

The Real People of Joyce's Ulysses: A Biographical Guide, Vivien Igoe, (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2016), 380 pages.

Vivien Igoe has long been associated with Joycean activities in Dublin. Indeed, she was one of a small group of people who, through their promotion of Joyce's life and work, could be said to have played a significant part in the modernisation of Ireland that took place between the early 1950s and the late 1960s. James Joyce became then a token of what made Irish culture interesting and important to the rest of the world.

At that time Vivien worked for Bord Fáilte, the Irish Tourist Board, and the Board's role in this process should not, of course, be overlooked. Early in 1954, Terence Sheehy, its director, went to the United States and conducted a survey on what Americans, and especially Irish-Americans, thought about Ireland as a holiday destination. Lovely scenery, ancient churches and castles, golf and fishing – all these were significant. But, among the younger, college-educated cohort, which – thanks in large part to the GI Bill of Rights – had become socially significant, he found that the name of James Joyce was the leading attraction.

On his return from this trip, Bord Fáilte acted. Through *Ireland of the Welcomes*, then a first class, exceptionally well-designed and well-written magazine; and the weekly newsletter of the Department of Foreign Affairs, which was distributed by most Irish embassies, Irish literary culture, and especially Joyce, was widely promoted. This at a time when many, or even most, Irish people were antagonistic towards, or at least sceptical about, the claims being made for the status of Joyce.

There were hopes at the time of establishing a James Joyce Society but this did not come about. In 1961 the Martello Tower at Sandycove, where *Ulysses* opens, had been purchased by Michael Scott, with the help of others, notably John Huston, whose deep interest in Joyce would eventually lead to the making of his last, memorable film, based on Joyce's short story, *The Dead*.

The tower eventually passed into the hands of Bord Fáilte and Vivien Igoe became its first curator. Soon afterwards, the first James Joyce International Symposium was held in Dublin in 1967, with a second one two years later in 1969. These events managed to be both highly scholarly and slightly risible. The local reaction to Margaret Solomons's lecture on 'The Phallic Tree in *Finnegans Wake*' entered Joycean folklore. Nowadays, most Dubliners take

such things in their stride and that that is so is due not least to people like Vivien Igoe and her fellow-pioneers from those years. We are all in their debt. Vivien remains greatly involved in Joycean goings-on. She has already published *James Joyce's Dublin Houses & Nora Barnacle's Galway*, which reached a second edition in 2007, as well as other local guides. Her latest book, under review here, which has had a long genesis, can be seen as the culmination of deep interest and many years of assiduous research. She has been aided in writing it by the vast new resources that have been opened up by digitisation, even though full utilisation of these can remain a challenge.

What she attempts is an exhaustive biographical dictionary of real people, either as themselves, or as the inspiration or model for characters in the works of Joyce. The title specifies *Ulysses*, but the writings of Joyce are, of course, in effect one long continually evolving work of art, from the very simplest of beginnings up to the extraordinary complexities of *Finnegans Wake*, a text which has a disconcerting tendency to return to the simple origins from which it ultimately springs.

Critics and biographers of Joyce are well aware of the intricate manner in which his life and the lives of his family, friends and associates are worked up into something quite new in literature.

But readers sometimes need to recall that the books are, in the end, *literature*. They are not autobiography, they are not history. The habit of modern novelists simply to transcribe the events of their own lives immediately into 'literary fiction' has meant that some readers, coming fresh to Joyce (a process which these days begins with English courses in secondary school), assume that this is what he too is doing.

There has long been a school of literary criticism that holds that readers should approach books with open minds, with no prior knowledge but their own experience of life. (This is, on the whole excellent, advice – in this way readers take the texts for what they are, without the help of a 'Kelly's Key' or 'Cole's Notes', which would come between them and the text itself.)

