



# Pet hates no help in getting over failing technology

**T**O QUOTE Kitty of Coleraine, "misfortunes, they never come singly 'tis plain," for very soon after the living room television went kaput, my car radio conked out, joining the CD player which snuffed it months ago and I never got round to replacing it.

Minor inconveniences in the great scheme of things you may think, but you've not suffered the privation of having to move lock, stock and barrel into the kitchen and sit all evening on a hard chair to watch the wee TV, read the papers and write, even with two cushions.

And how I miss shouting at Stephen Nolan in the mornings as I drive to the papershop. Daughter Dear, a very present help in trouble, immediately ordered me a new television online, next day delivery guaranteed. Except to Norn Iron, where the 'protocol' has marooned it in a lorry park in Larne.

The sound of silence gives me the heebie-jeebies. It's far too loud. I keep the radio on all night and dream the programmes. For writing, my constant accompaniment is the soothing aural wallpaper that is Classic FM. I can hum along with more than half of its Top Hundred, but couldn't put a name to more than a dozen. Wasn't it Wordsworth who praised 'the bliss of solitude'? I don't mind it so long as there's something burbling quietly in the background.

When I lost the Loving Spouse, well-meaning people suggested, "Would you not get a pet?" As either Shakespeare or the late Frankie Howard put it, "No. No. Thrice no." People only keep pets to have something in the house that doesn't contradict them.

That love comes at a price, viz. damage, mess, fleas, fees (veterinary and kennel.) Worst of all, pets are unpredictable at both ends – and a tie.

Anita ROBINSON



You can go nowhere without imposing their care on someone else.

They pine if you're absent for more than a day and, left alone, take it out on the furniture. Animals are calculating creatures. They sense tension, distrust and dislike. On the rare occasions the Loving Spouse and I had vociferous differences of opinion, an anguished Daughter Dear would appeal, "Stop fighting in front of Cloudy! You're upsetting her!" Cloudy was her founding kitten, grudgingly given three days grace, but stayed thirteen years, to the detriment of two sofas and the living room curtains.

Unlike her flint-hearted parents, Daughter Dear, from an early age, exuded the milk

of mongrel kindness from every pore and compassion for all four-legged creatures however repulsive.

Living independently she rapidly acquired two cats, a dog and a horse and provides a four star menu for a family of hedgehogs lodging in her garden – all of which make her visits not entirely an unmixed delight. Pets are proprietorial.

They have their favourite basking places and resent usurpers. I've only to choose a particular armchair and within minutes, the dog is upon the armrest staring at me accusingly and a cat is draped across the back like a fur stole, while I sit, rigid with apprehension.

Articulate adults are reduced to gibbering idiots by small, cute creatures. "Oozalubbyboy then?" they croon. "Duz diddums wanna biccie?" Of course diddums does.

It'll have your hand off in a minute. A policy of ignoring pets works in the long term, though it takes considerable strength of character to resist a small dumb creature, all winsomely cockedhead and liquid brown eyes, patiently looking at you with a toy in its mouth, begging to play. Do not be tempted.

You'll be there all afternoon and not a hand's turn done.

I attribute my phobia of animals to being doubly traumatised when young, having a litter of blind newborn kittens thrust at me, which clung to my chest with needle sharp claws, mewling piteously and a docile Alsatian who allowed toddlers to ride on its back, but made an exception in my case.

I'm planning a visit to Daughter Dear in the near future.

By the time I pack the pets' gifts in my limited luggage allowance, there'll be no room for shoes.

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## ON THIS DAY

APRIL 20 1921

### IRA 'Executes' Woman

OUR Monaghan correspondent writes: "Another appalling tragedy has taken place in County Monaghan – this time in the village of Scotstown where an unmarried woman named Kate Carroll, aged about forty, was done to death in the early hours of Sunday morning. The deceased resided in the townland of Aughnamena with her aged mother and a brother. It seems that at an early hour on Sunday morning the house was visited by a party of armed and masked men who demanded admission. Her hands were tied behind her back and she was forcibly taken from the house.

Later on, she was found lying dead by a neighbour; she had sustained a bullet wound to the neck. A label was found attached to the deceased's clothing bearing the words: 'Tried, convicted and executed by the IRA.'

Dublin Castle states: 'It seems that recently Miss Kate Carroll wrote anonymous letters to the police with regard to illicit drink traffic. These letters were captured by the IRA when the local postman was recently robbed of the mails.'

### Tragedy in Co Limerick

A SENSATIONAL shooting affray of a highly dramatic nature is reported from Castleconnell, near Limerick. It appears a mistake was made by Crown forces – a party of Auxiliaries and a party of plainclothes police – each thinking that the other were Sinn Féiners. Two of the policemen were shot dead on the spot and a third died from wounds. Mr Denis O'Donovan, the proprietor of the hotel, was also shot dead.

It appears that Mr O'Donovan was accused by the Auxiliaries of harbouring rebels and taken out into the yard and shot, dying in ten minutes. The Auxiliaries apologised to Mrs O'Donovan when the mistake was discovered.

### To Save North East Ulster

THE Nationalist forces in Belfast are being marshalled in a quiet and unostentatious but very practical manner, for the coming electoral battle against Partition. The national organisations, including the United Irish League and Ancient Order of Hibernians have got to work...

Yesterday a deputation waited upon Mr T J Campbell, MA, KC to ask him to allow his name to be put forward as the Nationalist Anti-Partition candidate for East Belfast. Mr Campbell replied they would fight the election to a finish. They would stand for the union of all Ireland.

**AS THE war moved inexorably towards its conclusion with the Truce in July 1921, the Northern Nationalists prepared to fight the 'Partition Election'. Devlin described his efforts to rally his supporters as 'heart-breaking' with little enthusiasm. Thomas J Campbell (1871-1946), a Belfast barrister and former Irish News editor long resident in Dublin, would become a later Nationalist MP.**

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