DMEEIR

DMEEIR

St Patrick tale to be released

BY **PAT FLANAGAN**

THE incredible story of St Patrick's life compiled by a leading German academic over a century ago is to be finally published.

The previously unpublished biography of our patron saint which was almost destroyed in a fire is to be restored thanks to an Irish-German collaboration.

The extensive work is regarded as a foundation document for modern scientific research on the country's national saint. This 575-page biography was compiled by one of Germany's foremost Celticists, Heinrich Zimmer.

The priceless manuscript, which survived two world wars, has not been seen by scholars in decades due to its fragile state but now it is to be digitised and will be able to be viewed online.

Tanaiste Micheal Martin yesterday announced that the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trinity College Dublin and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities are collaborating to fund the restoration of the fire-damaged biography.

Heinrich Zimmer, who died in 1910 aged 59, was Germany's first professor of Celtic Studies and a Member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences.

Mr Martin said he was delighted to announce the partnership.

He added: "I am sure this ambitious restoration will shine a new light on Ireland's patron saint, contributing to the increasing popularity Irish studies has been enjoying across Germany."

Don't miss your new issue of RSVP Home Magazine!

ON SALE NOW

RSVPLive DOWNLOAD OUR FABULOUS FREE APP Google Play App Store

LEARNING TO SPEAK CAT & DOG PURR-FECTLY

IRELAND is a nation of pet lovers with two-thirds of us owning a cat or a dog. They can't talk, but our furry friends communicate with us every day, in their own way. Paying attention to their body language and knowing their cues means we can decode what they are trying to tell us, and vice versa. We can talk to our dogs and cats, once we learn their language. Here, cat expert ALICE CHAU GINGUENE and dog behaviourist SUZI WALSH provide the translation.

> They are very similar in how they develop to a small child. They can follow pointing
>
> **SUZI WALSH** ON HOW DOGS CAN TAKE TO INSTRUCTIONS

> They hiss when threatened, or they will engage in excessive hiding if they have anxiety
>
> **ALICE CHAU GINGUENE** ON HOW TO KEEP CATS COMFORTABLE

20 Approximate number of words used by owners that cats can recognise

One Sign of happiness in dogs is rapid repeated sneezing sounds

UP FUR A CHAT Cat and dog have ways of interacting

Paws for thought...

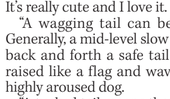
It's time to translate what your animal is trying to communicate

HOW TO TALK DOG

Suzi says: "Dogs are trying to communicate with us all the time. They are the most domesticated animals and the friendliest dogs thrive. So they have developed a whole separate language they use just for people that they don't use with other dogs.

"They are very similar, in how they develop, to a small child. They can follow pointing. They make the assumption you are trying to help them. Not even chimps can follow a point.

"Dogs mostly communicate through vocalisation and body language, but often we read it incorrectly. For example,


MESSAGE Ear up

people always see barking or growling as a negative thing, but it's a good thing, it's their way of telling you they're not happy, they're stressed or they don't feel safe.

"It's a warning, not a threat. If you punish a growl, it will escalate.

"One of their appeasement gestures, is when they hold their paw hanging down, just a few inches off the floor, like it might be injured.

"This is telling you; 'I do not understand what you're trying to say. Slow down, I don't understand.' They're stressed and anxious trying to diffuse the scenario.

"If a dog sneezes in quick fire succession and it sounds like 'Choo-choo-choo-choo' it's their expression of happiness.

"They're delighted with what's happening. It's comparable to a laugh. It's really cute and I love it.

"A wagging tail can be confusing. Generally, a mid-level slow wagging tail back and forth a safe tail. A high tail raised like a flag and waving fast is a highly aroused dog.

"A tucked tail means they're trying to hide the smell they produce, so they dont want to give other information from other dogs.

"A sad dog will tuck its tail and hang their head low to the ground and will show a lack of body language and a lack of interaction.

"A dog that trusts and likes you will be comfortable to face forward.

"They'll come and push their back into you and rest against your leg or body. If they use you as a shield it is a good sign. If they're very nervous, they will put their front paws on top of you and want to be picked up and comforted.

"Rolling over is good if the dog is splayed out in a relaxed fashion.

