

THE PHOENIX



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PULLED PORK SHOCK!

I had a ball
at Oxford

Swine, women
and song!



Máire Whelan clings to office
Profile: Aidan 'Ballydoyle' O'Brien
Frances Fitzgerald v Leo Varadkar
Young Blood: Developer Rick Larkin
Declan McGonagle exits NCAD



Also: Rosanna Davison's credentials; Paddy McKillen's libel action; Rita Crosbie's licence; Matt Cooper's book; James Reynolds's tax troubles; Ambrose Kelly's liquidation

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AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



AG CLINGS TO OFFICE

IN the run-up to the motion of confidence in the Government, Attorney General Máire Whelan – who has survived for entirely political reasons – was hit by two more landmines exploding underneath her. The catalogue of legal and political controversies that the AG has been embroiled in since taking office must surely be unparalleled in the history of the state.

That Nial Fennelly, a former Supreme Court judge, should challenge the veracity of evidence from the Government’s law officer to the Fennelly Commission, as he did, would surely be terminal for a comparable officer in any other democracy. Whelan was called before Fennelly four times to explain the glaring contradictions in her own evidence and also with that of other principal witnesses.

However, more recently, Whelan was in trouble with the most senior law officer in the land, Chief Justice Susan Denham, and two other Supreme Court judges. These found that the “organs of state” had nearly caused “very serious constitutional consequences” by rushing to ratify the marriage equality referendum even though a legal challenge was pending. That case was taken against the referendum returning officer, the referendum commission, the Government and Whelan.

In the same week, Judge Brian Cregan, chairman of another Commission of Investigation – into IBRC – has been warned



Máire Whelan

that his commission’s terms of inquiry could be unconstitutional, as they require him to apply the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Act retrospectively. Fianna Fáil finance spokesperson Michael McGrath said pointedly last week, “I presume the attorney general legally proofed the terms before they went before the Oireachtas”.

Whelan has been at the centre of a series of other legal and political disputes since being elevated to the AG post. The first was a contributory factor in the defeat of the Government’s 2011 Oireachtas inquiries referendum for which the then justice minister, Alan Shatter, received much opprobrium, due largely to his hubris in that referendum campaign.

But the real problem was with the wording of the referendum and the Government was faced with the excruciating embarrassment of having to accept an amendment to that wording by Sinn Féin’s constitutionally correct Mary Lou McDonald. Too late, the damage was done and the referendum was shot down in flames.

Whelan’s own party’s local government spokesperson in opposition, Ciaran Lynch, became incensed with Whelan when, in government, he discovered that on her advice his proposal to abolish upward only rent reviews was deemed unconstitutional.

Lynch pointed out forcibly to his then party leader and Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore, that his years of crusading work on the issue had been legally anchored by the previous advice of the party’s legal advisor, one

Máire Whelan.

Another blunder came during the 2012 children’s referendum which, while carried, saw the Supreme Court castigate the Government’s information campaign, saying there were “extensive passages in the booklet and on the website” which had breached “The McKenna Principles” (forbidding government from spending money to favour one side in referendums).

A feature of this controversy was the singling out of Whelan as responsible for this embarrassment by FG ministers Frances Fitzgerald and Leo Varadkar. Whelan’s survival now is entirely due to the appalling vista – Enda Kenny’s head – that would emerge if she were forced to resign.

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FRANCES AND LEO

FRANCES FITZGERALD'S coy admission last Sunday that she would not push away the crown should Fine Gael mandarins proffer it was not some random, throwaway remark; and neither was the timing of her carefully calibrated *Sunday Independent* interview.

There is no point, after all, in presenting as Enda Kenny's chosen successor – chosen in order to block upstarts like Leo Varadkar – if you then fade into the background while Vlad takes the stage. And in the week leading up to that interview, Vlad had been providing a running commentary on issues like ministerial budget leaks and Central Bank mortgage policy, maintaining his profile as speculation about the date of the election intensified.



Frances Fitzgerald

In the space of under 24 hours last week, Vlad firstly encroached on Michael 'Baldy' Noonan's patch and followed up by chiding virtually all of his cabinet colleagues over their spin on budgetary proposals. After Noonan had made his pitch about the Central Bank perhaps easing up on loan restrictions for first time buyers, Vlad issued his own statement on the matter. Cautioning against a return to a housing bubble, the health



The sad truth about British politics...

minister said there was, nevertheless, a need to ensure that young people were in a financial position to buy a house in what amounted to a refinement of the finance minister's statements.

Vlad followed up next day with a statement chiding his ministerial colleagues for "kite-flying" on the budget with leaks that furthered their own agendas and which had not even been discussed, never mind agreed, at cabinet. He reminded people that he had been rebuked by his leader, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, for forecasting tax raises in last year's budget, showing how much more mature and dependable he is now in comparison to other ministers.

Varadkar also got a lot of attention in the recently published Fennelly report. The report indicated that his description of the

whistleblowers as "distinguished" rather than "disgusting" had as much to do with ex-Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan's 'retirement' as any concern about the taping of Garda stations. Varadkar's outspoken intervention at the time was seen as a turning point for Callinan and Shatter because of a public anger that few ministers clocked. Which only goes to show how astute Vlad is at reading the public's mind and capturing their attention.

Vlad does not know the Taoiseach's mind on the date of the election, but he sure as hell knows that if the party takes a significant drop in seats then Kenny is at risk. He also knows that keeping his own profile high with statesmanlike and ever more responsible interventions is a strategy that works. So, too, does Frances.

DECLAN MCGONAGLE EXITS NCAD

IT may not be too surprising that Declan McGonagle, the director of the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), has decided after seven years to call it a day and will be retiring at the end of the year "for personal reasons". Minister for Education Jan O'Sullivan recently appointed a new board, chaired by Mrs Michael McDowell, Niamh Brennan. Given the dreadful record of the NCAD when it comes to corporate governance matters – Brennan's area of expertise – this sent a strong signal from the minister that change was due on Thomas Street.

In the run-up to Easter this year, NCAD was hit by major student protests that concerned cuts and overcrowding and were organised under the name NCAD Student Action (the campaign has not been led by the students union). They called for a reversal of "irresponsible decisions" made by the college's management.

Students have also referred to mismanagement of NCAD's funds and its accounts. This is something that McGonagle found hard to defend, given the roasting dished out by the Public Accounts Committee at the start of this year. According to the PAC, the provision by the Higher Education Authority of €104m in funding to NCAD over eight years – a period when the accounting practises

were deemed "not fit for purpose" – was "scandalous".

Only in recent weeks has the 2011/12 annual report been made available and these figures have been qualified by the C&AG, who states that the college "did not keep proper books of account".



Declan McGonagle

This type of carry-on undermined McGonagle's negotiating position with the bolshy students, who had demanded that he produce the figures to back up his claims about strained finances being responsible for the problems on Thomas Street.

The change of board in July did not come at a good time for the hapless McGonagle and the fact that O'Sullivan chose Niamh Brennan as chair meant that the director's position was set to come under intense

scrutiny from a governance perspective. This had also been the case in the Dublin Docklands Development Authority, where Brennan clashed with chief executive Paul Maloney after she was put in as chair in April 2009.

McGonagle still has three years left to run on his €136,000 pa contract and his sudden decision to exit has left the board with a challenge to find a new director, given the short run-in before McGonagle exits at Christmas.

In his statement, McGonagle notes that he looks forward "to making other contributions to the cultural sector in the future". He has always managed to land on his feet and after his equally sudden exit from Imma in 2001, McGonagle was immediately installed as chief executive at the City Arts Centre, before moving on to the NCAD gig. He recently popped up on the grandly titled 'Colloquium of Cultural Stakeholders' set up by Minister for the Arts, Heather Humphreys, ahead of the publication of a discussion document on the future of the arts.

The policy document was launched at Smock Alley last month under the banner 'Culture2025' and the only worthy from the 'colloquium' to give a speech was one Declan McGonagle. Goldhawk suspects there could be yet another job in store for the arts administrator, who is set to have a lot of free time on his hands.

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

ROSANNA'S CREDENTIALS

MORE to report on the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM), which hit the headlines over claims made by its famous past pupil, Rosanna Davison, concerning a link between gluten and rheumatoid arthritis (see *The Phoenix* 11/9/15).

Following her academic endeavours at CNM, Rosie is eligible to join one of CNM's accrediting bodies, the Irish Association of Nutritional Therapy (IANT). The IANT just happens to have been set up by Nicole Keppler, who co-founded CNM along with the school principal, Hermann Keppler.

Under the heading, 'Accreditation', the CNM website boasts, "Because of CNM's high standard, our courses are widely recognised and accredited, both nationally and internationally." Up until a few weeks ago – before the controversy over Davison's gluten claims – the website also stated beneath this heading: "CNM graduates are eligible to join IANT... after graduation. IANT is the leading Nutrition Association in Ireland providing insurance and further training." Curiously, this has since been removed.

The IANT was set up as a limited company in 2006 "to promote therapy in Ireland," according to company records. It claims to ensure its members "have attained the highest standards in the science of nutrition and clinical practice." One of the company's two founders, Nicole Keppler, was also previously described on the CNM website as the co-founder of CNM and the wife of Hermann Keppler. (That reference was later deleted, however.) She resigned as a board member of IANT in 2009 and now has a UK address on company records. However, she remains a director of CNM in Ireland, where she currently holds 20% of the company shares. (Hermann Keppler, now based in Florida, holds the balance.)

The other co-founder of IANT, Avril Ivory, was the "dean" of the college and its "academic director" for a number of years



Rosanna Davison

(up until at least last year). Her own website states that is now the "former academic director" at CNM. Meanwhile, the registered business address of IANT is at The Gate Lodge, in Glenageary, Co Dublin, which was, for a number of years, also where CNM was based. (CNM has since moved to an office in the city centre.) Elsewhere, a lecturer at CNM, Linda de Courcy, was also a director of IANT from 2009 to the end of 2012.

CNM declined to tell Goldhawk why the reference to IANT – which it appears to have set up to accredit its own graduates – was removed. Earlier this month, Hermann Keppler told the website EVOKE.ie that, "We didn't say that CNM is accredited by IANT on our website, but that graduates are eligible to join IANT, among other associations." This is a strange claim to make given that the information concerning IANT was under the heading "Accreditation."

PROPERTY investor Paddy McKillen may have resolved his long-running dispute with the billionaire Barclay brothers over control of the luxury Maybourne Hotel Group in London, but the businessman is clearly up for a fight elsewhere. Earlier this month, McKillen lodged High Court proceedings in Dublin against Associated Newspapers, publishers of the *Irish Daily Mail*. This is on foot of an article he took offence to earlier this summer, which was penned by its columnist, Matt Cooper.

In the offending article, Cooper referred to McKillen and to various other developers and McKillen has taken exception to being grouped together with these gents, and is claiming that this defamed him. While McKillen is one of the most high-profile developers in Ireland, in various court cases he has stressed that his bank loans are performing.

This is just the latest in a series of legal actions lodged by McKillen in the Irish High Court in the last 12 months or so. Earlier this year, the businessman lodged proceedings against the Information Commissioner, who had previously refused



Paddy McKillen

him certain documents under the Freedom of Information Act held by the Department of Finance (see *The Phoenix* 16/1/15). McKillen is seeking the documentation to assist him in a High Court action against Nama, in which he is claiming sensitive information was leaked about him to the Barclays. The case against the Information Commissioner is back before the High Court next month.

Elsewhere in the Irish High Court, McKillen is also suing The Sark Newsletter, a small local bulletin published on Sark, one of the Channel Islands, which is part-owned by the Barclays. This action was lodged last year and also listed as a defendant is Kevin Delaney, the newsletter's publisher and an associate of the Barclays. That case is next up in the High Court in November.

Last year, McKillen received an apology from the English publication, The Spectator – owned by the Barclays – which wrongly referred to McKillen as a "frontman" for Qatari investors in the luxury hotel, Claridge's, part of the Maybourne Hotel Group.

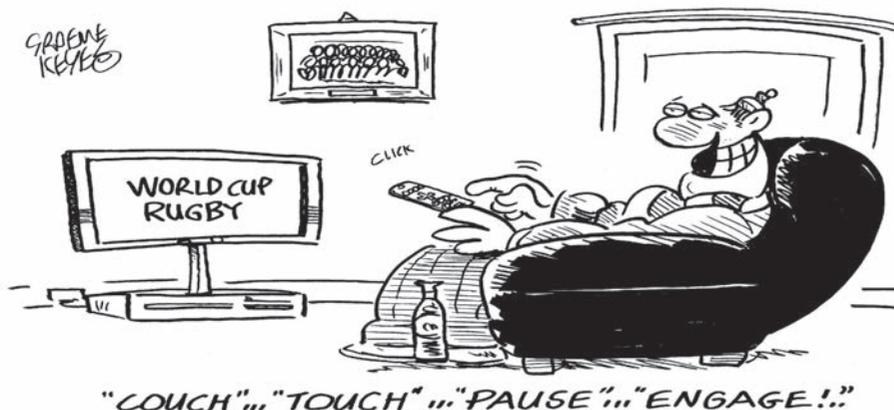
AMBROSE KELLY'S LIQUIDATION

INTERESTING to see Goldhawk's old pal, Ambrose Kelly, coming a cropper with the winding up of his business. This, of course, is only the latest in a number of adventures featuring the colourful architect-cum-investor

Kelly is probably best known to fans of *The Phoenix* for getting caught up in the Countyglen plc saga, in which John 'Conman' Carway managed to buy out John Teeling's stake and then hijack the listed company (previously known as Glen Abbey) and swindle around €1.3m in today's money out of it. The liquidator, John McStay, subsequently sought to have the architect disqualified from acting as a company director but the case dragged through the courts for years before Kelly emerged unscathed.

Kelly also had a supporting role in the Mahon Tribunal as a result of his links to the likes of Liam Lawlor and developer Owen O'Callaghan (for whom he was the principal architect). Kelly was the man who drew up plans for a controversial football stadium in Neilstown in West Dublin to be developed by O'Callaghan for Wimbledon FC, and he was also the architect on the infamous Quarryvale project. Later, Kelly popped up in Tim Collins's plan to develop lands adjacent to Dublin Airport, where Frank Dunlop was retained as a lobbyist.

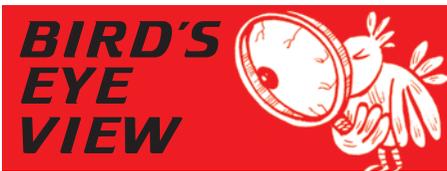
Meanwhile, Ambrose Kelly has remained a director and shareholder in Project Architects, which has operated out of one of his properties in D8 since the late 1980s. He is joined here by David Lennon, William Quane and Pat O'Hara and, according to last accounts, the company dropped a quarter-of-a-million euro in the year to April 2014. The directors have now wound up the company "by reason of its liabilities".



"COUCH" "TOUCH" "PAUSE" "ENGAGE!!"

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AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



**UNIONIST RIVALRY:
THE REAL STORY**

IT hasn't been a great few months for Peter Robinson. In the British general election in May, the rival UUP took the South Antrim seat from veteran DUP man, Free Presbyterian minister Willie McCrea. The UUP also snatched the bitterly contested Fermanagh/South Tyrone seat from Sinn Féin.

The UUP were on the move for the first time in ten years. Even two seats at Westminster count for something when the British government's majority is less than a dozen.

On May 25 Robinson suffered a heart attack and had three stents inserted. Perhaps he returned to the fray in June too quickly, but since then it has been obvious to observers that he is not in the best of health. Last weekend's hospital stay raised more questions about his health. He has been in crisis mode since he returned from holiday at the end of August and it's noticeable his normally assured approach is absent.

The UUP leader Mike Nesbitt stole a march on Robinson before he returned from holiday by announcing he would withdraw his sole minister from the Stormont executive because of IRA involvement in McGuigan's killing. A poll showing no less than 87% of unionists supported Nesbitt's action badly spooked the DUP. Robinson had no alternative but to follow suit, the last thing he wanted to do. He never thought he would face the prospect of the UUP attacking from his right flank. People underestimate



Peter Robinson



Mike Nesbitt

the degree of animosity between the two unionist parties and having lost the initiative Robinson has been playing catch up ever since.

Nesbitt could pull his one minister without making any difference, but for Robinson to pull out would mean the collapse of the executive and an election. The result has been a ridiculous merry-go-round with DUP ministers resigning, then being re-appointed for a few hours then resigning, all to avoid Sinn Féin taking over the vacant ministries under the complicated d'Hondt system. This week Robinson even nominated a DUP member, Michelle McIlveen, to the vacant UUP ministry. Gerry Adams compared it to Lanigan's Ball. 'He steps out, she steps in again.'

Robinson's weakness and inability to manoeuvre has been compounded by the firm stance of the British prime minister. David Cameron made it clear he wanted the Northern parties to get round a table and talk.

He made it equally clear they should be dealing with the Northern Secretary, not Whitehall. Robinson and Nesbitt desperately needed a fig leaf to enable

them to join talks, because they both said they wouldn't talk until the IRA's existence was dealt with. By the end of last week they were publicly begging for some cover.

The British solution was provided last weekend in the form of a panel to review an assessment of 'all paramilitary activity'. However the observers don't report until the middle of October, which means the unionists have to talk without the IRA matter resolved. In short, Robinson got nothing. In all the kerfuffle about the existence or otherwise of the IRA, people forget the British priority in talks is welfare cuts and implementing last December's Stormont House agreement, because Stormont's budget runs out coincidentally just after the review of paramilitary activity is published.

In Northern terms Sinn Féin have done surprisingly well out of the crisis, constantly

pointing up unionist disarray and echoing the British line that immediate talks are essential. Yes, they were livid at the arrest of 17 republicans in connection with the killing of McGuigan and the release of all but one within 36 hours. Nevertheless while unionists castigate each other, Sinn Féin are content that the assessment of paramilitary activity will obviously include loyalists who are fully armed, operational and up to their necks in criminality, yet ignored by unionists.

They are also happy that since both Dublin and London are determined to keep Stormont up and running come what may, the review body has no powers to suspend any party. And while the British and unionists wanted the review to operate on a continuous basis, Foreign Affairs blocked that, Charlie Flanagan saying it's a 'once-off'.

The assessment is for the optics and will be done by the PSNI, National Crime Agency and MI5 who naturally already know all there is to know. As Martin McGuinness confidently predicted, they won't reveal anything that hasn't been known for 20 years.

Given the two governments' determination to keep the show on the road, Sinn Féin are also confident that vindictive figures in MI5, 'securocrats' as they call them, hostile to the peace process and Sinn Féin's presence in the executive, will not be able to use the review to bring down the assembly. Conservative ministers exercise a more forthright control over spooks than Labour, and the British Intelligence Services Commissioner disclosed that this year the Northern Secretary had refused some MI5 requests for surveillance operations.

MI5 in the North will provide most intelligence for the review. They operate from a £20 million base at Holywood with 600 operatives, many of whom are former RUC Special Branch officers, bitter enemies of Sinn Féin. The base consumes 17% of MI5's budget, but its operations are accountable to the Northern Secretary, not Stormont.

