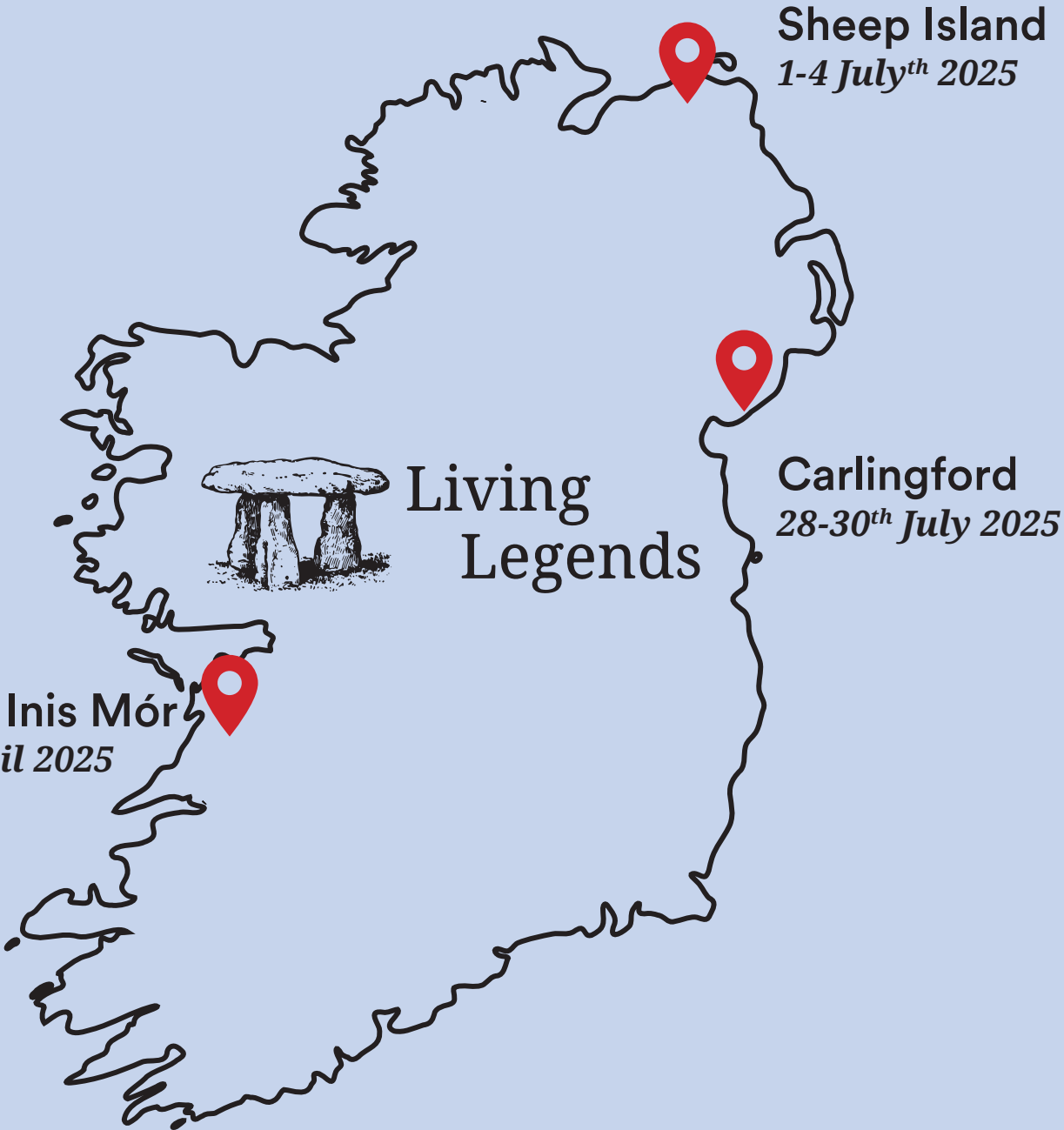


LIVING LEGENDS

A youth
exchange
between
Belfast and
Limerick

Introduced by
Colum McCann





Sheep Island
1-4 Julyth 2025

Carlingford
28-30th July 2025

**Living
Legends**

Doolin & Inis Mór
21-24th April 2025

Foreword

by Colum McCann



In April 2025, Senator George Mitchell, widely acknowledged as the architect of the 1998 peace process in Northern Ireland, addressed a packed hall full of young people in Belfast, saying: “You are the leaders and the lightning rods of tomorrow.” He added that “the legacy of your peacemaking can be one that will astound a world that sometimes seems broken.” Senator Mitchell’s profound optimism was a call for action amongst young people to show that the “possible exists within the impossible.”

