

rabble

Issue #5 Winter 2012
Published Quarterly.

we are rabble
where's the party?



INSIDE.

Publishing

Why are our young Irish writers not getting a look in?

Bottler Reilly

rabble takes a look at one prick politician's love of health...

Disability Cutbacks

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Thousands marched in Cavan to support Seán Quinn. 100,000 people were caught on the hop by the switch to Digital TV. That's Fianna Fáil's core vote right there.

{THE RANT}

Support rabble!

IN SEPTEMBER RABBLE TURNED ONE. WE'RE JUST ABOUT GETTING THE HANG OF THINGS AS OUR TEAM OF REPROBATES GROWS. THE LATE NIGHT WORK SESSIONS ARE STILL THERE, BUT THEY CONTAIN LESS OF THE NICOTINE AND COFFEE FUELLED LAST MINUTE CONTENT GENERATION THAN BEFORE.

The standard of our content, both word and image gets better and better. We're confident that rabble is growing into one of the freshest print publications Ireland has seen in years.

We weren't sure if the gamble would work, if the city would want us, if anyone would care. The response since has been nothing short of immense. Dublin didn't just get rabble, Galway, Limerick, Cork and Belfast did too. You've told us what you like and what you want more of; more culture, more investigative pieces and more razor-sharp satire.

We're getting bigger and bolder in our old age, increasing our page count and leaping up to 10,000 copies for this issue. That's a direct response to rabble#4 which disappeared from our clutches in a week. With your feedback suggesting that each issue is read by more than one person, our reach is growing too. If you want a bundle in your town, let us know and we'll figure out the best way to smuggle some in.

We thought distribution would be the hardest thing to crack - but an impromptu, organic network took care of that. rabble is grateful to those worker-bees that ferry away our rag to all parts of the city, bog and globe.

How we've shuffled through cash-wise is miraculous. We're putting that question straight on the table. Flick through to the back for a complete breakdown of how we finance this rag. We're not going to be able to continue at this level without your support.

It cost the guts of €1,700 to print this issue, and another few hundred to distribute. If you like what we're doing, if you want us to continue, then stick your hand in your pocket and help us. Every cent goes to printing and distribution, because rabble is strictly not-for-profit and we are keeping it that way.

We keep prattling on about cash. But if you want proper investigative journalism, then we need some time off begging for ads to sniff out the slum landlords and dodgy zoning decisions.

There's talk of regular blogging, of transferring our linkage and daily updates from Facebook and Twitter to our website to escape the Facebook loop and pool the conversation there. We want our online presence to be more than cat pikshurs and status updates about what we had for dinner. Our Xmas wish-list includes an office and a fundraising drive that will see us ad-free for 12 months. Nothing wrong with lofty notions.

You've shown you appreciate a voice that cuts through the nation's lethargic gobshiter. We've a harebrained idea that Ireland is ready to support a reader-sustained, free, print-publication dedicated to doing so.

Let's make that happen in 2013.



{EYE}

Wally Cassidy Captures Smithfield Market At The Turn of the 90s.

"I used to do a lot of street photography back then and you'd go wherever the big crowd was really. The market, the GPO - there was always republican protests on there, Dessie Ellis that kind of thing. Robert Capa, Elliot Erwitt sparked my interest of course but it was really Podge O'Farrell. He took a photo of me when I was hanging around Stephen's Green with the punk rockers, he gave me a print and it went from there. I took shots of the punks and it was a way of getting into gigs free, Deco from Paranoid Visions would get me in with the camera. I never thought they'd be looked at again never mind becoming so popular 20 years on."

For more visit www.facebook.com/WallyCassidyPhotography and look out for his fundit.ie campaign...

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE #5!

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p5. Donal Fallon looks at how we are marking the Lockout...

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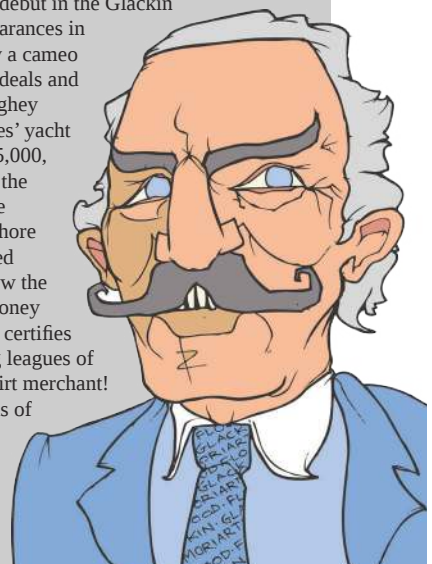
p25. It's make and do time with rabble's Voodoo doll kit...



Gombeen #5

THE DASTARDLY DIRTY DERMOT DESMOND WILL BE RECEIVING THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO IRELAND AWARD OUT IN HIS LAIR: THE IFSC.

Out there among the clusterfucks of wholesale financial "products", Desmond broods over his €1.35 billion fortune and laughs in the face of the now deceased "Robin Hood Tax" which Consigliere Noonan sorted out recently, ensuring speculative behaviour on the markets will not be reasonably taxed.. No! That cold, hard cash has to come from Household Charges, Water Taxes and Civil Service Pensions. The award will no doubt emulate just another notch in this man's ethically troubled belt: Citibank, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Aer Rianta... then things get topical. A debut in the Glackin report preceded several guest appearances in the Moriarty Tribunal, followed by a cameo in the Flood Tribunal. Some hairy deals and questionable "loans" with the Haughey family, including paying for Charles' yacht to be refurbished to the tune of £75,000, began to make Desmond look like the kind of alumnus Citibank would be proud of. With many different offshore bank accounts, Desmond has racked up an intriguing paper trail to follow the abortion that was the Johnston Mooney and O'Brien land deal. This award certifies our Desmond as dancing in the big leagues of corporate culture. Godspeed you dirt merchant! It's good to know that the standards of the IFSC are as low as one would expect...



Lettuce know
what you think
of the paper...

Take part in our
reader survey at
www.rabble.ie/survey

rabble

Editorial Ringleaders: Claire Davey, Dave Johnson, James Redmond, Killian Redmond, Mice Hell, Paul Reynolds and Siobhán McDermott

Words: Chris Connolly, Claire Davey, Culturalfatwa, Dave Johnson, Donal Fallon, Ed Murphy, Hugo Bass, Jake O'Brien, John Leech, Justin Cans, Killian Redmond, Lisa Cassidy, Mice Hell, Myles Ni Gangstaleen, P. Kolbe, Paul Reynolds, Paul

Tarpey, Peg Lesson, Rashers Tierney, Rob Flynn, Scratch Dat Itch, Simon Price, and Wagwan Gillan

Photography: Boo Doo, Jimmy Scissors, John Lalor, Nora O' Murchú, Paul Reynolds, Paul Tarpey and Walla Cassidy
Illustration: ADW, Akofa, Aoife Queen, Dara Lynch, James Redmond, Julian Astellarra, Luke Fallon, Mice Hell, Milo Tobin, Paddy Lynch, Pedro Astellarra, Phil Barrett, Redmonk and Thomas McCarthy

Pillow Humping: Officer Scamp

Layout Lackies: Claire Davey and James Redmond

Ads Hitman: Mark Furlong

Hosting Disaster Hero: Paul Mc

Typo Nazis: Dara Lynch, Dara McHugh and Mice Hell

Distro Fairies: Loadsa ya! You know who ya are.

About Us.

rabble is a non-profit, newspaper from the city's underground. It's collectively and independently run by volunteers. rabble aims to create a space for the passionate telling of truth, muck-raking journalism and well aimed pot-shots at illegitimate authority.

Ask Us Out At
www.rabble.ie



{LOOK UP #4}

Panels For Proles

AT A PROTEST OUTSIDE THE DÁIL ONE DAY WE FOUND OURSELVES TAKING SHELTER FROM THE RAIN IN THAT SAD-LOOKING SQUARE NEXT DOOR. TAKING A LOOK ABOUT US WE SAW SOME EXTRAORDINARY SCULPTURES THAT HAVE A CERTAIN TOTALITARIAN FEEL AND TOPPED OFF BY SOME KIND OF IRONMAN-MICHAEL O'LEARY CHARACTER SPEWING AIRCRAFT ACROSS THE BALCONY. WE GAVE LISA CASSIDY A BELL, SHE'S BEHIND THE AWARD-WINNING BUILTDUBLIN.COM BLOG, AND ASKED DOES SHE KNOW WHERE WE ARE...

...Yes rabble, it's the sort of place where a few benches would make so much sense that you're surprised every time to find none, and so you're just stuck standing there, surrounded on three sides by Government Buildings and government buildings.

Right in front of you, that's the large stripped classical building constructed for the Department of Industry and Commerce between 1939 and 1942, designed by James Rupert Boyd Barrett.

Starting off easy, the two keystones (over the entrance and on School House Lane) are of Eire and St. Brendan the Navigator. The keystones, like the relief panels on the

ministerial balcony, were sculpted by Gabriel Hayes in 1940 – all the more impressive because she was afraid of heights and did the work in situ, using a cage filled with sacks as scaffolding. She comes across as an amazing woman when you read about the project, frustrated that the reaction to the work was just fascination that the sculptor was female.

The balcony is a showcase of Irish commerce and industry. The sculpture work is great and the faces are damn handsome – their expressions are complex enough to make the scenes seem real, with the earnest, unguarded focus of someone concentrating without knowing anyone can see them.

The panels start with the iron and steel industry (a man with a serious, assessing expression) on the left end, with his milling counterpart on the right end. Across the front, the panels include shoemaking, the cement industry, tobacco (a woman in a neat hat, see photo), the Shannon scheme, spinning and pottery (a muscular man with his eyes closed, tracing the curves of a vase).

If, somehow, you still weren't excited about our brave industrial and commercial future, things go into overdrive on the panel above the door. There's Lugh, the Celtic god of light, throwing a swarm of aeroplanes into the sky. It seems like absurd imagery of air travel was kind of a thing, because an Office of Public Works pamphlet on the building's architecture shows a small ashtray with a chubby cast of a plane on it. Maybe the best workplace souvenir of all time.

There's a long history of buildings having decorative elements whose functions include giving lessons, and maybe the best example is stained glass in the Middle Ages - images reinforced the sermon using narrative and metaphor and the rich, coloured light to reach a substantially illiterate congregation.

Matched with the deliberate use of native materials and the stern intensity of the architecture, the building's imagery reads a bit like the stained glass. It's interesting to wonder who the intended audience was, then: is it advertising Ireland to the world (and to Britain), or reminding the workers that the most handsome, the most Irish of heroes are the ones who put their heads down and graft? I'm guessing both, and then some people who just really, really like planes.

Presidential Advice

"The quickest way to a man's heart is through his chest." - Roseanne Barr who came 6th in the US Presidential Election

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GOLDEN HAND SHANDIES

THEY CALLED FOR US ALL TO PUT ON THE GREEN JERSEYS, BUT WHEN THEY GOT THE CALL THE ONLY GREEN WE SAW WAS THE FAT WADS THEY STUFFED IN THEIR WALLETS. SCRATCH DAT ITCH EXPLORES THE FINE ART OF BEING TWO FACED...

You are the forgotten generation whose future was snatched in front of your eyes. Whilst you now shiver in the cold of uncertainty, breaking down the doors to a Croke Park job fair so that you can take your degree with you to lay floors in Canada or care for Australia's ill, remember that they lit cigars with fifty euro notes.

Experts warned of an economy that was overheating whilst they held blow torches in their hands. They helped their friends and backers to play Monopoly in real life, buying hotels here, buying shares in gas and electric and garbage companies there, and when they went bust no-one went to jail. Who are they? They are the backers of the politicians, like actors on a stage playing out a farce called 'Democracy' whilst 84,000 of you have left for someplace else.

So it helps to pay attention to what they're up to. The Feel & Fail Party Ard Fheis last year was like a mobsters' convention, where you could hear the ambitious young ones say, "mistakes were made, and my father, uncles and brothers may have at one time ran a numbers racket but all I am trying to do is make a living with a legit Pizzeria".

The precious economy which everyone cares about, from the Bundesbank to the IMF, looked like a splattered sloppy pavement pizza that had taken a jump from Liberty Hall at the end of their regime.

You may recall that Brian 'we-all-partied' Lenihan called his first austerity budget back in 2008, 'A Call to Patriotic Action'. We were all to pull on the green jersey, pay more tax and more VAT, and not go north of the border to shop. Now four years later the politicians were asked to respond, to chip in to help our little Republic.

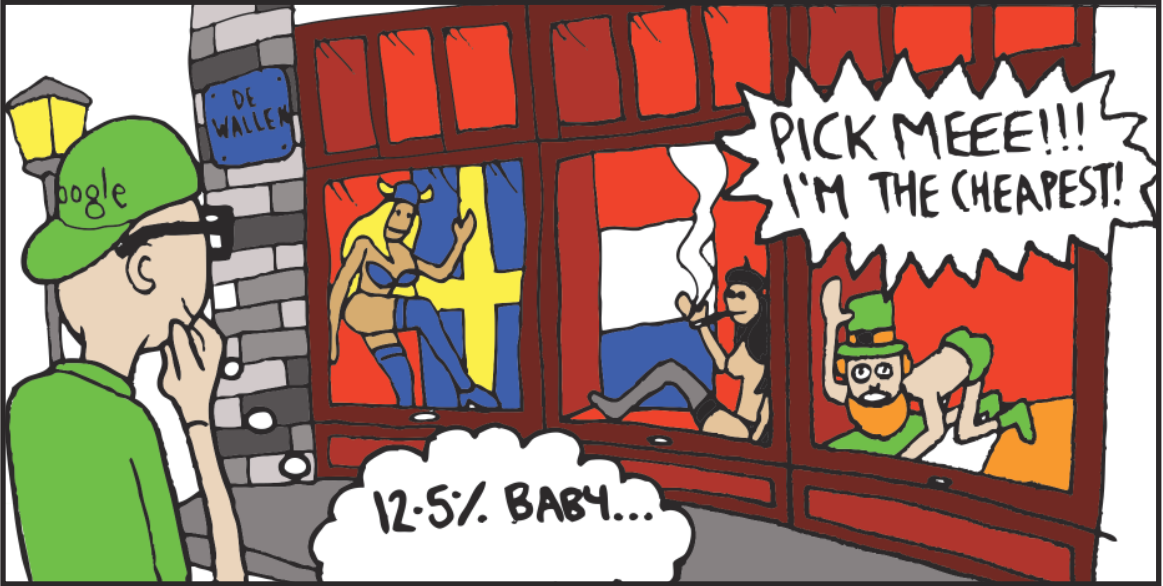
They were asked if they wished to give back some of their pensions. Bertie gave back €14,000 but then he's been known to win that much on a horse or the turn of a card. Mary Harney of the Progressive Democrats gave back zero from her 69k. Michael McDowell gave his €143,000 windfall to charity, ironically a former government minister would not appear to trust the State to competently redistribute wealth. Albert Reynolds, from €99,000 gave back nada. Dermot Ahern and David Andrews gave nothing from their €58,000 each.

Raphael Burke made a zero contribution from €53,000. Richard Barry; pulling down €60,000 and offers up nothing for Ireland - that's right, zero. Noel Dempsey, zero from €63,000; Martin Cullen zero from €69,000; P. Flynn nothing from €47,000. Alan Dukes kept all of his €42,000 pension. Dick Roche volunteered nothing from his €46,000. Dick Spring, nothing from €71,000. Green Eamon Ryan gave back nothing from his €51,000. Sile De Valera, surely a patriot, decided to volunteer nothing from her €53,000. Collins, another old school book patriot name, Edward, nothing from his €52,000. The previous incompetent/incumbent Taoiseach Cowen decided to part with none of his €79,000 pension.

Wisdom is something that gets passed on. My 81 year old mother was asked who was in government by a doctor and she replied 'a right shower'. She also says that politicians concentrate on 'feathering their own nests' and the list showing that 4% donations from a €4.1 million retirement payout doesn't contradict that.

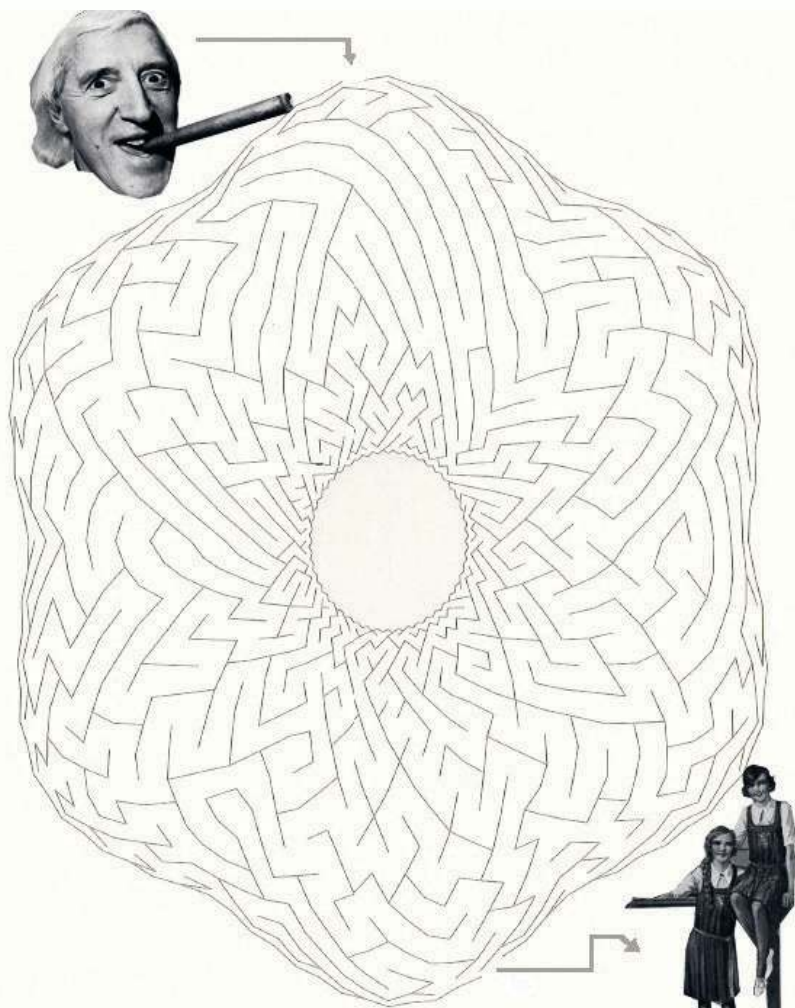
Meanwhile for the rest of us the 'menu del dia' continues to be austerity gruel, blood from stones and Bullshit Pie served on the hour by RTE.

Illustration by Dara Lynch



{UNDERGROUND CULTURE}

Help Jim fix it



WE'RE NOT JUST A PRINTED RAG, YOU KNOW. THERE ARE SWATHES OF YOU LAYABOUTS OUT THERE WITH YOUR FINGERS HOVERING OVER THE LIKE BUTTONS ON OUR CAT PICKSHURS. IT WASN'T JUST OUR PHOTO OF NICK GRIFFIN'S ADDRESS THAT KICKED UP SOME COMMENT ONLINE - HAVE A GOO AT WHAT YOU LOT WERE TELLING US ON FACEBUKE AND THE TWEET MACHINE SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE.