In what way, then, are the characters in Joyce 'real people'? Take a small instance: 'Fr Dolan' in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The figure in the book (who reappears phantasmagorically in *Ulysses*) was derived from a Fr James Daly at Clongowes. This reviewer is connected to him by marriage and family legend has it that Fr Daly's actual character was not as Joyce, through a myopic haze of fear and resentment, saw him. But far better for readers not to complicate their reactions to the character in the novel with

such extraneous knowledge but to take the character as presented by Joyce through the eyes of a very small boy, for whom the adult world was a mystery – as perhaps it may have remained to Joyce even when he himself became an adult.

Ulysses, as Vivien Igoe's book demonstrates, is filled with 'real people', some under their own names, some lightly disguised. Take the example of the first character we meet at the opening of the novel, Malachi 'Buck' Mulligan. 'Everyone knows' that Buck is Oliver St John Gogarty, whom Joyce had known in the 1890s as a student at University College. He had last encountered Gogarty as a successful Dublin surgeon with a large mansion in Ely Place and a fast car at the door. (Indeed, a *maison secondaire* in Commemara would follow in 1917). But, by the time the novel appeared in 1922, Gogarty was a senator, associated with Irish leaders like Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. He told friends that the wretched Joyce he had kept in his youth (the Martello Tower where Joyce spent a week in 1904 was Gogarty's property) had written a novel that could be read (in part at least) on the walls of Dublin's public toilets. When they had last met, in 1912, Joyce asked, as he looked out of the Ely Place drawing-room window over the elegant back garden: 'Is this your revenge?'

Some might see the slightly vulgar pseudonym he gave Gogarty in the novel, 'Malachi Mulligan', as Joyce's own deliberately intended revenge on his former friend for the offences and slights he retained in his memory from when they were students. But for the reader to see 'Malachi Mulligan' as Gogarty would be a mistake. Mulligan's character must be what the reader is told about it in the novel. There, something different emerges – a man filled with the *braggadocio* which has appeared as an essential part of the Irish character since Celtic times, a man of poetic ambition, but whose ambition remains essentially amateur compared with the ambitions and aims of a true artist like Stephen Dedalus. The characters of 'the real Joyce' and 'the real Gogarty' do not matter in the least for purposes of reading the novel.

I would not like to suggest by these comments that Joyceans and readers of Joyce should not value and make extensive use of this important book, but care is needed. We are getting to the stage where experts know more about some of the people in Joyce's Dublin than Joyce himself could possibly have known. Many of them he knew only second- or even third-hand, through his father's gossip and what was said in the papers. Like that red splash in an impressionist painting, they are there for effect, and not as

part of the vital composition. They add 'local colour'.

That said, what is contained in this book is of immense interest in itself, aside from any Joycean connections. Vivien Igoe provides, in a sense, a virtual conspectus of Irish lives of the secondary or tertiary kind in late Victorian and Edwardian Dublin. It makes fascinating reading.

The large aim of the book is to collect and arrange the facts about people involved in Joyce's world, in so far as they can be known. The author has gone about this unquestionably difficult task with exemplary care. The entries are neatly and concisely written, and do not enter into speculation. Reference to sources and suggestions for further reading are provided (not always the case in reference books, even academic ones). Her trawl of the relevant literature has been done with a fine mesh, the net spread wide.

Apart from its value to the Joycean scholar, the book also has another important value. Biographical information of any kind, even in the last two well chronicled centuries, is notoriously elusive. Even the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, let alone the great new *Dictionary of National Biography*, have pitfalls for the unwary in relation to Irish subjects, and this book can aid researchers in navigating such difficulties.

Facts about the great and the good, the infamous and the wicked, are easy to come by, but not so facts about ordinary people, businessmen, shopkeepers, minor civil servants, just the kind of people Joyce wrote about. By creating such a database of carefully researched information, supported by portraits in many instances (in itself an heroic task), Vivien Igoe has created a resource of immense value to all students of Irish life and history, including those, and they may be many, who have little or no interest in the life and works of James Joyce.

Of course, those involved in the creation of reference works such as this know all too well that such work can never be definitive. There is much more than the task of correcting errors. The constant stream of fresh information from previously unknown or unutilised sources must be collected and passed on. This vast task of constant revision has meant that many reference works, such as the biographical dictionaries mentioned above, are frequently digitised on the internet. This may also be the eventual destiny of Vivien Igoe's work, as future revised and enlarged editions are called for. But, meanwhile, how civilised it is to have it first in book form.

In these days of massive over-production, not all books are essential. It can truly be said that this one is. Elegantly designed, it is up to the high

standards of UCED Press. It will be welcomed as an important addition to Joycean scholarship by Irish writers. Moreover, it should find a place in any library devoted to the Irish Literary Revival and the history of modernism in Ireland, as well as to life and culture in Victorian and Edwardian Dublin. Vivien Igoe deserves the gratitude of the many readers and scholars who will be delighted by what she has done.

Peter Costello is an author and editor, with specialised interest in the life and work of James Joyce, on whom he has written extensively.

Radical & Free: Musings on the Religious Life, Brian O'Leary SJ, (Dublin: Messenger Publications, 2016), 98 pages.

Brian O'Leary's book provides a short but very engaging exploration of religious life, with a focus on the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Despite its relative brevity, this collection of theological, spiritual, historical, psychological and personal insights gives the book a variegated feel, hinted at in the word 'Musings' in the subtitle. Much of the content is taken from a series of talks the author gave to consecrated persons in 2014, during the church's Year for Consecrated Life.

The book serves to inform and renew the reader's understanding and living of the vows. It does so first by unveiling the original inspiration and biblical wisdom behind each of the evangelical counsels. It also offers an array of positive suggestions as to how religious can authentically live the vows today. These suggestions strive to be faithful to both the foundational impulse of the desert fathers and mothers 'to renounce', and contemporary demands on religious life and mission. *Radical and Free* can therefore be considered as both spiritual reading for anyone who wishes to engage with the question of how they live their vows, and as a source of valuable information for anyone who simply wishes to further their understanding and appreciation of religious life.

In chapter one the author reaches back to the time of the nascent Christian church, the age of martyrdom, and the desert fathers and mothers, to offer a critical discussion of the historical origins of religious life. He also traces how the singular decision 'to renounce' evolved in time into the triad of evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience that we have come

to recognise as the hallmarks of religious life. The following six chapters can be read as three two-chapter pairs, unearthing the biblical wisdom and witness which underpins each of the vows and exploring contemporary ways of both understanding and authentically living those vows. In the case of both celibacy and poverty, the author notes how they have been presented in the scriptures as evils as well as goods. Obedience is explored through the biblical portrayal of creation and specific personalities, seen as being and living under the authority of God. As a general observation, the biblical roots of all the evangelical counsels become clearer as the missionary life of the church kicks into gear.

In his discussion of the contemporary living of the vows, the author naturally attends to their apostolic value. What this reader appreciated more, however, was how pastorally attuned the author is to how the vowed life can serve the personal and relational needs of consecrated persons themselves: obedience is linked to self-acceptance (Is 45,9-11), chastity is presented as a living of life with God and others in a spirit of intimacy and mutuality, and poverty is shown as a way of allowing oneself to depend on others.

The author's years of experience show in his knowledge of the history and theology of religious life as well as his familiarity with how different religious institutes have adapted the ideals of religious life to their specific context. In that respect this book it is a useful resource for the ongoing processes of *ressourcement* and of *aggiornamento* called for by the Second Vatican Council.

The introduction left this reader with the impression that the audiences of the original lectures consisted predominantly of older Irish religious people. This book, however, is a timely reminder to younger and older religious people alike that, even though we are entering uncharted territory in the history of the Irish church, the next chapter is but the latest in a story which reaches much farther back than we are normally conscious of. We can dare to hope, therefore, that its future will equally stretch out farther than we can see.

Niall Leary SJ is studying theology in Regis College, Toronto, Canada, in preparation for ordination.