The Living Legends project – which brought together 23 young people from inner-city Belfast, Limerick and Clare – was designed to build understanding and collaboration across communities, fostering empathy and forging connections through the art of stories and Storytelling. The project, supported by Creative Ireland, through the Creative Youth strand, and the Shared Island Initiative, illustrated in extraordinary ways that vision can always defeat division. Throughout the project, the young participants showed remarkable courage, openness, and curiosity. Deep connections were formed, and many assumptions about each other were challenged and reshaped.

Friendships developed across communities that might never otherwise have met. In artist-led workshops such as screenwriting, costume design, and illustration, the almost two dozen participants were able to understand that the shortest difference between two people is a story.

As co-founder of Narrative 4, I would like to thank our partners in this endeavour: Festival in a Van, Northern Ireland Youth Forum, and R-CITY. Through our combined effort, we were able to access the repair that gives us access to a shared future. The initiative was an act of courage. To bring it forward, now, is a deepening of hope, from Shankill to Southill and beyond.

Watch the Living
Legends video here





Introduction

by Jayden Kelly

When I initially heard about the *Living Legends* programme, I was only going for the sake of the 3 residencies. But when I first met everyone in Doolin, I knew it would be more, and I knew it would mean more to me on a deeper level.

In Doolin, I was hesitant to interact with the Belfast girls. I was mainly just sticking to talking to my pre-existing friends from Limerick, sometimes I would talk to the leaders from Limerick. When it came to the night time activities, I embarrassed myself in an ice breaker in which we had to say our names and say something you like. That gave us a start.