On Bono Is A Pox

Any1 following this needs to look at them selves in the mirror. Cant believe theres over 1000 of you:-) Hard work and Determination are frowned upon!!! You need to sit around thinking of things to complain about, then your in! [Stuart Lee](#)

On rabble#4

Just read the new issue - good article on Hirschfield centre in particular. But comments on Childrens allowance drink offers were a bit strange - get real, people have been using childrens allowance day, dole day and other social welfare days to live it up a bit compared to days you are skint for years and years - why not? its not like we need to deserve these payments, they are there by right, who'se business is it if people have a drink now and again and let their hair down on the few times they can afford it? [Conor Koresh](#)

On rabble#4

Hi, just read Rabble for the first time, class, excellent job lads and lassies! It's spreading quickly around Dundalk, keep up the good work! [Robin Wilson](#)

I hate all this stuff that isn't for me. [Tina Turpie](#)

So, no college grants if your parents haven't paid the Household Charge rabblers?

Surely it doesnt matter if your parents havent paid and you are independent of them? in other words I hope it doesnt effect mature students on the BTEA? [Jason Kearney](#)

I would think that withholding a grant to which a student is entitled based on the payment (or not) of a separate charge by their parents sounds as if it's on very dubious legal ground. The basis for it should be questioned (including by those who have paid the charge). [Conor Gallagher](#)

On the report into the Magdalene Laundries

I go to school in the building(Lsad)have been told that up until th 1990s there were women enclosed there. There is no plaque no memorial to all those women who were imprisoned in the Magdelene laundry that is now an art college. That seems a crime, however several students make work on the subject. [Joanna Thompson](#)

Aside from the self-flagellating "ashamed to be Irish" nonsense, the report makes it clear that the women were committed to these institutions extra-legally, ie imprisoned without trial, subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment, ie torture, and subjected to slave labour. It also makes it clear that this imprisonment was used as a form of social cleansing, ie disappearing people classified as undesirables. This indicates that a state ideology was being enforced. [Andrew McGrath](#)

On Foetal Attraction and Youth Defence

That's how the Irish Government look after the women in their country, they deny us choice! Abortion is not for everyone I understand that but neither is parenthood and yet the government dont understand that!!! [Anthea Curry](#)

It feels like a war is being waged against women and it doesn't seem like there's any end in sight. There was a glimmer of hope for the EU ruling on Ireland's archaic laws, but at this point it really doesn't seem like it'll go anywhere. [Louise](#)

On Seán Quinn buys his daughter a €100,000 wedding cake

Portraying himself in Cavan as the local wealth creator victimised by the big Dublin media and establishment. [Barra Mugbook](#)

On James Reilly & developer Seamus Murphy

Harney with a beard. [Ruairi Shell](#)

On Drug Prohibition

Just because one might buy drugs off someone whom one wouldn't buy a pint from, does not mean that either should follow the other's model of supply. If MDMA was legalized, it would have to still be regulated and taxed and many people would still risk the newer cheaper option. [Conor Gallagher](#)

That seems unlikely. Taking illegal substances carries personal risk and uncertainty that are separate from the actual reason for taking them. I've never heard anyone say, 'I really like the buzz of not knowing whether you're going to get actual MDMA or just feel nasty and farty all night'. Have you? [Dara McHugh](#)

RISE OF THE MUTANT POTATO

Meanwhile in Teagasc, a new generation of genetically modified spuds appear to be in trouble...

Eat yer
sausage son

I can't. Ders sumfink
wrong wi me hand...

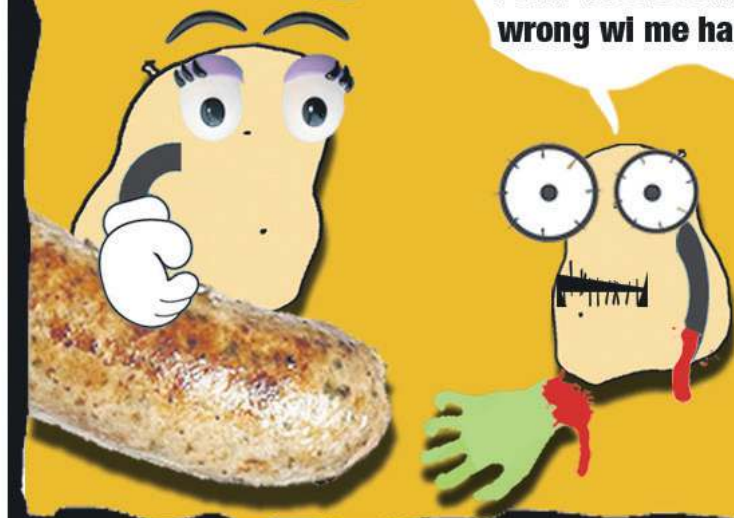




Illustration by Luke Fallon

So Jugend Fine Gael have a bizarre new icon. Something about working for loose change?

It's just as well one of the figures is wearing heels. Otherwise I wouldn't have recognised Lucinda.

[Eoin O'Mahony](#)

Superman? No way you can make a fascist joke about that... [Stephen Gaffney](#)

Any resemblance to real ideologies, living or dead, is purely coincidental. [Jennifer Collins](#)

Yer man, the UCC President struggles to get by on €232k. Could we organise a dig out?

ZOMG what a fucking wanker! Does he think people on minimum wage don't work 60-70 hour weeks too? Everything about this man = RAGE. No wonder universities are going to shit when people this out of touch with reality are running them.

[Cat Kavanagh](#)

On Snap Happy Saps in our clubs

Well, you can't reenact every letter of the alphabet when there is somebody lurking around with a camera, waiting for someone to pull a funny face then post it to Facebook. They're like the craic control squad. [Claire Donlon](#)

Illustration by Paddy Lynch



GET IN TOUCH
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CLASS DISMISSED: Marking the Lockout

WHEN THE NEXT ISSUE OF RABBLE RETURNS FROM THE PRINTERS, WE WILL BE WELL INTO 2013. WHILE THE COUNTRY MAY BE PLASTERED WITH BILLBOARDS ENCOURAGING YOU TO BRING YOUR 'UNCLE SAM' HOME FOR THE GATHERING NEXT YEAR, TO MANY OF US 2013 IS FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT THE CENTENARY OF THE DUBLIN LOCKOUT. [DONAL FALLON](#) LOOKS AT HOW SOME PLAN TO COMMEMORATE AN EVENT WHICH PITTED THE FORCES OF LABOUR AND CAPITAL AGAINST EACH OTHER IN AN UNPRECEDENTED AND DRAMATIC FASHION.

A very real Class War erupted on the streets of Dublin, one which left some workers dead and a movement ultimately defeated, yet which highlighted the power of solidarity and community.

Marking 2013 is no easy task for the left and community groups. Moving beyond the personalities like Jim Larkin and James Connolly, the stark fact that about 45% of the capital's working population were living in tenement homes, in a city which boasted some of the worst slum housing in the developed world, is something which must be central to the narrative. Charles Cameron, the Chief Health and Medical Officer for the city at the time, noted in 1913 that there was a "wonderful kindness which the poor show to those who are still poorer and more helpless than themselves."

Attempts to whitewash the memory of the Lockout are nothing new, and for decades it has been spoken of as some sort of rehearsal for the Easter Rising which came three years later. Yet while both events share some leading protagonists, they are very different events at heart. Attempting to place the Lockout only in the nationalist narrative, as something which happened in the 'bad old days of occupation', is disingenuous. William Martin Murphy, the leading employer of the day who clashed with James Larkin, was himself a one-time Irish nationalist politician. Many of the demands of the workers' movement in 1913 remain demands of the workers' movement of 2013. The right to organise, and to union recognition in the workplace, is a right still denied to many thousands of workers in Ireland. Indeed one of the awkward truths of the period is that post-independence, the conditions of workers in Dublin did not see any real improvement.

One form of solidarity in 1913 which remains an inspirational act to this day is the international solidarity which was shown, in particular by British workers at the time. Without the backing of rank-and-file trade unionists in Britain the labour movement in Ireland would have been largely incapable of mounting a fight on the scale it did, and the willingness of British working families to take Irish children into their homes should also be commemorated. The opposition of the Catholic Church, outraged at these children being sent to the homes of 'Atheists and Socialists', prevented children from leaving the city and this should not be forgotten either.

A wide variety of organisations and groups are planning to mark 2013 in their own unique ways. Ranging from local history groups to community media, there have already been discussions

held between a number of different groups on the best and most inclusive ways to mark the upcoming centenary. The North Inner City Folklore Project continue to promote the forgotten history of the north inner-city, and the recent 'Digging The Monto' exhibition in The Lab on Foley Street gave some insight into the incredible material within that groups' archives. Focusing on images of the Dublin tenements, and availing of audio recordings of oral history interviews with those who lived within those cramped houses, the exhibition was a powerful look into the total misery of life in the inner-city in the first half of the twentieth century. The Project will be mounting similar photographic exhibitions in 2013, and also plans to unveil a plaque relating to the labour dispute. One of the most tragic events of the dispute occurred in the heart of the north inner-city, when the Dublin Metropolitan Police raided the Corporation Buildings, injuring a number of children in the process.

Dublin Community Television have been recording footage which can be used as part of their tapestry project. This project is very much tied-in with the plan of the union movement to see a tapestry depicting the main events of the year produced by a variety of community groups. Dublin Community Television are hoping to produce short videos on the dispute which can be aired from August, covering a wide variety of content ranging from the production of the 2013 physical tapestry to song and also brief historical features.

The East Wall History Group, like the North Inner-City Folklore Project, are attempting to tell the local story of the Lockout in 2013, as Dublin's dockside communities on each side of the river were to the forefront of the union movement at the time. They are currently looking to hear from anyone who recalls their own families involvement in the dispute, and like others they have already begun to mark the period, hosting lectures such as Conor McCabe's recent talk on the often forgotten Railway strike of 1911.

It will be difficult for community groups and activists to be heard over the mainstream narrative in 2013, and indeed the so-called 'decade of commemoration' has proven to be a very top-down affair to date, and has almost grown into an industry in itself! 2013 will create a real challenge for us all, but it is important we remember that while those in power wish to see historical events as being just that and that alone, our job is to find the lessons at the heart of history and to apply them to the present.

Photo by Paul Reynolds



British BNP “politician” and resident bastard Nick Griffin got his bigoted and proverbial dick caught in a bear trap when he tweeted the address of a gay couple, attempting to encourage

a demonstration outside their home. In a delicious backfire, a certain magazine shared Griffin’s address on Facebook as a reply of sorts. What a dildo.



Under the Influence

SINCE 1833, LEGISLATION ON INTOXICATING LIQUOR AND ASSOCIATED SOCIALISING HAS ALWAYS COME AT THE BEHEST OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS SUCH AS THE CHURCH, THE VINTNERS, DEV OR THE SUPERMARKETS. THE LAST TEN YEARS HAVE SEEN GOVERNMENT LEGISLATE NAMA AND BANK BAILOUTS TO THE RUINATION OF THE COUNTRY WHILE ANY MOVES TO ALTER THE STATUS QUO SURROUNDING IRISH NIGHTLIFE HAVE MET FIERCE RESISTANCE AND BACKBENCH REVOLT. [SIMON PRICE](#) LOOKS AT WHAT WE’RE UP AGAINST.

Debate on the issue boils down to a mix of tabloid TV pointing a camera outside Supermac’s at three in the morning. Meaningless hand-wringing about supermarkets, ‘cultural issues’ and the usual misdiagnosis by panelists who seem to socialise on another planet.

The Spring session should finally see publication of the Sale of Alcohol Bill and with it some hope of your Saturday night brought in line with the 21st century. In the works since 2007 it aims to replace over 70 pieces of legislation dating back to 1833 and the first Licensing Act.

For a timeline this is roughly when the British Empire was moving to abolish the slave trade and regulate child factory labour. All those under six were to be freed immediately and no more than eight hours without lunch for under fourteens.

At home, we have 1833 to thank for measures against gambling, boozing in bogs and Good Friday closing though it took another fifty years before understandably parched thirteen year old children were deprived of a legal drop of porter.

What is remarkable over two centuries encompassing céilidh, set, two decades of showband and the explosion of modern clubbing from the mid-eighties is that no definition of a nightclub exists in Irish law. We can develop a number of reasons for this, with the earliest rooted in a lack of enthusiasm for this sort carousing emanating from Maynooth.

A statement from the Hierarchy in 1925 warned this unsupervised dancing threatened not only the “name which the chivalrous honour of Irish boys and the Christian reserve of Irish maidens had won for Ireland” but if left unchecked could “lower the tone of the whole countryside”.

We can only speculate on the harmlessness involved but the menace persisted into the 1930s prompting a mix of reactionary forces to mount the anti-jazz campaign and hyperbole that barely surfaced again till Swedish House Mafia and Liveline.

Pulpits pounded against these “vestibules of hell” and while continental fascism mobilised in Rome and Berlin the Irish marched against Billie Holiday and paganism in Leitrim.

The campaign ends with a partial overthrow of Beelzebub and Fianna Fáil beginning a long tradition of craven kowtowing in the regulation of weekends. The Dancehalls Act, eight years before the Ireland Dev dreamed effectively and ironically put an end to dancing at the crossroads.

The appetite however showed little diminishment and on the cusp of the Showband era Flann O’Brien observed “there are roughly 1,200 licensed halls in the 26 Counties, accounting for perhaps 5,000 dances in a year. Golf and tennis clubs, Volunteer halls and the like do not require a licence. In all, it is a fair guess that 10,000 dances are held in a year, an average of three a day. In terms of time, this means that there is a foxtrot in progress in some corner of Erin’s Isle throughout the whole of every night and day”

Fast forward to the eighties and vibrations were again beginning to cross the Atlantic from Chicago, New York & Detroit. Official concerns at first were limited to long term hearing but old habits quickly

returned in the 90s as clubbers had to endure moral panic about designer drugs on top of raving within twenty feet of Bono.

Irish clubbing has since gone through the usual peaks and troughs experienced elsewhere but a uniquely Irish feature is the music stopping before the night itself has peaked. No surprise the rise of late bars throughout the last decade has left plenty of places to drink but few choices to dance.

The Dáil record is littered with guff about “rave dancing” and risible statements about when a constituent find themselves kept up at night due to the knock on effect of early closing and some innovative manglers seizing the initiative. All these debates, even since the demise of Fianna Fáil, are tinged with a desire to “get people back into the pubs”.

The most recent case came July when that special Oxegen experience was on display in the centre of Dublin. The usual interests were quick to distance alcohol from the stabbing and shitehawking while at the same time putting the boot into supermarkets with the twenty cans for euro shtick that gets trotted out.

The battle between the on-and-off trade sees two of the country’s most powerful cartels scrapping it out. A tug of war is currently going on between Vintners and supermarkets, both wielding an extraordinary influence over policy making.

We only need look back to 2005 when an unprecedented seventy members of the Oireachtas sank attempts to introduce ‘café bar’ licences or 2009, the year

Cowen faced sustained discontent over drinking-driving changes from the same TDs who six days earlier stood to applaud a budget that cut the blind pension.

This is what we are up against.

In this respect it’s important to make this an issue beyond the interests of competing industries. While it’s extremely difficult to have any effect inside the Leinster House bubble, a half decent campaign will go some way to putting it on the agenda while the bill is being ironed out.

Draft one short email and CC it to each of your reps so they know the others have been asked the same. Post a copy on their facebook wall if you don’t hear back, drop them a tweet and bear in mind, detailed analysis of how your Omni Trio records are going to waste won’t cut it.

To look at this on terms they understand - or at least find it harder to argue with; in 2010 Mary Hanafin stood in the Seanad and thanked members for facilitating the brisk passage of legislation ensuring visitors to the convention centre could avail of a full bar.

The Bill received warm support from all parties but the interesting part was not just the “urgency to provide a fit-for-purpose intoxicating liquor licence” but a universal concern that the centre “compete on an equal footing with comparable venues in other countries”.

Similar rhetoric is often employed when it comes to heretical notions of Ireland’s financial services being regulated. Enda Kenny travels the world

telling anyone who listens and the most who don’t that his government is putting Ireland on the road to being the best small county in the world in which to do business. This is the only stuff that generates interest and action in 2012 Ireland.

Remind them of the competitive disadvantage Irish nightlife and business is struggling under. Tell them about the money you’ve spent leaving the country for a night out. Tell them how much cash ends up in London hotels and Kreuzberg dancefloors. Try and include the word jobs every second sentence and they might mysteriously start to see the correlation between A&E chaos and the insistence on emptying a couple of clubs worth of people on to the street to fight for chips every weekend.

they might mysteriously start to see the correlation between A&E chaos and the insistence on emptying a couple of clubs worth of people onto the street to fight for chips



Ballroom of no dance

THE 1935 DANCEHALL ACT WAS PASSED IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF RACISM AND MEDIA HYSTERIA WHICH SURROUNDED JAZZ. ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO TARGET THIS SALACIOUS NEWCOMER IT HAD A SERIOUS DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. JUSTIN CANS TAKES A LOOK AT HOW IT HAS HAD SERIOUSLY REPERCUSSIONS FOR IRISH CULTURE EVER SINCE.

There seemed to be no point in it; the music was slipping away in spite of us.

My first introduction to this bedevilment of the Irish Statue Book came around the year 2008, when at the end of a night of daaycent raving in an undisclosed venue in Dublin City Centre, a load of gardai showed up and started pouting on about having or have not-ting a dancing license, in between trying to confiscate all me and me mates' dubs.

"A dancing license? What, for dancing like? Sure why wouldya need one of them, no laws against dancing is there?" Says me. "You need a dancing license for any event where there's dancing in a public place" came the reply. "Ha ha" says me, "a license for dancing, that's hilarious, sure ye can dance anywhere at any time like, nothing stopping you having a dance around in the front room at home is there?". "Well actually you need to have a dancing license for dancing in your house as well" said the gardai.

You have got to be fiddling me I thought, whilst it was elaborated that The Public Dance Halls Act of 1935 apparently is where all this dancing license business comes from. There is nothing in it about confiscating records, btw. Just saying. Or instruments, for that matter.

So, 1935, surely this piece of law was written by a colonial oppressor, a draconian paymaster, upset in their belly at the fact that all around the country, subjects were gathering in country houses for a bit of a knees up and a chat about

the ails of the time and what was to be done about it at all?

The background to the legislation can be found anti-jazz campaign of the early 1930s, an inherently racist campaign initiated by the moral crusade of the Catholic Church and various elements of the press and state. Jazz music spawned from a diverse web of influences and social conditions, and similar to what was happening in some parts of America, was denounced by press and pulpit and regarded as a sexual and cultural threat.

The tendencies invoked in the listener for jiving and body-shaking to the fast-paced rhythms were considered an invitation for sexual immorality, and were seen as leading to all types of abuses including illegitimate births and emigration, overlooking, as some commentators have argued, the general social conditions of the time.

