

Murder in a Small Town Who Murdered Marian Beattie



ROSS

CRIME SCENE DO NOT

Somebody out there knows!!

Many believe 19-year-old Marian Beattie's killer still walks among us because of an alleged police cover up, intimidation and silence of local people.

Also

The dangerous lies of Belle Gibson

Wikipedia The fight for truth

Christopher Lee: Icon of the Screen

+ Lots more

New Digital Edition

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Going Forward: A New Challenge

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on us, like it has on many other magazines, organisations and businesses globally.

Unfortunately we are faced with a landscape that has irreversibly changed since the Big Issue first hit the streets in 1995. To meet this challenge Ireland's Big Issue must also change.

We have reluctantly decided, albeit with a heavy heart, to host the magazine digitally only for the foreseeable future.

From now on, Ireland's Big Issue will focus our support on the Irish Homeless Street Leagues. This volunteer-driven, non-profit has been using the power of sport to transform the lives of men and women who've found themselves affected by social exclusion all across Ireland - north and south. By continuing to support the magazine online you'll be helping to develop resilient individuals and stronger communities, connecting people and promoting equality and diversity, inspiring and motivating those affected by social issues.

We will also be adjusting the content to reflect the times we live in whilst endeavoring to provide an informative and enjoyable read.

We thank you for your support to date and ask that you continue to help us. As there is no charge for Ireland's Big Issue we do need your support to continue highlighting the issues that impact our lives and bring you a truthful, balanced view of what is happening in our world.



For as little as a cup of coffee (€3) you can subscribe.

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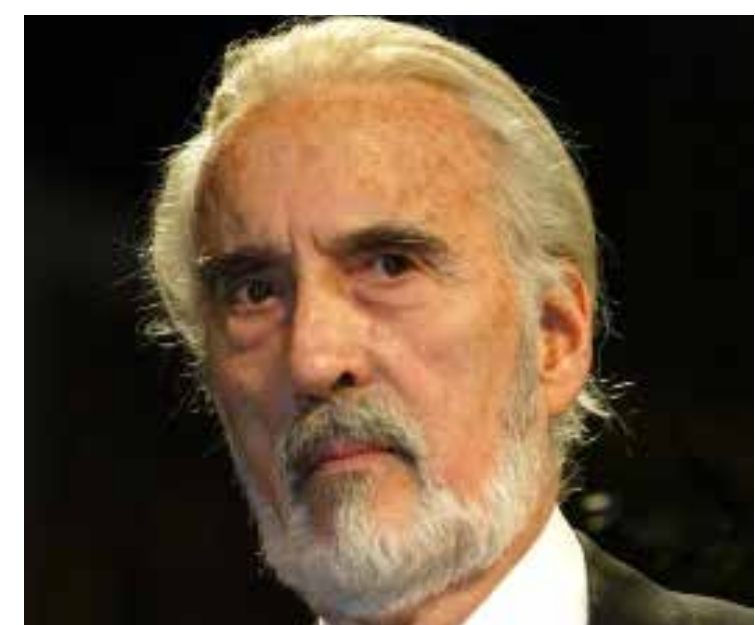
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Letter to my Younger Self - Andy Verity

Each issue, we ask a well-known person to write a letter to their 16-year old self. This issue, Andy Verity (56) a financial journalist and award-winning Economics Correspondent for BBC News takes on the challenge.



Dear younger self,

Here's something it will take you a long time to learn. Decades even. So please let me show you a shortcut. All you have to do is remember this one thing: Don't believe any story just because it feels satisfying. You may think your feelings are the best way to decide what stories to believe. It may feel like those feelings are intimately yours – dear to the kind of person you are. But the truth about your feelings is that they aren't yours alone. They're open to manipulation. And they're a high-stakes battleground. To a corporation with something to sell, your feelings can make the difference between a loss-making failure and a profits bonanza. To a government going to war, any sympathy you may feel for the 'enemy' could be disastrous. If advertising and propaganda didn't work, corporations and governments wouldn't put so much effort into them. They work because our feelings, if we're not careful, can be influenced and manipulated in someone else's favour.

**Ask yourself a question
you wouldn't normally think to ask:
'in whose interests is it that I feel this
way?'**

So defend yourself. Whatever you think the story is, if it appeals to your emotions, then that is exactly when you need to be careful. If you don't want your feelings to serve someone else's interests, be on guard. Ask yourself a question you wouldn't normally think to ask: 'in whose interests is it that I feel this way?'

By the age of sixteen, if you've been paying attention in history lessons, you'll already know that kings, queens and popes would rather see thousands killed than tolerate a challenge to their version of the Big Story. The commitment of all believers to the story they claimed was the truth was essential to their power. For centuries they spent huge resources trying to make everyone feel that others who rejected their version -

Catholics, Protestants or Atheists - were bad people. Knowing all that, you're now busy reading godless books, listening to The Fall, the Velvet Underground and Joy Division and deciding you are no longer a born-again Christian. But what about the religion you're about to replace it with – hedonism? The attitude that makes you so fanatically devoted to cigarettes that if you spend an hour without smoking, you think your life is poor and dull? 20-a-day – sometimes 40 on a night out.

You feel that you're rebelling against that preachy, tediously conventional modern morality that says 'don't smoke! It may kill you!' and embracing the pursuit of pleasure, heedless of the consequences, like some modern-day heretic. It will take you 15 years of coughing, sluggish energy and yellowy fingers to realise that, to the makers of Marlboro Reds or Camel Lights, you're no youthful rebel. You're their loyal, devoted, highly profitable slave. And the only rebellion is against yourself.

Our feelings about who the goodies and baddies of this story were – and who to be angry with – are being turned upside down.

Skip forward twenty years and you'll be in your thirties, watching in anger as overpaid bankers, let loose by a government that wishfully believed their lobbying ('de-regulate the City and the economy will take off'), pumped up an enormous mortgage and house- price bubble. You'll watch as it bursts in 2008, forcing taxpayers to bail out the banks at huge expense and pitching us all into the worst economic crisis in 80 years, feeling hugely frustrated that no banker is being held to account. Then, in 2012, when authorities on both sides of the Atlantic start prosecuting traders in banks for misconduct - 'manipulating' interest rates – you'll be happy, like others, to condemn them for something you don't understand, because you feel hugely relieved that at least some bankers are going to jail.

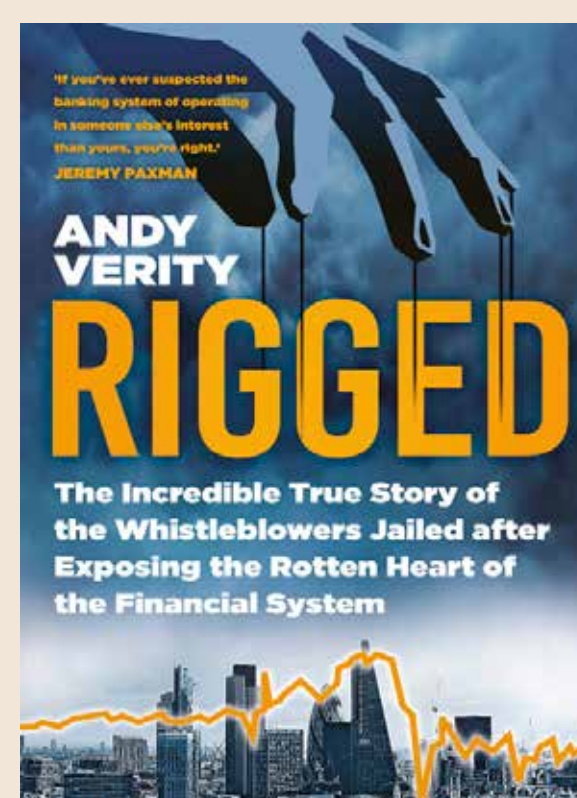


The story the public was fed about interest rate manipulation (the 'Libor scandal') was sold as a satisfying story of bankers being punished at last for their greed. It was only when I found explosive audio recordings, implicating the top of the financial establishment in the very same misconduct for which 37 lower-ranking bankers had been prosecuted, that I realised how misplaced my feelings had been. In fact, the evidence suggested that the real interest rate manipulation, carried out under pressure from central banks and governments on a much larger scale than the traders were jailed for, had been buried, while the prosecuted traders were innocent. In fact, some of them had tried to blow the whistle on the big fraud ordered from on high – only to find themselves prosecuted. The story fed to the public allowed those at the top to cover up the truth while the bankers much further down the ranks took the rap and went to jail.

The US courts have now reversed convictions and at the end of March, the UK's Supreme Court will hear lawyers argue it must do the same. Our feelings about who the goodies and baddies of this story were – and who to be angry with – are being turned upside down.

So whenever there's a story you'd like to believe, be suspicious of your own wishful thinking. Ask: in whose interests is it that you should feel that way? Because the truth may feel more shocking, more revealing and much harder to believe.

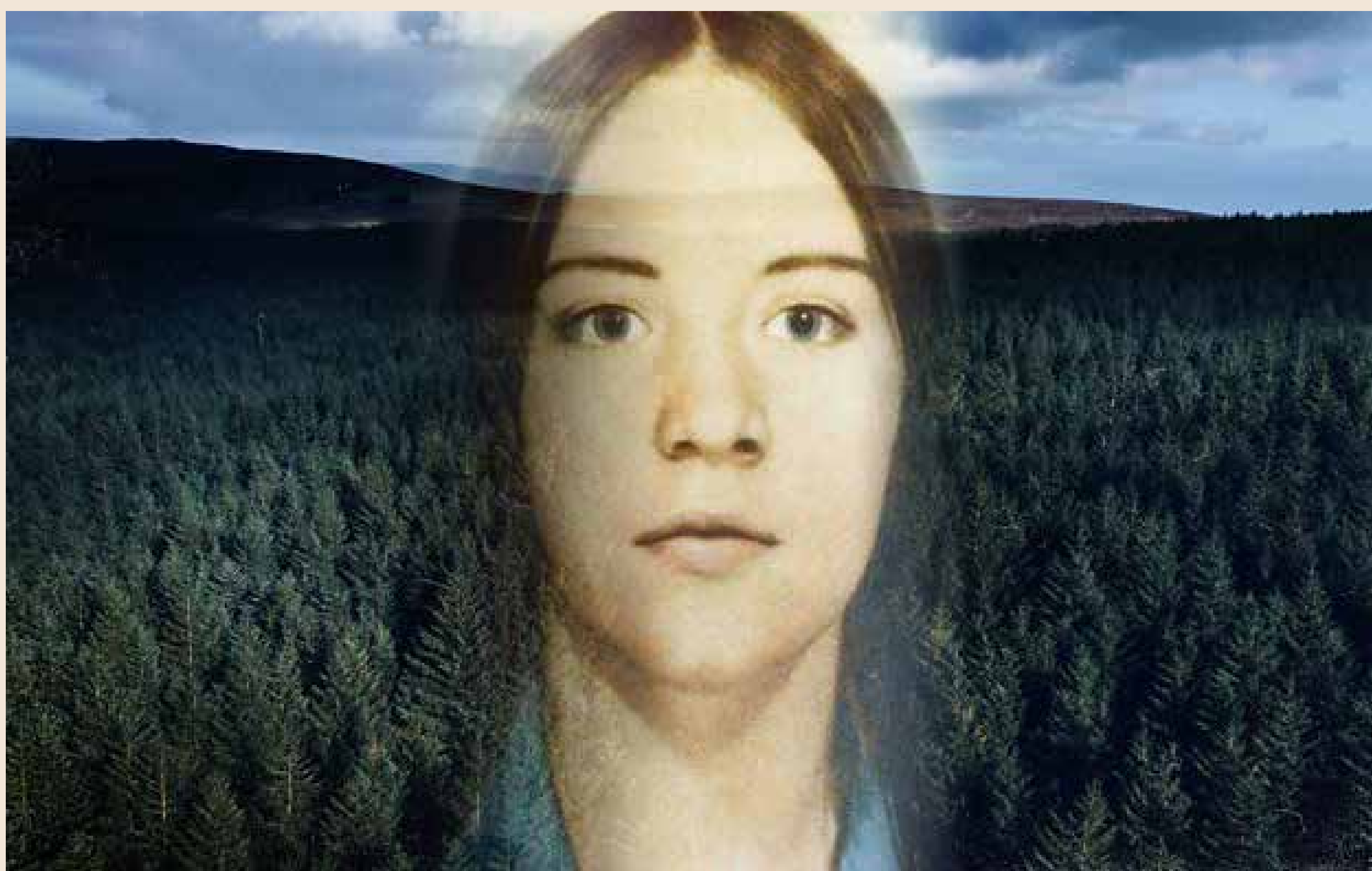
Andy Verity is author of 'Rigged: the Incredible True Story of the Whistleblowers Jailed after Exposing the Rotten Heart of the Financial System' (Flint Publishing) and is available in all good bookshops and online.