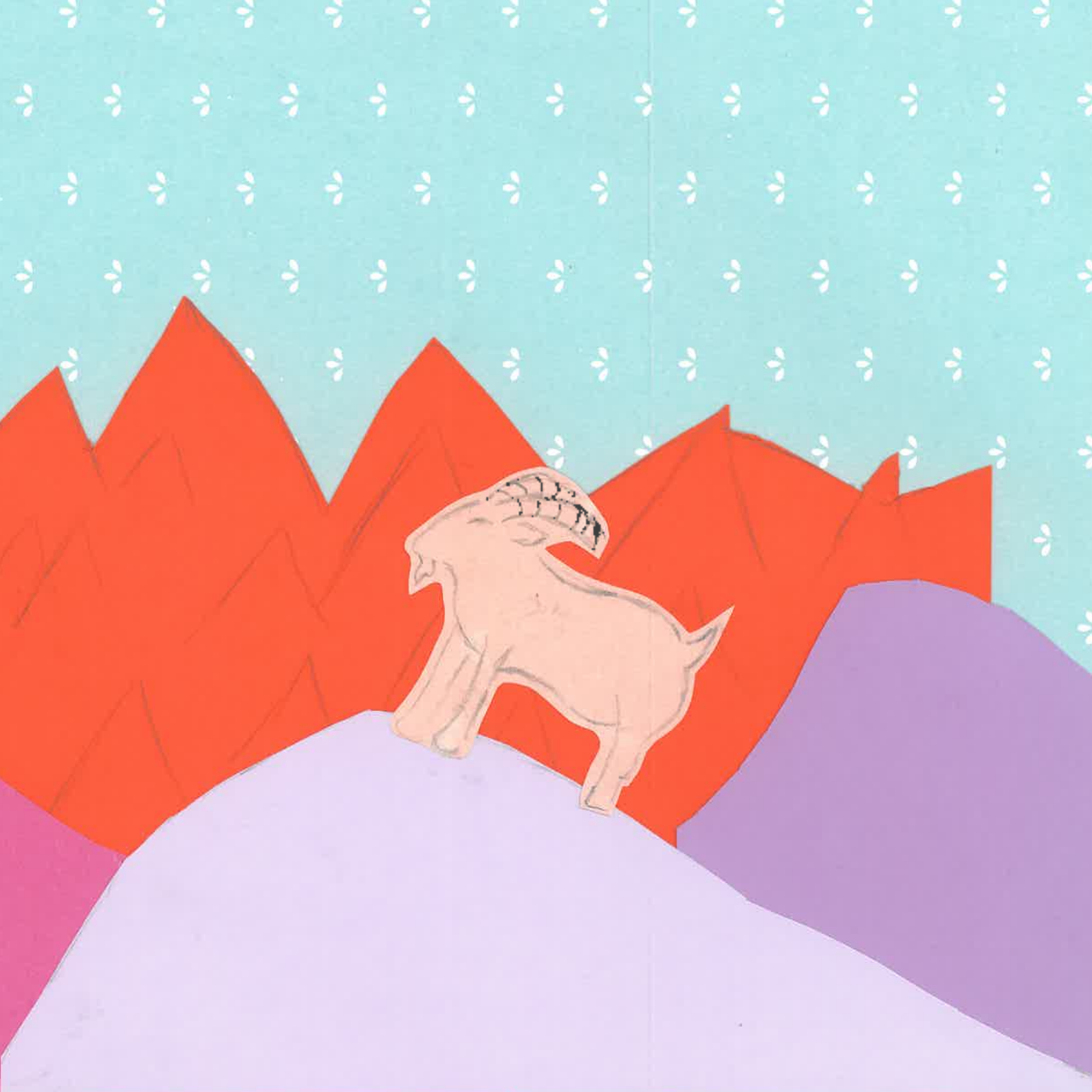
I felt more comfortable then talking to the “Belfastians”, as me and my friend aptly labeled them as we couldn’t remember all their names. But no real bond had formed until at least the second trip. Where I would go as far as to have called some of them my friends.

During the wait between the next trip we’d be texting, talking about how fun the final trip will be. The time between flew but the trip went as quick as it came. Even though we were excited to see each other again, we all knew that this was the end of this frankly life-changing experience.

On the final day, the Limerick bus arrived first so we shared hugs and left. Maybe the last time we will ever see each other. If I could change one thing about my whole Living Legends experience, it would be how good of friends I became with the Belfast girls, because the better friends we became, the more it hurt to leave.

But moving on from the sad stuff, I learned so much in an array of things: storytelling, improv, music, and writing. And learning about the music was even better because we had a genuine musician in Laura, one of the leaders, and I didn’t think when I first heard her music that I would like it to the extent I did.

But over all, if I had the option to do it all again, I’d accept in a heartbeat.



The Billy Goat of Southill

by Jayden Kelly

So there's four big massive hills in Limerick. You have North Hill, Southill, where I'm from, you also have West Hill and East Hill. There's loads of animals up there, loads. You find cows, you find sheep, they are all over the place. I looked out my front door there yesterday, yea. And there were about 15 of them just chilling out in my garden, absolute madness.

There's a billy goat up there called the Irish Billy Goat, and it is a sight to see. You know how you know it's the Irish Billy Goat? It has a big green stripe going down the back, actually I don't know what you'd call it, if it's a stripe or a mark, I don't know. It has a big line going down its spine. Like how is it green? What animal has green, you'd think you'd see that on like a flower, but not a billy goat. When you think of a goat's colours you think of white or you think of brown. You think of even grey, but green?!

I have one whose name is Jerry, he is class. Dju know Southill yea, it's the second biggest mountain, I dunno if you'd call it a mountain, or a hill, or what but it's the second tallest... we'll go with hill, in Ireland. There's a stream going down the side, by God it's beautiful.

Dju know where I live... at the very top of it. Well not the very top. You'd just fall off if you were at the top. There's no oxygen up there. No oxygen at all. Sometimes I step out my front door and I just start heavy breathing.

Anyway, did I tell ye about the 15 sheep in my garden? I saw them outside this morning then went straight back into my house to get them a bit of hay.

