

We'll meet again

The timeless appeal of the song 'We'll Meet Again' underscores people's need for sentimentality



Also

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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.



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Letter to my Younger Self - David Park

Each issue, we ask a well-known person to write a letter to their 16-year old self. This issue, David Park (72), Irish novel of the year winner from East Belfast takes on the challenge.



Dear David

Although you don't yet understand it clearly, the age of sixteen brings you to a pivotal moment. It marks the ebbing away of an old life and the beginning of a confused, painful journey that provides no vantage point to see the future. And the journey isn't linear and ordered but at time feels circular and uncertain in its grasp of direction.

You grow up in a Baptist family and a fundamentalist, biblical based orthodoxy. Your parents are loving and gentle – this isn't the fanatical world of 'Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit' – but life is still governed by the teaching of the church. And at the heart of this orthodoxy is the belief that you are physically in this world but not spiritually of the world. This paradox will accompany you through all the days of your life and even though at about this age you begin to move away from traditional faith, you will struggle to find a world in which you can live.

You stumble into literature and grasp hold of it like someone starving who has been invited to a banquet.

There will be a permanent sense of existing in a kind of limbo and you will experience many painful periods of loneliness and isolation. You know instinctively you can't go back to where you started but what I am telling you now is that you have no other option but to try and keep moving forward. And at this stage of your life other realities and realisations will begin to guide you and you will come to trust them.

You stumble into literature and grasp hold of it like someone starving who has been invited to a banquet. For some reason it begins with American writers – Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgearld, Carson McCullers, J. D. Salinger, and when you reach the end of Steinbeck's 'Grapes of Wrath' and Rose of Sharon suckles the

dying man, you are startled into a new kind of wonder, a new kind of faith. The written word will nurture you all your days, tell you that you are not crazy, not alone and when you grow up in a culture that values the plain as a virtue, is suspicious of expressions of the imagination, then this newly revealed world with its portrayal of different possibilities will have an enduring impact. You go through its open portal and know there’s no going back. And these early days are the formative basis of your continuing belief that books should be serious expressions and about important things. That they can change how we feel about ourselves and how we see the world.

You don’t realise it yet but when you become a writer there will be a lasting legacy of your church days. You will retain a love of the language of the Authorised Version of the Bible, a love of the miraculous, of looking upwards in faith and your own stories will encompass some of scripture’s dominant themes – redemption, the search for atonement for the failures and shame that we experience, and in contrast episodes of transfiguration where sometimes the quiet moments of human existence are illuminated and attain a depth of spirituality.



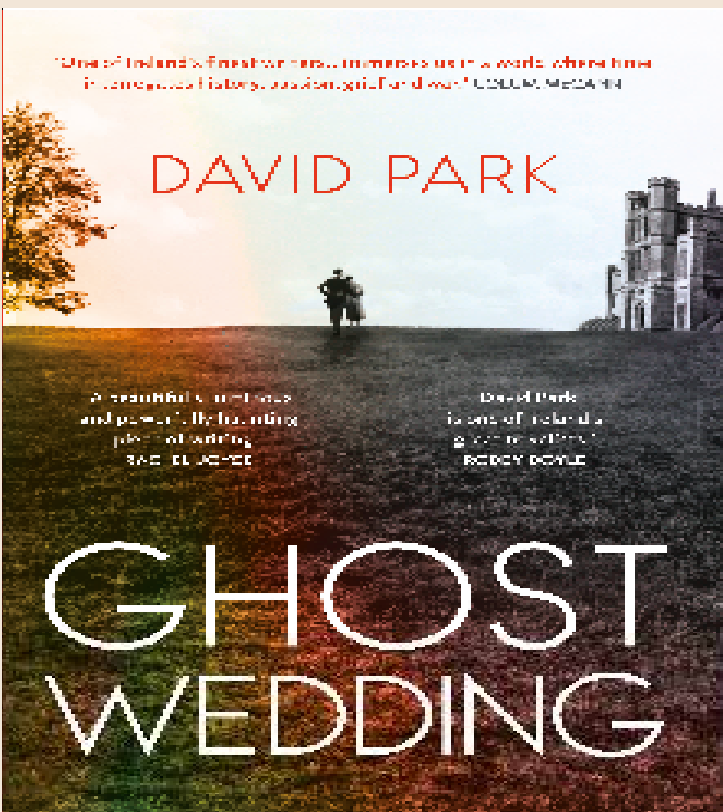
You are growing up in Belfast during the worst years of the Troubles and also while the Vietnam war rages. You feel a passionate intensity about the struggle for civil rights and imperialist wars. You get angry and frustrated with those who hold different views, argue with your father. Over the decades you won’t stop caring about such things but like many people you increasingly seek to protect your own well-being as you feel a growing sense of helplessness in the face of powerful forces. I think your sixteen-year-old self could teach me now the importance of not giving up on those passionate feelings and after the events of October 17th and the slaughter in Gaza, continue to confront what is being done in whatever way is open to me, even when it never seems enough.

**You are growing up
in Belfast during the worst
years of the Troubles and also
while the Vietnam war rages.**

At the age of sixteen you get a little red mono record player. You go to the Gramophone Shop opposite Belfast’s City Hall. You buy your first ever record – Bob Dylan’s Greatest Hits. At home you only ever had the sweetly sentimental and mellifluous religious music of singers like Pat Boone and Jim Reeves. In your little box room the world seemed to turn on its axis as for the first time you heard the opening chords of ‘Like a Rolling Stone’. And although your life in Belfast feels claustrophobic in only a few years’ time you will begin to travel, hitchhike in Europe, visit Paris and Amsterdam. Cities where you will develop a love of art.

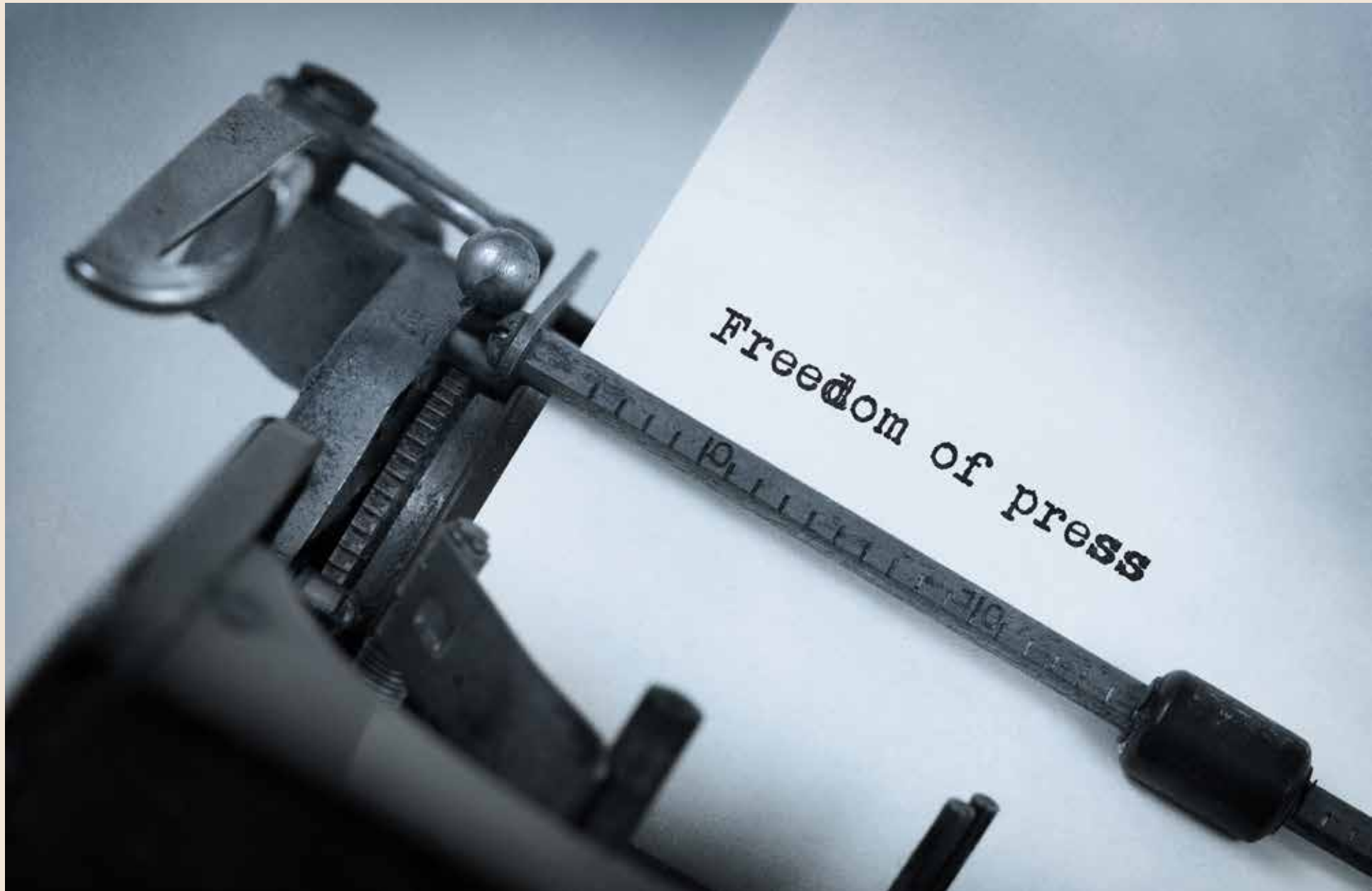
But I think what I would most like to say to my sixteen-year-old self is to never give up hope, never fall into despair, that in the future you will have a creative life, write books, find a voice. But most importantly of all, that in time you will be loved – something like many teenagers you never fully believe. And as I write this my beautiful three-year-old granddaughter comes into my study. She likes switches, working with things so as always, she reaches out to my desk light and says, ‘I’ll turn the light on for you,’ and presses the on switch. The light falls across the keyboard as I say thank you and it falls across my life and whatever days I still have to come.

Ghost Wedding by David Park
(Oneworld Publications) is
available in all good bookshops,
online and on Audible.



Threat to Press Freedom

Perfect storm of tech bros, foreign interference and disinformation is an urgent threat to press freedom says Tom Felle, Associate Professor of Journalism, University of Galway.



Media freedom has long been essential to healthy democracy. It is the oxygen that fuels informed debate, exposes corruption and holds power to account. But around the world, that freedom is under sustained attack.

The actions of populist political elites, tech billionaires and foreign disinformation campaigns are reinforcing one another. This is weakening independent journalism and reshaping the global public sphere.

This convergence was on full display at US president Donald Trump’s 2025 inauguration. The presence of Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg signalled that the tech elite are no longer simply disruptors. They are increasingly aligned with populist politics, a project openly hostile to independent journalism and democratic accountability.

**journalism is not a luxury or
a relic. It is a vital public good.**

Nowhere is this clearer than on X (formerly Twitter). Musk’s takeover has transformed the platform into a breeding ground for conspiracy theories and misinformation, while systematically undermining the credibility of established media outlets. Meta’s decision to abandon factchecking political content in the US also marks a dangerous retreat from even the minimal efforts once made to curb disinformation.

At its core, journalism’s role is simple but essential: to inform the public and hold power to account. Independent media – outlets free from government, political, or corporate control – are essential to democracy. They play a critical role in exposing corruption, amplifying marginalised voices, scrutinising government decisions and challenging abuses of power.

When media organisations are weakened, this essential accountability collapses – allowing governments, politicians and corporations to operate unchecked. Minorities and vulnerable groups suffer most when no one is left to shine a light on abuse or discrimination.

Human rights violations go unreported. Misinformation and rumour fill the void.

That is precisely what is happening, not just in fragile states but in established democracies. Populist eaders have attacked journalists as enemies of the people and smeared media outlets that challenge them.

Donald Trump infamously branded critical coverage as “fake news”. Brazil’s Jair Bolsonaro vilified journalists who investigated corruption and environmental crimes. Hungary’s Viktor Orbán has systematically dismantled media independence. Slovakia’s Robert Fico called journalists “bloodthirsty bastards” and “possessed by the devil”.

These leaders know that controlling the narrative is key to holding power. Discrediting the media is the first step.

One of the clearest recent examples is the Trump administration’s shuttering of Voice of America (VOA). This move to silence a broadcaster that had promoted press freedom for over 80 years has been celebrated by authoritarian regimes. China’s state media mocked VOA as “discarded like a dirty rag”.

Foreign threats

What makes this moment uniquely dangerous is that these political attacks are now supercharged by technology platforms retreating from accountability, and exploited by hostile foreign powers.

The latest European External Action Service (EEAS) Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threat Report paints a stark picture of how disinformation is used as a strategic weapon to weaken democracies from within.



In 2024, the EEAS – the diplomatic service of the European Union – detected record levels of foreign manipulation, particularly from Russia and China. The EEAS recorded more than 500 coordinated manipulation campaigns targeting 90 countries.

