

WHERE I WORK MARTIN KING

The broadcaster plans *The Six O'Clock Show* from his home dining table and a hot desk in an industrial estate in Dublin

My mornings are spent at home doing prep work for *The Six O'Clock Show*, the TV programme I present with Karen Koster on VM1. I sit at the dining table in our open-plan kitchen, dining and TV area, I open up my laptop and I work. It's a big expandable pine table that seats ten, but we have to get a bigger one as the family is still growing. I have a very pleasant view of the Mediterranean-style garden at our home, a former council house in Rathfarnham. I'm no gardener so it's low-maintenance, with a few plants and trees in pots.

I keep my back to the kitchen area so that I don't start thinking about getting the ball rolling on some pasta bolognese for tonight's dinner. It's quiet as usually I have the

house to myself with one son working, my youngest son in school and my wife,

Jenny, who is a commercial photographer, out on shoots.

Near me I have a lovely picture from my mam and dad's 50th wedding anniversary in 2012, when we brought the wedding guests back together for a big celebration. She's giving my dad, Martin, a kiss on the cheek and he's got a big smile on his face. My mam, Christina, had dementia for a number of years before she was diagnosed that same year. I think she hid it from us, but eventually between ourselves we noticed changes in her. She lasted for seven years after that, slipping away in 2019 just four weeks after my dad had passed.

When I was making the

documentary called *We Need to Talk About Dementia*, which went out on VM1 earlier this year, we filmed at this kitchen table. I sat here with my sisters talking about our experience and looking at

photos. We travelled around the country talking to people with Alzheimer's for the programme too. We wanted to show that people with Alzheimer's still have a lot to offer and that you shouldn't dismiss them. There's a lot of living to be done between diagnosis and the end. That's also why I'm encouraging everyone to get involved in the Alzheimer's Memory Walk, which raises money for the Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

In front of the photograph is a white feather. I picked that up in 2019 on the day of the All-Ireland football final



replay between Dublin and Kerry. My dad loved Gaelic games – he would take my brother and me to games in the 1970s and that love of the GAA was instilled in us then.

I have a wide selection of GAA mugs, some of which were gifts. Dad grew up in a tenement on Dorset Street, which is where I was born too, and he would ramble up to Croke Park to watch the match no matter who was playing. The day of the replay I visited his grave, thinking I'd take some grass with me to the game in my pocket – when Dad started taking us to games the Dublin team used to wear blue and white – and I heard his voice in my head saying, "Are you really going to take something green to the game?" So I dropped it. When I got home I found a big white feather sticking in the ground and it felt like a message that things were going to go well. Dublin won by six points and I shed a few tears thinking about him.

In 1978, when my dad was unwell, I thought I'd better bring some money into the house. So I started out in broadcasting when I was 15 at Big D, a Dublin pirate radio station. The broadcasters Marty Whelan, Gerry Ryan and Dave Fanning all worked there. I was on the phones, but I was like a big sponge soaking it all up. I was in radio for 20 years and then TV3, which is now VMI, opened up. I started doing the weather and that took off. I've been there since 1998 and I've been on *The Six O'Clock Show* since 2017. I still have a radio show on Q102 on Saturdays too.

I work from home in the morning and then head over to Virgin Media in the early afternoon. Virgin Media is

in Westgate Business Park on an industrial estate in Ballymount, in west Dublin, off the M50. There have been quite a few changes here in recent months, so it's modern and glamorous inside. When you enter there is a bank of TVs with the sound turned down.

I don't have my own desk. It's all hot-desking in an open-plan office. We all sanitise our desks after we finish our work. I'm there in the afternoon doing prep for the evening show. I'll be reading notes, formulating questions and having meetings.

Most of our interviews during Covid have been via Skype. That opened up the chance for us to have a variety of A-list Hollywood actors on the show: Dwayne Johnson, Angelina Jolie, Emily Blunt.

Before we go to air there's a little work that needs to be done in the studio. We have a read-through, check camera angles and lighting, then it's the show itself.

As told to Rose Costello

The Alzheimer's Memory Walk to raise funds for dementia support services takes place nationwide on September 19. Register at memorywalk.ie



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The photo of King's parents on their wedding anniversary



King and his co-presenter, Karen Koster, above, host the VM1 show every weeknight. Inset: his Dublin GAA mug





JENNY MCCARTHY