Anyway moving on, it's a beautiful spot but there's not a lot of people living up there, not a lot of people at all, there's a house about every half kilometre up. And at the top is mine, I live in a bungalow, what do ye think of bungalows? Nice and small and cosy. I have a dog as well, the dog is lovely. And what's the dog's name you ask? Billy, after the goat!

But anyways lads ye have had to listen to me for long enough, so I'll stop here. Ye should pay a visit someday to Southill.

The Story of my Story



This story began as a tale I was telling Americans I had met on the Aran Islands, which I later found to be called 'improv'. I later had to repeat it in front of everyone that night.



AN TUIRNE

THE ISLAND

SWEATER SHOP

The Island of the Banshee

by Erin Ferguson

Long ago, back in 1809, a 17 year old girl, Elodie, lived near the cliffs of Inis Mór. Elodie's family owned a sheep farm. Elodie loved the sheep as she raised most of the lambs as one of her own children.

One night a massive storm struck the island, lasting over three days. It destroyed a lot of houses and boats, it stopped anyone from getting to the mainland. The locals called the storm, Storm Saoirse.

On the second night of the storm, Elodie saw a sheep near the edge of the cliff, so she did the thing anyone would. She ran to save it.

However, unbeknownst to her, she was being watched by Emily, a girl who was always jealous of Elodie, as Elodie was the golden girl of the island. Emily pushed Elodie into the raging water below and Elodie grabbed on to the only thing she could. Which was the poor sheep, taking it off the cliff with her.

The locals presumed she had been a casualty of the storm but that was not exactly what had happened. Elodie had fallen into the wild water and drifted for what seemed like days. On a rock, Elodie sat up gasping for air, however she didn't look herself, as her skin was drained of colour, her hair was as white as snow, her lips were as blue as the water and her eyes held no warmth, they were just cold and lifeless.

When she saw a reflection in the rock pool, she let out an ear-piercing scream that was heard all over the island.

This is one of the origin stories of the Banshee of Inis Mór. A female spirit that haunts the island to this day.

The Story of my Story



We have all been to Inis Mór, it was a very eventful trip. But we know that the island is quite small, now I'm sure there are plenty of legends and myths that are passed down through generations of families. But today I am going to tell you a story about the first founding Banshee of Inis Mór, so here's *The Island of the Banshee*.

Scan to listen to Erin's story here





People in pic L-R: *James Lawlor, Jake Keogh, Gary Naughton, Travis McNamara, Jayden Kelly, Gracie Cummane & Rachel Gleeson.*

My Thoughts before Beginning the Programme

by Ella-Eve Cowan

Down in Doolin, I imagine everyone to be nervous but hopefully excited. I hope to make friends. I hope to learn more about story writing skills. To help myself for GCSEs, I'd love to learn about the group from Limerick's backgrounds or cultures. I think that there will be a lot of fun learning about the cliffs and in the towns. I hope also to explore my own confidence and my own skills and abilities over the course of all the residential and experiences in this group!

My Living Legends Experience

by Gary Naughton

Doolin

My thoughts from the first residential, I was nervous and excited to go to Doolin and meet new people.

Antrim

In the second residential, I made new friends and I wasn't nervous. I was excited to see everyone again after a couple months. We went to Antrim and had a good time playing games and going to the beach and getting to know people more.

Louth

On the third residential at Carlingford Adventure Centre, no one was nervous because everyone had made friends with everyone. We did some adventure activities such as laser tag and nightline but on the last day, everyone was sad because it would be the last residential.



People in pic L-R: *Holly McGuigan, Karley Dalton, Donovan Gawley, Aimee Donnelly, Stella Shaw, Kiera Calderwood, Meabh Cavan & Ella-Eve Cowan.*

The Old Woman of the Dolmen

by Ella-Eve Cowan

Once upon a time, there was an old woman of the dolmen. She owned the land where an ancient dolmen stood, which she was trying to sell. She set it up all nice and had a harp there, a magical one playing happy and wonderful music. Happy, twinkling, repetitive music, like the tunes you hear on an ice-cream van. And many buyers came looking around.

