

# Ex-boutique owner hit with €3m tax demand

A FORMER fashion boutique owner has been named on the Revenue Defaulters List and hit with a bill of more than €3million.

Nora Filtness from Millcastle, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath, was investigated and found to owe €1.06million in tax, a similar amount in interest and a €1.06million in penalties.

The total Revenue bill in connection with Ms Filtness's boutique, Clara Ellen, is €3,186,753 but was not paid at the end of June when the list was compiled for publication.

A Revenue spokeswoman said it was bound by law not to release any further details. Efforts by the Irish Daily Mail to

By Leah McDonald

contact Ms Filtness yesterday, via Facebook, were unsuccessful.

In all, the Revenue Commissioners reached 58 settlements with tax defaulters in the three months of June 30, amounting to almost €11.1 million.

In other cases, Edward Galvin, a painting contractor of Shannonlee, Model Farm Road, Cork, agreed to pay €633,827 following an offshore assets investigation.

Roscommon property developer Martin Downes, of Kiltycreighton, Boyle, agreed to pay €520,917 for the non-declaration of VAT and the under-

declaration of contracts tax, PAYE, PRSI and USC.

KC Tyre Centre in Quinlan Street, Limerick, now in voluntary liquidation, agreed to a €515,089 settlement relating to the under-declaration of PAYE, PRSI, USC, VAT and corporation tax.

Revenue said €5.67million of all settlements had remained unpaid by the end of June, and it said it would vigorously pursue collection of this money.

In the three-month period, a total of 1,387 Revenue audit and investigations, together with 23,877 'risk management interventions' were settled, resulting in €115.13million in tax, interest and penalties.

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# She lived only in fiction... but helped make sense of reality

**I**T was only when a single tear fell onto the page that I realised I was weeping. I was reading the final instalment of a trilogy of novels when one of the characters died. She was old and ailing, but, somehow, I had grown to love her.

The novels traced the entire course of her life and now she was a great-grandmother. And then she died, as she had lived, with grace.

I placed the book on my knee and wiped away the tears, incredulous that the death of a fictional character could have such an impact on me.

We have all had this experience when watching a movie.

A character dies or is slain and the atmospheric music forces us over the edge. The human heart is touched by the sight of someone finding redemption in their final agony.

This is true of even the worst villains. I remember watching a television drama on the life of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

He was played by American actor George C Scott who, in the last minutes, poured out his soul to his long-suffering wife. Only the hardest heart could not have been moved in that moment.

It is different in literature because we are in the realm of pure imagination. There is nothing to see, no visuals to work on the senses. And yet, we see in a way that is more real than anything on the screen.

As I lowered the book to my knee, I realised that I loved a person who did not exist.

She was a figment of someone's imagination, a name without physical substance. But, to me, she was as factual as anyone in this world.

It was only in that moment of sadness after she had died, that I fully understood how engaged with this person I had become.

I felt I had lost a friend, someone whose existence made the world a better place.

I was mourning a figure who had never lived, but whose 'life' had become part of mine.

Such is the wonder of culture – that sphere which opens a world beyond time and space. In reading literature and listening to music,

we move beyond the veil of reality into a world which stretches to eternity. It is as though we can see through the fabric of time to the other side.

The old woman did not belong to this world, but she caused me to cry. There was no physical death and no grave where she is interred. In fact, she dies every time someone reads that page.

She belongs to everyone and yet to no-one – a ghost-like figure dwelling only in our dreams. But these are dreams which make reality worthwhile.

They are the source of light and love, good and evil.

Without such characters, what could we know of nobility, beauty or courage? Life provides many examples of these virtues, but we are often too anxious, tired or distracted to notice them. In our books, they assume a human face and beckon us to do better.

A moral guide is not someone who pontificates or preaches. It is not someone who forces you to be good or decent or honourable. It is someone who leads by example, someone who simply lives out their values in the best way they can.

**T**HAT is why our fictional friends are so important for a happy life. Their lives offer us a vision of what it would be like to live in another way. They don't condemn us for our failings, but inspire us to overcome them.

When you open the pages of a book, you are taking a step inside a realm of possibility.

It is not a real world, but one that can become so – in you. It is an imaginary space where no-one exists, and yet it has the power to shape our lives for the better.

That night, I closed my book with a heavy heart. A person I had only recently come to know was dead. Like all lives hers was flawed, but it was not without moral majesty.

Through a small tear in the fabric of time, I caught a glimpse of another world. And in that world, I met someone who made me smile, proud and sad.

Such people do not exist except in you and me, which is why the true measure of their legacy is how we live when the story ends and the last tear has been wiped away.

—mark.dooley@dailymail.ie—

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