

CITY
READS

CITY READS 2016

ONE CITY.
ONE BOOK.
A THOUSAND
CONVERSATIONS...

3 MARCH
TO 29 MAY

PAUL
MCVEIGH
**THE
GOOD
SON**



CITYREADS.CO.UK

Information

VENUES

THE DOME STUDIO

New Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 1UG

THE FOUNDERS ROOM

Church Street, Brighton BN1 1UE

JUBILEE LIBRARY

Jubilee Street, Brighton BN1 1GE

THE LATEST MUSIC BAR

14–17 Manchester St, Brighton, BN2 1TF

THE NIGHTINGALE ROOM

Grand Central Pub, 29–30 Surrey Street, BN1 3PA

REGENCY TOWN HOUSE

13 Brunswick Square, Hove, BN3 1EH

UPSTAIRS AT MASTERS

Masters, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, RH16 2LE

ENQUIRIES

info@collectedworks.co.uk

TICKETS

cityreads.co.uk

City Reads would like to thank its:

FUNDERS



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**people's
health
trust**

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City Reads is produced by Collected Works CIC.



Enquiries: info@collectedworks.co.uk Tickets: cityreads.co.uk

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Why this book?

THE GOOD SON BY PAUL MCVEIGH

This year City Reads returns to its cultural home (the place where it all began), to take part in Brighton Festival's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The book we have chosen for the City to read, discuss and celebrate is Paul McVeigh's astonishing debut: *The Good Son*, a bittersweet tale, set during the Troubles in 1980s Belfast and narrated by the smart and hilarious 10 year old Mickey Donnelly.

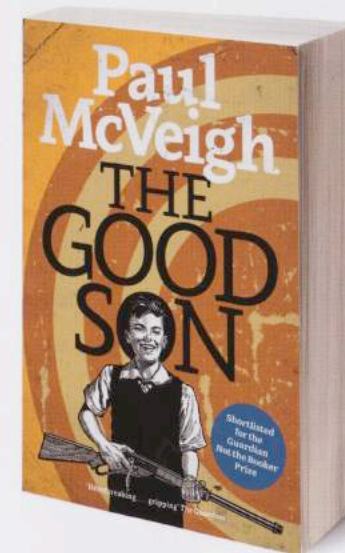
Shortlisted for the Guardian's 'Not the Booker Prize' 2015, it is an astute, assured and achingly funny novel about the complex nature of innocence and guilt at a time of extreme turbulence in Northern Ireland's history.

Choosing one book for a whole City to read, share and celebrate is a wonderful thing because it brings people together. Brighton based Northern Irish writer Paul McVeigh's incredible book was the perfect choice, particularly as 2016 marks the centenary of the Easter Rising, a rebellion that led to the eventual signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty and the creation of Northern Ireland.

'Blackly hilarious (with) one of the most endearing and charming characters I've come across in a long time.' *ELLE Magazine* – Best of 2015

I defy anyone not to fall in love with its protagonist Mickey Donnelly. He's clever, naive and hilariously funny. I hope you love it as much as we do at City Reads.

Sarah Hutchings
Artistic Director, City Reads



Enquiries: info@collectedworks.co.uk Tickets: cityreads.co.uk

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THE PUBLISHER

Salt Publishing, based in Cromer, Norfolk, is a leading independent publishing house established in 1999. Its list has had considerable literary success, with books being shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, National Book Awards, and winners in the Jerwood Fiction Uncovered Prize, the International Frank O'Connor Short Story Award and Polari First Book Prize.

'We're delighted to see Paul's book selected for this year's City Reads – a book festival that not only serves readers in Brighton, but has a wider impact on the UK, too, taking books to new readers all over the country. Paul's debut is a tragicomic classic in the making: using the voice of a 10-year-old Belfast boy in the midst of the Troubles to explore a brutal landscape with charm, comedy and just the odd touch of darkness. It's a book about wild dreams, your idiot brother and your crazy Ma.' **Christopher Hamilton-Emery** –Marketing and Publicity Director, Salt Publishing

*'A vivid, poignant and thrilling tale of troubled boyhood, *The Good Son* is a lot better than good – it's outstanding.'* Toby Litt

THE BOOK

Mickey Donnelly is smart, which isn't a good thing in his part of town. Despite having a dog called Killer and being in love with the girl next door, everyone calls him 'gay'. He has to protect his Ma and his sister Wee Maggie from the Troubles and from Da. And sometimes . . . you have to be a bad boy to be a good son.

*'When I was a working class boy growing up in Belfast, in the biggest slum in Europe, and with *The Troubles* going on, I remember thinking "Why is no-one telling my story? Why is no-one speaking for me? . . . So when I started writing the book I thought I'm going to tell people just how it was.'* **Paul McVeigh**

'The Good Son is a triumph of empathy and the understanding of human dynamics. Mickey is the funniest, most endearing human being for whom we feel huge compassion as he faces each adversity. This novel envelops the reader with its humanity.' *BookTrust*

THE AUTHOR

Born in Belfast, Paul McVeigh began his writing career as a playwright before moving to London where he wrote comedy shows. His short stories have been published in literary journals and anthologies, read on BBC Radio 5 and commissioned by BBC Radio 4. He is also the co-founder of London Short Story Festival.

'When I moved to Brighton a few years ago, one of the first things I did was volunteer for City Reads to celebrate books and get to know my new city. Who could believe that just a few years later my book would be chosen and my adopted city would adopt me right back. That it will be part of the 50th Anniversary of the Brighton Festival is such an honour. I can't wait to get started.' **Paul McVeigh**

'I feel it only right and proper that we have a national day of celebration for one of the best books I have read for a very long time indeed. A rare gift from a genius writer. Even more wonderful is hearing McVeigh read aloud.' Laura Lockington, *Brighton & Hove Independent*

PAUL MCVEIGH IN CONVERSATION

Sunday 29 May

The Dome Studio, 2pm, £8.00

Bring your City Reads experience full circle by joining Paul McVeigh live for an intimate and exclusive celebration of *The Good Son*.

Over the last two months people across the City have been reading, sharing and discussing this astonishing debut novel. Now you get the chance to hear direct from its author about its beginnings, what challenges he faced and where he's going next, as City Reads returns to its cultural home for Brighton Festival's 50th anniversary celebrations.

'As a boy, I wondered what it would have been like if I'd have been born somewhere else. Somewhere beautiful. Without fear. Mickey is obsessed with escaping, as I was.' **Paul McVeigh**

Be part of this very special in-conversation event in which Paul McVeigh talks candidly to columnist Laura Lockington. He will also read excerpts from the book, take questions from the audience and shed light on what it was like to grow up at the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.



St Patrick's Day with City Reads

IRISH WHISKEY TASTING

Thursday 17 March

Regency Town House, 7pm – 9pm, £17.00
(includes all whiskeys and nibbles)

Hosted by whiskey expert Dave Broom
With live music from fiddle player Rowan Piggott.

'Until the past decade, Irish whiskey's one time pre-eminence had largely been forgotten. Yet this is a country that conceivably made a barley spirit before Scotland.' **Dave Broom**

Discover the true taste of Ireland and the remarkable history of one of its most famous exports with drinks guru and author, Dave Broom.

An excellent selection of whiskeys from across the Emerald Isle await you, to purify your palate and tickle your taste buds. The knowledgeable and charismatic Dave will guide you through his hand picked selection for this celebration of Irish culture.

'The Belfast author's spirited debut delivers a real sense of a broken family living in a broken society. Poignant, convincing and alarmingly real' *The Irish Times*



Local Writers on Child Narrators in Fiction

AMONGST THE GROWNUPS

Wednesday 6 April

The Nightingale Room, Grand Central Pub
7.30pm – 10.30pm, £7.00/£5.00

Fifteen writers, four minutes each, one very special literary evening . . .

Paul McVeigh's *The Good Son* is narrated by the beautifully portrayed Mickey Donnelly (aged 10). Join us for an evening of pure reading indulgence in which some incredible writers talk about their favourite works of fiction featuring child narrators. Will your favourites be amongst them?

Writers include: Graham Duff, David Bramwell, Susannah Jones, Julia Crouch, Laura Lockington, Erinna Mettler, Mark A Radcliffe, Nye Wright, Laura Wilkinson and Bethan Roberts.

This special event will be hosted by Paul McVeigh.



Five Interesting Young Narrators in Fiction . . .

1. **Frankie in *The Member of the Wedding* – Carson McCullers (1946)**

'The trouble with me is that for a long time I have just been an I person. All people belong to a We except me. Not to belong to a We makes you too lonesome.'

Twelve year old Frankie is torn between wanting to escape and yearning to belong in McCullers perceptive novel. Even though the story is not told in the first person, Frankie's voice is so strong that we felt we had to include it.

2. **Cassandra in *I Capture the Castle* – Dodie Smith (1949)**

'Perhaps if I make myself write I shall find out what is wrong with me.'

The 1940s diary of Cassandra Mortmain portrays beautifully the life of her extraordinary family and presents a unique viewpoint of a girl experiencing life and love for the very first time.

3. **Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye* – J.D Salinger (1951)**

'All morons hate it when you call them a moron.'
Since his literary debut in 1951, Holden Caulfield has been synonymous with cynical adolescence. His wry observations capturing perfectly the essence of perceived teenage alienation.

4. **Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* – Harper Lee (1960)**

'I never figured out how Atticus knew I was listening, and it was not until many years later that I realized he wanted me to hear every word he said.'

The racism and prejudice in a 1930s small town in the Deep South of the USA are viewed through the eyes of Scout Finch in Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize winning novel.

5. **Christopher in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* – Mark Haddon (2003)**

'Siobhan says that if you raise one eyebrow it can mean lots of different things. It can mean "I want to do sex with you" and it can also mean "I think what you just said was very stupid".'

Mark Haddon's incredible novel offers us the unique workings of the mind of fifteen-year-old Christopher, a teenage boy with Asperger syndrome.

*'Although only his debut novel, *The Good Son* perfectly illustrates what a masterful storyteller Paul McVeigh is and I personally can't wait to see what he does next.'*
Ulster Tatler 'Book of the Month'



Celluloid City Reads

IMITATION OF LIFE, 1959, 125 MINS (PG)

Wednesday 9 March

The Nightingale Room, Grand Central Pub,
6.30pm, £6.00

Director: **Douglas Sirk**. Starring: **Lana Turner**,
Juanita Moore and **Sandra Dee**.
With a special introduction by **Paul McVeigh**.

'Forget those who decry the '50s Hollywood
melodrama; it is through the conventions of that
hyper-emotional genre that Sirk is able to make
such a devastatingly embittered and pessimistic
movie.' **Geoff Andrew Time Out**

Paul McVeigh introduces one of his favourite
films: Douglas Sirk's potent critique of
American society: *Imitation of Life*, a film he
feels echoes the restrictions and confinement
he experienced growing up in Northern Ireland.

A struggling young actress with a six-year-old
daughter sets up housekeeping with a homeless
black widow (played by Juanita Moore who
received an Academy Award nomination for her
performance) and her light-skinned eight-year-
old daughter who rejects her mother by trying to
pass for white.

Did you know?

1. *Imitation of Life* is an adaptation
of a 1933 novel by Jewish American
writer Fannie Hurst. Hurst (an
early feminist) was active in the
women's Suffrage movement and
a forceful advocate of civil rights.

2. Lana Turner turned down a salary
in favour of a share of the profits
from *Imitation of Life*. The gamble
paid off: Turner ended up with a \$2
million payday, a record for the time.

3. Despite the huge success of
the film, it was Douglas Sirk's
last Hollywood movie. Soon
after the release of the film
he left Hollywood, moving to
Locarno, Switzerland, producing
only a handful of experimental
German-language films until
his death in 1987, aged 90.

Celluloid City Reads

CAL, UK, 1984, 102 MINS (15)

Sunday 24 April

The Nightingale Room, Grand Central Pub,
1pm, £6.00

Director **Pat O' Connor**.
Starring **Helen Mirren** and **John Lynch**.
With a special introduction by
Professor Graham Dawson.

On the official centenary of the 1916 Easter
Rising we will be screening *Cal*: a story set
during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Cal,
a young man on the fringes of the IRA, with
no taste for violence, becomes involved with
Marcella, a Catholic woman whose husband, a
Protestant policeman, was killed one year earlier
by the IRA.

Pat O'Connor's film subtly portrays the terrible
effects of sectarian violence on everyone
within a community, whatever their political or
religious beliefs. Mirren won Best Actress at
Cannes for her moving performance and John
Lynch shines in his film debut.

'*The Good Son's* early-80s backdrop
is one of poverty, paranoia and
violence, both sectarian and domestic,
a terrifying world for a boy whose
best friend is his little sister and
whose favourite film is *The Wizard
of Oz*. There's no nostalgia in the
depiction of simmering brutality
and intense claustrophobia. A full-
colour close-up of life in a no-go
area.' Victoria Segal, *The Guardian*

This special screening will be introduced by
Graham Dawson: professor of Historical
Cultural Studies, at the University of
Brighton and Director of the Centre for
Research in Memory, Narrative and
Histories which he co-founded. Since 1995
the main focus of his research has been on
questions of cultural memory, violence and
conflict transformation in the Irish Troubles
and the peace process.



The City Reads Book Quiz

THE CITY READS BOOK QUIZ

IN LINDFIELD

Thursday 21 April

Upstairs at Masters, 7.30pm – 9.30pm, £6.00

THE CITY READS BOOK QUIZ

IN BRIGHTON

Wednesday 27 April

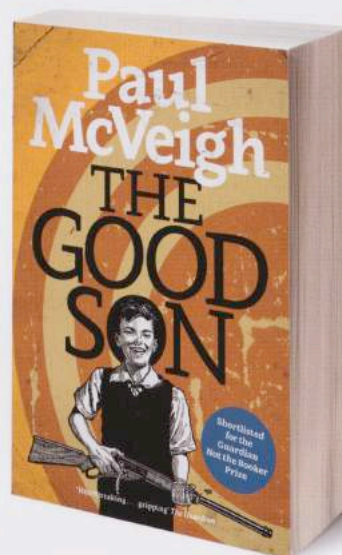
The Latest Music Bar, 7.30pm – 9.30pm, £6.00

“Mickey Donnelly navigates The Troubles like Huck Finn navigates the Mississippi River letting us see the human condition through penetratingly fresh eyes. *The Good Son* is a work of genius from a splendid writer.’ Pulitzer Prize-winner Robert Olen Butler

How much do you know about books? Classics, crime books, highbrow and lowbrow books? Whatever you’ve read, always meant to read, or simply bluffed your way through, come along and test your knowledge at the ever popular City Reads Book Quiz.

There will be questions on everything: from genre fiction to literary classics, plus a dedicated round on Paul McVeigh and *The Good Son*.

Join a team or bring your own. There will be brainteasers aplenty for book lovers of all persuasions. Wine and soft drinks available.



Free events

THEMED SUNDAY SCREENINGS

During April

Jubilee Library, 1.30pm, Free

Join us for *The Good Son* themed Sunday lunchtime screenings throughout April at Jubilee Library.

Please note that places for these free screenings are limited. Arrive early to avoid disappointment. Contact (01273) 290800 for info.

CITY READS BOOK SWAP

Saturday 28 May

The Founders Room, Brighton Dome, 11am, Free (Limited Capacity)

Something special happens when people share their passion for a book they love. Bring along just ONE book that you’d love to swap with someone else and we’ll do the rest. The Dome Foyer Café will be open for hot drinks – we’ll bring the croissants!

Email info@collectedworks.co.uk to book a place.

LIBRARY BOOK GROUPS

Thinking of setting up a book group? The City Library Service can help you with:

- setting up the reading group
- choosing the books
- supplying sets of books for your group to read

Email: BookGroupsLibraries@brighton-hove.gov.uk for more info

The Good Son will be available to loan from all Brighton & Hove Libraries.

LET THERE BE PICTURES

Saturday 21 – Sunday 29 May

Jubilee Library, Free

Look out for an interactive City Reads exhibition in the Jubilee Library Foyer that invites you to get creative. Share a drawing inspired by *The Good Son* – sketch a character, illustrate a new cover or doodle your response to the book. Experienced and novice artists all welcome!

‘An intensely moving, often riotously funny coming-of-age story that merges the personal and political to create a novel that resonates long after the final page is turned.’ Alex Preston, author of *In Love and War*



CITY READS AT A GLANCE

IMITATION OF LIFE (PG)
PAUL MCVEIGH INTRODUCES
DOUGLAS SIRK'S CLASSIC
FILM WEDS 9 MARCH, 6.30PM,
THE NIGHTINGALE ROOM

WHISKEY TASTING WITH DAVE
BROOM THUR 17 MARCH, 7PM,
REGENCY TOWNHOUSE

AMONGST THE GROWN-UPS
WRITERS ON CHILD NARRATORS
IN FICTION WEDS 6 APRIL,
7.30PM, THE NIGHTINGALE
ROOM

CITY READS BOOK
QUIZ (LINDFIELD)
WEDS 21 APRIL, 7.30PM
UPSTAIRS AT MASTERS

CAL (15) CENTENARY 1916 EASTER
RISING SCREENING SUN 24 APRIL,
1PM, NIGHTINGALE ROOM

CITY READS BOOK QUIZ
WEDS 27 APRIL, 7.30PM,
THE LATEST MUSIC BAR

LET THERE BE PICTURES
21-29 MAY, JUBILEE
LIBRARY, FREE

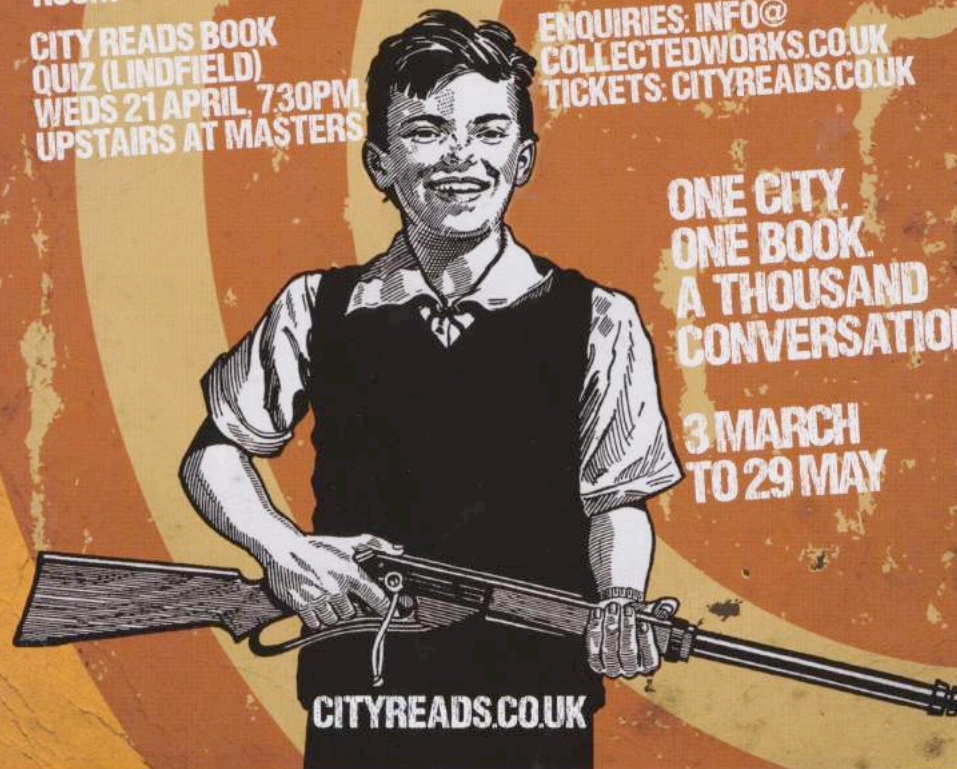
BOOKS FOR BREAKFAST -
BOOK SWAP SAT 28 MAY,
11AM, THE FOUNDERS
ROOM, BRIGHTON DOME

PAUL MCVEIGH IN
CONVERSATION SUN 29 MAY,
2PM, THE DOME STUDIO

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