Suddenly, a banshee appeared. She dulled the mood right down. The harp started playing sad music, and people started to leave.

The old woman of the dolmen was fuming. So she told the banshee to leave.

So the banshee did.

Things went back to normal and the harp music twinkled again. But only for five minutes.

Then the banshee came back. People started to cry. The harp went dull again, but this time the old woman of the dolmen felt uneasy, like death was near.

A huge, dark horse figure appeared, and swallowed the old woman whole, and galloped away.

The banshee then morphed into the old woman and took her place.

Scan to listen to Ella-Eve's story here



*Workshop with
Rab Fulton, writer
and storyteller*



FAIRTE
SMOKED MACKEREL €9
BEEF LASAGNE €15
GREEK SALAD €13
POTATO GRATIN €12
SMOKED SALMONES
VEGAN DISH €11
ALL SERVED WITH
SALAD

STEW & MASH €16
SANDWICHES €5
VEGETABLE SOUP €6
TOMATO SOUP €6
CAKES €5.50-€6
SCOTCH €3

Filleann an Feall ar an Bhfeallaire*

le Oluwanifemi Itiolu 'Nife'

Fadó, fadó...

Once upon a time, there was a clever boy named Cian who lived in a small village and was known for being a bit of a trickster. He was smart, funny, and always full of ideas, but not always good ones.

And every day, at school, he played tricks on his classmates, hiding their homework, switching water bottles, and telling little lies just to see people get confused or upset. People laughed with him at first, but slowly some started to avoid him.

Until one day, he told a big lie, saying that his best friend Liam had stolen their teacher's phone from her desk. He made the story sound so real that even Liam was shocked when he was questioned.

And because of this, Liam got into serious trouble. The teacher called home, and Liam's parents were furious. Liam was heartbroken that Cian would betray him like that.

And because of this, Liam stopped speaking to Cian completely, and the class began to wonder if Cian was behind other problems too. People started to whisper about him, and the teachers began watching him more closely.