The Tragic Story of Marian Beattie:

A Family's Unyielding Quest for Justice

The murder of Marian Beattie, a teenager from Portadown, Co. Armagh was a tragic and horrifying event that unfolded in 1973 in the quiet village of Aughnacloy. Despite her family's fight for justice, no one has ever been charged with the murder and some even suggest a police cover-up. Liz Scales reports.



Marian Beattie was born in 1957 in the picturesque town of Portadown, a charming locale situated just 39 km southwest of Belfast. Growing up in a close-knit family that was well respected in the community, Marian was characterised by her warmth and compassion.

Amidst the backdrop of the 1960s and 1970s, a time of tumult and change in the north, Marian's aspirations to become a nun reflected her nurturing spirit and commitment to serving others. However, like many families of larger size during that era, financial struggles loomed over the Beattie household. To support her family, Marian found employment, setting aside her childhood dreams in the face of harsh economic realities.

This occasion was monumental for Marian, as it was the first time Isadore had agreed to take her along to a social event.

On the night of March 30, 1973, an air of excitement electrified the town as Marian, her older brother Isadore—a roadie for the local band Tuxedo Junction—and her best friend Nuala Wilson prepared for an event that would turn out to be pivotal in their lives. They set off for a barn dance in Aughnacloy, a small village in Co. Tyrone with a population of about 1,000. This occasion was monumental for Marian, as it was the first time Isadore had agreed to take her along to a social event.

With high spirits, Marian and Nuala raided Marian's wardrobe, desperately searching for outfits that would make them feel grown-up. They finally settled on looks they felt captured the fun-loving spirit of the night. As they drove through the winding roads, the girls chattered excitedly, dreaming aloud of the fun that awaited them.

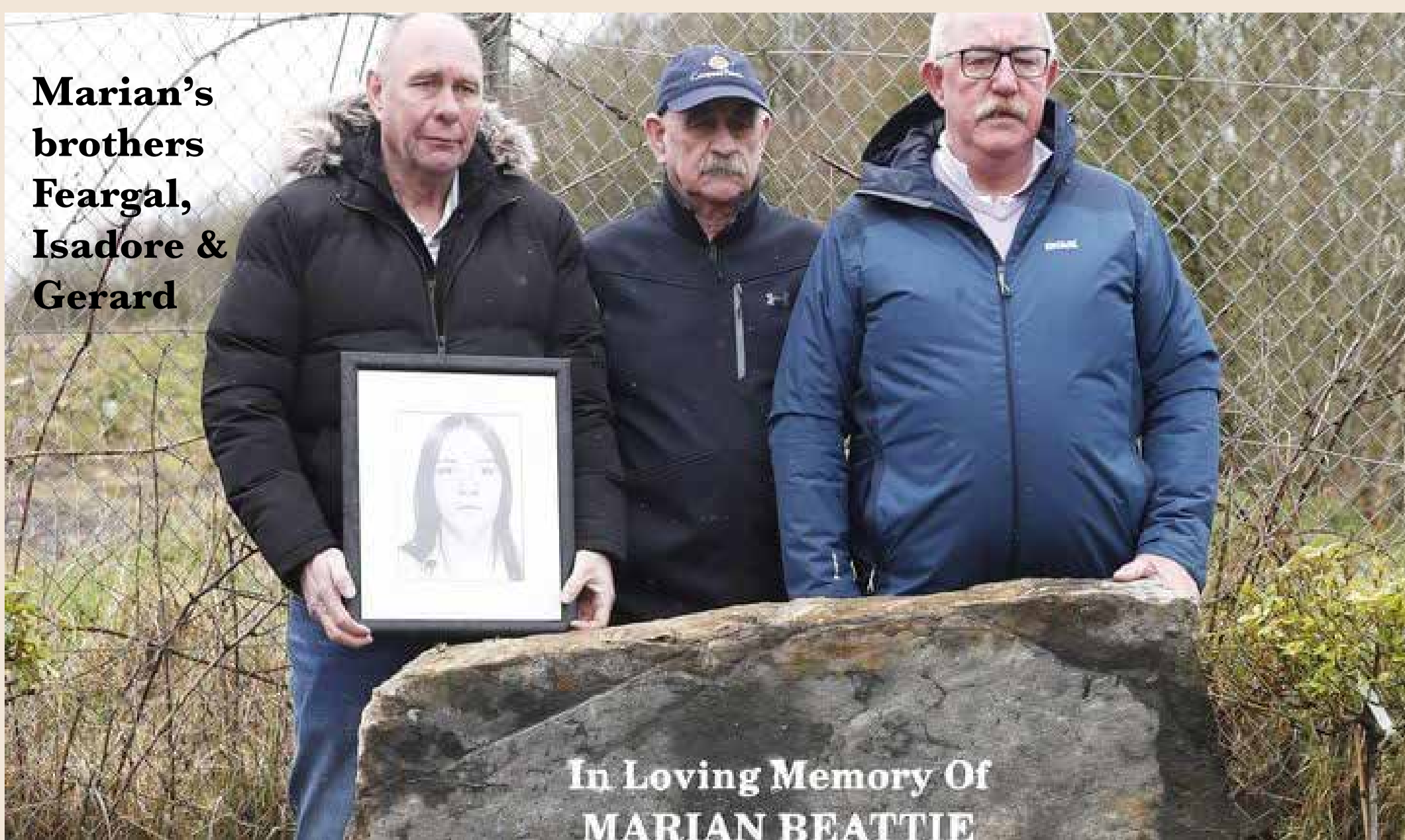
Upon arriving at the dance, Isadore bid the girls farewell. The barn was filled with music and laughter, and the atmosphere was vibrant with youthful energy. Marian and Nuala quickly joined the throng of dancers, their joy contagious as they twirled around the floor. After some time, the two decided they needed a break and headed to the sidelines, relishing the moment.

It was then that Marian noticed an older man with long blonde hair watching her. Naively delighted by the attention, she nudged Nuala and flashed a smile. As Marian sipped on her soft drink, the older man approached her, asking her to dance. A wave of nervous excitement washed over her, and she accepted his invitation to step back onto the dance floor. They danced away into the night, lost in the rhythm of the music, Marian oblivious to the dangers that lurked in the shadows.

As the clock struck 1 a.m. and the tempo slowed to tender melodies, Marian and her dance partner decided

to step outside, seeking a moment of quiet beneath the stars. As they headed out the door they came face-to-face with Isadore and his date. Isadore chatted to his sister for around four minutes and his girl spoke with Marian's date, "they seemed to know each other" Isadore stated in a recent TG4 documentary, *Marú inár Measc*. Isadore informed Marian that she must be back by 2am as the van would be leaving then, however, 2am came and there was no sign of her,

"That just wasn't Marian... if she told you she'd be there, she'd be there."



Isadore packed the van and he and Nuala waited but when another hour went by they realised something was not right and called the police. They then proceeded to RUC Station in Aughnacloy, once there Nuala spotted a plain-clothed policeman walk behind the counter who had had asked her to dance and Isadore observed a sense of unrest,

"There seemed to be some kind of commotion about a police officer or soldier who was missing, so they just told us to sit down and wait, but after waiting for some time I walked up again and said, 'Listen, we need some help here, I need to find out where my sister is.'"

The RUC said there was nothing they could do until the next morning so a few hours later when it was breaking daylight the police accompanied Isadore and Nuala back to the area, but according to Isadore the policeman "drove straight to the quarry" (something he found peculiar in retrospect) and as they stepped out, he spotted his sister lying at the bottom. Instinct kicked in and he tried to reach his sister but the police pulled him back, afraid he would destroy evidence. Burnt matches lay scattered around the teenager's body, and the buttons of her blouse had been arranged in a chillingly meticulous manner. Isadore noticed that the descent into the quarry was difficult, and would have been especially perilous at night, perhaps suggesting someone with good local knowledge could be responsible.

**Such omissions
compounded their feelings
of neglect...**

That evening Isadore would identify his sister at the morgue and make the difficult decision to have a closed casket,

"as I didn't want our parents seeing the damage done to Marian."

Isadore and Nuala were asked to come back to the station to do a photofit, however Isadore later stated,

"The image released to the press was nothing like how I'd described the man."

Nuala at one stage had become aggravated with the artist completing the photofit as despite imploring him to lengthen the man's hair, he seemed hesitant. After Nuala raised her voice in annoyance and declared,

"you need to make his hair much longer",

he conceded - however, the image released to the media and wider community "looked nothing like the person of interest" Nuala described.

The weeks that followed were a whirlwind of grief and disbelief. Marian's family grappled with a harrowing reality as they learned that she had suffered a brutal and sadistic death. The autopsy revealed that her death was caused by many areas of blunt force trauma. One such injury left a circular mark on her forehead. This was described as evidence that the injury was caused by a piece of inch and a half pipe.

While the family mourned, the quest for justice transformed into an unyielding fight against time despite the fact that the police had indicated the murder would be solved quickly. With plenty to go on, a local crime, with local knowledge required, a dancehall full of potential witnesses as to the identity of the suspect, plus forensic evidence from the crime scene, the case had a litany of potential clues but not enough it seems for this police force to solve.



Unbelievably, five decades later, the Beattie family still finds themselves grappling with unanswered questions and a deep sense of injustice as no one has ever been brought to justice for Marian's murder. This has led the family to question the thoroughness of the initial inquiry.

It would seem obvious that because the man was attending the local dancehall he must have been known to some of the patrons there. There were lots of people in attendance who could have been interviewed by the police, how thorough was that process? Fifty-five exhibits found at the crime scene went missing as well as some paperwork. Many are of the belief that the police were protecting someone. Was Nuala's description too close for comfort? Did the artist and/or other colleagues recognise him?