These included AI-generated deepfake videos impersonating European politicians, such as a fabricated video of Moldova’s president endorsing a pro-Russian party.

Bot networks were deployed to amplify false narratives about migration and inflation, distorting online discourse and inflaming social divisions. Impersonation tactics cloning legitimate news websites like Le Monde and German media were used to disseminate pro-Kremlin disinformation. All these efforts were aimed at undermining trust in democratic institutions, inflaming social divisions and creating confusion.

**X (formerly Twitter).
Musk’s takeover has transformed
the platform into a breeding ground
for conspiracy theories and
misinformation**

Disinformation has become a standard geopolitical weapon, often used as a precursor to military or economic action. In the lead-up to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russia conducted a sustained disinformation campaign. Fabricated videos and false flag operations portrayed Ukraine as the aggressor to justify military action.

Similarly, during the 2020-21 border clashes with India, China spread disinformation downplaying its military build-up while casting India as the instigator.

Russia has also used disinformation to pursue economic goals, notably by spreading falsehoods about European renewable energy and gas supply stability, to influence energy policy and sow public doubt about the EU’s energy independence strategy.

While this happens, platforms like Meta and X are retreating from content moderation and fact-checking. The result is a perfect storm where domestic populism, platform failure and foreign manipulation reinforce one another. Platforms like X have become the key battleground, accounting for 88% of detected disinformation activity.

What’s at stake – and what must change

As these threats grow, the traditional media model is collapsing. Advertising revenue – once the lifeblood of newspapers, radio, and television – has shifted almost entirely to digital platforms. Local newsrooms are closing, while investigative journalism is increasingly rare, expensive and risky.

In the UK, more than 320 local papers have closed since 2009. Titles like the Evening Standard ended daily print in 2024 due to plummeting ad revenues. Across Europe, rising news deserts and newsroom cuts are weakening media’s democratic role.

In the US, things are even worse – 3,200 newspapers have closed since 2005. More than half of all counties now have little or no local news coverage.

As social media platforms abandon even basic content moderation, they create vast, ungoverned digital spaces where bad actors dominate the conversation.



Into this gap flood social media influencers, partisan outlets and state-backed propaganda. The result is a fractured, polarised information ecosystem. Facts struggle to compete with viral misinformation and coordinated disinformation campaigns.

In the end, it is citizens who pay the price, bombarded by propaganda and adrift in a sea of misinformation. This is not just a media problem, it is a fundamental threat to democracy itself. Without independent journalism, there is no one left to ask difficult questions, expose wrongdoing or defend the public interest.

**These leaders know that
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the first step**

Protecting media freedom must now be treated as a democratic priority, as essential as free and fair elections or an independent judiciary. Governments need to regulate tech platforms effectively, enforcing transparency over algorithms and bringing in meaningful protections against disinformation.

Public investment in journalism is critical to ensure the press can survive and hold power to account. Democracies must coordinate efforts to counter foreign information manipulation, and protect journalists facing harassment and threats from authoritarian regimes.

The future of democratic accountability now depends on whether governments, regulators and the media can reclaim this space before it is lost entirely. Above all, this means recognising that journalism is not a luxury or a relic. It is a vital public good.

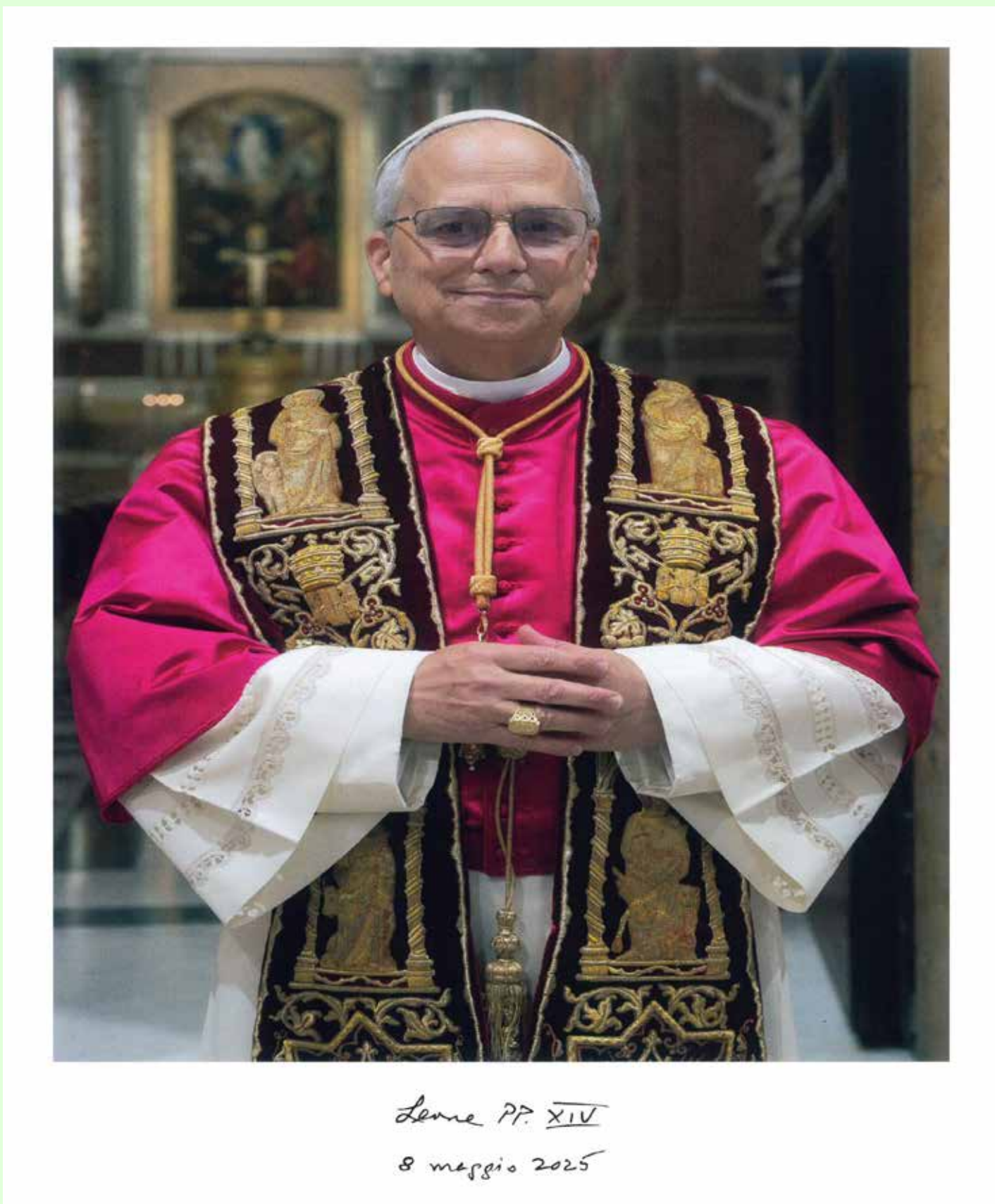
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Pope Leo XIV

Why the College of Cardinals chose the Chicago native and Augustinian to lead the church after Francis, Joanne M. Pierce reports.



When 69-year-old Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost appeared on the main balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica for the first time as Pope Leo XIV on May 8, 2025, he was cheered loudly by the huge crowd of pilgrims, tourists, local Catholics and other onlookers who had waited hours for the first sign of white smoke and the official announcement.

As a specialist in Catholic history and ritual, I know how important this moment was for Catholics and others all over the world. A new pope brings with him a sense of excitement often mixed with uncertainty.

But the choice of the College of Cardinals came as a surprise to some. Prevost is the first pope from the United States, and, traditionally, the European-dominated College of Cardinals has had reservations about choosing a cardinal from the U.S. for fear of too much American influence in the church.

So, who is Prevost, and what might have influenced the cardinals’ vote?

Early experiences

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Prevost joined a Catholic religious order at the age of 20: the Order of St. Augustine, called Augustinians, founded in the 13th century.

He would stay in Peru for the next 10 years

Instead of withdrawing from the world in isolated monasteries, members of this order travel as mendicants to aid the poor as well as serve as missionaries and teachers.

Prevost studied theology in the U.S. and Rome, and as a newly ordained priest he spent a year in Peru. After a short return to the U.S. as an official of the Augustinian order in Illinois, he returned to Peru as a seminary professor to teach canon law, the legal structure of the Catholic Church. He would stay in Peru for the next 10 years.

In 1999, he became the prior – that is, the head – of the local Augustinian province in Chicago and was later elected prior of the worldwide Augustinian order. This gave him a truly global experience, since the Augustinians had some 50 communities spread across every continent.

In 2015, Pope Francis appointed him bishop for the Diocese of Chiclayo in Peru. In 2019, Francis appointed him a member of several important Vatican dicasteries, or departments, where he became very familiar with the central church administration. Most importantly, he served as prefect, or chairman, on the Dicastery for Bishops.

In fact, because of his lengthy pastoral experience in Peru and service at the Vatican, some commentators had noted before Prevost was chosen that if the cardinals were to elect an American pope, it would be him. His service on the Dicastery for Bishops was considered especially important, since members play a key role in selecting new bishops.

Global church

During the 20th century, especially after the Second Vatican Council – a series of meetings of the world’s bishops to modernize the church, ending in 1965 – the popes began to name cardinals from other parts of the world that were previously considered to be on the periphery of the Catholic Church.



And this led to popes being chosen from outside of Italy for the first time in centuries. Pope St. John Paul II was Polish and the first non-Italian pope since the 16th century. Pope Benedict XVI was another non-Italian, born in Germany, who had served as a Vatican official. Pope Francis was born in South America to parents who were Italian-born immigrants to Argentina.

The College of Cardinals, which had few representatives from other continents until recently, is now much more international. Some 80% of the cardinal electors were named by Francis, many from countries that had never before had a cardinal.

In reviewing his record, the cardinal electors might have taken a number of factors into account. Prevost would be an effective administrator as head of the church and was an expert in church canon law. He had decades of experience doing pastoral work in South America, as well as in North America. And as prior general of the entire Augustinian order, he would likely have traveled widely to visit many of the communities he supervised.

**He
further urged Catholics to act
together “without fear ... united with
one another ... to build bridges**

The new pope appeared on the Vatican balcony wearing the traditional papal garments: white cassock, short red cape, decorated red and gold stole, and golden cross hanging around his neck. Francis, on the other hand, had appeared dressed in the plain white cassock of a pope.

Certainly, he had not chosen the simplicity of Francis. Was this a sign that he would be more of a traditionalist?

His choice of a papal name, I believe, could indicate a different point of view. Pope Leo XIII wrote a groundbreaking encyclical in 1891, “Rerum Novarum,” subtitled “On Dignity and Labor.” In this he stressed the rights of workers to unionise and criticised the conditions in which they worked and lived. He also championed other rights the ordinary worker deserved from their bosses and from their government

In his first remarks from the balcony, offering a glimpse into the direction of his papacy, Leo XIV stressed the role of Catholics and the church as peacemakers and bridge-builders, in dialogue with other religious traditions and cultures. His first words were “Peace be with you all,” describing this peace as “a disarmed peace, a disarming peace.” He further urged Catholics to act together “without fear ... united with one another ... to build bridges” through dialogue and outreach – to bring peace to the world.

He may not follow exactly in Francis’ footsteps, but he will likely continue walking in the same direction.

Author: Joanna M. Pierce: Professor Emerita of Religious Studies, College of the Holy Cross

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We'll Meet Again

The timeless appeal of We'll Meet Again underscores people's need for sentimentality. *Clare V. Church reports.*



It begins with just a few gentle flourishes from the orchestra before the honey-voiced singer launches into the chorus. Her words are instantly familiar to listeners, who sing along without having to search for the lyrics on their smartphones or strain their voices to remain in key. The song's simplicity is its boon and its enduring message of softness and sentimentality its raison d'être.

More than 85 years after its release, We'll Meet Again – made famous by singer Vera Lynn – continues to resonate with listeners, whether they experienced the second world war or not. In fact, as we head into the 80th anniversary of the war's end, it is one song that is sure to be at the top of all British commemorative playlists.

While embarking on this next year of remembrance, it is important to question why this song echoes so resoundingly across time and space. Why is it that, after all these years, we continue to meet We'll Meet Again again, and again and again?

Written by Ross Parker and Hughie Charles, We'll Meet Again was first recoded by Lynn in 1939. Its chorus is as follows:

*We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I'll know we'll meet again some sunny day.
Keep smiling through, just like you, always do, 'til the blue skies chase those dark clouds far away.*

**believed that Lynn's
song harmed soldier morale,
arguing that its emotional message
deflated appetite for the war**

In the early war, Lynn performed the song – as well as other wistful tunes – at palladiums across Britain and over the radio. She gained a reputation as a “sweet singer of sweet songs” and was soon after bestowed the moniker “the Forces’ sweetheart”.

By 1941, Lynn hosted her own BBC radio show named Sincerely Yours, described by Radio Times as a “letter in words and music” to fighting men. After reading messages from munitions girls to their husbands and congratulations to new fathers in the military, Lynn signed off the show crooning We'll Meet Again, authenticating the song as her signature.

Throughout the remainder of the war, she performed the song over the radio and in film (including in the fittingly titled We'll Meet Again in 1943) as well as in concerts as far afield as Myanmar.

However, the song was not met with universal acceptance. Some, including parliamentarian Earl Winterton, believed that Lynn’s song harmed soldier morale, arguing that its emotional message deflated appetite for the war. Diarists for Mass Observation – a social research project launched in 1937 that collected journal entries from volunteer citizens – repeated this idea. One diarist claimed that Lynn’s songs were “too intimate for broadcasting” and another called her catalogue “carefully written sob stuff”.



But just as some criticised, others came to her defence. Gunner A. E. Buckeridge, for example, scorned Winterton in Union Jack magazine for taking it

“upon himself to decide what the men should like”.

Frank Owen of the South East Asia Command similarly wrote that Lynn’s crooning “really hits the heart” and thanked her for ameliorating “the abiding home sickness” of soldiers.

The debate did not centre on whether We’ll Meet Again was sentimental. Rather, it questioned if such sentimentality helped or hindered fighting men.

By 1945, many listeners sat in the former camp, contending that We’ll Meet Again eased war’s hardships by reminding listeners of their home and humanity. In fact, it would be the song’s ability to do this that would propel its popularity to new heights in the following decades.

Post-war resonance

Following the end of hostilities, the ballad proliferated across media, genres and audiences. It was referenced in

a wide range of films and television series, including Dr Strangelove (1964), Muppets Go to the Movies (1981) and even Stranger Things (2016).

Other musicians covered the song too, including Frank Sinatra and Johnny Cash. Pink Floyd’s song Vera (1979) even contained the lyrics: “Does anybody here remember Vera Lynn? / Remember how she said that we would meet again some sunny day?”

The song was also used in war-related commemorative events and political addresses. This includes Queen Elizabeth II’s April 2020 broadcast that discussed the burgeoning COVID crisis and asserted: “We will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.”

Lynn’s songs were “too intimate for broadcasting” and another called her catalogue “carefully written sob stuff”.

So, what is it about this song that has maintained such longevity in the national consciousness?

In many post-war recollections, veterans especially praised the song’s emotionality. In a 1996 oral history interview, for instance, veteran George William Ledger remembered how grown men were brought to tears after listening to Lynn. He recalled that “when Vera Lynn got up and sang on that stage ... it was quiet, you could hear a pin drop”. He added that her songs were especially powerful because they “dwelt on the emotions of people”.

In select accounts within the BBC’s WW2 People’s War Project, this theme was reiterated. One contributor

wrote that Lynn was so popular because she “entertained us..... with her very emotional songs”. Another writer claimed that We’ll Meet Again raised the morale of the troops “who knew how near was a terrifying death”.



Even comments made on the song’s YouTube page reference its emotional resonance, with one user writing: “Played this song for my dad over skype (81) years old with Alzheimer’s. He knew word for word with tears streaming. Bless him.”

These recollections serve as a poignant reminder of the power of sentimentality and giving people the permission to emote during times of struggle. The song – both during the war and after – provided safely contained moments to embrace softness.



**We’ll Meet
Again eased war’s hardships by
reminding listeners of their home
and humanity**

Typically, when you think of a “war song”, you might be tempted to think of a military march, full of brazen boasts of strength and stoicism – both of which are characteristics commonly tied to narratives of war and heroism.

But the enduring resonance of We’ll Meet Again underlines the timeless testament of another set of heroic virtues: softness and sentimentality. The song demonstrates that in times of incredible hardship and trauma, all people require spaces to ache, mourn and feel.

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First Published on The Conversation



A BALL CAN CHANGE A LIFE

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And YOU can make it happen!

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Congratulations and best wishes to all who took part in the
Homeless Street Soccer finals 2025





Louise O Reilly TD




Fingal West

*Congratulations and best wishes to all
involved in Finals Day*


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IHSL Street Soccer Finals

AstroPark, Tallaght 2025

Brilliant weather, brilliant football, Wednesday 30th April, AstroPark, Tallaght, saw another successful All Ireland Street Soccer finals completed. On behalf of the IHSL I would like to thank all the players who participated, in what was a splendid tournament. A special word of thanks to all who supported us on the day,. Amazon, Fai, Lifeforce ambulance service and especially our staff of volunteers who worked so tirelessly to make the event happen. The day was all about the players, a competitive and sporting tournament which saw Grange Utd Mullingar defeat Longford in a sudden death penalty shootout to win the men’s title with St Catherine Dublin defeating Pearse St Dublin 3-0 in the Ladies final. South Dublin Mayor Baby Pereppaddan, Senator Teresa Costello, Councillor Alan Ashe, Martin McEntee DDLETB and Fai’s Thomas Morgan were on hand to present the trophies. Our IHSL coaches were also on hand monitoring potential players for our Ladies & Men’s that will represent Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Oslo, Norway in August.

No one should be left standing on the sidelines watching life pass them by, IHSL is not just about sport, it’s about empowering people to fulfil their true potential and participant fruitfully in life, sport is the catalyst that helps us achieve that goal. A sincere thanks to all whose support make it possible.

-A Ball Can Change a Life –

Sean Kavanagh Chairman & Founder Irish Homeless Street Leagues



Niamh Ryan & Jim Kelly (IHSL)



Mary Byrne (IHSL) & Lydia



Thomas Morgan FAI & Mickie Myers



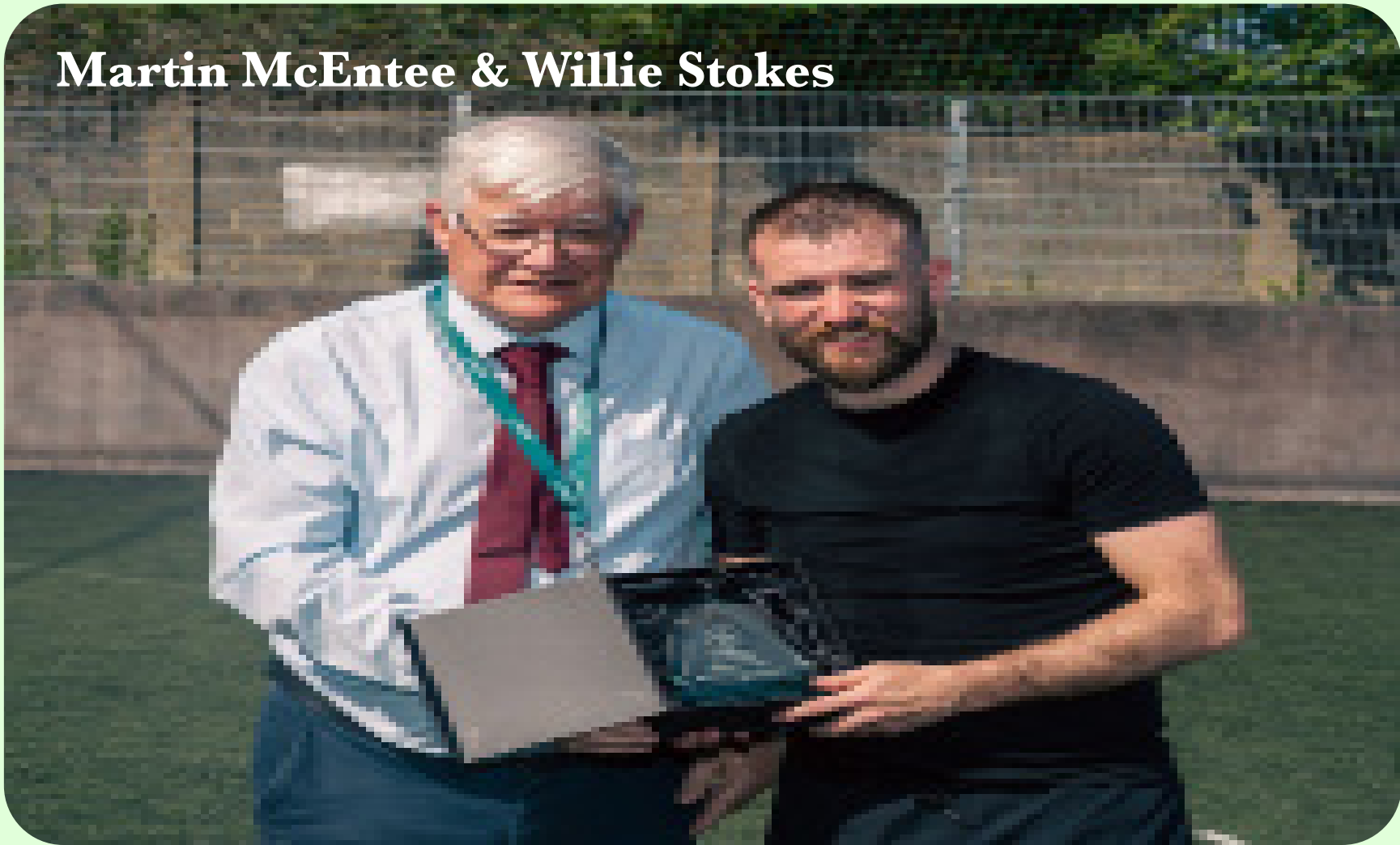
‘Eye on the ball’



Limbering up



Martin McEntee & Willie Stokes



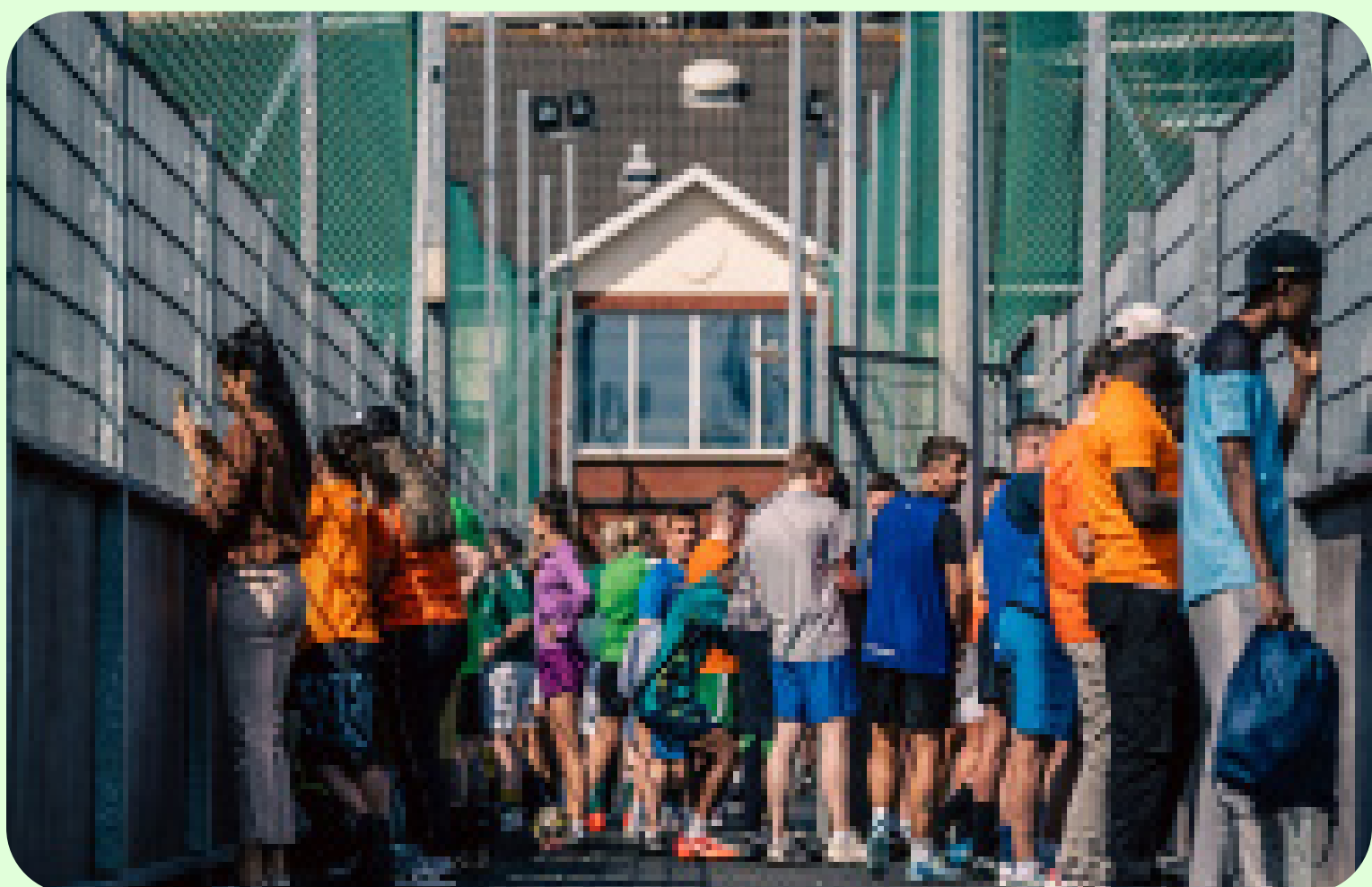
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Oliver Reed

The Thespian Hellraiser

Shaun Anthony looks at Oliver Reed a brilliant actor whose antics off screen often made more news than the films he featured in.



Let's forget all about the political correctness that plagues our society and celebrate in the misdeeds, mammoth drinking sessions and madness that was the life of one of the finest actors to come out of Britain in the 1960's - Oliver Reed. With astonishing dark brooding handsome features and a deep resonant voice, Reed was always going to exude a powerful stage presence however he opted to remain solely a film actor, where his brooding intensity, as well as his raucous off-screen presence, earned him a dangerous reputation that saw him play a steady stream of truly dark and terrifying bad guys; albeit the kind of bad guy that is utterly irresistible to women.

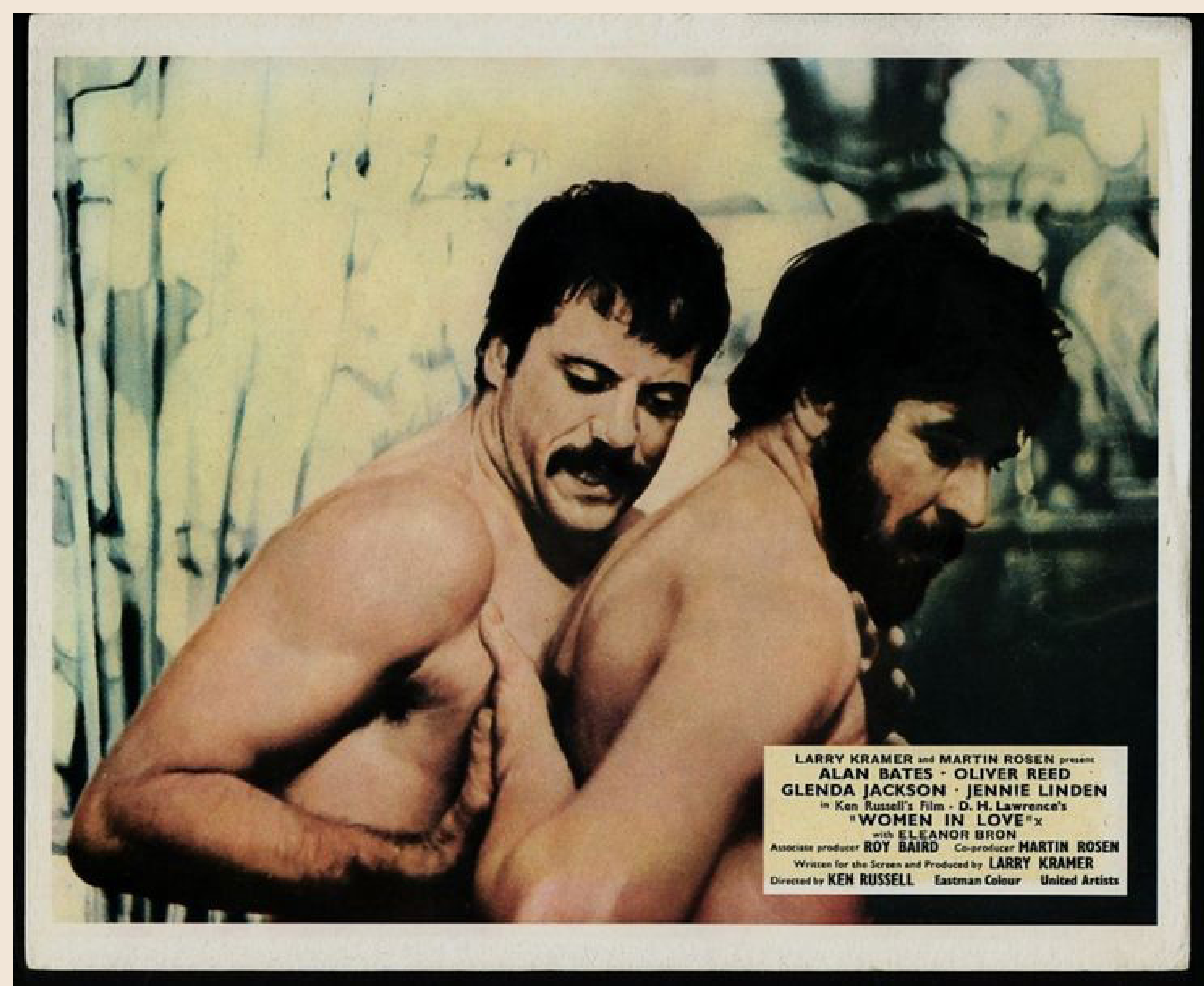
**The kind of bad
guy that is utterly
irresistible to women.**

Born in 1938 in Wimbledon, Reed was a nephew of renowned film director Sir Carol Reed and a grandson of actor and producer Herbert Beerbohm Tree. From an early age Reed was hard to tame the break up of his parents marriage didn't help, he struggled in school due to his suffering from dyslexia. After leaving school and doing his National Service, he took a number of low paid jobs including work as a hospital porter and a bouncer before a short career in boxing. With no formal acting experience whatsoever, the young Oliver decided that he wanted to become an actor. He attended the cinema regularly and watched how the actors preformed, and accordingly started attending auditions. He quickly realised that seducing the casting agent's secretary helped get him to the agent's attention. Obviously his dark brooding looks captured someone's imagination as in 1960 he suddenly showed up on screen, in the background of two Hammer Films, 'The Two Faces of Jekyll' and 'Sword of Sherwood Forest'.

He then went on to play a gay ballet dancer in Basil Deardon's 'The League of Gentlemen' before a larger speaking role as a rough factory worker in 'The Angry Silence' in 1961. With his brooding dark looks Reed suited horror films perfectly, and his first starring role was Terrance Fisher's 'Curse of the Werewolf' (1961); he then went on to make several films for Director and Bon Vivreur, Michael Winner before maverick director Ken Russell cast him in many of his films including 'Women in Love' in 1969. Renowned for pushing the

boundaries, Russell’s ‘Women in Love’, based on the D. H. Laurence novel, featured the first ever full frontal male nude scene in an English language film, where Reed and Alan Bates wrestled naked. Russell was said to want to drop the scene, worried about censorship; however Reed encouraged him to leave it in, even though he had to drink a bottle of vodka to relax himself enough to film the scene.

Reed already had a reputation for hard drinking, living it up with the other hard boozers of the era, Peter O Toole and Richard Burton. After one drinking bout he needed 36 stitches in his face after someone glassed him in a fight in a nightclub in 1963; It left him with a scar along his lower cheek, something he worried would put an end to his career before it really started (it didn’t). On another occasion he drank 100 pints of beer in one 24 hour drinking session, and then managed to do a horizontal hand-stand on the bar. David Hemmings passed out after a drinking session with Oliver and awoke to find himself dangling head first a couple of storeys up his feet being held by a laughing Reed. Another marathon drinking bout saw Steve McQueen, who had come to London to woo Reed to America, forced to spend the night covered in Reed’s vomit. His drinking also lost him the part of James Bond, which he was almost cast to play. Producers felt that his drinking, fighting and affairs were too far removed from the clean-cut Bond image, and George Lazenby got the part instead.

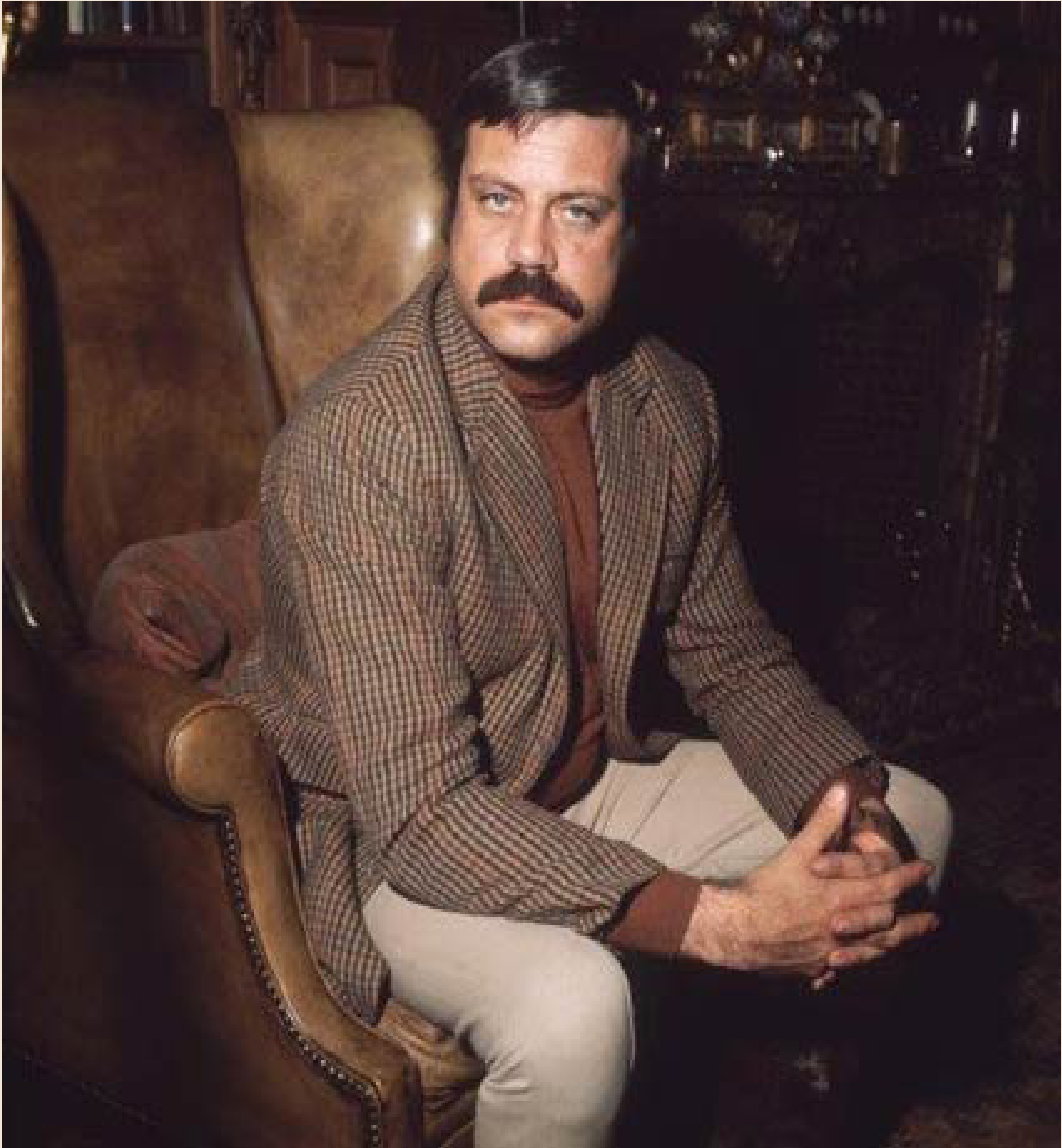


His role in the 1968 musical ‘Oliver’ (directed by his uncle) would attest to an actor who took his craft very seriously, and his dark, brooding Bill Sykes is still one of the most truly frightening villains ever to cross our screens, striking terror in the hearts of audiences, young and old, even today. His portrayal of Father Grandier in Russell’s ‘The Devils’ in 1971 was another pivotal role for Reed and he described it as the best performance he ever gave. He then went on to play Athos in ‘The Three Musketeers’, the 1973 film adaptation of the Alexander Dumas novel, and was almost killed on set when he was accidentally stabbed in the neck while filming a fight scene. It appears however that the stunt men were more afraid of him as his reluctance to rehearse and his full-blooded efforts in sword fights meant the stunt men drew lots before being paired with him. Christopher Lee his co-star described him as a dangerous menace with a sword. Another unforgettable part was Reed as the evil stepfather in the Rock Opera ‘Tommy’, based on ‘The Whos’ 1969 conceptual album (of the same name) in 1975.

‘You meet a better class of person in the pub’

The mid seventies saw many film offers from Hollywood for Reed, but he remained resolutely loyal to Britain, despite the fact that many other stars of the time were decamping to America to avoid the high taxes they were being forced to pay. He was offered a part in ‘Jaws’ and also in ‘The Sting’, but turned them down because he didn’t want to re-locate to Hollywood; (this was later disputed by Hollywood producers, who said that they turned him down, not the other way around: ‘we like our stars to have respect. Reed respected no one, and showed it’). Ironically both parts were later given to another hell-raiser, Robert Shaw and made him a star.

Although at the top of his game in the mid seventies, Reed’s reputation for hard drinking and debauchery and his increasingly erratic displays of public drunkenness, nudity and profanity was going to affect his career, no matter how professional he was on set. Producers were afraid to hire him, worried about him turning up drunk, causing chaos and fighting. However it seems his career was blighted unfairly for Ken Russell later said of him that although ‘he was the life and soul of the party, for all his macho image, he was a sensitive actor who approached his craft intuitively.’



Steve McQueen, who had come to London to woo Reed to America, was forced to spend the night covered in Reed’s vomit.

This was backed up by actress Glenda Jackson who although they didn’t hit it off said, after starring with him in ‘Women In Love’, ‘What I admire most about Reed is his consummate professionalism. Whatever state he is in, when they call ‘action’ he is ready.’ Still producers steered clear and the decent roles stopped coming in, and Oliver Reed went from being one of the highest paid actors in England to doing second rate genre films for obscure production companies.



There were some exceptions though - in 1987, Reed made a return to form in Nicholas Roeg’s ‘Castaway’, where he was remarkably obnoxious as the man Amanda Donohue was forced to share a deserted island with. 1989 saw another good movie, Terry Gilliam’s ‘The Adventures of Baron Munchausen’). But did Reed really care that his career was not what it could have been? It seems not. Michael Winner, his close friend and admirer, said that while Oliver was a superbly accomplished actor who could have had a great career, he chose to have a great life instead; indeed having settled in Ireland with his third wife, Josephine Burge (who was decades younger than himself), Reed seemed unabashed by his frankly cringe-inducing appearances on various television shows in appalling states of inebriation, and lived a contented life in rural Ireland, where he was a frequent and welcome visitor to his local hostelryes.

In 1999, Reed was playing Proximo the slave dealer in the Oscar winning ‘Gladiator’, when he went on a massive drinking binge while filming in Malta. After a night downing bottles of rum (reports vary greatly as to what he actually drank, but there is no doubt it was a heavy session) and arm wrestling with sailors, Reed suffered a heart attack and sadly died. However director Ridley Scott decided to finish the film with Reed’s character intact, so spent a fortune digitally re-creating his likeness and grafting it onto a body double - so, despite being dead Reed managed to complete filming!!!

Having played in over sixty films in his life-time Oliver Reed has a body of work of which anyone could be proud, despite the many forgettable films. However for his own reasons he chose to leave the fickle world of the mega-star behind and content himself with enjoying his life, albeit it in his own unique way:

‘You meet a better class of person in the pub’ he is quoted as saying (probably after quaffing the drink he reportedly invented himself) - an ice bucket with every drink in the bar poured into it!



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DEATH ON AN ISLAND

THE ARRANMORE DISASTER

Arranmore, an island three miles off the coast of Donegal, would lose nineteen of its citizens in one night and one woman would lose two daughters, four sons and her husband as the elements of island life took their toll. Samantha Bailie-McMurdock reports:



On a freezing cold Saturday night in November 1935, a boat bringing workers home from Scotland hit a rock and capsized. Everyone on the small island, which is situated just three miles off the coast of Donegal, was waiting on the Arranmore natives returning, excited to catch up with loved ones and have family safely under one roof.

For many years residents of Arranmore would go to Scotland for the potato harvesting season, working as ‘tattie-hokers.’ Family members would go, taking the older kids with them, and this really helped big families to survive financially as money orders were sent back each week.

**Of the twenty on the
boat, only one man, Paddy
Gallagher
survived.**

Of the nineteen who drowned that dark November night, the majority were from the south of the island and seven of them were from one home - the house of Edward Gallagher. Of Edward and his wife Annie’s children, six of them went with the ‘tattie-hokers’. Twenty-six year old Paddy got sick and had to return to the island, so with one less worker and one more mouth to feed at home, the money orders were depended on even more.

When tattie-hoking season was over, it was time to return - and the journey started with a night crossing the Moyle Straits on the Derry boat, then the next day they got the train to Burtonport, excited to get home to see much missed kin. With the workers on their way home, a sailing boat with seven of a crew left Athphort to go and meet them. Edward Gallagher, the boat’s owner was at the helm, his nephew John Gallagher

was part of the crew as well as Edward’s sons - 29 year old Micí and Paddy, who had come home from Scotland earlier due to sickness. Edward was excited at the prospect of having his family home again, but for the rest of the crew it was just a trip. John O’Donnell was just home after more than a decade working for Standard Oil in Chicago - the trip, for him was something to pass the time. John Rodgers, Edward’s neighbour, used it as an opportunity to visit his sister who owned the Arran Bar in Burtonport. Éamonn Ward, a member of the lifeboat crew was going to the mainland to pick up a radio, which would be the first one ever on the island. Sadly, he and his friends would be the news on that radio the very next day.

The train was a couple of hours later coming into Burtonport, and they couldn’t phone the island to say they were running late. They eventually made it to Burtonport at 4:30pm. The crew then had a drink up at

Johnny Gallagher's. Another man, Willie Bonner was going to the island on his motor boat and wanted to take some of the men with him, but they wouldn't go.

The twenty men got on board and raised the sail and set off for the island - having no idea the fate that lay in store for them.

The crew were all well-experienced, seafaring men, that's what made their experience all the stranger - friends and family describing how the route was "engraved into their minds", but quickly the atmosphere changed, the sky went pitch black and a fierce shower of hail started (Paddy Gallagher said he had never seen it so dark in his life). As the boat tried to sail up the narrow channel of Béal an Eilín, a strong wind hit the vessel, but the crew felt confident they would be okay, after all, they had taken this course many times. Just then, there was a bang - they felt the boat smashing into a rock, "She went like a shot - like a bullet from a gun," Paddy said, and the boat capsized, pulling the men overboard. The water was freezing, and the harsh November winds were taking their breath away. Paddy could hear nothing but screaming and yelling, but quickly this turned to silence as the men perished one by one. The boat quickly overturned again and Paddy clambered on, pulling his brother Johnny on. He could see his father, but could do nothing for him, "He had lost his will," he said in an interview back in 1985, the effects of such a loss still evident in his eyes.



Paddy began talking to his brother, asking him questions - anything to keep him conscious, but as the brother glanced around his desperate surroundings, he began crying, "What's going to happen to us?..... What about mother?" Paddy tried to calm him down and to keep his spirits up, told him, "Look, we can see the lights on Árainn..... when they go off, it will soon be light," but his brother, exhausted exclaimed, "I'm finished", and with that he died right in front of his brother. Paddy, devastated, but having to keep his wits about him at all costs, lifted his brother and laid him on the keel of the boat. He kept one arm around the body and one around the boat as the rain and the sea splashed viciously over him.



Struggling to keep the boat sailing evenly, a heavy shower of hailstones came from the east; neighbours say it was so strong that, even on the mainland, it would have knocked you down. Paddy Gallagher's survival was nothing short of a miracle, having been under the water for 15 hours in the dead of night in the freezing cold, wearing only his oilskins as protection. He said he was firm in spirit and knew he would be saved - never losing hope.

.... he soon realised the boat was upside down, with someone on the keel.



Of the twenty on the boat, only one man, Paddy Gallagher survived. Despite living to tell the tale, he could not, and it took many years for him to be able to talk about the incident - he didn't speak of it until two years before his death. Friends say he was so traumatised and tormented by the images that night that he just couldn't bring himself to think about it, never mind speak of it.

The following morning Annie Uí Ghallchóir became very worried when her husband Edward and her children didn't come home. She started to search for them. Paddy was still drifting in the current, close to shore with his brother's body beside him. As the day was dawning, Paddy said he saw his mother and neighbour walking over from Athphort to find out if there was any news, because the boat hadn't arrived.

A few hours went by before Paddy's mother discovered about the tragedy that had occurred.



Around 8am, Charlie Bán who lived on the mainland was getting up to feed his baby breakfast, when he looked out the window and thought he saw someone fishing, however, he soon realised the boat was upside down, with someone on the keel, so he ran down to his neighbour and went out to see if they could help. The man pulled his boat alongside the capsized one and Paddy Edwards explained who he was and said the body beside him was his brother. As soon as Paddy was rescued, he asked if anyone had a fag, and he dragged hungrily on the cigarette until they got to the pier. As soon as he stepped off the boat, his legs went from under him. He could barely believe when he set foot back in his own home.

His sons weren't due home for another week, but when he went down, the first two bodies he discovered, were two of his sons lying against a rock.

Survivor Paddy Gallagher



News was spreading fast of the Arranmore Disaster and as people came to walk to Mass at 11 o'clock, some started to walk down the beach and began searching around, and that's when bodies began to surface here and there. Mass was cancelled as Fr. Gallagher was so shocked that he became ill. Eight bodies were found around the rocks, a couple were found on the beach. All the baggage on the boat was washed up on to the beach. One man was found still holding on to a box.

Local resident Mici Mor went down to help. His sons weren't due home for another week, but when he went down, the first two bodies he discovered, were two of his sons lying against a rock. He rushed to the one he thought was still alive, but he was dead. Mici screamed and had to be restrained by the men as he tried to drown himself, such was his anguish.

Paddy's mother came to see him as he lay recuperating. When he confirmed his father and brother were dead, his mother fell unconscious and had to be carried home. Annie still didn't know that seven of her family were among the 19 victims, including her youngest daughter Hannah. When the boat was brought ashore a few hours later, another shock was in store - a man was found tied by the waist to the stern of the boat. The 9 bodies found were brought to the boat house in Athphort, where they were waked, and the search continued for those still missing.

The amount of young deaths, some 15, 16 and 17 had a huge impact on everyone. The 9 bodies that had been found right away were buried in one big grave - there was no transport, so all the coffins had to be carried a distance. As months went by, 8 more bodies were found, and as they were recovered, they too were buried in the mass grave.



It was 9 months before Paddy Gallagher's father was found, and the family had to go through all pain again, as he was waked and then committed to the ground.

**The islanders did
their best to get on with life.**

Two bodies were never found - those of Kate Ní Dhomhnaill (45) and Hannah Ní Ghallchóir (31).

The islanders did their best to get on with life. One can only imagine what it was like for Annie Uí Ghallchóir who had lost two daughters, four sons and her husband and still had to face life, to raise her two remaining son.

Sadly a lot of families on the island died out - their generation cut short with the deaths and many never married or had children, meaning their family line ended that dreadful night.

Screen Scene

Sirens ***

Starring: Julianne Moore, Kevin Bacon
Run Time: 5 x 60 mins
Streaming: Netflix
Available: Currently

Sirens, a dark comedy limited series created by Molly Smith Metzler and based on her 2011 play Elemeno Pea is a compelling watch, especially for those who love a good comedy with a sharp edge.

The story unfolds throughout one explosive weekend at a lavish beach estate when Devon (Meghann Fahy) becomes concerned about her sister Simone's (Milly Alcock) creepy relationship with her new boss and decides it's time for an intervention.

The series, which has been described as an “incisive, sexy, and darkly funny exploration of women, power and class” will not disappoint.

Presumed Innocent ***

Starring: Jake Gyllenhaal, Ruth Negga
Run Time: 8 x 50 mins
Streaming: Apple TV+
Available: 12th June

Presumed Innocent is an eight-episode limited series starring and executive produced by Jake Gyllenhaal, hailing from David E. Kelley and executive producer J.J. Abrams and is based on the New York Times bestselling novel of the same name by Scott Turow. Starring Gyllenhaal in the lead role of chief deputy prosecutor Rusty Sabich, the series takes viewers on a gripping journey through the horrific murder that upends the Chicago Prosecuting Attorney's office when one of its own is suspected of the crime. The series explores obsession, sex, politics, and the power and limits of love, as the accused fights to hold his family and marriage together. The star-studded ensemble cast of the thriller also includes Ruth Negga, Bill Camp, Elizabeth Marvel, Peter Sarsgaard, O-T Fagbenle and Renate Reinsve.



28 Years Later **

Starring: Jodie Comer, Ralph Fiennes

Streaming: In cinemas

Run Time: 126 mins

Available to watch: 20th June

28 Years Later is an intense sequel that boldly re-enters the dystopian world established by the original “28 Days Later.” Directed by Danny Boyle, the film masterfully captures the chaos and despair of a society still struggling to recover from the devastating outbreak. The narrative picks up nearly three decades after the initial catastrophe, exploring themes of survival, revenge, and the lingering scars of trauma.

The film’s cinematography is gritty and visceral, immersing the viewer in a desolate, post-apocalyptic landscape. Its pacing is relentless and will keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish. The performances are powerful, particularly Jodie Comer as Isla, a pregnant woman living on a tidal island who is haunted by past horrors. The story introduces new factions and lingering threats, adding complexity and depth to the universe.

While it pays homage to its predecessor, “28 Years Later” also introduces fresh ideas that keep the franchise feeling relevant and urgent. Overall, it’s a gripping, emotionally charged film that appeals to fans of horror, thriller, and dystopian genres, cementing its place as a worthy continuation of the “28 Days Later” saga. Not for everyone and certainly not one to watch before bed!



Rematch ***

Starring: Christian Cooke, Sarah Bolger

Streaming: Disney+

Run Time: 6 x 52 mins

Available to watch: Currently

Rematch is an English-language French-Hungarian television miniseries starring Christian Cooke as the world chess champion Garry Kasparov, depicting his 1997 match against the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue.

The series, a historical psychological thriller will have you captivated, whether or not you are a chess player.

Cooke has Kasparov’s idiosyncrasies down to a tee - which was no easy feat as Kasparov fans will know!

Excellent viewing - especially for those who followed the IBM drama back in the late nineties.

Currently available, not only on Disney+ but HBO Europe also. convoluted territory. However, the gripping action and character development more than compensate for any narrative hiccups.



Migraine, Coke and Fries

Why your migraine might be making you crave a large Coke and fries. *Amanda Ellison reports.*



Whether it’s one or two coffees to get us going in the morning or a bar of chocolate after a stressful day, many of us self-medicate when we’re tired, stressed or sad. But when we have a headache, most of us head straight for the painkillers.

Lately, though, a viral hack has been making the rounds: that a large Coca-Cola and fries can stop a migraine in its tracks.

And oddly enough, it’s not total nonsense.

Coca-Cola and fries can stop a migraine in its tracks. And oddly enough, it’s not total nonsense.

The caffeine in Coca-Cola acts as a vasoconstrictor, meaning it narrows blood vessels. This helps counteract the dilation of blood vessels that occurs during a migraine – a key trigger for pain.

When vessels widen, they can press on and activate nearby pain-sensitive nerves, especially those of the trigeminal system, which carries sensory information about touch, pain and temperature from the head and face to the brain, leading to that familiar throbbing headache. That’s why caffeine is often included in over-the-counter headache medications.

Meanwhile, the sugar and salt in Coke and fries may help restore balance to blood sugar and electrolytes, both of which can be disrupted during a migraine attack.

But to really understand why this combo might work, we need to unpack what’s actually happening during a migraine.

The four stages of migraine

Migraines can be sparked by a wide range of factors: hormonal shifts, stress, skipped meals, certain foods, even changes in the weather or visual overstimulation. But, once one begins, it follows a specific pathway that makes it distinct from other types of headaches.

A migraine is no ordinary headache. It’s a full-body experience with four distinct stages – two of which occur before the pain even hits. That means there’s a window in which to stop the episode in its tracks, and many migraineurs (people who suffer from migraines) already self-medicate by doing just that.

Prodrome

Prodrome is the first stage, which can begin hours or even days before the headache. You might feel tired, irritable, or unusually low in mood. Most people who get migraines are surprisingly bad at spotting this

phase, even though it’s the best time to intervene.

During prodrome, people often crave certain things. Many migraineurs report yawning more, which helps regulate dopamine, or seeking out hugs and affection, which boost serotonin. Others might drink ice water to calm their autonomic nervous system. Others still might reach for the large Coke and fries.



These responses aren’t random. All of these are unconscious attempts to rebalance the neurological systems that go haywire during a migraine. Irregular serotonin, dopamine and nervous system function are all known contributors to migraines.

And that brings us to arguably the ultimate migraine hack: chocolate. While it’s sometimes blamed as a trigger, chocolate is rich in compounds that help raise serotonin levels.

Because low serotonin is a known factor in migraine onset, a craving for chocolate might be your brain’s way of correcting a chemical imbalance. For some people, a bit of chocolate in the early stages may help ward off an attack.

Aura

Aura comes after the prodrome phase, and it’s when some people experience visual disturbances like flashing lights, or odd sensations like pins and needles. About 80% of migraine sufferers don’t experience the aura phase, but the same wave-like changes happen inside their brains.

These symptoms come from a burst of electrical activity in the brain that is subsequently suppressed, which alters blood flow and causes the constriction of blood vessels. Whether a person notices these effects depends on the structure and sensitivity of their cerebral cortex.

The brain relies on a stable supply of blood for nutrients and oxygen — but direct contact with blood is toxic to brain tissue. That’s why we have the blood-brain barrier, a filter that protects brain cells.

For some people, a bit of chocolate in the early stages may help ward off an attack.

Pain

The pain comes next. The body takes vascular changes in the brain seriously and headache pain is one way it warns us that something could be wrong. Any disruption to blood flow – too little or too much – is potentially dangerous. A blocked vessel can lead to ischemic stroke, while a ruptured vessel causes hemorrhagic stroke. The pain phase begins when earlier blood vessel constriction gives way to a rebound dilation. This sudden widening of vessels activates pain receptors — and voilà: the familiar, throbbing pain of migraine – and it can be debilitating.

For many people who suffer from migraines, once the pain hits, food is the last thing on their mind. That’s why many turn to triptan medications instead of fast food, which rebalance serotonin and histamine (another regulator of blood flow) once the migraine is underway.

Postdrome

Postdrome kicks in after the worst of the head pain subsides. This migraine hangover is more than just feeling worn out, though – it’s a distinct phase of a migraine attack. Known medically as the postdrome phase, it follows up to 80% of migraine attacks and can bring symptoms strikingly similar to a traditional hangover: nausea, fatigue, dehydration, body aches and mental fog.



For many people, this lingering phase can be just as disruptive as the migraine itself, making recovery a drawn-out and exhausting process. It can take days or even weeks to transition through all four phases of a migraine.

Knowledge is prevention

Still, prevention is better than cure and recognising the early signs of a migraine, then responding in ways that support the brain’s neurobiology, can make a huge difference.

Migraines are complex, personal and frustratingly unpredictable. But knowledge is power. And while no single solution works for everyone, recognising the prodrome phase and supporting your nervous system before pain sets in may be your best shot at heading off an attack.

Whether it’s recognising the craving for chocolate as a biological warning sign, sipping iced water, getting a hug, or yes – even reaching for a Coke and fries – these small interventions have roots in brain science. They reflect our body’s efforts to protect itself. Developing your personal treatments based on how

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A man goes to Spain and attends a bullfight. Afterwards he goes to a nearby restaurant and orders the specialty of the day. The waiter brings him two very big balls on a huge plate, which the tourist eats with relish.

The next day he goes to the same restaurant again, once again orders the specialty of the day, and he is brought two very big balls on a huge plate. It tastes even more scrumptious

The third day he does the same and the fourth, but on the fifth day he goes to the restaurant and orders the specialty of the day, and they bring him two very small balls on a big plate. The man asks, ‘What gives?’

And the waiter says, ‘Senor, the bullfighter doesn’t always win!!’

In a murder trial, the defence attorney was cross-examining the coroner.

Attorney: Before you signed the death certificate, had you taken the pulse?’

Coroner: No.

Attorney: Did you listen to the heart?

Coroner: No.

Attorney: Did you check for breathing?

Coroner: No.

Attorney: So when you signed the death certificate you weren’t sure the man was dead

Coroner: Well, let me put it this way, the man’s brain was sitting in a jar on my desk. But I guess its possible he could be out there practicing law somewhere.

There was a lawyer and he was just waking up from anesthesia after surgery, and his wife was sitting by his side. His eyes fluttered open and he said, ‘You’re beautiful’ and then he fell asleep again. His wife had never heard him say that so she stayed by his side. A couple of minutes later his eyes fluttered open and he said, ‘You’re cute’ Well, the wife was disappointed because instead of ‘beautiful’ it was ‘cute’. She said, ‘what happened to ‘beautiful’? His reply was, ‘The drugs are wearing off!!’

What’s wrong, Bubba?” asked the pastor.

“I need you to pray for my hearing,” said Bubba.

The pastor put his hands on Bubba’s ears and prayed. When he was done, he asked, “So how’s your hearing?”

“I don’t know,” said Bubba. “It isn’t until next Tuesday.”

My boyfriend was working in the souvenir shop at Canterbury Cathedral in Kent, England. One afternoon he was talking with an attendant who worked in the cathedral when they were approached by two tourists. “Are you a monk?” one of the women asked.

“No,” the attendant explained, “I wear this robe as part of my job, but I’m not a member of any religious order.”

“Then where are the monks?” asked the woman.

The man replied, “Oh, there haven’t been any monks here since 1415.”

Hearing this, the woman looked at her watch and announced to her friend, “Betty, we missed the monks.”

As a drunk guy staggers out of the bar one Friday evening, a fire engine races past, siren wailing and lights flashing.

Immediately, the drunk starts chasing the engine, running as fast as he can until eventually he collapses, gasping for breath.

In a last act of desperation he shouts after the fire engine, “If that’s the way you want it, you can keep your bloody ice creams!”

Husband: “Honey I’ve been asked to go fishing in China with my boss for a week. This is a good opportunity for me to get the promotion. So could you please pack enough clothes for a week and set out my rod and fishing box. We’re leaving from the office and I’ll swing by the house to pick my things up. Oh, and please pack my new blue silk pyjamas!”


The wife thinks this sounds a bit fishy, but being a good wife she did exactly as her husband said. The following weekend he came home a little tired but looking good.

The wife welcomed him and asked if he caught many fish?


He said, “Yes, lots of Salmon, Bluegill and a few Swordfish. But why didn’t you pack my blue silk pyjamas?”

“I did... They’re in your fishing box!!!”

Congratulations and best wishes to all who took part in the Homeless Street Soccer finals 2025





**Sinn Féin**

Best wishes to all who took part in the Homeless Street Soccer Finals



I am always happy to help, should you need me.


Johnny Mythen TD Co. Wexford
Phone: 087 114 2100
Email: john.mythen@oir.ie



CATHERINE CONNOLLY

Independent TD

“Well done to all who participated in the Homeless Street Soccer Finals”



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A Little Bit of Irish

PHRASE	TRANSLATION	PRONUNCIATION
It is June already!	Tá Meitheamh ann cheana	Taw myeh-hov un kha-na
The sunshine is welcome	Tá an ghrian fáilte roimh	Taw un ghree-an fawl-teh ruhv
Exams are finished	Tá na scrúduithe críochnaithe	Taw na skroo-itch-eh kree-ukh-nuh
I’m having a barbecue	Tá mé ag déanamh barbeque	Taw may ag day-nuhm bar-beh-kwe
I’m going on holiday	Táim ag dul ar saoire	Taw-im ag dul ar seer-uh
I’m reading	Tá mé ag léamh	Taw may ag layv
I’m going to swim	Táim ag dul ag snámh	Taw-im ag dul ag snawv
It’s my birthday	Tá mo lá breithe agam	Taw muh law breh-huh ag-um
What’s your name?	Cad is ainm duit?	Kad iss an-um gwit?

Word Power

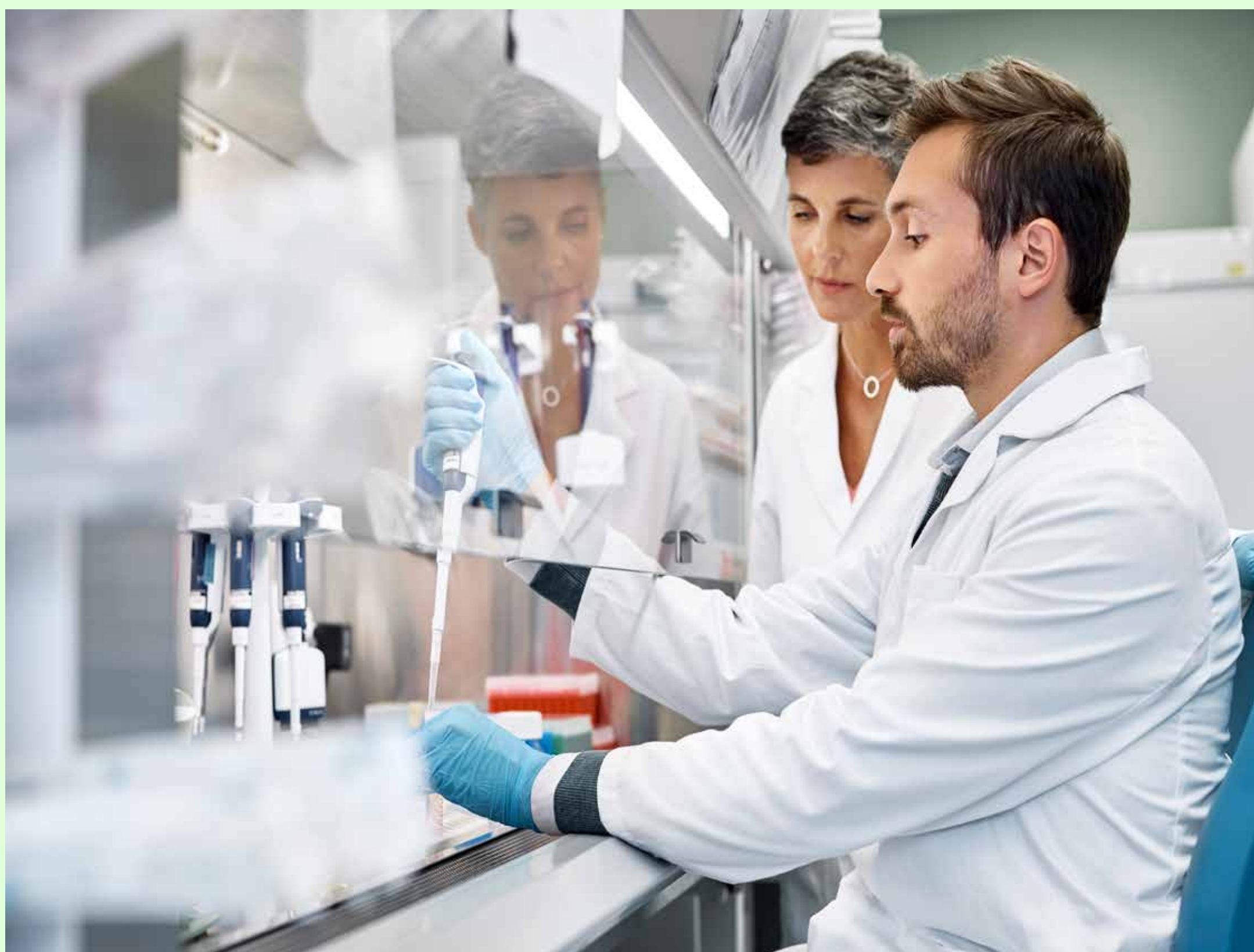
Over the next few issues we’ll be attempting to increase your word power. Have a look at the words below and afterwards see if you know their meaning.

Word	Pronunciation	Answers
1. Sagacious	suh-geh-shuhs	1. Showing keen mental discernment
2. Perspicacious	per-spi-kay-shuhs	2. Having a ready insight into and understanding of things.
3.Cerebral	suh-ree-bruhl	3. Relating to the brain or intellect.
4. Perfunctory	per-fuhk-tuh-ree	4. Carried out with minimum effort or reflection; superficial.
5.Inscrutable	in-skroo-tuh-buhl	5. Impossible to understand or interpret; mysterious.
6. Intransigent	in-tran-suh-jnt	6. Unwilling or refusing to change one’s views or to agree about something.
7. Magnanimous	mag-nuh-nuh-muhs	7. Very generous or forgiving
8. Peregrinate	per-uh-grin-ate	8. To travel or wander around from place to place.
9. Epistemology	ih-pis-tuh-mol-uh-jee	9. The study of knowledge—its nature, origin, and limits.
10.Dichotomy	dahy-kot-uh-mee	10. A division or contrast between two things that are represented as opposites.
11. Reification	ree-uh-fi-kay-shuhn	11. The process of making something abstract more concrete or real.
12. Noetic	noh-ET-ik	12. Relating to mental activity or intellectual insight.

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



Cancer Trials Ireland Urges Patients to *"Just Ask!"* About Clinical Trial Options



Cancer Trials Ireland is mounting a “Just Ask” campaign urging people with cancer undergoing treatment to “just ask” their doctors of the clinical trial options open to them.

Partly funded by the Health Research Board and the Irish Cancer Society, Cancer Trials Ireland currently has over 110 trials dedicated to finding new ways to prevent, find and treat cancer.

Public Attitudes

When it comes to the latest attitudes of members of the public to clinical trials, a survey conducted by Cancer Trials Ireland last year yielded some very interesting findings:

Approximately one in five (18%) either know of someone who has taken part in a clinical trial, or have taken part themselves, while three in five (62%) would be willing to take part in one

Seven in ten (70%) would take part in a trial to potentially help others get better treatment for their health issues in the future, while almost four in ten (38%) would do it to have a longer life, and approximately one-third would sign up to access a new treatment before it’s widely available (32%), or to cure their disease (30%)

Over half (53%) would get involved in a trial to improve their health and well-being, with two in five to have a more active role in their healthcare if ill (44%), or to access medical care and more frequent health checks as part of treatment (40%)

With over 24,000 people newly diagnosed with cancer each year in Ireland, three in four of those surveyed (77%) know someone who has had cancer, or have had cancer themselves.

**I
would encourage any person
going through cancer treatment to
‘just ask’ their doctor if there is a cancer
trial currently available that would be
suitable for them.”**

Next Generation of Treatments

For Prof. Gerry Hanna, Vice Clinical Lead at Cancer Trials Ireland, the ambition is to achieve an up to 75 per cent five-year survival rate for people diagnosed with cancer within the next decade:

“We’re seeking to constantly improve outcomes for people with cancer and we’ve gone from 25 per cent of people being alive five years after a cancer diagnosis 30 years ago, to now over 50 per cent. We want to get that figure up to 75 per cent in the next ten years and one of the ways that we can do this is through clinical trials in finding the next generation of treatments that will improve outcomes for people with cancer. The intention with a prospective trial treatment received by patients is that it should be at least as good as the standard of care and, hopefully, better.

“We also know that in hospitals that run clinical trials, the outcomes are generally better even for those patients who are not taking part in the trial, as the quality of clinical care improves for everyone. With this campaign, I would encourage any person going through cancer treatment to ‘just ask’ their doctor if there is a cancer trial currently available that would be suitable for them.”

For details of almost all cancer trials available in this country, visit www.cancertrials.ie to access a search engine for trials.

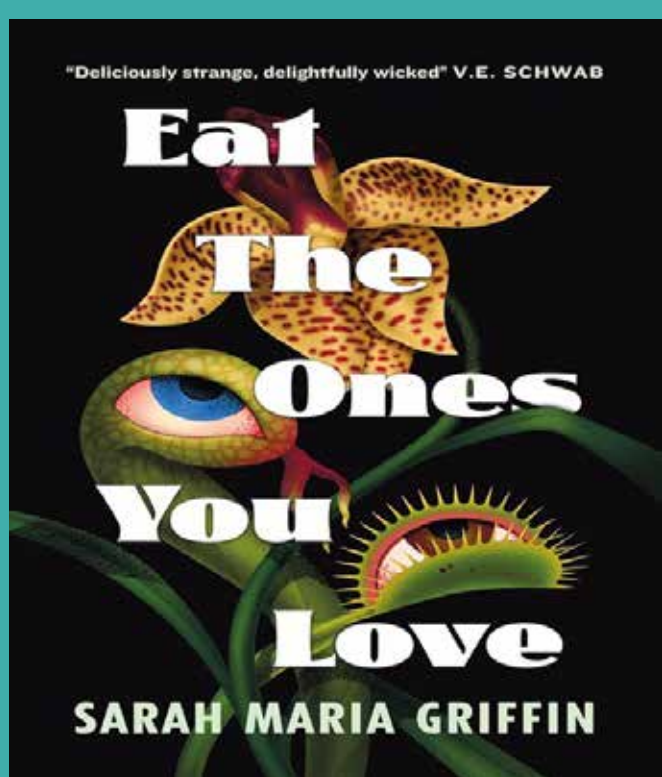
Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



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.

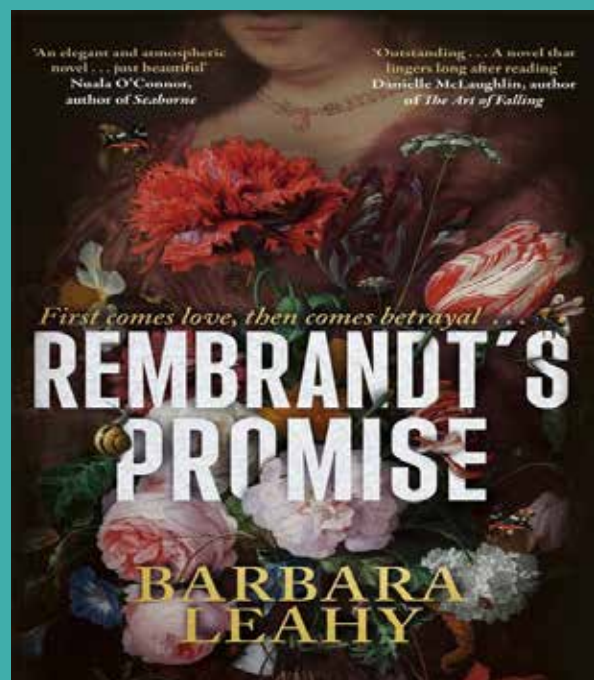
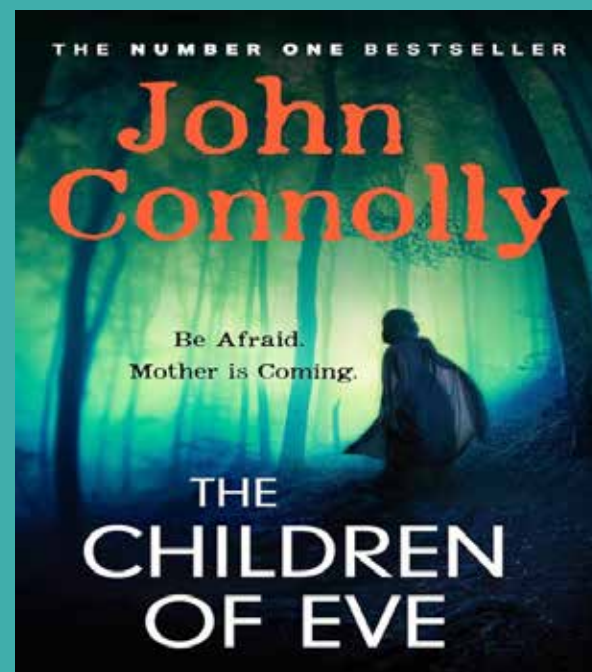
Eat The Ones You Love – Sarah Maria Griffin – Titan Books



A twisted, tangled story about workplace love-affairs, and plants with a taste for human flesh from the acclaimed author of Spare and Found Parts and Other Words for Smoke. During a visit to her local shopping mall, Shell Pine sees a ‘HELP NEEDED’ sign in a flower shop window. She’s just left her fiancé, lost her job, and moved home to her parents’ house. She has to bring some good into her life, so she takes a chance. And flowers are just the good thing she’s been looking for, as is Neve, the beautiful florist. The thing is, Neve needs help more than Shell could possibly imagine. An orchid growing in the heart of the mall is watching them closely. The beautiful florist belongs to him, and he’ll do just about anything to make sure he can keep growing big and strong. Nothing he eats— nobody he eats—can satisfy him, except the thing he most desires. Neve. He will stop at nothing to eat the one he loves. Infused with wit, heart and horror, this is a story about possession, monstrosity and working in retail. It is about hunger and desire, and other terrible things that grow. Gripping!

The Children of Eve – John Connolly – Hodder & Stoughton

Wyatt Riggins, the boyfriend of rising Maine artist Zetta Nadeau, has gone missing, leaving behind a cell phone containing a single-word message: RUN. Private investigator Charlie Parker is hired to find out why Riggins has fled, and from whom. Parker discovers that Riggins, an ex-soldier, has been involved in the abduction of four children from Mexico: three girls and a boy, all belonging to the cartel boss Blas Urrea - except Urrea’s family is safe and well in Mexico, which means the abductees cannot be his children. Yet whoever they are, Urrea wants them back, and has dispatched his agents to secure them, even if it means butchering everyone who stands in their way. One of those agents is Eugene Seeley, a clever, ruthless solver of other men’s problems. The other is an unknown woman. Every child has a mother. Now Charlie Parker will face one unlike any other, and learn the terrifying truth about the Children of Eve.

