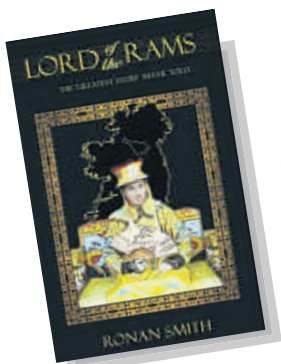


This kind of vanity is to be encouraged

Although sniffed at, authors who go it alone do offer the public more than simply memoirs and madness



WHY IS IT that “Indie” musicians or filmmakers, who work tirelessly to get the budgets together to produce an album or film, are revered by so many but the humble author who does likewise is scoffed at?

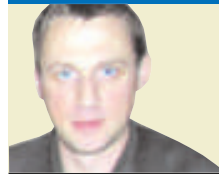
The reasons given by the industry are fairly standard. Authors who go down the self-publishing route are classed as vain. “Vanity publishing” has become the trade name for self-publishing. If they couldn’t secure the services of a reputable publisher, then their work isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.

Reasons given to avoid self-published authors include their work being too personal (memoirs, eccentric hobbies or obscure histories being favourites) and, being new to the game, the guilty authors have failed to consider a proper marketing strategy or even a suitable readership for their work.

Everyone has a book in them, but it takes more than strength of will to get it out there. Publishers — to use an industry phrase — throw plenty of sh*t against the wall hoping a decent enough percentage of it will stick, the same as the A&R men in record companies or producers in the film world.

Authors who go down the self-publishing route not only have the tenacity to see their book through to print without corporate help, but also the courage to throw the sh*t all by themselves, and they clean up the mess if it doesn’t stick. Sadly, mostly it doesn’t.

BOOKS



Tom Galvin

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Several books of this nature land on the *Herald* desk every week. And while many lack the finesse of the branded titles, the wealth of topics covered, the colour, the personalities, histories, tales, trials and tribulations are always a wonder to behold.

While I only rescued two from the basket this

‘Everyone has a book in them, but it takes more than strength of will to get it out there’

week, it was a nice indulgence to able to veer off the beaten track and both are worthy of a mention.

Ronan Smith's *Lord of the Rams* (Trafford, €14.50) is a warm story of rural Ireland in the 1980s, a decade that is now being referred to with gusto in the media.

FASHION

It's not as depressing as it sounds today, and Smith's tightly written memoir will charm the naysayers into reconsidering their view of the decade that fashion neglected and youth turned their backs on as they hit the airports. The group of characters would be familiar to anyone who lived in those times, and while much of it is for the boys, it is a diverting and entertaining read. The price tag is cheekily optimistic, but fortune favours the brave and Smith has courage in abundance.

Another prescient book that I grabbed is Colum and Ita Killeen's *Half Century Memoirs of Two Dublin Inner City GPs* (Linden Publishing Services). While the title could have done with a scalpel, being a GP in 1950s' Dublin provides some endearing tales.

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