On the evidence of the past month, David Cameron will not allow the devolved administration in the North to collapse. Cameron has now successfully called Robinson's bluff. He knows he doesn't want an election. Has he any lever to move Sinn Féin to cut welfare?



AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

CRISIS AT GALWAY
RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

THE LAW SOCIETY is investigating an alleged deficit in the client account of a Galway city law firm of more than €500,000. The firm, Feeney Solicitors, is headed by Aine Feeney McTigue, who was suspended earlier this month, following an application by the Law Society to the High Court in connection with the alleged deficit.

Feeney McTigue is a well-known figure in Galway, where she is the executive director of the Galway Rape Crisis Centre (GRCC) and chairperson of the Galway City Business Association. Earlier this month, the Law Society issued High Court proceedings against Feeney McTigue under the Solicitors Act. The President of the High Court, Nicholas Kearns, later held a vacation sitting of the court and granted the Law Society its application to have the solicitor suspended.

A court order states that Feeney McTigue is suspended "until further order of the court" or until such time that she complies with solicitors accounting regulations and files an accountant's report for the year to the end of 2014.

The case is back before the High Court this week. A notice on Feeney Solicitors' website now states: "This office is currently closed until further notice." Meanwhile, Feeney McTigue is also due to appear before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal next month, in a case taken by the Law Society.

A native of Athlone, Feeney McTigue qualified as a solicitor in 2003 before setting up her own practice. According to her biography on the GRCC's website, she mainly specialises in family law and, in 2008, her firm began providing a legal clinic to the GRCC. The website states that she became executive director in 2014 and that, "The legal clinic continues to be run by a practising solicitor within the office of Feeney Solicitors."

Theatre director Garry Hynes is a patron



Aine Feeney McTigue

of the GRCC, according to its website. Earlier this year, Feeney McTigue was photographed in the *Irish Independent* alongside Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald as part of a GRCC fundraiser.

John Daly, the chairman of GRCC, told Goldhawk that another Galway city firm, Blake & Kenny Solicitors, acts for GRCC and said that Feeney Solicitors never held any funds belonging to GRCC.

OH REALLY MATT?

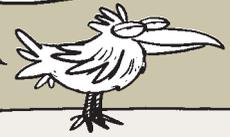
MATT COOPER'S biog of Tony O'Reilly, *The Maximalist: The Rise and Fall of Tony O'Reilly*, touches on the sensitive subject of O'Reilly's parentage; that his parents were not married; that his father had already been married with four children before Tony was born; and that Tony was unaware of his family background until he was a teenager.

Cooper says that the author and journalist Ivan Fallon "revealed" these details in his 1994 biography of O'Reilly, and how it explained O'Reilly's craving for success and recognition. In fact it was one Harry Walsh who 'revealed' O'Reilly's family background in his book, *Oh Really, O'Reilly*, two years earlier. Strangely, Cooper lists Walsh's book in his own book's select bibliography. Did Matt miss that part of Walsh's book?

Cooper also refers with awe to O'Reilly's rugby prowess from an early age, stating at one point that O'Reilly, "just turned 17", was "able to break 10 seconds for the 100 yards in full rugby kit". That would have been in 1953 when the world record for the 100 yards sprint was 9.3 seconds (*sans* rugby shirt and boots).

Another vignette from Matt about the young O'Reilly at UCD in the '50s describes how he was gifted a car by his dad and that he "particularly enjoyed female company". According to the book, "He became something of a party animal – although never drinking alcohol because of the car – staying out until near dawn".

Cooper was given a two-page spread in the *Sunday Business Post* to write about his book and his own encounters with O'Reilly last weekend, in a generous promo for his biog, although the article contained as much material about Matt's life, times and journalism as it did about O'Reilly.

THE
HOT AIR
BRIGADE

If I'm hungover, I'll say I'm hungover. I think it's good for young girls to have someone relatable.
Holly Carpenter, Irish Independent



Holly Carpenter

I saw him in the rice queue at Izmir / The boy with the war in his eyes / He followed me around until he lost himself in the twilight lanes / A child going nowhere but forwards... (continues)

Feargal Keane contributes a 'free verse' poem on the Syrian refugee crisis, Sunday Independent

In the indulgence of the age I too would like to come out: I am a (reconstructed) socialist, like Ruairi and Bertie
Jody Corcoran, Sunday Independent

I've sort of created my own genre, which is wanting to make people cry
TV3 director of content Lynda McQuaid, Irish Times

Ronan Ryan's super trendy eatery Counter Culture was packed with media types who ogled the glossy read while chowing down on 'energy grenades', honuts (healthy donuts) and raw chocolate pie.

Kirsty Blake Knox attends the launch of Susan Jane White's *The Virtuous Tart*, Irish Independent

A new breed of middle class earth mother, the avocado mum is more likely to be seen at a birthing workshop than on a relaxation chair at Monart.

Nikki Walsh, Sunday Times (submitted by reader)

It's Star Wars, cosmology, biology, artificiality, information overload, technology. It's my dog. It's you looking at my dog. And the slow walker sees it all.

Dublin Fringe Festival blurb for *Tardigrade* (submitted by reader)

Taking my brand online happened when I joined Instagram and started to post photos of my lifestyle journey.

Model Maeve Madden, 'Ireland's global superstars (who you've probably never heard of)', Irish Independent

At a late hour, I leave him there in the dark, in a lay-by somewhere between Turin and Milan, lost in his music. The scene is like a visual representation of Hank Williams' *Lost Highway* song.

Brian Boyd meets Bono, Irish Times

€15 for suitable contributions, send to: The Hot Air Brigade, The Phoenix, 44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2 or email: hotair@thephoenix.ie



"Absoutely - their creatine, protein, steroids, whey..."

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



MEDICAL COUNCIL'S BAHRAIN 'OVERSIGHT'

THE backstage machinations by the Irish Medical Council in supplying accreditation to the Royal College of Surgeons-Medical University of Bahrain (RCSI-Bahrain) last December would leave hardened members of the Irish political class gasping.

Now, Global Legal Action Network (GLAN), a human rights NGO run by Irish lawyers, has uncovered the extent of that manoeuvring by the medical council via documents secured under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. Initially, most of these documents were "inadvertently omitted" by the council from the material originally to be released.

The craven response of the Irish medical establishment, Government and even the media to the militarisation of hospitals in Bahrain, including those utilised by the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI), has been documented in *The Phoenix* (see edition, 4/5/12 and *passim*). The Bahrain government is controlled by a sectarian, feudal monarchy and since 2011 its crackdown on protesters demanding reform has included the torture, framing and imprisonment of medics, some of them Irish trained, for treating wounded demonstrators.

The refusal of Ireland's medical organisations to publicly condemn this assault on doctors trained in Ireland is despite, or rather because of, the construction of a €100 million investment by the RCSI in its spanking new medical university in Bahrain. This is despite international condemnation by human rights, medical organisations, the UN and the European Parliament of the Bahrain military's maltreatment of doctors for treating wounded demonstrators.



Katharine Bulbulia



"We are the last line of defence against non-Christian values!"

The RCSI's €100 million Bahrain investment is of course dependent on securing accreditation from the medical council in the country, Ireland, in which the host university is based. To be fair to certain council members 7 out of the 18 voting members voted against granting accreditation to RCSI-Bahrain. This division arose following a 2013 report from GLAN's fore runner, CEARTAS (Irish Lawyers for Human Rights) which submitted that medical, legal and human rights criteria binding the RCSI should prevent the council from accrediting the Bahrain university.

CEARTAS's report was grounded in well researched documentation citing the obligations of Irish public bodies under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Act 2003 and the standards of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME). Despite the WFME's stipulation that its standards demand the teaching of "medical ethics, human rights and medical jurisprudence relevant to the practice of medicine", the medical council's accreditation process was, it claimed, guided by WFME standards.

Last January GLAN made a FOI request for all council documents relating to RCSI-Bahrain and received extensive material, but little or nothing on the debates and divisions in the council about the human rights issue. When GLAN appealed to the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) for more documents, it emerged that the council had "inadvertently omitted" to supply a large amount of documents relating to RCSI-Bahrain which were originally supposed to be released. This was due to what the council described as an "oversight". The newly released documents provided a picture of serious opposition on the council from a number of its members to accreditation of

RCSI-Bahrain and the council's successful efforts to eliminate any reference to human rights in its accreditation process.

For example, when it was proposed by the dissenting doctors on the Medical Council in June 2014 that the CEARTAS report be supplied to members of the medical council's inspection team visiting Bahrain last year, the council majority agreed and decided that RCSI-Bahrain would be notified of this. However, they also decreed that a) RCSI-Bahrain would not be invited to respond to the document (in other words, they could ignore it) and b) the CEARTAS report "lies outside of Council's standard approach to the accreditation" (ie. it was irrelevant to the accreditation process).

Undeterred, the same doctors proposed in September 2014 that Professor Eoin O'Brien, a long time defender of medics persecuted by the Bahrain military (see *The Phoenix* 1/7/11), accompany the council accreditation team then due to visit Bahrain the following month. This proposal was rejected by the council.

In December the council's education committee met to discuss the accreditation team's recommendation that RCSI-Bahrain be endorsed. Dr Ruairi Hanley argued there was an inherent risk to the council's credibility as there was no reference in the accreditation's report to human rights violations and this would give legitimacy to the Bahrain regime. The education committee voted by three to one (Hanley) to accept Katharine Bulbulia's proposal to accept the report. When the issue came before the full council meeting in mid-December, a proposal from Hanley and John Nisbet to reject the report was defeated by 10 votes to 7 and the council then approved the accreditation report.

The role of various political players in all of this is also interesting. One of the moving spirits behind approval of RCSI-Bahrain is political appointee to the council, former Fine Gael senator, Katharine Bulbulia, who defected from FG to join the PDs and became programme manager to ex-Tánaiste and health minister, Mary Harney. Bulbulia led the site visit to Bahrain and helped to push through the motion at council for accreditation.



Sally Mulready



"I'M LOOKING FOR A PEOPLE SMUGGLER...ER, I MEAN PEOPLE CARRIER!"

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One might expect a former FG and PD politician to take such a position but the role of Sally Mulready – she moved the motion, seconded by Bulbulia – is less explicable. A London Labour Party councillor, Mulready was appointed to the Council of State by Michael D Higgins, largely due to her work for Irish emigrants to London and for the inquiry into the Magdalene Laundries in Ireland, among other issues with the disadvantaged.

Mulready's leading role in pushing through the council's endorsement of RCSI-Bahrain may perhaps be explained by the position adopted by Labour education minister Jan O'Sullivan, who might be expected to prioritise human rights in education at home and abroad. O'Sullivan was quizzed in



Dr Ruairi Hanley

the Dáil last February by Fianna Fáil TD Seán Ó Feargháil about human rights concerns surrounding RCSI-Bahrain and the accreditation process. The minister firstly proclaimed the Government's support for the UN Human Rights Council's serious concern at human rights abuses in Bahrain. But she moved swiftly along to state, "The Government has always sought to draw a clear distinction between the wider human rights situation and the involvement of Irish



SCHOOLBOY SCIENTIST BUILDS WORKING RACISM DETECTOR

institutions in the education and training of Bahraini medical personnel", before endorsing the accreditation of RCSI-Bahrain.

Ironically, the leading protagonist for human rights against the strictly technical approach of the council is former PD member, Dr Hanley, who was supported by, among others, political appointee John Nesbit and director of the National Clinical Programme in Anaesthesia, Dr Bairbre Golden. That these should make a stand on the Bahrain issue is in sharp contrast to the studied refusal of the RCSI, the medical council, the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) and the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), who have refused to publicly condemn the Bahrain government for its abusive treatment of medics, even though the latter victims included half-a-dozen or so Irish-trained doctors.

Members of the medical establishment would claim, privately at any rate, that

the threat to the RCSI's €100 million investment is an obvious deterrent to confrontation with Bahrain. But why did *The Irish Times* step back from this story to the point that its freelance reporter in Bahrain, Finian Cunningham, accused it of covering up for the regime and the RCSI? At the time the *IT* even refused to publish letters on the issue from not only Hanley but also Professor Muiris Fitzgerald, former Dean of the UCD Faculty of Medicine (see *The Phoenix* 4/5/12).

MUMBO-JUMBO

"In September 2014 a new chart of accounts was introduced into the College which has a two dimensional structure which facilitates much better drill down capabilities."

Latest annual report produced by the National College of Art and Design

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



INDEPENDENTS: THE FIRST ITEM

ARE the Independent TDs in the Dáil Technical Group about to tarnish their politically ecumenical, non-party approach to democratic reform with a factional bear garden?

The announcement by the Social Democrats

(Catherine Murphy, Róisín Shortall and Stephen Donnelly) this month of a slate of general election candidates that includes Anne-Marie McNally (in Dublin Mid-West) has provoked serious angst from some of the Technical Group, who now regard Anne-Marie as a rival candidate.



Anne-Marie McNally

The problem is that McNally is employed – and paid – by the Technical Group to provide a secretarial service for them. And yet the Techies now find themselves paying for a rival candidate looking for a Dáil seat in Dublin Mid-West.

McNally has worked for Murphy throughout the 31st Dáil, something that did not bother anyone as long as a) Murphy was an Independent or sole trader; b) was not herself a candidate for the Soc Dems who are now in competition with the rest of the groups and individuals for Dáil seats and c) was not being paid to by her rivals to compete with them.

The Trots – Richard Boyd Barrett, Joe Higgins and Ruth Coppinger – have not so far expressed their anger at McNally's entrance to the stage and nor have Clare Daly and Mick Wallace. But joint leader of the Independent Alliance, Shane Ross, certainly

has and his anger at this 'outrageous' conflict of interest has greatly exercised the man who would be the first non-party Minister for Finance in the next Dáil. Lord Ross's reaction to McNally and the Soc Dems' behaviour would make a Fine Gael chief whip look like a model of political reform. The Technical Group's first meeting since the summer recess, due to convene this week, has threatened to upset the Independent 'tolerance' of differing political opinions so carefully fostered in the last few years.

Dublin Mid-West is fertile ground for anti-coalition candidates and both Labour sitting TDs, Joanna Tuffy and Robert Dowds, are regarded as extremely vulnerable to Sinn Féin and other left candidates. The Independent Alliance are to run former Green TD Paul Gogarty, who is anxious to return to the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate (Gogarty has form when it comes to getting Labour TDs to F... off) and would



Shane Ross

have expected to be in contention for one of the Labour seats.

But McNally's entry to the electoral fray in this constituency could put paid to Gogarty and the Independent Alliance's hopes here, as Murphy's Dáil assistant is a formidable operator and the Soc Dems' brand of traditional Labour/WP politics

could strike a chord with the voters in the sprawling estates of Lucan and Clondalkin.

What will Lord Ross and his bailiff, Finian McGrath, do about this interloper from below stairs in Leinster House?

FF DYNASTIES FALL TO KEAVENEY

EX-LABOUR Party chairman Colm Keaveney's positioning next to Micheál Martin and party fixer, Timmy Dooley, at the Fianna Fáil think-in last week helps to explain how the scourge of Eamon Gilmore swept all before him at the FF convention for Galway East this week.

First of all, sitting TD Michael Kitt (65) had to be, er, persuaded that he should step aside for trophy acquisition, Keaveney, who

had provided more opposition to coalition policies than most FF politicians in the current Dáil. That much of Kitt's base had transferred to the new Galway-Roscommon constituency was a blow to Kitt's prospects in any case.

But the memory of Kitt's seizure of the Leas Cheann Comhairle position in the Dáil in 2011 – he went to Enda Kenny behind Martin's back and ahead of Martin's choice, John Browne – meant that the leadership was never going to support Kitt against Keaveney. Kitt now joins his brother and sister, Tom Kitt and Áine Brady respectively, as three former FF TDs and junior ministers (their father was a party TD also), in retirement.

However, Keaveney then had to contend with dynastic big beast, Mark Killilea, whose below radar canvassing campaign for Cllr Michael Connolly, in the run-up to convention baffled many. But Killilea, whose dad was a founder member of FF and who was himself a TD, junior minister and MEP in a 30-year political career, is intent on continuing the dynasty via his son, Donagh Mark.



Colm Keaveney

Connolly would have stood no chance of retaining the FF seat if selected at convention but knocking out Keaveney would have paved the way for first time councillor, Donagh Mark, to build his profile for the next general election.

That Killilea's cunning plan failed and that Kitt was also seen off indicates two things. First is that the old method by party barons of canvassing cumain officers to deliver the convention vote from ghost branches as well as real ones has been superseded by the one member, one vote method.

Second is that Keaveney is now Martin's man in the west where bum nibblers, Éamon Ó Cuív and Dara Calleary have been creating trouble for Martin's leadership throughout the current Dáil. Having watched admiringly as Keaveney tormented his former party leader, Gilmore, Martin will surely hope that Keaveney will not turn on him in future.

BERTIE'S BOYS' GENDER BATTLE

BERTIE AHERN continues to mastermind the offensive against Micheál Martin and his favoured candidate, Mary Fitzpatrick, in his old stomping ground of Dublin North Central (DNC). As the High Noon convention – set for October 7 – approaches, there are two questions posed to Fitzpatrick; one is whether she will be confronted with a candidate supported by Bertie's Good Ol' Boys (BGOBS) and the second is who would win such a contest.

The faintly ridiculous scenario now exists of former Taoiseach, Bertie, who is



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also a former party member – he resigned before Martin could expel him – running a campaign against the leadership in DNC from outside the party and outside the constituency.



Mary Fitzpatrick

Bertie’s bunker is in Beaumont House, where the BEGOBS meet for planning meetings and a few bevvies as they prepare their plan to stop ‘that bloody woman’, Fitzpatrick, and Martin from seizing Bertie’s seat.

Despite the shrieks from Bertie’s boys about the party headquarters’ ‘gendermander’ directive to select a single female candidate, the BEGOBS had anticipated this move and had moved Denise McMorrow into position as a fall back candidate. This, it was hoped, would deter the ‘single female’ directive.

Now, the question is whether they will persist with a candidate that has not the faintest hope of taking a seat or whether Denise herself wants to accept this poisoned chalice. The possibility exists of one of the women resiling on the night of convention; Denise because she knows she cannot win the seat or Fitzpatrick if she reckons that the BEGOBS will muster enough of their cronies to swing the delegates’ votes.

McMorrow has no electoral track record at local or national level, while Fitzpatrick



The prevailing mood at Leinster House

headed FF’s group of councillors in the last Dublin City Council and nearly took a European seat in last summer’s elections. And if it were not for Bertie’s extraordinary transfer of votes to former TD, Cyprian Brady, in the general election of 2007, Fitzpatrick would have made it into the Dáil.

However, while Bertie and the lads know they cannot win the seat, they also know that they can deliver a blow to Martin if they keep Fitzpatrick off the ticket. And if McMorrow can’t win a seat this time round, the argument being whispered into her ear is that an election campaign will raise her profile and she could take a seat next time round at an election that could take place sooner than later.