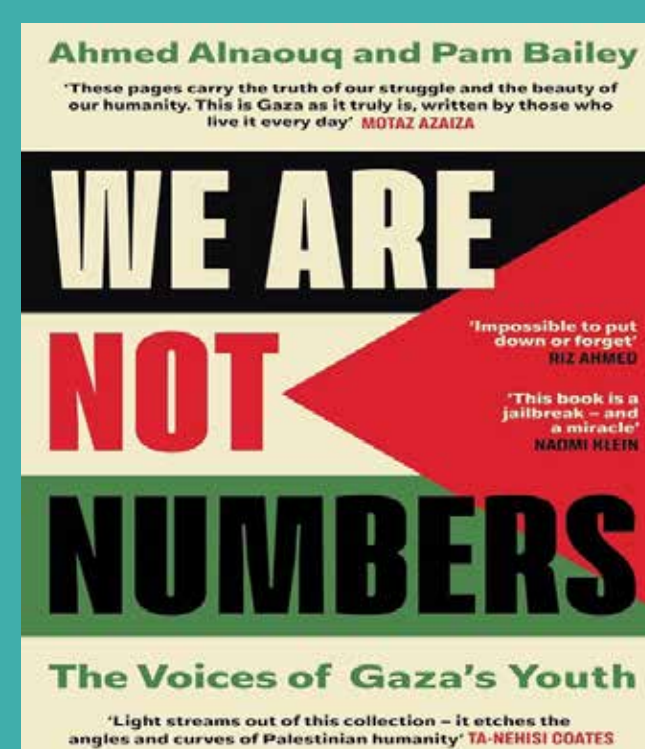


Rembrandt's Promise – Barbara Leahy – Eriú

Hanging beside the door is a painting of a wedding feast. The light is centred on the bride; the guests are banished to the shade. That is how it is when he looks at her: all others fade away. 1642. The Dutch Golden Age is underway, with Amsterdam at the height of its powers. Geertje, an impoverished widow from Edam, enters a melting pot of wealth and culture when she becomes nursemaid in the house of renowned painter Rembrandt. After Rembrandt’s wife dies, Geertje is drawn deeper into his world and despite her friends’ warnings, she begins a passionate affair with the master of light and shadow, with devastating results. Based on the true account of a wronged woman who demanded justice, with themes of feminism, loss, ambition and redemption, this is a remarkable debut, perfect for fans of sumptuous historical fiction.

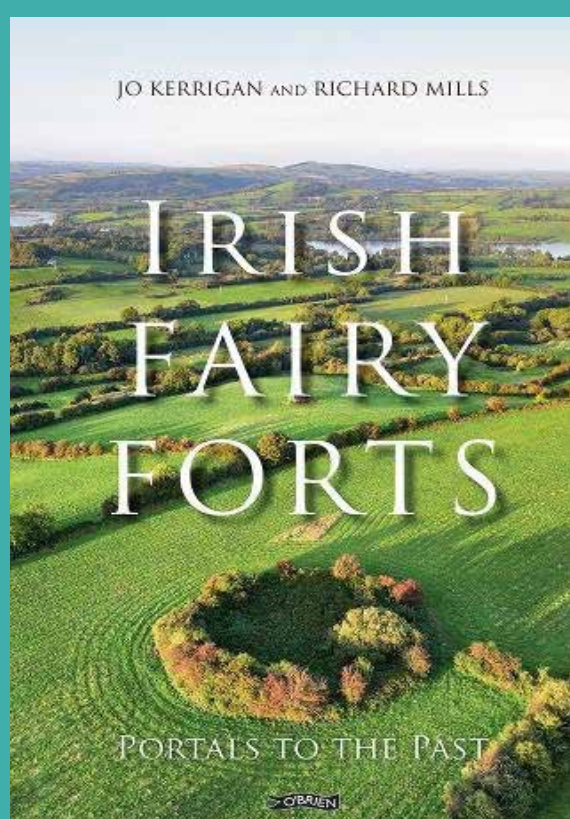
We are Not Numbers – Ahmed Alnaouq Pam Bailey – Hutchinson Heinemann

A teenage girl stares at her roof, hoping it won't collapse over her head. A young student searches the Internet for photos of libraries around the world, hoping he'll be able to visit them one day. Another walks around the city, taking notes of all the buildings she dreams of repairing. These are the stories of young people from Gaza, born under Israeli occupation and blockade. They are people who have endured unspeakable struggles and losses, who keep fighting to be recognised not as numbers, but as human beings with hopes, dreams and lives worth living. We Are Not Numbers was founded in 2014 to give voice to the youth of Gaza. In this collection, vital, urgent and full of heart, spanning over ten years to the present moment, we gain an unparalleled insight into the past, as well as the current and next generation of Palestinian leaders, artists, scientists and scholars and imagine where we might go from here.



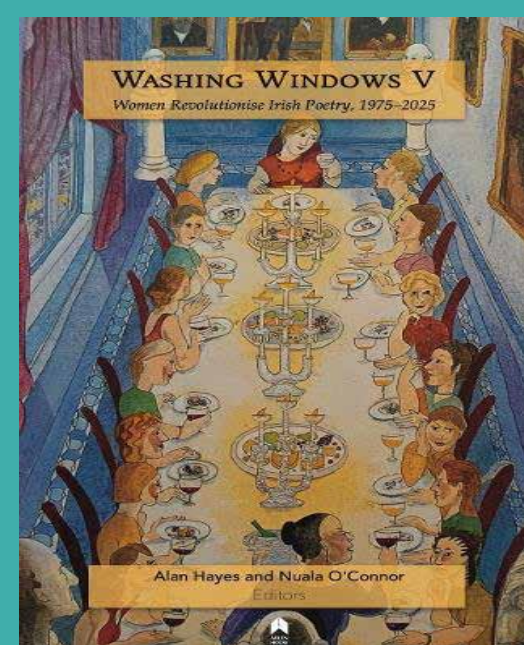
Irish Fairy Forts: Portals to the Past – Jo Kerrigan, with Richard Mills – O'Brien Press

Far more than just a faint echo of the past, Ireland's fairy forts are still vibrantly alive. The traditions connected to them are so powerful that, even today, people rarely interfere with Irish fairy forts or fairy trees. They aren't built on; roads curve around them; farmers don't plough over them. The most numerous ancient remains in Ireland today, numbering up to 50,000 or more, these enigmatic mounds and grassy banks seem to call out to us from an earlier time. So, what are they, who built them and what were they for? And how have so many survived for so long? With evocative photographs by Richard Mills, master folklorist Jo Kerrigan explores the origins of these mysterious circular structures: the stories and legends, the history and archaeology, the living traditions and practices connected to them. And reminds us of the dangers of disturbing the ancient spirits dwelling beneath.

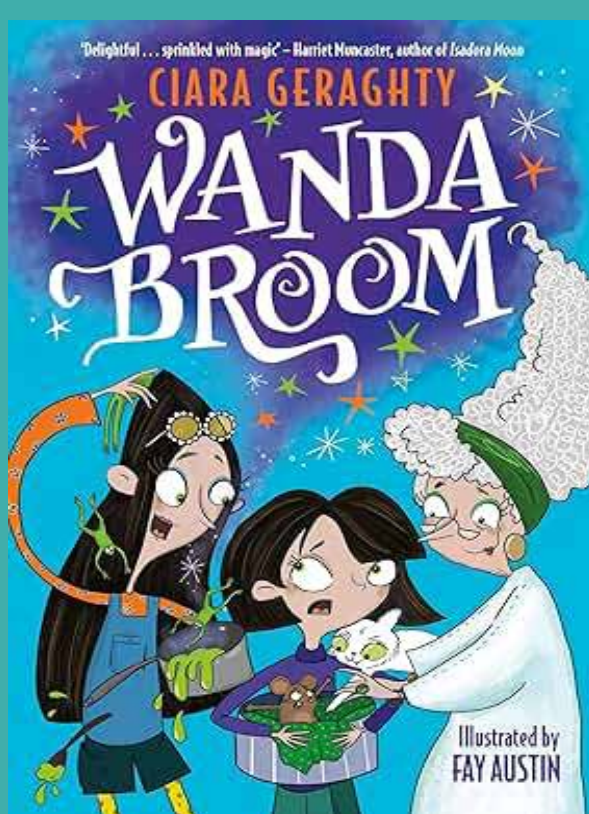


Washing Windows V: Women Revolutionise Irish Poetry, 1975- 2025 - Washing Windows: Irish Women Write Poetry – Alan Hayes, Nuala O'Connor (Editors) – Arlen house

Washing Windows V is the biggest anthology of poetry by Irish women ever compiled, with over 300 contemporary women poets, from all over the island and further afield, writing in English and Irish, poems of power, potency and poignancy.




Wanda Broom – Ciara Geraghty (Author) Fay Austin (Illustrator) – Erín



Wanda's mother is a witch, but Wanda wishes she wasn't! Following yet another of Esmerelda's failed spells, Wanda, her mother and her granny have to move to a new town. AGAIN. Then Esmerelda receives a letter from the World Wide Web of Witches & Warlocks, informing her that she has to undergo an assessment carried out by Mr. Pincer, the Chief Whip, who is determined to put an end to Esmerelda's witching career, once and for all. Wanda is certain her mother will fail the test. Part of her wants her to. Then her mother wouldn't be a witch anymore and Wanda would get what she has always wanted . . . an ordinary life.

What are you reading?

**Let us know on 
@BigIssueIreland**

The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Don't Cross Kat, Scam Factory, Titanic: Ship of Dreams, Final Thoughts: Jerry Springer and CBeebies Car Journeys.

Don't Cross Kat (Crime)



Kat Torres seemed like a typical aspiring model/Instagram influencer type—she even managed to get paparazzi'd next to Leonardo DiCaprio and had some dating rumours swirling. But behind the scenes, after having moved from Brazil to the U.S., Kat started bringing other Brazilian women to live in her home, offering to help them out. But it was not at all what they had hoped—they were being trafficked!

This podcast is hosted by award-winning Brazilian investigative reporter Chico Felitti, who initially released a Brazilian version of the podcast which quickly became a hit.

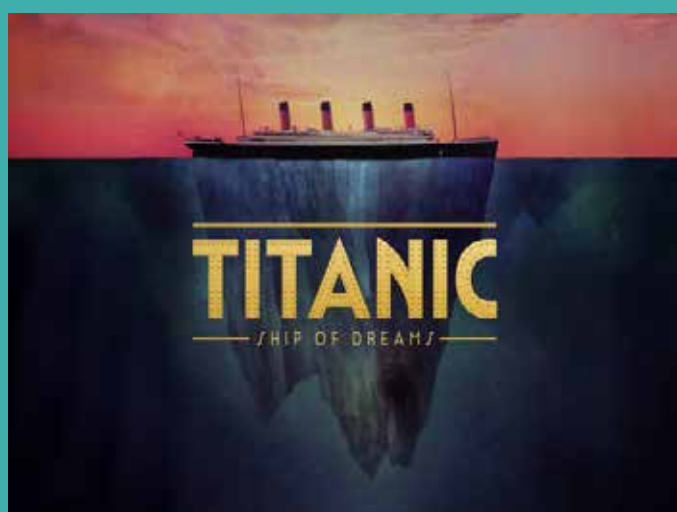
Scam Factory (Human Interest)

You know those scammy texts that always seem to be blowing up your phone? Well, as it turns out, there very well could be a real person sending them and they're likely not doing so voluntarily.

Scam Factory tells the story of how would-be scammers end up trapped in a warehouse in Myanmar, held at gunpoint, and forced to scam their way out.



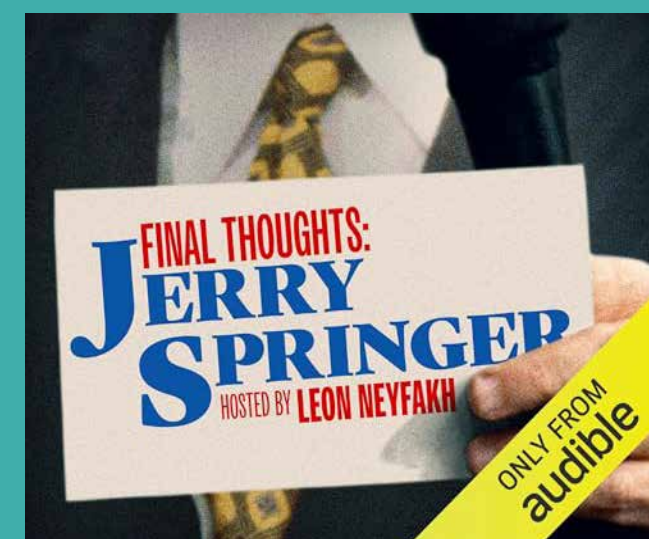
Titanic: Ship of Dreams (History)



Actor Paul McGann hosts this podcast about the world's most infamous shipwreck, featuring contributions from his brother Stephen. Both are nephews of a Liverpudlian named Jimmy McGann, who survived the disaster. They build a vivid picture of nautical near-misses and class separation that contradicts Hollywood's more romanticised version of events.

Final Thoughts: Jerry Springer (Comedy)

Long before he was a chatshow titan, Jerry Springer was a plucky young politician who held the post of mayor of Cincinnati before setting his sights on the state of Ohio at large. Slow Burn's Leon Neyfakh goes all the way back to those beginnings for this nine-part series, marrying excellent journalism with some unbelievable source material – not least when it comes to Springer's 70s sex scandal.



CBeebies Car Journeys (Kids)

With picnic season upon us, what better than all your kids' favourite songs and stories in one great podcast for the car?

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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