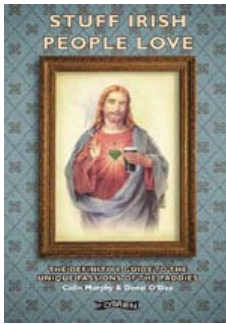


Books of the Year 2011

MAYO COUNTY LIBRARY BOOKS OF THE YEAR 2011

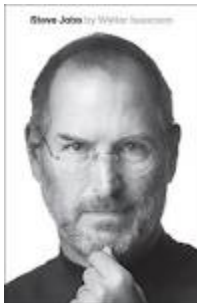
NON-FICTION:



Stuff Irish people love by Colin Murphy and Donal O'Dea – Whether its waving hello to complete strangers, making Marietta biscuit butter sandwiches, changing into your swimming togs under a towel on the beach, admiring 'the grand stretch in the evenings' or being drunk at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve this is the book that shows us as we really are. It's a tongue-in-cheek compendium of almost 100 of the iconic objects and habits that make us uniquely Irish - Tayto Crisp Sandwiches, Red Lemonade, waving on winning streak....

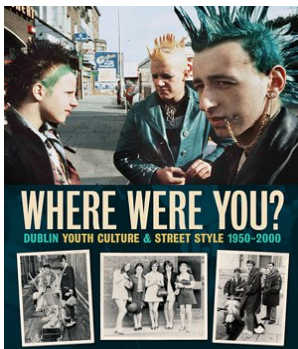


How to be a Woman by Caitlin Moran. This is a short, sharp, feminist manifesto for the new century. But it's not remotely academic –instead Moran uses her own life to examine the everyday niggles of everyday womanhood – hair removal, getting fat, Botox, expensive handbags – as well as the big stuff such as work, marriage and kids. This is a great big hoot of a book. There are lines in it that will make you snort with laughter, situations so true to life that you will howl in recognition.



Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson.

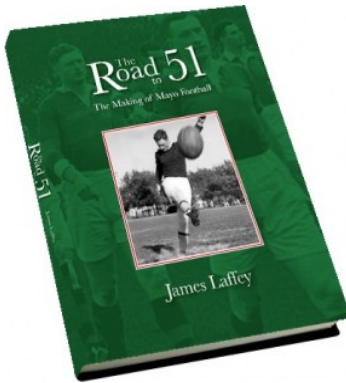
This is a biography of one of the great visionary business innovators of the modern age. It explores Job's life tracing his rise from an anti-social geek to one of the richest men in the world. He is revealed as a complex and sometimes eccentric character-for instance, for a long time he did not believe he needed to wash. He was also adept at taking credit for other people's work, yet ultimately we admire him for the wonderful products he has created.



Where Were You? Dublin Youth Culture and Street Style 1950-2000 by Garry O'Neil

A photographic celebration of Ireland's youth culture, street style and teen life, this fascinating visual record features over 800 photographs of every trend that has hit Ireland in those 5 decades regardless of how cool or off-the-wall they were. Take a trip through five decades of Dublin's past and glimpse its Punks, Teddy Boys, Skinheads, Hippies, Mods, Rockers, Goths, Breakdancers, Bikers, New Romantics, Skateboarders, Ravers and Boot Boys.

Books of the Year 2011



***The Road to 51* by James Laffey** tells the story of Mayo's footballing history from the county's first appearance in a senior All-Ireland final in December 1916 up to when they won our third – and still most recent – All-Ireland title in 1951. In that dizzying 35-year period, Mayo won three All-Irelands, eight National Leagues and 18 provincial titles in what truly was a Golden Era for the county. This is an inspirational story of community passion and pride engendered by the GAA and is set to become the definitive history of the GAA in Mayo.

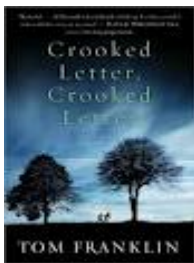


Ireland's Wildlife Year (edited by Eric Dempsey) is a superbly illustrated survey of the four seasons in the Irish natural environment. It traces the development of plants and trees, the movements of birds and animals and the changing face of the Irish landscape over one calendar year. There is nothing understated about the seasonal changes in Ireland. This book, driven by stunning nature photography, tracks those changes as they affect plants, trees and shrubs, bird and animal life, the general landscape and the natural environment. Contributors are outstanding experts in their fields.



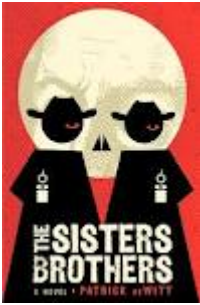
***A Little Gaelic Kingdom* by Tim Robinson** marks the concluding instalment of Robinson's 30 years of work in the west, meeting people and mapping places, making poetic connections between the culture and the complicated countryside. This beautiful book takes us around the Gaeltacht areas of south Connemara exploring the lives of its heroes and rebels. Nobody has ever written about the Irish landscape with such attention and beauty.

