

Echo on Tour in Romania



The recent 49th annual Association of European Journalists' congress was held in Bucharest, Romania.

It was attended by over 60 journalists from 17 European countries.

While there was a lot of serious discussion and debate at the Congress, there was also some time for a bit of sight-seeing.

As part of this, one group,

accompanied by five Romanian students, was brought on a three-hour drive out of Bucharest to Bran in the region of Transylvania.

Naturally this area is best known for Bram Stoker's Dracula and so a visit to Bran Castle or, as it is more commonly known, Dracula's Castle was in order.

Of course, the Irish delegates felt it was necessary to tell the Romanians that, in actual fact,

Dracula was written by Bram Stoker in Dublin.

The students who took great interest in reading *The Echo* at Bran Castle were (l-r) Matea Andreea, Drăcea Alexandrij, Marinescu Crina, Gindac Andrei, Mateescu Andreea and (right) Bran Castle guide and Dracula's 'grand daughter' Bianca Neacșu caught up on Paddy Drac's activities over the Halloween season.

We're giving away €20 every week!

Are you heading out on a 'Stag' or 'Hen' weekend, or going to the UK for a football match? Maybe you're going on a leisurely weekend away or a big holiday to far-off places. If so, make sure you bring *The Echo* on tour. Send in a photo to news@echo.ie and if we publish it we'll send you €20, just like that!



DECADE:
Gavan Duffy,
husband, dad
and writer

Offering by Gavan Duffy

*I refused his first offer of a smoke.
Good manners round here
both for him to offer
and me to turn it down.
The second time would be more telling,
him offering what he couldn't afford to give
me refusing what I couldn't afford to buy.
The twenty to each box
would have been measured out
till the next payday in days and hours.
I thanked him anyway, waved them away.
He could have kept them honourably now.
Instead he jabbed the packet towards me.
"Go on, sure the shops are full of them".
I slide one out, took a light from him,
knowing again, that though he often spoke
of things "up our way", in an accent
not shared by his kids,
he was always more at home here
than I was.*

The Poet's Corner

I AM from the Tallaght area, I am married with four children. I write as a hobby, mostly at night, after the kids have gone to bed! I switched from writing short stories to writing mostly poetry after taking the creative writing course in Old Bawn school with Eileen Casey.

I have met loads of people during my 10 years writing who have been helped and encouraged by Eileen in a similar way. I am a member of Platform One writers group in Rua Red, which I would recommend to anyone who, like myself, mostly writes alone. The group has a supportive and constructive atmosphere and welcomes new members. It's very helpful to be able to read your work to people who will really listen and give you a supportive honest opinion.

I have been lucky enough to have been published in Crannóg, The Stony Thursday Book, Boyne Berries and St Kerrill's Journal.

I have placed or been commended in The Oliver Goldsmith awards, Jonathon Swift Awards, Francis Ledwidge awards, Golden Pen Competition, Boyle Arts Festival, Caomhnú Literary Competition, Maria Edgeworth Competition, Pádraig Fallon competition, Clogh Writers competition, Tallaght Literary Awards, and was long-listed for the Fish Short Story competition.

Gavan Duffy

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