....the designation of the case as a legacy issue was a disheartening effort to sweep it under the rug

The case was eventually designated as a 'Legacy' case which the family believes led to complacency. They asserted that it should have been actively reassigned to a dedicated murder investigation team, one that could harness the latest technologies and approaches to reinvestigate the circumstances surrounding Marian's death. Why has a murder with no sectarian motive been unsolved for so long?

In September 2021, a glimmer of hope surfaced when the PSNI announced that a man had voluntarily come forward to be interviewed concerning Marian's murder. However, the man was not detained, and the family learned he had been cleared based on tax records showing he was working in England at the time of Marian's murder. The Beatties found this conclusion deeply troubling, pointing out that it does not account for the possibility that he could have traveled back to Northern Ireland in those critical hours.

As the Beattie family pressed on, the desire for justice became a rallying cry echoing through their community. They believed that Marian's killer remained at large, walking among them as time passed mercilessly. Renewing their call for witnesses to come forward, the family issued a statement emphasising their frustration over the lack of progress in the investigation, "Fifty years is too long to wait for justice for a loved one," they stated passionately, their words infused with the pain of enduring loss.

The case gained renewed attention after being highlighted in the documentary "Murder in the Badlands," but it was disheartening for the Beattie family to note that Marian's episode lacked contemporaneous commentary from the PSNI. Such omissions compounded their feelings of neglect, deepening their commitment to ensure that Marian's story was not forgotten.

In a heartfelt plea, the Beatties reached out to Chief Constable Simon Byrne, requesting a meeting to discuss potential advances in the case. Their hope was for honest dialogue and assurances that action would be taken to renew investigations. They also sought a follow-up with the Police Ombudsman, requesting updates on a long-awaited report regarding the flaws in the investigation.

Darragh Mackin, the family's solicitor, characterised Marian's case as "the personification of justice delayed, justice denied." He asserted that the designation of the case as a legacy issue was a disheartening effort to

sweep it under the rug, overshadowing the stark reality that a killer still roamed free. Mackin expressed his concern that critical information regarding potential suspects, some even identified as main suspects, had never been disclosed to the family, questioning the integrity of the investigative process. Who are these suspects? Why the secrecy?

As the Beattie family stands at the intersection of hope and despair, they carry the memory of Marian with them—a reminder that, while time may march on, the fight for justice must not be forgotten. They hold steadfast in their belief that Marian’s story is not just a past tragedy, but a call to action,

“If Marian could speak to you all today, we believe she would say that her soul is now in the Lord’s hands,” Isadore poignantly expressed, “but justice for her murder is in all of our hands.”

Will the Beattie family ever receive justice for Marian? Someone out there knows something and its important this vital information is gleamed before potential witnesses pass from this world and take the secret with them. Or like too many crimes in the north, are people too afraid to come forward for fear of retribution from paramilitaries.

Best of luck to all participating in the Homeless Street Soccer finals in April



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A Fight for Truth

Wikipedia has been under attack. Right-wing extremists tried to change history, twist facts, and spread their own version of the truth. But they didn't expect the pushback. This is the story of how the Wikipedia community came together to defend the truth—and won.



The Secret Plot to Rewrite History

In 2007, a sharp-eyed Wikipedia user named “Eintragung ins Nichts” (“Entry into Nothingness”) noticed something strange. A group of accounts was repeatedly editing articles about World War II, right-wing extremism, and antifascism. Their changes weren't minor—they were designed to rewrite history.

The method? “Sockpuppets”—multiple fake accounts controlled by a single group—were used to make it seem like there was widespread agreement on false information. One of the biggest attempts was to introduce the term “Red Holocaust,” a phrase pushed by far-right groups to equate Nazi crimes with communist actions, watering down Germany's responsibility for the war.

Wikipedia's Community Fights Back

But Wikipedia's volunteers refused to let misinformation win. Editors and administrators launched an investigation using special tools to track suspicious accounts. What they uncovered was shocking: more than 700 fake accounts were working together to spread false narratives.

Over three years, the Wikipedia community fought back, banning these accounts one by one. But the attackers didn't stop. They created new accounts, found new ways to manipulate pages, and continued their attempts to twist history. What made Wikipedia's response powerful wasn't a central authority taking charge—it was ordinary people, working together, who refused to let truth be erased.

One of the biggest attempts was to introduce the term “Red Holocaust,” a phrase pushed by far-right groups

Another Front: The Croatian Wikipedia Takeover

The battle wasn't just in German Wikipedia. In the 2010s, Croatian Wikipedia was hijacked from within. Nationalist administrators took control, rewriting history to downplay Croatia's fascist past. Articles about the Ustaša, the country's World War II fascist movement, were whitewashed. The concentration camp Jasenovac, where thousands of Serbs, Jews, and Roma were murdered, was falsely described as a “labour camp”.

Unlike in Germany, where an active community stopped the manipulation, Croatian Wikipedia was dominated by extremists for years. Editors who tried to correct falsehoods were banned. Only after public outcry from historians, journalists, and even the Wikimedia Foundation did the issue gain wider attention—but fixing the damage took years.

Why This Battle Still Matters

Wikipedia's fight against manipulation is far from over. Right-wing groups continue to try to spread their version of history, and smaller Wikipedia editions remain especially vulnerable. But there's hope:

- **The Power of Transparency:** Because Wikipedia is open, people can detect and correct manipulation.
- **Community Matters:** Automated tools help, but human editors are the real defenders of truth.
- **We Need More Editors:** Fewer people are actively contributing to Wikipedia, making it more vulnerable to future attacks. If young people stop editing, who will protect the truth?



Wikipedia’s volunteers showed that misinformation isn’t unbeatable. They proved that ordinary people can stand up to organized manipulation. But their success depends on one thing: a strong, engaged community.

Author Kontrast / Sarah Hammerschmid
TheBetter.news. <https://thebetter.news/wikipedia-fight-right-wing-manipulation>

What is Wikipedia?

Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia that enables users worldwide to create, edit, and update articles on a wide variety of topics. Launched in January 2001 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger, it has become one of the most visited websites globally, with millions of articles available in numerous languages. Its unique collaborative model and open access principles are key to its functionality.

At its core, Wikipedia allows anyone to read and contribute, operating under the GNU Free Documentation License. Users can create accounts for additional privileges, but even unregistered users can edit most articles. The interface is user-friendly, featuring an easy-to-use visual editor and a markup code editor for more advanced users. This accessibility encourages contributions from diverse individuals, including experts and casual enthusiasts.

Community oversight is vital to Wikipedia’s reliability. Articles are monitored by the user community, and discussions occur on “talk pages” where consensus can be reached about changes. This helps ensure the accuracy and neutrality of information, with policies advocating for a neutral point of view and proper sourcing.

However, the open editing model poses risks related to misinformation and vandalism. Wikipedia employs measures such as editing restrictions on controversial articles and has a community of editors monitoring changes. Contributors must adhere to the principle of verifiability by citing reliable sources.

Overall, Wikipedia serves as an invaluable tool for education and research, providing accessible information while showcasing the power of collective knowledge and community-driven efforts. Despite occasional inaccuracies, it remains a testament to the potential of collaborative content creation on a global scale.

Dangerous Lies

Stephanie Alice Baker reveals how social media gave rise to fraudulent wellness influencers like Belle Gibson.



The new Netflix series *Apple Cider Vinegar* tells the story of wellness influencer Belle Gibson, who built a loyal following on social media by documenting her cancer journey online. But in 2015, Gibson was exposed as a fraud. She never had cancer, and lied about donating funds to charities and ill children.

The series documents Gibson's rise to fame and subsequent downfall, portraying some of the psychological factors that influenced her deceit. But this scandal also illustrates a larger story about the conditions that enable cancer frauds such as Gibson to gain credibility and influence online.

The 2000s were characterised by the “blogging revolution” – a shift in how people produced and consumed information. Blogs enabled content creators to share their lives and experiences publicly, and engage directly with their readers. Niche communities formed around common interests ranging from health to heartbreak.

Gibson capitalised on this trend, creating a blog called *The Whole Pantry* where she documented her alleged journey battling a rare form of terminal brain cancer. She claimed on her blog to have decided to reject conventional cancer treatments.

**she documented her
alleged journey battling a rare
form of terminal brain cancer**

Instead, Gibson expressed that she was empowered to heal herself naturally through nutrition, determination and love – as well as alternative medicine including Ayurvedic treatments, craniosacral therapy, oxygen therapy and colonics.

The blog was developed into an app in 2013 and a book in 2014 – with Gibson's story being legitimised by a reputable publisher and brands, then further fuelled by her social media presence.

Gibson's primary platform of communication was Instagram. She used the photo-and-video sharing app to build and engage with her followers through inspirational quotes, personal anecdotes and evocative photographs. Lifestyle and wellness influencers typically earn trust and intimacy by presenting themselves as authentic, accessible – and autonomous from state and corporate interests.

A quote from Gibson's book, also called *The Whole Pantry*, encapsulates the way she executed this strategy to appeal to online followers. She wrote:

“Too many people over-edit themselves. There's not enough honesty out there. It's human to feel sick, to ask questions, to search for answers ... Never refine yourself in a way which takes away your heart, message and truest self.”

This persona allowed Gibson not only to achieve fame online, but to establish a parasocial relationship with her followers by distancing herself from the medical establishment, appearing relatable and unfiltered in her exchanges with followers.

The mass media has long been recognised as facilitating parasocial relationships: emotional and imaginary bonds that, despite feeling real, tend to be one-dimensional and one-sided. The original parasocial relationships were formed with media figures such as news anchors, radio hosts, and film and pop stars.

Today, content creators on social media are the primary influencers. Although these relationships are typically one-sided, they can still feel intimate and real.



The role of the wellness industry

In the aftermath of the scandal, people searched for who to blame. Fingers were pointed at the press for glamorising Gibson, as well as a publisher and other companies that failed to adequately fact-check Gibson's claims. Criticism was also directed at the wellness industry for peddling misinformation and pseudoscience.

There's an assumption that wellness is mainly a female pursuit – and the Netflix series follows several female wellness influencers who have built brands around their illness and disease.

In fact, the gendered dimensions of wellness are more complicated. The original founders of the wellness movement were male. Although many struggled to commodify wellness, they increasingly tapped into a market of women, many of whom felt justifiably unheard and overlooked by health professionals.

There's an irony that Gibson's wellness brand went by the Instagram handle "healing_belle". Part of the success of the wellness industry today is derived from promising miracle cures and remedies for various forms of illness and disease. Many wellness influencers have built successful brands by commodifying health and wellbeing.

The prevalence of cancer misinformation online highlights that the problem runs much deeper than the case of Gibson

This is a far cry from the movement's origins and the more positive conception of health they sought to establish – which aimed to operate in conjunction with medicine, rather than against it.

Gibson rose to fame in a climate of low institutional trust, where her lived experience was valued over institutional expertise. Similar to many alt-health influencers, her suspicion of conventional medicine resulted in controversial claims about vaccination, and the benefits of Gerson therapy – a regimen that claims to cure cancer through a special diet, supplements and enemas – and raw milk.

It was by documenting the negative side effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy in her book that Gibson was able to present her lifestyle and lived experience as a hopeful alternative path to healing.

After she was convicted of misleading and deceptive conduct in 2017 and ordered by the Federal Court of Australia to pay a fine of AUS\$410,000 (£206,000), one might have expected to see a decrease in cancer frauds, given the global publicity this scandal attracted.