Fitzpatrick’s hopes are that the middle ground of the 100-plus membership –

they became alienated by the moribund organisation that the lads created with their factionalism – can be persuaded to re-activate themselves and turn up for convention.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

“Ireland has one of the most advanced and competitive telecommunications infrastructures in Europe. Large investments in recent years have resulted in state-of-the-art optical networks with world class national and international connectivity.” *IDA website (idaireland.com)*

“It has emerged that some rural parts of the north-west could have to wait as much as another six years for the roll out of broadband” *thejournal.ie June 23 2015*

REFUGEES: TO HELL OR TO CONNACHT

A LOUD and uncomfortable silence from media and political quarters followed an extraordinary remark from minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin last week about just where Ireland’s intended intake of 4,000 refugees should – or rather, should not – be received and hosted.

The splendidly titled junior minister with responsibility for new communities and equality told *The Irish Times* that refugees arriving in Ireland should not be housed in Dublin due to the homeless and housing crisis in the capital. Furthermore, he argued, the reception and orientation areas where refugees will stay for short periods, should not be in Dublin either.

Apparently, the reception of refugees would incite less reaction away from densely populated areas, O Ríordáin argued; so, dropping a hundred or so refugees in a small town in East Clare would create less integration problems than in, say, north Dublin. O Ríordáin made his remarks after the first meeting of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme Task Force but, interestingly, the question of where the refugees would be received and housed was not discussed at that meeting.

Ó Ríordáin’s comments when appointed to his portfolio last year were of the Sandymount, liberal variety with much talk of his long-time aspirations for a civilised and republican approach to asylum seekers.

Their treatment by previous administrations was “inhumane and intolerable”, thundered the new minister. And when the report from the working group on improvements to the lot of asylum seekers was published last July, Aodhán described it fulsomely as a

being accused of talking the talk but not walking the walk on such issues. On this occasion, Aodhán has not even talked the talk. Not for the first time recently, it took the supposedly more reactionary Fine Gael leader and Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, to adopt a more moderate government line on a thorny issue.

Kenny stated quickly – within hours – that no decisions had been made about where refugees would be housed in Ireland and that the logistics surrounding the acceptance of refugees were still being worked out (whatever Aodhán Cromwell says).

The minister for new communities statement hung around the body politic like a bad yet silent smell for the following days, with most socialists and liberals perhaps deciding that responding to the remarks would only raise the temperature on this subject.

Whatever could be the reason for such a Dublin-centric statement on refugees from a minister who has embraced every liberal and equality issue in sight, from religious discrimination to child poverty, travellers and the like? Could it possibly be that this Dublin minister and TD knows he is fighting for his political life in Dublin Bay North at the upcoming election, and that he believes his usual stance on this issue would be badly received by an electorate already enraged by Labour’s behaviour in coalition government? Say it ain’t so, Aodhán.



Aodhán Ó Ríordáin



Frances Fitzgerald

“Yes for equality moment”, emoting about how “it was particularly heartbreaking to meet children who are living behind walls” and “in limbo”.

Significantly, Ó Ríordáin’s senior minister at justice, Frances Fitzgerald, was less enthusiastic about the report’s recommendations in a response that was lukewarm and short on when and how the proposals would be implemented. This was, at least, less disingenuous than Ó Ríordáin’s triumphal rhetoric which has led to him

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INDEPENDENT
ASYLUM SEEKERS

THE exodus of editorial executives at Independent News & Media (INM) has proceeded with Syrian-style attrition, and a flood of senior hacks have left in recent months, only some of whom have been replaced.

The weekend announcement that Kevin Doyle “succeeds *Irish Independent* editor Fionnan Sheahan in the Group Political Editor role” is not strictly true, as Doyle’s immediate predecessor was Miriam Donohoe, although she lasted only a fortnight in the role. Before that, INM was without a group political editor from January until August, as several applicants were deemed unsuitable and at least two of those that Sheahan and group editor-in-chief, Stephen Rae, wanted for the job declined it, such is the macho, control-freakery culture at the group.

Another heavy hitting editorial exec who left – in high dudgeon – is executive editor, Shane Doran, who not only stormed out in May, but who has taken a High Court action against the group for not implementing his appointment as editor of the *Herald*. Doran has not so far been replaced. And one of the most senior editorial positions in Irish journalism, INM group business editor, has remained unfilled for at least three months following Thomas Molloy’s resignation.

Molloy had editorial differences with Rae about the new cross platform, cross title coverage of business affairs, and subsequently departed for the calm cloisters of Trinity College Dublin’s communications



Robert Pitt

department (see *The Phoenix* 5/6/15).

Yet another vacancy at top editorial level is that of head of content across all the titles and of INM’s digital operation. Ian Mallon, whose “dynamism leading teams of journalists” at the group, as the *Indo* described it on his appointment two years ago”, will now be deployed by the Football Association of Ireland as its communications director.

In the same statement describing Mallon’s “dynamism”, the *Indo* also referred to its newly appointed editor, Claire Grady, as possessing “the drive and energy to lead the *Irish Independent* to the next level”. Grady’s next level was reached a year later when she handed in her resignation.

Another crucial editorial post has been that of managing director of INM digital operations, held by Fiona O’Carroll for just over 18 months, but who left earlier this year “to pursue other interests”, as she put it. O’Carroll has been replaced by former *Irish Times* journalist John O’Shea.

Quite apart from INM’s failure to hang on to some of its top editorial heads, the reluctance to replace some of them is partly due to the group’s ongoing editorial cuts, which have seen at least €9 million savings in the last twelve months. One presumes that the failure so far to develop a digital strategy that works to the satisfaction of journalists and shareholders alike will not see the departure of INM chief executive, Robert Pitt.

The former Tesco and Lidl manager in Eastern Europe was appointed a year ago and has had more than one brush with some of the editorial staff in the hot house that is Talbot Towers.

SINDO’S RIPPING
IRA YARNS

THE *Sunday Independent*’s security correspondent, Jim Cusack, has been to the fore in exposing IRA dirty deeds, north and south, but as he himself complained to RTÉ and *Irish Times* colleagues recently (see *The Phoenix*, 11/9/15), other media have failed to keep pace with his investigations. These have uncovered some truly dramatic tales about the double murders of Jock Davison and Kevin McGuigan, as well as the IRA’s motivation in the killings.

Initially, Cusack reported (23/8/15) that McGuigan had shot Davison because he wanted revenge for his punishment shooting

by the IRA and also because he had been plotting to kill another top Provo in “an apparent kamikaze mission against the IRA”.

Three weeks later, Cusack’s investigations turned up the news that shortly before his murder Davison was about to be appointed chief of staff (C/S) of the IRA. At the same time, Davison was “an agent for British security services who may also have been supporting his elevation to the top spot”. The plot does not end there, however, and according to the *Sindo* story the IRA Army Council member promoting Davison as C/S was also suspected of being a British agent. McGuigan, Cusack reported, shot Davison because he knew that Davison was about to become C/S.



Jock Davison

The evidence that “exposed” Davison as an informer was that he had been seen in a hospital talking to two men in suits who had British accents.

Last weekend Cusack’s deep throats provided him with a story that blew the lid off a massive cover-up and which had gulled all of his colleagues in the media (and which also contradicted his own earlier reports). Cusack revealed that McGuigan had not shot Davison at all and that in fact it was a “cabal within the IRA” that had done so. The IRA had carried out Davison’s murder because of an internal row over a missing £500,000 from the 2004 Northern Bank robbery. And while the dead man had not benefited personally from IRA activities, Cusack’s *Sindo* story said his pending elevation as IRA C/S meant he would be in a position to nail down the truth about the missing money. Davison, therefore, had to go.

Cusack also told *Sindo* readers that after dispatching Davison, the IRA then shot McGuigan dead as “part of an elaborate ruse to make Davison’s murder look like a revenge killing by a renegade former IRA member”. (Cunning bastards).

Whether or not MI5 and British Military Intelligence – previously described by Cusack as manipulating the Army Council leadership – were in on this plot is unclear. Whatever, the failure of either RTÉ or the *IT* to pursue this latest *Sindo* scoop underlines Cusack’s allegation that these media outlets are not on message with the reality of IRA chicanery.

One looks forward to the new monitoring body – being organised by the British government to get to the bottom of “all paramilitary activity” – vindicating Cusack’s contentions; or not, as the case may be.



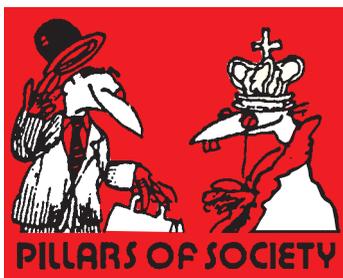
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NO CALLER I.D.

Keep Him Informed



Aidan O'Brien

UNDER HIS polite exterior, there lies a tough and stubborn personality that has helped Aidan O'Brien climb the greasy ladder of Irish racing right to the top. The 45-year-old Wexford native, with no racing pedigree and few connections in a tight knit and insular industry, has made his mark at Ballydoyle, the racing wing of the Coolmore Stud operation, where Squire John Magnier calls the shots. But after almost 20 years the partnership between the champion trainer and 'the Boss' has become increasingly strained as a result of the usurping of the role of young Joseph O'Brien, son of Aidan, as the stable jockey at Ballydoyle. Blood is thicker than water and the finishing post could now be in sight for the most successful partnership in thoroughbred racing.

Tensions at Ballydoyle are nothing new. In the past, a number of high profile jockeys found O'Brien difficult to work with due to his fastidious nature, none more so than Jamie Spencer, Magnier's godchild and stable jockey at Ballydoyle for just one season. The relationship between Spencer and O'Brien was fractious and Magnier had to move in and try to broker some form of detente before Spencer walked out in 2005.

Mick Kinane – another top class jockey who, in the latter years of his tenure at Ballydoyle, found it difficult to work alongside O'Brien – had exited in 2003. Although never stated explicitly, some Ballydoyle observers believe that O'Brien has always had a problem with the fact that he does not have final say in choosing stable jockeys.

When Johnny Murtagh was appointed stable jockey in 2008, Aidan's son Joseph O'Brien was just 16 and riding all the top horses 'in their homework'. While Magnier appointed Murtagh as his stable jockey, AOB was always

pushing Joseph and Murtagh soon found himself playing second fiddle to Joseph. In 2010 the former resigned his position, the third senior jockey to get on the wrong side of O'Brien and to exit Ballydoyle as a result.

Up to that point, Magnier had backed his trainer, as he was delivering the results and after all, the top trainers tend to have a ruthless streak. Now there was a change in the balance at Ballydoyle, with Joseph O'Brien taking over as number one jockey. Before the young O'Brien was appointed stable jockey, all of the previous incumbents answered to Magnier, as he was 'the Boss', but Joseph's allegiance was, understandably, to his father and most likely was riding to Aidan O'Brien and not John Magnier's instructions.

Most young jockeys learn their trade by making mistakes on moderate horses and handicappers; Joseph was thrust into the big leagues, riding against stronger and more experienced riders and it was inevitable he would make mistakes. Cracks in the relationship between Aidan O'Brien and Magnier were starting to appear before the 'Australia incident' at Leopardstown in 2014.

Magnier and his dearest associates ('the Boys' – Michael Tabor and Derrick Smith) were

making fewer visits to Ballydoyle and AOB was even employing a number of freelance jockeys to ride Coolmore horses in training. It was clearly jockey error that saw red hot favourite *Australia* beaten in the Champion Stakes at Leopardstown and Tabor was not keeping it a secret that he was unhappy with Joseph O'Brien riding his horses. After another serious gaffe aboard *Gleneagles* in France last October (when demoted to third place after passing the post in front), Joseph's position as stable jockey came under even more pressure from 'the Boys'.

ARRANGEMENT

Over the winter months, Ryan Moore was approached by Coolmore to replace Joseph as number one at Ballydoyle. It was Magnier's call to appoint Moore to the position, a move that is understood to have irked AOB, as in the trainer's eyes, Joseph remained his stable jockey. Traditionally, it is the trainer who appoints his stable jockey, but that is not the Magnier way.

Nevertheless, the O'Brien family stood firmly behind Joseph and AOB clearly refused to budge. Magnier could not sack Joseph, as Aidan O'Brien most likely would have walked, leaving Coolmore without a trainer at the start of a season that had *Gleneagles* and a number of potential Group 1 contenders in the yard. Some sort of arrangement was duly arrived at, which saw Ryan Moore timidly accepted by O'Brien as the jockey that would ride "the main horses" at Ballydoyle.

Notably, Moore was not unveiled as the new number one jockey at Ballydoyle. A timely weight problem was diagnosed as the reason why Joseph was standing aside and sharing the riding duties at Ballydoyle – ie. he had not been sacked, a crucial factor for the O'Brien family that just about kept them on side at Ballydoyle.

However, quietly, amongst racing circles, Aidan O'Brien started letting it be known that he was considering his future. By June this year, leaks from a normally watertight Ballydoyle started to appear and the name of UK-based trainer David O'Meara circulated as a possible successor.

AOB had been making some uncharacteristic training mistakes, namely in the 2000 guineas at Newmarket in May this year, where he clearly believed *Ol' Man River* (ridden by Joseph O'Brien) would win in preference to *Gleneagles*, the latter of which drifted from 7/4 right out to 4/1 before winning the race with ease, with Ryan Moore in the saddle. Maybe O'Brien didn't know how good *Gleneagles* had become as a three-year-old, given that he had changed the horse's regular work rider.

Fortunately, from AOB's



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the horse's regular work rider.

Fortunately, from AOB's perspective, an injury in July to Ryan Moore played nicely into Joseph O'Brien's hands, who has since been making the most of the opportunities coming his way, but 'the Boys' do not believe he is in the same league as Moore. Nevertheless, with Moore currently out of the equation, things have settled down at Ballydoyle. Magnier, Tabor and Smith were in the parade ring with Aidan and Anne-Marie O'Brien at the Curragh recently, where Joseph rode two Group 1 winners, including an Irish St Leger.

So where does this leave one of the most successful partnerships in world racing? There has been a lot of activity in recent times back at Piltown in Co Kilkenny, where the O'Briens have their own breeding and training operation and a move back there for AOB is increasingly seen to be on the cards. This could this be no more than posturing and manoeuvring to defend his position or is O'Brien really ready to walk away from the dream job at Ballydoyle? The smart money says it is unlikely that the trainer will accept Ryan Moore back as *numero uno* at Ballydoyle in preference to his son.

It is not by fluke or accident that O'Brien is the Master Of Ballydoyle today – the most sought-after training job in racing here or maybe anywhere else. Everything he does is thought out with meticulous attention to detail – a trait honed on the hill of Coolcullen, where he was the apple of Jim Bolger's eye, a dedicated student whose ambitions clearly lay elsewhere. Staff at Bolger's regarded him as a lickarse and teacher's pet and Bolger admitted he would have married him to keep him in the yard.

It was at Coolcullen that O'Brien forged his relationship with his wife, Anne-Marie Crowley. She was the yard's lady jockey and he was head man of his barn and riding then as a successful two-time Champion Amateur Jockey. As they say in racing, AOB married well. Joe Crowley is regarded as a shrewd horseman, one of the first trainers to utilise a hill gallop to train racehorses. He punched well above his weight with unfashionable stock and the Crowleys lived and breathed the game. Other Crowley girls married television racing pundit Kevin O'Ryan, former jockey Trevor Horgan and Dermot Weld's principal jockey, Pat Smullen.

WINNERS

After three years at Bolger's yard, O'Brien left when Anne-Marie took over her father's licence at Piltown in 1992, and the married couple established themselves as a force to be reckoned with, recording an impressive tally of 40 winners in their rookie season. The licence was held in Anne-Marie's name and the general consensus at the time was that the talent and skill to train winners rested with the Crowleys.

It took AOB a couple of years to convince the Crowleys to transfer the licence of the family yard into the O'Brien name and after Anne-Marie took a break

to give birth to their first son Joseph, O'Brien took over the reins completely. This turned out to be a rather well-timed move, as O'Brien, at the tender age of 25, was now nicely positioned to take a run at the Ballydoyle job, which everybody in racing knew was becoming vacant, with the looming retirement of the maestro, Vincent O'Brien (no relation).

John Magnier required a diligent Yes man at Ballydoyle and in O'Brien he had a champion cap doffer. Three years of dutiful hard work and forelock tugging at Coolcullen ensured a glowing reference that Bolger delivered in person to Magnier. The Coolmore boss had no problem taking a punt on the young AOB, particularly with the Crowley pedigree alongside him, and O'Brien was unveiled as the successor to Vincent O'Brien in 1996.

Vincent O'Brien had had a very particular relationship with Magnier (including the fact that his daughter had married him) and had been the founder of Ballydoyle, involved in all aspects of the business at the Rosegreen yard, near Cashel, Co Tipperary. In contrast, Aidan O'Brien was hired specifically to train the precious bloodlines discovered by Vincent and now owned by his son-in-law.



Anne-Marie and Joseph O'Brien

When Aidan and Anne-Marie O'Brien moved into Ballydoyle, the yard was very much intact, with all of Vincent's professional staff *in situ* and handling their respective duties. This made it possible for AOB to make an early impact, sending out the Champion two-year-old *Desert King* to win the National Stakes in his first season, before registering three classic wins in 1997.

With the best facilities and horses in the world at his disposal, O'Brien could hardly but establish himself as the rising star of the training ranks, although it impressed observers how quickly he acclimatised to the conditions at Ballydoyle. He now has 12 Irish Derby wins under his belt, although the more sought-after Epsom Derby wins proved rather harder to come by for much of this century until *Camelot* in 2012 kicked off a three-in-a row run that included *Ruler of the World* in 2013 and *Australia* last year.

With Magnier's backing and financial support, O'Brien has earned big bucks through his share of the prize money and the vast majority of the trainer's wealth remains intact – partly because he rarely has the opportunity to spend it, such are the heavy demands from the Coolmore breeding operation. The O'Brien family live modestly enough, holidaying two or three times a year and both Aidan and Anne-Marie are teetotalers – the result of Jim Bolger's puritan teachings at Coolcullen.

PROFITS

Evidence of where a chunk of the lolly has gone over the years emerged in 2011 when the Aidan and Anne-Marie O'Brien-owned breeding and training operation Whisperview Trading Ltd (WTL) had to cough up over €½m to the dreaded Revenue after an offshore assets investigation identified underpayments in Corporation Tax, PAYE and PRSI.

WTL was established by the O'Briens back in 2000 and operates out of Piltown. This is a low enough profile operation but despite having no website and no entry in the *Irish Field Directory* it is certainly active and has produced its fare share of decent thoroughbreds in recent years. Many of the horses run in the orange and blue silks of 'Mrs AM O'Brien', trained by Aidan O'Brien.

The last accounts filed for WTL reveal that all is well in Piltown, with accumulated profits at the end of January last year standing at an impressive €6m, with tangible assets of €13m. An associated company, Flymount Trading Ltd (described as an investment holding company), had accumulated profits of €2.6m at the end of January 2014, while a third O'Brien company, Dougcastle Investments Ltd, was sitting on profits of €1.7m, albeit having dropped €2m that year. These three companies all do business with each other and clearly Aidan O'Brien and his wife have a substantial bloodstock business in place.