A further cultural argument was also made against the jazz dances; an Irish Times article of 1929 claimed that "what was needed above all was recognition of the fact that the nation's proudest and most precious heritage was slipping from its grasp". The Gaelic League, one of the most vocal proponents of the campaign, believed that the foreign music, "borrowed from the savages of the islands of

the Pacific" Leitrim Observer 1934, would destroy Irish faith and music. Public anti-jazz campaign meetings called for the training of young teachers in Irish music and dancing, and on occasion would finish with a concert or a ceilidh.

Although no reference can be found in documents from the time that a specific religious influence can be linked to the actual penning of the legislation, the state bowed to the growing moral outcry, and the Public Dance Halls Act of 1935 was passed.

Paradoxically, it is now widely accepted that in the following years the act had a devastating effect on Irish cultural traditions and music. The clergy started to build parish halls to house the (licensed) public dances, and the state collected taxes; but country people found it hard to adjust and to them the dance halls were not natural places of enjoyment; they were not places for traditional music, story-telling and dancing; they were unsuitable for passing on traditional arts".

Junior Crehan, a noted traditional musician from Co Clare eloquently captures the impact that the Act had on Irish culture after its implementation:

"It was this loneliness that I felt most of all; there was no one to swap tunes with, very few to

talk about music, and the flag floors were silent. In corners, in attics, and on shelves, fiddles and flutes lay gathering spiders and cobwebs. There was no heart to play and I remember finding it a struggle to take down the fiddle and play a few tunes to oblige a neighbour. There seemed to be no point in it; the music was slipping away in spite of us."

While the act itself refers only to dances in a public place, the interpretation of the legislation by the actors of the state was somewhat different, and many gatherings in country houses were subject to dispersal; "that it extended to parties in private houses when dancing took place is unlikely but that is beside the point. The local clergy and gardai acted as if it did and by their harassment they put an end to this kind of dancing in those areas of rural Ireland where it still survived". In this way, gatherings of friends and neighbours were disrupted as "illegal" activities, and punters were instead directed to licensed dances, where presumably there would have been even exactly the same kind of moral temptations on offer, all the while raising an income for the parishes.

Now if my memory serves me correctly, and I seldom have cause to doubt it, although in fairness the old head could have been a little bit fuzzy at the time due to a few cans like... when I first heard about this back in 2008, were the actors of the state not at at the same game still on that night? And who gives them the moral backing for this, as the Church doesn't have a great record of late in this regard do they? Did anyone that was involved in the moral outcry that brought about the 1935 act in the first instance cry out again when the ensuing erosion of traditional culture, music and country life occurred?

Junior Crehan, who was strongly opposed to the act at the time, said "all in all it was a lonely time for anyone interested in the music and all that it meant". Do we want to live in such lonely times still?



Want more on our crap licensing laws? Read the extended interview with Sunil Sharpe of Give Us The Night at rabble.ie...



PAINT THE TOWN

COMMENTARY ON IRISH STREET ART FLUCTUATES BETWEEN FRAGMENTED BURSTS OF TABLOID ‘VANDALISM TRACKING’ THROUGH TO INSTITUTIONAL VENERATION OF ARTISTS LIKE CONOR HARRINGTON. PAUL TARPEY LOOKS INSTEAD AT THE UNREGULATED RANDOM SCRAWLS, JAMS AND HARD-WON SEMI-OFFICIAL SPOTS WHERE MOST LOCAL IRISH ARTISTS STILL TEST THEIR SKILLS.

Irish originality is an issue. Generally the work that clogs our local walls tends to over-reference past styles and overseas artists. Irish-directed stand-out work, outside of contained spaces such as the Drogheda Bridge Jam, is rarely acknowledged. This is unusual for a small country, or it would be if we had an Irish-managed version of the form to offer. The recent book on Irish Street Art by Rua Meegan and Laura Teeling gamely makes a case for what they call the ‘universal nature’ of Irish street art. But sadly, by choosing to illustrate their argument with too many sub-Banksy stencil graffs, they undermine any commitment they made to starting the process which could define an Irish context. Instead the ‘Irish scene’ becomes two dimensional, subsumed into a desire to simply be active at anything ‘graff’ related. The result is that it appears to be an onlooker in a global context. A truer appraisal of Irish street art can be told through Limerick’s experiences: a mix of intentions, desire, authority and community.

Circa 2009, Limerick City supported a healthy, varied underground street art culture. Spray-paint was finally available over the counter. Graff artists’ links with streetdance crews and DJs was reclaiming the urban edge for a city dogged by gun-driven anti-social behaviour. The creative profile was so high that a graffiti crew was able to successfully negotiate with the council for a disused shop space in the city centre to use as a commercial gallery.

Commercial commissions were common and these were balanced with freestyle work in ‘The Spot’ on the Dock Road. Street painters also unofficially chose to render portraits of the Munster Rugby

team, which garnered popular attention and legitimacy for their own outlaw status. A long-awaited skatepark was finished and quickly filled with well-executed pieces of graff art. Significantly, the city council held back when the ramps got regular makeovers as the park unofficially passed into self-managed, graffiti-covered ownership.

So far, so progressively European, with Bristol in the UK being the most famous comparable example. But it was Limerick’s compact environment that made the wider tale such an interesting case study. A series of contentious events were to damage much of what had been achieved throughout 2009 - 2011.

Firstly the group of master painters based around the Limerick College of Art moved on. They were the glue holding most of the scene together and the civic ecosystem suffered in their leaving. The gap was filled by low-effort tagging, fuelled by the adrenaline of social media. A rolling assault of crude tags and derivative stencilling tattooed the city’s waning commercial centre and redefined city centre boundaries. Conflict lines appeared and drama cancelled out fading goodwill projects like the rugby idols.

Once the city council began to notify the owners of the tagged buildings that they were in breach of the city’s litter laws, the fragility of the creative environment became glaring. A fine of €300 per tagged building hung over the owners’ heads and heated comments began to warm up the local papers. The relationship and unofficial codes of respect between artists and traders evaporated. Then an event unique to Limerick occurred.

Overnight a new group entered the contested cityscape. Anti-graffiti vigilantes on a mission to take back the streets began to do so with determination and generous amounts of cheap emulsion. They crudely painted over both multicoloured pieces in the skatepark and the larger street tags. Initially this intervention was thought to be the work of the council until a ‘concerned business man’ admitted he organised the anti-tagging through the local press. After a provocative Facebook page championed his endeavours, the city began to hum to the adolescent rhythms of now nightly counter-tagging.

In the middle of this, the local authority was managing its own stash of physical graffiti in the form of a failed shopping centre and other stalled projects, which became a canvas for commentary by groups of conceptual wheat-paste artists. The Skint group positioned their transient post-Celtic Tiger imagery on Nama-fied boards and

used the recorded work as the basis of an exhibition-cum-auction-cum-workshop in a council-supported art space

By now the taggers were viciously active. The volume of their mark-making relentlessly outperforming vigilante and conceptual street peers in a ‘we don’t care’ blitz. The drama was stoked by a regrettable editorial decision in a local paper which presented a gallery of tagged images on its front page. Short of awarding the taggers the keys to the city, this blast of fame spurred them to levels beyond even their own nebulous ambitions. By the time large motorway signs began to sport tags, threatening the possibility of the story becoming national, a weary team of Garda started to round the taggers up.

Again, Limerick’s response was unique, with civil liberties being tweaked to facilitate the official solution. Community service was invoked and two of the neutered culprits were photographed cleaning the signs before being ordered to present themselves to the press for chastisement. In the resulting interview one of the team confessed his addiction to tagging and lamented the lack of a legal space where he could curb his so called anti-social tendencies. A name and shame draft of repentance was printed which included images of things returning to normal.

What makes this more than a Limerick tale of loose street art practice, harassed shopkeepers, panic journalism and disgruntled police is that it occurred in parallel with the achievements of the Make a Move festival which was organised in the midst of the drama. In the summer of 2012 this ambitious city centre festival hosted a successful series of events which included dance and hip hop gigs, talks and workshops which culminated with the centrepiece event of a graffiti jam.

There were also a number of longer-term outcomes. Limerick City Gallery of Art, offered to facilitate an engagement process using the institutional space of the gallery. Later Limerick City Council offered a series of sites to street artists pending the announcement of an artist-led managed structure.

The culmination of this story was Irish B-Boy Cool C’s talk on Culture Night 2012 in the Limerick School of Art. Now an educator who sets up graffiti projects all over Ireland, Cool C is one of the handful of original players who has been around since the mid 80s. His detailed account concluded that to promote a collective attitude, both state bodies and taggers must lead to create a proper working



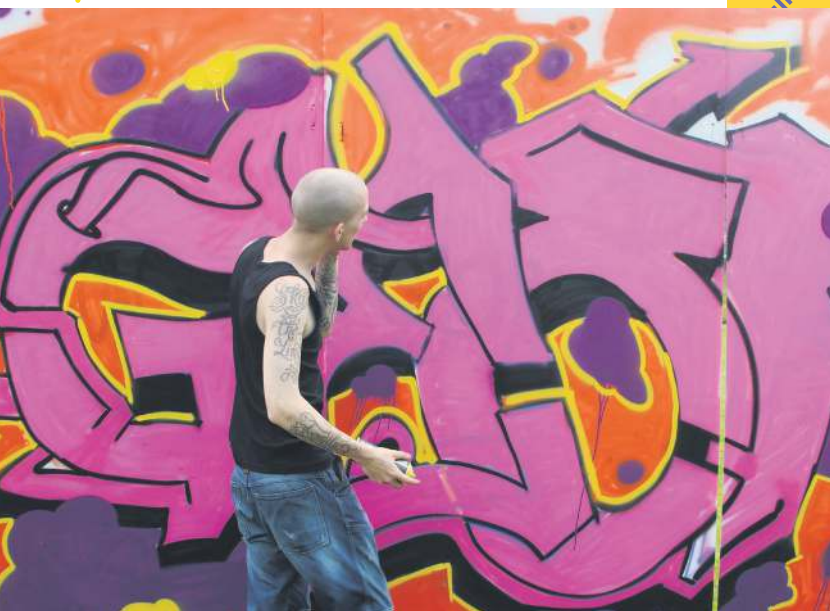
Anti-graffiti vigilantes on a mission to take back the streets began with determination and generous amounts of cheap emulsion...

environment irrespective of style or content. Only then can it be led by the artists.

As illustrated by the tale of Limerick, an erratic approach to the city featuring a range of urban art exposed every creative and defensive cliché associated with the practice since the 1980s. In the resulting melee a disparate but integrated cast came together to represent an Irish take on graffiti culture that is embedded within community. This is the beginning of a street-led process where everybody recognises and respects each others limits and the nature of their involvement. If successful, this process could even be classed as style.

Further, this story demonstrates that the dynamics involved in a social history of of Irish graffiti need to be represented more. The exploration of how these dynamics are embedded in spaces both urban and rural are seriously underrepresented and undocumented. It needs to take away the comfort narratives based on style and fame, and begin to recognise that no matter what the era or soundtrack, every young generation wants to mark their own time, usually with paint. How those marks get there, who facilitates and supports them must feature in the resulting historical sketches and narratives.

Photos by Paul Tarpey



NO JUSTICE, NO PIECE

ADW HAS TAKEN A STANLEY BLADE TO OUR POST-BOOM WRECKAGE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. CARVING NUMEROUS STENCILS AND HURLING WELL-AIMED BARRAGES OF HUMOUR AT THE MYOPIC FOOLS THAT LANDED US HERE. WE WERE MORE THAN A LITTLE PEEVED TO SEE HIM GETTING HIS KNUCKLES RAPPED AT THE KINGS OF CONCRETE. REDMONK CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AND FOUND OUT WHAT HAPPENED.

[Just to get a bit more context on the piece, was it inspired by policing in Ireland or abroad? Is it a reflection on the Gardai or another police force?](#)

I originally created the piece to reflect all ‘policing’ forces and the increasing militarisation of these forces employed to uphold the law. I guess the piece was born during the worldwide Occupy movements and the savage handling of the protesters. But the motivations dates back further for me and I often think about the unjust killing of Jean Charles de Menezes, who was mistaken by British police to be a terrorist and shot 8-times in the head at point blank range. The title ‘There is no justice, there’s just us’, was given to me by a friend fit perfectly. So, armed with a history of excessive police force, violence, cover-ups and corruption I set about creating the piece.

[Did you get to finish it or were you asked to cover it up before completion?](#)

Unfortunately I didn’t get to finish the piece. From the moment the first layer of spray-paint hit the wall the heat began to build until it boiled over about two hours later, with a very angry Tall Ships Organiser demanding the image be removed, backed up by about 6 Gardai and a paddy wagon.

[On what grounds did the Gardai ask you to cover it up? Did they quote any Act or piece of legislation?](#)

The Gardai didn’t speak to me. Firstly, I was approached by two Kings of Concrete organisers who informed me there had been complaints about the piece of artwork, the main complaint being the exposed bum. We agreed that I would cover the offending rear-end with some sticky tape and they were happy for me to complete the picture. A little while later I was informed by two more bemused Kings of Concrete organisers that the Gardai were unhappy with the image and were looking to get the piece completely removed. All the while I was being watched closely by two embarrassed Gardai as passers-by could be heard jeering them with comments like “are you going to let him paint that?”. It all came to a head soon after when a Tall Ship organiser flanked by Gardai demanded the piece removed. Not wanting my partner and son (who were helping me out for the day) see me being hauled away I crumbled under the pressure.

[Reading the feedback online suggests some people feel the piece might have been unsuitable considering the age demographic at the festival. Considering it was a legal piece, what would be your response to this?](#)

It was interesting to see the public reaction to the piece and the subsequent story, although there was a lot of support in my corner there was also a lot of criticism regarding the piece and

its content. I honestly arrived on the opening day of the festival, looking forward to painting a new piece of artwork, blinkers on, not thinking that the image would be as controversial as it became. I have two sons and if either of them asked me what the artwork meant I would try my best to honestly answer them. In fact I answer any of their questions as honestly as I can. The female depicted in the image is the Lady of Justice. The blindfold represents her decisions to be objective and impartial and not to be influenced by wealth, power, status or politics. In one hand she holds the scales of justice which represents her careful weighing the claims of each side. Her sword which represents her willingness to defend her decisions lies broken beside the riot shield. It’s interesting to note that her portrayal of goddess by both the Greek and Romans of ancient time through the Renaissance has been bare or barely draped which was a sign of virtue, or good or justice. The piece of artwork was not in any way glorifying violence against women Nor was it any way condoning sexual violence. Nor was it solely aimed at the Irish police force. I think it’s a shame that the point of the piece was lost on some people.

[Your pieces over the years tend to be politically charged. Has this been a constant feature in your work?](#)

Political and social themes can be found running through some of my art although it is not always the main motivation. I do like to add some humour to issues that tend to be serious, hoping to raise a smile and engage the public. Creating and painting is a way for me to try figure out this crazy world we live in.

[Do you feel there’s a certain obligation on artists to make political statements and raise questions this way?](#)

No obligations are needed by anybody in any role or profession. I think we need the Bob Dylans in this world as much we need the Jedwards, otherwise the world would be a pretty dull place. Although street-art is a great tool to make a powerful statement and over the last few years there have been some iconic, politically-charged images created from a host of amazing artists from around the world.

[Despite the piece getting covered up, this seems like something of a victory. Do you think the rash judgement of the Gardai on the day has backfired on them somewhat?](#)

It didn’t feel victorious, and up until now the finished image had yet to be seen in all it’s glory. I wasn’t anticipating such a heavy Gardai presence at the event and I guess it hit a nerve, their overreaction and eventual shit-storm proved this.

[What’s in the pipeline? How will you feed this experience back into your future plans?](#)

I have a few projects I’m working on at the moment and plan to keep busy doing what I love. I’m constantly learning and growing and these sort of experiences I believe can only benefit me as an artist. In future though I will be more aware of the pitfalls of painting at a legal event.

Photos by John Lalor

www.johnlalorphotography.ie

Jump to the centre page for a pull out poster of ADW’s finished piece!

10

10,000

The number of lives saved in the US by administering naloxone, a generic drug (sometimes called Narcan) that helps to reverse opioid overdose when administered via injection or intranasally.

Ireland has the 3rd highest rate of death from overdose in the EU at 45 deaths per million (87 among 15- to 39-year-olds). Check out www.naloxone.ie for more info.



JUST SAY KNOW

IN IRELAND WE ARE YEARS BEHIND WHEN IT COMES TO PARTYING AND HARM REDUCTION. PEG LEESON TALKS TO TIM BINGHAM OF THE IRISH NEEDLE EXCHANGE FORUM, WHO BUCK THIS TREND WITH AN HONESTY ABOUT WHAT IS OUT THERE AND HOW TO PLAY SAFE.

Tim, 'harm reduction' is a term that is not familiar to the majority of people, could you briefly explain it?

A lot of people think that harm reduction is needle exchange or methodone but it is a lot more than that. It is a model that works with people at whichever stage they are at. Literally you are keeping the person safe. So, for example, if you have someone who is on the streets and injecting, then your priority for that person is to basically keep them alive and limiting the dangers of blood-borne viruses. Another form of harm reduction would be going into a club or venue and carrying out some form of pill-testing or giving out information about how to use more safely.

People often misunderstand harm reduction and think it condones drug use. Have you experienced this?

Definitely. A lot of people say we are condoning drug use. We are not condoning drug use, we are saying if you have to take something then do it safely. We still bring an education and prevention side into it.

The name 'Irish Needle Exchange' immediately brings to mind intravenous drug use, does the INEF deal with other forms of drug use?

Yes, the INEF is a national harm reduction forum. For example we have been looking at overdoses and have recently launched a new website, naloxone.ie, about a drug which has saved thousands of lives. We also look at overdoses from the psychoactive substances that are very much on the scene now as well. We are looking at the whole recent influx of various drugs, like 2ci, 2cb, pma and providing information through the forum or the national media

about how you can reduce the risks associated with them.

Would I be correct in saying that a lot of the messages in the mainstream media can be counter-productive?

Definitely the media has an important role to play, some of them have been great, others not so much. It is also the individuals who make statements to the media who have a significant responsibility to ensure that their facts are right. The whole issue with the pma was that people reporting about it didn't really have a grasp on what it is. The INEF had to brief individuals to make sure the correct message was getting out there. At the time the warning was that this brown powder being circulated in the Cork area was dangerous (which it was. It was very, very dangerous) and do not take it. But it should have gone out that it may have been in the pills that were circulating as well. For the INEF it was an opportunity missed in regards to getting accurate information out there about how to keep yourself safe if you are taking synthetics. For example, leave it at least 60 minutes before redosing because pma takes much longer to effect you, up to an hour depending on the individual. So you could have overdosed before you are even showing any symptoms. When people are redosing that is when they are exposing themselves to a significant risk. This is the type of information that needs to get out there a lot more than it does at the moment.

Pill-testing isn't something that is familiar to Irish the club or festival scene. Do you think it is a useful harm reduction technique?

One of the problems with some of the pill-testing is that it won't bring up every substance in that pill. As well as the pill-testing there should be qualified workers going into clubs and venues who know what they are doing and are equipped with the right information. In Scotland there are a couple of organisations that do this [such as Crew: Mind Altering]. They work with the local law enforcement including the club security. It is important to have people on the ground so that an intervention can happen, first aid can be called or whatever, before things get serious. And from that we also get a lot more information about what is happening in the scene.

