

## Events

### Wednesday 17 May, 6.30pm

Screening at the Irish Film Institute. Tel: 01 679 3477  
Kurt Palm's 1997 *At Swim-Two-Birds* [In *Schwimmen-Zwei-Vogel*]  
Introduced by Flann O'Brien's brother Micheál Ó Nualláin.  
Described as 'Monty Python for intellectuals'

### Saturday 20 May, 12-2pm

City Centre, Dublin  
The Jem Casey society will board a vintage bus and tour the centre city stopping off at Stephen's Green, the Mansion House and O'Connell St to read from *At Swim-Two-Birds*

### Monday 22 May, 7pm

Ballymun Library Tel: 01 842 1890  
'*At Swim-Two-Birds* – what's it all about?' with Deirdre Breen

### Tuesday 23 May, 6pm

Bank Of Ireland Arts Centre, Foster Place, Dublin 2  
ILE and The Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association present a guest lecture/interview by Dr. Adrian Otoiu, Romanian translator of *At Swim-Two-Birds*. Tel: 01 6788961

### Wednesday 24 May, 7pm

Rathmines Library Tel: 01 497 3539  
'*At Swim-Two-Birds* – what's it all about?' with Deirdre Breen

### Monday 29 May, 7pm

Raheny Library Tel: 01 831 5521  
'*At Swim-Two-Birds* – what's it all about?' with Eibhlin Evans

### Wednesday 7 June, 6pm

Seminar Room, National Library, Kildare St, Dublin 2  
'Ringsend Cowboys: the Dublin Background of Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*'. Lecturer: Peter Costello, biographer and historian.  
Respondent: John Wyse Jackson, editor and historian.  
Admission on a first-come basis.

### Wednesday 7 June, 6.30pm

Central Library, Ilac Centre Tel: 01 873 4333 Extn 4  
'*At Swim-Two-Birds* – what's it all about?' with Eibhlin Evans.

### Monday 12 June, 1pm

Central Library, Ilac Centre Tel: 01 873 4333 Extn 4  
Screening of documentary '*Flann O'Brien – the Lives of Brian*' (courtesy of Mint Productions).

### Sunday 18 June, 12pm

Dublin Writers' Festival in Bewley's Café Theatre, Grafton St, Dublin 2.  
To book tel: 01 881 9613/4. 'A Rough Guide to Flann O'Brien's Comic Genius' with Eibhlin Evans and Jack Lynch.

A Dublin City Council initiative supported by:

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Sunday Tribune



DUBLIN: ONE CITY,  
ONE BOOK



Dublin City  
Baile Átha Cliath

15 May – 18 June 2006





**Dublin: One City, One Book,**

a Dublin City Council initiative, led by Dublin Public Libraries, is a project I wholeheartedly support. Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* is witty and sometimes irreverent. Set in Dublin, it takes the reader around the backstreets as well as the landmarks, giving a completely alternative spin on the city.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the sponsors, Flann O'Brien's family and the Jem Casey Society in making this project a reality and recommend that you take the time to read or re-read this book and participate in some of the events to mark

**Dublin: One City, One Book.**

Catherine Byrne, Lord Mayor of Dublin

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Flann O'Brien (real name Brian O'Nolan) was born in 1911 in Co. Tyrone. He graduated from UCD and joined the Civil Service. In addition to *At Swim-Two-Birds* he wrote *The Dalkey Archive*, *The Third Policeman*, *The Hard Life* and *The Poor Mouth* – as well as the *Cruiskeen Lawn* column in the *Irish Times* under the pseudonym Myles Na Gopaleen. He died on 1 April 1966.

**ABOUT THE BOOK**

First published in 1939, the same year as Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, *At Swim-Two-Birds* is a modern masterpiece mixing Irish history and Gaelic legend with a profound knowledge of Dublin's streets, bars and urban grime – creating a hilarious and irreverent cocktail. It pokes fun at the work of O'Brien's Irish near-contemporaries, among them W. B. Yeats, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett.

**SYNOPSIS**

*'One beginning and one ending for a book was a thing I did not agree with'* Flann O'Brien

The narrator of *At Swim-Two-Birds* is a young, lazy, and often drunk young man who lives with his grumpy uncle in Dublin. He is writing a novel about pub landlord and would-be author Dermot Trellis, whose characters are rebelling against him, culminating in their attempt to murder him because of his bad writing. The characters chosen by Trellis come from a wide variety of genres: American Westerns (Slug and Shorty), Gaelic Legend (Finn MacCool, Sweeney Peregrine), Dante (the Devil), Fairytale (the Good Fairy) and others – all of whom are transported to Dublin. Mixed in with this is the story of the narrator's term at college and involvement in the literary life of Dublin in the 1930s.

*At Swim-Two-Birds* is utterly hilarious. It's a novel of chaos, a wild and comic send-up of Irish literature and culture which should be enjoyed for its exuberance and irreverence towards all sacred cows. It's as good a map of Dublin as Joyce's *Ulysses*, as lively a celebration of Dublin spirit as Kavanagh's canal-bank poems, and a glowing testament to the unassailable character of the city.

**PRAISE FOR AT SWIM-TWO-BIRDS**

*'That's a real writer, with the true comic spirit. A really funny book'* James Joyce

*'The kind of glee one experiences when people smash china on the stage ... one of the best books of our century'* Graham Greene

*'Flann O'Brien was too much his own man, Ireland's man, to speak in any but his own tongue'* Washington Post

*'At Swim-Two-Birds is both a comedy and a fantasy of such staggering originality that it baffles description and very nearly beggars our sense of delight'* Chicago Tribune