Back at Ballydoyle, there is a growing sense that AOB is ready to go out on his own and not be answerable to 'the Boss', or any boss. If Aidan O'Brien is of the opinion (as whispered by Ballydoyle insiders) that he is taken for granted at Ballydoyle, he is certainly financially sound enough to set up a serious operation on his own, complete with one of the best CVs in the racing world. He recently hinted in a Channel 4 interview that he would like to spend more time visiting the cities where he races the horses, as presently he travels home with his runners after each race to ensure they are safe. This could be a hint that he may want a lifestyle change, away from the pressure cooker environment of Ballydoyle.

For John Magnier, this may not be that big an issue. David O'Meara is at the same stage of his promising career as O'Brien was when he was appointed to succeed Vincent O'Brien in 1996. The form book points towards the Cork-born trainer should the vacancy arise. And for many aficionados of the sport of kings, this is a question not of if, but when.



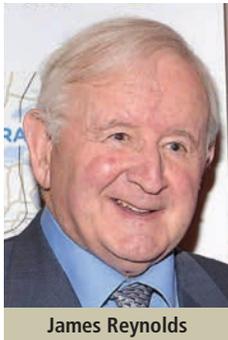
MORE TAX TROUBLE FOR JAMES REYNOLDS

LONGFORD businessman James Reynolds – brother of the late Albert Reynolds and father of well-known music promoter, John Reynolds – has landed in trouble with the Taxman yet again.

The businessman, best known as the proprietor of the Longford Arms Hotel, had a judgment of €245,000 registered against him earlier this month. This is just the latest in a series of judgments that have been registered against James Reynolds in recent years, from the Revenue and Longford Town Council.

Earlier this year, the Taxman registered a judgment of €105,000 against James Reynolds, while the year before, a tax judgment of €95,000 was registered against the businessman. In 2014, there was a judgment against him for €65,000 courtesy of Longford Town Council (see *The Phoenix* 6/7/14). The local authority also registered a judgment of €72,000 against James Reynolds in 2012.

Currently, a company called LA Business Enterprises Ltd operates the Longford Arms Hotel, with this company's directors listed as the hotelier's daughter, Oragh Reynolds, and a business consultant, Barry O'Mahony, who has a Dublin address on company records. LA Business Enterprises was set up in 2013 and has yet to file accounts. James Reynolds and his associated companies own this company, with some of his family members also holding small shareholdings.



James Reynolds

SOLICITOR'S FISHY TALE

CORK-BASED legal eagle Greg Casey is no stranger to disputes with the Law Society, having racked up a number of misconduct findings at the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT), and having been struck off the Roll of Solicitors in 2013. Now, according to a recently published decision from the Law Society, Casey has been struck off – for the second time – in relation to a complaint involving the Irish Tuna Association.

Casey previously practised at Casey & Co, in Bandon, Co Cork, and once acted for the likes of An Taisce and Friends of the Earth, in addition to acting as a legal advisor for the Rosspoint Five at one stage in their dispute with Shell. In 2008, he was suspended by the President of the High Court, Ricky Johnson, from acting as solicitor.

This was because he had a limited practising certificate restricting him to practice only as an assistant solicitor. He had given an undertaking to ACC Bank on his own behalf, describing himself as a partner and later defaulted on the loan. Because he had wrongly held himself out as a partner, he was subsequently struck off the Roll of Solicitors in 2013.

Casey said at the time that it was "obvious" he would not work as a solicitor again and that he didn't see how being struck off was necessary to protect the public. But the Law Society clearly took a different view back then and again, earlier this year, when it took another case against Casey over separate transgressions. (It is unusual for a solicitor to be struck off for a second time, but a landmark decision in 2010 established that the High Court has the power to make additional orders against a solicitor who has already been struck off.)

According to the recently published decision, Casey was struck off (for the second time) because he failed to act on a client's instructions to seek compensation in relation to the implementation of an EU ban on draft-net fishing for tuna. The decision also states that Casey retained papers and files and refused to return these to his client and the Irish Tuna Association to enable them to instruct new solicitors, to do the work that Casey had failed to do.



ONE-LEGGED MAN LOSES THE RUN OF HIMSELF

A CURFEW has been imposed on a one-legged man whom the court was told "loses the run of himself" after drink. Jason Crowley, 31, of Rock Street, Kenmare, was before Tralee District Court after being arrested for possession of a knife at The Square, Kenmare at lunchtime on Tuesday, August 11. Members of the public had phoned the garda station to say a man was walking down the street with a bread knife, Garda James Hendrick said in evidence. When Garda Hendrick went to the scene, "I could see the handle of a bread knife sticking out of his pocket," he told Judge John King. "Mr Crowley is a very nice man when sober but, unfortunately, when Mr Crowley takes drink, he loses the run of himself," Garda Hendrick said. Judge John King imposed on Crowley a nightly curfew, as well as an obligation to sign on at Kenmare Garda Station. (*Irish Examiner*, submitted by reader)

STREAKER APPEARS IN COURT

A MAN who ran onto the pitch at Nowlan Park and removed his clothes at the Kilkenny senior hurlers' homecoming was ordered to carry out 80 hours of community service in lieu of six weeks in prison. Inspector Joe Carton outlined how Stephen Clifford, Emmet Street, Kilkenny entered the pitch at Nowlan Park, where there were approximately 10,000 fans present. Solicitor Michael Lanigan said his client had attended the homecoming and had 'too much to drink' and a colleague dared him to run across the field. The defendant was apprehended by gardai and stewards. "He had too much to drink and was overcome by exuberance. He wants to apologise to everyone that was present and to the gardai and the court," said Lanigan. Judge Colin Daly remarked that the defendant would 'be better off to tog out and try for the Kilkenny team'. (*Kilkenny People*)

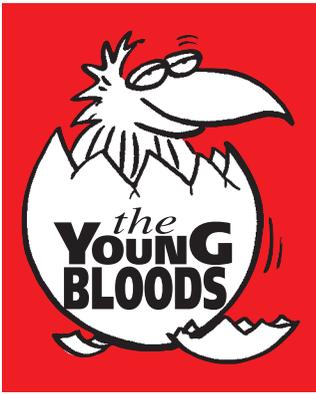
GIRLFRIEND RANG ACCUSED IN COURTROOM

A 28-YEAR-OLD man who answered his phone in court before his case was called has had his phone confiscated for a week. Emmet Brannigan of Rowanree Gardens, Collooney is facing charges of driving without insurance or a driver's licence at Knoxpark, Ballisodare on May 21 last year. He was waiting to appear before Judge Kevin Kilrane at the District Court last week when he answered his girlfriend on his phone. He left the courtroom but returned claiming he was assaulted by gardai. "Some garda smashed my face off a wall," he told Judge Kilrane, clearly agitated. "You were on the phone. You can collect the phone at Sligo Garda Station this day week," said Judge Kilrane. "Why? Cos my girlfriend rang?" (*Sligo Champion*, submitted by reader)

• €15 offered for suitable contributions
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AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



Rick Larkin

RICK LARKIN (31) is now at the helm of his family's multimillion euro property empire, previously headed by his low-profile developer dad, Eugene Larkin, but he is now involved in two major legal actions, both legacies of the property boom. The Larkins were behind the biggest housing development in the history of the State, at Tyrrelstown, north Dublin. Now the family are involved in a complex multimillion euro legal action against Ulster Bank, while in another case, a Larkin company is suing the Revenue over a tax dispute involving €3m. Can Rick Larkin – who is also a movie director and a licensed pilot – steer the family through this legal turbulence?

When not slugging it out in the Four Goldmines, Rick has plenty of other drama in his life. He has directed and produced a number of films, notably a 2008 production, *Satellites & Meteorites*, which starred Amy Huberman and which was shown at the Cannes Film Festival that year.

Elsewhere, Larkin also directed a short film called *The Good Doctor* in 2009, which featured the late David Kelly, and his most recent effort was a 2012 production, *Dublin In Pieces*, which he wrote and directed. Larkin's other great passion is flying and both he and his father are licensed pilots. The family's 60-acre estate, Dolly's Grove, Dunboyne, Co Meath – which Rick Larkin gives as his address on company records – has an 800-metre runway and an aircraft hangar.

The Tyrrelstown project began around 2001 and eventually consisted of 2,200 homes. Ulster Bank was one of the lenders for the project, which was mostly carried out by a Larkin company called Vieira Ltd, which trades as Twinlite. (Eugene Larkin stepped down from the board here in 2010, and was replaced by Rick Larkin, who joined his older brother, Michael Larkin, as a director.) Last year, a number of companies in the Larkin group, including Twinlite, as well as a company controlled by Rick and Michael Larkin, European Property Fund plc (EPF), issued High Court proceedings against Ulster Bank.

Numerous allegations were made against the lender, which largely centred around complicated financial instruments known as 'interest rate swaps', which the Larkins claimed they were mis-sold and which related to a restructuring of the Larkin group around 2008. They claimed these instruments turned out to be inappropriate and also pleaded fraud and misrepresentation. Furthermore, the Larkins claimed that they had been unfairly coerced by the bank into selling two London properties. The Larkins also wanted to halt the sale of their Ulster Bank loans of €89m, part of a tranche the lender was trying to get off its books.

Last December, the High Court refused the Larkins an injunction halting the sale of the Ulster Bank loans. Judge David Keane was less than impressed with one affidavit sworn by Rick Larkin, and referred to a "failure to disclose to the Court" relevant contractual documentation. In a court ruling last July, Judge Caroline Costello struck out most of the claims against the bank and said that a claim of fraud was "remarkably nebulous."

However, she didn't dismiss a claim of "coercion and intimidation," in which the Larkins said that they were forced by the bank into selling the two London properties. The action is ongoing and is back before the High Court next month.

Meanwhile, Rick Larkin is also awaiting the outcome of a legal tussle with the Taxman. In 2007, Twinlite lodged High Court proceedings against the Revenue, in which it disputed a VAT assessment made the previous year for more than €3m. The dispute centred on a licensing agreement the company had made with an auctioneering firm to sell 198 houses at Tyrrelstown (previously used as show houses on the massive scheme), in which Twinlite let the units to the firm on a short-term basis, with the auctioneers then selling the units on Twinlite's behalf.



Rick Larkin

This arrangement meant – as far as the Larkins were concerned – that Twinlite would only be liable for VAT on the cost of the land and buildings, rather than the full selling price achieved for each unit. A Revenue official took a very different view and told the High Court that the licence agreement was "simply a naked VAT avoidance device." The High Court ruled in favour of the Revenue in 2009, before Twinlite appealed to the Supreme Court, which reserved judgment on the matter following a hearing last July.

Larkin studied business at Griffith College before, ironically, working for Ulster Bank. He later became finance director at Eugene Larkin's property development business. In the last few years,

his father has resigned from a number of company boards in the Larkin group, leaving Rick Larkin and his brother, Michael, in charge. There is plenty of red ink in some of the Larkin group's companies' accounts.

A subsidiary, Vieira Investments Ltd, had accumulated losses of €6.9m at the end of 2013. Another company, Cobalt Developments Ltd, had losses of €36m at the end of 2014. Its AIB bank loans were transferred to Nama in 2010, and the agency has since registered charges against the company's assets. (While Rick is a director here, his father is the sole shareholder.)

Rick and his brother Michael are still in the property game, however. There was good news this year, when An Bord Pleanála granted their company, Allied Land Investments Ltd, permission for an 18-unit development at Santa Maria, Cunningham Drive, Dalkey. Santa Maria has a remarkable recent history.

It was bought for €20m in 2007 by a group called the Santa Maria Co-ownership, which was assembled by Goldhawk's old friend, the disgraced accountant Alan Hynes, but had construction problems and the co-ownership was later put into receivership. Rick Larkin's company bought Santa Maria some time after 2011 and a planning saga ensued, involving objections from the local well-heeled residents, which was only resolved earlier this year.

Allied Land Investments is noteworthy for the fact that it was set up by Rick and his brother Michael in 2011, after the crash. While many of their other directorships involved companies set up by their father during the boom, in this instance it appears that the boys' old man has never had any involvement in Allied Land Investments, as the shares are held equally by his two sons. The latest accounts here showed accumulated profits of more than €2m at the end of 2014.

While the Ulster Bank case continues, so far it appears to have accomplished little for the Larkins, save for a pile of legal costs. While the Larkins have managed to avoid some of the other pitfalls that have befallen other developers, such as bankruptcy, receiverships and judgments over personal guarantees, this case could set them back.

In the movies, Ulster Bank suits and the Revenue officials would be portrayed as the 'baddies' who get their comeuppance in the end. But will Rick Larkin get a happy ending?



CON CREEDON'S SANDYMOUNT SAGA

THERE WAS a glowing write-up in *The Irish Times* earlier this month for a near €2m 'villa' in Sandymount D4 – featuring “a wish list of modern conveniences that includes a Bond-like den with a home cinema”. It also features a most interesting planning history.

The property in the heart of D4 has been owned for many years by tile and stone moneybags **Con Creedon**, who razed the original end of terrace house at 131 Tritonville Road ten years ago and reconstructed it from



Tritonville Road

scratch. Hence, the *IT* was left drooling over the integrated music and lighting system, lift dumb waiter to all floors, modern bathrooms and that James Bond-style den. Nothing was left to chance, apparently, and readers were informed that bathrooms feature “book-matched marble tiles – cut from an original sheet of marble, and reassembled like a jigsaw so that they match up perfectly”.

Potential purchasers of the three-bed Sandymount pile might be interested to know that the sites to the rear of three houses – 127, 129, and 131 – have

been the subject of extensive planning issues, with Creedon taking years to get a green light for an ambitious scheme involving the construction of three brand new mews properties in the rear gardens of the three Tritonville Road houses, where Creedon has

freehold ownership of the sites.

Last summer, Dublin City Council granted an extension of the duration of planning

RITA CROSBIE'S LICENCE

WHILE 'dacent skin' and member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (honorary), **Harry Crosbie**, has been engaged in a high profile legal battle with Nama, it turns out that the motor mouth's missus, **Rita Crosbie**, has had a small bit of bother with the Taxman.

The list of tax defaulters published by the Revenue earlier this month records that Rita Crosbie was convicted on a charge of not holding a current liquor licence with respect to the Dublin docklands restaurant and bar she operates, Café Bar H. Mrs H was also fined €740 for her troubles.

The good news for Rita is that she has since put Café Bar H's affairs in order, as evidenced from the current list of liquor licences maintained by the Revenue. The venue is described on its own website as “the best café/bar in Grand Canal Plaza” which is a relatively low bar to set for any business. Given its

strategic location adjacent to the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and not too far from the 3 Arena, this is a business that has access to very significant footfall unlike

the ghost town that is The Point Village – the cause of Harry Crosbie's financial collapse.

The licence for Café Bar H is held by Rita Crosbie's company, Fastwell Ltd, which operates the café and the latest accounts here showed accumulated losses of €212,000 at the

end of 2013, following a profit for the year of over €100,000.

While hubby Harry has his problems with Nama, he has not been directly involved with the D4 bar/restaurant and there is no sign of him as a shareholder or director, although Rita is joined on the company board by her son, **Simon Crosbie**. Nevertheless, there is a note in the accounts which states that the company “entered into transactions with the following related entities: HA Crosbie” (ie. Harry).



Rita Crosbie

permission in relation to a scheme first proposed back all the way to 2000, when Creedon attempted to get the mews properties greenlighted. A 2004 plan for three two-bed apartments in a single block with balconies was shot down by the Council and An Bord Pleanála, while an application in 2007 for three mews houses was declared invalid. Creedon lobbied in a second 2007 application – which got the nod from the Council planners but attracted a number of appeals from neighbours on Tritonville Road and nearby Herbert Road and duly got rejected. An Bord Pleanála ruled the scheme would “seriously injure the amenities of this residential conservation area”.

Creedon, however, kept at it and in 2008 got permission for the three mews properties. Again, the irate locals kicked up a fuss, but in 2009 An Bord Pleanála gave the scheme the thumbs up (reducing the permitted height of the proposed houses). Summer 2009 was hardly the optimum time to undertake a building project and the wily Creedon duly mothballed his plan. However, last year he got permission to extend the grant of permission – which had been due to run out – until August 2016.

IN PRAISE OF DANIELLE RYAN

GOLDHAWK'S favourite multi-millionaire heiress, **Danielle Ryan**, gave yet another interview about her accomplishments last weekend, this time in the fawning *Irish Times* which headlined its piece, with tongue firmly not in cheek: “Danielle Ryan reveals the secret of her success”. While some readers would have expected the answer to be pretty obvious, the *IT* was in awe of Danielle's accomplishments.

The interview with the granddaughter of Tony Ryan took place in the offices of her Roads luxury brands outfit off Dame Street in Dublin's city centre – “a tasteful oasis of calm just a few floors up”. Hackette **Tanya Sweeney** pointed out that “Danielle Ryan's seemingly charmed life may well make you die a little inside.” This is because the wife and mother of two has propelled Roads “to ever dizzying heights” since her company's inception. This looks a grandiose claim for a company that was only formed three years ago and whose latest accounts show accumulated losses of €60,000

at the end of 2013. Despite this, there is, apparently, “something of a perfect storm about Ryan's Roads venture”.

Elsewhere, it turns out that Danielle “surrounds herself with the right people” although La Ryan herself is “a woman who is hard to keep up with in every sense of the word”.

When it comes to the secret of Danielle's success, there is a reference to her inheriting “a prime slice of a €250m fortune”, although only in the context that such a windfall “would have derailed many a person”.

Overcoming a multi-million euro windfall is a common theme in articles on Danielle. Recently, an extensive puff piece in the *Indo* – having referred to a well-known playwright reduced to an “inarticulate buffoon” when Ms Ryan had merely brushed past him – asked “what has this girl got?” It turns out “it takes more than such a rare lineage, a vast fortune and terrific beauty to melt a man on the spot”.

Presumably, Danielle is helped by the fact, according to the *Indo*, that she is “a woman of the

world who seems decades older (though not in looks)”. Then there's her voice: “The words pour forth, deep, crisp and clear, with an elocution that shouts of Swiss finishing school”.

The *Indo* also suggested that Ryan's “cool-headed manner” would make her “a very proficient pilot too”.

Just a few weeks earlier, the *Sindo* business section devoted a chunk of space to the “one-woman luxury superbrand” (“Roads' headquarters is an exercise in good

taste ...”). Cleary, Danielle Ryan is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to generating publicity, although she was also the driving force behind The Lir drama academy that operates under Trinity College and which recently renewed a contract to use the RADA brand name. The good news here is that figures just filed show that the acting academy managed to turn in a profit of €106,000 last year and ended up with a surplus of €300,000. A performance almost as impressive as Danielle's media appearances.



Danielle Ryan



AN KLONDIKE

TG4

THIS four-part "Irish Western" from Galway-based Abú Media is an obviously ambitious project for writer Marcus Fleming (*The Clinic*) and director Datháí Keane. Despite the challenge of re-creating North-West Canada in Connemara, however, *An Klondike* has been generally well-received and even favorably compared with the cult HBO series *Deadwood*.