A lot of drugs education in Ireland is a zero tolerance message. Is this a useful approach?

I think a lot of the mainstream education in Ireland in regards to drugs is appalling to be honest with you. The biggest problem is if you are going to tell a young person to not do drugs 'cos drugs are bad then they are just going to engage with a peer group, or go onto the internet to find out that information. A lot of this advice, especially on sites like youtube, is wrong and dangerous. A lot of people wouldn't really know that, they will watch this video about how to do it but there won't be anything about how to look after yourself. These zero tolerance messages alienate young people and stop them engaging with professionals. What we need to do is to get young people who are experimenting with drugs to engage with professionals in a proper way. There are some great projects out there. The Kerry Life Education Unit targets infant schools and is very much age appropriate. It is all about empowerment and looking after your body, and it is very successful. In Ireland we need to be providing age appropriate information. We have to give out an honest message. We have to admit that people do have a good time on drugs but that there also dangers.

The new synthetics have made applying traditional harm reduction techniques much harder. Why is this?

Well you don't know what you are at. I wouldn't have said this 12 or 24 months ago but we don't know what is out there now and this is the biggest problem. When the headshops were in full swing we had a potential there to legislate around them but we didn't. Now the substances that are available are far more dangerous than the ones that were banned in 2010. Yes, some of the headshops acted really recklessly. They were open seven days a week, they were selling to very young people, to really drunk people, they were offering home delivery. There were no restraints. Some of the headshop owners wanted regulation. If some form of regulation had happened, it would have been better than what has happened now. The wholesale ban on everything has made it even worse. People are buying stuff without knowing what it is and it has made things much more dangerous.

Photo by Boo Doo

LICE TO P

IN SEPTEMBER TWO FRIENDS DIED AFT KINSALE. MOST LIKELY THEY THOUGHT AT HOW THE IRISH AUTHORITIES NEED ABROAD IN ORDER TO PREVENT FUTUR

For those of us without a chemistry degree, PMA stands for para-Methoxyamphetamine - more dramatically known in some quarters as Dr Death. The recent deaths in Kinsale and the overdoses at Swedish House Mafia have unsettling connotations for any weekend warrior that has taken a sneaky dab off a stranger at a festival or in the smoking area of some club.

In what was seen as an unusual move, the Health Service Executive issued a high-profile, poorly-informed warning about PMA. Beyond a nondescript image of a baggy there was little else identifying the substance, and users were left scrambling to find out for themselves online.

PMA is one nasty substance. Alexander Shulgin, the researcher who popularised MDMA, bluntly suggested 'staying away from this compound'. Putting its market presence down to restrictions on some of the precursor chemicals used in the production of MDMA.

In a nutshell, prohibition leads to it popping up in adulterated street drugs that users would rather not touch. One Irish head on pillreports.com came into contact with the contaminated batch in Newbridge. "I took this brown stuff... after the first tiny bit my friend went cross eyed. I threw the rest away I couldn't sleep or do anything I was that fucked. People do not take."

Despite calls and emails to the HSE communication section, I couldn't find out whether this was a once-off or if a protocol was now in place to issue warnings when they became aware of such cases in the future.

The media leapt on the story, falling over themselves with delight at having a "new" chemical nasty to castigate - conflating MDMA and PMA in the same breath as if it was a new party sensation. This ignorant whoring for headlines has the consequence of making recreational users just go 'meh' to a media that cries wolf at every stage in the drugs debate. Remember the mephedrone hysteria?

There's nothing novel about PMA. To suggest so chucks about ten years of harm reduction research and work right out the window, and fills the void with worn-out tabloid templates.

Not one mainstream Irish journalist delved deeper. How hard is some Google research? Sharply contrasting with this were the hordes of clued-up heads in the comment sections and on social media retorting with quickfire pops at various journalists' laziness.

When it comes to MDMA, fatalities are, thankfully, a tragic rarity in contrast to garbage warblings from the Herald and friends. PMA is a different story entirely. Russell Newcombe, known to some as the "godfather of rave research", spearheaded Madchester's Safer Dancing Campaign in the 90s.

People are buying stuff without knowing what it is and it has made things much more dangerous...



SENSE PILL...

D AFTER USING A BROWN POWDER CONTAINING PMA IN
UGHT THEY WERE TAKING MDMA. RASHERS TIERNEY LOOKS
NEED TO WISE THE FUCK UP AND CATCH SOME SENSE FROM
UTURE DEATHS.

WANT SOME
CRAZY, REALITY-
WARPING
SHIT??!

HERDILD
DRUG
MAYHEM

IRISH WHINES
JOE DUFFY:
DRUG USERS
SHOULD HANG

Russell worked alongside local authorities, clubs and even law enforcement to establish guidelines that took into account the realities of chemical usage. Basic things, like having free water on supply for over-heating ravers. The Point Depot could have done with this in 1995 when it was criticised for charging five punt a bottle in the wake of one death.

On the phone Russell tells me there was a number of PMA deaths in Liverpool last year too. "All of this is created by drug prohibition. If MDMA was legal, there'd be no need for people to buy unknown tablets off dealers that had PMA in them."

And that's the controversial crunch. He's not alone in this thinking; a health chief in British Columbia landed himself in hot water for similar comments.

About one in ten people aged 15-34 have admitted use of ecstasy in their lifetime, according to the latest Irish drug prevalence survey released in October. A sample of 2000 clubbers taken in the UK found that 94% had tried an illegal drug at least once and 36% had planned to or had already taken pills on the night of the survey. The vast, vast majority of these will never experience any problems with MDMA.

Trapped between an entrenched anti-drug political class, media moral outrage and the spectre of demon chemists are these bog standard weekend users.

Face it, some drugs do give us the desired effect of being more social or cresting on a wave of music in a sweaty basement. Regardless of how much demonisation is done, we'll still party on - that's what the research says. Referring to this as a game of Russian Roulette is true, but the authorities are refusing to let us look in the barrel before we play.

The National Drugs Strategy only concerns itself with what it terms the "problem user" - that's generally seen as someone on opiates or crack. While needle exchanges and so on are accepted wisdom - this logical stretch of the imagination hasn't been extended to party drugs in Ireland.

Fiona Measham sits on the UK government's Advisory Council on Misuse of Drugs. For her this approach means "we miss this whole group who might go into occasional recreational use and could have harm reduction strategies directed at them but that doesn't happen any more. We've come a long way backwards since twenty years ago with Safer Dancing and Safer Clubbing. That doesn't get funding anymore. And that's a tragedy. Because that's what most people are doing"

In the absence of the authorities doing much to minimise our exposure to dodgy batches, recreational users themselves are using the internet to crowdsource information on what's doing the rounds. Pillreports.com leads the charge

on this front, with results from home ecstasy testing kits paired up with info gleaned from research elsewhere.

Bearlove, one of the site's moderators told me how it was set up as a platform to share experiences when pills started to "turn really shit" at the start of the noughties.

"People were taking random ass pills and, as they had no prior experiences, thought they were using MDMA/Ecstasy. They had no idea that they should not be puking up and unable to sleep."

There's quite a few active Irish users there, sixteen reports were filed from Ireland since the start of September. Warnings were posted for about eight of these batches.

Just in case you leap to assumptions, sites like this aren't just for doped up psychonauts. User reports are regularly quoted in briefing documents from health centres and state agencies.

Pill-testing too isn't a renegade idea. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is one of the EU's decentralised agencies - it looked at the dangers of PMA as far back as 1995. It concluded "one answer is on-the-spot pill-testing. Not by the 'authorities' - but by groups in touch with the music and dance scene. Not by warning them off pills - but by giving instant analyses of the chemical content and other useful information, enabling users to weigh up the health risks themselves."

There are groups in the US and elsewhere that pursue this strategy. I asked the Garda Press Office for a comment on what would happen were people to do the same here.

"I suppose in one way life is simple for us. These drugs are prescribed as illegal, we don't give advice as to how to make it safe - you need to be talking to the HSE. There is nothing illegal in using the kit, but if you are using one, you are in possession of an illegal drug. It's very simple from our point of view, we don't give advice about how to use fireworks safely, if we can stop them, we do."

The focus of law enforcement is to reduce crime, that's understandable - but is there not a need for compromise when it comes to public health? Not in Ireland anyway.

If ecstasy testing kits represent users fending for themselves on a DIY bent, the other end of the scale is the well funded Dutch Drugs Information And Monitoring Service (DIMS).

DIMS is as an information exchange between users who access drug testing but also contribute to a feedback loop of what

they themselves then experience. Often it's not the labs that signal the first warnings, but parties on the ground, setting off a red alert system across the region. Crucially, the knowledge they gather allow this to happen before fatalities occur. Zurich too takes a similar approach.

It's a core plank of their drug strategy.

With such an array of novel psychoactive substances finding their way onto the market, there's a fear that home testing kits are too crude to guard against everything. So maybe this authority-led approach is the way to go? Fiona Measham anticipates the backlash to suggestions we follow this model.

"One of the criticisms of testing is that dealers can go along, get their drugs tested and then it's just becoming a service, sort of rubber stamping and giving approval to the illicit ways of dealers. They've really taken that on and said 'our priority is public health, we don't give a monkey's about that, it's a red herring."

Headlines around the world indicate the ground is shifting on recreational drug use. There was the legalisation of marijuana in Colorado and two other US states, Channel 4's reality TV experiment, Drugs Live: The Ecstasy Trial, and then, the elephant in the room that is decriminalised Portugal.

Saying Joe Duffy dominates the discourse here isn't a glib joke. Go read the Seanad Eireann debate on the headshop legalization. You'll find Liveline popping up eight times as the main reference point for our lawmakers.

Our politicians lag pathetically behind international sense.

After the Guatemalan president suggested legalisation, The Journal website carried a survey asking 'should Ireland consider legalising drugs?' That site is hardly known as a bastion of drug fiends - yet over 80 per cent answered either "yes to some extent" or "yes totally." Community and voluntary organisations here like Citywide are also calling for an open debate on how decriminalisation can facilitate harm reduction.

Real lives are at stake and there are mechanisms in place elsewhere to prevent such losses.

Not that you'd pick up any of this in the mainstream Irish press. In that world, recreational drug users are only worth paying attention to when they wind up frothing at the mouth on the highway to heaven in an A and E ward.

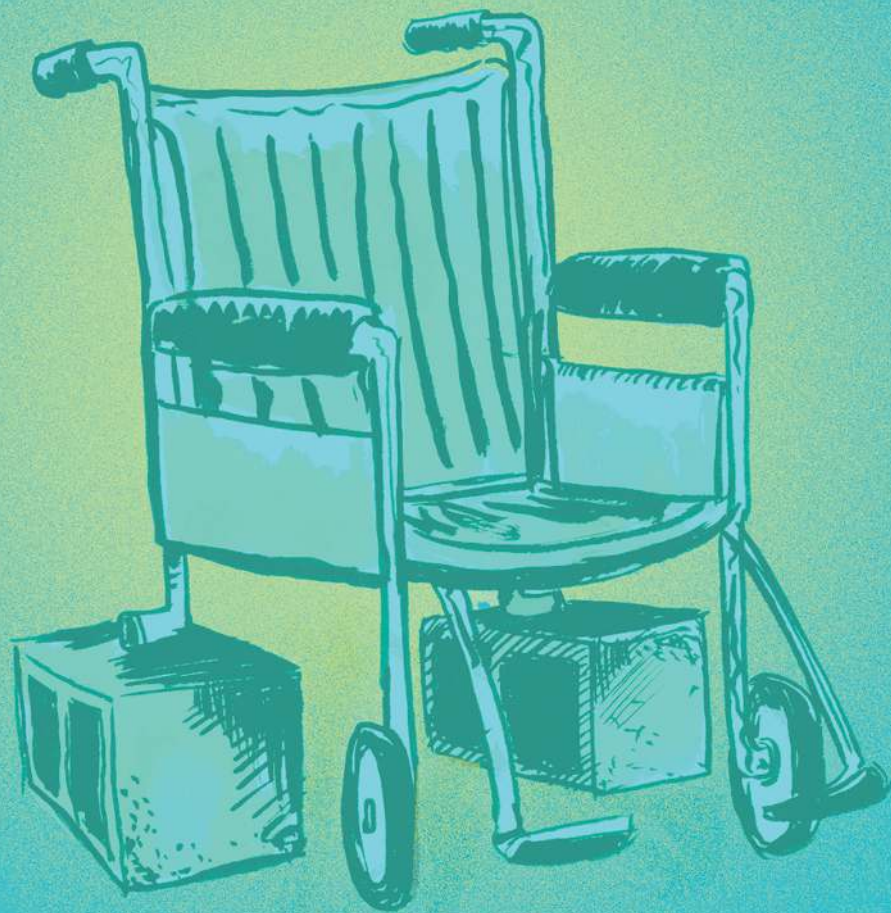
As long as we abdicate quality and control to profit-motivated street suppliers, there's no guarantee what's floating around our sessions. People will remain exposed to the threat of adulterants like PMA. When all they want is a decent empathogen and a bit of a dance.

The Irish authorities are abandoning us. By not considering strategies to alert users to what's in their recreational stashes and how to keep themselves safe. They are making us fall victim to middle Ireland's drug-use cliches and worst nightmares.

It's not madness to think deaths like those in Kinsale could have been avoided had we woken up a little sooner.

Illustration by Dara Lynch

Log onto
www.rabble.ie
for our full
interview with
Dr. Fiona
Measham!



WOES AND WHEELCHAIRS *A Personal Assistant's Dossier*

LIVING WITH A DISABILITY CAN BE A CHALLENGING AND OFTEN ISOLATING EXISTENCE. HAVING WORKED AS A PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR OVER 6 YEARS, HUGO BASS CALLS THE CALLOUSNESS OF RECENT PROPOSED CUTS “A DAMNING INDICTMENT OF STATE DETACHMENT, ADMINISTRATIVE SLOTH AND THE VOICELESSNESS OF THE VULNERABLE.”

You'll need to have been living under a stone not to know that there have been massive reductions in funding for disability advocacy and support organisations. Public outcry against further proposed cuts by James 'Bottler' Reilly caused an embarrassing u-turn by the FG/Lab coalition earlier this year. Perhaps one of the most damaging aspects of the Government's current policy has been the erosion of personal assistance entitlements - the provision of help to another person with the activities of daily life. I've witnessed first hand the resultant trauma and general malaise suffered by both service users and personal assistants (PAs). It's shocking that a service so vital to the lives of so many people could be attacked with such vigour.

When it comes to disability, society itself is often the main disabling factor. A person with a disability often depends heavily upon their PA's support to maintain a decent standard of living, maintain an active role in the community and retain their human dignity. Naturally close bonds develop between PA and the person they assist, particularly when the level and duration of assistance is high. The mood of either individual can greatly affect both. One former long term PA said "the job has great humanity, but it's a ridiculously tiring role emotionally, you can't just walk off the job. It's not exactly the sort of place you can ring in sick. It feels like you are covering cracks due to a lack of funding. Sometimes there's an overwhelming sense of being trapped, with no real supports coming from the agencies involved."

The harsh realities being endured by PAs and service users has

seen unbearable stresses placed upon each. For some, wages have fallen by €7 per hour in the past three years and weekly hours increased by up to fifteen. It's become a really tough battle to make being a PA pay. Many others have been forced to take on second, or third, part-time jobs to get by. This has had a direct impact on the quality of service they can provide, as their hectic schedules leave them burnt out.

These reductions in PA funding have been stealthy and incremental. When coupled with other cuts such as the reducing winter fuel allowance by 6 weeks, you're looking at a grim reality. Stripping a high dependency individual of almost 20% of this allowance during the coldest period of the year is nothing short of barbaric, leaving them (and indeed their PA) cold, miserable and vulnerable. Those with mobility limitations often have difficulty maintaining healthy body temperature and have limited heating choices as they try to supplement the reduced allowance from a weekly €188 disability benefit. The shafting of people with disabilities by the State is relentless and unmerciful.

The cuts have placed a heavy emotional burden on PAs. Sinead O'Donnell, a PhD student and member of the NUIG Centre for Disability Law and Policy Reform notes how "the wrong people feel responsible for the cutbacks. Those on the ground feel as if they are implementing them, whereas the reality is that it is the bureaucrats and pen pushers who are culpable, but who never have to witness first hand their intolerable ramifications"

In countries like Sweden, Finland, Britain, Belgium and Germany, people with disabilities have, with social policy and legislative support, chosen to self-direct their personal assistance, controlling the recruitment, management, payment and training of their PAs. Just a handful of individuals in Ireland have had the opportunity to take this route, through a pilot scheme administered by the group Aiseanna Tacaíochta. For the most part, intermediary organisations such as the Irish Wheelchair Association and the various Centres for Independent Living direct the provision and management of a person with disabilities PA services. As Declan O'Keefe, one of the founding members of The Centre for Independent Living put it: "From the beginning, we were aware of the importance of personal assistance and of the vital role of PAs in enabling those of us with disabilities to take control of our lives. Indeed, it was CIL's pilot programme which empowered me to live an independent life."

These groups have been hit hard by the cuts, but the unfortunate reality for both the PAs and service users in Ireland is that these cutbacks are not borne by these intermediate organisations but passed down the line. As demonstrated time and time again in Ireland these middlemen are the administrative fat that soaks up available resources. The pass-the-buck culture in these organisations is endemic. A 2010 UK study entitled "What is 'More Integration' between Health and Social Care?" found that these intermediaries promote inefficiencies and higher costs. Their slice of the pie far outweighs their contribution to the lives of the service user. The agencies regularly take half the hourly rate paid for assistance, leaving the PAs to work for near minimum wage.

What utter bullshit!

Given the cutbacks, something's got to be done about this belching, bloated bureaucracy.

According to Martin Neachtain of Aiseanna Tacaíochta those service users who have adopted the self-directed model have been "able to manage the cuts better than others, without losing any element of service". Research by the Northern Ireland Department of Health has shown that where the service recipient made the change to a self-directed model, there was greater control, autonomy, privacy, value for money and flexibility for all concerned. Surely one of the most effective ways of combating the cutbacks alongside steadfast resistance would be a switch, where possible, to this method.

Those reductions that have been assimilated at intermediary level have undoubtedly led to a decreased quality of service. From a PA's perspective, we've seen delays in wage payments and annual/sick leave requests. Weak administrative processing makes our working lives tougher. It significantly reduces job satisfaction and reduces the user service.

These pen pushers should spend a day in the shoes of someone dependent on the services they are dismantling. As disability rights activist and playwright Rosaleen McDonagh put it recently "not only is the service seen as 'low fruit' but also it's seen as a luxury, not a necessity. At a guesstimation, including all the variables regarding individual disabled people's type of impairment and the support they need, it's suggested that the PA service saves the government €1,500 a day per person, due to the fact that we're living in our own homes

Expecting people to wait several hours before being able to use the toilet is a cruel and unusual punishment...

and not in an institution. If this is not value for money, what is?"

Expecting a quadriplegic person to spend several hours alone and functionally isolated between PA shifts is inhumane. Expecting people to wait several hours before being able to use the toilet is a cruel and unusual punishment and can lead to situations of extreme trauma, loss of dignity and personal embarrassment. Incidents such as these are becoming all too commonplace.

