

# Shelf Life

Time travel, the Young British Artists and cookbooks:  
**Bridget Hourican** reads widely.



## THE VISUAL TIME TRAVELLER, 500 YEARS OF HISTORY, ART AND SCIENCE IN 100 UNIQUE DESIGNS

**Alison Hackett (21st Century Renaissance, €45; limited edition, €85)** A stylish 21st century look at the past – each double-page spread covers five years, starting in 1500 and ending in 2010. Events, quirky and famous, Irish and international, artistic and scientific, are referenced and visualised. The text for 1900-1904 references the first Tour de France, the Wright Brothers' first powered flight, and Rodin's "The Thinker", but the image, *above*, goes to Dublin, Joyce and the first Bloomsday. An endearing kaleidoscopic view of history and human achievement. Author Alison Hackett left a job with the Institute of Physics in Ireland to set up 21st Century Renaissance publishing – this is their first book, and is in collaboration with Dublin's Origin Design agency (*origin.ie*). Available at Hodges Figgis, Dublin or online at *thevisualtimetraveller.ie*.

**AWAY DAY**  
 Don't miss Immrama, the annual **Lismore Festival of Travel Writing**, June 12-15 in Waterford. Talks by Paul Theroux, Simon Winchester, Charlie Connelly and others as well as workshops and the Molly Keane Creative Writing Award; [lismoreimmrama.com](http://lismoreimmrama.com)

## Who's reading what?

Debut novelist **Jonathan Gibbs**.

### WHAT IS YOUR FIRST NOVEL

**RANDALL ABOUT?** It's about the Young British Artists (YBAs) and the scene that sprang up around them in London in the 1990s, and the weird trajectories they've taken since. It's about art and money, and love and friendship – and the terrible things that happen when they get confused.



### IS THE CHARACTER OF RANDALL BASED ON A PARTICULAR ARTIST?

Randall's not based on Damien Hirst exactly, but he couldn't have existed without him. The YBAs needed someone like him at their centre to become what they did.

**WHERE DID YOU WRITE IT?** Mostly at my dull old desk in south London. I don't go to art galleries that often, but whenever I do I write plenty – usually along the lines of: "What on earth are all these people doing here? What am I doing here?"

**FAVOURITE TRAVEL BOOK?** I love Geoff Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage*, which is an anti-pilgrimage – traipsing despondently after DH Lawrence from Nottinghamshire to Italy to Mexico.

**BEST BOOK TO TAKE ON A JOURNEY?** Something that feels wrong at home. You're already someone else when you travel, so read something you wouldn't normally read.

**... AND THE WORST?** For a plane, I'd say *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Jonathan Gibbs is a freelance British journalist and book reviewer. *Randall* is published by Galley Beggar Press on June 19.

## Three new cookbooks ...



Susan Jane White, **THE EXTRA VIRGIN KITCHEN** (Gill & Macmillan, €27.99). *The Sunday Independent* columnist cooks without sugar, wheat or dairy (but allows meat). Necessity is the mother of invention: she substitutes maple syrup, quinoa, coconut oil, goji berries ... Some recipes are wholly unexpected, others a new take on old classics. All are delicious.



Cathal Armstrong, **MY IRISH TABLE** (Restaurant Eve, £28). Hailed in the US as a "renaissance in Irish cooking", Dubliner-turned-celeb restaurateur – and Obama favourite – Armstrong updates traditional Irish dishes (stew, coddle, cheese on toast) to make new dishes (crab and artichoke salad with harissa mayo).



Irish Countrywomen's Association, **IRISH COUNTRY COOKING, MORE THAN 100 RECIPES FOR TODAY'S TABLE** (Sterling Epicure, £15.07). This could be re-named "Recipes from Around the World by ICA members". Irish staples (colcannon) sit alongside international fare (Hungarian goulash). Expect meticulous recipes that work.