The story is set during the frantic Alaskan Gold Rush of the 1890s and centres on the Connollys – three emigrant Irish brothers from Rosmuc, Galway, who make their way to the Klondike Valley in the hope of striking it rich. Tom, Séamus and Pádraig Connolly are sharply drawn types who allow plenty of scope for family tensions – particularly when their mining

adventures eventually get lucky.

Amid the numerous dark interiors of the fictional town of Dominion are a colourful collection of restless misfits, including greedy entrepreneurs, deluded prospectors, confidence tricksters, world-weary whores and countless gambling saloon drunks knocking over chairs – and one another.

There are the standard expletive-spewing baddies around – many complete with tragic moustaches and mumbling threats like Clint Eastwood. The series is bilingual – reflecting a scenario that would have been common at the time. The emigrants speak to each other in Irish and converse with the American characters in English.

Swarthy, foolish Séamus Connolly is the likeable hero who keeps getting himself and his brothers into scrapes. When he shoots the hotel-owner's son in a duel, the storyline turns to revenge. Unsurprisingly, the

Connollys become powerful figures in town, but their newfound wealth leads to bitter divisions between them.

Tom Connolly is gradually corrupted by his lust for power and gold to the point that he turns his back on his own brothers. Naturally, his enemies use this to their advantage to cause trouble for the family in the hope of ruining them entirely.

Meanwhile, Fr Judge is the hard-working principled priest – which makes him the only man around who believes in anything other than money or booze. Another interesting presence is Skookum Jim (played by American Indian actor, Julian Black Antelope) who maintains a Zen-like aura throughout.

As a diversion from all the double-dealing inside the Golden Nugget Saloon, the programme-makers include regular song-and-dance interludes. This week's episode even had its own St Patrick's Day festival – complete

with traditional musicians and on-street brawling.

An Klondike stays as close to the record as most period dramas while reserving the right to invent whatever it pleases. Some of the cinematography is stunning, and an effort has been made to ensure that most of the dialogue doesn't cause obvious concerns about historical accuracy.

Overall, there is never a dull moment in *Dominion* – what with whiskey-sodden villains, sentimental expatriates, losers at the roulette wheel, inter-racial relationships and bare-knuckle boxing bouts.

Strong acting and lively conflicts make *An Klondike* more than the usual horse opera. The scenery alone is highly impressive. Budget limits take their toll, of course – especially with the lack of establishing a more authentic Yukon landscape.

The format can also be untidy at times, but there's more than enough drama and knockabout divilment to satisfy viewers who are happy to accept yet another rewrite of mythical America. Will family ties and good old Irish decency win out over greed? More than likely.



An Klondike



OLIVER CALLAN

OLYMPIA THEATRE

ONE OF the oldest forms of comedy, impressions are also one of the trickiest. The best performers can exaggerate a target's unique faults, without crossing the line into material that's simply abusive. Done well, it's essential social satire; poorly, and it's nothing more than nasty playground taunts.

It's no surprise that Oliver Callan still hasn't gotten that memo. The comic has made a name for himself on Irish TV and radio by ridiculing famous people for the most obvious reasons. His current live show offers more of the same. Like previous versions, it's a breakneck race through more than two dozen contemporary Irish and international personalities. Callan chooses to end it with an encore where he plays

Michael D. Higgins. In the killer gag, Callan drops to his knees, and says he likes spending time with people his own size – like Queen Elizabeth's corgis.

Still don't get it? Higgins' favourite part of London is 'Canary Dwarf'. This stuff comes after frequent material where Irish male politicians mock Angela Merkel and Joan Burton for their looks.

Callan's mother must be proud. When he's not attacking someone because he thinks they look funny, Callan lays into the rich and famous for their success. His politicians gloat about the size of their pensions; his musicians – like Daniel O'Donnell, Christy Moore, Bono and Bruce Springsteen – all sing songs about how they love to fleece their audiences.

Careful, Oliver: go too far with this one, and audiences might start wondering about the €30 they cough up for your show.

All this begrudgery is especially unfortunate not just because it isn't funny: it's also unnecessary. Callan is an

uncanny mimic, with an ear for detail – many of his caricatures precisely nail his targets' pretensions, and explode them. He's also skilled on stage. In his take on RTE's *Sunday Sport* panel, he juggles four characters, delighting the audience by donning different wigs and eyeglasses, hopping deftly through accents and attitudes.

Throughout the show, he changes costumes and characters at a moment's notice by stepping behind a thin bookcase at the back of the stage.

His talent shines during the Imelda May routine, when OTT jokes about the poor 'aul' Dublin days come so fast and furious that it's hard to keep up with them all. Similarly, Callan's George W Bush delivers a memorably spectacular stream of malapropisms. His Enda Kenny says of Heather Humphreys that, "putting a Monaghan person in charge of culture is like putting a bullock in charge of milking."

It's the content that lets Callan down. He relies on basic references to familiar concepts

that the crowd can recognise, and doesn't go any deeper. He resorts to parochial and clichéd stereotypes: his Marty Morrissey, the pompous RTE sports presenter, turns through a flip-chart of Irish counties, insulting each one and listing off his exploits with its women.

A former journalist who started on radio and TV, Callan needs an editor or director. Certain routines are painfully drawn out. Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh tells a bizarre rambling story about silage; Leo Varadkar uses two audience volunteers, for way too long, to demonstrate the difference between public and private hospital care. (Joe Public sits in a shopping trolley propped up against a bloodstained wall while enduring Leo's abuse; Josephine Public gets doted upon while lying in bed in the 'Mary Harney Suite'.)

The best stand-up routines put deserving individuals under a satirical microscope, but also make the audience take a hard look in the mirror. Too often Callan doesn't go much further than crudely mocking famous people for the most obvious reasons, and there's little insight or thought. Even more than direction, it feels like Callan just needs to find something to say.



Oliver Callan



THE LAST FOUR DAYS OF PADDY BUCKLEY

JEREMY MASSEY
(RIVERHEAD BOOKS)

THE HERO (and narrator) of this surprisingly well-received debut novel (“darkly funny” – *The Irish Times*) is a middle-aged widower employed by a well-established Dublin funeral home. Still inconsolable after the sudden death of his pregnant wife, Paddy Buckley considers his day-to-day life as “pretty miserable” – until everything dramatically changes for this uncharismatic workaholic.

In a lively introduction, we are told to expect a story that is “so outlandish, so surreal” that it could only result in Paddy’s death. Unfortunately, the early

warning is no preparation for the series of outlandish coincidences that follow. The hokum starts when Buckley finds himself arranging a routine funeral and somehow manages to “escape his grief” in the arms of a seductive woman whose husband is just about to be buried. Within an hour or so, her equally attractive daughter is also casting a favourable eye on our unlikely hero.

It’s impossible to think that such beautiful women would suddenly fling themselves at the feet of someone who isn’t remotely interesting or even handsome. Paddy’s sequence of barely believable events continues when he gets involved in a hit-and-run accident that kills the brother of a notorious Irish racketeer.

To his dismay, he is given the task of meeting with the vengeful crime boss, Vincent Cullen, and his entourage of psychotic thugs. From then on, it’s non-stop mayhem and misadventure, with Buckley continually trying to avoid being in the wrong place

at the wrong time. However, despite his lovably roguish self-image and delusions of shabby nobility, Paddy remains a self-centred figure prone to bouts of tedious soul-searching.

Once in a while, the author comes up with some fresh writing – for example, an ageing mechanic has “an Icelandic look about him with a beard like William Shakespeare’s”. Otherwise, the style is juvenile and mawkish. One grief-stricken character whose mother and father have just died reckons that “her parents would always be with her now, in her heart”. There are also some strained Raymond Chandler descriptions – one

cartoon criminal, for instance, has “hard-boiled black eyes” and “smelled of oil, leather and menace”.

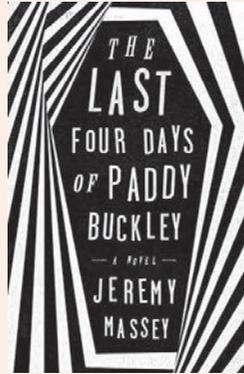
Before he settled in Australia, the author himself was a former Dublin undertaker and the story is well stocked with trade secrets about the intricacies of embalming. But apart from grim details about cremation and the

book’s catchy title, there’s little of interest.

In addition to the incongruous romantic interludes (leaving Paddy and his infatuated lover “drunk” with “sated desire”), there are random references to magic realism, folk legends and cod psychology. Apparently, Paddy possesses special psychic powers which he has inherited from his guru-like father. The implausible supernatural tricks extend to various mind games, including out-of-body experiences and the knack of hypnotising vicious dogs – all of which conveniently help him survive his ham-fisted enemies.

At least the overblown fairytale ending is perfectly in keeping with everything that has gone before. The book clearly aims at being a quirky gangster comedy along the lines of Martin McDonagh’s movie, *In Bruges*.

Overall, this is an undemanding read – with very short chapters and the simplest of language – leaning heavily in the direction of commercial claptrap while constantly falling between stools. It’s neither an engaging love story nor particularly funny – and it’s certainly not thrilling enough to be successful as a crime novel.





RTÉ'S INDEPENDENT WINNERS

THERE WAS a time, not that long ago, when Ireland's 'independent' film and TV producers could be relied upon for a show of collective outrage at RTÉ's opaque accounting practices. There's not quite so much noise about transparency now that some of Screen Producers Ireland's most active members are themselves the beneficiaries of RTÉ commissions to the value of €38m, as set out in the Independent Productions Annual Report for 2014.

The only commission value revealed in the 2014 report – and that only indirectly – is the €240,000 contract **Stewart Switzer's** *Coco* Television secured for its 2.5 hours of St

Patrick's Day coverage. This figure is a likely drop in the ocean for Switzer's company, which had eleven commissions amounting to 42 hours of programming last year. In what is almost a footnote in the report, on page 22, RTÉ reveals, "Television commissions with a value of €16.3m, representing 43% of the value of new 2014 television commissions, were awarded to six independent production companies, and a further sum of €7.8m or 20% was awarded to a further six independent production companies."

In other words, commissions worth €24.1m – 63% of the total value of commissions – went to just 12 companies at an average of €2.5m each. That means

that 50 companies shared the balance, €14m, averaging €28,000 each.

Some high volume production outfits, for instance, would be on far lower per-hour contracts than a company such as **James Flynn's** Octagon which had just two drama commissions, the six-hour *Love/*

Hate and the forthcoming **Billy Roche**-scripted four-hour *Clean Break*.

The high volume producers, in terms of hours commissioned, are led by a length by **Robert and Lucinda Hall's** Highflyer Productions, with 60 hours of horse racing coverage. Next

comes *Coco*, followed by **Larry Bass's** *Screenetime* Shinawil with 35.5 hours; and **Brian and Mary Graham's** *Adare Productions* with 32 hours.

Suggesting that there's plenty of cash in the sports commentary business, **Mark Horgan, Eoin McDevitt, Ciaran Murphy, Simon Hick** and **Ken Early's** *Second Captains* business had 24 hours commissioned and are followed in the commissioning stakes by **Liam Lavell's** *Independent Pictures* with 21.5hrs, **Brian Waddell's** *Waddell Media* with 18.5hrs, **John McColgan** and **Moya Doherty's** *Tyrone Productions* with 18hrs, and *Animo Television's* 17hrs.

VINCENT KEELING'S GALLERY

ART and business rarely mix, as was the experience of artist **Vincent Keeling** who bit off a little more than he could chew.

DUBLINER Keeling studied under artist and teacher **Brian McCarthy** and subsequently exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy annual exhibition at the tender age of 18. He has since exhibited widely in Dublin and around the country in a variety of galleries.

However, the easiest place to take a peek at Keeling's works was at his eponymous Keeling Gallery on Clarendon Street, Dublin 2. Opening your

own gallery is an ambitious undertaking by any artist but maybe Vincent felt he would benefit from the Keeling business DNA – his cousin is chief executive of the huge Keeling's fruit and veg business, **Caroline Keeling**. Last year she gave cousin Vinnie a plug, telling the *Indo* that if she could collect one artist's works it would be Vincent Keeling's: "His work is amazing".

The gallery opened by Vincent Keeling at the end of 2009 featured his own works as well as those of other artists. Visitors could also pick up hand painted neckties and bow ties by artist **John Kirwan**. Running a gallery is never the easiest of businesses to make a buck from and Keeling struggled financially from the off. The fact that the economy had gone into a nose dive can't have helped turnover on Clarendon Street either and the last accounts filed for his company showed accumulated losses of just over €50,000 at the end of 2013. Things improved little in the last 18 months and the company also was signed into a long-term lease.

As a result, Vincent Keeling has decided to stick to the day job and wind up The Keeling Gallery Ltd with **Aidan Garcia Diaz** installed as liquidator. The other director is social worker **Keith Blundell**, although Keeling owns 100% of the shares. According to the artist's own website, Keeling ran the gallery for several years but he "soon came to realise that running a gallery was taking too much time away from his own work."



Moya Doherty

REVIEWING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

GLITZY AS EVER, the 2014 annual review of the National Library of Ireland (NLI) was launched earlier this month by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, **Heather Humphreys**. **Catherine Heaney's** DHR Communications was there to provide a guiding PR hand and certainly the bad news was well hidden.

In introductory sections to the review, outgoing board member and business consultant **Paul Shovlin** (the nominee of the RDS) asserts that the NLI "excelled in efforts to bring its collections to the public" in 2014, while the recently installed new director **Sandra Collins** declares that she sees "many exciting opportunities".

Last July's release online of digitised (but not indexed) copies of the NLI's microfilm collection of Catholic parish registers is undoubtedly the repository's

good news story for 2015, and Shovlin makes sure to give the initiation of the project in the previous year good mention in the 2014 review. Less positively, he draws attention to the continued under-resourcing of the library, in terms both of decline in state funding (down nearly half since 2008) and reduced staff numbers.

Like its 2013 predecessor, the NLI 2014 review features 'infographics' which tell a story of dramatic increase in public use of the library in spite of cutbacks. There were over 270,000 visitors in 2014, a 90% increase since 2009, with millions of online interactions, thousands of Facebook and Twitter followers

and over 176,000 visitors attracted to the Yeats, 1913 Lockout and other exhibitions. However, the library's reorientation to a museum-style environment may be affecting

its traditional role as a research centre, in that there were 83,000 research visits in 2014, down 7% from the previous year's 89,000 – a fall which does not merit an infographic mention.

The NLI's annual reviews do not trouble readers with detailed financial statements, which are compiled separately and must be approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Although passed by the C&AG **Seamus McCarthy** last December, the financial statement for 2013 was

released online only in the past week, in response to a query. The statement does at least deal with an issue on which the annual review is silent, namely, the theft – or as McCarthy more delicately puts it – the "loss" of certain material from library stock.

In a section which would be more appropriate for the annual review, the 2013 financial statement confirms that a "significant amount" of the material was recovered, that a Garda investigation is "ongoing" and that library security is being upgraded. There is no mention of the nature or value of the stolen materials – which Goldhawk understands relate to 1916 and Sean O'Casey and are valued at up to €100,000 – nor is there a reference to the fact that the Gardaí detained an NLI staff member for questioning in relation to the affair (see *The Phoenix* 10/10/14).



Sandra Collins



JOSEPH O'BRIEN'S NEXT GIG?

REPORTS in a British red top that suggest two-time Irish Champion Flat Jockey **Joseph O'Brien** is to retire at the end of the season and go training, remain to be confirmed.

Following vague comments made by retired champion **Tony McCoy** in a bookmakers blog, well-known 'Newsboy' tipster, **David Yeats**, published an exclusive story stating that the heir to the O'Brien fiefdom, would quit race riding and start training national hunt horses for the minted **JP McManus** at the end of the season.



Joseph O'Brien

The rumour that Joseph O'Brien was to shift to training had been doing the rounds in Irish racing circles for some time, without ever gaining any traction, as certainly no time span was evident. The story shifted up a gear when McCoy, now an ambassador for William Hill bookmakers, suggested that JOB would "be very good at it".

The timing of the article, amid all the speculation concerning future plans at Ballydoyle, suggests that the story is rather premature and Goldhawk understands that young O'Brien will continue riding on the flat next season. Racing manager for McManus, ex-jockey **Frank Berry**, whose job McCoy has been linked to, denied any knowledge of the move.

The young Kilkenny rider was comfortable on board the impressive Irish Classic winner *Order Of St George* in the **Michael Tabor** silks at the St Ledger meeting at the Curragh last week. O'Brien is currently riding at the top of his game and has not made any public comment regarding his future.

Presumably, like many others, he will be awaiting developments at Ballydoyle before making any career changing decisions (see p14).

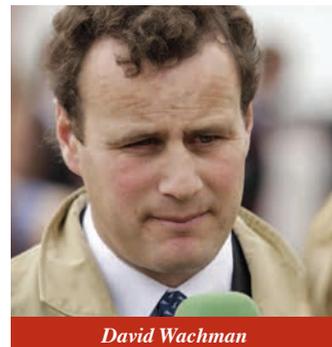
DAVID WACHMAN'S 'EDUCATION'

IRISH racehorse trainers tend to be a pretty resourceful bunch of individuals when faced with adversity, especially when called into question by **Denis Egan's** enforcers at the Turf Club. They usually trod the tried and tested route to sidestep any reputational sanction, but every now and again, a brand new 'Get Out Of Jail Card' is played. This was the case last month for the resourceful **David Wachman**.

Wachman is a well-connected chap – he is the son-in-law of **John Magnier**, having married the Squire of Coolmore's daughter, **Kate Magnier**, in a lavish 2002 affair. When confronted by the Bowler Hats recently at Galway, the trainer pulled a novel excuse out of the bag, after his horse, *Alaskan Son*, was given an overly tender ride by **Billy Lee**, finishing second to a Ballydoyle hotpot it could have beaten.

The Galway stewards immediately called an enquiry but Wachman was not present to answer the charges. They then called for his authorised representative, who could only inform the stewards that he was unaware of the riding instructions given to Lee.

Unusually, the Bowler Hats decided to refer the enquiry to headquarters until Wachman could attend to provide evidence and details of the riding instructions he issued to his jockey.



David Wachman

The referral was held more than three weeks later, with retired INHS registrar **Sean Barry** in the chair, ably assisted by Judge **Tony Hunt**, normally held in reserve for the big fish. At the hearing, Wachman admitted the horse

would possibly have won with a more forceful ride and that his instructions to Lee were to "educate" the nag and not give it a hard race.

What looked like an open goal for the committee to enforce a sanction instead resulted in a fine for Wachman of €250 for failing to give details of riding instructions to his authorised representative at Ballybrit. The incident could surely have been handled more authoritatively at Galway and it is far from clear why the local stewards dodged the question on the day.

COLM O'DONOGUE'S OTHER TALENTS

CORK RIDER **Colm O'Donoghue** – fourth string stable jockey for **Aidan O'Brien** at Ballydoyle – proved he is more than just a one-trick pony, after talking his way into winning the English St Ledger aboard the **Derrick Smith**-owned *Bondi Beach* at Doncaster recently.