Given the ominous outlook created by the cuts, the workplace environment has adopted a gloomy character with both parties fearing for their futures. As Mary Collins, a protester involved in the recent triumphant action against further PA cutbacks told Trade Union TV outside the Dail: "Why don't they let us live in our homes, fulfill our dreams and be productive members of society instead of placing the fear of God into us with every announcement?"

Still Minister Reilly and his gang implement their cutbacks regardless of cruelty, injustice and barbarity. But the fight goes on, undoubtedly buoyed by the recent government u-turn on the proposed reduction to PA hours. Because as Rosaleen McDonagh rightly pointed out during those Dail protests, "we are not asking for anything unreasonable. But the way these things are being dealt with, it's as if we are an easy touch. We are not".

Illustration by Paddy Lynch

Jump over to
www.rabble.ie
to for Rosaleen
McDonagh's
account of how PA
cuts were beaten!



HELPING HANDS

"THOSE WHO NEED THE SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO GET A SERVICE", ENDA KENNY TOLD THE DAIL AMID FRESH CALLS FROM ALL SIDES FOR THE CUTS TO HOME HELP TO BE REVERSED. MR KENNY SAID THAT PEOPLE WITH AN ASSESSED NEED FOR HELP WILL GET IT. RABBLE THOUGHT IT BETTER TO GO STRAIGHT TO THE SOURCE AND ASKED THOSE ON THE FRONTLINE HOW THESE CUTS WERE AFFECTING THEM AND THOSE IN THEIR CARE.

Liz Matthews has been a Home Help for 26 years. "I am very concerned about the cuts to services for clients. They're becoming more and more vulnerable and in many cases they are having their hours cut when they should be increased. When I take a week off, I am asked 'who can do without the service that week?' and I am left to break the news that nobody will be coming. It just isn't right."

Some critics point to the continued privatization of our health services. With some politicians having vested interest in private nursing homes surely they're not

trying to profit at the expense of people's dignity?

Eileen Hanly is a Home Help Employee of the HSE; "I believe it is morally contemptible that the budget of the HSE Home Help Service is being slashed and that money is instead being turned into millions of euro of profit for private companies. The move to privatisation of our service will see the rich prosper, while both clients and workers will pay a heavy price."

Home Helps are already some of the lowest paid workers in the public service. We are mainly part-time workers and our hours are being decimated.

Our ageing population is growing and the number of care workers needed will increase every year."

If privatisation and profit is the motive behind these changes what are the immediate, visible effects on clients? Eileen continues:

"Quality care cannot take the form of 15 minute calls to clients, as has been introduced first by the private operators and now copied by the HSE."

The pursuit of profit means that the private operators and Minister Reilly will engage in a race to the bottom for both standards of employment for workers and standards of care for the sick and

vulnerable who rely on our service

Marion Tyrell, a Home Help worker from Co Offaly told us how bad it is in relative terms:

"I'm twelve years in the service and I've never seen it this bad."

We look after very vulnerable people - some of the people we look after suffer from the late onset of dementia and Alzheimer's."

And how do these cuts affect Marion's day-to-day routine and the help she gives those in her care?

"I'm only given half an hour with some of our clients now. Just today one lady got very agitated and I didn't have the time I needed to calm her down and help her get settled. You're given just half an hour to give someone a shower - sometimes it just isn't enough time. I'm under huge pressure all the time to get to the next client. I love my work but they're making it so difficult for us."

Photo By Paul Reynolds

Postcards from the parish pump



THE IRISH ELECTION LITERATURE BLOG SHOWCASES THE PERVERSE NATURE OF OPPORTUNISM AND SPINELESSNESS WHICH RUNS DEEP IN MANY WHO COURT OUR VOTE. [BARRY GRUFF](#) FINDS OUT MORE FROM ITS CURATOR [ALAN KINSELLA](#).

It is fair to say most people don't hold on to election flyers and leaflets for too long before filing them to the nearest bin. This is not the case for Dubliner Alan Kinsella, who has been studiously collecting election literature and other political documents for the last 30 years. In that time he has amassed a unique and valuable historical archive, which he has been sharing with the wider world through his Irish Election Literature blog.

Rabble caught up with the man himself to find out more about the blog, his hobby and all things election-related.

Alan caught this bug during the general election of February 1982. Too young to vote, he was brought down to a polling station which was "a lot more lively and really exciting [place] as canvassers hadn't the restriction they have now. I came away with a handful of leaflets and stickers, including one autographed by Barty Desmond and somehow I held onto them. By November there was another election and I got more, this time some relatives kept stuff for me also." Over time the circle and locations from which he drew material grew. In the days before email he wrote away to parties requesting leaflets with varying degrees of success and has to date amassed a collection of between four and five thousand.

As well as enjoying uploading this material to the blog it serves another purpose, he explains "I posted a letter that James Reilly sent out last year before the election assuring Roscommon Hospital was safe but next of all Roscommon Hospital was closed. That one went everywhere; it was in the paper, the Fianna Fáil website and a few other places. It definitely made an impact."

Other material provides a valuable insight into the mindset and concerns of previous eras, with anti-divorce literature from Alice Glenn and others, or leaflets from Sean Clerkin's 'Jobs for Youth – not condoms' offering a glimpse into a different Ireland. "Looking at them now they appear to be crackpots" says Alan, "but that wasn't the case at all. Alice Glenn was a TD and in the 1991 Local Elections Clerkin polled 1,136 first preferences, just over 10% of the vote and that was in Cabra where he was up against sitting TDs Jim Mitchell and Dermot Fitzpatrick." Similarly Alan wonders what future generations will make of more contemporary literature, like that of the anti-Royal visit. He is intrigued to see "what narrative is put on the visit in the future and if opposition to the visit is covered. Although I think there was a general air of ambivalence to it."

Certain issues remain rooted to a specific time; others however, have a habit of recurring again and again. Two which resonate strongly with people today are of course, the household tax and water charges. Both feature frequently in his collection and have evolved as the nature of the proposed charges and the forms of opposition to them have changed over the years. For example a value-based Property tax mooted in the early 90's was, as Alan explains, "seen as an anti-Dublin tax and an anti-family tax, as young people working would be forced out of the family home. It was double taxation. It was also seen as anti-home ownership." The household tax resurfaces again in material from 1992, where Fianna Fáil accuse both Labour and Fine Gael of intending to increase it, while Fine Gael point the finger at Labour alone. The PDs were also against it, primarily because it was anti-Dublin, citing "a figure of 77% of Property Tax being paid in Dublin." Adding "at that time in 1997 the property boom had just started, so people were paying (what were then) hefty mortgages, hefty Stamp Duty and then the Property Tax on top of it. Another argument used, and one that resonates with the current policy of using revenue from the household charge to pay for local services, was voiced by Olivia Mitchell (FG) when she said "Most of the money will be collected in this area but will be spent elsewhere."

Alan says there is a similar trend in tracking the life cycle of water charges, "In my own collection they first pop up in the early '80s with a leaflet from the Communist Party of Ireland. What's interesting is that there's nothing about water conservation. Some of the Democratic Left anti-water charges material from the early 90s doesn't mention conservation. It was the same again in 1996 when Joe Higgins ran as a Militant Labour / Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns candidate in the Dublin West by-election. In 1997 The Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns ran a number of candidates with Joe Higgins being elected. Anti water charges candidates, such as Paddy Mulcahy also ran in Cork in 1997. Through the Greens and the green agenda, water charges are back on the radar but it's not yet as major an issue as the property tax, although that will probably change when people have to pay it".

What began as a childhood fascination has become over time a valuable and unique resource for anyone with even a vague interest in politics, for those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. The materials collected by Alan show the fragility of parliamentary democracy and the perverse nature of opportunism and spinelessness which runs deep in many who court our vote.

Surprised rabblers? No? Didn't think so, but sometimes it's nice to have your feelings confirmed.

Photo by Paul Reynolds



Anti Akin

In case anyone missed it, that scurvy political shyster Rep. Todd Akin of Missouri, has been caught red-handed, retrospectively that is. Salon uncovers his links to a pro-life militia in St.

Louis in the late 1980s. Members of said militia went on to commit violent attacks against doctors providing the godless act of saving women's lives. Oh sweet irony, Akin is your name...



15

{HEALTH}

THE LIFE OF REILLY

P. KOLBE REPORTS THAT OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS, OVERSIGHT FOR IRELAND'S PUBLIC HEALTH HAS RESTED IN THE HANDS OF MANY PRIME ADVERTISEMENTS OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Brian Cowen and Michael Noonan reigned in the 1990s - men whose figures were honed by life-long dedication to strenuous pint-swilling regimes. At the turn of the millennium Michael Martin provided a break from the tradition of clinical obesity as the primary qualification for the job and actually introduced an anti-obesity campaign which included a proposal for a fast food tax. It turned out that this was, in fact, merely an elaborate set up for the punchline that was Mary Harney, who combined a love for stuffing her face with the finest foods known to humanity with a transparent hatred for the sick and poor. Oh how we laughed.

Reilly is Fine Gael's comedic riposte to Harney. Not only does he boast a traditionally obese girth, but he sports a bulbous and ruddy complexion that hints at a staple diet of burgundy and truffles. He has the unusual distinction of actually being a qualified doctor. However, upon closer examination of his record, one begins to suspect that his interpretation of "duty of care" extends all the way from his belly to his wallet.

During the boom years of the Celtic Tiger, Reilly demonstrated his love for the public health system by investing heavily in private health business ventures, including a €15m primary care centre near Dublin airport and a multi-million euro private nursing home in Tipperary. When the nursing home investment went belly-up, he failed to pay his share of the €1.9 million outstanding debt and ended up on Stubbs' list of debt defaulters. This was a first for a serving minister in Ireland. Considering the rogues' gallery who have served as ministers in this country, one can't help but be impressed by somebody who manages to distinguish himself by being the first to such an achievement.

However, Reilly can't be accused of neglecting the public sector altogether. When it comes to the question of drawing down payments, he is an obvious fan of the state economy. In 2009 and 2010, he received a total of €674,165 from the Department of Health for his work as a medical-card GP, while also having a full time job as a TD which paid him another €100,000 or so with expenses on top. Somehow Reilly managed to fulfil the responsibilities of both of these

full-time jobs while also having enough free time to manage his large property portfolio and various investments - including a major shopping centre in Lusk and various plots of land around the country. No wonder he is paid so well - his talents and time management skills are clearly in an elite class.

Along the way, Reilly also managed to accumulate enough wealth to acquire a stately home in Offaly and a fleet of classic cars. This surely helps to explain his failure to pay his debts - the cost of keeping a mansion with 13 bedrooms in these times of austerity must be simply dreadful. Naturally the state helps him out with significant tax breaks for his troubles. However, when one considers the cost of petrol nowadays and the poor fuel efficiency of classic cars, there is surely a strong case for further

state subsidies for the hard pressed minister. There are few among us who are dedicated enough to our national historical heritage that they will steadfastly keep the traditions of the gentry alive into our modern era.

Reilly's recent bout of media attention has dwelt on the mysterious last minute addition of 2 new primary care centres to the HSE's plans. The fact that both of them happen to be in Reilly's North Dublin constituency is surely a coincidence. The fact that one of them is due to be built on land owned by one of his cronies can only be random chance. And, when Reilly started by simply denying that anything unusual had happened at all, then it merely goes to fully prove his bona fides - we can hardly expect such a multi-talented and busy

individual to remember such trifling details.

The villain of the latest affair was Reilly's understudy in the Department of Health - Roisin Shortall. She made the schoolgirl error of publicly criticising the minister. Somehow she had arrived at the bizarre idea that high-falutin concepts such as 'conflict of interest' and fancy foreign words such as 'ethics' and 'principles' applied in Irish politics. Happily, the upstart was quickly put in her place and ousted from her role, as all of her Labour party colleagues rallied around Minister Reilly. Her apparent belief that the choice of public health centres should be based on expert-judged criteria rather than ministerial largesse threatened to undermine the most dearly shared principle of Irish politics - keeping the rabble from interfering.

Illustration by Paddy Lynch

The cost of keeping a mansion with 13 bedrooms in these times of austerity must be simply dreadful.





rabbit

There's No Justice, Just Us. Artist: ADW
Photo by John Lalor (www.johnlalorphotography.ie)



Publishing Prose & Cons

“People don’t do that.” She obviously goes to different sessions than I do.

WITH BOOKSHOP SHELVES OVER-STOCKED WITH HARRY POTTER AND FIFTY OTHER SHADES OF POPULIST SHITE, MAEVE SPANNING ROOTS THROUGH HER REJECTION SLIPS HAS AND THIS RAMBLE ABOUT HOW THE PUBLISHERS ARE STACKED AGAINST HER.

Writing a book? Easy. Heading in to work extra early so you can print out 200 double-spaced pages on the sly? No bother. Quadruple-sellotaping them into an envelope from the pound shop that’s already starting to crack at the seams? Standard. Sending a copy to your parents because they’ve been begging you, even though you’re totally mortified about the scenes of drug abuse and riding? Manageable. But finding someone to print it for you? Well. I’m currently clocking in at around 53 rejections and counting, and yes, I am still counting.

I know what you’re thinking: “53 rejections? You’ve got your answer there, love, don’t give up the day job.” But bear with me a minute. My first ever response from an agent was an invitation to meet with her and her boss in their slick London office, some fawning praise and a few lavish references to movie rights. But in the end: no deal.

“Well, fair enough.” I thought. “You’ve gotta pay your dues” So I kept diligently posting off one sellotape-mangled parcel after another until I’d built up a nice collection of battered-looking, rejection letters on my wall. These consisted of a few

impersonal form-letters - grand - a good few no-replies - fair enough - but also (and this is the stinger) a steady stream of scrawled handwritten notes with flirty little messages telling me ‘Hey, you can write, but we can’t sell you.’

So what’s the problem? Poor writing? Probably. An ill-conceived storyline? Almost certainly. But maybe, just maybe... Could it be just a little bit too Irish?

Irvine Welsh was recently cited, giving out in The Guardian that a quality of “Upper-class Englishness” is used as the measure of good literature, and that Scottish authors don’t get a look-in at the award ceremonies. I’ll re-use the line from that article here, because the prick wouldn’t give me a quote of my own to use. Typical Scot. (I’m only messing Irvine. Will you take a look at my manuscript?)

“[It] would be difficult for Trainspotting to be published today by a London-based publisher. The market has become much more defined and Trainspotting doesn’t fit into any defined slot.”

Comparing it with an unusually detailed rejection letter I had received, there are some pretty glaring similarities.

“I’ve now finished reading your novel and though it might be described as the

bastard child of “Ulysses” and “Trainspotting”, I just don’t think we’d succeed in selling it in the current climate (the same could be said of Messrs Joyce and Welsh).”

Could it be that the ‘real’ prose of Dublin, like that of Edinburgh, is just too out-of-sync with the Jane Eyres and Great Expectations of the GCSE reading list? I wouldn’t go so far as to crowbar my own pile of shite into Welsh’s category, you’ll be relieved to know, but looking back, it does cast a new light on my first meeting with that first London agent. I remember exactly how her lip curled distastefully under her stylish black-rimmed glasses as she complained about the many references in my book to drinking and recreational drug-use. The particular section she was referring to was based on a true story from a party in Rathmines a few years back. “It’s unrealistic,” she explained to me in her trim British tones, “People don’t do that.” She obviously goes to different sessions than I do.

“So stop sending your books to London publishers,” you say? “It’s not like Ireland doesn’t have a publishing industry of its own.” And indeed you’re right. But in the end, we’re a small island, and if a publisher doesn’t have one eye on the market across the pond well, they can’t expect to be in business for that much longer.

I discussed the possibility of an ‘anti-Irish’ bent to the industry with Brendan Barrington, editor at Penguin Ireland, who admits that “it would be foolish to underestimate the cultural influence of ‘upper-class Englishness’. But he also makes the valid point that the very existence of Penguin Ireland as an entity, publishing primarily Irish books for the British and Irish markets, suggests the market does have room for Irish talent.

Still, which Irish talent are they publishing? It is well-known that Joyce struggled for years to find a publisher for Ulysses (although admittedly, it is a bit of a tricky read) and Roddy Doyle self-published The

Commitments. So who is chosen to represent us abroad? A majority of our new novelists (first published within the last 20 years) have either lived or studied in England for large chunks of their lives, a fact which surely has a diluting impact on the ‘Irishness’ of their prose. William Trevor, one of our greats, has been based in England since the age of 26, Keith Ridgeway spent years living in the UK, and Adrian McKinty was educated in Oxford and is still still living abroad today.

But still we have runaway multi-book successes in Marian Keyes and Paul Howard’s Ross O’Carroll-Kelly – talented authors providing an undeniably Irish voice in the international marketplace. So what is the difference there? For one thing, genre-writing has always been more commercially successful than its awkward cousin ‘literary fiction’ – a catch-all term for everything with claims to literary merit or that just struggles to slot neatly into one marketing category. In other words: the very books that have the best chance at showing the world what Ireland really sounds, looks and feels like these days (without being distracted by creepy love letters from beyond the grave, or the white witch making it winter all year around, the bitch). For another, there is a certain quaintness to the depiction of the Irish in these books: the very image of the harmless, good-humoured Paddy that Welsh’s ‘upper-class Britishness’ really fetishises (I am leaving Northern Irish writing aside for the moment – that’s a different article altogether).

Think Father Ted Crilly (typical quote: That’s the great thing about Catholicism - it’s so vague. No-one knows what it’s really all about.”), Keyes’ Walsh family (“I rang my mother to thank her for giving birth to me and she said, “What choice had I? You were in there, how else were you going to get out?”), and Frank McCourt in Angela’s Ashes (“When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I survived at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while. Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood.”)

All fantastic characters, no doubt about it, but perhaps a little too loveable? Where’s our Trainspotting? I know it’s out there; I’ve seen it. And in fact, where are we? Where are the roll-over sessions and the dole, the raves that get shut down after an hour and a half, the pictures in the Herald after leaving cert night and the carnage on O’Connell street on St. Patrick’s day that is anything but quaint?

So look. Fair dues, it probably is about time I threw my first novel in the green bin; I gave it a fair lash and 53 rejections probably is taking the piss a bit. But when I write the next one I’m going to make sure it’s every bit as truthful, every bit as awkward, and every bit as shaming to my parents as the last. And I hope some of you are ready to do the same. Because in the end, it’s up to us.

And I want to read it.

Illustration by Julian Astelarra

J.K. ROWLING

E.L. JAMES



FIGHT FOR YOUR WRITE

FIGHTING WORDS IS A CREATIVE WRITING CENTRE BASED IN THE NORTH INNER CITY. THE CENTRE OFFERS FREE CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS AND COURSES TO STUDENTS OF ALL AGES. MICE HELL EXPLORES THE PROJECT'S CORE ETHOS THAT "CREATIVE WRITING IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF EVERY CHILD'S EDUCATION."

Fighting Words is a creative writing centre established by author Roddy Doyle and Seán Lovel. From its base in the north inner city of Dublin, the centre offers free creative writing workshops and courses to students of all ages. The centre's core ethos is that "creative writing is an essential part of every child's education."

