, the Rawlings.

Her grandfather came to the town of Portrush in the 1930s as a Coastguard.

The trilogy has been written over the last five years with Part One, 'The Kingdom' published in November last year. Part Three, 'New Asgarth' will be published next October in 2024.

Mary said: "I wanted to honour the legacy my grandfather's ancestors gave me - a love of small English towns and their unique communities."

"There is an Irish proverb: 'It is in the shelter of each other that the people live', and it is this idea, this sense of community, which is at the core of the Circle Trilogy."

Born in Carnlough in the Glens, Mary lived in County Antrim until 2011 when she moved to France for six years. Forced by circumstances to return, she now lives in Portstewart.

In 2017, as part of a move to begin a new life, she joined her first ever Creative Writing Group run by local writer Bernie McGill at Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart.

CHARITY

When Bernie left Flowerfield to take up a position at Queen's University in Belfast, Mary, with fellow writer Robin Holmes, set up a new Creative Writing Group, now called Pen and Paper, which meet on Zoom weekly.

As part of an Initiative begun with Libraries NI, in September 2023 Mary moved on to firstly form another writing Group which meets weekly in person in Coleraine Library and then a third one which meets in Agherton Church Hall, Portstewart on Fridays.

Finally, as part of the charity Aslam, she now also facilitates a fortnightly Zoom Group for autistic adults from all over Ireland.

Three of her general Collections 'It's like walking a Tightrope', 'Out of the Chrysalis' and 'A Phoenix still Rising' were published in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively.

RED SAILS

Her textbook, 'Springboards: a Creative Writing Manual for Beginners through to Facilitators' was published in November 2022.

She has read her work on BBC Radio Ulster, and in 2019 was a guest on the BBC Radio Ulster programme, 'Time of Our Lives' talking about her life and work.

Her short story, 'A Tale of a Barn' won the Lurig Drama Club Competition in 2020, and, recorded by the actor Ciaran Hinds on November 26th, 2020, can be found at www.thenineglens.com.

She regularly performs at Tenx9 events and has appeared at the Red Sails and Swell Festivals in the Triangle area.

However, while she enjoys all her writing activities, her time spent with her grandson Jamie and her three step grandsons Alexander, Taylor and Charlie is the part of her new world which she considers "beyond price."

The launch of 'Maybury' stories was held on Sunday, 19th November, in The Atlantic Suite at the Royal Court Hotel, Portrush.

READERS

The seven Guest Readers were Bernie McGill, Cathy Carson, Liz Weir, Maura Johnston, Kate Murphy, Kathleen McCracken and Paul Hutchinson.

Afterwards, some of the guests moved on to the Royal Court Dining Room for a very enjoyable meal.

Mary paid tribute to the many people who have helped her on her journey over the past five years to produce these books.

She said: "The Creative Writing world is a very generous one. The writers in the Groups I facilitate, other Group Leaders who have made me very welcome and Course Facilitators have all been generous in their desire to help, and in sharing their time and knowledge. I owe them all deeply grateful thanks."

• Her books are available from 'No 6 Queen Street' in Coleraine and 'Causeway Books' at 106 Main Street, Bushmills and can also be purchased from Amazon.



Mary Farrell, 'Maybury' author pictured with Hazel Siberry from Castlerock, a member of Sanderlings Writing Group, Portstewart.



Pictured reading is Bernie McGill, Portstewart, with other readers - from left - Kate Murphy, Portrush, Paul Hutchinson, Portrush, Maura Johnston, Moneymore, Cathy Carson, Crossgar, County Down and Liz Weir, Glen Ballyeamon, Cushendall.



A section of the crowd at the launch event in the Royal Court Hotel.