"But they don't necessarily want to be rubbed, at all. If they are lying on their back, belly facing you and they are lip-licking, that's a sign of stress. Averting eye contact means please don't pet me, but I mean you no harm.

CHEERY Relaxed dog

"Yawning can also be a sign of stress, as it can be in humans.

"Dogs have learned to mimic, from looking at people. A rare dog behaviour is a smile; we see it very rarely in collies, mostly, and it's amazing. It looks like they are baring their teeth, but they're mimicking our smiles."

■ dogbehaviour.ie

HOW TO TALK CAT

Alice says: "Cats have different social groups and they communicate with each other through scent and body language.

LICK Cleaning up

"Mutual grooming is an important indicator they are in the same group. It means they can create a group scent. They will sleep together in what we called 'pillowing' where one cat uses the other as a pillow.

"Rubbing each other is a way of saying; 'You're in my gang'. If they do this to a human, they're letting them in their gang, too.

"You will often see them smell the spot where another cat has sat.

"This allows them to gather so much information about that other cat. They'll know which cat is around, whether they're male or female and if they're neutered and their age, how regularly they come to the area.

"One of the best known cat body language moves is the Halloween cat, with the arched back, walking sideways. This is a cat in extreme anxiety.

"To make sure they don't get to that point, we have to watch for the steps before it. They hiss when threatened, or they will engage in excessive hiding if they have anxiety issues.

"Kneading is a sign of playfulness, as it's a comforting behaviour that goes back to when they were nursing with their mother. Another such sign is what's called the question mark tail.

"Ancient Egyptians talked about this tail, that's high and curved at the end, like a question mark. They believed it was a sign of wisdom. It means a curious, confident cat.

"Cats will often lie down in front of you, showing their tummy, from a little distance. This means: 'I trust you, I know you're not trying to kill me, I am happy to show you my most vulnerable part.'

"Slow-blinking is also an indicator of trust. It's saying, 'I can close my eyes with you and know you're not a threat.'

"If you do it back to them, you can let them know the feeling is mutual.

"Their meow sound was invented as a coping mechanism to get attention from humans. Cats meowing to each other is rare. Always remember with a new cat, they are very different to dogs.

"They are more introverted animals and will need time to warm up to you. They're routine animals and need a routine structure. They understand commands and studies show they can understand about 20 words.

"One of the nicest cat behaviours is the 'loaf'.

"This is where a cat sits fully down, with their paws tucked in front of them and their tail hidden, so they're like a meat loaf, or a loaf of bread. Loafing means they're happy, relaxed and content."

LOAFER Happy cat

■ Alice The Cat hosts The Psychology of Cats at the Set Theatre, Kilkenny, December 4. alicecatexpert.com.

ADVICE Pete The Vet

Wagging tail is not always sign of happy mutt, says telly vet

BY **MICHELLE FLEMING**

THE doggy in the window with the waggedy tail may not have been happy after all, according to TV's Pete The Vet.

Pete Wedderburn says pet owners sometimes get it wrong, such as thinking wagging their tail is a sign of happiness.

He revealed the secret of communicating with your dog is spending lots of time with them and paying close attention.

Pete, above, said: "Most of us assume a wagging tail means our dog is happy, but their emotions aren't so black and white.

"If a dog is wagging his tail, people will say he must be happy but that's not true.

"Tail wagging indicates ambivalence, like a person tilting their head and going 'hmmm'.

EXCITED

"They often do it in situations where they feel a bit uncertain and a bit excited."

Pete, whose surgery is in Bray, Co Wicklow, added: "If a dog's eyes are narrowed and their ears are flattened, then they're clearly very unhappy. They might take a snap.

"If you ignore what their body is saying, they'll give you a stronger message to say: 'Leave me alone'.

"They don't particularly like hugging. It's not really a doggie thing – if you want an animal to hug, get a big soft cat."

He advises pet owners who want to communicate with their dogs to do sessions with a dog trainer.

"Look at the dog to see what he's doing, is he relaxed, looking around with interest, finding a comfy spot and settling down.

"Or are they pulling on the lead? Are their ears up? Licking their lips and yawning is a sign of anxiety in dogs. If they exhibit these behaviours take them somewhere they are happy. The secret to knowing if they're happy? They look it. Eyes wide open, mouth open a little bit, their tongue is out as they're panting a bit."