In a controversial finish, the **Sheikh Fahad Al Thani**-owned *Simple Verse*, ridden by Qatar Racing's Italian stable jockey, **Andrea Atzeni**, bumped her way into beating the Ballydoyle colt, resulting in a stewards' enquiry into the race.

Cameras recorded the live action inside the stewards' room, as both jockeys argued their case. It soon became clear to viewers that O'Donoghue was the more authoritative and convincing player. He delivered a performance that would have impressed our learn'd friends in the Four Goldmines.

The hapless Atzeni was nearly in tears, seen with head in hands, when the announcement came through that he had lost the race for the Sheikh. The cameras followed Atzeni's walk of shame into the changing room, prompting a complaint from the Professional Jockeys Association chief executive, **Paul Struthers**, stating that the coverage was excessive and "not especially welcome".

The Doncaster executive would most likely have preferred to see the race stay with the Sheikh and the filly's Lambourn trainer, **Ralph Beckett**, but **John Magnier** was once again the one with the broadest smile.

REGIME CHANGE AT TURF CLUB

INFLUENTIAL and respected senior Turf Club member, **William Flood**, last week lost a landmark internal vote that has split the 200-year-old club over its future direction.

Flood, an ex-HRI board member and chair of the Irish National Hunt Committee, lost out to well-connected Dublin-based property developer and banker, **Eamon McElroy**. Other significant uncontested Senior Steward appointments saw **Meta Osborne** securing the first lady Senior Steward role in the history of the club and Norelands Stud owner, **Harry McCalmont**, appointed Deputy Senior Steward.

The new order at Bowler HQ will pave the way for Minister for Agriculture **Simon Coveney's** Horse Racing Ireland Amendment Bill 2014 to be passed without any objections from the Turf Club. Goldhawk's fans will recall

(see *The Phoenix* 10/9/15) that the Bowler Hats were on a sticky wicket with regard to the €55m development of the Curragh racecourse. In order to guarantee funding, they had to agree to the new legislation or else see the project delayed even further.

Flood rallied a number of the conservative old guard to stand up to what was perceived as bullying tactics by divisions of **Joe 'Strawberries' Keeling's** Horse Racing Ireland board. However, Flood and his allies lost out to a well-orchestrated campaign fronted by HRI and executive friendly Turf Club stewards, including Osborne and her husband, **Dermot Cantillon**, who backed his former Tote Ireland director McElroy in the vote.

The defeat of Flood will strengthen the new order at the Turf Club and undermine the independent structures of the old guard, many of them landed gentry and hunting enthusiasts.



Meta Osborne

THE OIRISH Sun

Competition Authority Slams Dubs and Kilkenny – P7



PIG DISTANCES ITSELF FROM CAMERON



The pig at the centre of the David Cameron controversy has strongly denied that the incident ever took place.

"This is an outrageous slight on my character," fumed the pig to reporters at a packed press conference. "We all get up to hijinks in our youth, but to suggest that I would stoop so low as to be associated with swine like the Tories is disgusting."

However, the pig conceded that there

were similarities between himself and the Conservatives. "Many of them are filthy rich and have their snouts in the trough," he noted. "They also love telling porkies, particularly Jeffrey Archer."

The pig also denied he would be writing a tell-all autobiography. "I just want to retire to my pen and – like the Tories – roll around in filth," he concluded, before being led away from the media scrum by his lawyer.

Quinn latest: 'Labour party to see off Labour party'

In a stunning new pronouncement of his party's strength, Ruairi Quinn has said Labour is intent "on getting rid of Labour – and we're succeeding." The bold statement follows Ho Chi's boast that Labour has already "defeated the Fine Gaelers, Fianna Fáil and the Free Staters", and has been warmly received throughout the country.

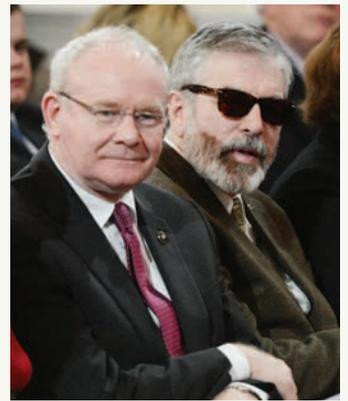
Speaking at the opening of a

fresh bottle of Chateau Verdignan 1985, the Dublin South-East TD barely touched his foie de boeuf grille as he promised that "our greatest gift to the people of Ireland is at hand. We have worked tirelessly towards it and we are so close to it now – soon we will be gone, I promise!" The 69-year-old received an extended round of applause as he recommenced his meal.

NORTHERN CRISIS LATEST

THE IRISH and British governments are to ask Hungary if they have any spare razor wire left over after securing their border with Serbia. Political parties on both sides of the community again grabbed headlines this week as the Assembly threatened to crumble over DUP anger concerning Sinn Féin's alleged links to criminal activities.

"We plan to ask both sides to come in for talks on getting the Assembly back up and running," said a spokesman. "Then we'll lock them in and place razor wire around the perimeter. We won't take it down until they come to some agreement. And if there's no breakthrough they'll starve to death



and no harm done there either, to be honest."

World News

Ireland: Terrible cock-up duped entire country, shock!

Investigators in the Emerald Isle say a group of 'pretenders' seem to have systematically screwed the entire country for several years by using prosthetic promises to disguise their true selves. It is claimed that the gang, known as Fianna Fáil, pulled the wool over people's eyes while urging them to "lie back and enjoy the ride."

Commentators say the group "even snuggled up to bankers and property speculators" who helped to dupe people into loving them "without ever actually seeing what they were really like." The truth



emerged after what seemed to be the earth moving was, in fact, the roof falling in. "That's when the mask slipped," sighed a former property developer who fled to Canada after being caught with his pants down.

HOW LABOURS DIFFER

Corbyn



- Leading people on lurch to the left
- Leftist for peace and justice
- Would hail more taxes for the wealthy
- Sometimes poses with open-necked blue shirt

Burton



- Leadership left people in the lurch
- Just wants to be left in peace
- Would hail a taxi for the wealthy
- Has some neck posing with the 'blueshirts'

Government announces new plan for housing refugees

In order to relieve concerns expressed by the electorate, the Government has unveiled its innovative new plan for dealing with the influx of refugees. "Based on the highly effective model we developed in relation to hospital patients, the refugees will be accommodated in trolleys. We plan to give each refugee a shopping trolley in which they can live while waiting for their applications for asylum to be processed," according to a Government spokesperson.



ally own the trolleys. The trolleys will need to be returned to the stores as soon as the refugees have been deported back to Syria (surely 'as soon as their cases have been processed'? - Ed). They will also not be permitted to own a store loyalty card."

Making a meal of it

This week top dietician Joan Burton discusses what she likes – and dislikes – for breakfast



A good start to the day is crucial for one's very survival, so I like to get my teeth into something light for what I call my first (sound) bites of the day. Hot potatoes are certainly out, as is any sort of grilling if I can avoid it. Being a working class girl I'm quite happy to talk bread and butter, with jam on both sides if possible of course, as long as I don't have too much on my plate! I may take the biscuit and even go a bit bananas as well if in the mood.

I'm not one who slavishly follows whatever the doctor recom-

mends, no matter how insistent he may be, so anything rough or hard to swallow isn't for me at that hour. Some doctors will tell you that breakfast conversation is a good way to digest things, but I'd prefer not have to listen to rich platter-chatter on Mourning Ireland from some Dublin... (That's enough food for thought for this day - Ed.)

Those DUP preconditions (in full)

1. Sinn Fein to be withdrawn from sensitive areas (Stormont, N. Ireland, etc.)
2. PSNI to be scrapped and replaced by progressive new policing service to be known as the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).
3. Martin McGuinness to be given full migrant status and immedi-

- ately deported to Hungary.
4. Appointment of new full-time Premier-for-Life administrator (P. Robinson) to oversee DUP direct rule in N. Ireland.
5. All outstanding DUP demands to be met in full.
6. That's it.

New facebook buttons



It's a fucking cat, get over it!

Oh no – not more kneejerk outrage!

Won't be looking at your album with 50 pictures of you in it!

You're so progressive and liberal, fair f*cks to ya!



Jesus, not another "inspirational" quote

Any chance you could go for a jog without telling everyone about it?!

Fresh refugee crisis



SHOCKING IMAGES have emerged from Monasterevin as desperate Syrian immigrants try to escape from Co Kildare. Footage captured by reporters at the scene show dozens of Syrians, many of them young children, fleeing the former Hazel Hotel. Dressed in little more than rags, a steady stream of refugees headed back to their homeland via the dangerous M7 motorway after realising what they had let themselves in for.

"This is not what we expected," said one man called Abdul al Hassan, who wished not to be named. "We're heading back to make our peace with Isis, hopefully they'll have us. We heard terrible things happened here, including a kidnapping and siege. That's what we were trying to escape. In addition, there's no satellite TV in the hotel and we were forced to watch an Ireland soccer international game, no child should have to see that. We'll take our chances between Al-Assad and Jihadi John."

EIRCOM REVISES NEW LOGO



According to a spokesman, "It reflects our previous effort, as well as the levels of broadband connectivity around the country."

NAOMI – NEWBRIDGE DIVA



"In your face, Amy Huberman!"

Mobile phone attack alert

Last chance for publicity before super-model sell-by date

"Dirty-looking" rough diamond collection

Famous child-bearing lips

Former maids recovering well from their injuries

Remnants of Adam Clayton

THE WESHT WING

Scene 1: A cemetery in Castlelyons, Co Cork. As the Taoiseach prepares to deliver the graveside oration at the State funeral of Thomas Kent, the VIP guests chat among themselves.

Gerry Adams (to the President): You know of course it should be you delivering the oration here, Michael D. Not this Mayo Blueshirt, using it as a party political broadcast.

Michael D Higgins: Yes, you're probably right.

Even aside from the political issue – entre nous – the occasion could benefit from my oratorical powers. God love him, but you wouldn't ask Enda to make an inspirational speech to the Castlebar under-10 football team, never mind the nation.

Micheál Martin: Personally, I think that the job should have fallen to an – ahem – Cork person. Especially when we're in the fortunate situation that the real – the original – republican party is led by a Corkman. I'm sure if Thomas Kent had been able to choose who gave the oration, it would have been me, as the direct inheritor of his tradition.

Joan Burton: Don't flatter yourself, Meehawl. The poor man would be turning in his grave – if he wasn't temporarily out of it – at the prospect. As for you, Grizzly, you'd be better off working out how to save the peace process from the activities of your cowboy pals. They haven't gone away, you know.

Adams: Whatever little local difficulties I might be having, Joan, only proves that I'm the inheritor of the true republican tradition on this island. If this were 1915, I'd be delivering the oration: like Pearse did for O'Donovan Rossa.

Burton: Yeah, well, it's not 1915. We have an independent, democratically elected Government in Dublin now. A government, by the way, that looks increasingly likely to win a second term, thanks to the new boom we're creating in the Republic. That's your other problem.

Adams: But the fools, the fools! They have left us our Irish Water meters. And while Ireland holds these devices, Ireland unfree will never be at peace.

Higgins: Enough of the squabbling. This is itself proof of why I should be making the speech here. I alone soar above the petty difference of Irish politics.

Burton (patting him on the head): Soar away, Michael D – if only in the metaphorical sense. Anyway, we better shut up. Here's Enda.

Scene 2: Croke Park, Sunday evening. After watching Dublin regain the Sam Maguire, Leo Varadkar bumps into the Minister for Sport.

Paschal Donohoe: Ah the bould Leo. Good to see you here. I always thought you were more of a rugby man.

Varadkar: Gosh, no. Just because I went to King's Hospital. But don't believe what you hear. I'm a bogball – er, I mean Gaelic – man at heart.

Donohoe: It nearly was a bog out there today, right enough. Still, we got over the line in the end. It's always a good day when ye beat Kerry.

Varadkar: Yeah. Go Dublin!

Donohoe (leaning in, sympathetically): "Up the Dubs" is better. "Go Dublin!" sounds like something you'd hear at a school hockey game. But, eh, speaking of games, I see Frances Fitz is making her pitch in the Sunday Indo today.

Varadkar (pretending indifference): Her pitch for what?

Donohoe: You know what. The leadership.



Varadkar: Oh, that old thing. Really – what did she say?

Donohoe: That she's not ruling herself out. Which in political speak, as you know, means she's gagging for it. And she's clearly pitching herself as the compromise candidate between you and Simon.

Varadkar: Compromise candidate indeed. As if I couldn't represent everyone in the party. Look at me: I'm the original man of the

people.

Donohoe: Yeah. You know, today would be a good day to lay down a marker yourself. What with the Dubs taking one title from a bunch of culchies. (He winks) It could be a sign of things to come in Fine Gael. It's just a pity you didn't wear the jersey.

Varadkar (unzipping rain jacket): Actually, I did.

Donohoe: Good man. Go for it. Here's some celebrating fans now. I'll hold your coat.

Fan: Howaya Leo? Any chance of a selfie with the lads here?

Varadkar: Of course! (He poses, with the group, smiling, and making victory signs). Up the Dubs! (They take the picture).

Fan (shaking hands with him): Thanks Leo – fair play to you. I'll be honest: I used to think you were a snobby fucker. But now I realise you're one of our own.

Scene 3: The bustling corridors of Government Buildings, Monday morning. The Government Press Officer and the Taoiseach walk and talk.

Feargal Purcell: So have you heard this stuff about David Cameron?

Enda Kenny: You mean the, eh, bizarre initiation ceremony in Oxford? Yes. I'll never be able to look him straight in the face again.

Purcell: I can imagine that might be difficult. But, er (lowering voice), there's nothing like that in your past, is there?

Kenny: Involving pigs? Dear God, no.

Purcell: Not just pigs, but – well – livestock generally. I mean, I'm only asking because, as Government Press Secretary, it'd be better if I found out about it now, rather than in the middle of an election campaign.

Kenny: No. Thankfully, I never went to Oxford. Although...

Purcell (worried): What?

Kenny (also worried, and lowering voice): Well, I did once win a catch-the-greasy-pig contest. It was at the Islandeady Sports Day – 1974, I think.

Purcell: Are there photographs?

Kenny: There might be.

Purcell (stroking his chin and thinking hard): But it would be obvious that this had happened at a traditional field day of the sort that were common in rural Ireland then?

Kenny: I suppose. Although, if there were close-ups, it might have looked a bit, er, romantic.

Purcell: Please tell me you're joking.

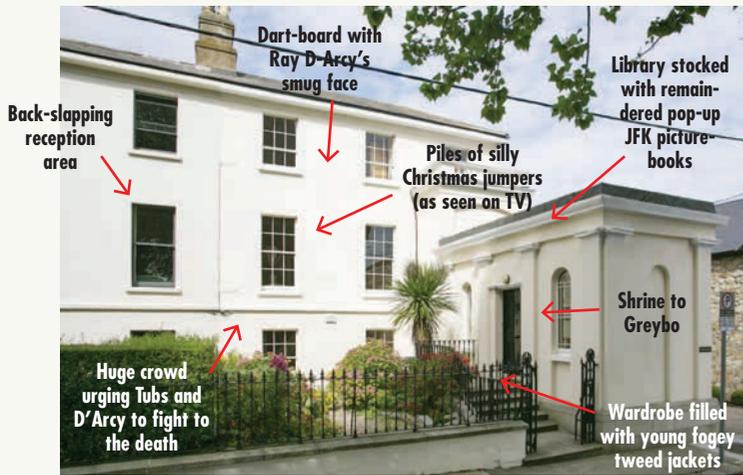
Kenny: Well, I was struggling with the pig a long time. And when I finally caught him, we were both sweating heavily. And I had to hold on very tight.

Purcell: Ok, we need to put this out first, on our own terms, in case the opposition gets hold of it first and twists it to look bad.

Kenny: Will I make a statement at Leaders Questions?

Purcell: No. I'll prime one of the tabloid hacks to ask you on a doorstep. Then you can make a joke of it. I'll script the joke for you. But let me think about it first.

TUBRIDY HOUSE SALE



THE INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE



APOLOGY

The Irish Times would like to take this opportunity to apologise to its readers for an error that presumably occurred at the sub-editing stage in one of our issues last week. It only became evident after the paper had gone to print that there was no reference to abortion in *any* of the articles.

There were no opinion pieces

on the experiences of women who had abortions, who had considered having abortions, or who never had abortions. While such an omission is clearly unacceptable, we hope this expression of regret will go some way to easing the pain experienced by our readers, many of whom may feel their experience had not been recognised.

NEW FROM CLYNCHEY

J'ENDRE FLUIDE – THE AMAZING FRAGRANCE



BECAUSE BOTH OF YOU ARE WORTH IT!

MERKEL SPEAKS OUT

GERMANY'S MAJOR publicity stunt has badly backfired, Chancellor Angela Merkel has admitted. Mrs Merkel recently announced that the country would take in close to a million refugees fleeing conflict in North Africa. The Germans were made out to be the "good guys" in Europe as other countries struggled to cope with unprecedented numbers seeking asylum.

"Okay, it sounded good at the time," confessed Merkel. "With our history of registering people coming off trains I'd thought it would



be a doddle. Unfortunately, it seems that our generous offer has been taken advantage of. Now we have to close our borders to ensure that we are not overrun."

Hurling latest



In an innovative proposal, Kilkenny has offered to enter a second senior hurling team in next year's All Ireland competition – but on behalf of another county.

A spokesgod for Kilkenny explained: "We believe that weaker teams like Cork, Tipperary, Galway and Waterford need a break but in Kilkenny, as always, we go that little bit further. We want to reach out (surely, "reach down"? – Ed) to the weakest hurling counties, like Laois, Meath, Tyrone etc. and provide them with the Kilkenny reserve team."

Four counties – Carlow, Offaly, Roscommon and Kildare – have already responded favourably to the proposal and have agreed that the team will be a combination of all four counties. Based on using the initials from these four counties, the team will be called C.O.R.K.

It is understood that Brian Cody will manage both teams. In the event of both Kilkenny and C.O.R.K. reaching the All Ireland final, Cody will manage one team in the first half and then walk (on water) across to manage the other team for the second half.

Rugby World Cup Preview

FIVE TO WATCH AGAINST IRELAND



PUNCHA GOUJA

Argentina's legendary full-back has that rare ability to make his mark on and off the field. Incredibly fast for someone who weighs in at just under 33 stone.

RICHIE BAASTAAD

Veteran 7ft 7in South African All Whites star famed for his imaginative kicking ability in the maul when under pressure.

BARRY DU'LALI

As blindside flankers go, Du'Lali's legendary reputation as a no-nonsense line-out specialist with a deadly boot is fully deserved.

KAN'GA ROUX

Australia's super hooker is almost impossible to pin down. Well-known back in his hometown of Sydney thanks to his role in the reality TV hit, Strictly Scrum Dancing.

BAZZA BOLLBKEAKA

Aussie legends Fred Swagman and Bob Billabong have both tipped this young 29-ton Wallabies centre to take the fight to the other side over the coming weeks.

(That's enough legendary players – Ed.)

