

YOUNG READERS

Alice and Megan's Cookbook, Judi Curtin, O'Brien Press, 160 pp €9.99 £8.99 pb 21 cm, +1-84717-215-0. The best friends are back — in the kitchen! A fantastic cookbook for tens plus. October

Cócó an Colgán Cairdiúil. Ailbhe Nic Ghiolla Bhrighde. *Futa Fata*. 40 pp €9.95 hb 27 cm +1-906907-20-4. Ages 4 to 7. Cócó is a friendly swordfish, but her family move to the other side of the reef; Coco must go to a new school. October

Dancing in the Dark, P. R. Prendergast, O'Brien Press, 192 pp €7.99 £6.99 pb +1-84717-185-6, Jesse's brother has died and her parents are lost in grief. Can dancing help her find her feet? September

Deireadh Baire : Cailtín series final instalment. Caitríona Ní Mhurchú, *Cló Iar-Chonnacht*, 95 pp, €8, pb, 20 cm, +1-905560-64-6, Heroine Rósmáire gears up for a terrifying showdown with her immortal foe, the Formorian druid Cailtín. October

Easter Rising 1916. G&M. 24 pp €18.99 £16.99 hb 26

cm +0-7171-4773-1. Day-by-day chronicle illustrated with pop-up scenes. September

Eva's Journey, Judi Curtin, O'Brien Press, 272 pp €7.99 £6.99, pb +1-84717-224-2. Eva is the girl who has everything, but her dad loses his job. September

Flick, Geraldine Meade. *Little Island*. 288 pp €8.99 £7.99 pb 20 cm +1-84840-950-7. Felicity tries hard to come to terms with her sexuality. October

Fugitives : a story of the flight of the earls. Aubrey Flegg, O'Brien Press, 192 pp €7.99 £6.99 pb +1-84717-202-0. The great chieftain Hugh O'Neill must leave Ireland forever but his son has disappeared. Can he be found? October

Hugh O'Flaherty : his wartime adventures. Alison Walsh. *Collins*. 128 pp €6.99 pb, 20 cm +1-84889-058-9. Children's adaptation of this popular biography. September

It's Great Being Little, Nita Fitzgerald, illus. Francesca Carabelli, O'Brien Press, 32 pp €7.99 £6.99 pb 26 cm, +1-84717-176-4. Beautiful full-colour book about a little girl who just can't wait to be big! September

Leabhar mór na healaine. *Futa Fata*. 140 pp €13.95 hb 31 cm +1-906907-18-1. September

Lúlú agus an Oíche Ghlórach. Bridget Breathnach. *Futa Fata*. 40 pp €9.95 hb 27 cm +1-906907-19-8. Ages 4 to 7. In the jungle all the monkeys are asleep — all, that is, except Lúlú. October

Prim Improper. Deirdre Sullivan. *Little Island*. 250 pp €7.99 £6.99 pb 20 cm +1-84840-948-4. Touching diary-style novel for teenagers. September

The Rebel Prince : book 3, the Moorehawke Trilogy, Celine Kiernan, O'Brien Press, 320 pp €10.99 £9.99 pb 22 cm, +1-84717-112-2. Final instalment of the acclaimed fantasy trilogy. September

Taking Flight. Sheena Wilkinson. *Little Island*. 320 pp €9.99 £8.99 pb 20 cm +1-84840-949-1. Declan's cousin would do anything to keep him away from his horse. Anything? September

Techcorp. Joe Buckley, *Wordsonthestreet*, 194 pp €11.99 pb 21 cm +1-907017-04-9. Teenagers escape technophile city to cross wilds of post apocalyptic Ireland. September.

In a glass lightly

Isolde Coggin

HARRY CLARKE was not just one of the greatest Irish artists of the 20th century but possibly of all time. However neither in his lifetime nor after did he receive the recognition he deserved.

This is probably because he worked mainly in stained glass, a medium which does not have the standing of say painting or sculpture and which, although it can be seen in public buildings and churches everywhere, is almost anonymous in that the artist's signature is not obvious.

Strange Genius : the stained glass of Harry Clarke. Lucy Costigan and Michael Cullen. *History Press*. 320 pp €60 hb 27 cm +1-84588-971-5.

Nevertheless Clarke has received critical acclaim and this book from Costigan and Cullen is the latest in a line of appreciations of his life and work.

While Clarke was also a painter and successful as a book illustrator, he is best known for his stained glass windows. Costigan is not an artist or professional critic but has been an enthusiast of Clarke's for many years. She brings this devotion to the book which is as much a tribute to Clarke as a catalogue of his work. However this is no crusading book attempting to rehabilitate Clarke in popular opinion. She is neutral in her approach to his life and gives a factual account, for example, of the story of the Geneva window. Commissioned for an international exhibition in 1925 by the Irish government, it depicted scenes from contemporary Irish literature but was considered too indecent for public view by politicians of the day. It was locked away in a government vault for decades and Clarke's widow only received the payment due years after his death. Another writer may have made much of this scandalous episode and its effects on Clarke but Costigan discreetly passes over it.

Each piece that Clarke created is listed and described here, most with an accompanying photograph. This gives the reader an accessible comprehensive inventory of the various book illustrations, windows and glass panels that he was commissioned to produce during his short life. There is a minimum amount of description or interpretation as it seems Costigan is content to allow the work to speak for itself.

And that work, especially the stained glass, is beautifully presented here. Michael Cullen is a freelance photographer who specialises in sport, night-time events and special effects. He also has an interest in stained glass and his

expertise comes through in the impressive colour photographs of Clarke's glass not just here in Ireland but in places as far away as Miami (eventual home of the Geneva window) and Australia. Most of these are religious works for Catholic churches, often depicting Irish saints as well as biblical scenes. A few represent secular art such as the windows for Bewley's café in Dublin and the famous Eve of St Agnes, now in the Hugh Lane Gallery. The photographs enable us to appreciate the subtlety of Clarke's work, his eye for detail and above all his amazing use of colour.

However this is not just an illustrated catalogue. By way of introduction, Costigan gives a biographical essay of his early life in Dublin, his teenage interest in art and his decision to specialise in stained glass. Usefully too she writes an essay on the influences on his work both historical and contemporary. In all he produced over 160 stained glass windows and panels. In his day they were recognised as being above the ordinary church art and Clarke was seen as no ordinary artist. It was George Russell who described him as "one of the strangest geniuses of all time", giving the book its title.

This is a beautiful book and probably the next best thing to seeing Clarke's stained glass in real life. The text is a restrained tribute to an artist who, like many others, was badly treated by both state and society in his day. Nevertheless Clarke's genius shines through in his work and this book will be useful to the enthusiast and the neophyte in bringing together a complete list of his output along with the many full colour illustrations of his stained glass windows and panels. □

Awfulness

Syd Bluett

Bendhu (binn dubh, or black cliff), is the name of a singular three-storey house perched on the north Antrim coast in Ballintoy, not far from the Giant's Causeway. The house was designed and built singlehanded, floor by floor by Newton Penprase, an artist from Cornwall. He was his own man, building to his own ever-changing impulses (his

Bendhu and its builders. Andrew Cowser. *Ulster Architectural Heritage Society*. 254 pp £18 pb flapped 22 cm +0-900457-71-5.

original proposal was for a bungalow). Like many self-appointed home builders, he didn't finish the job. Despite this, the house was listed in 1992 as a building of special architectural or historic interest and has found favour in newspaper articles and on TV.