FICTION:

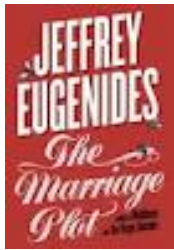


***Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter* by Tom Franklin** enthralled Castlebar Book Club this year with its shimmering prose and captivating sense of place. Two boys share a brief summer of friendship in Mississippi before their lives take very different paths, one becoming a small-town cop, the other forever tainted by the suspicion of murder. Franklin's depiction of the American South is so seductive you can almost feel the heat radiate from the page.

Books of the Year 2011



***The Sister's Brothers* by Patrick DeWitt** is an unsettling, compelling and deeply strange picaresque novel. The story, set against the backdrop of the 1850s Californian gold rush, tells of two gun-toting brothers, Eli and Charlie Sisters, who embark on a thrills-and-spills adventure across California to hunt down and kill a chap by the unlikely name of Hermann Kermit Warm. They encounter a gallery of strange and weird characters along the way. This is a genre bending book in that it is a delightfully dark and bloody Western that turns out to be surprisingly moving



***The Marriage Plot* by Jeffrey Eugenides**

Just once in a while, a book comes along that makes you want to turn it upside down and shake it just to see how the author managed to pull off such an accomplished and stirring tale. The problem with novelists like Jeffrey Eugenides is that they make it look easy. Set in early-'80s America, and focusing on a handful of college students and their struggle to make sense of it all, 'The Marriage Plot' focuses mainly on the beautiful Madeleine, a by-the-book English student who falls like a ton of bricks for the charismatic Leonard. If it sounds a bit too much like boy loves girl who loves other boy, 'The Marriage Plot' is actually much, much more. It's a story of dawning realisations, of growing up, of settling, and then tearing up the rule book. As the characters go on their voyage of discovery, we are with them each step of the way. Utterly engrossing; you get to the end and wanted to start reading it all over again.



***Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline.** Set in a futuristic world where poverty is rife, this book centers on a massive on-line virtual world OASIS and a puzzle. In order to solve the puzzle gamers have to hook in to 1980's pop culture and solve complex gaming riddles and puzzles (derived from the early days of gaming, think Dungeons and Dragons). It's gaming geek heaven, and rings lots of bells for anyone who was a teen in the 80's and has a great story-line.



***Pigeon English* by Stephen Kelman**

This debut novel draws heavily on the killing of 10-year-old Damilola Taylor on a Peckham estate in 2000. Kelman himself grew up on a council estate in Luton and in this book he explores the issue of gang violence through the authentic and innocent voice of Harri Opoku, a newly arrived 11-year-old immigrant from Ghana. It is extremely difficult to write from a child's perspective but Kelman succeeds brilliantly in depicting Harri's slow but inevitable descent into gang warfare on a south London estate. The reader turns the last page with a much better understanding of the forces drawing young people into gang tribalism – and the courage and strength of character needed to stand against such forces. This is a powerful, horrifying and funny book, both utterly convincing and deeply moving and well deserving of its place on this year's Man Booker shortlist.

Books of the Year 2011



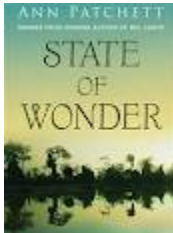
***Lean on Pete* by Willy Vlautin.**

The story is told through the eyes of a 15 year old boy called Charley and his relationship with a horse called Pete. It is a very sad but gripping story. All Charley wants in life is a stable home, friends, playing football and to stay in one school for a while but he has none of this. Relying on simple language, it has a ring of authenticity to it and qualities of grace and sympathy that make it impossible to put down. And if you are a lover of horses it will bring tears to your eyes.



***Before I go to sleep* by S J Watson**

Even those who tend to avoid mystery novels should check out this page-turning psychological twister, which will keep the reader on tenterhooks till the very last page. When Christine wakes in the morning she is stunned to discover a stranger in bed beside her, and she gets an even bigger shock when she looks in the mirror and sees that she has aged about 20 years overnight. When the stranger turns out to be her husband, and he fills her in on the accident that resulted in devastating amnesia, she struggles to make sense of her life. Don't start this book late at night –you won't be able to put it down



***State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett**

When the pharmaceutical company bankrolling the research of eccentric scientist Annick Swenson has had enough of her constant lack of contact, they send the mild-mannered Anders deep into the Brazilian jungle to bring the recalcitrant doctor to heel. But his colleagues are shocked when a curt letter arrives informing them that Anders died suddenly and has been buried in Brazil. His colleague Marina is then sent to solve the mystery of Anders' mysterious passing. When she discovers the medical miracles occurring regularly in the remote rainforest area, she is astounded. But there are even more surprises in store in this remarkable tale of discovery. Patchett creates a space in which the calendar, medical ethics and capitalist economics are suspended and then sliced open for further consideration.