*{*The treachery returns to the betrayer/What comes around goes around.}*

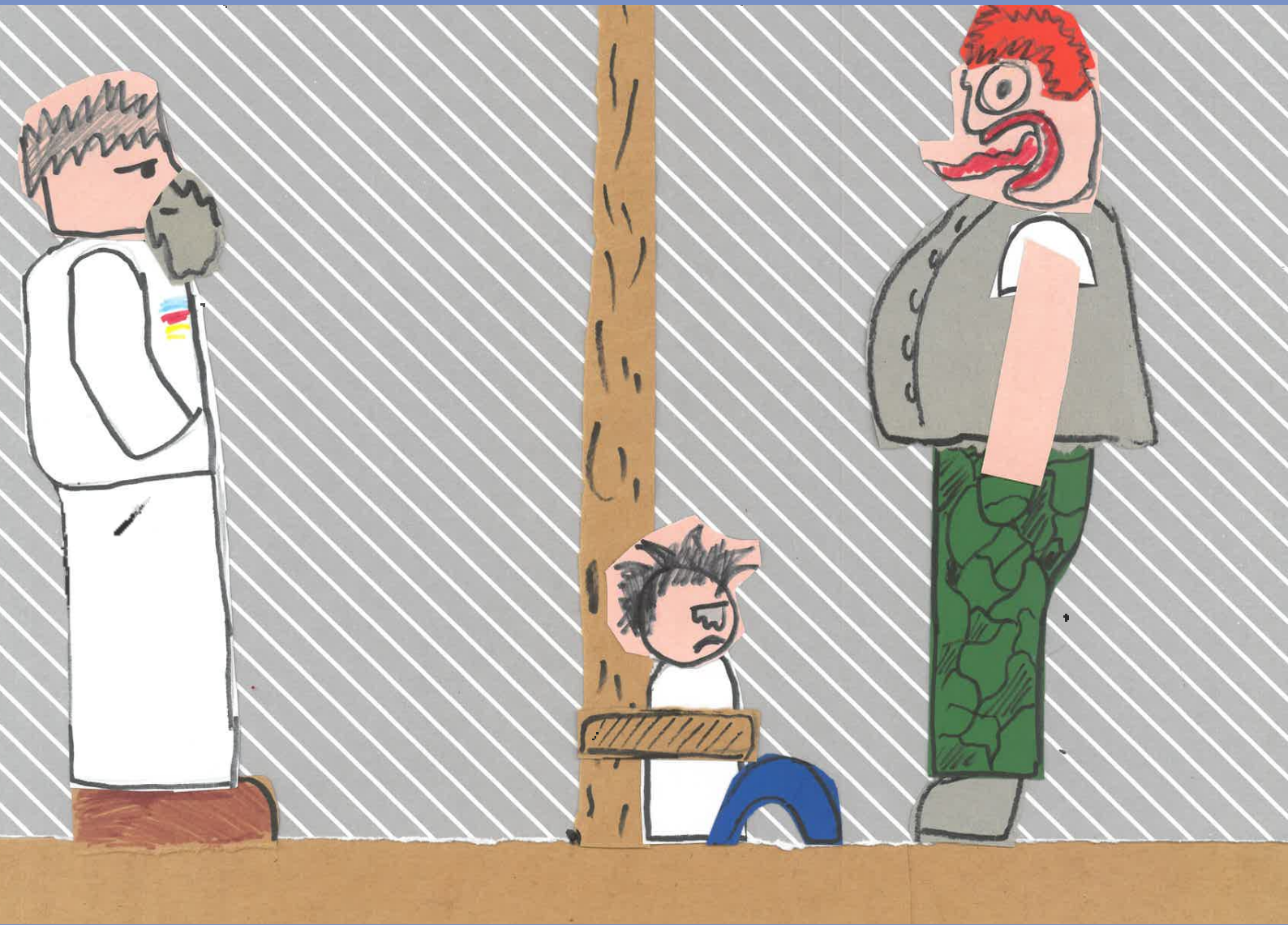
Scan to listen to Nife's story here







 **Giant's Causeway**
County Antrim



A Boy's Hero by Luke Geraghty

A Boy's Hero

by Luke Geraghty

Once upon a time, there lived a small child on an island not far off a wealthy kingdom. The boy was no more than seven years of age, his father had left him years before, so the boy's grandfather was left to look after him. The grandfather was a larger man, who worked for the military, he was well regarded across all the ranks and seen as a hero.

Every day, the boy and his grandfather would train in the woods so that the young boy would become stronger and eventually join the military like his grandfather. Each day, they would train for countless hours, and after all those hours the pair would sit down in front of a fire and eat a large amount of food - meat, fruits, veg, and sweets - after all that. They would go to sleep when they finished their meal and repeat this every day in hopes the child would one day become stronger than the grandfather.

Until one day, the pair were attacked by mountain bandits who were lurking in the trees. They stood before the two demanding all the money they had or they would beat them, but both grandfather and grandson were still sleeping, knocked out cold as if they were in comas. The bandits looked amongst themselves in confusion, with all their screaming and shouting, these two still managed to stay sleeping, as if they weren't there at all.

And because of their deep sleep, it led to them being captured by the bandits and tied up. The bandits had taken them to their hideout, far up the mountain, away from the family's camp, and even further from the village where they lived. Once the boy woke up, he looked around, blinking to focus his eyes.

"Grandpa... where are we?", he said sleepily.

But his grandfather was snoring, and quite loudly, until one of the lower bandits heard the boy.

"Boss, the child's awake, you want me to do anything with him?"

The leader of the bandits came rushing in, almost out of breath.

"HA! You're awake, and now you're in big trouble, we are the infamous banditeers, anyone who sleeps in our woods either dies, or has to pay us for life."

The boy looked up at this large woman, dark red hair, wrinkles all across her forehead and lips large like they'd been stung by bees.

"If you're so famous, how come we've never heard of you?"

The leader's face was painted red with anger, she went on a rant of how they were famous all across the island, and even made a name for themselves in the rich kingdom not far off.

And because of this shouting, the old man had woken up from his sleep. Looking down at his ropes, he broke out with ease and the bandits all went pale and ran with their tails between their legs, wishing they had never captured them. The grandfather untied the ropes around his grandson and picked him up and set him down on the ground. They decided to make their way back to the village to enjoy a treat and off they went.

