

# Buying Irish is harder than shoppers realise

IRISH food is recognised as some of the best in the world, so it's no surprise then that most of us pick home-produced goods off the supermarket shelves.

As evidence of our loyalty, nearly nine out of ten shoppers – or 87 per cent – make an effort to buy Irish, a survey has found. And 74 per cent try to buy items with the Love Irish Food logo.

Despite the best efforts of shoppers however, consumers sometimes buy brands, such as HB Ice Cream and Lyons Tea, which they mistakenly believe are produced here.

A spokesman for Love Irish Food, which ordered the survey of 1,000 people, said: 'Irish shoppers are confronted by misdirected information as they try to be confident in the food that

By **Christian McCashin**

they feed to their families. By using local Irish business addresses on such packs, shoppers may think that the brands that they are buying are produced here in Ireland.'

Elsewhere, of the shoppers polled, 95 per cent said they wanted to see the country of origin on packaging so they could pick out not only what they want but also what they do not want.

The survey revealed too that there are some nations shoppers don't want to buy from. A quarter said they boycotted some countries, with Israeli food and drink the worst affected, being shunned by 11 per cent.

Apart from a minority of products such as beef and fish, there is

no legal requirement to show the country of origin on groceries, unless 'its absence might mislead consumers as to the true origin of the product'.

Executive director Kieran Rumley said: 'Made at an Irish or even English, French or Polish address would give shoppers the information that they need to decide if they want to continue buying from that source.'

'The Love Irish Food website provides information on all our member brands and their products that are being manufactured locally.'

The agri-food industry employs around 300,000 people here, while Love Irish Food member brands – such as Glanbia, Britvic and Barry's Tea – have staff numbers of approximately 30,000.

# Dr Mark Doooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Don't give into the mob, just listen to your child's wisdom

**I** WISH we lived inside a children's book. When I asked our eldest what he meant, he simply replied: 'In those books people are always kind, loving and there is never any trouble or violence'. As always, the greatest wisdom falls from the mouth of babes.

No doubt affected by the recent disturbing scenes on our streets, our son was speaking for all who cherish peace, law and order. However, it was also one little boy's lament for his passing childhood, his time of magic and dreams. He thinks the magic must end, but he doesn't want to live in a world without it.

Who can blame him? My time as a father has taught me that if there is joy to be had in this life, it is amongst children. In them, I have seen the true beauty of humanity.

Children are invariably loving, caring, trusting and, no matter what their troubles, they never cease to shine like the summer sun. Looking always to the stars, they live their days in wonder and hope. If you wish to see us at our best, ponder the miracle that is your children.

The older I get, the more I realise that we should emulate our children. In saying that he would like to live inside a children's book, my son was simply stating that, if we could all live like children, the world would be a far finer place. If only we could share their joy, exhibit their love, innocence and tenderness, we could create the perfect society.

Of course, adults regularly behave like children. However, immaturity is not the true essence of a child. At their core, children are wise well beyond their years.

The fact that we consistently fail to learn from them only proves children are often wiser than their parents. They look at the world without cynicism, without the resentment that drives so many of us to say and do things we usually regret. Judgment and condemnation simply don't feature in their world.

This is not to say that children don't fight, tease or bully. They are, however, always quick to put things right. Many times, I have broken up a violent confrontation only to find, within minutes, the little culprits declaring their undying love for one another.

The great pity is that we can't live inside a children's book. We can't smile our way through life with Mr Happy or share magic moments with Pooh Bear. What we can do, however, is live as though it were possible.

What would it be like to live like that? What would it be like to always

see others and the world through the eyes of a child? It would be to dance with the angels until the end.

Christ summed it up perfectly when He said: 'Unless you change and become like little children, you shall never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' By this He meant that unless we see our children as moral role models, we shall never ascend to our true height. We shall remain stranded in a wilderness of self-doubt, misery and despair.

To live as children is to open your heart to every human that crosses your path. It is to live in the moment, never permitting the past to prevent the dawn of a brighter future. It is to laugh whenever you can, and to see another's tears as an open invitation to offer affection.

It is to see in those around you only the best, never doubting for a moment their sincerity.

It is to forgive them their faults even when they continue to fail. As one of my sons remarked when he overheard me complaining about those causing trouble on the streets: 'I know they upset you, Dad, but you shouldn't speak about them like that. They are human beings.'

To follow that child's example is to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. It is to cease worrying about little things and to savour special moments as though they were your last. It is to look for the sun in the midst of the shadows, and to embrace the joy that can always be found wherever there is life.

It is to know that when you do things for love, love is what you will receive. It is to sing and smile your way through the day, to dissolve all worries in a blaze of light and laughter. It is to be for others what you would like them to be for you.

**A**ND that is why we must never cease to learn from our children. That is why, as we slowly enter this blessed season of wonder and warmth, we should remember that if salvation came in the form of a child, it was because children are the key to our happiness. They show us what it means to be truly human, what it means to live in peace and perfection.

That night, as I kissed my sleeping sons, I realised that living inside a children's book is not the stuff of dreams. Whenever we open our hearts to become like little children, we enter a magical kingdom where anything is possible.

In such moments we can soar with them to the stars, only to find that, in order to get there, our feet do not have to leave the ground.

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