

Your Life

Jimmy Cricket C'mere, there's more from the Post's funniest columnist @Jimmy_cricket

Memories of Frank (It's A Cracker) Carson

It was in the early 60's when I first met up with Frank Carson. The occasion was a charity concert at St Pauls Parish Hall in Belfast.

I'd only just started doing a stand-up comedy act, but Frank was well known locally by then. He bounded through the stage door with his overcoat over his dress suit complete with bow tie, opened the closed curtains ever so slightly and peered out front. There was a wide expanse of floor with people sitting round the sides, more akin to a ballroom than a concert situation. What made it really unusual was that directly below the stage on the floor was a long table behind which a load of civic dignitaries including the Lord Mayor and local councillors...they were all sat facing the audience.

Frank wasted no time. The next thing I know he's got his overcoat off and is sitting at the table beside all the local pillars of the community. Within minutes, he had the mic in his hand, and I'll never forget his first gag..."I just spoke to my dad, before I left the house. He was lying in bed look-



WITH
JIMMY CRICKET



Frank Carson with other comedy greats

ing for a job!"... and that was that. For the next 20 minutes he had the audience in stitches, as he let rip with a barrage of one liners and jokes with big punchlines, then he put his overcoat back on, shook hands with everybody and was out the stage door and on to his next gig. As a young fledgling comedian, I was in awe of how quickly he assessed the situation and was able to stamp his authority on the whole proceedings.

Press fast forward now readers, to six years later and I head over to England to try my luck in showbiz. By this time Frank

had hit the big time through an appearance on the very popular TV talent show at the time called Opportunity Knocks. He had an agent called Ernie Mack who had an office in Liverpool, and I thought well if he got Frank his big break perhaps, he could sprinkle some of his fairy dust over me.

Ernie couldn't have been nicer. After welcoming me in, he actually got Frank on the phone. For the next five minutes I listened open mouthed as Frank dispensed his hard-earned knowledge on how to navigate a

career in stand-up comedy. The gist of this master class was that I should try to work every night even if it was for nothing, because that way I would gain experience and confidence with a live audience, and also be able to sharpen my timing. When I thanked him for his advice he replied, "It's not advice you want, it's money!"

As the years progressed and I eventually broke through myself, Frank and I did lots of shows together. Even though we were two comics from Northern Ireland there was never any hint of rivalry. Indeed, some nights we would toss a coin to see which one of us would do a letter from our mothers back home in Ireland.

Frank once told me if he ever wrote an autobiography he would call it - "Rebel Without a Pause" (a play on words on the title of the James Dean Hollywood movie of the 50's Rebel Without a Cause). It's a shame that he never got to pen his memoirs otherwise we would have heard about his life pre showbiz when he served in the armed forces as a paratrooper out in Aden.

Or how even as one of the country's top comedians he still

found time to serve two terms as honoree mayor of the Irish town of Balbriggan. We would have also found out that he raised so much money for worthy causes during his lifetime that he was awarded a Papal Knighthood by Pope John Paul.

In this year of the tenth anniversary of his death, people are recalling their favourite jokes of Frank.

One of mine would be "I was in a bar the other night and a fella shouted over.. Hi Frank, could you lend me a tenner? I said, I can't hear you. He shouted again, lend me a tenner? I said, I can't hear you. Then the barman whispered to me I can hear him. I said, Well you lend him a tenner then!" Yes folks, it really was the way he told them.

Jimmy's "50 Golden Years in Showbiz", show takes place at the Blackburn Empire theatre on Sunday the 16th of October at 2-30pm.

For Tickets here is a link below folks:- <https://blackburnempire.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/1173623619>

Email boxoffice@blackburnempire.com

Jane Binnion Social entrepreneur and business trainer thegrowingclub.co.uk

It's always good to talk

This week I have mainly been pondering leaving the planet. I heard an article recently that we are investigating the moon for the option of moving there.

My first thought was that's like someone having a wild party and deciding to buy a new house rather than tidy up their mess. But right now, it feels like a good option.

This week there are many things I could write about; I could write about our new PM, about the start of Autumn, that I have already started using my slow-cooker in preparation for the winter bills, about the ap-



WITH
JANE BINNION

parent gender skills gap when it comes to dating aged 40 plus, about being expected to drink recycled sewage water, when in fact we chuck up to nine litres of drinking water down the loo every time we flush...

But then a young man died, he took his own life.

And that is the only news that really matters this week.

A young man who saw no future for himself.

And he is not the only one, so many young people are struggling to see anything to look forward to right now, because we have made such a total and utter mess of things - and then we have the audacity to turn the blame on our young people.



When a young person takes their own life, it should be national headlines, because that is a clear indication that, as a society, we are failing.

We need to ask our young people how they are, and we need to listen.

They do not have the resource and resilience that comes with the experience of living for half a century.

They do not know that this too shall pass. And so, we need to ask, "have you been feeling suicidal?". We need to ask, "are

you considering suicide?"

As a nation we do not talk about death enough, and we certainly do not talk about suicidal feelings. Why? It is a very good measure as to how someone is doing right now.

Asking does not make things worse, it gives people an opportunity to hear that they can actually talk about this.

Saturday is world Suicide Prevention Day. You will find lots of useful information on The Samaritans webpage. And if you have suicidal feelings and think there is no one to talk to, please call The Samaritans on 116 123. Have a good week, please stay safe, stay kind, and stay connected