When they finally made it back, the villagers all looked at the army man and this boy, holding hands and laughing about all that had happened, people overheard this and asked if they were okay.

"YEAH!! MY GRANDPA IS SO COOL, HE MADE ALL THE MEAN PEOPLE RUN AWAY!", the grandson said with stars in his eyes, admiring his hero.

Ever since that day, the villagers threw parties for the grandfather for getting rid of the bandits who stole from the village every day and charged people for just going near the woods. The grandfather took his grandson out of one of the parties, thanking the villagers. The pair went into the woods to continue their training but before they started, he sat down with a large thud and said to his grandson,

"Do you know why we train so hard?"

"No, why Grandpa?"

"It is within each other's shadows that people live. I train with you so you know what to do, and so you can become a big and strong military man like me, or even stronger."

The boy looked at his grandfather, and giggled.

"You're so silly, Grandpa, of course I'm going to be strong, you train me. But definitely not as strong as you. You're the hero."

Leprechaun by Stella Shaw



Unicorn by Katie Smith

A Unicorn's Tale

by Stella Shaw

There was once a unicorn who was held captive by humans for years. And one day, it escaped and ran away. And it kept running until it reached a warm, comfy cave.

In the cave, there was a nice, warm meal waiting on the unicorn. The unicorn quickly ate the food and just as it finished, a dragon came into the cave and was so angry that the unicorn had eaten its dinner.

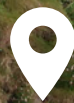
So he snatched the unicorn in his sharp teeth and flew away until they reached a rainbow. The dragon dropped the unicorn and she fell straight onto the rainbow.

The unicorn got scared and slipped down the rainbow. She then felt a warm, comfy cloud beneath her. She hopped off the cloud only to find a big pot of gold.

She was so excited that she took the pot of gold and started singing and dancing.

A leprechaun then came and was so mad that she took his gold, that he cast a spell on her to turn her into a human.





Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge

County Antrim



The Story of my Story



I'm sure we're all familiar with Jayden and his story of North Hill, West Hill, East Hill and Southill and the goats that reside there, but that story is just a modernisation. Let me tell you the true story.

The Legend of the Southill Billy Goat

by Semilore Ade-John

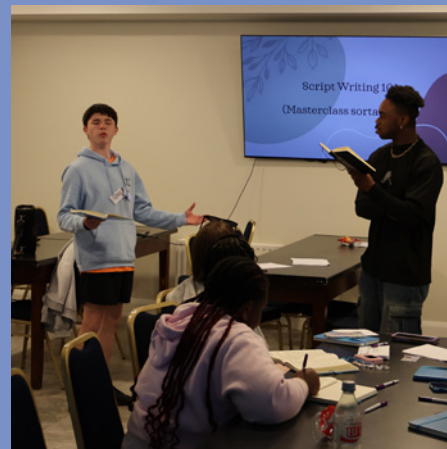
Once upon a time in the Kingdom of Limerick City were the Four Goatingdoms. The Earls of Newcastle West, the King and Queen of Moyross, the Dukes of North Circular Road and finally, the Lords of Southill. The Goatingdoms lived in harmony until one day, the King and Queen of Moyross started to attack the other Goatingdoms.

It was a horrible and gruesome war, lots of lives were lost and the harmony of the Four Goatingdoms was lost. The King of Moyross became the dictator of the Kingdom of Limerick City. Everybody was hopeless, there was no hope for Limerick.

Because of this, a hero called Billy rose up. He was from Southill, nobody really liked him, but they didn't really care at that point, because again, there was no hope.

Billy of Southill travelled all the way to Moyross on horseback, it was a long journey but it was necessary for the unity of the Goatingdoms. The King of Moyross' subjects told the King about him approaching as they saw him from the gate. So the King prepared an army. The army was ruthlessly strong and nobody could defeat them. Regardless of all of this, Billy of Southill slayed the whole army and beheaded the King.

