

# Dripping with pride after mammy's recipe takes win

By **Darren Hassett** and **Sean Poulter**

AN IRISH mother's secret recipe is the key to one butcher's award-winning foodie hit.

The fact it is pure animal fat, made from rendered down beef cattle, would seem to be enough to send blood cholesterol readings off the scale.

But this beef dripping has been named Supreme Champion in a contest of the best gourmet foods Europe has to offer.

The Finest Quality Dripping from James Whelan Butchers of Clonmel, Co. Tipperary beat 10,000 food and drink products in the Great Taste 2015 awards.

Speaking to the Mail about his win, butcher Pat Whelan, 47, said: 'My dad [James] had [the butch-



Award: Butcher Pat Whelan

ers] before me and I continued it on and developed the business and grew it.'

The father of three says his inspiration came from a hunger for quality products. The family

have been butchers since 1960 and employ 55 staff across their stores, farm and website.

Mr Whelan said: 'I went up to my mother and I said to her "Mam, what did you do with fat?"'

'She said we used to make dripping... and we made it for the first time four or five years ago.'

'What makes the dripping so special?'

'Dripping is a by-product. We actually blend the fat to get that special beefy flavour and that's a family recipe we have which my mother was kind enough to share with me and I will hopefully share with my children.'

Mr Whelan, who attended the event in London with his mother, said: 'To win the Supreme Champion is just amazing.'

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Even in times of change, it is nature that will steady us

**T**HEY say the world is in flux, that the old certainties are being swept away. The things that we cherish, those which testify to who we are, no longer command respect or allegiance. Some things, however, do not change, and it is to those we should look in times of turmoil.

As I write, the September sun is pouring its precious light upon my desk. It is low, warm and less dazzling than it was just a month ago. It hangs there in the sky as if suspended by a silken thread. A September sun is not meant to give you a tan. It is not meant to bring the world to bloom. It is the last salute of summer, a farewell kiss from a loved one for whom we yearn all year long.

Basking in this gentle light, I am reminded of Christ's consoling words: 'The Father causes his sun to rise on the just and the unjust, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous'. It doesn't matter what is happening in the world, the September sun will still rise and cast its golden glow across the surface of the earth.

Everything is changing, and yet we know the sun will sink shortly after six. We know that darkness is steadily eating away the day and that dusk will soon have its way. We know that because, however changeable our human affairs, the ways of nature remain steady.

I turn on the kitchen light at dawn. From the window, I can see the autumn songbirds eating breakfast in our garden. With each bite they pause and sing as though offering praise for their provisions.

Just as the sun rises and falls with seasonal regularity, so too do those gentle creatures visit our home. They arrive each year in late August and by Christmas they are gone. They stay for as long as they are meant to stay and then it is upwards and onwards.

Will I miss their sweet September sonatas and their dainty dancing at dawn? Not at all, for I know they shall return and I also know some old friends will soon take their place. From the heavens they shall suddenly descend, a family of robins that will see us through the winter.

We call them 'Santa's spies', but for me they are a symbol of beauty and colour in the dark days of December. Their songs resemble the voice of creation crying out to the cosmos. They are a hopeful reminder of new things, of growth and life bubbling beneath the surface.

The events of today will bear no resemblance to those of tomorrow. Each day is a new page in human

history, a new drama with different actors. That is extraordinary in as much as it bears witness to the unique individuality of each person, to their free will and their marvellous capacity to alter the course of events.

Such is the mystery of our condition and it is one that we should never cease to look on with awe. However, we are also creatures of habit, beings that thrive best with routine. Few enjoy being tossed to and fro by circumstances beyond their control.

What they call the ordinary business of life is that which gives us most comfort. To rise at the same time every day, to gaze out upon the world and know what to expect in each season, is also something miraculous. It is to see the world at work, to see life in all its harmony.

That is why I never listen to the radio in the morning. It is to leave oneself at the mercy of the unexpected, to start the day without the comfort of certainty. I simply peer out my window and watch as the world unfolds to a rhythm that rarely varies.

The sun shines on the wicked and the good, on the happy and the sad, on the lonely and the loved. The days shorten and lengthen as they have since the dawn of time. In this, there is no discrimination, bias or favouritism.

**H**UMAN things will always change. Old certainties will collapse and new ones will only endure for the shortest time. With us, nothing lasts forever.

History is not driven by a force greater than itself. To see such a force at work we must look to the world beyond our window. We see it in the perfection of a September sun, in the autumn colours and in the certainty that tomorrow's dawn will be later than today's.

We see it in the sensational sunsets, the evening stars and in the stillness of the night. We see it in the landscape, which changes but somehow stays the same. We see it in our gardens, where creatures do not decide to stay or go, but are compelled to visit and depart when nature decrees.

I stand alone in the shadows of an early morning. I see the sun peep from behind the hills, the dew twinkle on the lawn, the song birds taking advantage of the soft soil. I listen to the sonatas and the distant barks as they are carried on the still air.

I stand there and give thanks for the consolation that these blessed certainties convey. And then I turn back to the human world knowing that whatever comes my way, some things at least are here to stay.



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