Letters to the Editor

Email: guff@southsidetimes.com (no attachments – or anyone earning less than €100,000)
Post: Nonsense Dept, Humbug Street, D2, Eire (beside UK)
Follow Letters page on Twitter: @ITCrap

Note: please provide name and address so we can weed out any non-professionals. Letters may be edited or cut – especially if from the northside

Russia's pro-gay record

Sir, – May I be the first to respond to the recent comments by the world-famous singer Elton John about Russia's proud record in dealing with degenerate homosexuals. Personally, I have always admired Elton's songs – particularly 'Crocodile Rocket Man' and 'I'm Still Standing for President'.



Putin: admires Elton John

Anyone can be unfortunate enough to be born homosexual and completely depraved. It's like these unlucky Chechen activists who keep getting accidentally shot by the police in Moscow. They cannot help themselves. Similar to our heavily-armed Russian soldiers accidentally stumbling and falling over the Ukraine border. These things are part of everyday life – and I think Sir Elton understands this.

Yours, etc,
 Vlad Putin
 Moscow

Millions more for tax-payers

Sir, – Now that the economy has been rescued from the disastrous mismanagement of our grossly irresponsible predecessors, I am happy to confirm that the Government is in a position to pledge millions of promises to middle and low-income voters over the coming months. Like every other political party, Fine Gael

has always been committed to delivering millions of empty promises in the run-up to an election and I can assure everyone that the latest pre-budget sweeteners will be carefully targeted to those areas most at risk of getting on the front pages.

Yours, etc,
 Michael Noonan
 Leinster House

Facebook "Dislike" button

Sir, – As the latest variant on our popular "Like" button, I am happy to announce that Facebook is now rolling out an exciting new "Dislike" button. We see ourselves as a vehicle for a wide variety of self-expression, within the context of a globally-massive superficial hive-mind. As everyone knows, the phenomenal success of the social media network has already been built on allowing those we love to express pleasure when their closest friends post bad news. Next week, I plan to add to my billions by introducing a new "Apathetic" button that will allow people to highlight their level of complete boredom with myself and Facebook. Happy times.

Yours, etc,
 Mark Zuckerberg
 Silicon Valley

Memory influx

Sir, – Having just seen further footage of the tens of thousands of migrants bravely facing the elements as they determinedly march in search of a better future, it is with welling eyes that I put pen to paper this day.

For the scenes remind me of

my own my tribe's torturous journey in search of fresh pastures. We too brought new hope



Quinn: tortuous journey

to native terrains that so often failed to appreciate our value. I make no apology for shedding a tear as I watch those scenes brought by our television service that Pat Rabbitte rightly says comes far too cheaply. I say to those Syrians, Lebanese, Afghans, Eritreans and others, be strong: We did it and so can you!!

Yours, etc,
 Ruairi Quinn,
 Pioneer Place,
 Loonstown.
 Co. Galwaywithefairies

Criminal streak

Wot's de staw-ry? – I wanna complain most violently at de price of a lottery ticka nowadays! All



One of the contestants on next week's Winning Streak

wanna do is get meself onna *Winning Streakers*, so I can get some dosh an' get me life straightened ou' like. But the bleedin' cost is gone up ta €2 a panel!

Dat meanz I'm gonna have to go out again tonite an' do a job on some rich geezers so I can get a ticket for Marty and yer wan from Cork to pull me outta da drum like wot happened to Hutchie.

It's just crimnal wot a lad 'as to do to afford a lottery ticka, but then RTE is de reel muggers wit dem wages dey do give to the suits dat do be grinnin' at us from the telly. (Up) Yours, etc,
 Never mind who I am or where I live ok?!

Culture shock!

Sir, – Imagine my dismay during the recent Culture Night when I discovered there would be no recognition for the renowned "bonus culture" at Irish Water! I was intensely disappointed to be met with a disdainful response, when I rang the company to make inquiries as to exhibition times etc. Ridiculously, the receptionist even denied the very existence of such culture and became quiet incensed.

I ended up having to take my tearful kids to Leinster House in order to placate their obsession with moneymaking and thankfully they became enthralled by the seats in which Bertie Ahern and Ray Burke once sat.

Yours, etc,
 Attracta Crowd,
 Trad Street,
 Mullingarish

■ THE IRISH TIMES receives a great many awful letters each day and, thankfully, it is possible to find space for only a small selection. We regret that we can't publish even fewer of them.

€15 for suitable contributions. Email letters@thephoenix.ie

THE ADVENTURES OF FESTY O'SEMTEX

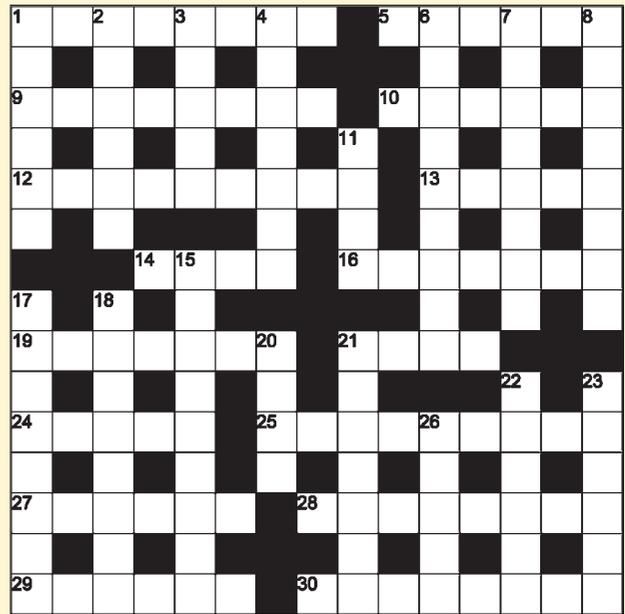


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Crossword by Procrustes

ACROSS

- 1 How can Tom, Dick and Harry tot up those figures without pen, paper or calculator? (8)
- 5 As host, I'd be involved with Mary. (6)
- 9 See how red a fire flickers in air at low pressure at great heights. (8)
- 10 Even though you don't know the lyrics, sing some of the score for your food abroad. (6)
- 12 It could be any one of these: noon, 2.32am, 4.19pm or midnight, but it's no big deal. (5-4)
- 13 RIP and GIR! (5)
- 14 Coming from O'Brien's Sandwich Bar, it's filling. (4)
- 16 Makes one long for divorcee nurses. (7)
- 19 There's no law regulating the chief in any position. (7)
- 21 Keep for the beginning of term. (4)
- 24 Seeing a little green man on the moon would surely have given Armstrong a turn. (5)
- 25 Rovers Return will help you to come clean. (3,2,4)
- 27 Coming from Siam, bicycle will get you one metre only. (6)
- 28 Being red hot, arrange it in poem, but tastefully. (8)
- 29 There has been wrong done during the year. (6)
- 30 It causes upset when it penetrates ornamental stones. (8)

DOWN

- 1 It's hard to make progress in such an area or during a religious service. (6)
- 2 Lohengrin opens after Bellini opera and then, it's Not Unusual. (6)
- 3 Legal guillotining is terrible, horrendous! (5)
- 4 You'd find shelter here in Ballingearry or Ballincollig, but not in Portumna or Killaloe. (7)
- 6 How strange! Gone rusty though it definitely can't be old. (9)
- 7 Explosion in Thulium mine may happen at any moment now. (8)
- 8 Great anxiety is caused by first having to get into the gown. (8)
- 11 Egomaniacs call repeatedly for an idea that'll spread between people in a group. (4)
- 15 Encrypted inert code for some abstruse reason. (9)
- 17 Knock, a large town synonymous with naked greed. (8)
- 18 It is lucky to spend half a life in the sea between Australia and New Zealand. (8)
- 20 Half of the children get involved with not very nice people. (4)
- 21 The distant oriental dynasty that gave rise to agriculture. (7)
- 22 Seat of power disrupted by dangerous one from inside the nest. (6)
- 23 Reels on seeing that ships have capsized. (6)
- 26 Float like a butterfly around the back of Liston; now that's hard! (5)



BRITAIN'S LACK OF TALENT WORRIES COWELL

X FACTOR supremo Simon Cowell has slated Jeremy Corbyn's performance during a recent Battle of Britain commemoration. The new Labour Party leader came in for criticism across almost all British media for his attire and poor attempt at God Save The Queen during the ceremony.

Cowell, Louis Walsh's boss, added his tuppence worth. "I'll be honest," said Cowell, "it did nothing for me. He forgot his lines, it looked like he hadn't rehearsed. As for presentation - terrible. His suit was mismatched, his tie wasn't even done up properly. When you get to this level you have to



give a million per cent, he only gave 100 per cent. It's a no from me!"

Black card saga continues

THE HUNGARIAN camerawoman who was captured on film tripping up a fleeing Syrian refugee has had her appeal against a red card rejected. Petra Laszlo lost her job with a right-wing TV company because of the incident and appealed the sanction on the grounds that the foul she committed only warranted a black card.

However, Hungary's Central Hearings Committee felt that her action was worthy of a red card. Laszlo, no relation to Victor, subsequently appealed that

decision to the CCC but her case was rejected here too. She confirmed that she will try her luck with the DRA.

"It's my right to exhaust all avenues - I want to be able to film more refugees coming in next week," said Laszlo. "I am hoping that maybe there was a technical error in one of the previous hearings and that I'll be cleared for action. All I'm asking for is consistency as I saw many others obstructing the runners off the ball, as they say, and they got away scot-free."

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LAST ISSUE'S WINNER: Martin O'Reilly, Dublin 9



Paddy Power's expensive bet on Betfair

BREON CORCORAN is the man of the moment. He was the brains behind Paddy Power's online betting growth up to the time he left in August 2012 to join Betfair, a somewhat different gambling model based on running a betting exchange rather than a conventional bookmaker. He has since managed to grow a conventional online betting business inside Betfair from nothing to €1.75bn turnover last year, in the space of just three years. This is almost as big as Ladbrokes, and now Paddy Power has realised its mistake and is attempting a merger, split only slightly in its favour, 52% against 48%. This narrow split reflects the value put on Corcoran by Paddy Power, as the ratio should be much more in the Irish firm's favour.

The proposed merger represents a big bet by Paddy Power on the man Paddy Kennedy let go three years ago. He should have kept Corcoran and taken out Betfair, which was struggling, then capitalised at €1bn. There is huge regulatory pressure being imposed, not just on the European betting industry but also worldwide. Alongside this, the industry is being landed with increasing turnover-based levies and licensing fees. This has accelerated consolidation, with not just the Paddy Power/Betfair merger going down, but alongside it, the merger of Ladbrokes and Corals.

It is far from clear what exact benefit Paddy Power's merger with Betfair brings, other than creating a huge €8bn monster. More significant is the parachuting back into the enlarged group of Breon Corcoran as the enlarged group's CEO rather than Andy McCue, the current CEO of the larger Paddy Power business.

In his three years at Betfair, Corcoran has built up a totally new conventional online betting business as well as doubling profits. Betfair is paying him well with a combined salary and bonus of €1.5m last year. In addition, a once-off performance bonus for Corcoran's three-year record

amounted to €14m, to bring his total remuneration last year up to over €15m.



Corcoran accepted what could have been a poisoned chalice in taking on the Betfair job in 2011. The company had gone public in 2010 and immediately ran into problems with delays in its betting exchange software development that sent shudders through the City, and knocked the share price by 50% from the issue price of £13 to £6.50. To steady the ship, Corcoran had to take out 500 staff, cutting numbers down from 2,300 to 1,800 almost immediately, and in the process taking out annualised costs of €50m.

Having seen its share price drop from £13 to a low of £6 when Corcoran joined, over the last 12 months Betfair's share price has soared to £30, representing a 500% increase in the value of its equity under Corcoran.

On the surface at least, the proposed merger terms



Breon Corcoran

between the two groups look inequitable, with Paddy Power only to end up with a fraction over half the enlarged equity (52%), while Betfair's shareholders get virtually half (48%). Strategically, however, it is also a serious climb down for Paddy Power that it is the CEO of the smaller company who will end up heading the enlarged company, with McCue becoming COO.

Meanwhile, Gary McGann, the retiring CEO of Smurfit Kappa, who has only just been appointed chairman of Paddy Power, will remain on as chairman of the enlarged Paddy Power/Betfair group.

He clearly has been instrumental in this whole merger in the first place, obviously with the support of the original founders of the group 25 years ago. These are David Power, who is still sitting on a near 8% shareholding currently worth €386m, John Corcoran with a 3% shareholding currently worth €150m, and Stewart Kenny with a near 1% shareholding worth €40m.

On the basis of the last full trading year, Paddy Power made a pre-tax profit of €166m, while Betfair only made €118m. Thus on a profit contribution basis, the equity split should be 59% to Paddy Power and 41% to Betfair, rather than the 52:48% split proposed.

If you take the most recent figures for Paddy Power,

covering the six months to June 2015, its pre-tax profits on a constant currency basis rose by 17%. However, with the benefit of the exchange rate of sterling, pre-tax profits jumped by 31% to just over €80m. Betfair's year runs to March, so it has only reported on its first quarter to June 2015 but not in any detail, other than revenue being up 15%, way behind Paddy Power's 25% increase in net revenue, while its profit growth is only up 19% for the quarter. This would suggest an equitable split could be more like 65:35%.

Betfair's betting exchange is by far the biggest in the world, trading a whopping €77bn last year, although margins for betting exchanges are tiny. The first thing Corcoran did when he went into Betfair was to build up a big conventional online bookie business, and the volume handled here increased last year by a hefty 140% and, most importantly, virtually all of this latter was taken out of the UK pool, which is where the bulk of Paddy Power's online betting customers are based.

Alongside this, Paddy Power's online betting growth is rather pedestrian. After 15 years it has only grown to €2.8bn, whereas in three years Corcoran has grown Betfair's

Continued on page 36

Reference the Market Abuse Regulations 2005, nothing published by Moneybags in this section is to be taken as a recommendation, either implicit or explicit, to buy or sell any of the shares mentioned.

Secretive Fyffes keeps investors in the dark

EARLIER THIS year, Fyffes escaped the embrace of Chiquita, one of the three giants in the international tropical fruit trade, focused on bananas, which also includes Del Monte and Dole. Since then, the company has returned impressive numbers, but it remains vulnerable to a takeover specifically because of the flawed decision to break the group into component parts. Meanwhile, investors remain nervous as they are kept in the dark on the profitability, or otherwise, of the Fyffes group component divisions.

Just on a decade ago, Carl and David McCann split the group into three components including Fyffes, which would focus only on sourcing and shipping tropical fruit. A new spin-off, Total Produce, would focus on actually buying that same fruit from Fyffes's European ripening sheds as part of its European fruit and veg distribution business.

Meanwhile, Carl McCann's belief that property was a one-way bet resulted in a €200m investment in a separate specialist property company, Balmoral International Land. Having floated this off at the top of the property boom, the McCanns have since seen huge value destruction.

This company was practically wiped out, with Fyffes writing off almost the whole of its investment in this property vehicle. The situation is so bad that nine months into the current trading year, Balmoral has still not issued its accounts and Fyffes is only able to refer to the 2013 outturn.

One good thing that came out of the break-up of the proposed Fyffes-Chiquita merger was that Chiquita had offered Fyffes a hefty break fee of €19m if the proposed merger was not affected. This would have been a nice little bonus for Fyffes, but somehow €14m was accounted for by "professional and advisory fees". Nevertheless, Fyffes still ended up with a €4.3m bonus courtesy of the break fee.

Profits at Fyffes have dropped back from around €80m pa when Neil McCann called the shots in the 19902 to €20m in 2010. Over the last four years, however, this has almost doubled to €39m, with profits up last year by 23%, albeit on the back of almost static turnover of €1.1bn.

Because of the pressure from the giant supermarkets

like Tesco, Dunnes, Asda, and Morrisons, tropical fruit has increasingly become a commodity business. It is thus essentially a huge volume business with Fyffes, for example, shipping 44 million cases of bananas to Europe from Central and South America, the bulk of these being on-sold to Total Produce. Carl McCann was convinced that this arrangement would dramatically increase the shareholder value, by exposing the three components inside the original Fyffes Group. This proved well off the mark and integrating the two companies now would throw off significant organisational savings.

While Fyffes ships 44 million cases of bananas to Europe and claims to be the biggest European importer, in Fyffes' own Chiquita merger



documents, it admitted that the latter was much bigger overall, in shipping 73 million cases of bananas to North America, but also bigger in Europe where it ships over 48m cases.

No doubt Chiquita would only be too happy to supply all Carl McCann's requirements in Total Produce if it believed that he was a free agent and not sourcing bananas from his brother in Fyffes.

Over the last decade David McCann has been building up a significant business in two other tropical fruits, namely sweet pineapples and winter melons. Developing a big business in sweet pineapples and building up a market for these has been a major



David McCann

exercise. After attempting to grow its own bananas in Honduras in the 1990s, Fyffes threw in the towel. In sweet pineapples, however, David McCann made the decision to grow his own and bought a pineapple farm in Costa Rica six years ago.

In buying a second farm two years ago, David McCann discovered that on a like-for-like basis, he significantly overpaid for the first farm and last year had to write this down by €4m. Nevertheless, of the 10 million pineapples Fyffes now handles, 6.5 million of these are grown in Costa Rica on Fyffes's own farms.

On the winter melon side of the business, David McCann again made blunders initially, sourcing

these in Brazil, but later discovered that he could do much better by sourcing these in Central America. Fyffes now ships 17 million cases of winter melons into North America, alongside the 10 million cases of bananas Fyffes ships to Florida in a joint venture with Turbana.

Currency movements caused price deflation last year, which resulted in a static €1.1bn total turnover. In stripping out the associates' turnover, Fyffes's group revenue rose 2% to €853m and its trading profit by 22% to just over €40m, to return a group trading margin of 4.7%, up 80 basis points from 3.9% to a much healthier 4.7%.

In the first half of the current year, Fyffes made further progress with total revenue increasing 9% at

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Stocks & Shares

Paddy Power continued from page 32

to just on €1.75bn. These are disturbing figures for both Paddy Power's shareholders and board of directors to wrestle with. No doubt they have come to the conclusion that it is better to pay a €3bn premium to capture Betfair and Corcoran, rather than let this rapidly growing competitor eat into its market.

There should be huge synergies between the two groups' online business, with an almost total overlap in Ireland, Britain, Italy and Australia. In addition, Betfair has broken into the highly regulated American market, going into New Jersey where it is developing an online horse racing betting operation as well as a casino business. The latter was originally linked to Donald Trump's Plaza complex in Atlantic City, although Corcoran switched this to the Golden Nugget in October last. Betfair also has smaller evolving businesses in Bulgaria, Denmark, Gibraltar, Malta, and Spain, and so will bring a wider geographic spread to the enlarged group.

Surprisingly perhaps, the market has given a warm

welcome to this proposed merger, even though it will cause serious short-term earnings dilution for Paddy Power's shareholders. The hope has to be that Corcoran will not only be able to overcome this dilution impact through synergies savings, but will also be able to better drive the whole group.

