

Teddy Black



Have I got a story for **you**?

TEDDY BLACK - SEANACHAI / STORYTELLER
by Geoff Ward

As a child growing up in a small community in the far south-west of Ireland in the 1950s, Teddy Black often sat captivated at the feet of the old-timers, listening to stories and songs passed down from generation to generation - little knowing that his destiny was to join the honoured tradition of the seanchaí, or storyteller.

Seanchaí is an Irish word meaning a bearer of old lore. Long ago, the seanchaí was the clan chief's well-respected retainer who guarded the knowledge and traditions of the people, sometimes a village storyteller central to community life, or perhaps one who roamed the countryside bartering stories for food and shelter.

While Teddy, from the fishing port of Castletownbere on the beautiful Beara peninsula, might not seek food and lodgings in exchange for his storytelling, he certainly fits the other aspects of those categories - the upholder of tradition and a rambler through the world with glorious yarns full of the spirit of his tenacious and beguiling homeland. Like the druidic bard, the seanchaí sprang out of the indigenous oral traditions of the old Celtic culture, with roots probably in even older shamanic orders going back into prehistory. Teddy, the veritable 'Bard of Beara', delving into a timeless crane bag brimming with his own brand of magic, brings forth tales not only of the workaday world but of the mysterious otherworld, too, the realm of the banshee, the leprechaun and the fairies.

Told with grace and great humour, many of Teddy's tales are warm-hearted evocations of life in a little Irish town of yesteryear - of a less complicated Ireland before the depredations of TV and the worldwide web. You'll hear character-rich stories that raise gusts of laughter and, occasionally, a tear. You'll hear of boozers and banshees, sailors and selkies, and sundry incorrigible rogues and rascals. There'll be a sprinkling of folk wisdom, myth and the mystical. And there'll always be a heartfelt song.

Teddy, a master of his art, clearly loves what he does and finds it both a joy and a privilege to be able to spin his yarns in good company. Let him bring you the gifts of the seanchaí for a priceless hour