Why did you choose the name 'Fighting words' for the project and what does it mean?

The name was chosen by Roddy Doyle. We were registering with the companies office for charity status and realised we needed a name – immediately. Roddy said "Fighting Words" pretty much off the top of his head. It could easily have been a temporary name, just to tide us over, but we soon realised it was perfect. It captures the essence of what we are about, using a well-known Dublin expression in the process. Interestingly, Dave Eggers, founder of 826 Valencia, said he loves the name, but that they could never have used it in the US, as the term "fighting words" constitutes hate speech per the US Constitution.

Fighting Words was inspired by the 826 Valencia project in San Francisco. The basis of that project is that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success. How is that?

Strong writing skills are definitely important, but the essence of Fighting Words is really more about facilitating the opportunity and mentoring for as many children as possible to engage creatively with writing – in whatever genre – and see what doors it opens up for them. What we do is certainly of benefit to straightforward writing and academic skills, but even more significantly it leads to greater self-confidence, self-esteem, empowerment, independence of thought, critical thinking, etc.

The operation of the centre relies heavily on volunteers. Who are the volunteers, ie their backgrounds, what brings them to the project? And how would one go about volunteering?

We have over 400 volunteer tutors. Since we opened, we have never had a problem with recruiting volunteers – though you can never take it for granted and it is always a work in progress. We put a lot of thought and effort into trying to ensure our volunteers get as much enjoyment and fulfillment as possible out of their time with us. We can guarantee it is fun and there is no minimum commitment. We interview between 10-15 new applicants every week, which keeps the numbers constantly renewed. People from every background, young and old, volunteer with us. Basically anyone who enjoys working creatively with children and adults and is a good listener will enjoy volunteering with us. No special qualifications or skills required. Obviously, since we work with children and vulnerable adults, we have a system in place involving an interview, reference checking, Garda vetting and we provide training.

In previous issues of rabble we have addressed the representation of the working class youth voices in the media, the way they are often portrayed as voiceless and framed as anti-social. Do you feel that Fighting Words is addressing this by helping young people find their voice?

No doubt we are, but it happens naturally and organically. We are very much here for working class youth but not exclusively so. We are here for all youth on an equal basis. The children and teenagers who come here are from every background, as are the volunteers. There is a natural diversity that works very well.

How influential is class in Ireland in allowing access the full potential of the education system and the opportunities it offers?

There are lots of issues in Irish education about ensuring full equal access to the entire education system, but they are not the essence of what drives Fighting Words. We believe creative writing is an essential part of every child's education, and we are doing our bit to provide that opportunity to as many children as possible, on an equal basis. We are not part of the formal education system – though we would like to see some adaptation of what we do incorporated into the formal education system – and given that our main interlocutors are primary and secondary school teachers, we believe they would probably also like to see that happen.

You have quite a list of publications including a graphic anthology, Jam by Newpark Comprehensive School; and. Are there many budding graphic novelists under your wing?

We have published four anthologies of short stories by Transition Year students: Fighting Tuesdays by Larkin Community College, Dublin 1; Lost in Transition by Scoil Chaitriona, Glasnevin; Fighting Words by Coláiste Dhúlaigh, Coolock; and Yet to be Told by Mount Carmel Secondary School, Dublin 1. In 2012, we also published A Window on the Lane – poems and short stories inspired by the works in Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, by Transition Year students from Mercy College, Coolock.



There is colossal interest in graphic fiction, from children of all ages. Always the first of our summer camps to book out. Many of our volunteer tutors are visual artists and graphic artists and animators. It was some of them who originally proposed seeing what the interest would be. We work in all forms of creative writing, in all genres. Since 2009, we have offered workshops covering short fiction, prose, playwriting, screenplay writing, animation, songwriting, poetry, memoir, radio drama, television drama, journalism....and volunteer tutors come from all of these backgrounds.

We are very much here for working class youth but not exclusively so.

Photo supplied Fighting Words

Take a nosey down to Smithfield one of these days soon and check out the mural of Bob Doyle painted by rabble's own Thomas McCarthy. Lashed up as part of the Anti Fascist Ireland birthday weekend, to celebrate our

last surviving Spanish Civil War veteran who died three years ago.



A Fistful of Bitcoins

ED ZILLION TAKES US TO THE WILD WILD WEST OF DIGITAL CULTURE. THE LIBERTARIAN MILLENNIUM, IF YOU WILL. A PLACE WHERE THE TWIN TECHNOLOGIES BITCOIN AND TOR HAVE LED TO THE EMERGENCE OF AN ONLINE COMMUNITY LIKE NO OTHER WITH ITS OWN MARKETPLACE AND ITS OWN CURRENCY.



A place inhabited by a disparate collection of cyber-utopians, digital activists, scammers and their inevitable marks. A place where you can buy LSD and shotguns online and brag about it. It's a lot like some squat houses I have lived in - one half idealists and the other half people only idealists could put up with. This scene wasn't born wholly-crafted onto the internet like a 4chan meme, it has been developing for a long time now, intimately related to the ongoing battle for control over the internet, and specifically over the right to be anonymous online. On one side we have corporations and governments variously motivated by profit or security (paranoid security it may well be) and on the other a fairly dismal cast of digital rights campaigners such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the occasional mob of disgruntled randomers from reddit or Facebook or whatever. Recent skirmishes include the ACTA "anti-piracy" bill which was rejected by the EU parliament in June, and last year's financial blockade by VISA/Mastercard/Paypal/etc of Wikileaks.

The Wikileaks saga was a blessing in disguise for the doomsayers, here was a perfect example of what could happen in a world where financial corporations control the flow of money on the internet. Any activism that goes against the wishes of these corporations and needs to sell products or receive donations can be censored without the need for governments to get involved in the whole grubby process. The debate sparked by this incident led to a lot more attention being given to technologies that could circumvent these restrictions, among them Bitcoin & Tor.

Tor has been around for some time, originally created by programmers motivated by fears of censorship and surveillance of the Internet. The Tor client software routes traffic through a worldwide network of servers to conceal a user's location or usage from anyone conducting network surveillance or traffic analysis. Tor allows users to surf the web anonymously, but it also allows websites to be hosted anonymously too.

Bitcoin is the new kid on the block. The very definition of disruptive technology. How Bitcoin works is a fascinating feat of engineering, so fascinating that I am not going to go into it for fear of losing my audience. Suffice to say, Bitcoin is a peer-to-peer digital currency which has no central issuing authority (which is an astounding feat in itself, and one which many thought impossible) which by its nature is anonymous and irreversible. Think about it like online cash: cash transferred by sending someone a digital signature on the internet instead of a greasy 20 rolled-up-and-palmed-off in the alley behind Supermacs. Bitcoins are created by computers that run complex computational problems and through an ingenious and beautiful design, the owners of these computers are compensated for their efforts to provide security to the Bitcoin network by receiving a reward of 50 bitcoins for solving one of these problems. The total

value of all bitcoins in circulation (10.231m) is currently about €93 million at a valuation of €9.10 per bitcoin. From the very beginnings, when a bitcoin could hardly be said to have any value at all (it is hard enough getting your head around assigning value to a string of alphanumeric digits in the first place) it has fluctuated wildly in price, at one stage trading at over €24 in June 2011, giving rise to a situation in which one early adopter bought a pizza for 10,000 bitcoins that would have been worth €24,600 a year later! I hope he enjoyed it. All very interesting stuff that I could elucidate at length, though what you want to hear, I suspect, is about 'drugs on teh internets'.

So here we go: there is a website, accessible using Tor on which one can purchase from a whole range of illicit products. Listings as I write include drugs: "1g of Pure Flake Cocaine Uncut" for 9.95 bitcoins (€95) or how about that gram of crack cocaine you always wanted? Only 12.21 bitcoins (€115)! Among other stimulants, psychedelics and similar substances, probably the biggest market is weed. Lots and lots of weed. From around 5 bitcoins for an eighth of chronic down to about 1 bitcoin/gram of the cheaper stuff. And all listings replete with user reviews such as this recent one on a listing for "1G- Moroccan Pollen - Nxt Day Delivery": '5 of 5 excellent, nice hash as usual, and next day delivery, cheers'. While drugs are the biggest market on Silk Road, for obvious reasons, listings also include hacking tools, lab supplies, chemicals, food, the ubiquitous porn, software, forgeries (need that get-out-of-jail in case Ireland goes down the swanny? Get your fake UK passport for the competitive rate of 470 bitcoins or €4380), as well as the relatively benign, such as art, literature etc, though I gather they do little enough business.

The thing is, it works. I have, for research purposes you see (The Pete Townshend Defence), purchased from Silk Road. I received my letter addressed to one 'Monsieur Dred' a few weeks after purchasing my eighth of orange bud and after skinning up a jasper with smoking silver and just the smallest amount of Golden Virginia I sat back and savoured the crispy nugs cracking away as I thought about this development:

We may not all be Rand-carrying libertarians but I think most of us would agree that the current climate of drug prohibition is anathema to our perception of a moral society, since we should a priori have the right to ingest whatever substances we so wish, as long as it does no harm to other members of society. On a more technical level I think many of us have realised that the negative effects of prohibition have caused more societal harm than the substances would themselves. I think that many of us would secretly cheer on these cyber-utopians for making the War Against Drugs look as silly and misguided as it really is, but this is an easy case. Until recently The Silk Road also sold guns. One could purchase from a range of weapons and ammunition including handguns, semi to full automatic rifles, grenades etc. Depending on your political stripe you may be cool with an anonymous marketplace selling heavy weaponry but what about snuff videos, or child porn? Thankfully none of these are sold on Silk Road

but Bitcoin & Tor, with their anonymous nature, make it possible for other websites to exist selling this kind of stuff. The same features that make it possible to buy drugs from Silk Road make it a lot harder to track paedo rings on the Internet, as most of the major busts have involved tracking credit card transactions.

Up to now there haven't been any large crime networks using bitcoin uncovered and, despite calls by US congressmen for investigations into The Silk Road by the FBI, it has continued trading. What is far more common are raids by hackers such as the raid on Mt.Gox (the largest bitcoin exchange) that caused the price to nosedive from \$16 to 1¢/bitcoin in a matter of minutes and scams like the recent Bitcoin Savings & Trust ponzi scheme where some internet huckster made off with \$5.6m worth of bitcoins after offering returns of 3700%/pa (I did mention the marks, didn't I?) But so far these are still otherwise harmless young hackers behind computers fighting over their stash - sooner or later a more serious criminal gang will start using it and there will be a large bust, and as long as bitcoin can be traded for dollars or euro the probability of it being used in the sale of child pornography increases. This will be the number one most effective argument against Bitcoin, Tor and anonymity on the Internet in general, it is one that will be used, and I am not sure that there is a thoroughly convincing argument against it.

Collage by Milo Tobin

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Abercrummy & Felch

The new flagship for the tired American rag-trade has opened to much salivating by the Irish gutter press. But no amount of taut mid-riffs and fake tan can mask the whack of desperation from all who enter. As one

tweeter noted, it was too dark, too loud and too difficult to get out of - a bit like losing your virginity.

HOME GROWN HEROES

IT'S A DAMN GOOD TIME FOR ELECTRONIC MUSIC COMING OUT OF IRELAND THAT SOUNDS FECK ALL LIKE ANYTHING ELSE. MYLES NI GANGSTALEEN HAS THIS RUNDOWN OF RECENT RELEASES THAT DEMONSTRATE THIS RELEASES FROM ACTS WHO CERTAINLY DON'T SLOT IN EASILY WITH THE CURRENT POPULAR SUB-GENRES AND "SOUNDS" IN ELECTRONIC SCENES THE WORLD OVER.

A couple of months back, LionFX dropped the 'How a Kid from the Hood became the Lord of a Galaxy' EP on the Boy Scout Audio label (also home to Meljoann and Herv). This four track digital release of synth-heavy instrumental electro goes from the nasty funk groove of 'Lion Dance' and 'Tuff Kid' to frantic high-bpm workouts. This is seriously well produced epic stuff here.

Melodica Deathship (pictured left), whose debut album 'Doom Your Cities, Doom Your Towns' was one of the finest releases of 2010, returned with 'The Sunken Path' EP. Deathship play dark pirate/maritime

themed hip-hop. Heavy beats, dubby melodica echoes, pulsing synths, and the powerful vocals of Exile Eye bring these five songs to life. This isn't your average alt-hip-hop fare though, with slabs of punk, folk, prog and post-rock in the mix here. After their more lo-fi debut, 'The Sunken Path' establishes a bigger fuller sound for the duo, and as their most recent live gigs have proven, they definitely pull it off on stage as well as in the studio.

The ultra-productive turntablist/producer Deviant and Naive Ted, and MC Sebi C just put out their debut under the name Flying Buttresses (pictured top right), the 'Orson Welles' EP. The songs are often short feral bursts of stream of consciousness vocal madness from Sebi while Deviant provides boom-bap beats under dusty loops and lurching cuts. Sample lyric: "If rabbits ate frogs I wouldn't like them at all. I wouldn't mind them eating poisonous vegetables but they wouldn't do that they're sound out and on the ball. Completely delicious but I couldn't shoot one at all". This shit is unique. At the end of last year I heard some describe Deviant's 'Send In The Hounds' EP as "the most important Irish electronic/dance record ever". At this years end I'm sure we'll be seeing the 'Orson Welles' EP in a fair few lists and charts too.

In fact, all the above releases should be in the kind of lists that end with the words '..of the year'. And if you wanna hear some quality original Irish electronic talent then they should also be in your music collection also.

Homegrown labels have been thriving of late, with Apartment Records and Takeover Recordings putting out some great techno, electro and house, with the former being more influenced by Detroit and Chicago sounds. Galway based Alkalinear Records went physical

with their first vinyl release after a string of excellent eclectic digital releases. Up North you've got Rudimentary Records, Melted Music, and the long running Acroplane imprint dropping some fantastic bass driven music.

Speaking of Acroplane and Alkalinear, there are rakes of free to download albums, EPs and compilations on their websites. Ditto with Alphabet Set, !Kaboogie, and the Loudmouth Collective.

Also on the free or pay-what-you-want buzz are likes of Automatic Tasty, Captain Moonlight, and Herv. Prolific feckers the lot of 'em. Sure have an auld google there and get them into ya. While you're at it, do yourself a favour and download the beautiful 'Friday Syndrome Volume 1' album from Sunken Foal. Across eighteen tracks, guitar and mandolin melodies sit comfortably alongside lush keys, glitchy pads and rolling beats. There is a vast amount of unreal aural goodness online from Irish acts and labels that is just itching to be on your hard drive.

A loose collective of like-minded producers has been making waves across Ireland in 2012. Often playing shows together, these "lovely boys" (as my mate likes to call them) toured the land as part of their 'Lightbox' tour earlier in the year. I wouldn't be surprised at all if Bantum, Monto, SertOne, Toby Kaar, Replete or Adultrock started getting regular international bookings and big-name remixes a la the Kildare boy-done-good Mmoths. Expect 2013 to be a busy year for these lads.

A fair few other Irish heads have started getting well deserved attention from abroad lately. Jamie XX has been dropping Frank B in sets. Frank's catchy



house banger 'Chain Of Fools' has been bigged up by XLR8R and is raking in the YouTube hits and online plays. With slick production and a natural ability to get bodies moving, he's surely one to keep an eye on.

Nasty electro badman Matthew Flanagan aka Defekt has gone from strength to strength with both club and radio DJs rinsing the bejaysus outta his tunes across Europe. The chap's been landing fairly regular slots in Berlin and London as well as releases on French label Newflesh, and German imprint AC Records.

Enjoying similar success in those parts of the world are Dublin duo Lakker. A string of very well received EPs and overseas gigs have established them as a staple for fans of dark industrial heavy techno. It certainly didn't do any harm when none other than Aphex Twin and Surgeon began playing Lakker tunes in sets across the globe, and with the lads having recently turned their sets into full-on audio visual sync experiences, it's a good time to catch Dara and Ian live.

The aforementioned Ian also performs solo as Eomac. He first caught a lot of ears in late 2010 with his ridiculously anthemic 'You Don't Know What This Means To Me'. (Seriously, around then and for a long while afterwards, it was near impossible to go back to a gaff for a post-night-out drink or what have you, without hearing that tune playin' outta somewhere). EPs on Hsuan, Acroplane, and through his own site soon followed with a !Kaboogie release also in the pipeline.

Dublin's grimeiest producer/DJ Major Grave is another one who's been tearing it up lately. He has consistently raised the bar for himself production-wise, gotten plenty of spins from London djs and started working with some top-notch MC's. Check him out.

Sure check ALL of the above out. G'wan, certainly help sink and drain the economy.

Photos by By Nora O' Murchú and Jimmy Scissors.

Keep it On The Download?

EVER SINCE THE INVENTION OF THE PLAYER PIANO, THERE HAVE BEEN MORAL PANICS ABOUT THE CONSUMPTION OF MUSIC, ABOUT WHO STANDS TO GAIN FROM IT, AND WHO IS LOSING OUT. MYLES NI GANGSTALEEN TAKE A LOOK AT THE ETHICS OF DOWNLOADING.

Sure even back in the 1870s when it was invented, towns across America were covered in black and white posters emblazoned with a skull and crossbones, and the words 'Player Pianos Are Killing Music'. That last sentence was a load of lies. But so was the hysteria about the creation of many new formats. The Cassette Tape and the Recordable Compact Disc will destroy the music industry, we were told. The factual inaccuracies of these claims became fairly clear soon enough. Yeah, changes happened but we and 'the industry'

adapted and moved forward.

Then the Internet came along, and pretty soon it was clear that unlike previous modes of music consumption, the impact of this one was not gonna be so clear cut. To this day debate about downloading rages on.

One of the biggest differences between then and now, is it's not just a case of "you either illegally download or you don't".

We chatted to two Dublin DJs about morality and music downloading. PCP has been rinsing out the raves since the mid 90s and told us "Yea, I download lots but I buy lots also. Tens of thousands worth, now and over the years when I only bought vinyl, but then that was cos I had no choice. I download now cos I can. It's freely available, it's supply and demand. I don't exercise my moral choices via shopping."

Olan, who some of you know as the dude behind the All City Records counter and more know for his sharp eye on the next critical beat melting pot says its a mixed bag.

"The pros are full and instant access to any point in musical history whatsoever. It's incredible to think you can just grab the whole of Fela Kuti's discography in a second. I guess the main con is you don't appreciate it in the same way as if you had to go seek it out and pay for it. A con is if

artists / labels were suffering a huge financial loss because of it but I'm not sure people will pay for it if you remove the free/illegal download option. Another con is the sheer amount of poor quality music out there as the bar is so low now. It costs nothing to stick it out so people whack it out there.

PCP on the other hand sees a lot less cons. "Mainly it's great. One can listen and educate oneself about music in a way that was impossible previously unless you were rich. It also decentralises music and takes some of the power away from the cities with the media and technical infrastructure. There are no cons. Just big differences around the way we attend to music. The cycle is so quick now. Music dates quickly. It's harder to make it matter or feel it matters. But this is just a difference really. Stuff changes."

Olan goes on to tell us about the theft side of downloading. "I don't feel like I'm stealing if I'm downloading The Beatles. If I were downloading the latest bass 12s and going out DJing and making money I would feel differently. Most people have probably stuffed a 7 inch down their trousers at some stage in their lives. Stealing is an inherent part of the human condition. In the past given the choice between buying the music and owning it, or not owning it, most people choose the latter. These days theres a third way. Owning it and not paying, and that is always going to be the most popular

choice."

Finally we asked PCP about whether he can suggest any solutions or alternatives to the current state of downloading. "Something along the lines of IMRO but levied on the bandwidth providers and done via youtube, soundcloud, etc. plays. And a special high tax on rich musicians to be redistributed to poor ones which is almost all of them (only half joking). I think of music as a community thing. It's about being involved, learning an instrument / skill, organizing gigs / festivals, blogging, doing radio, buying / stealing music, whatever, as long as it's an active passionate thing."

We also asked rabble readers how and why YOU download. In an online poll the vast majority of you were keen to emphasise the extra value you give to a physical release as opposed to digital. You also have no qualms about downloading the work of someone rich and famous, and that you are very willing to pay to support local and upcoming acts. Yet a large bunch said they "always pay for music".

Gotta go now. 97% of Metallica Discography downloaded, 98%, 99%, download complete. Right-click. Delete. Are you sure you want to move this to Recycle Bin? YES.

Empty Recycle Bin.

{HISTORY}

A gombeen-Nation once again



THE 19TH-CENTURY TERM GOM'BEENISM, THE PRACTICE OF BORROWING OR LENDING AT USURY, IS INCREASINGLY REFERENCED IN RELATION TO IRELAND'S DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PRACTICES. CONOR MCCABE TAKES A LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH MIDDLEMAN AND ARGUES THAT THEY HAVEN'T WENT AWAY.

On Tuesday 3 January 1882 the nobility and landed gentry of Ireland met in Dublin to discuss the future of the island. Among those present was R.J. Mahony, a landowner from Kerry. He stood and said that the recently-passed land act would be the ruin not only of the landlords but of the small farmer as well. He explained that as soon as the landlord class was put out of the way, another would come along to take their place. 'The merchant, the trader, the usurer, the gombeen man,' said Mahony, were 'the future rulers of the land.' Mr. Mahony called these the middlemen, and although he may have had his reasons for defending landlordism, his warnings were not without foundation. Forty years later the middleman were in the ascent and set about carving the newly-independent Free State in their image - and we've been living with the consequences of that ever since.

Just who were these middlemen? In an article published in 1982 Michael D. Higgins wrote that the mainstream image of the period - and the one taught at secondary level - was one of poor small farmers fighting against perfidious, foreign landlords. However, what was glossed over in such a black and white analysis was that there was another struggle - a class struggle - going on, one that involved small farmers and the rancher/grazier families. These large rancher farmers fattened cattle for export, and occasionally they were the local shopkeepers, the arbiters of credit in the community, and the dispensers of loans. It gave them significant societal influence and power. Not all shopkeepers were graziers, of course, but neither one was the friend of the smallholder. The social relations which underpinned Irish rural society were not only framed by land, but by credit:

those who needed it, and those who profited from it. And in the north and west of Ireland, it was the Irish entrepreneurial spirit of the middleman and his gombeen cousin that held sway over credit.

Today the middleman is concerned with the tax avoidance, commercial property and resource licences. In the nineteenth century it was the sub-letting of land. The link between the centuries is the practice of positioning oneself between foreign capital and the resources of the island. In an article for the London Times on 7 October 1845 the newspaper's Irish correspondent explained the 'middleman' system to his English readers. Large tracts of land, including waste-land, were let by landlords to a class of businessman known as middlemen. 'The middleman of 100 acres is no farmer as in England, who invests his capital and skill and industry in the land, and looks for a fair profit,' write the journalist. The middleman's 'laziness makes him prefer doing nothing, his greediness and necessities make him resort to subletting at exorbitant rents to poor tenants, whilst he lives an idle, useless extortioner on the profit rent.' The poor tenants, in turn, become themselves rent-seekers. 'He lets out an acre out of his farm of six acres in conacre to some wretched labourer' wrote the correspondent, 'who for the potatoes grown on this land is perhaps compelled to work for the farmer the whole year.'

This is not to say that the middleman and gombeen man always got their own way. In the early 1850s the sin of usury and profiteering was punished in the North-West of Ireland by local secret societies such as the Ribbonmen or Molly Maguires. In one particular case in 1852, recounted by an ex-policeman 50 years later in the Irish Times, three men 'known as gombeen men purchased agricultural produce in the harvest time and sold out seed in the spring time to needy farmers... touching heavy interest on their three or six months' bills.' Their business acumen brought them to the attention of the Ribbonmen. The ex-policeman explained what happened next:

When a gombeen man infringed the rules of the Ribbonmen he was put on trial, and if found guilty, the sentence was carding. His house was visited by a select party of these legislators, generally between midnight and 2am, and he was taken out of bed naked, and placed on a chair in the room, and a pair of wool cards were used with vigour on his chest and back until the blood flowed freely. He was then solemnly cautioned to obey their orders

in the future or worse would follow..... The parish priest denounced [the Ribbonmen] from the altar, and a message was conveyed to him to mind his own business.

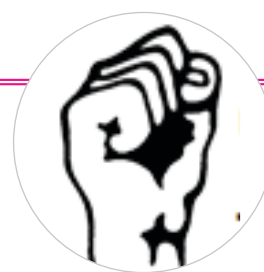
By the end of the nineteenth century the middleman had expanded their business model into the cities. The decline of Dublin in the decades after the Act of Union and the retreat of the landed gentry from the city opened up the Georgian squares and grand houses to the speculator and rank-renter. In his evidence to the 1884-85 Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, the chief medical officer of Dublin, Sir Charles Cameron, was scathing in his criticism of this urban class of middlemen. In the word of his biographer, Lydia Carroll, this class 'rented houses from absentee landlords, to re-let at exorbitant rents to the poor.' Cameron in his evidence stated that they 'live by screwing the largest amount of rent they can out of the tenants. The disproportion between the rents which the actual owner of the house gets and the rents these house jobbers get out of the tenants is sometimes as one to three.'

In 1924, when the dust had settled on the Civil War, and with the industrial north ensconced in its own mini-state, the grazier, shop-keeper, rack-renter and gombeen man set about the task of carving the Irish State in their image. And what a sight it is to behold.

Since the 1920s the gombeen has become a shorthand for all the ills and evils of the Irish business class. The sins of the middleman, the rack rents and money lending, have concertinaed into a Pat-Shortt bumbling character of cloth cap and Guinness stains proportions. And throughout the history of the State, although the type of business has changed, the underlying principles have not. The Irish entrepreneur is still a rentier-class, still acting as middleman between foreign capital and the resources of the State - but whereas before it was the Georgian houses that marked their lives, now it's the IFSC and the law and accountancy firms that make billions by handling the tax-avoidance millions of others. The resource for sale today is the right of a nation-state to set its own tax laws, and to have those tax laws recognised internationally. That is a tradable commodity, one that provides a comfortable living for those engaged in it. The business suit has replaced the cloth-cap, but the gombeenism and criminal self-interest remain.

The sins of the middleman, the rack rents and money lending, have concertinaed into a Pat Shortt bumbling character of cloth cap and Guinness stains proportions.

Illustrations above and opposite by Mice



A FESTIVAL OF CRUELTY CURATED BY AS PURE A CURMUDGEON AS EVER SPRANG FROM EIRE'S GRASSY HILLS. CULTURALFATWA LOOKS BEYOND THE HARANGUING TO THE TRUE MESSAGE OF TONIGHT WITH VINCENT BROWNE.

By any measure, Tonight with Vincent Browne at the unearthly hour of 11pm on TV3 is a weird yet wonderful phenomenon. In fact, in a political landscape almost completely devoid of genuine debate, it might just be said to be unique.

Stranger still the fishies that swarm and nibble about in the associated Twitter hashtag, #vinb. Here extreme lefty meets dedicated republican, hard core begrudger and random Twitter smartarse, and all on a roughly even footing. Within this tag swim small schools of wrigglers of the anti-bailout right (the Karl Whelan/Paul Somerville shoal for want of a better term), and occasionally, even in these shallows, drifting thoughtlessly under a bridge you hear a faint shout, "TROLL!" Too late! A doughty rock lobster of the Fianna Fáil, Labour or (horror!) Fine Gael variety has you held in its vice-like claws.

The #vinb tag, rightly described recently on Twitter by @soundmigration as a genuine social/sociological phenomenon, would repay study – maybe someone is already on it?

Moving out of 'virtual pools' for a moment what we have is simply a TV panel show presided over by the mighty Vincenzo. It's extraordinarily hard to describe to the uninitiated this man of (apparently) lefty-liberal leanings. Of course his arsenal of ticks, shudders and eye-browy moves and gestures have been well mimicked, if not quite equalled, by the short-lived Mario Rosenstock sketches on the

show. But beyond the baleful sighs and the eyes up to a heaven he doesn't believe in, to a god that's not taking calls, Vincenzo is as pure a curmudgeon as ever sprang from Eire's grassy hills.

Besides a photographic memory stretching back eons there is his most dreadful weapon, the phrase "Just answer the question". So strong is this stinger that it seems to have been the main reason that the Troika refused to meet either opposition or press on their last tour of inspection. It is deployed with limpet-like tenacity, the hapless victim (be they left, right or centre) is allowed to blather on at will for a brief period. Then "the question".

"The question" is always of a "have you stopped beating your wife?" nature. It might be nice to think that a simple yes/no could be returned as an answer, but that would be far too easy! Rarely has the harried victim even the microseconds to draw breath, yet alone stretch to audible sound. "The question" is always completely 'loaded', entirely and intricately of arch Vincenzo design and almost never, ever, drawn from whatever has been the media pre-approved 'argument' or 'side' in any particular debate.

Some choice examples of this include asking Leo Varadkar, "Why did you put the 'gun to head clause' in the preamble to the Fiscal Compact Treaty?" (he also deployed this particular bludgeon during the first Compact Treaty debate with Micheál Martin and Simon Coveney), asking Troika member Klaus Masuch, "did your taxi

driver tell you how the Irish people are bewildered that we are required to pay unguaranteed bondholders billions of Euros for debts that the Irish people have no relation to or no bearing with, primarily to bail out or to ensure the solvency of European banks? And if the taxi driver had asked you that question, what would have been your response? That's my first question", or September's evisceration of the hapless Kieran O'Donnell, "are you proud of what your party colleague, Phil Hogan, did in this instance – reassuring or assuring neighbours in this area that a Traveller family wouldn't be housed in that area?"

There are many other things that you are liable to see on Tonight with Vincent Browne that you will never see anywhere else on the Irish airways or, possibly, anywhere in the world.

There are the Festivals of Cruelty or bloodings, horrible rituals in which one of the major political parties supplies a young innocent for the specific purpose of a verbal savaging by Vincenzo. This seems to be based on the misguided notion that the victim will be steered/tempered or toughened in some way. The repeat throwing of FG TD Paschal Donohoe into the metal box shows that particular theory up as a complete non-starter. The casual savaging of doe-eyed Paschal only seems to draw him back for more and at times even this seasoned anarchist antichrist feels like throwing a towel into the ring on his behalf. Seasoned ministers and party leaders generally will not be found even accidentally within a 50 mile radius of Vincenzo under any circumstances. In our lovely wee democracy in the year 2012 they are basically terrified of a 'mere' TV presenter. This is, obviously, hella cool.

There are times when an 'ordinary head', be they homemaker or community activist, is allowed to

spout forth at and, occasionally, annihilate some stuffed shirt or other. There are times when an academic or expert is called out, though mind you one or two (Diarmuid Ferriter springs to mind) take to it like ducks to water. There are live embedded outside broadcasts from within protests ignored elsewhere on the airwaves. They have a presenter who reads viewers' tweets, texts and comments out live, later reproducing them fully credited on a blog (politico.ie), responding in detail and often using that to generate debate in future shows.

This show never so much ends as fizzles out – usually in a bad-tempered, inconclusive and incoherent morass. Each ending is a tiny, beautiful example of another glib and easy closure (the sine non qua of most political broadcasts), deliberately and successfully elided. As a resigned Vincenzo stares directly into the void and mumbles something about the weather forecast the message is clear: if there is to be resolution or closure, indeed change of any stamp, it's gonna have to come from out there beyond the TV screen, from you (yes, you!), the humble viewer.

The sun always shines on #vinb

"The question" is always completely 'loaded', entirely and intricately of arch Vincenzo design

THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES ON #VINB



HOLLYWOOD'S FEAR OF THE HORDE

DAVID JOHNSON EXPLORES A CREEPING RELABELLING OF THE MOB IN SOME OF HOLLYWOOD'S LATEST OFFERINGS.

One, Two, Many, Mob. Everything you need to know about the Hollywood blockbuster can be summed up in these four simple words. One is the hero, a lone rebel fighting against an unjust system. Two are the buddies, a mismatched but balanced yin and yang. The Many is the team, able to overcome all odds but only when united behind their charismatic leader. Mobs are the bad guys, the endless waves of nameless thugs, cannon fodder for the One, the Two and the Many.

The robes the Mob is draped in says much about contemporary US fears, from brownshirted fascists and white-armoured Stormtroopers to the mix-and-match thawbs and kufiyas of the cookie-cutter terrorist. But look closely and you will notice that the uniformed foot soldiers and ragged Jihadists are giving way to something more insidious, something far more terrifying to the Californian moguls and their plutocrat friends.

Gone are the Technicolor days when "our" glorious square-jawed boys stood toe-to-toe with the forces of "their" decadent and oppressive regime, these ideological clashes now replaced by carnage-filled 3D scenes of billionaire playboys facing down endless hordes of wretched refuse. These shadowy miscreants of the 21st Century are no enemy from a distant teeming shore, they are in every city in your country, watching with envious eyes and waiting for a chance to strike out and tear down everything that you have worked for. They are Emma Lazarus' tired poor and huddled masses yearning to be free. They are Jack London's 'People of the Abyss'. They are Occupy's 99% and Romney's 47%. They are the faceless and nameless rabble, they are the mob and the city is their home.

Ignore, for a moment, the techno-fetish porn of military recruitment Trojan horses like Transformers or Battleship, and shine a light on this summer's greatest hits. In The Dark Knight Rises, Batman is the One, the lone voice in the wilderness vilified by the ungrateful city for whom he is the sole protector. With Catwoman they are the Two, his noblesse oblige spurring him on to reform her light-fingered Eliza Doolittle. With his butler Alfred, Commissioner Gordon, Morgan Freeman and the kid from 3rd Rock from the Sun they are The Many, the team of would-be heroes ineffectual without their mighty cowed leader to drive them on. While the masked Bane might serve as the film's poster-boy villain, the true protagonist is Gotham itself and the faceless filthy Mob who call it home. Gotham's degenerate denizens are the reason Bane plots the city's destruction, to cleanse it of their corruption and vice and when given the chance they rise up not against Bane and his criminal cohorts, but in tacit service to him, storming the institutions of the elite and dispensing summary justice through warped and perverted People's Courts. It is only when

They are the faceless and nameless rabble, they are the mob and the city is their home.

the forces of the State (the police) and the Church (the priest who ushers a busload of orphans to safety) unite behind the One and his Many is the Mob vanquished, put back in its place under the thumb of the civil hierarchy that Batman simultaneously leads and yet manages to remain outside of.

The Avengers indulges us with three Ones, a living flag, a billionaire playboy and a leather-clad human Patriot Act in an eye-patch, a Holy Trinity of US Republicanism, three perfect neo-liberal beings in one divine military-industrial complex. The film's central conflict is as much their internal struggle to unite their deeply dysfunctional Many behind a single One as it is with the faceless CGI horde they take time out at the end to overcome. Here the Mob is less the internal Other, but the external, an invasion of unwanted immigrants coming from an unknown elsewhere for reasons never made entirely clear, but most likely because they hate Freedom. Perhaps Captain America should simply have built a giant wall.

In a way it is this ubiquitous CGI that has enabled the demonisation of the horde. In the days before

digital trickery when the bad guys had to be played by real live people, mobs were expensive, so mano-a-mano fisticuffs and low-level gunfights were the order of the day. But with The Matrix trilogy battling the infinite agents of insidious government bureaucracy and George Lucas' tireless three-film struggle against the animated enemies of the free market in the Star Wars prequels, the pixelated gloves were off and Hollywood was free to let the Mobs run riot. The Lord of the Rings came to our screens with the warning, "Contains scenes of epic battle", and we cheered as a small band of heroes held fast against the unrelenting Orc armies at Helm's Deep. From the Matrix to Middle-Earth the theme was the same, the bigger the numbers, the more evil the crowd.

Even before CGI we were still trained to fear the mob. The drooling glistening teeth and eyeless onyx dome of Ridley Scott's titular Alien was made all the more horrifying in James Cameron's sequel by simple multiplication. While one Alien was bad, a nest of Aliens was more than the stuff of nightmare. Scott learned from this, transporting Cameron's

vision to the slums of Mogadishu in Black Hawk Down, where the poor and wretched of this war-torn city exist for Scott only to swarm insect-like in their multitudes. They race through the streets and over the rooftops to devour the brave but doomed heroes of the military Many. Poor or Alien, they all look the same when viewed from above like moving dots on a Google Earth map, sanitised and objectified as they are mown down in their scores.

In the Global South extras are cheap, as cheap as the lives they represent on screen. Filmed in Cape Town, the third of this summer's paeans to paternalism, Dredd, filled that screen with another teeming lawless underclass, abandoning their own cowed saviour to the criminals he tries to protect them from. Once again The City is the enemy, both creation and creator of the degenerate Mob who call it home. Once again the champion of law and order exists both as paragon of the ruling hierarchy and as the lone outsider, once again the massed poor serve both as his ward and as his nemesis.

The message here is clear, that there is no such thing as society, only individuals. Groups must only exist as rigid hierarchies, never as self-organised collectives. The rich are here to protect us from ourselves, and the poor are a mindless hydra whose grasping tentacles of decadence and corruption contaminate and pollute all that they come in contact with.

This is what the blockbuster does. It leaves behind doubt. It leaves behind fear. It leaves behind a sense of estrangement from our fellow citizens who have been transformed into The Other, the alien, the stranger, the enemy. Community and our global commonality become the dark things hiding in the shadows, seeking to swallow us whole, gorging themselves upon our individuality, our liberty, our soul. Survival means isolation or embracing the hierarchy. "Know your place," it whispers, "and we will keep you safe".

This summer The Avengers made over \$1.5bn in ticket sales worldwide, The Dark Knight Rises made over \$1bn. Twenty-five years ago when Thatcher proclaimed the death of society, she was roundly castigated for doing so. Today when Hollywood repeats this message, we give them \$2.5bn as a thank-you.

Perhaps Thatcher should have sold us all 3D glasses first.

The rich are here to protect us from ourselves, and the poor are a mindless hydra whose grasping tentacles of decadence and corruption contaminate and pollute all that they come in contact with.