At around €100, however, Paddy Power's shares are trading on a trailing 33 price earnings multiple. Assuming the merger goes through on the terms outlined, this pushes the pro-forma price earnings multiple up over 40 times.

If Paddy Power on its own could repeat the earnings increase in the first half for the full year (something far from certain as there was a favourable betting outcome in the first half), then the pro-forma multiple would fall to a 25 p/e with Paddy Power on its own, but a 30 p/e assuming Betfair was able to increase its earnings at roughly the same pace.

Either way, assuming the merger goes through, the enlarged group is on a very high earnings multiple and Corcoran is going to have to really drive the group. As more



Gary McGann

and more restrictions come on the betting industry, with increased levies, etc, this will be a big ask. While Corcoran was a big factor in Paddy Power's online bookie growth and a major factor in Betfair's recent transformation, the enlarged group will be so big that it may not be as easy to grow it to the same extent as in the past.

Moreover, the competitive environment is hotting up as industry consolidation progresses. The most significant movement here is the current

proposed merger between Ladbrokes and Corals, which gives these a huge conventional street presence in Britain, with 40% of the 7,000 bookie shops in the country, as well as much more significant online presence.

Significantly, the supplier of the core technology here for most of the big players, including Paddy Power, is Playtech, which is putting a significant investment into the enlarged Ladbrokes/Corals merged entity.

Fyffes continued from page 34

€644m, while group revenue rose 10% to €541m. In the much more seasonally profitable first half, trading profit on the back of this rose 9% to €34m, but trading margins were actually static at 6.3%.

What is interesting, however, is that while David McCann has always refused to break out the profitability of the group's four segments – melons, pineapples, European bananas and North American bananas – he has started the process of disclosure in his first half report, in that he claims that bananas made a €2m higher contribution, without saying what that contribution was.

On the pineapple side, McCann confirms that this operation contributed an extra €1m but, again, without noting what that contribution was. Meanwhile, on the melon side, he just says profits here were similar, but gives no figure. It is pointless to titillate shareholders with random pieces of selective information like this. David McCann should be giving a full profit breakdown of each of these segments, so that investors can have some idea of what is going on inside the group.

Fyffes have agreed to pick up half of the €15m fine

the European competition directorate imposed on Fyffes's German 80%-owned subsidiary, Weichert. These fines arose in the two years before Fyffes owned Weichert and it was still owned by Del Monte. It is hard to understand why Fyffes should have to pay any of these charges if all of these arose under the latter's ownership. In maintaining that "the activities in question were not anti-competitive," Fyffes is effectively saying that practices which the Commission found to be objectionable are ones that it considers to be acceptable and, on this basis alone, there could well be further trouble afoot for Fyffes.

One of the other problems with Fyffes is that it entered into a joint venture in India five years ago and, last year, formed a joint venture in China. However, shareholders were given no information whatsoever in relation to these two operations in these two huge markets. David McCann should let shareholders know what volume and turnover these operations are achieving and if they are profitable.

Last February, David McCann guided that 2015 should turn in trading profits of between €36m to €42m – a mid-point of €39m and €1m down on 2014. He is now guiding a trading profit



Carl McCann

range for the full year in 2015 of between €44m and €50m, a midpoint of €47m, representing an 18% increase on last year.

At the current share price of €1.50, Fyffes is now trading on a prospective price earnings multiple of 10.8 times. The McCann family's stranglehold is now gone, down to 12.6%, while the Jerry Zucker Trust is actually a larger holder with 13.2%. The latter was believed to be instrumental in the Chiquita merger proposition, so as long as this holding remains in place, there is a

reasonable chance that the McCann family concerns may not completely limit the options open to the company. Fyffes would still be a tidy morsel for any of the three tropical fruit giants.

Ironically, Fyffes is more vulnerable to being taken out now than was it when the fruit and veg trading arm was part of the group. It could be that the brothers will eventually integrate the two companies together again but, in the meantime, it is hard for investors to work out if this makes Fyffes a buy or a sell.



PASTOR BYRNE'S PENANCE

PASTOR GERRY BYRNE, of the Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF), is busy asking the Lord for forgiveness, having suffered the ignominy of appearing on the tax defaulters' list published by the Revenue earlier this month.

The list recorded that Byrne – a close associate of Goldhawk's old friend, **Brendan Hade**, with whom Byrne has been in a bitter legal dispute with Bank of Scotland over VCF's loans – received two tax-related convictions earlier this year. One of the convictions was for failing to lodge income tax returns



Gerry Byrne

while the other was for failing to deliver a "statement of affairs." (In both instances, Byrne was fined €1,250.) This is the third time Byrne has appeared on the defaulters' list. Back in 2001, he received two convictions (plus a small fine of €875) for not lodging income tax returns.

Byrne's profession is described on the recent defaulters' list as a "trustee," which is presumably a reference to his role as a trustee of VCF. Bank of Scotland landed Byrne, Hade and Hade's wife, **Sheila Hade**, with a hefty €18.7m judgment in February 2014, in their capacity as trustees of VCF. The lender had also appointed receivers to three Dublin properties owned by VCF and, earlier this year, the church lost an appeal in the Court of Appeal in which it disputed the validity of the appointment of the receivers.

The good news for Godly Gerry is that he is not letting the recent difficulties of VCF

get in the way of business. Last year, the entrepreneurial evangelical preacher set up a business called Get Married. ie. It turns out that Byrne is on the Department of Social Protection's Register of Marriage Solemnisers, meaning that he is legally able to perform weddings in Ireland, an increasingly lucrative line of business. The good news for Pastor Gerry is that marriage solemnisers do not need a tax clearance certificate to be on the register.

THE RETURN OF PETER BUTLER

CONGRATULATIONS are in order to former Anglo Irish Bank suit, **Peter Butler**, who has joined the board of a construction firm, Genesis Homes, which has offices in Dublin and Limerick. Butler became a director of several companies in the Genesis group last year, although recently there has been a bump in the road as the construction company was refused permission by An Bord Pleanála for a 36-unit apartment building at

Stoneybatter, D7.

Butler was a long-serving Anglo executive, who joined the bank in 1987 and served in a number of senior positions, the last of which was as chief risk officer. Butler was also known as a keen golfer in the corporate world and played on a 2005 Irish team against the Yanks at the US-Ireland Alliance Golf Challenge at the K Club, where his team-mates included **Brian Cowen** and **David Drumm**. In 2008, Butler confirmed that he owed the bank €860,000 and said he was meeting his repayments. He left the bank in 2009.



Barry O'Connor

Genesis Homes was set up in 2011 by former McInerney

Hot Water Brigade continued on page 44

Hot Water Brigade continued from page 42

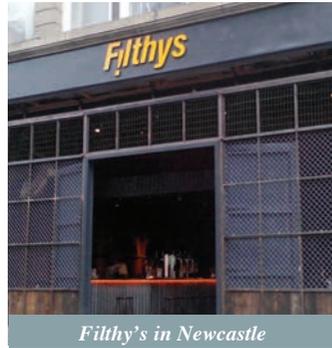
Homes chief executive, **Barry O'Connor**, with a number of other former McInerney Homes suits also now on board. Shares in the group's holding company, Genesis Homes Holdings Ltd, are held equally in the names of **Brian McGann**, a partner at BDO accountancy firm in Limerick and an unlimited company called Ireboc Ness, which is owned by O'Connor and his family.

Earlier this year, Dublin City Council turned down one of the Genesis Homes's projects, a proposed apartment building in Stoneybatter. The firm then went to An Bord Pleanála, where it argued, according to an ABP inspector, that the project "epitomises the ideals of urban regeneration." However, ABP had a different opinion and refused permission for the project, finding that it would "detract from the visual amenities of Stoneybatter and interfere with the views of the important landmarks of the former Jameson Distillery chimney in Smithfield Square."

PETER DOLAN'S NEW VENTURE?

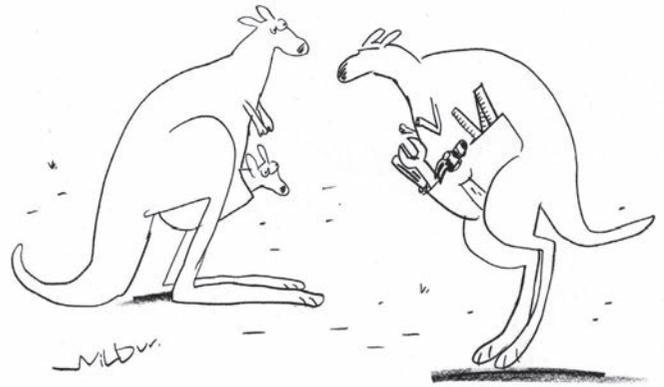
NORTHERN IRELAND pharmacist-turned-developer **Peter Dolan** borrowed heavily from southern lenders before going bankrupt in 2012, at which stage Nama had also seized most of the properties in his company, Jermon Ltd. In 2014 Dolan was also disqualified from acting as a company

director in Northern Ireland for six years, but the good news is that the businessman now appears to be involved in a Northern Ireland pub company, Hathor Inns Ltd, which has obtained planning permission for a new pub in Newcastle, England, where Dolan's name pops up in the planning files. This may be of interest to the Directors Disqualification Unit at the Insolvency Service of Northern Ireland.



Filthy's in Newcastle

Dolan had assembled a major property portfolio in Northern Ireland and overseas, much of which was funded by lenders south of the border. In 2011, his main property vehicle, Jermon Ltd, went into administration, by which stage its assets were valued at £91m, leaving a net deficit of over £100m. AIB was owed £63m, Bank of Ireland, £25m, while Anglo and Bank of Scotland (Ireland) were together owed over €100m. The developer was discharged from bankruptcy in 2013. Last year Dolan and his wife, **Jacqueline Dolan**, consented to a seven-year disqualification order in Northern Ireland.



MALE KANGAROO POUCHES

All was not lost, however. In October 2013, a new pub company, Hathor Inns Ltd, was set up, ostensibly by Dolan's daughter, **Stephanie Dolan** (24), who is the company's sole director and shareholder, according to company records, and is described as a student on company records. Hathor Inns has its registered office address as the Dolan family residence in Dungannon, Co Tyrone.

Quite where the funding for Hathor Inns is coming from is uncertain, but what is clear is that the company has since set up four new boozers (in Belfast, London, Nottingham and, most recently, in Newcastle), under the name "Filthy McNasty". The Newcastle boozier opened its doors last month.

Earlier this year, the pub company applied for planning permission with Newcastle City Council to renovate an existing pub premises in the city as a Filthy McNasty. Included in the planning file

were designs of the proposed new shop front for the pub by a firm of architects. In the designs, Peter Dolan – not Hathor Inns – is described as a "client" of the firm of architects. Elsewhere in the planning file, a chain of emails was also submitted (which discussed the facade of the proposed new pub), in which Peter Dolan was included.

Under UK company law, it can be a criminal offence for a disqualified director to be engaged in the promotion or management of a company, which is punishable by a prison sentence of up to six months. Peter Dolan didn't respond to a query concerning his precise involvement in Hathor Inns Ltd.

SPARE A THOUGHT for developer and estate agent Matt Bruton, who has recently been landed with two judgments courtesy of Bank of Ireland, for a total of €4.2m. One of these judgments (for €3.7m)

FERGUS RICE'S LATEST BATTLE

SOME worrying news for businessman **Fergus Rice**, who was previously an executive with spread-betting company Marketspreads Ltd, but who later had a falling out with the company that was played out in the Four Goldmines.

Rice was declared bankrupt last year following a petition from Marketspreads (which later changed its name to SFS Markets Ltd), and to make matters worse, he is now being pursued in the Circuit Court by KBC Bank. The lender is seeking to take possession of Rice's family home in Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, and the case is back before the Circuit Court in December.

It will be recalled (see *The*

Phoenix 23/2/12)) that in an action taken by Marketspreads against Rice, the High Court heard that he left the company in July 2011 along with its chief executive, **Brian O'Neill**.

Marketspreads claimed that around late 2010 and early 2011, it discovered that the boys had advanced €1.4m from the company to fund another venture, SSB Ireland Ltd. Including interest, the amount came to €1.7m, which ultimately led to judgments

granted against the pair and then to Rice's bankruptcy last year. The bankruptcy was "hotly contested," according to a subsequent High Court judgment.



Fergus Rice

Property records show that IIB Bank (as KBC Bank was previously known) was granted a mortgage secured against Rice's home at Pembroke Road, Ballsbridge, in 2006. The charge remains unsatisfied and, last year, the lender issued Circuit Court proceedings seeking to take

possession of the house, which was before Judge **Jacqueline Linnane** earlier this summer. Because it is seeking to take possession of a family home (as opposed to a property investment, where it could simply appoint a receiver), KBC Bank is obliged to obtain a court order to take possession of the D4 home.

After Rice was made bankrupt, he stepped down as director of SSB (Ireland), and was replaced by another Rice, **Patrick Rice**. The company's out-of-date accounts showed accumulated losses of €275,000 at the end of March 2012 and a note in the accounts stated that Rice's bankruptcy was being appealed.

was also registered against **David Bruton**, a developer with an address in Dunboyne, Co Meath.

The two boys managed to keep a low-profile during the boom, although one of their notable ventures was a major housing development at Coneycoro, in Co Kildare, for which they (along with a construction company, Royal Meadows Solutions Ltd) borrowed some €25m from INBS between 2005-2007.



Sean Dunne

The vendor of the site was well-known developer Sean

Dunne, but in a complicated arrangement, the Dunners retained legal title to the land on which the development took place, even though the borrowers were its beneficial owners.

Details of the arrangement emerged in 2013, in the context of Dunne's bankruptcy case in Connecticut, the US. It was claimed by a Nama solicitor that Dunne was still owed almost €6m arising out of the project, which he hadn't declared during his bankruptcy. In court papers, it was also claimed that the borrowers first defaulted on their repayments to Irish Nationwide in 2008. However, there is no record of Irish Nationwide having issued High Court proceedings against either Matt or David Bruton.

Meanwhile, Matt Bruton previously owned a company called Matt Bruton Auctioneers Ltd, which had offices in Maynooth and Dunboyne. (Bruton gives his address at Sandymount, D4 on company records.)

Hot Water Brigade continued on page 46

IN COURT WITH GREG KAVANAGH

MORE to report on the ubiquitous developer **Greg Kavanagh**, who has been snapping up Dublin properties at a frantic rate and has had more than his share of visits to the Four Goldmines (see *The Phoenix* 7/11/14).

A Kavanagh-linked company, Crekav Landbank Investments Ltd, has purchased a property known as Mount Argus, Harold's Cross, D6W – a site that includes a former Passionist monastery – from Viera Ltd (which trades as Twinlite), owned by the Larkin family (see Young Blood, p17). Not everything went according to plan, however, and now the Larkin company is suing Crekav in the Circuit Court in a row related to the deposit for the sale.

In early 2008, Twinlite – then headed by the developer **Eugene Larkin**, whose sons, **Rick** and **Michael**, are now in charge – spent a whopping €20m on Mount Argus. Initially there were plans for two residential developments,

but these stalled before the company finally obtained planning permission for a 42-unit development from An Bord Pleanála in July 2014. A sale (understood to be just shy of €15m) was later agreed with Crekav.

Twinlite is complaining that Crekav breached an agreement to provide the deposit for the sale by an agreed date, which meant that it missed out on the interest on that deposit. Property records show that Crekav became full owners of the site this year, and while the deposit (and balance) have since been handed over, Twinlite is now seeking damages for the loss of the interest.

Crekav was set up in 2014 and Kavanagh's fellow director is his business associate, **Patrick Crean**. There are almost 50 registered charges against assets held by the company – various sites in the greater Dublin area – which give an indication of the scale of Greg Kavanagh's operations in recent years.



Greg Kavanagh

Hot Water Brigade continued from page 45

MICKEY MOUSE is not amused that Irish cinemas are giving away discounted tickets as part of promotions to see Walt Disney movies. That's according to a sniffy email sent earlier this month by Tom Batchelor, theatrical sales director at Walt Disney for the UK and Ireland, to various Irish cinemas.

Batchelor said that the Disney company has observed an "increasing number of promotional offers" in Ireland involving "the discounting or giveaway of cinema tickets."

Given the huge mark-up on drinks and popcorn – where cinemas can really make their money – cinemas can afford to give away tickets for free or at a discount.

Not everyone is happy with this arrangement, however. Batchelor said in his email that this type of promotional activity "will inevitably affect our revenues from the Disney pictures."

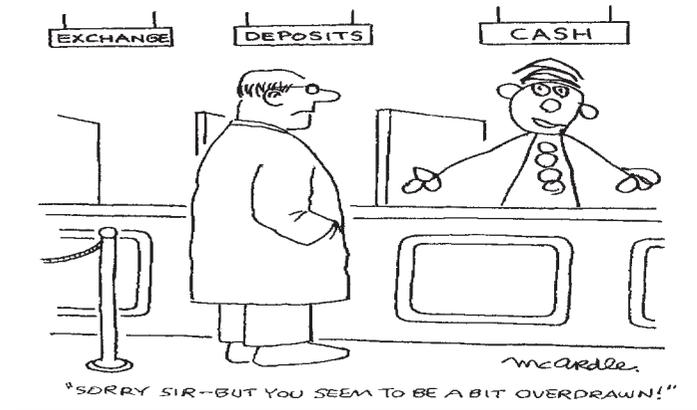
He also said that Disney is entitled to be notified in advance of any such activity and that if "such transparency" is not provided, Disney reserves the right to withdraw any of its pictures previously booked. Who

knew that Mickey Mouse could be such a party pooper?

GER KILLALLY'S LEGACY

EARLIER this month, Nama issued High Court proceedings against Offaly woman **Rita Guing**, the wife of a deceased developer from Edenderry named Declan Guing. Declan Guing may be a familiar name to fans of Goldhawk, having been one of the unfortunate Offaly victims caught up in the well-publicised 'secret profits' schemes involving the notorious former Fianna Fáil councillor **Ger Killally**. Also listed as a defendant in the recently lodged action are the sons of Declan Guing – who passed away in 2013 – **Colm** and **Stephen Guing**. In the action, Nama is seeking a declaration from the court, which is understood to be in connection with the ownership of certain assets previously held by Declan Guing.

Declan Guing was a small-time builder in Edenderry, Offaly for a number of years, doing



one-off houses and small estates. He was part of a four-man partnership with Killally, former Offaly football manager **Richie Connor** and another man, **Frank Lawlor**, called the Daingean Road partnership, which paid €6.5m for land at Tullamore. It turned out, unbeknownst to Guing and Lawlor, that the true purchase price was actually €5m, with Killally and Lawlor pocketing the extra €1.5m. A similar chain of events unfolded in relation to other deals and, around 2008, it became clear that Guing and Lawlor had been hoodwinked.

Guing was subsequently

involved in a number of High Court cases as Killally's web of deceit unravelled. He and Lawlor sued Killally and Connor in a case in which the defendants admitted their part in the secret profits schemes. That case was settled but Killally went bankrupt in 2012. AIB, which was one of the funders for Killally's schemes, was granted a €15.5m judgment against Guing and Lawlor in 2009. This judgment was previously granted against Killally and Connor.

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