**today
a content creator with only
a handful of followers can upload an
engaging video and achieve millions of
views.**

Instead, other high-profile cases of content creators peddling cancer misinformation on short video platforms have emerged at an alarming rate – often using social media to monetise fake miracle cures, from apricot kernels to soursop tea.

Short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have changed the dynamics of fame. Algorithms are central to the user experience on these apps, allowing relatively unknown content creators to gain visibility and attention online.

Whereas Gibson spent years cultivating a following online, today a content creator with only a handful of followers can upload an engaging video and achieve millions of views.

The technologies have changed, but there is an industry of content creators profiting from misleading and harmful advice. The prevalence of cancer misinformation online highlights that the problem runs much deeper than the case of Gibson, as told in Apple Cider Vinegar.

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First Published on The Conversation

**Best of luck to all participating in the upcoming
Homeless Street Soccer finals**

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Irish Homeless Street League Finals Set for April

Male & female teams from the Irish Homeless Street Leagues throughout Ireland will take part in what promises to be a festival of football. The top prize is of course the all Ireland Trophy and last year's male winners Longford and female winners Dublin will be back to defend their trophies.

Our World Cup coaching staff will be watching the players closely and will use the finals among other criteria as a basis to form a panel of players from which a male & female team will be selected to represent Ireland at the Homeless World Cup which will held in Oslo, Norway August 23-30th 2025.

Longford 2024 winners



Dublin Ladies winners 2024.



Best of luck to all participating in the Homeless Street Soccer
finals in April

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CATHERINE CONNOLLY

Independent TD

Good luck to all taking part in the Homeless Street Soccer
finals in April



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Galway

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(00353) 51 856066

Sinn Féin



Ruins of an old copper mine engine house on the Copper Coast on the Wild Atlantic Way near Tankardstown on the west coast of the Republic of Ireland

Christopher Lee:

A Legendary Career in Film and Beyond

Christopher Lee starred in more than 250 films across eight decades including the Hammer Horror, James Bond, Lord of the Rings, and Star Wars franchises. Shaun Anthony takes a look at the life of the titan of the golden age of cinema.



Early Life and Beginnings

Christopher Frank Carandini Lee was born on May 27, 1922, in Belgravia, London, to an aristocratic family. His father, Geoffrey Trollope Lee was a Lieutenant Colonel, and his mother, Countess Estelle Marie, was the daughter of a baron. Growing up in a family with such distinguished lineage, Lee's early life was marked by both privilege and tragedy. His father, who had served in the British Army during World War I, and his mother separated when he was very young. Lee's formative years were spent with his mother, and it was she who introduced him to the world of literature, opera, and film.

**...he
helped track
down Nazi war
criminals**

Lee's early education was at the prestigious Wellington College, where he was known for his striking height (he grew to be 6'5" tall), as well as his ability to excel academically. However, his passions leaned towards the arts, particularly acting. Despite his family's background in military and nobility circles, Lee was drawn to the stage and screen. As a young man, he was inspired by the films of legendary actors such as Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. These cinematic experiences would later become the driving forces behind his career.

After his education, Lee's life was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. He joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1941, where he trained as a pilot, though his military service did not see him engage in combat directly as he developed optic nerve damage and could no longer fly, he could however speak fluently a range of different languages so he got pulled into the secret service doing missions of which the facts have never been released. He also helped track down Nazi war criminals.

Lee's role in the war would have a lasting effect on him and would play a significant part in shaping his worldview. Though he never served as a combat pilot, Lee's service with the RAF during the war marked a pivotal moment in his life, bringing him experiences that would provide depth and complexity to his acting later on.

Transition into Acting

After World War II ended, with little opportunities Lee decided to pursue a career in acting, initially finding work with Hammer Film Productions, a British company that would become synonymous with horror cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. Lee's debut film role came in 1948 with the movie *Corridors of Blood*, but it wasn't until the early 1950s that his career truly began to take shape. In 1952, Lee joined the Rank Organisation, a British film company and started to build a portfolio of roles in films such as *The Black Knight* (1954) and *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957).

Lee's rise to fame was largely due to his role as the iconic Count Dracula in Hammer Films' *Horror of Dracula* (1958), which was one of the most successful films in the genre at the time. Lee's portrayal of the vampire count cemented his place in cinematic history, with his towering stature (6'5"), piercing gaze, and brooding presence giving the character an air of menace and mystery that distinguished him from other

actors who had taken on the role. Lee would go on to portray Dracula in a series of sequels and other Hammer horror films, including *Dracula: Prince of Darkness* (1966), *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970), and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (1973).

In addition to his portrayal of Dracula, Lee was also known for his work as Frankenstein's monster and as a villain in numerous other films. Lee's versatility as an actor allowed him to transition between various roles in horror, fantasy, and adventure genres. He became one of the defining faces of British horror cinema in the 1960s, though his filmography spanned far beyond just this genre.



Iconic Roles and Collaborations with Hammer Films

Hammer Films were pivotal in Lee's rise to prominence. The company's brand of horror was based on lavish sets, atmospheric tension, and actors who brought strong, larger-than-life performances to the screen. Lee's ability to portray characters with moral ambiguity—such as Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, and the Mummy—made him an invaluable asset to the studio. His collaboration with director Terence Fisher was particularly fruitful, with Fisher's direction helping to craft the unique, gothic aesthetic that would define many of Lee's most famous roles. Lee also worked in Europe for a couple of years where his proficiency in languages and his stature in the horror genre made him very popular. However, while Lee's work with Hammer brought him fame, it also pigeonholed him somewhat. By the early 1970s, Lee had become frustrated with being typecast as a villain, and he sought roles in different genres to showcase his range as an actor. A particular favourite of his was *The Wicker Man*. A role specially written for him by esteemed screenwriter Anthony Shaffer. This was both a commercial and critical success. This desire for variety led him to take on more diverse roles, including performances in adventure films like *The Three Musketeers* (1973), where he played the villainous Rochefort, and *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974), in which he portrayed the sinister assassin Francisco Scaramanga in a James Bond film (interestingly, Lee's step cousin was Ian Fleming). Soon Hollywood beckoned and he made many appearances in Film and TV there. Lee's work outside of Hammer Films began to demonstrate his versatility and willingness to take on complex characters. He proved that he was more than just a figure of terror, venturing into epic action, adventure, and fantasy, all while maintaining his commanding presence on screen.

**while
Lee's work with Hammer
brought him fame, it also
pigeonholed him somewhat.**

The Lord of the Rings and Star Wars: A New Chapter

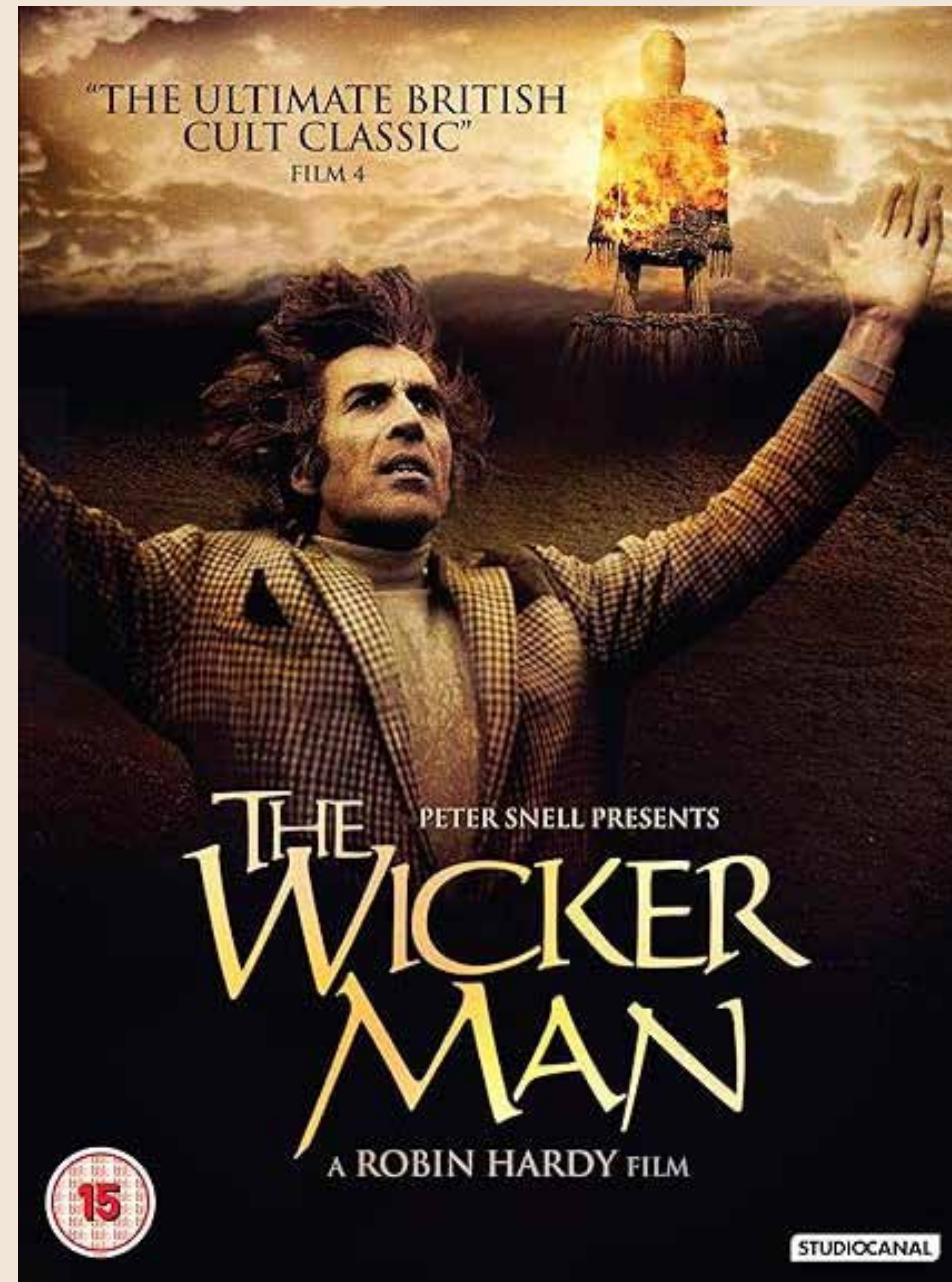
Lee's career reached a new pinnacle in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when he joined the cast of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003) directed by Peter Jackson (interestingly, he is the only person in the *Lord of the Rings* films to have met JRR Tolkien). Playing Saruman the White, Lee's performance as a once-noble wizard who succumbs to darkness was lauded for its gravitas and complexity. His portrayal of Saruman became one of the defining aspects of the trilogy, with Lee's deep voice and imposing stature contributing significantly to the character's sense of authority and corruption. For a man who had spent decades playing villains, Saruman provided Lee with a character that was multifaceted, allowing him to explore the moral complexities of his role.

Shortly after, Lee found himself in another major franchise, playing the Sith Lord Count Dooku in *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* (2002) and *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005), directed by George Lucas. As Count Dooku, Lee once again portrayed a powerful antagonist, though his role was more nuanced than many of the villains he had played earlier in his career. His performances in both *The Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars* showcased a newfound international appeal for Lee, attracting a new generation of fans while solidifying his legacy as one of the greatest character actors in cinema.

The Enduring Legacy of Christopher Lee

Beyond his cinematic accomplishments, Lee was known for his multifaceted talents and interests. He was an accomplished musician, recording several heavy metal albums in his later years, including *Charlemagne: By the Sword and the Cross* (2010), a concept album based on the life of Charlemagne - holding the record as the oldest person to get on the Billboard music charts with a Heavy Metal album. He was a talented swordsman (and was in an Errol Flynn movie showcasing his skills), an expert knife thrower and he also possessed a lifelong interest in opera, particularly the works of Richard Wagner, which informed his

performances and provided him with a deep appreciation for storytelling and drama. Additionally, Lee was known for his deep voice, which was frequently used for narration, and he even recorded readings of literary classics.



Lee's personal life was also remarkable. He married Danish painter Birgit Kroencke in 1961, and the couple had one daughter, Christina. Despite his towering screen presence, Lee was known to be a humble, thoughtful man in his personal life. His love of history, literature, and classical music often influenced the roles he chose, and he was dedicated to preserving the legacy of classic cinema.

**As
Lee's back catalogue
attracted the Gen Zs, a rumour
started online that he was an
occultist**

As Lee's back catalogue attracted the Gen Zs, a rumour started online that he was an occultist and had over 20,000 occult books in his library, however, at a talk at University College Dublin, Lee confirmed that this was completely erroneous, "Somebody wrote that I had 20,000 [occult] books. I don't—I'd have to live in a bath!"



He went on the caution the students against involving themselves in occult practices, claiming, "I have met people who claim to be Satanists, who claim to be involved with black magic, who claimed that they knew a lot about it. I certainly have not been involved and I warn all of you: never, never, never get involved - you will not only lose your mind: you lose your soul."

Christopher Lee continued to work in film until the very end of his life. He made appearances in films such as *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012) and *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* (2014), where he reprised his role as Saruman. Tragically, Lee passed away on June 7, 2015, at the age of 93, from heart failure. His wife delayed the public announcement until 11 June, informing his family of the death before releasing the news to the press.

**Lee has left behind a legacy
that spanned nearly seven decades.**

Following Lee's death, fans, friends, actors, directors and others involved in the film industry publicly gave their personal tributes. Then British Prime Minister David Cameron praised Lee as a "titan of the golden age of cinema". He was honoured by the academy at the 88th Academy Awards on February 28 2016 in the annual in Memoriam section.

Lee has left behind a legacy that spanned nearly seven decades. He had been active up until the end, working on film projects and continuing to engage with his fans worldwide. His extraordinary career in film and his contributions to the entertainment industry have left an indelible mark on the cinematic world. From his early days in British horror to his iconic roles in *The Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars*, Lee's diverse body of work showcased his versatility, his ability to bring complexity to even the most sinister characters, and his enduring dedication to his craft. His film legacy and his influence will continue to resonate with audiences for generations to come.

Get Healthy & Happy with your Pet

Jacqueline Boyd looks at five ways to get healthier (and happier) with your pet.



This article was written with the help of my pets. When I lost focus or started to tire, I grabbed my dogs' leads and they happily joined me for some fresh air and a little outdoor adventure. I freely admit that my pets help my own health, productivity and happiness – and I hope I help them to be happy and healthy too.

It's widely recognised that pets can help support humans' health and wellbeing – but the benefits should be mutual. Our pets are sentient beings who deserve to be treated with care and respect, not as tools to support humans' wellbeing to the detriment of their own.

**Our
pets are sentient
beings who deserve to be treated
with care and respect, not as tools to
support humans' wellbeing**

Given that many countries, including the US, UK and Ireland are currently facing an obesity crisis in both humans and pets, what can owners do to ensure they aren't unintentionally damaging the health of their pets while relying on them for comfort and companionship?

Here are five ways for you and your pet to get healthier and happier together.

1. Rest and relaxation

Companion animals can help relieve stress and distress. Research has shown that the physical presence of a dog can reduce humans' blood pressure and heart rate during a demanding task – more so than the presence of a family member or friend. However, people asked to undertake stressful tasks in the presence of a friendly, but unknown, animal didn't reveal any benefits.

Pets, then, can be an important source of comfort, security and support – a safe haven – for their owners.

But pets, too, find solace in their humans. They can be calmed by their presence and enjoy affection; however, intense human–animal interaction can also lead to attachment issues, making them prone to aggression, fear and separation anxiety.

For some pets, too much handling, or inappropriate petting, can be stressful and frightening and lead to

aggression or anxiety.

Some owners even prefer to share a bed with their pets. There are potential health implications for sleeping alongside an animal, including disturbed sleep and the possibility of injury, disease transmission or allergies.



However, sleeping with your pet may also support good quality sleep as well as warmth, security, and companionship. Many pets seem to prefer to sleep in close proximity to others, so there might be a mutual benefit too.

2. Relationship building

Relationship building is essential for both owner and pet to maintain good health. A positive human-pet relationship is one that acknowledges owner responsibility for pet welfare and wellbeing. Conversely, dysfunctional relationships with pets can lead to trauma and aggression. Caregivers with less friendly or poorly behaved dogs can suffer from anxiety and depression.

It's important to train pets using methods that help nurture a positive partnership between human and animal. This can also help both owner and pet have a more optimistic outlook on life. Research has shown that positive reinforcement training as opposed to punishment-based methods is the best approach for animal welfare and skills acquisition.

Strong human-pet relationships can often be seen in assistance and therapy animals. Therapy pets are linked to improvements in independence and reported wellbeing of their owners. Stroking and interacting with therapy pets is beneficial for patients in healthcare

facilities, where pets can create a sense of normality, reduce boredom and help alleviate depression.

**The
incidence of obesity in
pet dogs – but not cats – is linked
to the waistline of the owner**

3. Making (two and four legged) friends

Taking your pet out for a walk might have more health benefits than just exercise.

Pets can help foster friendships and relationships – and build a sense of community. Pet owners, for instance, are more likely to get to know other people in their local area.

Why is this? Research suggests that pets have a profound effect on “social lubrication” helping create relationships with other pet owners and animal lovers.

Pet owners, then, are less likely to experience loneliness and social isolation than people with no pets.

4. Dietary decisions

Vets agree that the average waistline of pets is getting larger. This mimics what is happening in the human population – and diet and exercise are two major contributory factors.

The incidence of obesity in pet dogs – but not cats – is linked to the waistline of the owner, suggesting a causal lifestyle relationship. So, owners tend to unintentionally damage their pets' health because of same poor diet and exercise habits that cause their own health issues.

By supporting people to make better dietary decisions for their pets, it might also be possible to encourage healthier eating for the human.

Combining improved diet with regular exercise might reduce the waistlines of pets and people to a healthy size.

5. Walking for wellness

Regular physical activity is associated with many health benefits, both for people and pets. Walking is cost effective and relatively accessible way for most dog owners to improve the physical health and general wellbeing of both humans and their pets.

For example, regular dog walkers have lower body masses and higher levels of physical activity than people without dogs, or those who do not walk the dogs they live with. Also, walking at least three times a week can ease back pain and reduce the risk of recurrence by half.

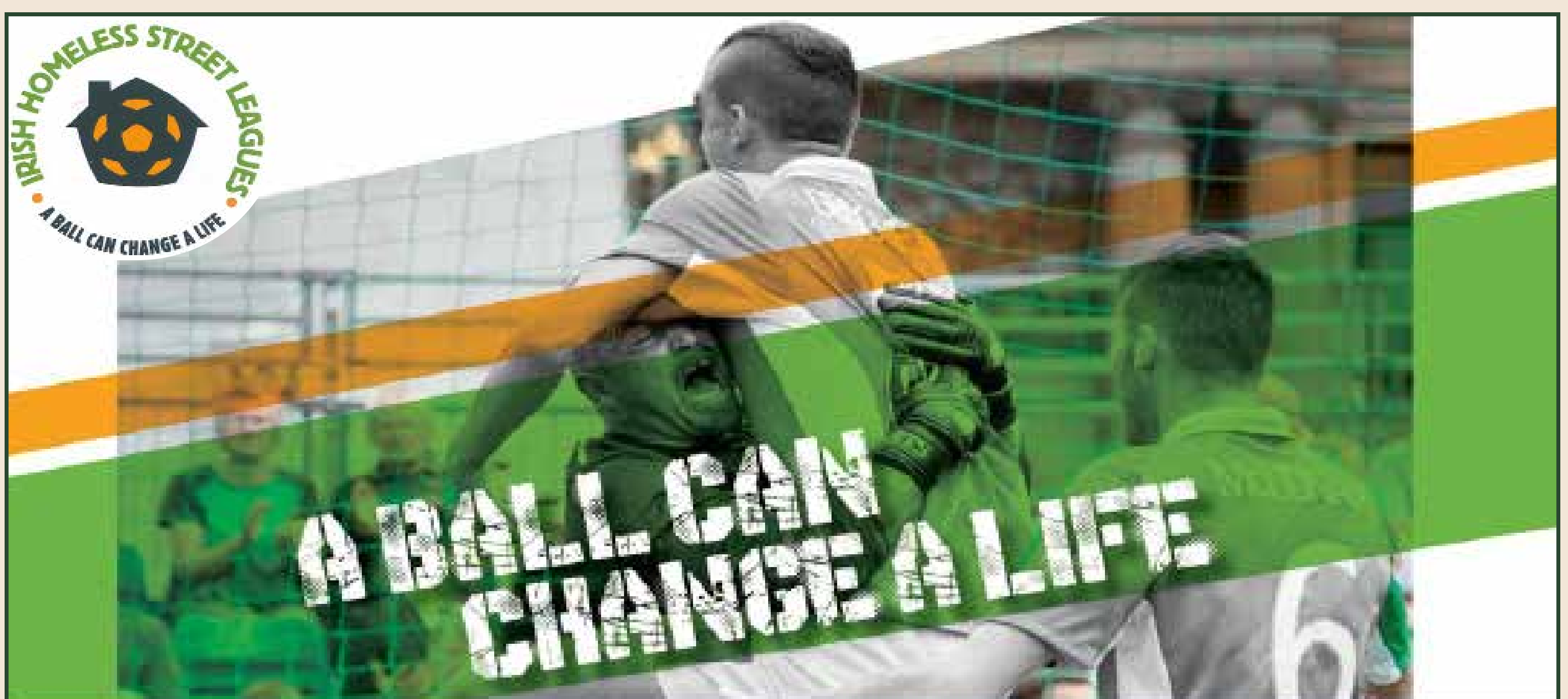
However, not everyone regularly walks their dog. This can be because of a lack of suitable places, safety concerns or even worries about their own or other dogs' behaviour. Making facilities accessible, safe and user-friendly for all can encourage activity. This includes provision of "poo bins" to reduce dog fouling, neighbourhood design that supports safe walking opportunities and restricted access to potentially sensitive areas such as children's playgrounds.

Ultimately, living with a companion animal should be a mutually beneficial, healthy and happy relationship. Following these five guidelines should help owners and their pets to find comfort and calm in each other and maintain a healthy weight and outlook.

Author: Jacqueline Boyd Senior Lecturer in Animal Science, Nottingham Trent University

First published on The Conversation

Best of luck to all participating in the Homeless Street Soccer finals in April



And YOU can make it happen!

By holding a **fundraiser** for the Irish Homeless Street Leagues, **you** will assist us in reintegrating hundreds of men & women who have experienced homelessness, addiction and social isolation, back into society through sport.

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Best of luck to all participating in the upcoming
Homeless Street Soccer finals



CAMPAIGNING FOR WORKERS



Right to join and be represented by a Union

Right to Collective Bargaining

Outlaw victimisation of Workers and
Trade Union Representatives

Transposition of the EU Adequate
Minimum Wages Directive

Full implementation of
LEEF Report on Collective Bargaining

Support the Respect at Work Campaign

Join the CWU



**BETTER IN A
TRADE UNION**



Screen Scene

Ransom Canyon ***

Starring: Josh Duhamel, Minka Kelly
Run Time: 10 x 60 mins
Streaming: Netflix
Available: 17th April

The Big Door Prize ****

Starring: Chris O'Dowd, Gabrielle Dennis
Run Time: 20 x 35 mins
Streaming: Apple TV+
Available: 24th April

Welcome to Ransom Canyon, where love, loss, and loyalty collide beneath the crimson mesas of Texas Hill Country. With three ranching family dynasties locked in a contest for control of the land, their lives and legacies are threatened by outside forces intent on destroying their way of life. At the centre of it all is stoic rancher Staten Kirkland (Duhamel), who is healing from heartbreaking loss and on a quest for vengeance. Staten's only glimmer of hope rests in the eyes and heart of Quinn O'Grady (Kelly), longtime family friend and owner of the local dancehall. But as the battle to save Ransom wages on, a mysterious cowboy drifts into town, dredging up secrets from the past. Visé tightening, Staten fights to protect the land he calls home, and the only love that can pull him back from the demons that haunt him.

If you love *Virgin River*, *Sweet Magnolias* and *My Life with the Walter Boys* you'll love this. It's nice, simple watching and just perfect for those nights you don't want anything too heavy.

The Big Door Prize is a whimsical, heartwarming exploration of fate, self-discovery, and the complexities of life in a small town. Based on M.O. Walsh's novel, the series centres around a quirky, magical vending machine that appears in the local grocery store, offering everyone a glimpse of their "true potential" through a personalised life-altering card. This simple premise sets the stage for a charming and thought-provoking journey into the characters' lives, as they wrestle with their hopes, disappointments, and the path they're currently on. The show masterfully blends humour with deeper existential questions, creating a delightful balance between light-hearted moments and more poignant reflections on identity and purpose. The small-town setting adds to the charm, with each character bringing their own struggles and dreams to the forefront.



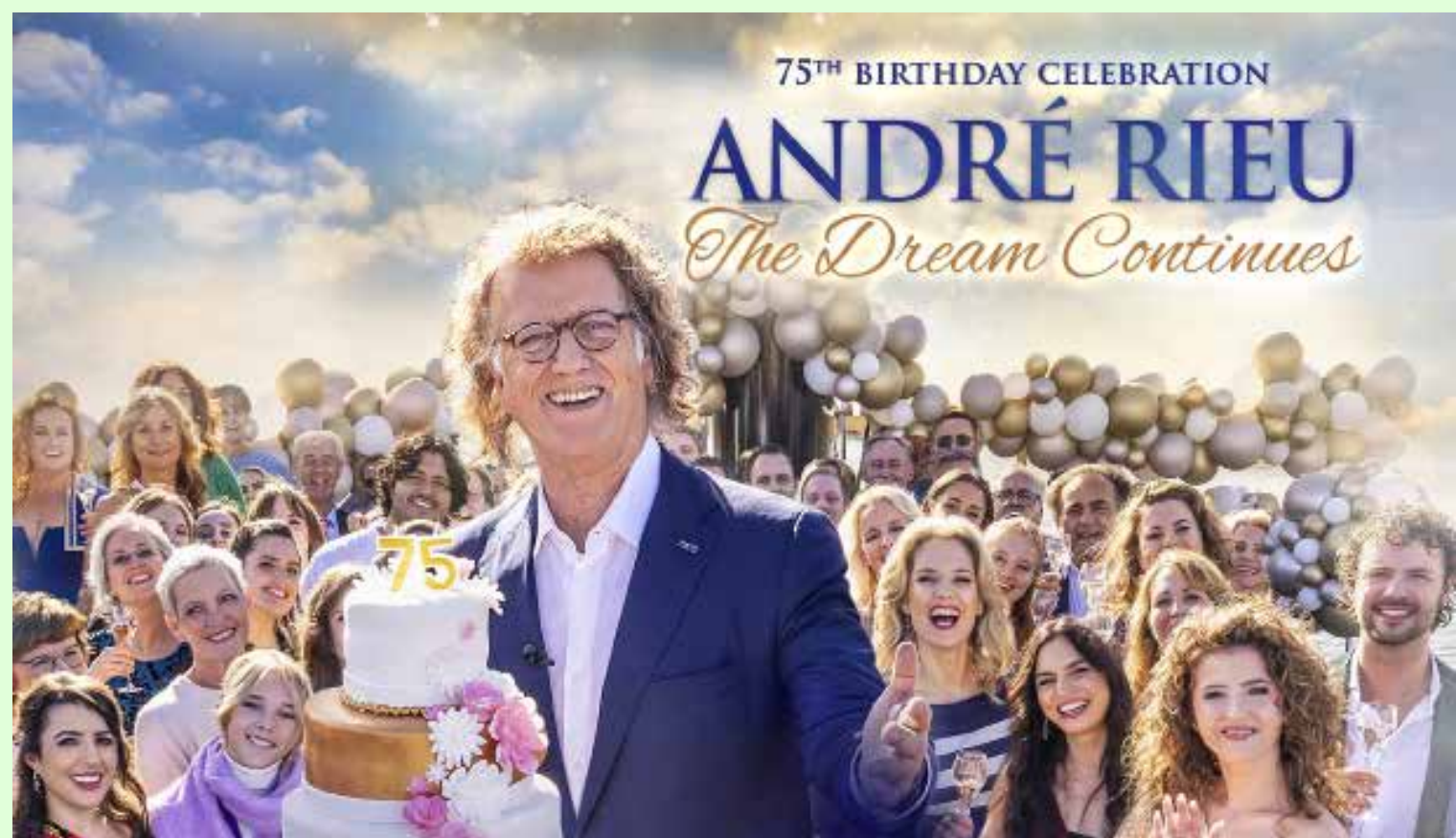
Andre Rieu's 75th Birthday Celebration ****

Starring: André Rieu
Streaming: At cinemas.
Run Time: 200 mins
Available to watch: 12th April

André Rieu's 75th Birthday Celebration is a dazzling, heartwarming tribute to the legendary violinist and conductor's remarkable career. The special event, filmed in the picturesque town of Maastricht, is a joyous and vibrant celebration that showcases Rieu's unmistakable charm and musical talent. With his Johann Strauss Orchestra and a host of guest performers, Rieu brings an unforgettable mix of classical masterpieces, waltzes, and festive tunes that captivate and engage the audience.

Rieu's infectious energy, humour, and deep connection with both the orchestra and the audience make for a lively, intimate atmosphere that transcends the stage. The camera work and cinematography elevate the experience, providing a perfect blend of sweeping shots and close-ups that highlight both the grandeur and the personal moments of the celebration.

Throughout the event, Rieu's passion for music shine brightly, making it clear why he has become such an iconic figure in the world of classical music. His ability to bridge



Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Road Trip ***

Starring: Eva Longoria, Jesse Garcia
Streaming: Disney+
Run Time: 89 mins.
Available to watch: Currently

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Road Trip is a delightful and heartwarming continuation of the beloved Alexander series, based on the classic children's book by Judith Viorst. In this film, Alexander embarks on a chaotic family road trip that is anything but smooth. As the journey unfolds, Alexander finds himself facing one misfortune after another, from car troubles to sibling squabbles, all while his optimistic family tries to keep the spirit of the trip alive.

The film strikes a perfect balance between humour and heartfelt moments, making it enjoyable for both kids and adults. The blend of slapstick comedy with deeper family themes—like patience, resilience, and understanding—adds layers to the story.

What truly sets this movie apart is its emphasis on the unpredictability of life, and how, even in the face of chaos, family bonds can strengthen. While the film is lighthearted, it offers valuable lessons about perspective, growth, and the importance





Because laughter is the best medicine!



A lawyer and two friends - a Rabbi, and a Hindu holy man had car trouble in the countryside and asked to spend the night with a farmer. The farmer said, "There might be a problem. You see, I only have room for two to sleep in the house. So one of you must sleep in the barn."

"No problem," chimed the Rabbi. "My people wandered in the desert for forty years. I am humble enough to sleep in the barn for one evening." With that he departed to the barn, and the others bedded down for the night. Moments later a knock was heard at the door; the farmer opened the door. There stood the Rabbi from the barn. "What's wrong?" asked the farmer. He replied, "I am grateful to you, but I just can't sleep in the barn. There is a pig in the barn, and my faith believes that is an unclean animal." His Hindu friend agrees to swap places with him. But a few minutes later the same scene reoccurs. There is a knock on the door. "What's wrong?" the farmer asks. The Hindu holy man replies, "I, too, am grateful for your helping us out, but there is a cow in the barn. In my country cows are considered sacred and I can't sleep on holy ground!" That left only the lawyer to make the change. He grumbled and complained, but went out to the barn. Moments later there was another knock on the farmer's door. Frustrated and tired, the farmer opens the door, and there stood the pig and the cow.

Hospital Blues

14 hours in A&E after getting covered in camouflage paint and I still haven't been seen.

A man was driving along the highway, and saw a rabbit hopping across the middle of the road. He swerved to avoid hitting the rabbit, but unfortunately the rabbit jumped in front of the car and was hit. The driver, being a sensitive man as well as an animal lover, pulled over to the side of the road and got out to see what had become of the rabbit. Much to his dismay, the rabbit was dead. The driver felt so awful he began to cry. A woman driving down the highway saw the man crying on the side of the road and pulled over. She stepped out of her car and asked the man what was wrong.

"I feel terrible," he explained. "I accidentally hit this rabbit and killed it." The woman told the man not to worry. She knew what to do. She went to her car trunk and pulled out a spray can. She walked over to the limp, dead rabbit, and sprayed the contents of the can onto the rabbit. Miraculously, the rabbit came to life, jumped up, waved its paw at the two humans and hopped down the road. 50 feet away the rabbit stopped, turned around, waved at the two again, hopped down the road another 50 feet, turned, waved, and hopped another 50 feet. The man was astonished. He couldn't figure out what substance could be in the woman's spray can! He ran over to the woman and demanded, "What was in your spray can? What did you spray onto that rabbit?" The woman turned the can around so that the man could read the label. It said:

"'Hare Spray' Restores Life to Dead Hare. Adds Permanent Wave."

There was a woman who was pregnant with twins, and shortly before they were due, she had an accident and went into a coma. Her husband was away on business, and unable to be reached. While in the coma, she gave birth to her twins, and the only person around to name her children was her brother.

When the mother came out of her coma to find she had given birth and that her brother had named the twins, she became very worried, because he wasn't a very bright guy. She was sure he had named them something absurd or stupid.

When she saw her brother she asked him about the twins.

He said, "The first one was a girl."

The mother: "What did you name her?!?"

Brother: "Denise!"

The Mom: "Oh, wow, that's not bad! What about the second one?"

Brother: "The second one was a boy."

The Mom: "Oh, and what did you name him?"

Brother: "Denephew."

I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places - he told me to stop going to those places.

Before you criticise someone, walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you do criticize them, you're a mile away, and you have their shoes.

My wife and I laugh about how competitive we are. But I laugh more.

I'm so good at sleeping I can do it with my eyes closed!

A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

PHRASE	TRANSLATION	PRONUNCIATION
Happy Easter	Beannachtaí na Cásca	Bann-ukh-tee nah Kaws-ka
It's April already	Aibreán atá ann cheana féin	Ah-vray-awn ah-taw ahn hyaw-na fayn.
I'm going to the festival	Tá mé ag dul go dtí an fhéile	Taw may egg dul guh jee on ay-la
I'm watching TV	Tá mé ag féachaint ar an teilifís	Taw may egg fay-khint air on hel-ih-fish.
Where is the remote?	Cá bhfuil an cianda?	Kaw will on kye-anda?
I'm going to Spain	Tá mé ag dul go dtí an Spáinn	Taw may egg dul guh jee on spaw-in.
Look at the chicks	Féach ar na sicíní	Fay-akh air nah shik-nee.
It's sunny	Tá sé grianmhar	Taw shay gree-an-war.
I'm thirsty	Tá tart orm?	Taw tart orm.

Word Power

Over the next few issues we'll be attempting to increase your word power. Have a look at the words below and afterwards see if you know their meaning.

Word	Pronunciation	Answers
1. Recalcitrant	ri-KAL-sih-truhnt	1. Stubbornly resistant to authority
2. Lugubrious	loo-GOO-bree-us	2. Looking or sounding sad and dismal
3. Peregrinate	PER-eh-grin-ayt	3. To travel or wander around from place to place.
4. Imbroglio	im-BROH-lee-oh	4. A complicated and confusing situation.
5. Verisimilitude	ver-ih-sim-ILL-ih-tood	5. The appearance of being true or real.
6. Mendacious	men-DAY-shus	6. Not telling the truth; lying
7. Ineffable	in-EF-uh-bull	7. Too great or extreme to be expressed in words.
8. Reprobate	REP-ruh-bayt	8. Having an obstinately uncooperative attitude.
9. Sublime	suh-BLYM	9. Beauty as to inspire great admiration or awe.
10. Cynosure	SYN-uh-shoor	10. A person or thing that is the center of attention or admiration
11. Soporific	soh-puh-RIF-ik	11. Inducing sleepiness or drowsiness.
12. Indefatigable	in-deh-FAT-ih-guh-bul	12. Persisting tirelessly; incapable of being fatigued.

How did YOU score?
10 or more - Perfection!
6-9 Brilliant.
3-5 Well done.
0-2 Must do better.

Cathal Brugha

A Life of Commitment and Sacrifice

Liz Scales takes a look at the life and legacy of Irish republican politician Cathal Brugha who was active in the Easter Rising, the Irish War of Independence, the Irish Civil War and was the first chairperson of Dáil Éireann as well as the president of Dáil Éireann.



Cathal Brugha, originally named Charles William St. John Burgess, was born in Fairview, Dublin, on 18th July 1874. He was the tenth of fourteen children—four sons and ten daughters—born to Thomas Burgess and Maryanne Burgess (née Flynn). Thomas was a cabinet maker and antique dealer originally from Carlow, and although he was Protestant, his wife's Catholicism left a lasting impression on their children, who were raised as Catholics. Among them, young Charles emerged as the most devout member of the family.

The Burgess household was characterised by a strong nationalist sentiment. Thomas Burgess was noted for his ardent support of Parnell and possibly even aligned with the Fenian movement. Brugha's early education began at the Colmille Schools on Dominick Street, after which he entered Belvedere College in 1888 with the intent of pursuing medicine. However, this ambition was cut short in 1890 due to the failure of his father's business, forcing him to start working as a clerk for a church supplies company called Hayes & Finch. Later, he transitioned into a role as a traveling salesman.

Despite his deep commitment to the republican cause, Brugha viewed himself primarily as a soldier and harboured a suspicion of political manoeuvring.

Despite his small stature, Cathal exhibited remarkable strength and athleticism. He excelled in various sports, including boxing, swimming, cycling, gymnastics, cricket, and rugby. Known for his steely determination, he abstained from smoking, drinking, and swearing, focusing intently on his passions.

Engagement with Irish Culture

Brugha joined the Gaelic League in 1899, where he quickly became fluent in Irish and embraced Gaelic culture. He eventually adopted the Irish name "Cathal Brugha," reflecting his deepening commitment to his heritage. By 1908, Brugha had ascended to the position of president of the League's Keating branch, promoting Irish language and culture, which became a vibrant hub of separatism.

In 1909, while attending a Gaelic League meeting in Birr, King's County (now Offaly), he met Kathleen Kingston, and the couple married on 8th February 1912, in Dublin. Sensing the dissonance of working for an English-owned firm, Brugha and two colleagues, Anthony and Vincent Lalor, established Lalor Ltd., a candle-making company at Lower Ormond Quay, where Brugha served as a director and salesman.

Throughout this time, Brugha's political aspirations burgeoned, and he joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in 1908, leveraging his professional connections to recruit supporters. In November 1913, he was appointed first lieutenant of C Company in the 4th Battalion of the Irish Volunteers. By the spring of 1914, Brugha had become the battalion adjutant and played a crucial role in the significant event where volunteers landed a shipment of arms at Howth on 26th July of that year.



Involvement in the 1916 Easter Rising

During the pivotal 1916 Easter Rising, Brugha served as the vice-commandant under Eamonn Ceannt, overseeing the 4th Battalion's defence of South Dublin Union. In a fierce engagement on 27th April, Brugha was badly wounded, becoming isolated from his unit. Despite sustaining multiple gunshot and shrapnel wounds, he valiantly held off a significant number of British troops. When found by Ceannt, Brugha was propped against a wall, injured but defiant, singing 'God Save Ireland' as he taunted his attackers. After the battle, he was transported to hospital and ultimately released in August 1916, diagnosed as incurable. Following a long and painful recovery, during which he dealt with mobility issues and persistent pain, Brugha began to mobilise efforts to revive the Irish Volunteers.

Political and Military Career

In November 1916, he convened a conference of approximately fifty Volunteers in Dublin, marking the resurgence of the organisation. Brugha was arrested during a public demonstration in June 1917, where he demanded the release of political prisoners, but later returned to active service. His fervent republican sentiments led to his election to the party executive at the Sinn Féin convention in October 1917, where he was instrumental in advocating for a republican constitution.

Despite his deep commitment to the republican cause, Brugha viewed himself primarily as a soldier and harboured a suspicion of political manoeuvring. His focus remained on arming and reorganising the Irish Volunteers, serving as their chief of staff from October 1917 to April 1919. During the conscription crisis of spring 1918, Brugha opposed Sinn Féin's collaboration with the Irish Parliamentary Party, prompting his resignation from the party's executive.

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Brugha organised an expedition to London with twelve Volunteers aiming to assassinate British ministers if conscription was imposed. His tenure in the political arena culminated in his election as a TD for Waterford in December 1918. Following the imprisonment of Éamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith, Brugha was temporarily elected acting president of the first Dáil Éireann on January 22, 1919. By April, he resigned in favour of de Valera and was subsequently appointed Minister for Defence.

Leadership Challenges and Internal Conflicts

Brugha's leadership was marked by extensive challenges, mainly due to his strict disciplinary approach and his insistence on Dáil approval for military actions. He was adamant about avoiding civilian casualties and only reluctantly approved attacks on police and intelligence officers. Nonetheless, his limited engagement with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) often led others to view him as disconnected from the realities of their efforts on the ground.

On August 20, 1919, Brugha proposed an oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic for both Volunteers and Dáil deputies, an initiative that saw varying degrees of acceptance but was never formally ratified by the IRA. In an impactful moment before the infamous Bloody Sunday on November 21, 1920, he intervened to remove suspected names from Collins's assassination list, citing insufficient evidence against them.

In a bid to diminish the IRB's influence within the IRA, Brugha resigned from the IRB in the wake of the 1916 Rising. He believed that the military council's authority conflict undermined the nationalist movement during the rebellion and felt that, as republicanism grew, there was little need for secrecy. This suspicion extended to Michael Collins, who was both an IRB head and Brugha's nominal military subordinate. Their complex relationship was marred by mutual resentment and competition over control of defence matters, further muddling their working dynamic.



Opposition to the Anglo-Irish Treaty

Brugha's opposition grew increasingly vocal during the negotiations that ensued after the war of independence. He made a deliberate choice not to join the delegation negotiating with the British in September 1921, preferring to remain outside the realm of failure should talks collapse and violence resume. As discussions unfolded, de Valera reached out to Brugha, hoping to persuade him toward accepting the concept of 'external association' with the British Commonwealth, which Brugha grudgingly considered.

When the Anglo-Irish Treaty was presented, Brugha vehemently opposed it, arguing on 7th January 1922, that it represented "national suicide," an assertion he believed compromised the independent republic proclaimed in 1916 and ratified in 1919. He launched a fierce attack on Collins, questioning his contributions and portraying him as a secondary figure within the Department of Defence, a move that alienated some within the anti-treaty faction.

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Brugha's harsh critique of Collins drew ire even from some fellow anti-treatyites, ultimately damaging his reputation more than that of Collins, who retained considerable public favor. Following the Dáil's approval of the Treaty, Brugha was succeeded as Minister for Defence by Richard Mulcahy.

The Civil War and Legacy

In March 1922, Brugha became vice-president of the anti-treaty Cumann na Poblachta, striving to temper extremist behaviours within the faction. He opposed radical proposals at the anti-treaty IRA conference and advocated for restraint even as political tensions rose. Yet, in June, he was elected as TD for Waterford–Tipperary East, suggesting that his influence still resonated among constituents.

As the civil war erupted on 28th June, following the shelling of the Four Courts, Brugha reported for duty at the Hammam hotel, taken over by anti-treaty forces. Despite intense gunfire enveloping the area, Brugha remained resolute. In a desperate charge into the streets while exchanging fire, he sustained serious injuries, culminating in a gunshot wound to his thigh.

Brugha succumbed to his injuries on 7th July 1922, in the Mater Hospital in Dublin, and was laid to rest in the republican plot at Glasnevin Cemetery. He left behind his wife, Caitlín Brugha, who served as a Sinn Féin TD from 1923 to 1927, along with five daughters and a son, Ruairí, born in 1917, who later became a Fianna Fáil TD for South County Dublin.

In an era populated by passionate individuals fighting for their beliefs, Cathal Brugha's zeal was particularly remarkable. He remained immovable on principles and was characterised by an intense fixation on the republic he envisioned. Following his death, tributes revealed a complex legacy: a blend of admiration for his tenacity and frustration over his relentless intransigence. Piaras Béaslaí, a once-close friend, poignantly described Brugha's courage as "leonine," yet tempered by an "almost taurine obstinacy." As Collins reflected on Brugha, stating, "He was a fanatic in a noble cause," he emphasised the rarity of Brugha's commitment, suggesting that long after others had faded into obscurity, Brugha would be remembered as a staunch advocate for Ireland's freedom.

Best of luck to all participating in the Homeless Street Soccer finals in April



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- Outreach Team
01 872 0185
7am to 1am Monday to Friday
9am to 1am Saturday and Sunday

Day Services

- Focus Ireland Coffee Shop
01 671 2555
- Capuchin Day Centre
01 872 0770
- Merchants Quay Ireland
01 524 0923
- PMVT - Berkley Street
087 247 7117
087 434 1668
- Alice Leahy Trust
01 545 3799

Local Authorities

- DCC Central Placement Services
01 222 6944
- Finglas County Council
01 890 5090
- South Dublin County Council
01 890 5090
- Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council
01 205 4804

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Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



Patricia Scanlan was born in Dublin, where she still lives. She is a #1 bestselling author and has sold millions of books worldwide. Her books are translated in many languages. Patricia is the series editor and a contributing author to the award winning Open Door Literacy series.

This issue, Patricia brings her favourite books of the moment.

The Stolen Child -Carmel Harrington – Headline



It's every parent's worst nightmare. But there's no waking up from this . . . On board a cruise ship in the Mediterranean, Kimberly wakes to discover that her two-year-old son Robert has vanished from the cabin overnight. She and her husband Jason vow to do whatever it takes to bring Robert home. But he is never found. Forty years later, their therapist daughter Lily welcomes a new client into her home. Zach has a shocking theory about what happened to her brother Robert years before. If Zach is to be believed, someone out there knows what happened on that ship. And they would do anything to stop the truth getting out. But secrets always find a way to reveal themselves . . .

Burn After Reading – Catherine Ryan Howard – Bantam

The night Jack Smyth ran into flames in a desperate attempt to save his wife from their burning home, he was, tragically, too late - but hailed a hero. Until it emerged that Kate was dead long before the fire began.

Suspicion has stalked him ever since. After all, there's no smoke without fire. A year on, he's signed a book deal. He wants to tell his side of the story, to prove his own innocence in print. He just needs someone to help him write it. Emily has never ghostwritten anything before, but she knows what it's like to live with a guilty secret. And she's about to learn that there are some stories that should never be told . . .



The Language of Remembering – Patrick Holloway - Epoque Press



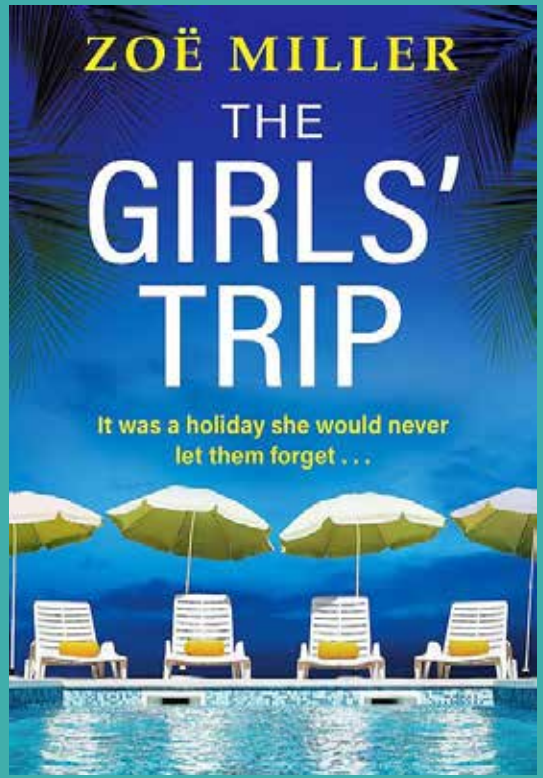
Returning from Brazil with his wife and daughter, Oisín is looking to rebuild a life in Ireland and reconnect with his mother, Brigid, who has early onset Alzheimer's. As her condition deteriorates she starts to speak Irish, the language of her youth, and reflect on her childhood dreams and aspirations. Mother and son embark on a journey of personal discovery, and as past traumas are exposed they begin to understand what has shaped them and who they really are. The Language of Remembering asks how we connect to the people we love and how we move on from the past to find meaning in the present.

The Morrigan – Kim Curran – Michael Joseph

RULER. MOTHER. GODDESS. WARRIOR. They called me The Morrigan. I was magnificent. I was multitudes. They twisted my story, stripped me away. But I will tell it now in my own voice. It begins, as all the best stories do, in darkness. From an ancient, storm-tossed sea, a tribe of gods reach the rocky shores of Ireland. Among them, a strange, hungry, red-haired girl. A girl who can change shape, from bird to beast to goddess. A girl who dreams of battle, of blood, of death and power. She does not know yet that a woman who seeks to rule will always be in danger – or that there are far more treacherous figures in this land than the gods who raised her. She does not know that one day love will burn so deep in her heart that its scars will never heal. That she will know pain so raw and pure it will almost tear her apart. She does not know that her journey will take a thousand years. That her name will be remembered for a thousand more.



She is The Morrigan, and she is waiting: a girl with rage coiled in her chest. Beautiful, powerful, ravenous rage. A rage that will live forever. An electric debut retelling of Ireland's mythic goddess of war, from a bold and powerful new voice.



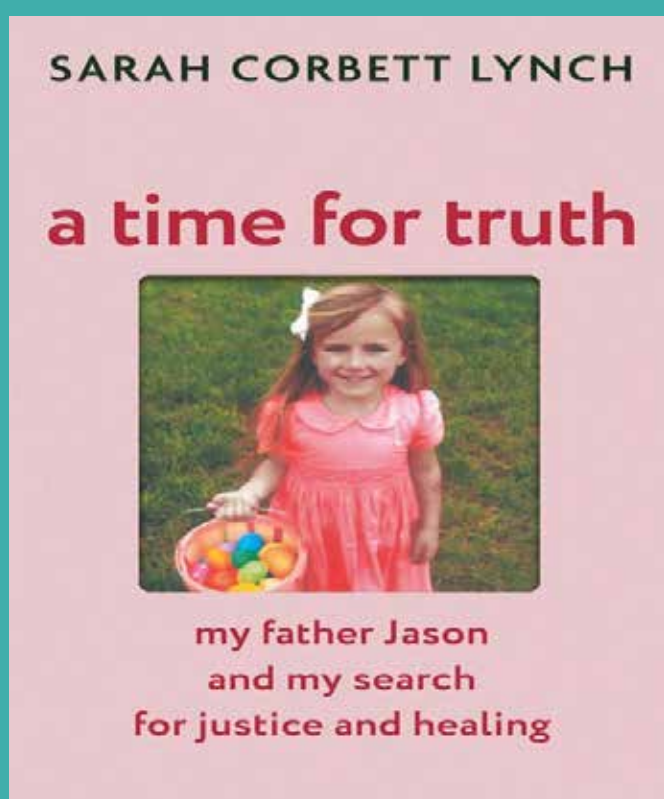
The Girls' Trip -Zoë Miller – Hachette Books Ireland

It was a holiday she would never let them forget ...‘She had it coming. So had the others.’ In 2007, four friends returned home from a week in Ibiza with secrets to keep. When they agreed never to contact each other again, all traces of their holiday were erased. Or so they thought. Now, almost seventeen years after that trip, Anna's sister Kim is still picking up the pieces after Anna abandoned her life without warning. Kim is sure that Anna's unexplained departure had something to do with her visit to Ibiza. And when a photo from the trip surfaces unexpectedly, she finally has some clues to start looking into what happened to her sister.

Julia, Cora and Faye are forced to come together when they realise someone might be looking into the past. But how far will they go to bury the truth? And what's to stop one of them from letting a 'friend' take the fall, in order to save herself?

A Heart Full of Hatred: The latest epic adventure in the bestselling Skulduggery Pleasant series: (17) Derek Landy – Harper Collins Children's Books

A killer is stalking and murdering sorcerers, and Valkyrie Cain is next on his list. While hunting down a cult of magical terrorists intent on taking their revenge on the mortal world, Skulduggery and Valkyrie are drawn into a murder investigation with unsettling similarities to a case they just closed – the case that nearly took the lives of both Valkyrie's sister and girlfriend. With the body count rising, a special night approaches – a night where the elite of sorcerer society will gather on a remote island to witness a ceremony that could change that society forever. Speeches will be made, champagne will be sipped, and two things will become terribly, distressingly clear... No one is safe. And not everyone will make it out alive.



A Time for Truth: My Father Jason and My Search for Justice and Healing – Sarah Corbett Lynch – Hachette Books Ireland

At approximately 3.15 a.m. on 2 August 2015, eight-year-old Irish girl Sarah Corbett Lynch was lifted from her bed by a Davidson County police officer and carried downstairs, shielded from the chaos that had broken out around her. Hours passed before Sarah learned that her beloved father Jason was dead. And the people who killed him were Sarah's stepmother Molly Martens and her father Tom. Now Sarah tells her story for the first time and reveals the startling truth of life behind closed doors in her family's suburban North Carolina home. Sarah recalls the weeks and months leading up to that night in August, and the use of manipulation and gaslighting by Molly Martens - the only mother she had ever known. She describes the traumatic years after her father's death as she and her brother Jack fought for justice from the safety of their new loving home in Limerick, Ireland, with Jason's family. A Time for Truth is a unique testimony of devastation, survival and hope, against the odds.

What are you reading?

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The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Unspoken by Dr. Clodagh McKenna, The Man with the Plastic Bag, Begin Again with Davina McCall and The Apology Line.

Unspoken by Dr. Clodagh McKenna (Mental Health)

Each episode of Unspoken, Dr Clodagh McKenna speaks passionately about removing the taboos and shame that so often surrounds our experiences and internal worlds. Each episode, Dr. McKenna is joined by someone who would like to uncover their unspoken story in order to help themselves, and others. Episodes mirror the therapy process, cultivating a listening experience where those tuning in will feel like they have a fly on the wall vantage of these unspoken, often taboo topics, that are actually far more common than we might care to admit or realise.



The Man with the Plastic Bag (Mystery)



‘Peter Bergmann’ isn’t his real name. The Vienna address he gives at the hotel doesn’t exist. Bags seen on CCTV are never found, including a purple plastic bag he is seen with 13 times over three days. What was in it? Where did he empty it? And why all the secrecy? Irish Times journalist Rosita Boland spent years investigating this case. She spoke to every witness she could think of, visited the hotel and the beach, determined to find out who this man really was. But 16 years later the mystery is yet to be solved. Rosita joins Sarah McGlinchey over two episodes to guide her through that investigation.

Could she, and the Gardaí, have missed something? Or is this a case that will never be solved? And what was in the plastic bag?

Begin Again with Davina McCall (Empowerment)

This show is dedicated to empowering people to embrace midlife as their most transformative era yet. Davina’s guests will share stories of growth and rediscovery, letting you in on their own life journeys - many of which have challenged outdated narratives and ideas. Whether it’s through expert insights, candid discussions, or real-life inspiration, Begin Again will be a supportive community for everyone to explore the revitalising second act of life. Davina wants everyone to know that midlife is not the start of the end; instead, it’s the perfect opportunity and time to Begin Again.



The Apology Line (Human Interest)



A phone number gets posted across the streets of New York City in the early ’80s, into which strangers can spill their secrets via voicemail. Messages poured in, and for 15 years, what started as a social experiment, took on a life of its own. Known as Mr Apology, Allan Bridge found himself tapping into the dark side of the human psyche. The eerie recordings are uncovered by Bridge’s second wife, Marissa, who takes listeners on an unsettling journey of what it means to be the keeper of secrets and the toll it took.

How to:

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