

10 minutes with...

MARGARET CONNOR



Margaret Connor

What are you up to at the moment?
Working on second book, titled *My America*.

Which writer has most influenced you?
Hemingway, Twain, Steinbeck, McCourt, Tóibin, Edna O'Brien.

What is your modus operandi for writing?
My writing is from my own experiences with minimum research.

What are your Irish roots?
I was born and raised in Dublin.

Which piece of music always sends a shiver down your spine?
Fields of Athenry, Four Green Fields, The West's Asleep, The Last Rose of Summer.

Heaney or Yeats?
Both are wonderful. I know Yeats' poems better since Sligo is close to home.

Which recent book has moved you?
Say Nothing by Patrick R. Keefe.

The English National Opera performing Tosca
Picture: Getty Images



MARGARET Connor is the author of the memoir *My Ireland*.

The book is a factual and descriptive account of Ireland in the 1950s, evoking a nostalgic picture of Ireland's rural life with its sense of community.

The book begins with Margaret's childhood to adolescence in Dublin leading eventually to emigration.

Which living writer do you most admire?
Fintan O'Toole.

Opera or pantomime?
Opera – *Tosca, La Traviata*.

Which (real) historical figure do you most admire?
President Abe Lincoln.

What would be your motto?
Compassion, intelligence, bravery.

Have you a favourite quote from any poem you've read?
"I will arise now and go to Innisfree and a small cabin build there..."

Have you a favourite quote from any book you've read?
"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times..." from *A Tale of Two Cities*.

What's a favourite line from your own writing?
"What do they need flush toilets for? A lot of flush toilets we had in our day. How will flush toilets help with their learning?"

Mozart or Marin Hayes?
Mozart – I even visited his home in Salzburg.

What books are on your bedside table at the minute?
Walking with Ghosts by Gabriel Byrne.

In terms of inanimate objects, what is your most precious possession?
Irish linen, a gift from my mother.

What do you believe in?
Self-reliance.

Who/what is the greatest love of your life?
My parents.



Fundraiser for Creeslough



SPONSORS: Left to right - John and Kathleen McDaid, Joe Shovlin, Kevin 'Tiffany's' McGinley, Timothy Kelly, Michael O'Donnell, William Coyle, Martin McCarron, Brendan 'Tiny' Vaughan, Paul O'Donnell and wee Charlie Mc Laughlin

THE launch for the raffle of a Massey Ferguson 135 Tractor has taken place at Tiffity's Tavern, Sudbury Hill.

The tractor raffle is in aid of the following voluntary emergency responders who were active in the aftermath of the tragic event that occurred in Creeslough, Co. Donegal in October 2022. The responders include Mevagh Fire Service, K9 Search and Rescue NI, Critical Emergency Medical Services and SARDA Ireland North.

Tickets for the raffle are priced at £10 and the tractor will travel to various locations both in Donegal and London with the final draw taking place on November 26, 2023. Ticket enquiries can be made via email to: creesloughtractordraw2023@gmail.com

Humanitarian aid for orphans

Irish Post journalist in bid to help Ukraine's kids

A CHARITY supported by Irish Post journalist James Ruddy for 30 years is searching for thousands of children scattered to the winds by Ukraine's bitter war.

Hope and Homes for Children staff are trying to trace and protect the desperate youngsters who were trapped in orphanages when Russia invaded last year.

Most of the 105,000 children living in all 700 Ukraine orphanages were evacuated in the first few weeks when staff fled the fighting.

But with the country's social services still in tatters, and amid fears of widespread child trafficking, neglect and abuse, the race is now on to track down the orphans also forced to flee.

The specialist charity, based in Salisbury, is at the heart of the rescue mission. It has saved many thousands of children in similar crises over the past three decades, when James Ruddy first got involved.

He has supported its life-saving work in war zones as far afield as Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Sudan, where desperate children have been rescued and placed in the care of loving families.

"In the face of horrific fighting, the charity's expert Ukraine team have been tracking down these missing children and ensuring they are as safe as possible," he said.

"I've seen its amazing work with countless traumatised



Ukrainian refugees

children on the war-battered streets of Sarajevo and Free-town – tragically, Ukraine's conflict has produced thousands more of such terrified kids, fleeing for their lives from evil they cannot understand."

Hope and Homes for Children is on the ground, working with partners, attempting to trace and protect as many as possible of the 105,000 – including in places where there is fighting raging.

Because eight out of 10 children living in Ukraine's huge Soviet-style orphanage network still have living parents, an estimated 96,000 were sent back to their families when fighting broke out.

A further 2,600 were evacuated across borders, while more than 3,000 children remain in orphanages. Others have completely disappeared.

The charity's army of social workers are ensuring children are in safe families, have shelter, heating, food, water, medicine and trauma counselling.

The charity's founder, ex-Gurkha officer Col Mark Cook said: "One year on in the

disastrous war in Ukraine, it is impossible for any of us to know what it must be like to be there in the terrifying conditions in which many are living.

"We have been working in Ukraine for the past 25 years, trying to get successive governments to agree to change their old communist system of orphanages and replace it with ones of family-based care.

"They did not listen and there were 105,000 children in 700 orphanages across the country when the war started. Many of those closed as the staff fled with their own families and other have been destroyed in the fighting.

"Now our team, which has been increased in size, has the incredibly difficult task of locating all those thousands of children, and finding out their family history and reuniting them wherever possible."

The war has created a new generation of orphans.

■ To find out more, or to contribute go to www.hopeandhomes.org. Or you can text UKRAINEAPPEAL to 70460 to donate £10.