



University
of Glasgow

Marney, L. (2014) *Irn Bru Granny*.

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Irn Bru/Granny Yestival reading

I've been asked here tonight because I recently wrote a book called *For Faughie's Sake*, available online and at all good bookstores, as they say. It's a comedy about independence and sustainability, it's my personal manifesto. It's great, you should read it. It's a fiction of course, I'm not a politician, I can't be doing with politics. My husband watches Question Time every week and every week I end up shouting at the telly. Every week they wheel on the same corrupt fat cats spouting the same patronising lies. The only thing that changes is the mouthy celeb, the location and David Dimbleby's wacky ties. So I hate politics. I'm just a voter, an ordinary person, I'm a granny for God's Sake. Most of you probably know a lot more about politics than I do but I know a thing or two about being a granny and I know how much I like Irn Bru.

I love Irn Bru. (opens bottle, pours, drinks) look at the lovely golden bubbles. And the adverts are brilliant too aren't they? Remember the 50s style ad with the family round the piano and the mum singing, 'and I particularly love Irn Bru' and then it suddenly gets surreal 'even though I used to be a man!' (whistling and shaving). I don't really know why I identify so much with that one (adjusts balls).

I've always admired the Phenomenal campaign; the adverts that gently take the piss out the creeping encroachment of American culture and the black humour of the Snowman spoof , 'and now I'm falling thru the air'. Milf, Fanny, they're all brilliant. And have you seen the new one for the Commonwealth Games?

Oh proud land

We may take more wee steps than giant leaps

But that is what makes our mettle

We may reach for the stars and come up with clouds

But it is in the reaching that we find joy

We may be scared to dream, for losing is a very real option

But dream we do

Yes, disappointment may be our meat and two veg

But that is what makes us hungry

We'll smile. We'll sing

We will dress like numpties

For though we walk in the molehills of achievement

Our best have scaled mountains

And when the sporting gods do shine on our pasty faces?

Martians need earplugs

Why?

Because we're the underdog with the heart of a lion

Why?

Because we're born to support and we have IRN in our blood!

And we say, 'aye, no bad,' to that.

No bad, eh? They've spent £12million on that campaign.

'Oh proud land' - fair doos

But 'More wee steps than giant leaps?' – oh right, a comparison with the American moon landing. Ok fair enough, Scotland never sent a mission to the moon.

'Reach for the stars and come up with clouds' – I don't know about that.

'We may be scared to dream' –eh, naw!

'For losing is a very real option' – is there some kind of coded message here?

‘Yes, disappointment may be our meat and two veg,’ - ho ho, meat and *two* veg, I see what they’ve done there, they’ve implied that our genitals are a disappointment, very funny (adjusts balls again)

Who wrote this shite? ‘though we walk the molehills of achievement’ - eh excuse me: Eric Liddel, Liz McColgan, Alan Wells, Ken Buchanan, Kenny Lynch, Jim Watt, Rona Martin, Robert Millar, Graeme Obree, Matt Busby, Bill Shankly, Jock Stein, Jimmy Johnston, Sandy Lyle, Willie Carson, Jackie Stewart, Gavin Hastings, David Wilkie, Andy Murray – need I go on?

‘Underdog with the heart of a lion, born to support’ - Eh? What does that mean? Born to stand on the sidelines? Born to be passive spectators; crowd extras for the main event, a bunch of vulnerable adults handed an ice cream and a flag to wave?

Och, get over yourself, I hear you say, it's only a bit of self-effacing fun. That's what we Scots are good at, dressing like numpties and laughing at ourselves. But Irn Bru didn't used to belittle us. The Irn Bru brand was built on Scottish sporting heroes, Adam Brown a famous Scottish athlete was the first to feature on the label striking the now familiar Irn Bru pose. It's not the ad agency's fault if there's a new twist. Ad campaigns nowadays are built on science: they use metrics, mathematical modelling, digital strategy, and they simply reflect what we think of ourselves.

But is it any wonder?

We learn nothing of Scottish history in school, N Oth Ing.

Teachers don't teach Scottish novels because they're scared of the dialects and there are no supporting materials. The mass media pretty much ignores Scottish language, culture and literature. The BBC has tons of notes for any amount of

English and American novels – none whatsoever for Scottish ones, giving the impression that Scottish books are not as relevant, not as important, not as good as English or American ones. Teachers forbid kids to use ‘vulgar slang;’ words like ‘aye’ or ‘wean’ or ‘jaicket’. My grandson is insidiously taught every day –it’s never actually explained but it’s tacitly understood- that we are born: not to lead, or achieve or succeed, only to support.

Well, this granny’s supporting days are over: Supporting the union, supporting rich powerful people in the south east of England to stay rich and powerful, those days are over.

Grannies are doing it for themselves.

I’ve never heard anyone talking about this so let me share it with you: Being a granny is kind of a big deal; I’ve done my bit to propagate the species, I’ve arrived. But I’m not settling into my rocking chair, now the most important thing is this

new wee person. So no laurel resting, absolutely the opposite; being a grandparent means that you care more about the future- beyond your own lifespan- than you've ever done.

I want my grandson to grow into a happy young man with a good education, a good job, good prospects and, if he wants: one day to start a family of his own. I want my grandson and all of our young people to live in a Scotland that has dignity and humanity and these come along with having a healthy self respect. We can teach our children their history, give them an understanding of their place in it, let them enjoy and take pride in Scottish sporting achievements, literature, poetry, art, music, drama, architecture, philosophy; give them a wealth of languages: Scots, Gaelic as well as English. If we give them a positive identity, we'll build a nation who are not just supporters, but are strong confident smart Scottish heroes to take their rightful place back on the Irn Bru bottle. Cheers.