He became the symbol of peace for the whole Kingdom, but after a few years, some rebels rose up and tried to kill Billy. At this point, Billy was old, so as he heard about the bounty on his head, he fled to Carlingford, and Billy of Southill is still there to this day. So if you're exploring the mountains of Carlingford, just look for a goat with a blue stripe.







Festival in a Van

Festival in a Van travelled to each of the three residential. Participants not only watched performances by the artists, but also had the opportunity to take to the stage themselves during the third residential in Carlingford, showcasing their own creativity and storytelling skills.







Residential 1

*County Clare &
the Aran Islands*











Participant Feedback

“I swear to God, I am so happy now that I actually did this. I talked myself into taking part and now I think it turned out to be the best decision I could ever have made.”

“I made friends I never would have met otherwise, like real friends.”

“I went out of my comfort zone and I sat with the people from Limerick, and I sat and really got to know them and I feel like I’ve made a lot of really good friends.”

“It’s shown me that I’m capable of doing stuff that I didn’t think I would have been able to do, and let me make friendships that mean a lot to me.”

“I wouldn’t normally do something like this with another group because I’m normally quite shy, but I’ve really enjoyed it and it’s really amazing.”

“I think it’s made me more comfortable meeting new people and making new friendships, and knowing that no matter where you go or no matter who you meet, you can build something off of it.”

“Living Legends helps you grow your creative side and your artistic side as well, and you get to meet new people and have fun.”

Scan to listen to Jayden Kelly speaking about the Living Legends Programme





Acknowledgements

by Rachel Gleeson - Executive Director Narrative 4

The *Living Legends* project would not have been possible without the generosity, support, and dedication of many individuals and organisations.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Creative Ireland and the Shared Island Initiative team for their belief in this project, and especially to Tania Banotti, Kate Delaney, Simon Willmott, and Abigail Goldrick for their guidance and support throughout.

Our deepest gratitude goes to the incredible artists who brought creativity, skill, and inspiration to every session: Colum McCann, Órla McGovern, Pat Ryan, Rab Fulton, Harry Hennessy, Arthur Greene, Dafe Orugbo, Nigro Impacto, James Riordan, Claire Garvey, and Cian Laffey.

We are profoundly grateful to the staff at our partner organisations: Festival in a Van, Elizabeth Mohen and Alice Quinn-Banville; Northern Ireland Youth Forum, Paul Dynes, Amanda Stewart, and Paula Sands; R-CITY, Donovan Gawley, Eve McGrath, and Mallory Barratt; and to the wonderful staff of the Rainbow Hostel Doolin, Sheep Island View, and Carlingford Adventure Centre, as well as local tour guides who welcomed us so warmly along the way.

James Lawlor, Laura Duff, Leonie Kerins, Jade Gill, and Gracie Cummane – thank you all for your unwavering commitment and expertise. We also wish to acknowledge and thank Maria Dwyer for her invaluable evaluation work. We also extend a special thanks to Deirdre Power, who joined us at Poul nabrone Dolmen and captured the day through her beautiful photography, preserving a memorable moment of *Living Legends*.

This project was the realisation of a dream nurtured by Elizabeth Mohen and James Lawlor, whose vision and passion transformed an idea on a grant proposal into a vibrant, lived experience. We are immensely grateful to the parents and, above all, the extraordinary participants whose curiosity, courage, and openness made this project truly impactful.

Living Legends has left a lasting mark on everyone involved. Through shared stories, immersive experiences, and moments of connection, we have witnessed relationships flourish and barriers dissolve. The memories we have created together will be carried with us forever, a testament to the power of storytelling to unite and inspire.

–January 2026



Participants

Eoghan McNamara
Luke Geraghty
Luca Abraham
Anthony Casey
Gary Naughton
Jayden Kelly
Travis McNamara
Aurora Byrne

Semilore Ade-John
Oluwanifemi Itiolu
Jake Keogh
Kaila Murphy
Kiera Calderwood
Ruby Skillen
Maja Chodkowska
Katie Smith

Karley Dalton
Meabh Cavan
Ella-Eve Cowan
Aimee Donnelly
Erin Ferguson
Holly McGuigan
Stella Shaw



Living Legends

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Project Partners:

