

IRELAND'S **BIG** **ISSUE**

Digital Edition
Aug 2024
Is 302 Vol 22

MEDICAL TOURISM: ONE WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

*“waking up, it was like I was
trapped in a nightmare”*

Also:

Graham Mellon : Triumph over Adversity

“ I was 13... a child... and I barely had to ask for them [drugs]... they were handed to me.... That's terrifying isn't it?....”

Israeli -Palestinian Conflict: What is the two state solution ?

William Holden - Destroyed by Demons

And lots more

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Edition

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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.



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The 'Proclamation of the Republic' was read in front of the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin on Easter Monday of 1916. Over the next series of editions, Liz Scales will delve into the lives of each of the signatories. This issue, we focus on Tom Clarke, described as "the most single-minded of the 1916 leaders".

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Letter to my Younger Self - *Milly Johnson*

Each issue we ask a well-known person to write a letter to their 16-year-old self. This issue it's Sunday Times Best-Selling author, public speaker and script writer Milly Johnson (60) who takes on the challenge.



Dear Milly, at sixteen all you have to worry about most in life is getting your Latin homework in on time. Keep it that way for as long as possible because the decades bring a whole host of anxieties and the longer you can keep them at bay, the better.

You'll do very well in your GCSEs and A levels so I'm not going to lecture you, but please... one day you'll be telling your sons not to cram their revision at the last minute and that's a bit rich. Do spread it out a bit, love.

**Giving people
the benefit of the doubt is a
nice quality to have, but don't be a
mug.**

You'll actually end up going out with that boy who you've admired from afar and he'll end up hurting you so badly it takes you an age to get over it. I'm not going to lecture you about that because that heartbreak will harden you up and – sorry – but you won't be qualified to be a novelist without being kicked around the ring a few times. It's the course and you'll graduate with honours. But BUT I would like you to learn the art of two strikes (max) and you're out. Giving people the benefit of the doubt is a nice quality to have, but don't be a mug. If they aren't prepared to walk over hot coals to get you back, then you're worth more. Also, you will never forgive a cheat, so I can save you a bit of time there.

The mates you have now, you'll have for decades at least so carry on being there for them because you'll come to realise that women's friendships are a gift beyond measure. You'll write about these friendships and they'll fuel the career you've always wanted but never thought you'd have. You see, at this age being a novelist is right up there with being an astronaut – it's for other people, a dream too far. Girls like you from northern industrial towns with a working class background do not get those jobs, that's what you believe. Well they do, because you will. But have some faith in yourself. You'll be knocked down a LOT and you're good at getting back up, but you could get up faster. And inverted snobbery is worse than the regular sort – you don't need to be defensive about where you come from, just be proud of it. You are no better nor worse than anyone else.

Think about the degree course you choose. Do you really want to become a teacher? Nope. You love English, why not just do that? Yes you ARE clever enough. You'll hate that drama and education course. And when you graduate for goodness sake do not take that job in the building society. You and accountancy are a match made in hell. I know you want to make your parents proud, I know that you want them to see you have a proper job... but don't make yourself miserable in the act. They'll be proud of you when they see how you've pushed yourself and become what you always wanted to be.

If only you were as wise in choosing men as you are friends. You have the worst taste. I can't tell you not to hook up with that man because he gives you two great kids, but as soon as you're pregnant with number two – get out of there as fast as your little legs will carry you.

Also drink more water and less Baileys, eat more salad and less eclairs. And that gorgeous figure you have... don't let it slip away because keeping it at your age is effortless, but that will change. Savour the joys each

decade brings.

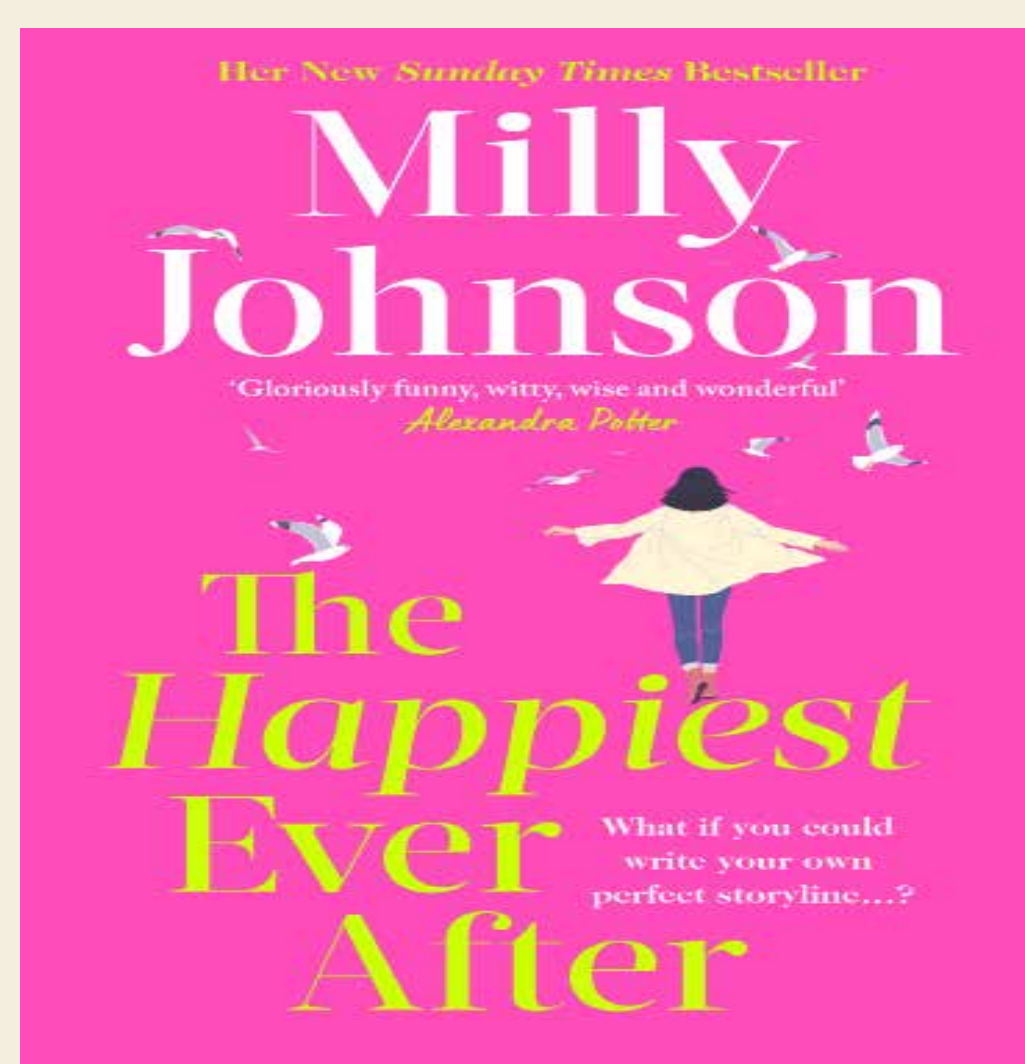
Trust your judgement more because your intuition will be screaming at you on occasion and you'll rationalise it away and then it'll tell you 'told you so'. That voice that says 'DO NOT GET MARRIED' don't ignore it, it's right. You really shouldn't.

as soon as you're
pregnant with number two
– get out of there as fast as your
little legs will carry you.

You'll eventually get where you want to be but if you'd had the courage of your convictions you just might have got there sooner. Pick your battles and just because you can say something, doesn't mean you should. You're impulsive and sometimes you need to count to ten and just breathe.

Finally, be your own best mate. You're great at giving advice, rubbish at taking it. And learn very early to say 'no' more. Don't be manipulated, you'll end up spending more time with strangers than with loved ones. It's a skill that takes years to perfect. Start now. You'll be fine.

**Milly's new book is available from
18th July (Simon & Schuster) in all
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Medical Tourism - Would You Risk It?

Sam McMurdock talks to Ellie, a mum of 3 from Belfast who can no longer work due to botched surgeries in Turkey.

“waking up, it was like I was trapped in a nightmare”



*Ellie (32) from East Belfast had it all up to two years ago. Having worked “in the job of my dreams” as a personal trainer she took great pleasure in helping her clients meet their fitness goals. She had always been “pretty confident” with her body until she had three babies in one calendar year - a daughter in January and twin boys in December 2019,

“It was a tough year.... I had a really big baby [9lbs 15 oz] on 7th January and had twin boys on 28th December [6lbs and 5lb 5oz). Not for the faint-hearted. [laughs].”

Although Ellie is laughing now, it’s been a long, arduous road for her and birthing three babies would be nowhere as traumatic as the “mummy makeover” she decided to “treat myself to” at the beginning of 2022 in Turkey.

Why did you want surgery?

“As a personal trainer you have to look good. All my clients are women. You aren’t going to win trust if you don’t have the body they’re aiming for, so I occasionally Googled mummy make-overs as far back as during my pregnancy with my daughter.”

“I had a couple of clients who’ve had them after they were done having babies, albeit in the UK and they looked amazing.”

**I
had Rhinoplasty in Turkey
years ago and was delighted with the
results so I wasn’t afraid of travelling
to have work done.**

As a personal trainer some may argue it was a strange choice.

“The mummy makeover? “I don’t think so. When I was pregnant with my daughter and the twins I exercised and ate within my calorie allowance yet after the birth of my girl, despite losing the weight on the scale quite quickly my body just didn’t feel like mine...I looked very different. I was back to 9 stones but my stomach didn’t look right. I felt really self conscious. Even when I’m not working I like my scrunch bum leggings and crop tops but I found myself really wanting to cover up and that’s not me. I continued working out gently in our home gym and was looking forward to going back to work but on maternity leave I discovered I was pregnant again.”

That must have been a shock.

“It was an even bigger shock when I discovered it was twins. While I was pregnant with the boys I found myself really struggling with poor body image.... my boobs were enormous, my belly was the same. I opened up to my mother-in-law and she said I should be grateful I was able to conceive but that made me feel very guilty, like my feelings were superficial, but that wasn’t it.... I felt disconnected from who I was... I suppose lockdown didn’t help ... I know *Alan [her husband] blamed Covid for me, as he calls it ‘falling down the rabbit hole and getting fixated.”

Do you think having extra time on your hands played its part?

“Anyone who knows me knows I like to be tiny and muscular, I like my tans and looking good, it’s part of my identity. I had Rhinoplasty in Turkey years ago and was delighted with the results so I wasn’t afraid of travelling to have work done. I didn’t rush into it. I remember a full year after the boys were born looking at myself in the mirror, surveying the loose skin I’d been left with, I’d lost muscle around my core and breast feeding had left me with breasts like spaniel ears [laughs]. No matter how hard I worked out there was little change. I just decided it was time to get me back again.”

Ellie found “what I thought was a steal” after “countless nights spent researching” with a surgeon with “stellar reviews” and purchased a package that included breast augmentation, tummy tuck, liposuction, flights and 12 days in a beautiful hotel for £4,850. [For context, in the UK breast augmentation starts at £7,150, tummy tuck £9,350 and liposuction £4,950],

“I told my husband I’d found a great offer in Turkey. I’d even joined a private Facebook group and had online chats with women who’d had it done. He wasn’t happy about it but I told him I’d birthed three babies and I needed this for me so we arranged for his parents to help out until I got home.”



Ellie flew to Turkey with her sister, looking forward to having the surgeries done and “going back to the hotel to Netflix and chill” but sadly things would not be so straightforward.

After arriving on the Wednesday evening [January ’22] she had the breast augmentation and liposuction at 9.30 the next morning,

“I’ll never forget waking up. It was like I was trapped in a nightmare, I was still feeling fuddled but the agony... there’s no words for the torturous pain I could feel everywhere but especially my chest and legs. I started to scream for help but I couldn’t see anyone. I remember wondering why I had pain in my face but would later discover I had two black eyes due to a tool accidentally falling on my face during the procedure.... Something I’d later find is very common....due to the speed at which these ops are done.”

“I continued screaming and a man finally arrived asking why I was making a fuss. I was crying by this stage. I’d never felt so overwhelmed with pain in my life and I’ve delivered three babies vaginally - one of them almost 10lbs!

“The man came back and gave me two tablets, then two other men came in and wheeled me to a room with two women. The two women had had lipo and told me I needed to ‘flash the Lira’ to get taken care of. They were from Wales and said ‘tipping generously’ was the only way to get proper care.

...
**there’s no words for
the torturous pain I could feel
everywhere but especially my
chest and legs**

“I lay and cried and must have fallen asleep because I remember waking up in the early hours of the next morning with all-consuming shooting pains in my breasts.... my bed was wet. I tried to move my body around to get to my feet when I noticed this awful, wet clumpy mess running down my front... I started to scream... A member of the team gave me two tablets, told me to lie down and that a doctor would see me shortly. When he did come around he didn’t seem concerned about this black gunk coming from my breasts. I told him I knew this wasn’t normal and I didn’t want to have the tummy tuck today if this was the kind of treatment I’d receive. ‘Well then, you are ready to go back to hotel’ he said in a low voice.’ I was raging. I knew this wasn’t ok. ‘I’m not ready to go back to the hotel’ I yelled, ‘I can barely support my body weight, how do you think I’m going to cope in a hotel?’ He repeated, ‘Tummy tuck, you don’t want so then you go back to hotel.’ He walked off calmly like I didn’t matter.

Just hours later I was back at the hotel, my sister had to come and get me in a taxi even though it was just a five minute walk away. I lay in bed crying. I was also vomiting. The pain wouldn’t stop and I’d been given fresh padding which apparently would absorb the fluid they looked like the puppy pads you get in Poundland... not medical bandaging. My sister phoned my husband who immediately arranged flights to get us home. I thought ‘wonderful’ but when we were at the airport, again, I was treated really badly. My sister tried to explain I was in pain and she showed them a paper stating I’d had surgery but still, they made me peel back

the dressing even though I was sitting in a wheelchair, skin weeping badly and clearly struggling.”



Ellie was leaking on the plane seat on the way home and writhing in pain and upon arrival her husband rushed her to A&E. She was admitted immediately as an emergency, spending the best part of a month in the RVH,

“Being back in Belfast put me at ease but seeing the specialist’s face when she unwrapped my padding was disconcerting. She told me I had necrosis in my breasts and that’s where all this weeping was coming from. I’d also a severe skin infection in my thighs which they feared would lead to necrosis - thankfully it didn’t but I have been left with numbness in my thighs that they say will be permanent and thermal burn from the equipment used during the lipo. I also got a really severe viral infection even though my specialist had me on very strong antibiotics. I’ve had surgery to remove dead tissue too. During further tests they’ve founded trauma to my chest muscles. I still don’t feel right to this very day. I wonder if I ever will some days. I’m currently receiving counselling for PTSD.”

In hospital she filled a bag daily with black discharge and her specialist told her ‘sadly this is all too common’ claiming the hospital sees ‘several botched cases each month’.

Sadly Ellie is unable to return to work and is medically signed off for the foreseeable future. Ironically she had pre-paid for another procedure in Turkey called Juvederm (a long-lasting lip filler) but understandably decided to cut her losses.

**..that
money I used was
my £5,000 inheritance from my
grandmother... what chance have I in
affording legal help - especially now
I’m not working....?**

Advice for anyone wanting cheap surgery?

“I’d say unless you specifically know the person who has used the surgeon and you’ve witnessed their work then don’t take the chance.”

Ellie now believes that the reviews she read were fakes and the women she spoke to bots. She has sought legal advice and was told it could take up to 24 months in front of Turkish courts to prove a negligence claim and that it’s ‘incredibly difficult’ to prove medical negligence if you don’t have the correct documents - which is often the case through a package deal like hers,

“It’s really unfair... that money I used was my £5,000 inheritance from my grandmother... what chance have I in affording legal help - especially now I’m not working....? We live and learn and I certainly don’t blame myself... I blame the Google algorithm, I blame dishonest package deals In some ways I blame the aspirational world of Instagram where everyone is size 6 with perfect glutes and perky boobs.... I blame the surgeons that roll patients out on a production line. I can’t allow myself to start pointing blame my way - I’m dealing with enough.”

*Ellie is not her real name

Congratulations and best wishes to all who took part in the recent Irish Homeless Street leagues 20th Anniversary International Tournament



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Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

What is the two-state solution Andrew Thomas Lecturer in Middle East Studies, Deakin University explains



In recent weeks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeated his rejections of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, saying:

I will not compromise on full Israeli security control over all the territory west of Jordan – and this is contrary to a Palestinian state.

While Netanyahu has never been in favour of a two-state solution, it has had significant support from governments around the world for decades, including the United States, the United Kingdom, European nations, Australia, Canada, Egypt and others.

However, the two-state solution is now further away than it has ever been, with some even proclaiming it “dead”.

But what actually is the two-state solution and why do so many see this as the only resolution to the conflict?

What is the two-state solution?

The two-state solution refers to a plan to create a Palestinian state separate from the state of Israel. The goal is to address Palestinian claims to national self-determination without undermining Israel’s sovereignty.

The first attempt at creating side-by-side states occurred before the independence of Israel in 1948.

**And
of course there is Netanyahu
– no individual has done more to
undermine the two-state solution than the
current Israeli leader and his party.**

The year before, the United Nations passed Resolution 181 outlining a partition plan that would split the Mandate of Palestine (under British control) into separate Jewish and Arab states.

The UN’s proposed borders never materialised. Shortly after Israel declared independence, Syria, Jordan and Egypt invaded, sparking the first Arab-Israeli war. More than 700,000 Palestinians were displaced from the new state of Israel, fleeing to the West Bank, Gaza and surrounding Arab states.

In recent decades, there have been many different views on what shape a Palestinian state should take. The 1949 “green line” was seen by many as the most realistic borders for the respective states. This line was drawn during the armistice agreements between Israel and its neighbours following the 1948 war and is the current boundary between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza.

However, following the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel captured and occupied the West Bank and Gaza, along with East Jerusalem and Golan Heights. Most current discussions of the two-state solution now refer to creating two states along “the pre-1967 borders”.

This would mean the new Palestinian state would consist of the West Bank prior to Israeli settlement, and Gaza. How Jerusalem would be split, if at all, has been a significant point of contention in this plan.

Why is statehood so important?

The kind of statehood referred to in the two-state solution, known as state sovereignty in international politics, is the authority given to the government of a nation within and over its borders.

State sovereignty was formalised through the League of Nations (the precursor to the UN) and it gives governments complete control to administer laws within their borders, allows them to conduct relations with other states in formal bodies, and protects them from invasion by other states under international law. This status is derived from mutual recognition from other states.



This is something many of us take for granted. The vast majority of people on Earth live in or legally fall under the jurisdiction of a sovereign state.

The state of Israel was formally established in 1948 through the political project of Zionism – the movement to establish a Jewish homeland. The aim was to create a sovereign state – with borders, a government and an army – that would give the Jewish people a political voice and a place free from antisemitic violence.

But it was not until other countries established diplomatic ties with Israel – along with its accession to the UN in 1949 – that it achieved state sovereignty similar to other countries. More than 160 members of the UN now recognise Israel; those who do not include Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Since the end of the Six-Day War in 1967, more than 5 million Palestinians who are not citizens of another nation have been stateless. The West Bank and Gaza Strip remain in an institutional limbo – best described as semi-autonomous enclaves under the ultimate control of Israel.

While 139 members of the UN recognise a state of Palestine, the governing bodies in the West Bank and Gaza (the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, respectively) do not have control over their own security or borders.

a leaked recording from 2001 came to light where Netanyahu claimed to have “de facto put an end to the Oslo accords”.

As such, the self-determination of Palestinians through the creation of a sovereign state has been a cornerstone of Palestinian political action for decades.

The closest the two sides got – the Oslo Accords

For a time in the early 1990s, significant progress was being made toward a two-state solution. Negotiations began largely as a result of Palestinian uprisings across the West Bank and Gaza. Beginning in 1987, they were known as the First Intifada.

In 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the head of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Yasser Arafat met in Oslo and signed the first of two agreements called the Oslo Accords. At the time, this was not seen as a meeting between equals. Rabin was head of a sovereign state and Arafat was leader of an organisation that had been designated a terror group by the US.

But the leaders were able to formalise an agreement, following major concessions from both sides, that laid the groundwork for the creation of a separate Palestinian state. While the accord did not expressly mention the 1967 borders, it did refer to “a settlement based on UN Security Council Resolution 242” in 1967, which called for the withdrawal of Israel’s armed forces “from territories occupied in the recent conflict”. Arafat, Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres all received Nobel Peace Prizes afterwards.

The Oslo II Accord was signed in 1995, detailing the subdivision of administrative areas in the occupied territories. The West Bank, in particular, was divided into parcels that were controlled by Israel, the Palestinian Authority or a joint operation – the first step toward handing over land in the occupied territories to the Palestinian Authority.

But just six weeks later, Rabin was shot dead by a Jewish nationalist aggrieved by the concessions made by Israel.



Negotiations between the two sides slowed and political will began to sour. And over the next few decades, the two-state solution has only become harder to achieve for various reasons, including:

- **the rise of conservative governments in Israel and lack of effective political pressure from the US**
- **the shrinking political influence of the Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas and the rise of Hamas in Gaza, which caused a political split between the two Palestinian territories**
- **Hamas' vows to annihilate Israel and refusal to recognise the Israeli state as legitimate**
- **the continued growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which has turned the territory into an ever-shrinking series of small enclaves connected by military checkpoints**
- **dwindling support among both Israelis and Palestinians for the model**
- **continued political violence on both sides.**

And of course there is Netanyahu – no individual has done more to undermine the two-state solution than the current Israeli leader and his party. In 2010, a leaked recording from 2001 came to light where Netanyahu claimed to have “de facto put an end to the Oslo accords”.

What alternatives are there?

There aren't many alternatives and all of them have significant problems.

Some are now advocating for a “one-state solution,” in which Israeli citizenship would be granted to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to create a democratic, ethnically pluralist state.

Although Arabs already make up around 20% of Israel's current population, the one-state solution would not be politically feasible. According to Zionist ideology, Israel must always remain a majority Jewish state and granting Palestinians citizenship in the occupied territories would undermine this.

**Such
action would draw the ire of
the international community**

Another kind of one-state solution is not feasible for a different reason. The most far-right ministers in Israel's parliament have championed an idea to expand complete sovereign control over the West Bank and Gaza and encourage mass Jewish settlement in these areas. Such action would draw the ire of the international community and human rights organisations and would be seen as tantamount to ethnic cleansing.

The other option is the status quo. The Hamas attack on October 7 and subsequent Israeli assault on Gaza have shown us that this is not a solution either.

**Author: Andrew Thomas
Lecturer in Middle East Studies, Deakin University**

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Congratulations and best wishes to all who took part in the Irish Homeless Street Leagues 20th Anniversary International Tournament

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Sinn Féin

Graham Mellon: *From Addict to Advocate*

Sam McMurdock recently had a chat with Graham Mellon (33), a chef from Ballybrack, Dublin who'll be representing Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Seoul, South Korea in September.



Graham Mellon is celebrating. He's a full year and one day clean and rightfully proud. Since the age of 13 he has been "on one drug or another" and with a combination of revulsion and incredulity in his voice he declares,

"I've been looking back and I was 13... a child... [takes a deep breath]... and I barely had to ask for them [drugs]... they were handed to me.... That's terrifying isn't it?...."

**"I've
been looking back and
I was 13... a child... [takes a deep
breath]... and I barely had to ask for them
[drugs]... they were handed to me.... That's
terrifying isn't it?...."**

Graham's gateway drug was hash but he swiftly moved on to weed, ecstasy, cocaine and similar substances and it would not take long for addiction to set in,

"Kids, who aren't old enough to make decisions for themselves in life are handed drugs like they're Smarties on the streets, and from that first experience, many are on a downhill course [to addiction]. I see my 13-year-old self and wish he knew how important it was to just say no...."

I always hung around with lads four and five years older than me. My poor mam couldn't get me away from them... she just couldn't stop me. I was the bold one and my two younger brothers really looked up to me for that and I knew it.... [takes a deep breathe]....I wish I'd been a better role-model... I led them down a dark path..."

You sound upset.

"Those two lads really copied everything I did... I was their hero and they ended up in jail.... And I do experience guilt.. a lot of guilt that they are really struggling and I'm clean and doing things to improve my life...."

You did the work to improve your life.

"I did after I truly hit rock bottom. My partner at the time couldn't cope with it any longer. She threw me out. I'd nowhere to go and had to sleep on my mam's couch. I was lost. I wasn't allowed contact with my kids, my partner made it clear our relationship was over, I lost my job....I was penniless, I had so many debts.... I couldn't think straight. I'd always sold drugs but when I stopped selling I was still on them, I'd no way to pay. People were coming to the door... I was at my all time low... not seeing my children was killing me and that

spurred me on to get help... I needed to get clean and live a better life to have a relationship with my children and I took that help with both hands.”

You’re playing in the Homeless World Cup in Seoul in September.

“Yes! I am so excited. Not only is it a dream to represent Ireland but visiting South Korea.... The day I was selected was the proudest day of my life and today as well, I just feel so very lucky because here I am, free of drugs and about an hour ago I got out of the shower, put on the Ireland tracksuit and caught a glimpse of myself and... I just felt really good in myself...”

You’re quite rightly proud of your achievements.

“Yes, I think sometimes it just hits you how far you’ve come. When I spotted myself in the tracksuit it really dawned on me that I’ll be playing for my country.... Growing up that was always my dream. I’m buzzing and it’s healthy buzzing [laughs]...I’m buzzing from taking care of myself, eating properly, exercising, focusing on what’s important and the Street League...I can’t even put into words how important it has been to me.... We have this saying ‘A ball can change a life’ and that might sound a bit, ‘oh, how can a ball change somebody’s life’ but it has changed mine, it has changed loads of people’s and I’m so glad I went along. Tomorrow I play against England in the Leagues 20th Anniversary tournament and that’s such a big one for me - an Irish lad out there playing with the lads against the English.”



Graham didn’t know any of the young men or volunteers before going along to the Street League for the first time and believes he has experienced “real friendship and a sense of belonging to something important”, “We are a family.... I didn’t know any of these people six months ago and now they’re such a part of my life ... I can’t imagine not having them around. Same with the people who give their time to the Leagues.... they are helping so many people and I’m very grateful that they do this and do such a great thing for their community. It has really inspired me to want to give back to my community.”

**I was
at my all time low... not seeing
my children was killing me and that
spurred me on to get help**

Sounds very philanthropic.

“Yes, I’ve been talking to guys where I live in Bentley House who’re on drugs, into crime and all that stuff and telling them there’s a better life. I share a room with asylum seekers and they’re sleeping when I get up at 5.30am to go to work and they’re still in bed when I come home at 4pm. I’ve been trying to get them to come along and enjoy the benefits of taking part, having positive company, having a purpose.... I’ve been there, I’ve been down, I’ve been broken and being in the Street League and seeing how the volunteers care has really smitten me [laughs]....I want my life, my experiences to help others. I’d never believe I’d feel like this but when you feel good in yourself you want other people to feel good. You also notice when other people could do some things to help themselves and I do try and motivate them to do, even small things to start moving in the right direction.”

Graham, when he got clean went back to work as a chef at a large American-owned pharmaceutical company and cooks for 700 people everyday. He likens the buzz in the kitchen to the buzz on the pitch,

“I love working with people and there’s eight of us in the kitchen everyday working together to create different dishes....Before [going to rehab] I was a chef in hotels and its very stressful... I knew I needed something with a little less stress and it’s perfect for me. I work best in a team and cooking is my other love besides football.”

Graham has lots of little stories about his children that he slips in throughout and it’s plain to see they’re his greatest achievement and his constant source of pride. As he tells me about the dishes he cooked earlier he jokes that he can’t take his kids to any restaurant without them telling the staff “our daddy makes the best mash in the world, and the best cabbage and the best barbecues [laughs].”

You’re a very proud dad.

“My kids are the most important thing to me and a worry that really plagues me is - what if my kids remember me as an addict. I really worry they’ve thoughts or memories of that time... I’d hate to think I’d caused them a moment’s worry or fear.”



To counter that I'd say, even if they do remember, they'll also remember that dad turned it all around and got clean.

“Thank you, that means an awful lot. My kids are coming out to watch me tomorrow and I'm bursting with pride that they'll be here watching. My partner has two young boys (13 & 10) who are mad into football from a previous relationship, she's three kids in total and I've two. They're all coming and I'd like to think I can show them that it's always good to take care of yourself, have pride in what you do and work as a team to improve yourself and others when you can.”

**being
in the Street League and
seeing how the volunteers care has
really smitten me**

Relationships are very important to you.

“They are and I always tell all the kids how important it is to think of others, take care of friendships, be a team player, be a friend... I've learned a lot with the Street League... skills that have helped me a lot in life.

“I think we all need to learn and look at things from the other person's point of view, like my ex-partner, now I'm clean I can see she did exactly what any good mam would do and I respect her for that. She put the children first and although the relationship is broken we have respect for each other and that's great groundwork for co-parenting. I know she gives her all and I give my all and I'm grateful that part of the relationship is healed enough to make us the kind of parents we need to be.”

As we finish our chat Graham is getting ready to go out on a run, “I've really caught the running bug, last night I did 20km around Dun Laoghaire, it really clears the mind and I always do at least 3 runs a week of 5-10km to keep me fit on the pitch.”

**I'm the living embodi-
ment that 'A Ball Can Change a Life' and
I want to be part of a ball changing other
people's lives**

Graham's dream is to bring the Street League to his local community and,

“...show young people that drugs, crime and anti-social behaviour are not the way to go.... I'd love to be a part of things and use the skills I've learned to help others - that's my biggest desire for the future. I've seen what the Street League can do... I've seen what it's done for me. I really want to bring it to my community.... I'm the living embodiment that 'A Ball Can Change a Life' and I want to be part of a ball changing other people's lives and giving kids and young people the tools to reach for a better life.”

Graham has transformed from an addict to a true advocate of Street League and we wish him the luck of the Irish as he represents Ireland at the HWC in Seoul from 21-28 September.

FINE GAEL 

Senator Mary Seery Kearney

“Congratulations to all who took part in the 20th Anniversary International tournament and represented their countries with such pride and joy!”

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A voice for
workers'
rights and
eco-socialism



**PEOPLE
BEFORE
PROFIT**

William Holden - Destroyed by his Demons

Alcohol was how actor William Holden escaped - sadly it would also be how he died. Liz Scales looks at the tremendously talented actor who lived a life of constant mental torment.



Born on 17th April 1918, William Franklin Beedle Jr. - better known to the world as William Holden was the first of 3 sons born in O'Fallon Illinois to Mary-Blanche, a teacher and William Sr, an industrial chemist. With close family living within walking distance, William was always used to having cousins around and took great joy in being the centre of attention.

**Overnight
he had to grow up and take
on enormous responsibilities.**

In 1930, William's family faced a crisis, his dad, after years of working in a lab that exposed him to a concoction of dangerous chemicals, contracted Pneumo Silicosis. Bedridden, the family moved to sunnier climes in a bid to help William Sr's ailing health. South Pasadena, LA was an affluent area and while the Beedle family were not poor - they were by the standards of their wealthy neighbours.

William Becomes Man of the House

At the age of just 12, William became the head of the family when his father passed away. Overnight he had to grow up and take on enormous responsibilities. Unsurprisingly, he found himself overwhelmed at times but one thing kept him going during these tough times - acting. Not only did he have a voice that instantly captured everyone's attention, but he learned the scripts for his school plays faster than anyone else, therefore the teachers always cast him in lead.

Whilst attending junior college William began acting at the Pasadena Community Playbox. One evening he caught the eye of Milt Lewis, a talent scout for Paramount. At the time, William was acting as an elderly man and thrilled by the "old man's" acting, Lewis went backstage, expecting to praise the elderly gentleman—only for 19-year-old Holden to greet him. Shocked, Lewis offered him an audition. As soon as William began reading the script, he had Lewis captivated. The talent scout described his voice as, "the voice of a mature man, warm and resonant, rising from deep within him." Paramount executives swiftly offered him a position

as a contract player for 7 years, and thus, his career had begun.

Paramount's Golden Circle Club

Paramount grouped William with a bunch of other young actors, and dubbed the group "The Golden Circle." Holden was now groomed for stardom, however, it was a loan-out to Columbia that secured him his breakthrough role. He was the 66th actor to audition for the part of an Italian violinist forced to become a boxer in *Golden Boy* (1939). Columbia felt they couldn't find the right man and again, by chance the director, Rouben Mamoulian happened upon a screen test that included Holden and had invited him in. Immediately intrigued, he had asked Paramount to send Holden over for a meeting...but William hadn't exactly made a great impression; walking into Columbia Pictures office, wracked with anxiety, he had impressed Mamoulian, but when it came time to meet the president of Columbia, Harry Cohn, William nearly ended his career right there as when Cohn asked him if he could act, he answered, "I'm not sure."

Barbara Stanwyck and Holden
in *Golden Boy*



Columbia Take Advantage of their New Star

Holden's rigorous filming schedule for *Golden Boy* began. He woke before 6am every morning and didn't get to sleep until almost 1am as he had to become proficient in playing violin and boxing. Overwhelmed with self-doubt he struggled and never felt good enough.

During the first three days of filming, William failed to impress most of his fellow cast members. Visibly anxious, veteran actress Barbara Stanwyck took him aside and told him he was doing a great job - in fact when Holden's acting caused Cohn to consider firing him, Stanwyck brusquely informed him that if he fired Will, she would leave as well. Stanwyck really invested a great deal of her time in Holden - coaching and encouraging him on and off-set and this morphed into a lifelong friendship. *Golden Boy* turned William Holden into an overnight sensation. While his growing fame should have boosted his confidence, it did anything but.

**Visibly
anxious, veteran
actress Barbara Stanwyck
took him aside"**

Imposter Syndrome

Even as William acquired more starring roles, which included *Invisible Stripes* that same year, he remained a nervous wreck before he walked on set - the anxiety would be so overwhelming he would shake violently and vomit with nerves. To calm himself and to ensure he could perform he self-medicated with stronger booze.

For the next few years William continued playing wholesome, next-door types and rookie servicemen in movies like *Our Town* (1940) and *I Wanted Things* (1941). His salary had now been bolstered from \$50 per week to \$150 and this gave him the confidence to ask Brenda Marshall, an actress he'd met and fallen for whilst filming *Invisible Stripes* out. Marshall had been technically married and had a child, so he'd held off getting involved - however, as the months passed he realised he couldn't get her out of his head so called her and the pair went out on a date. Holden pushed to have her divorce finalised so they could start their lives together and the pair eloped in 1941 in Las Vegas.

WWII

As WWII rocked the lives of everyone in the U.S., Holden enlisted, leaving his wife behind and putting his acting career on hold. Being a star, he wasn't called to combat duty; instead, he spent his days starring in endless training films. He felt guilty; he wanted to put his life on the line, like his brother. Things only got worse. On 4th January 1944, he learned that enemy fire had downed his brother's plane in the South Pacific. The survivor's guilt of it nearly destroyed him and he numbed his pain by slugging bottles of vodka.

With Hepburn in Sabrina



In September 1945, William eagerly returned to his acting career. He took a lot of pride in being a family man, eventually adopting his wife's daughter from her first marriage. After that, the couple went on to have two more sons but he was plagued by the thought he was living a charmed life while his brother was never coming back. This might explain his next strange decision.

By
this time Holden had
become a savvy businessman

At his request, Holden's wife retired as an actress, making him the sole breadwinner. There was one major problem: his wife made five times more than him. Tragically, Holden's dream of supporting his family began to fall apart - there were no roles for him. He became increasingly irritable, isolating himself from family and friends. It would take a full year to secure his next role, *Blaze of Noon* but again his nerves were causing problems and he found himself consuming more alcohol to function. His next film a rom-com called *Dear Ruth*, helped re-establish him as a desirable lead, however, co-stars were beginning to worry about his over-reliance on vodka. It can't have been easy taking on ever-challenging roles whilst battling the booze. For instance in *The Dark Past* in 1948, instead of being the handsome lead he played a ruthless killer which requires a very different skillset.

Holden liked to give the impression he was doing well and on impulse bought a \$100,000 house one morning (\$1.3m today) which was a strange decision bearing in mind he was supporting a big family in an expensive city. Realising he'd made a huge error he lined up two films back to back, *Streets of Laredo* and *Miss Grant Takes Richmond* - however, both were major flops. Terrified, Holden almost lost his mind until he got a call from Billy Wilder who asked him to play a poor screenwriter taken in by a silent film actress (Gloria Swanson) in *Sunset Boulevard* after Montgomery Clift backed out. This was the major break and indeed the pat on the back that William desperately needed. The chemistry between Swanson and Holden was electric and during filming a kissing scene the pair didn't stop despite 'Cut' being called and his wife walking in and furiously yelling 'CUT!'



Sunset Boulevard really proved to the world that he was a capable actor but this success would be the undoing of his marriage. Jealous of her husband's success (and loss of her own) his wife took every chance to knock his confidence - and the cracks in their marriage began to show. Holden's performance in the film, impressed everyone so much that they nominated him for an Academy Award. This should've been a joyous occasion for all, except for two issues: first, he didn't win, and second, his wife spent the evening making passive-aggressive comments about how José Ferrer, who took the award home, deserved the win over Holden.



1953 finally saw Holden win a much-deserved best actor Oscar for his role as Sgt JJ Sefton in Billy Wilder's classic Stalag 17, followed in 1954 by Sabrina opposite Audrey Hepburn. The pair started an affair almost instantly. Holden fell hard and asked Audrey to marry him (he was still wed), however, when she discovered he'd had a vasectomy (she wanted a family) she broke up with him. William, like always, numbed his pain with alcohol and avoided his family.

**“relying
on liquid courage just to
get through the day.”**

It must be said that despite Holden's mental health problems and addiction, his acting skills were second to none, for instance, as Commander Shears in David Lean's The Bridge Over the River Kwai. This would become his best-remembered role. It was a monster hit, winning 7 Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Though Alec Guinness won an Oscar for his memorable turn as the rigid Colonel Nicholson, it is just as much Holden's picture if you ask fans. By this time Holden had become a savvy businessman and his deal was considered one of the best ever for an actor at the time, with him receiving 10% of the gross, which earned him over \$2.5 million.

On a trip to Africa, he fell in love with the wildlife and became increasingly concerned with the animal species that were beginning to decrease in population. With the help of his partners, he created the Mount Kenya Game Ranch and inspired the creation of the William Holden Wildlife Foundation

Holden would continue to bring his unique skillset to various films throughout the late 50's and into the 60/70s including the ground-breaking violent western 'Wild bunch' in 1969, 'The Towering Inferno' 1974 and Network 1977- but sadly his legacy has been largely smeared by his alcoholism, which is very unfortunate - a drunk-driving accident in Italy which killed another driver resulted in an 8-month suspended sentence for vehicular manslaughter.. His marriages and (some) relationships were completely destroyed by his alcohol addiction and sadly, even when his partner (from '72 until he died) Stefanie Powers had helped him enormously, encouraging him to attend AA (where he had sporadic success), he still could not quit. Sadly, he liked to go off and drink alone and it would be on one of these occasions he'd meet his death by slipping on a rug and lacerating his forehead whilst intoxicated - he bled to death. He was just 63.

His daughter Virginia has spoken in more recent times recalling her dad

“relying on liquid courage just to get through the day.”

It's very sad that success and his unique talent never brought him any joy yet he entertained millions across the globe.

FOUR WAYS TO TELL *if your cat loves you*

Based on science Emily Blackwell reveals four ways to tell if your cat loves you.



Even the most devoted cat owners wonder at some point, perhaps waking up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night, whether their cat really loves them. Dog people like to smugly point out dogs' long history as humankind's best friend.

But research shows cats' reputation as a cold and aloof pet is undeserved.

**Curling up on your lap
for a nap is a sign of deep trust**

Because of their evolutionary ancestry, domestic cats are, by their nature, more independent than dogs. The wild ancestors of our cats didn't live in social groups as canines do. However, during the process of domestication, cats developed the ability to form social relationships not just with other cats, but also with people.

While they may not rely upon people to feel safe as dogs do, many cats show affection towards their guardians and seem to highly value the company of their human companions. Their attachment to humans is partly influenced by their experiences of being handled by people as a kitten.

Cats behave towards humans in the same way that they respond to their feline friends, so the secret of whether your cat feels bonded to you lies in their behaviour.

1. Look out for scenting

The ability to communicate with other cats over long distances and when no longer physically present was an advantage to their wild ancestors. Our pet cats have retained this "supersense" and rely heavily on this form of communication.

In particular, cats use scent to identify members of their social group or family, by sharing a group scent profile. Cats have scent glands on their flanks, head and around their ears, and often rub their heads against people and objects that are familiar and comforting.

Does your cat rub its head or side against your legs? The soft sensation you feel against your calves is actually your cat identifying you as a friend and is a huge compliment.

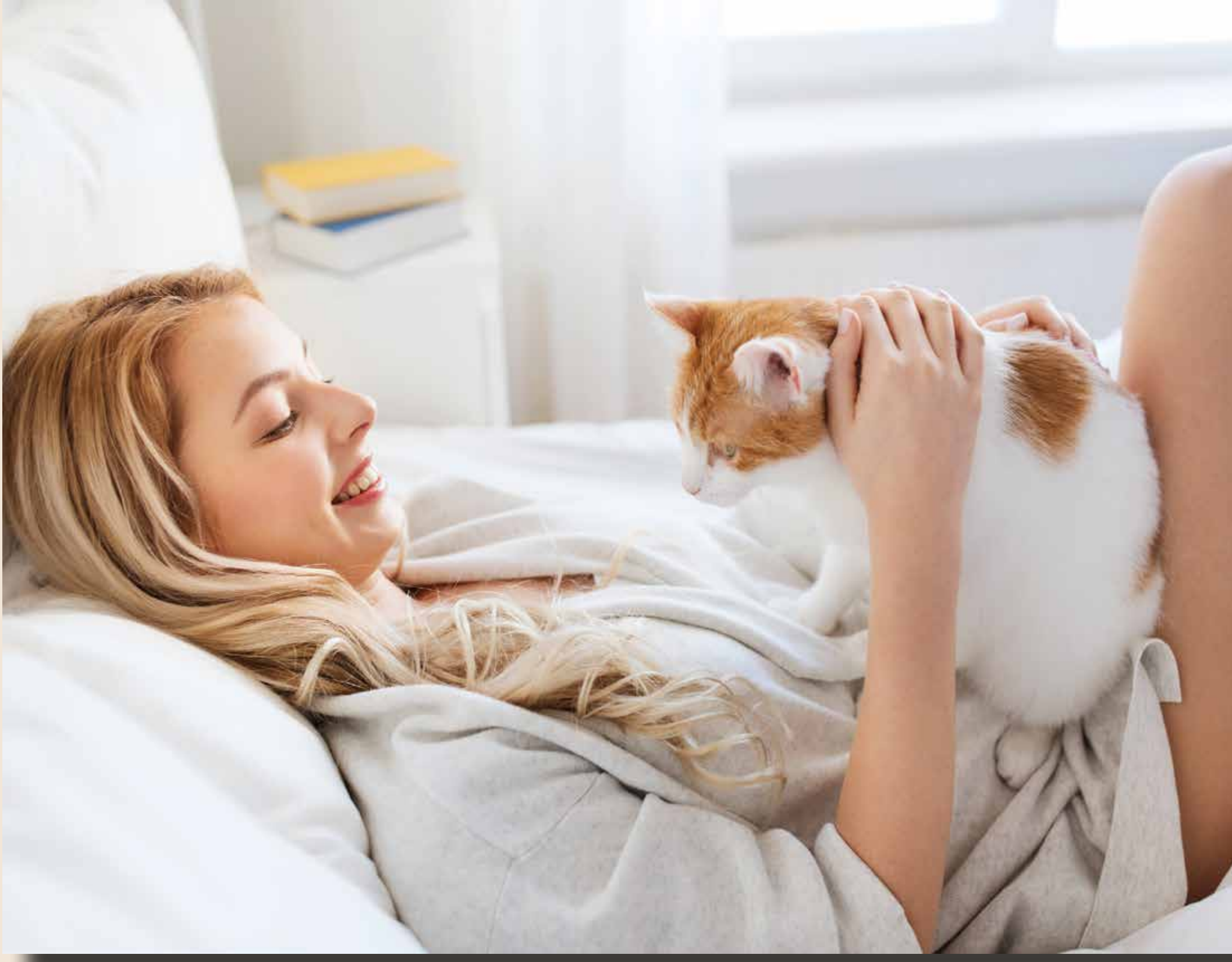
2. Watch how they greet you

One of the most obvious signs that your beloved pet is fond of you, is the way that your cat greets you. When

cats greet members of their social group they show signals to indicate friendship and a desire to move closer. Cats also show these signals to humans.

A tail held in the upright flagpole position shows a friendly intention (the feline equivalent of a wave), indicating familiarity, trust, and affection. Some cats also use an upright question mark shaped tail to greet someone they like, or to motion that they want to play.

Cats sometimes intertwine their tails as a sign of friendship and the human equivalent of this is to wrap their tail around your calf.



Rolling over and exposing their vulnerable under belly is another gesture that a cat has ultimate trust in you. However cats prefer to be petted on the head and neck area, so this is not usually a request for a belly rub.

Attempts to stroke a cat's belly will often result in a hasty retreat, or even claws. The chirrup or trill greeting is a melodious sound that cats make when saying hello to preferred individuals. So if your cat sings to you in this way, be assured they are pleased to see you.

That familiar feeling when your cat hits the back of your knee can also be a sign that they feel an extremely close bond to you. The feline version of a high-five, the head bump is usually saved for a cat's closest feline friends and most trusted humans.

**A tail held in the upright
flagpole position shows a friendly
intention (the feline equivalent of a
wave)**

3. Look for blinks

Your cat might also be secretly signalling their affection in the way they look at you. When cats encounter strange humans or other cats they don't know, they usually greet them with an unblinking stare. But they are more likely to slowly blink at cats they have a good relationship with.

Research suggests slow blinks are associated with a positive emotional state and can be a sign of trust, contentment and affection, similar to a human smile. If you wish to return the compliment, blink and your cat might blink back. This is nice a way to bond with your cat if they aren't keen on being touched.

4. They get up close

Cats are very protective of their personal space and don't like unwelcome guests to invade it. If a cat allows you to get close to them, that suggests a close bond, particularly where the contact is frequent or long lasting.

Curling up on your lap for a nap is a sign of deep trust. Grooming only happens between cats with a warm relationship, so licking your hand or face can be a show of endearment, even though those barbed tongues may not feel all that gentle.

Author:

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First published on The Conversation



Typical Greek house with bougainvillea flowers and scooter

A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

Phrase:	Translations:	Pronunciation:
Cá bhfuil an siopa uachtar reoite?	Where is the ice-cream shop?	Kaw will un shop-uh oo-akhter roh-chuh
Cá bhfuil an siopa caife?	Where is the coffee shop?	kaw will uhn SHOP-uh KA-fuh
An bhfuil Netflix agat?	Do you have Netflix?	ahn will Netflix uh-GUHT
Seo í mo bhean céile.	This is my wife.	Shuh ee muh van kay-luh
Cá bhféadfainn toitíní a cheannach?	Where can I buy cigarettes?	kaw WAY-dhin tuh-CHEE-nee uh HYAN-ukh
Seo é mo chéile.	This is my husband.	Shuh ay muh kay-luh
An bhfuil madraí ceadaithe?	Are dogs allowed?	ahn will MAH-dree kyad-ih-huh
An bhfuil luchtairí gutháin agat?	Do you have a phone charger?	ahn will LUHK-tuh-ree GOO-hawn uh-GUHT
Cá bhfuil an pháirc charranna?	Where is the caravan park?	Kaw will un fawrk khuh rahn un

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
1. Recalibrate	ree-kal-uh-breyt
2. Stratification	strat-uh-fi-key-shuhn
3. Qualitative	kwol-i-tey-tiv
4. Empirical	em-pir-i-kuhl
5. Counterargument	koun-ter-ahr-gyuh-muhnt
6. Unconstitutional	uhn-kon-sti-too-shuh-nl
7. Blockchain	blok-cheyn
8. Deepfake	deep-feyk
9. Microaggression	mahy-kroh-uh-gresh-uhn
10. Stan	stan
11. Vape	veyp
12. Mukbang	muhk-bang

Answers

- To reexamine (one's thinking, a plan, a system of values, etc.)
- The hierarchical or vertical division of society according to rank, caste, or class
- Pertaining to or concerned with quality or quantities.
- Depending upon experience or observation alone
- A contrasting, opposing, or refuting argument.
- Unauthorised by or inconsistent with the constitution
- A structure used for a distributed or shared database consisting of discrete blocks of data
- A fake, digitally manipulated video or audio file
- A subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a member of a marginalized group
- An overly enthusiastic fan, especially of a celebrity.
- An e-cigarette for the delivery of nicotine in a vapor
- A video, usually posted online, featuring a person eating large quantities of food.

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

Screen Scene

The Deliverance **

Starring: Andra Day, Glenn Close
Run Time: 109 mins
Streaming: Netflix
Available: 30th August

Director, Lee Daniels, best known for movies like *Precious*, *The Bulter*, and *The Paperboy*, is heading to Netflix for the first time with a new horror starring Glenn Close, Andra Day, Anthony B. Jenkins, Caleb McLaughlin, and Demi Singleton.

The plot revolves around a family living in a home in Indiana who discover strange, demonic occurrences that convince them they're living in a portal to hell.

The movie arrives on Netflix 30th August but will also have a two-week cinema run from mid-August.

This won't be everyone's cup of tea - especially those who hate scary movies.



Space Cadet ***

Starring: Emma Roberts, Tom Hopper
Run Time: 110 mins
Streaming: Prime Video
Available: Currently

Space Cadet, starring Emma Roberts, is a delightful space adventure that combines whimsical exploration with heartfelt storytelling. Roberts shines as a young astronaut-in-training, bringing charm and relatability to her character's journey from eager cadet to confident space explorer. The film's imaginative portrayal of space travel captivates with its futuristic spacecraft and stunning cosmic landscapes, enhanced by well-executed special effects that add to the sense of wonder and danger. The ensemble cast of cadets and mentors provides depth and humour, creating entertaining dynamics of camaraderie and rivalry. While maintaining a family-friendly tone, the movie explores themes of courage, friendship, and ambition, balancing adventure with poignant moments of self-discovery. The cinematography beautifully captures both the vastness of space and intimate character interactions, grounding the story in emotion amid the spectacle. Overall, a feel-good movie that won't disappoint.



Lady in the Lake ***

Starring: Natalie Portman, Moses Ingram
Streaming: Apple TV+
Run Time: 7 x 60 mins
Available to watch: Currently

Andre Rieu's 2024 Maastricht Concert: Power Of Love (Piece Of Magic) ****

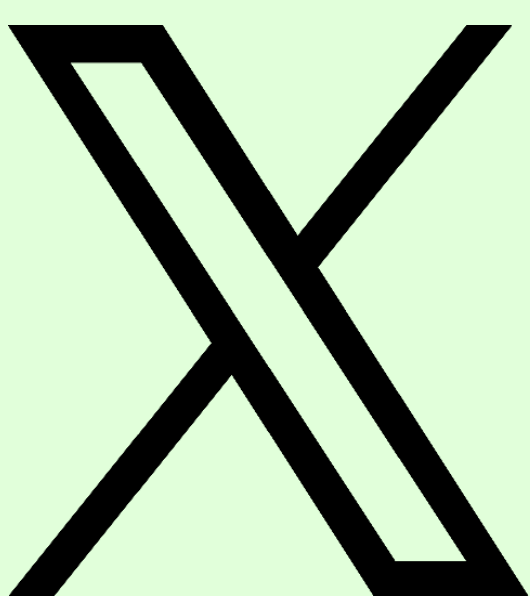
Starring: Andrew Rieu
Streaming: At the cinema
Run Time: 195 mins.
Available to watch: 31st August

Lady in the Lake, starring Natalie Portman, is a visually stunning and emotionally complex adaptation of Raymond Chandler's novel, infused with modern sensibilities. Portman delivers a nuanced performance, expertly balancing vulnerability and strength, drawing the audience into her character's tangled web of deceit and intrigue. The film's breathtaking cinematography uses the lake as a symbolic motif, with its calm surface concealing dark secrets beneath, enhancing the mysterious atmosphere. Strong supporting performances add depth and tension, while the haunting soundtrack and skillful sound design heighten the suspense without overshadowing the narrative. The screenplay balances dialogue and action, ensuring character development and plot progression. Although the pacing can feel uneven, with some scenes lingering longer than necessary, and the genre-blending may not appeal to all, the film effectively explores themes of reality, truth, and deception. A captivating and thought-provoking experience, particularly for fans of character-driven dramas and psychological thrillers.

Andre Rieu's 2024 Maastricht Concert: Power Of Love" is a dazzling display of music and spectacle that highlights Andre Rieu's mastery as a conductor and entertainer. Directed by Piece Of Magic Entertainment, this concert film captures Rieu's charismatic performances in his hometown of Maastricht, Netherlands. From the grandeur of the concert venue to the vibrant choreography of the Johann Strauss Orchestra, the film immerses viewers in a world where classical music meets theatrical showmanship. Rieu leads his orchestra through a diverse repertoire, blending classical favorites with contemporary hits, all infused with his trademark enthusiasm.

The theme of "Power Of Love" resonates throughout the concert, celebrating romance through passionate waltzes and soulful ballads. Rieu's warm interactions with the audience add an intimate touch, enhancing the emotional depth of the performance.

For fans of Andre Rieu and lovers of classical music, this concert film is a captivating experience that captures the joyous spirit and



What are you streaming?
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Because laughter is the best medicine!

Seems that, after all these years, the romance and love just wasn't what it used to be for John and Jane. In an attempt to salvage their thirty years of marriage, Jane convinces her husband to see a marriage councillor with her.

The councillor first asks Jane what she feels the problem is, and before he can even finish his sentence she goes into a tirade listing every single problem the couple has ever had - even before things went south. She goes on and on for nearly an hour, and finishes in tears.

Finally, the councillor gets up from his couch, walks over to Jane, embraces her and begins to kiss her passionately. The woman quiets down, immediately, and sits there in a daze.

The councillor then turns to the John and says, "Your wife needs this at least three times a week. For the sake of your marriage, can you can do this?" The husband ponders this question for a moment, and confidentially replies, "I can drop her off here on Mondays and Wednesdays... but on Fridays, I play golf."

James, as usual, came home really late one Saturday night after being at the bar all night drinking. Not only was he drunk, he was sloppy drunk. He carefully crept into bed next his wife, who fell sleep angry hours earlier, and gave her a goodnight kiss on the cheek in hopes that she wouldn't wake up.

He awoke in the middle of the night to a strange man standing at the end of his bed wearing a long flowing white robe. "Who the hell are you," demanded James, "and what are you doing in my bedroom?" The mysterious man answered "This is not your bedroom, and my name is St. Peter".

James didn't take the news so well... "You mean I'm dead! That can't be, I have so much to live for, I haven't even said goodbye to my family... you've got to send me back right away!"

St. Peter replied "You cannot go back as you were, you have passed away James. However, you can be reincarnated - but there is a catch. We can only send you back as a dog or a hen." James was devastated, but knowing that there was a farm just down the road from his house, he asked to be sent back as a hen.

A flash of light later, he was covered in feathers and clucking around pecking at corn on the ground. "This ain't so bad," he thought until he felt a strange feeling churning inside him. The farmyard rooster strolled over and said "So you're the new hen, huh? How are you enjoying your first day here?" "It's not so bad" replies James, "but I have this strange feeling inside like I'm about to explode". "You're ovulating" explained the rooster, "haven't you ever laid an egg before?"

"Never" replies James.

"Well just relax and let it happen."

And so he did, and just a few uncomfortable seconds later an egg pops out from under his tail. An immense feeling of relief swept over him - emotions got the better of him as he experienced the joy of motherhood for the first time. When he laid his second egg, the feeling of happiness was overwhelming and he knew that being reincarnated as a hen was the best thing that ever happened to him... ever!

The joy of motherhood continued to build and, just as he was just about to lay his third egg, he felt an enormous smack on the back of his head and heard his wife shout "James, wake up you drunk, you're sh***** in the bed!"

Query to boss on email re Air strike in Aer Lingus

I'm flying to Australia with my wife in July, and the first leg of the journey is with Aer Lingus where does that leave us if our flight is cancelled.

Boss reply

In Ireland

"Ben walked into the local bar all a fluster and ordered seven shots of Irish whiskey and a pint of Guinness. When the barman arrived back with the pint, all of the shots of whiskey had been drunk.

'Ah here, you drank those very quickly' said the barman. 'Well' says Ben, 'If you had what I had you'd drink them quickly, too.'

'Whaaat?' replied the barman 'What do you have?' 'A tenner' replied Ben."

There are only three kinds of men who don't understand women...

Young men, old men, and middle-aged men.

Got a good joke? Drop us a line on X @BigIssueIreland

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Why it's healthier than other cooking oils. Richard Hoffman explains.



It's common advice for people watching their waistlines or looking to eat healthier to beware of the amount of oil they use while cooking. But that doesn't mean we should cut oil entirely from our diet. This is because extra virgin olive oil in particular can have many benefits for our health.

Numerous studies have shown that consuming olive oil – in particular extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) – can have many different benefits for our health. For example, the Spanish Predimed study (the largest randomised control trial ever conducted on the Mediterranean diet) showed that women who ate a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra virgin olive oil had a 62% lower risk of breast cancer compared to women who were advised to eat a low fat diet.

Experts who have since examined multiple scientific studies looking at the Mediterranean diet and its effect on chronic diseases conclude that a primary reason the diet protects against breast cancer is because of EVOO. There's also evidence that EVOO may protect against type 2 diabetes and possibly even Alzheimer's disease.

So what makes extra virgin olive oil better for us than other types of cooking oil? The answer lies in its composition.

a
62% lower risk of breast cancer compared to women who were advised to eat a low fat diet

Alongside its fat, EVOO also contains many natural substances, such as polyphenols. Polyphenols occur naturally in plants, and have been linked to many health benefits, such as reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and cognitive disorders. Studies also seem to show that a major reason why EVOO is beneficial to our health is because of the polyphenols it contains. Polyphenols are thought to have many benefits in the body, such as improving the gut microbiome.

Research shows that the polyphenols in extra virgin olive oil are linked with lower risk of cardiovascular disease. In fact, when researchers stripped EVOO of its polyphenols, they found it didn't protect the heart from disease as well. It's believed that one of the benefits of EVOO on heart health is because its polyphenols prevent cholesterol becoming oxidised. It's when cholesterol reacts with oxygen and is oxidised that it damages blood vessels.

The reason EVOO contains such high levels of polyphenols is because it's produced by simply crushing olives. More processed versions of olive oil – such as light olive oil or spreads – don't contain as many of these polyphenols. This is because to create these requires more processing, resulting in most of the polyphenols being lost.

Other cooking oils

Most other cooking oils, such as sunflower oil or rapeseed oil, are made from seeds. Seeds are very difficult to extract oil from, so they need to be heated and the oil extracted with solvents. This means that most of the polyphenols in seeds are lost during production.



It's sometimes claimed that rapeseed oil (also known as canola oil or vegetable oil) is a healthy alternative to EVOO. While there is some evidence that raw rapeseed oil (meaning it hasn't been heated during cooking) can temporarily lower cholesterol levels, there's currently no evidence it can lower risk of developing diseases associated with high cholesterol – such as heart disease.

Of course, most of us use oils for cooking. But when an oil is heated at too high a temperature it reacts with the oxygen in the air, causing the fat in the oil to break down. This can lead to the formation of harmful substances that irritate the eyes and even carcinogens. Rapeseed oil is particularly prone to this process - called oxidation - especially when used repeatedly for deep fat frying.

**There's
also evidence that EVOO
may protect against type 2 diabetes
and possibly even Alzheimer's disease**

Polyphenols help prevent fats from oxidising and so EVOO remains stable even when used at the temperatures needed to shallow fry foods. Because rapeseed oil and other oils such as sunflower oil contain lower levels of polyphenols, the fats aren't so well protected from breaking down during cooking. Another important reason for EVOO's stability is that its main type of fat is monounsaturated fat. This is both a healthy fat and quite resistant to oxidation. Monounsaturated fat is also the main type of fat in rapeseed oil. But unlike EVOO, rapeseed oil also contains quite high levels of a polyunsaturated fat called alpha-linolenic acid. This is not very stable and is another reason why heating rapeseed oil too much is not a good idea.

Coconut oil is often advocated as a healthy oil to use. But coconut oil contains high levels of saturated fats, which can significantly increase low-density lipoprotein (or LDL) cholesterol levels (sometimes know as the "bad" cholesterol). Elevated LDL-cholesterol is linked to cardiovascular disease, and there's evidence that the saturated fat in coconut oil increases the risk of heart disease.

One of the important messages about EVOO is that it seems to be far more effective when eaten as part of a Mediterranean diet – which is typically high in vegetables, fruits, legumes, grains, fish and olive oil. This is probably because extra virgin olive oil and its beneficial polyphenols interact with other foods including the vegetables eaten as part of this diet. The Mediterranean diet is linked with lower risk of many chronic diseases including cancer, cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's disease.

This might just make the extra price of EVOO worth paying for.

Author: Richard Hoffman

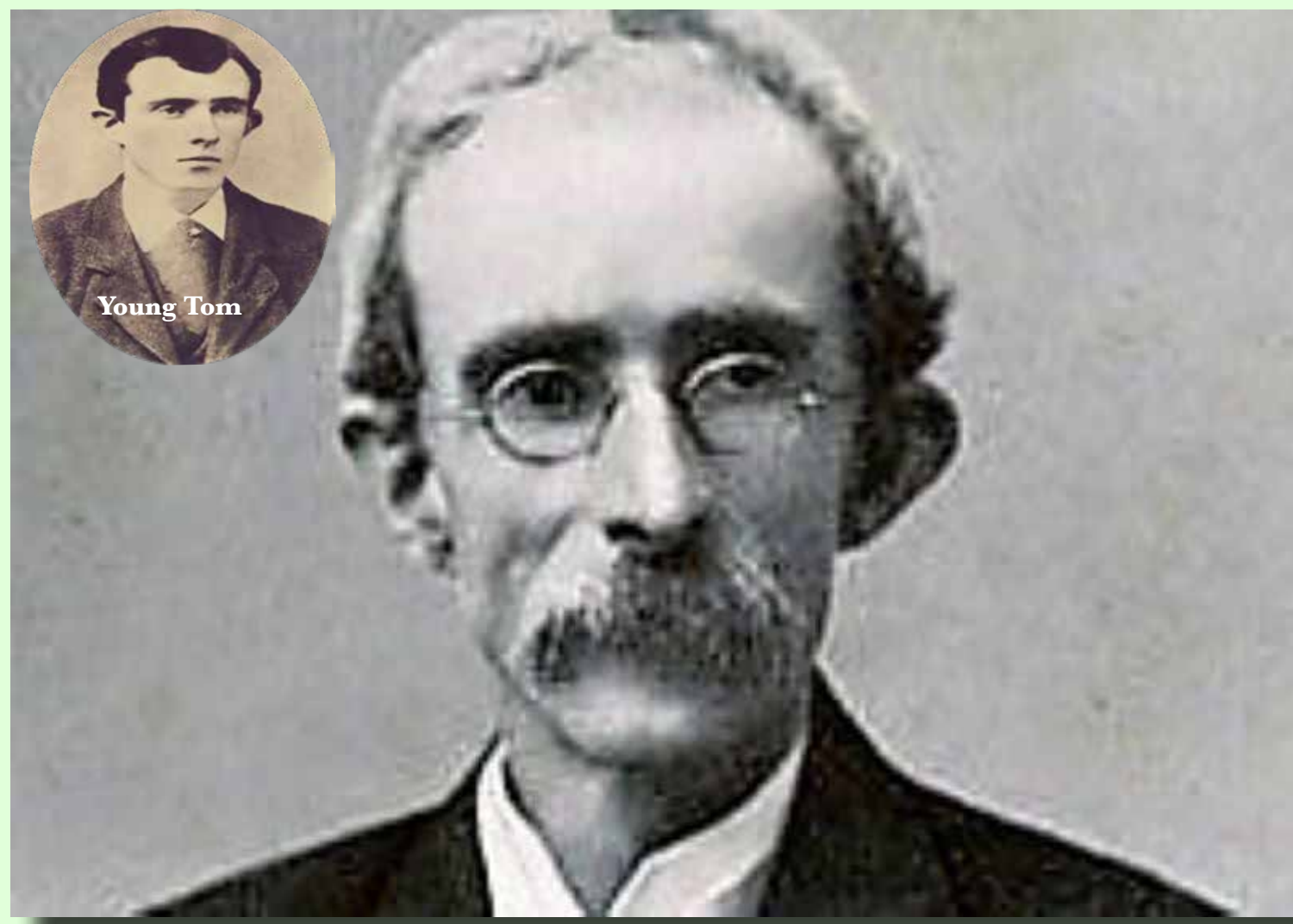
Associate lecturer, Nutritional Biochemistry, University of Hertfordshire

First Published on The Conversation

TOM CLARKE

A MAN OF UNWAVERING DEDICATION

The ‘Proclamation of the Republic’ was read in front of the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin on Easter Monday of 1916. Over the next series of editions, Liz Scales will delve into the lives of each of the signatories. This issue, we focus on Tom Clarke, described as “the most single-minded of the 1916 leaders”.



Thomas (Tom) James Clarke was born on 11 March 1858, the eldest child of Irish parents Mary Palmer and James Clarke. He spent his early years near Milford-on-Sea in England before his family moved to Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. His father, James Clarke, originally from Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim, served as a sergeant in the British Army, which led to the family relocating frequently. Tom, along with his brother and two sisters, experienced this nomadic life, including a period spent in South Africa, before settling in Dungannon in 1865. Despite being raised in a Protestant household, Tom’s mother Mary, originally from Clogheen, Co. Tipperary, ensured her children were baptised into the Catholic Church, reconciling any initial tension within the family.

Tom received his education at St. Patrick’s national school in Dungannon, where he distinguished himself as a monitor and diligent student. It was during his school years that he developed a deep sympathy for nationalist politics, which would shape his future profoundly.

Convicted of treason-felony on 11 June 1883, he was sentenced to penal servitude for life..

At the age of 20, Tom Clarke joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) following a visit to Dungannon by leading IRB member John Daly. Within two years, he rose to become head of the local IRB. Clarke’s early involvement in nationalist activities coincided with a tumultuous period in Irish history marked by agrarian unrest and growing discontent with British rule.

In August 1880, a tragic event in Dungannon sparked Clarke’s active opposition to British authority. A member of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) killed a man during riots between the Orange Order and the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the town. Clarke and other IRB members retaliated by attacking RIC officers on Irish Street, with Clarke himself firing buckshot during the skirmish. The incident forced Clarke to flee to New York to evade arrest.

In New York City, Tom found refuge and began working as a hotel porter. It was here that he became further immersed in revolutionary activities, attending bomb-making classes under the guidance of Dr. Thomas Gallagher. In March 1883, Clarke participated in a bombing mission to England under the alias Henry Wilson, as part of the Fenian Dynamite Campaign championed by Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa. However, his involvement in the movement led to his arrest in London, where he was found carrying explosives. Convicted of treason-felony on 11 June 1883, he was sentenced to penal servitude for life and incarcerated in various British prisons, including Millbank, Chatham, and Portland. Throughout his imprisonment, he maintained his alias ‘Henry Hammond Wilson’, enduring severe conditions and forming strong bonds with fellow Fenian prisoners, such as John Daly and James Francis Egan.

By 1896, Tom Clarke was among the last Fenian prisoners remaining in British jails, sparking public outcry

in Ireland for their release. At public meetings advocating for their freedom, figures like MP John Redmond praised Clarke's steadfastness and spirit during his years of incarceration.



Despite his eventual release from prison, fifteen years behind bars had taken a toll on Clarke. Socially awkward and prematurely aged, he struggled to find stable employment upon returning to Ireland. Frustrated with his prospects, he made the decision in 1900 to emigrate once again, this time with his wife Kathleen Daly, whom he had married the previous year with Irish nationalist John MacBride as his best man. Settling in Brooklyn, New York, Tom found work with Clan na Gael, an organisation led by John Devoy, and played a pivotal role in launching their newspaper, The Gaelic American, in September 1903. By 1905, he had obtained American citizenship but declining health forced him to retire from his editorial role. Clarke and Kathleen moved to a 30-acre farm in Manorville, New York, where he cultivated a passion for gardening.

he refused to sell the anti-union Irish Independent in his shop, underscored his unwavering commitment to the working class..

Despite his distance from Ireland, Clarke remained committed to the cause of Irish independence. Feeling an overwhelming sense of duty to return home and continue his Fenian activism, he relocated back to Ireland in November 1907. Tom and Kathleen settled in Dublin, where he opened a tobacconist and newsagent shop on Amiens Street. His return coincided with a resurgence of young IRB members eager to revitalise the organisation, viewing Clarke as a living embodiment of militant Fenianism. He quickly established himself within the IRB's supreme council, assuming the role of treasurer and becoming a mentor to younger radicals like Seán Mac Diarmada.

Clarke's shop on Parnell Street became a hub of IRB activity in Dublin, facilitating meetings and organising campaigns aimed at rejuvenating the nationalist movement. He actively supported organisations like the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin, though he remained critical of the latter's moderate approach to achieving Irish independence. Clarke's participation in the 1913 Dublin Lockout, where he supported striking members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and refused to sell copies of the anti-union Irish Independent in his shop, underscored his unwavering commitment to the working class and the nationalist cause.

Tom's return to Dublin coincided with the formation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913, initially conceived as a response to the Ulster Volunteer Force's arming in opposition to Home Rule. Although he initially refrained from formal involvement due to concerns that his prominent nationalist profile could discredit the organisation, he played a critical role behind the scenes. Together with Seán Mac Diarmada and others from the IRB, Clarke ensured substantial IRB influence within the Volunteers, shaping its militant direction.

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Volunteers experienced a schism over whether to support Britain's war effort. Clarke and Mac Diarmada led a coup within the organisation, rejecting the leadership of John Redmond and effectively establishing IRB control over the Irish Volunteers. Clarke viewed this as an opportunity to organise a militant uprising aimed at achieving Irish independence.

The Military Committee, led by Clarke and Mac Diarmada, meticulously planned the Easter Rising of 1916, coordinating with other nationalist organisations, including James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army. Clarke, despite his frail appearance and aversion to public speaking, emerged as a key figure during the Rising, headquartered at the GPO alongside Connolly. The decision to proceed with the Rising was fraught with uncertainty, exacerbated by Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order to Irish Volunteers, which threatened to

undermine the rebellion's effectiveness. Despite the setback, Clarke and his fellow leaders remained resolute, determined to press ahead with their vision of an independent Irish Republic.



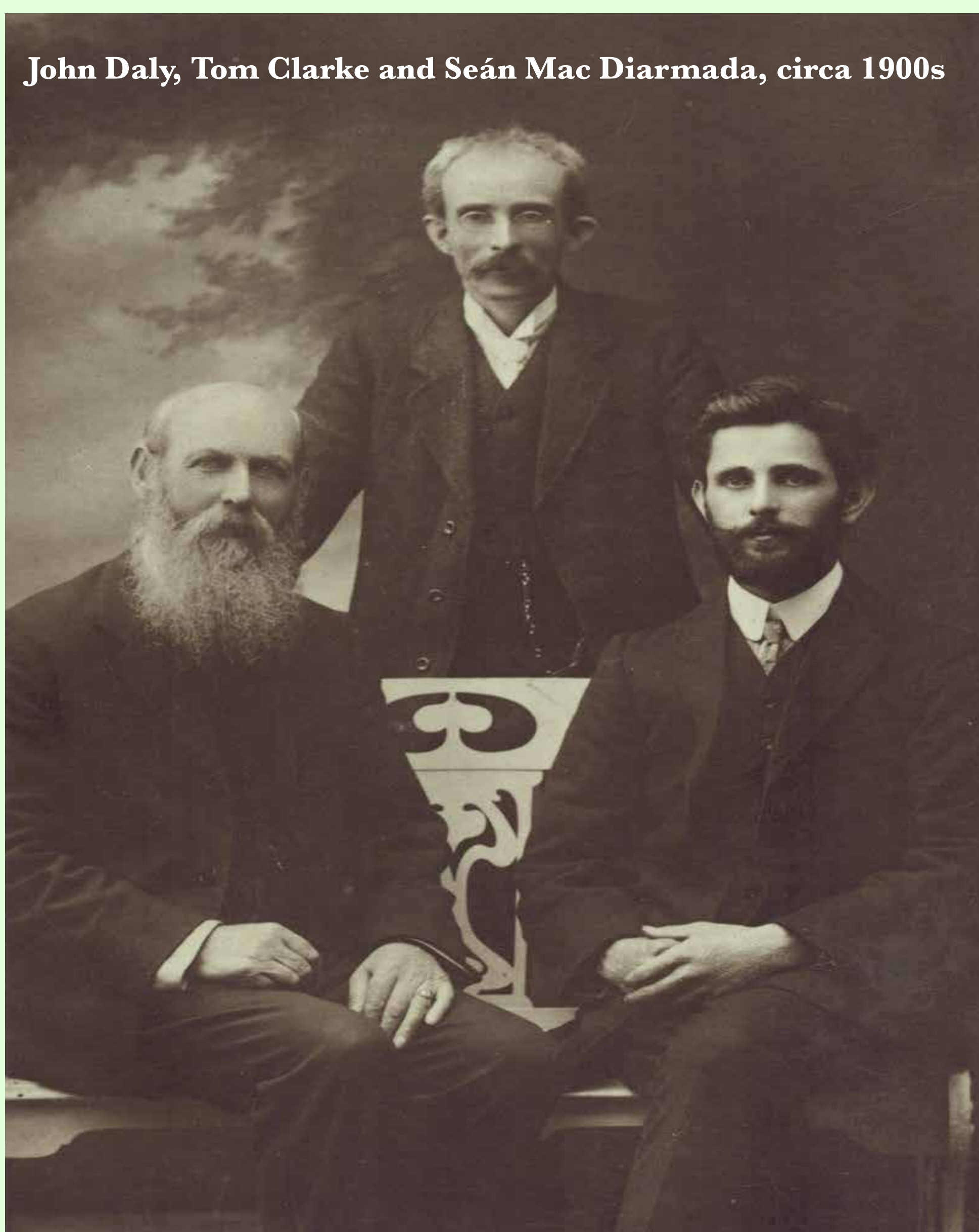
Tom and Kathleen (composite photograph). 1901

As the General Post Office burned during the intense fighting, Clarke, devastated by the inevitable loss, gathered with other leaders at Moore Street to chart their next steps. Despite his unofficial rank, his leadership was crucial in maintaining morale and guiding strategic decisions. When Patrick Pearse made the difficult decision to surrender on April 29, 1916, Clarke accepted the outcome with profound sadness, leaving a poignant message on the wall of the house where they convened, honouring the bravery and sacrifice of the rebels.

Historians regard Tom Clarke as one of the most determined and single-minded leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916.

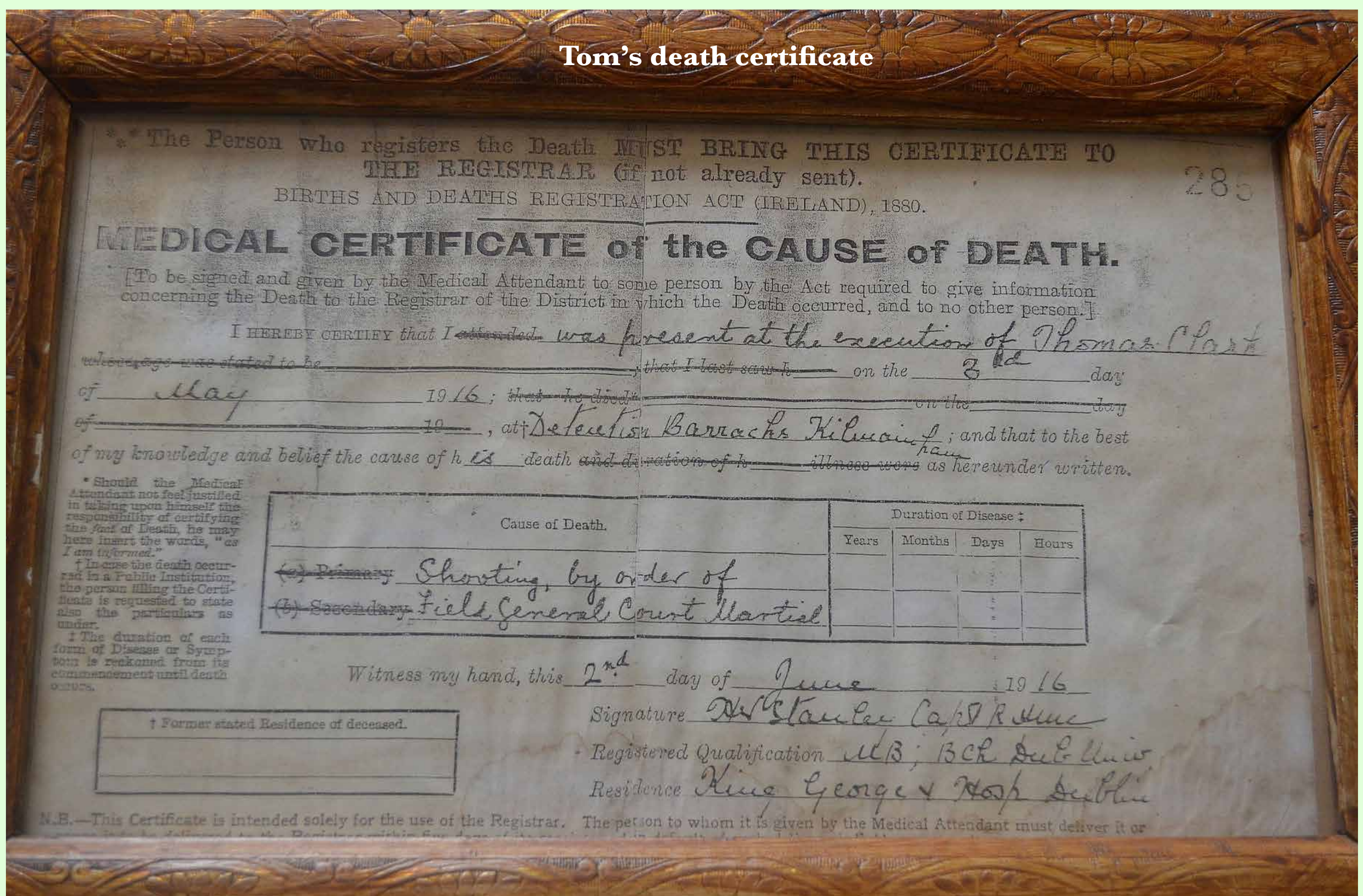
Following the surrender, Tom Clarke was arrested by British forces and subjected to a court-martial. On 2 May 1916, he was executed by firing squad at Kilmainham Gaol, along with Patrick Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh. Clarke faced his fate with unwavering resolve, convinced that their actions had set in motion the inevitable achievement of Irish freedom. Just prior to facing his death he asked Kathleen to convey a message to the Irish public,

“My comrades and I believe we have struck the first successful blow for freedom, and so sure as we are going out this morning so sure will freedom come as a direct result of our action...In this belief, we die happy.”



John Daly, Tom Clarke and Seán Mac Diarmada, circa 1900s

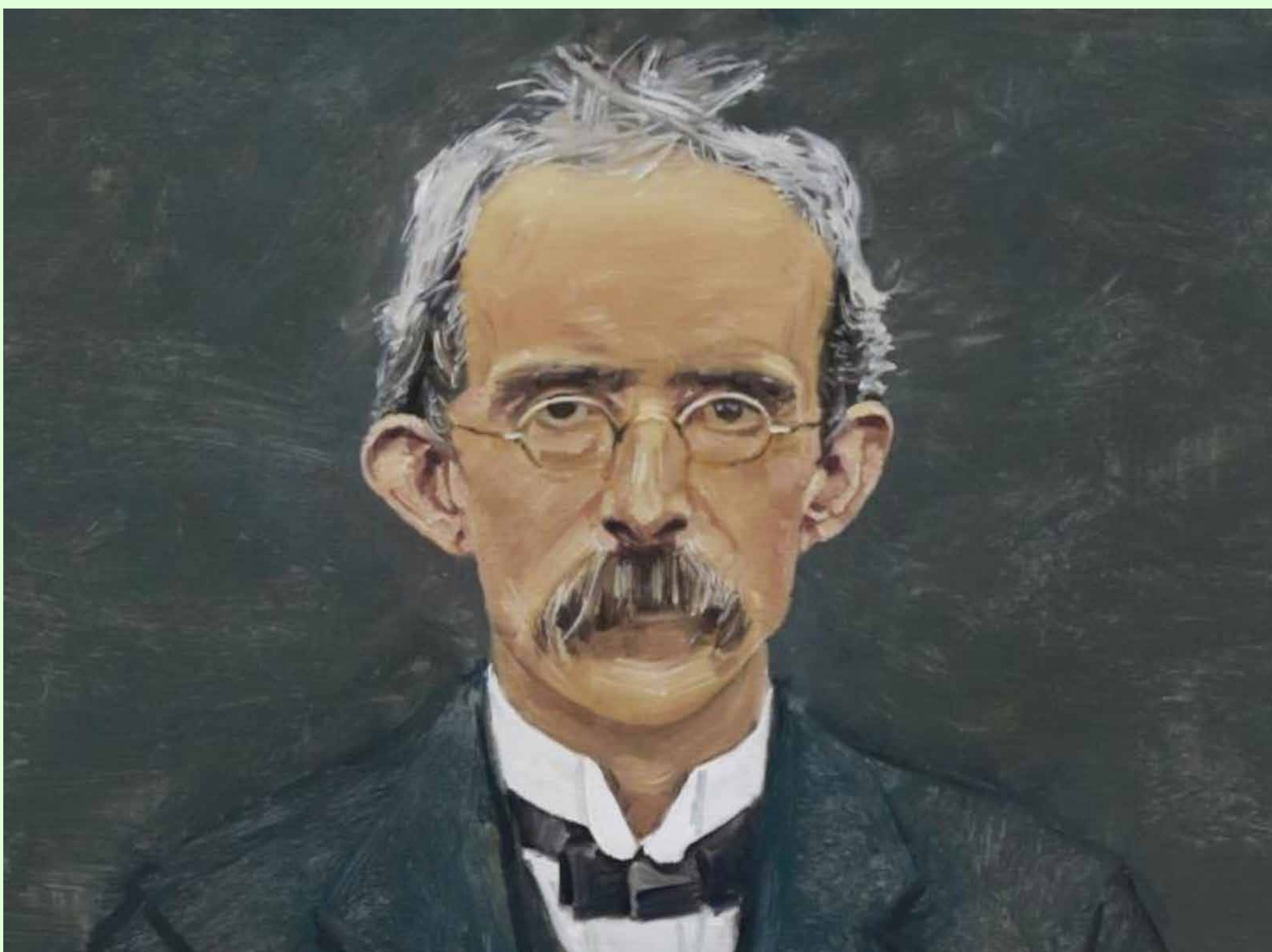
Clarke left behind a wife 21 years his junior, and three sons: Emmet, John and Tom jr. Kathleen was actually pregnant during the Easter Rising but hadn't told her husband in case it added to his anxieties. He never realised she was carrying another baby and sadly losing her husband and brother (Ned Daly - the commandant in charge of the Four Courts) was all too much and she miscarried.



Legacy

Historians regard Tom Clarke as one of the most determined and single-minded leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916. Despite his frail physical appearance and aversion to public attention, Clarke's unwavering commitment to the Fenian cause and the pursuit of Irish independence underscored his leadership qualities. His resilience and strategic acumen played a pivotal role in shaping the course of Irish history, inspiring future generations of nationalists and revolutionaries. Clarke's legacy remains enshrined in the annals of Irish history, a testament to his enduring belief in the cause for which he sacrificed everything.

Kathleen Clarke would go on to carve out a Republican reputation of her own and in 1939 she became the first woman to become Lord Mayor of Dublin. One of her first official acts was to remove a portrait of Queen Victoria. She died in 1972 at the age of 94. She outlived her husband by 56 years.

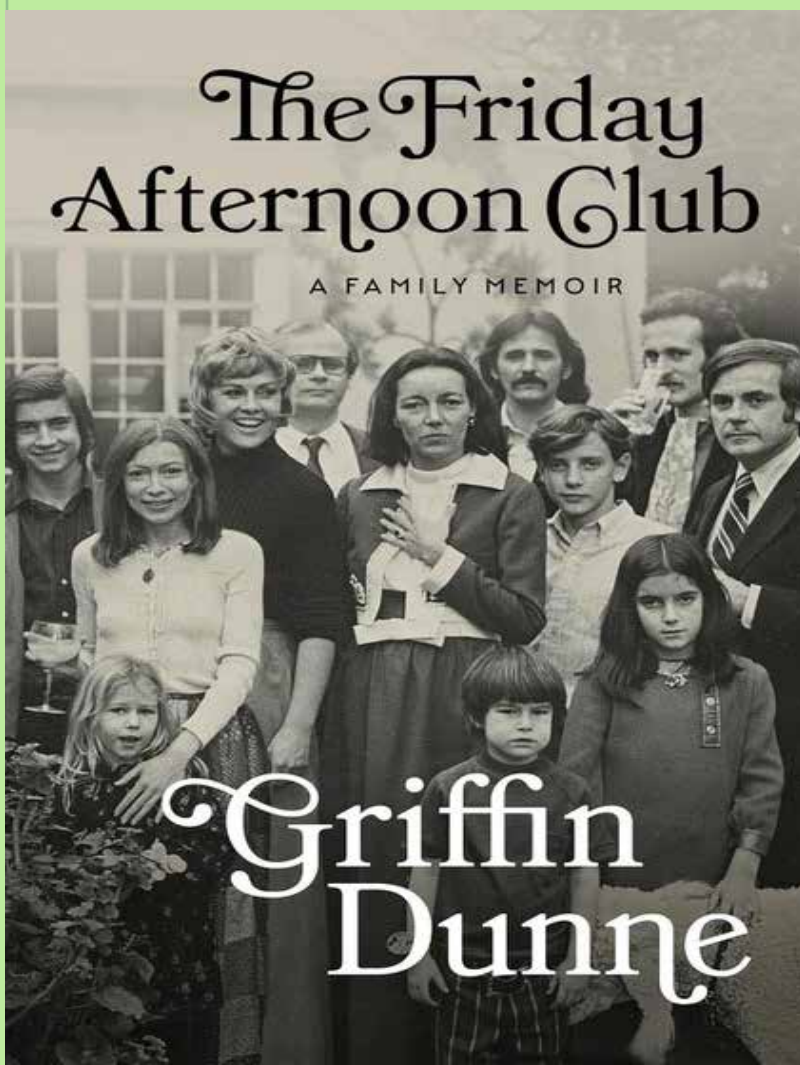


Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



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. In this monthly feature, Patricia brings you her favourite reads of the moment.

The Friday Afternoon Club: A family Memoir – Griffin Dunne – Grove Press UK



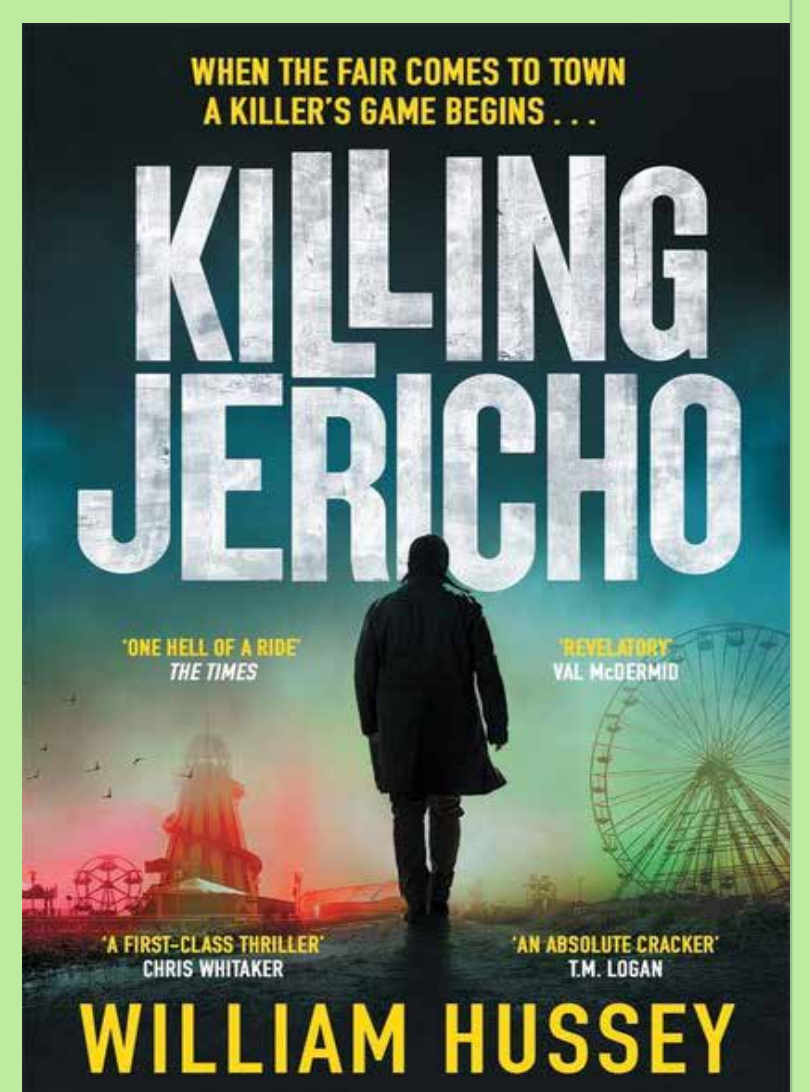
A charming, hilarious account of Griffin Dunne's coming of age among a family of larger-than-life characters in Hollywood and Manhattan. At eight, Sean Connery saved him from drowning. At thirteen, desperate to hook up with Janis Joplin, he attended his aunt Joan Didion's legendary LA launch party for Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. In his early twenties, he shared a Manhattan apartment with his best friend and soulmate Carrie Fisher while she was filming some sci-fi movie called *Star Wars* and he was a struggling actor selling popcorn at Radio City Music Hall. A few years later, he produced and starred in the now-iconic film *After Hours*, directed by Martin Scorsese. In the midst of it all, Griffin's twenty-two-year-old sister, Dominique, a rising star in Hollywood, was brutally strangled to death by her ex-boyfriend, leading

to one of the most infamous public trials of the 1980s. The outcome was a travesty of justice that marked the beginning of their father Dominick Dunne's career as a bestselling author of true crime narratives. And yet, for all its boldface cast of characters and jaw-dropping scenes, *The Friday Afternoon Club* is no mere celebrity memoir. It is, down to its bones, a family story that embraces the poignant absurdities and best and worst efforts of its loveable, infuriating, funny and moving characters - its author most of all.

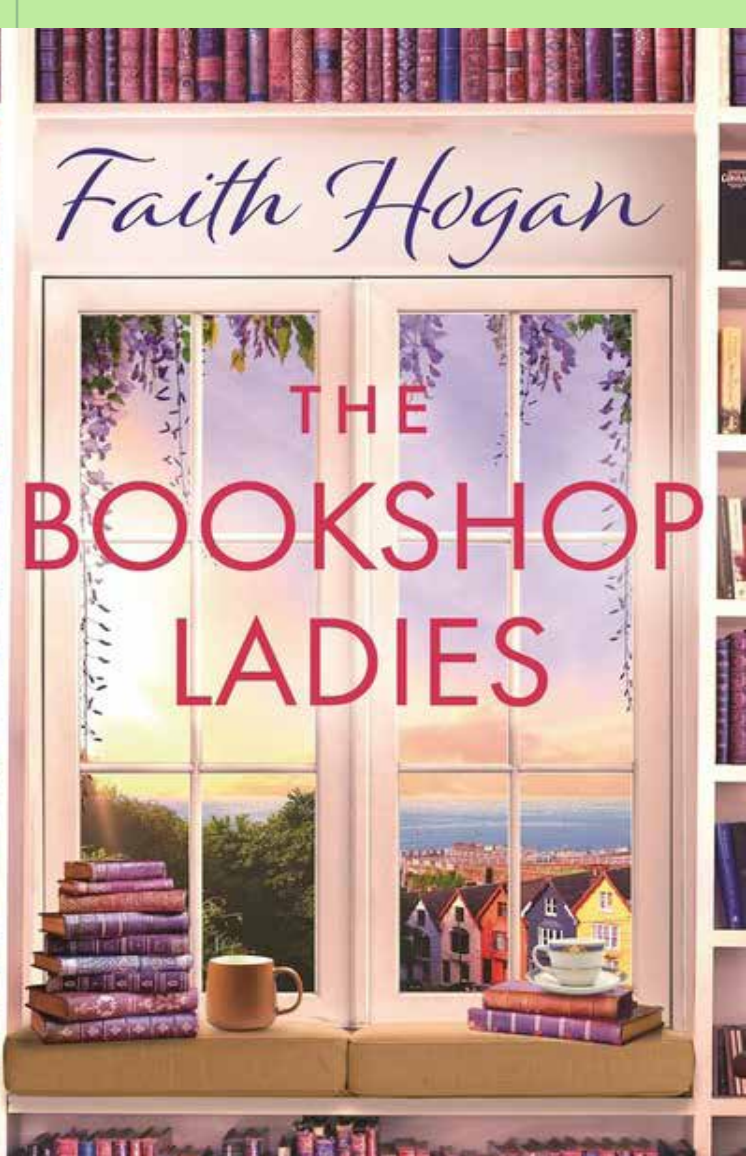
Killing Jericho – William Hussey – Zaffre

WHEN THE FAIR COMES TO TOWN, A KILLER'S GAME BEGINS...

Scott Jericho thought he'd worked his last case. Fresh out of jail, the disgraced former detective is forced to seek refuge with the fairground family he once rejected. Then a series of bizarre murders comes to light - deaths that echo a century-old fairground legend. The police can't connect the victims. But Jericho knows how the legend goes; that more murders are certain to follow. As Jericho unpicks the deadly mystery, a terrifying question haunts him. As a direct descendant of one of the victims in the legend, is Jericho next on the killer's list? From the award-winning author of *The Outrage* comes *Killing Jericho*, the gothic, helter-skelter thriller debut that introduces crime fiction's first ever Traveller detective, Scott Jericho.



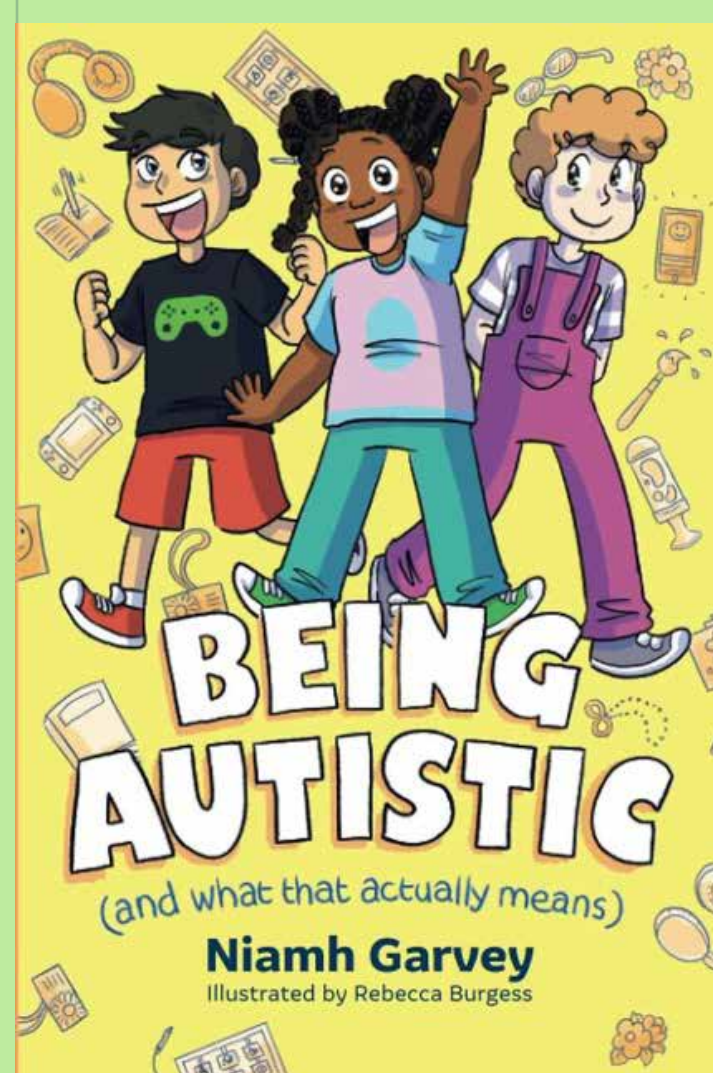
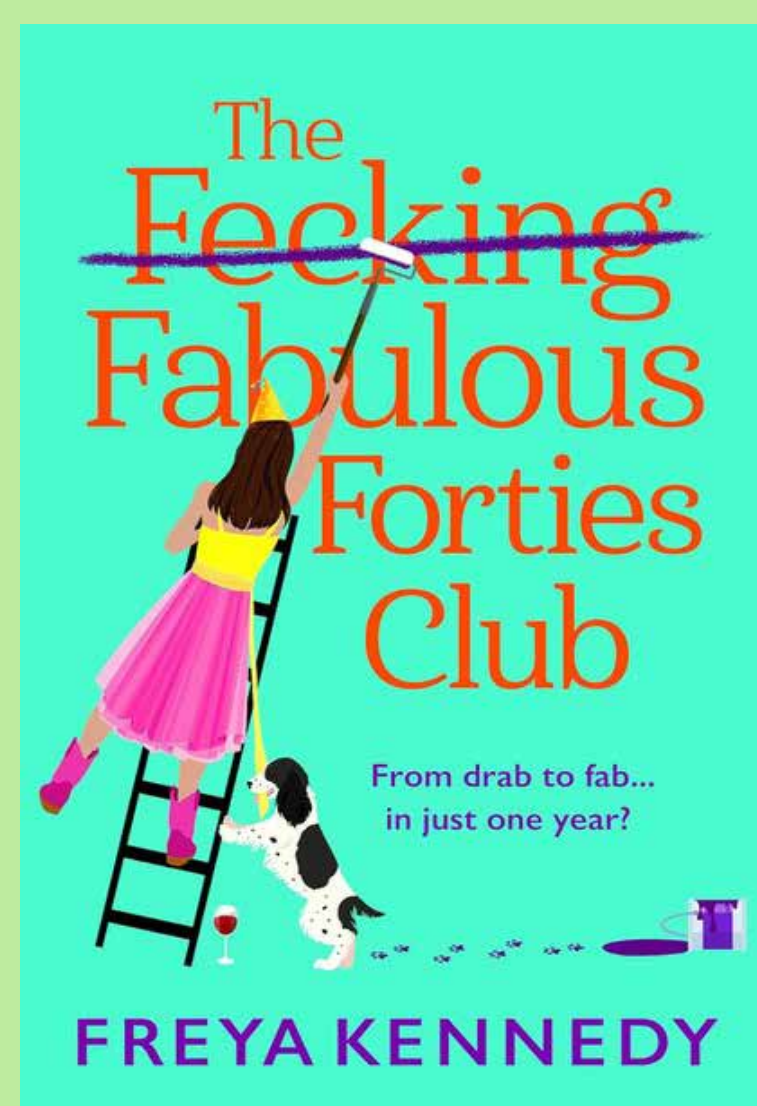
The Bookshop Ladies – Faith Hogan – Aria



From bestselling Irish writer, Faith Hogan, comes another gripping saga of friendship, betrayal and secrets in this story of a widow in search of answers to a shocking confession by her dying husband. Joy Blackwood has no idea why her French art dealer husband has left a valuable painting to a woman called Robyn Tessier in Ballycove, a small town on the west coast of Ireland, but she is determined to find out. She arrives in Ballycove to find that Robyn runs a rather chaotic and unprofitable bookshop. She is shy, suffering from unrequited love for dashing Kian, and badly in need of advice on how to make the bookshop successful. As Joy becomes entangled in the daily dramas of Ballycove, uncovering the secrets behind her husband's painting grows increasingly challenging. When she finally musters the courage to confront the truth, her revelation sends shockwaves through the tight-knit community she's grown to love.

The Fecking Fabulous Forties Club – Freya Kennedy – Boldwood Books

Becca Burnside isn't sure where it all went wrong.. How did she end up single in her forties, with the highlight of her weekend being a trip to Big Asda with her mum and the only chance of cuddles coming from her dog? It's fair to say that Becca's life isn't quite where she'd hoped it would be. She already knew that, deep down, but when she finds the time capsule she and her friends made as teenagers and remembers the hopes and dreams sixteen-year-old Becki (with an i) had for the future, she knows she has to do something, and fast. Refusing to be controlled by her hot flushes and Unexplained Waves of Sadness, Becca is determined to turn things around – for Becki's sake. But what will it take to prove there's life in the old girl yet? Join the most fabulous club in town!

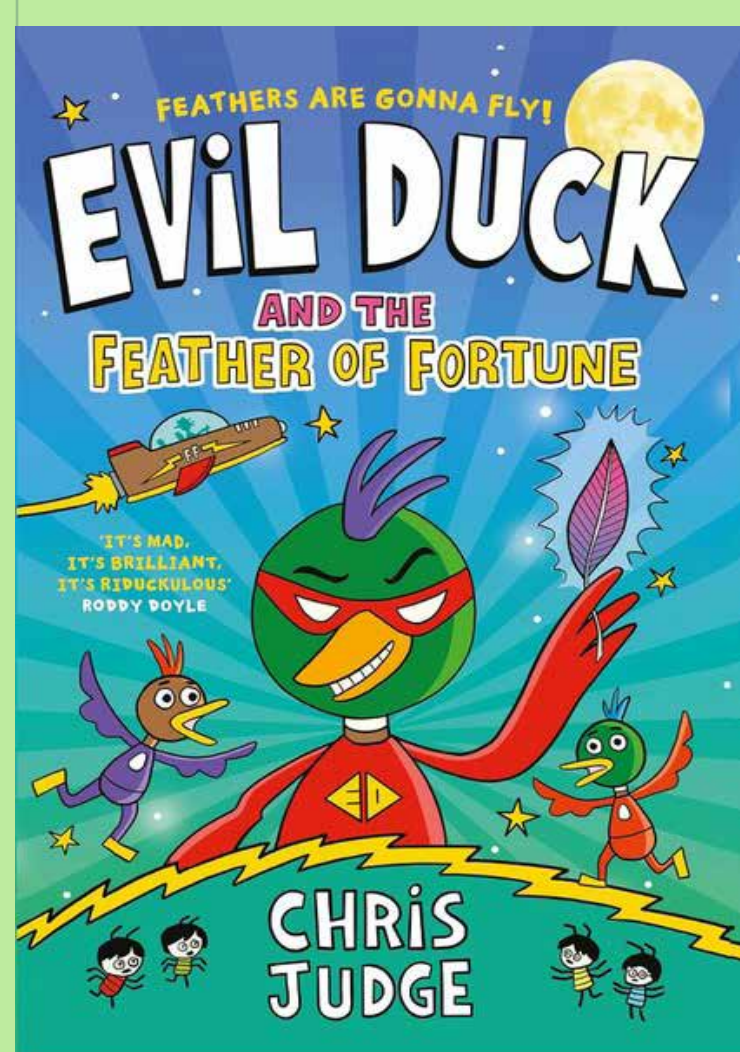


Being Autistic (And What That Actually Means) – Niamh Garvey (Author) Rebecca Burgess (Illustrator) – Jessica Kingsley Publishers

You're autistic - but what does that really mean? Welcome to the ultimate guide to understanding who you are and what it means to be autistic! In this fully illustrated graphic guide to what it means to be autistic and discover the differences between sensory seekers and avoiders, why you might find some things super easy and other things extra challenging and even begin to understand and navigate all your big (and small) feelings. Best of all, learn what makes you totally unique. You might just come away with some cool facts to share with your friends and family!

The Great Irish Bucket List – Tony Potter – Gill Books

Discover Ireland's must-do adventures that represent all that's great about the island. These 100 activities include relaxing walks in beautiful places, wild swims in Ireland's rivers, lakes and seas, and unforgettable pit-stops for the best of Irish-produced food and drink. Explore the hidden gems of the Emerald Isle in this inspirational guide. Survey the coastline and beaches from the Cliffs of Moher to the Giants Causeway, see historic sites including Newgrange and Dublin Castle, gain the gift of the gab by kissing The Blarney Stone or take a dip in one of Co. Cavan's 365 lakes. From music festivals to bog snorkelling, The Great Irish Bucket List is a must-have guide to Ireland's cultural and natural beauty, ideal for any prospective explorers. For locals and visitors alike, this book offers the perfect way to explore Ireland.



Evil Duck and the Feather of Fortune – Chris Judge – Gill Books

Twins Flo and Eddie are staying with their grandad while their mum travels for work. Nosing around in Grandad's attic, they find a villainous-looking duck frozen inside a special, temperature-controlled chamber. Eddie accidentally presses the DEFROST button – and releases super-villain Evil Duck! It turns out that Grandad, AKA Fearless Frank, is a retired superhero duck who captured his nemesis Evil Duck many moons ago, saving society from his sinister schemes. But now Evil Duck has escaped, and Grandad is too old to recapture him alone, Eddie and Flo are going to have to help him track the super-villain down – before he gets back to his evil ways!

The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Kicking Back with The Cardiffians, Blame it on the Fame and The Belgrano Diary.

Kicking Back with The Cardiffians (Light Entertainment)



Charlotte Church warmly welcomes us into her world with a lovely homage to the places and people she calls home. The natural conversationalist chats with the likes of the landlord of her local, the Robin Hood – also known as her “family headquarters” and where she met both her husbands – her oldest friend, who recalls nights out the tabloids were obsessed with, and her 86-year-old Bampy (granda), who remembers wartime Cardiff. A great listen!

Blame it on the Fame: Milli Vanilli (Music)

The 80s/90s pop duo Milli Vanilli is often ridiculed for their fakery, especially after they were exposed for not singing on their own album and subsequently stripped of their Best New Artist Grammy. However, this podcast explores a darker side of their scandal. It delves into how the attractive and charismatic Rob Pilatus and Fab Morvan became ideal targets for pop music manipulator Frank Farian. Host Amanda Seales investigates “the cachet of Blackness in pop culture, who really benefits from it, and who gets to walk away with the money,” highlighting Pilatus’s vulnerability when he accepted a “pact with the devil” from Farian, the German producer behind Boney M’s success. Through a captivating narrative of Farian’s desperate quest for the next big hit and Milli Vanilli’s subsequent downfall, Seales raises profound questions about exploitation and cancel culture.



The Belgrano Diary (History)

The sinking of the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano resulted in the deaths of 323 crew members, marking the largest loss of life in the Falklands War. Margaret Thatcher justified the attack by claiming the ship posed a deadly threat to “our boys.” However, questions remain about whether the vessel was actually a threat or peacefully returning to port. Andrew O’Hagan’s comprehensive podcast for the London Review of Books provides a nuanced perspective on the incident, centering on the diaries of Lt Narendra Sethia, who was aboard HMS Conqueror. His account contradicts Thatcher’s narrative. This complex story is expertly narrated over six episodes, with the power to both move and infuriate listeners.

How to:

Search “Google podcasts” in the Play Store app (if you’ve an Android phone). iPhones comes with Apple podcasts app installed. Open the app and type in the name of the podcast you want or you can just browse categories whilst there.

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