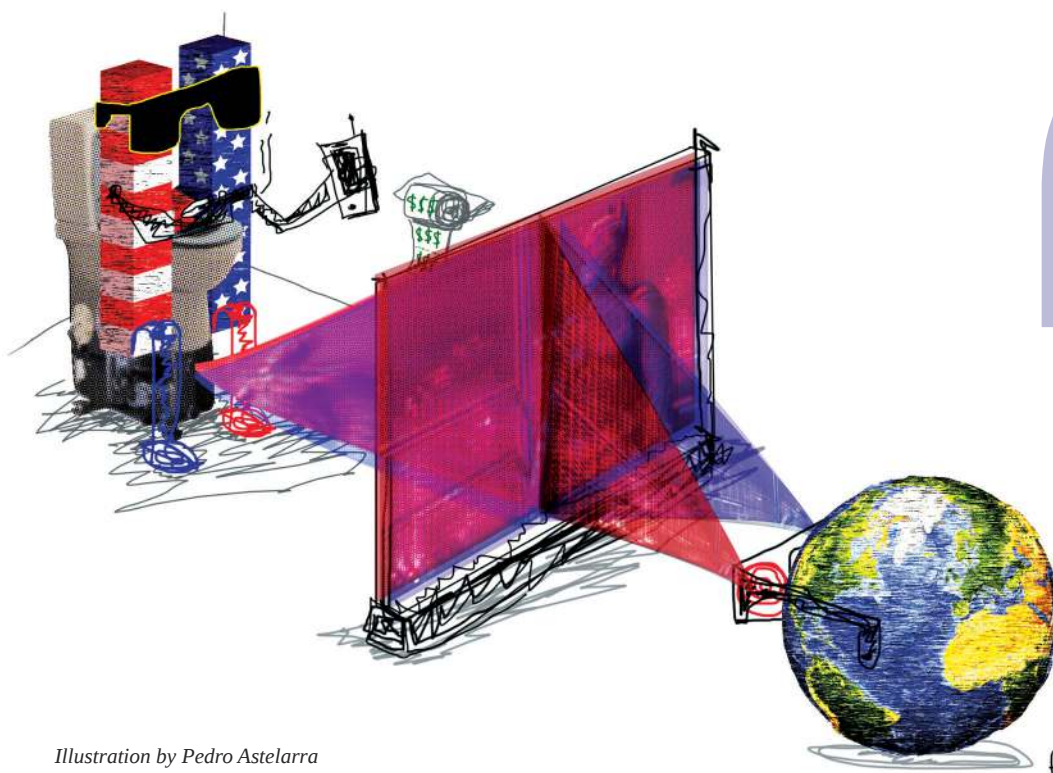
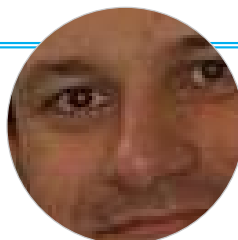


Illustration by Pedro Astelarra

1,700 bankers from the bailed-out banks are still on salaries over €100,000 - with 66 executives earning over €300,000. Just remember that the next time you hear Leo Varadkar telling you we're all in this together.



MATERIALS

- STICKS!
- STUFFING!
- STRING!
- THIS!
- FABRIC STRIPS!
- A PICTURE OF YR FAVOURITE POLITICIAN!

TIME TO GET CREATIVE WITH THE:

CURSE-DEM KIT!

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, US RABBLE MUST TURN TO THE FOLK ART OF VOODOO TO CURSE OUR RULERS!

- MAKE A CROSS SHAPE AND TIE WITH STRING
- WRAP STUFFING AROUND CROSS, STARTING FROM THE MIDDLE AND WORKING YR WAY OUT
- START WRAPPING WITH MATERIAL AND SECURE WITH GLUE AT ENDS. YOU MIGHT WANT TO LEAVE A TUFT AT THE TOP FOR THE SLICK HAIR-STYLES.
- STICK PICTURE OF FACE ON WITH GLUE. OPTIONAL: YOU MIGHT WANT TO ADD SOME PERSONAL ITEMS TO INCREASE THE VOODOO CONNECTION, E.G. BROWN ENVELOPE, ELECTION LEAFLET, ETC...
- NOW YOU WANT TO CAPTURE HIS/HER ESSENCE: SHAKE THE DOLL OVER A TV OR RADIO DURING A LIVE BROADCAST, AND THEN:

HATE IT! BURN IT! HURT IT! OWN IT!

Illustration by Redmonk

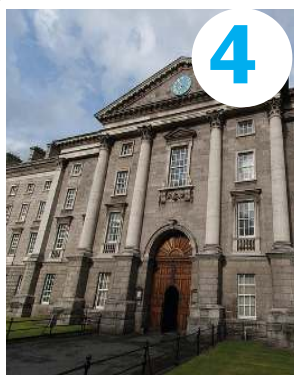
{TAKE FIVE}



LITTLE FECKERS
Hey mister!

They come in all shapes and sizes. Big ones, little ones, snotty-nosed, lazy-eyed, gap-toothed or freckle speckled. Cheeky chungfellas and yobbo young ones that shout after you as your dog drags you along the street. Halloween belongs to them, a festival of chaos punctuated with bangers, stolen pallets and a warm can of bulmers shared between five. On bicycles they come unlit whirling through the night like some steroid enhanced Dalek, pulling wheelies down the length of the M50. Haranguing you for fags to the chant of 'hey mister' and 'ah here leave it out'. Two-fingers up at the Gardai as they rush home to see their Mammy, the Dublin bold kids embodies the irreverent potential of this city.

But what is it about the hands down the pants?



THE GINGER MAN
Story Time

Obscene, offensive, outrageous, downright rude. These are all words presumably used to decry J.P. Donleavy's 20th century wonder of Irish literature known as The Ginger Man. Banned in Ireland and America for obscenity, there is now no harm at all in wiling away a tiresome afternoon following a homemade trail of the titular character, Sebastian Dangerfield. A work of explosive wit and sexual mischief, Donleavy's prose cognitively map 1940s Dublin through the deranged and drunken eyes of Trinity student and ex-pat Dangerfield. Tour Dalkey with a spring in your ragged shoes; fart about Trinity in full knowledge of your own inebriation; crash through the window of a swanky, upper class window in the middle of lunchtime service only to run home and have a go at your wife and child for not understanding your love of alcohol and other women. Well... Maybe just enjoy the walk...



BINGO
Legs 11, swit swooo

If you fancy an evening sans booze there's an underground movement out there that you may not have heard much about. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday night between 1,000 and 2,000 people pack out the National Stadium as well as other venues around Dublin like the Whitehall Grand Bingo Club. If you don't know what you're doing just ask for help and within moments you'll have a flock of blue rinses giving you advice, explaining the difference between a check and a house and honestly it's great gas. Pots of tea and the finest minerals accompany a fast and frenetic numbers game that is live linked across bingo houses in the city meaning one wrong call by you will draw tutts from upto 4,000 hardcore gamers across the city.



HOT SAUCE
What's your poison?

If you find yourself searching for that hotter fix and they're out of Frank's Hot Sauce in Dunnes visit hotsauceemporium.co.uk. Their produce rated on a pain scale from 3 - 10+ is the mecca for chilli junkies. For flavor with a kick we recommend Blair's Q Heat Wasabi Green Tea with jalapaeno & lime or the deliciously smokey El Yucateco Chipotle. But if its straight up obnoxious pain you're after go for the Sphincter Shrinker or the Colon Cleanser, just remember the sudcream tomorrow. About town, Boojum Burrito Bar offers a consistently changing selection of hot sauces to use as liberally as you dare. Your local Asian market is great for picking up unusual brands, just avoid the crowd-pleasing sweet chili. A notable mention is Hogan's Butchers on Wexford St, their Hot Squirt comes in a tub you'd easily mistake for poster paint if not for the slogan "We're proud of our squirt", and so are we.



KildareStreet.com

VAMPIRE CAPITALISTS, GHOST ESTATES AND ZOMBIE BANKS, IRELAND IS A TREASURE-TROVE OF HALLOWEEN COSTUME IDEAS.

This year we dressed up as our favourite government watchdog transparency website, KildareStreet.com, which raised nearly €8,000 in a zombie-themed appeal to bring it back from the dead.

Launched by John Handelaar and TheStory.ie's Gavin Sheridan, the site got its first boost when it won the Twitter-based crowd-funding competition Outvesting back in 2009, walking away with over €5,000 in a precursor to today's omnipresent Fund:IT campaigns. Since then it has been providing an actually useful, searchable alternative to the official and woefully inadequate Oireachtas website, maintained entirely through donations from its loyal users.

Such civic-mindedness could not go unnoticed by the Powers-That-Be. Dismayed that more people were using KildareStreet than the official website, the Oireachtas changed their system to be even less usable, shutting off their XML data stream and forcing KildareStreet out of business. With even TDs calling for its resurrection, the site went on the fund-raising offensive to build a better data-scraper and no longer rely on the munificence of the Oireachtas.

In an era when successive politicians have pledged themselves to open data and transparency, the current KildareStreet saga shows how hollow their words actually are. rabble salutes the KildareStreet Massive, and hopes their online treat did the trick.

Photos by Paul Reynolds

rabble

A Financial Appeal To Our Readers.

It cost us 1,682 squids to print this issue of 10,000 copies...



rabble might be free to you. But it costs us a damn fortune to print...

What you are holding in your hands is produced by a team of volunteers on a strictly not for profit basis. Consider rabble a wager with Dublin. We reckon the city can sustain a non-profit, newspaper that gives space to all its best impulses.

rabble set out over a year ago to create a space for the passionate telling of truths, muck-raking journalism and well aimed pot-shots at illegitimate authority. We want to build an uncompromisingly independent paper. To do so means finding a secure

financial footing.

We've hustled and blagged - but meeting our printing bill is getting harder. Never mind the countless hours of work that goes into production.

We want to continue offering an alternative look at Ireland after the boom and help contribute to the popular imagination of what is possible. rabble wants to continue offering a caustic eye on our gracious leaders and power brokers, as well as supporting DIY arts and culture.

BUT rabble will only survive if it is funded from the bottom up by it's readers. That is the only way we'll remain a truly independent voice.

Here's a breakdown of how we financially survived 2012 through a combination of gigs, reader support and ethical advertising.

Ads - 63%
Gigs - 16%
Reader Donations - 12%
Merchandise - 9%

You can donate to us online at **www.rabble.ie/support**

Come on folks, we're worth it!



To set up a regular standing order subscription to support rabble magazine, please complete this form and drop it into yizzer bank.

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I would like to make a regular gift via standing order of:

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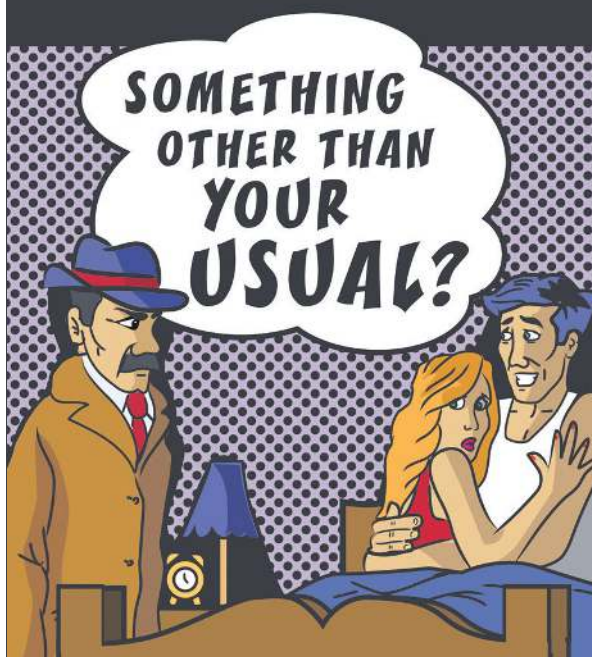
And thereafter the same sum in instalments to rabble, Ulster Bank, Sort Code 98 50 10 Account Number 13603451

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rabble supports those who fight with a new world in their hearts and encourages those creating cultures that seed hope in bleak times...





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Saturday 22nd Dec - Dublin

KING 7 @ 9PM - SCOUT HARDCASTLE SET
WITH LIONEL, JIMMY PENGUIN, ZYMÉ AND CRABCLAW
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Saturday 28th Dec - Dublin

SEOMRA SPRAOI @ 9PM - MELJOANN LIVE SHOW
WITH ED DEYANE, DAN JACOBSON, TONY HIGGINS
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www.meljoann.com
www.boyscoutaudio.com
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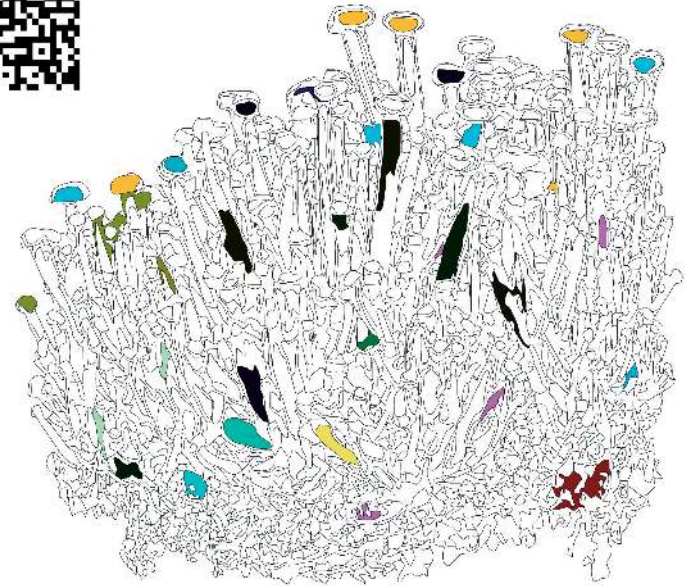
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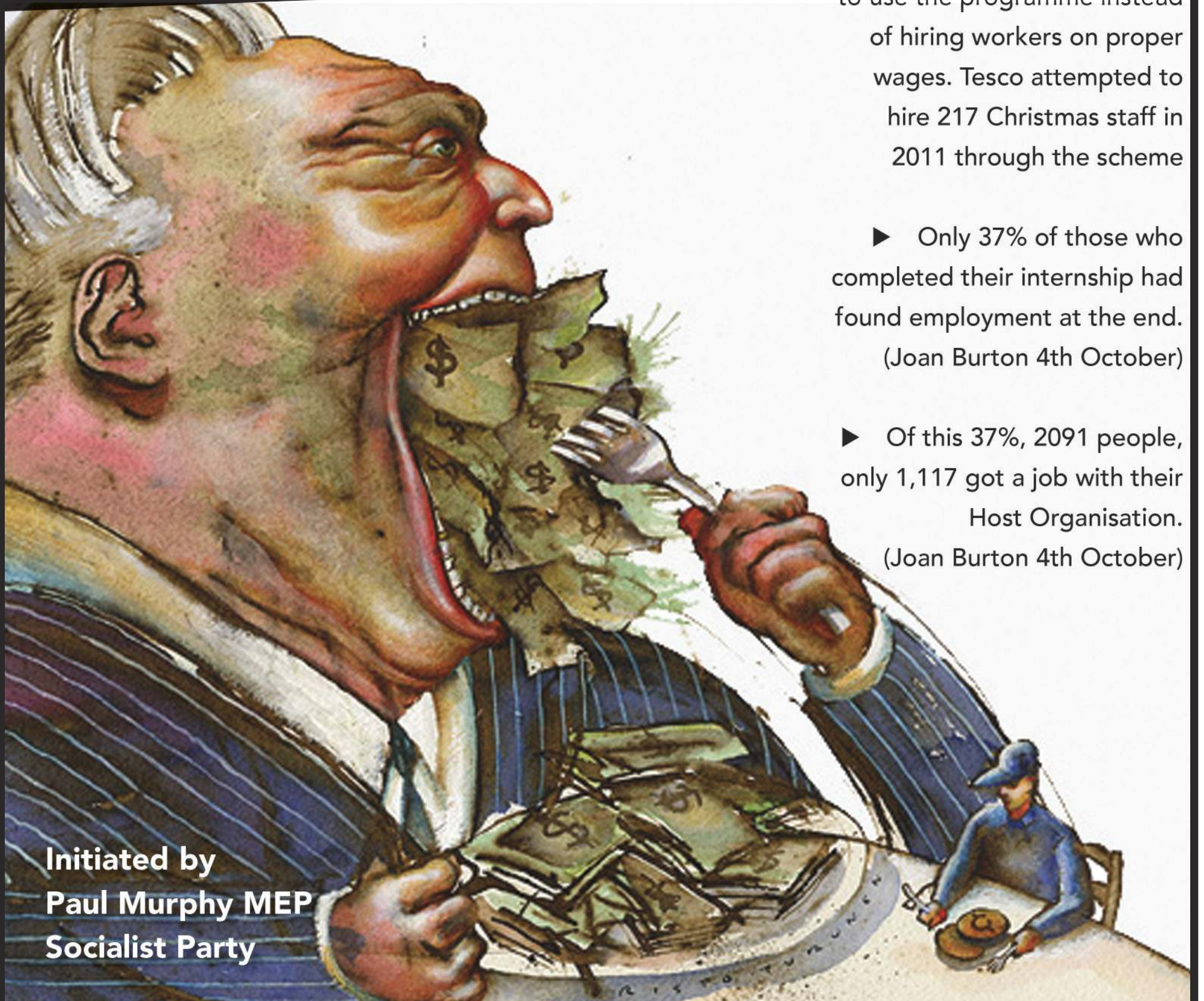
Send your Scambridge story to info@scambridge.org

► Huge multinationals like Tesco, O2 Telefonica and GlaxoSmithKline are attempting to use the programme instead of hiring workers on proper wages. Tesco attempted to hire 217 Christmas staff in 2011 through the scheme

► Only 37% of those who completed their internship had found employment at the end.
(Joan Burton 4th October)

► Of this 37%, 2091 people, only 1,117 got a job with their Host Organisation.
(Joan Burton 4th October)

Initiated by
Paul Murphy MEP
Socialist Party



Marian Finucane dismissed as 'baloney' claims that her €500,000 salary (since cut by 30%) was for just 4 hours work at the weekend. 'Endless hours of

research' go into the programmes she insisted. She recently admitted on air never having heard of Jon Stewart or his Daily Show. Check @FantasticMar to keep up ;)



{FLASH FICTION}



The Venial Glint

MY FATHER WAS A LOST CAUSE, GRANNY INFORMED US SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING TO SPEND HER FINAL YEAR OF WISDOM AND ILLNESS WITH US, AND BY THE TIME SHE WAS ALMOST READY TO BE JUDGED HERSELF, CONFINED TO HER ARMCHAIR IN THE LIVING ROOM FROM MORNING UNTIL EVENING WHEN HE - THE GREAT SINNER - WOULD CARRY HER TO BED, SHE HAD GIVEN UP SPEAKING TO HIM ENTIRELY, JUDGING HIM SOLELY WITH HER EYES.

Despite her assurances that even a venial sin could get you barred from heaven, there were occasions when my mother's mother was so taken with the idea of damnation that a definite hint of affection could be detected in her voice when she spoke of it. She would turn bright red as her sermonising became more vitriolic, and her eyes would seem to shine. My father called it the 'venial glint', and said that if she didn't feck off to heaven soon he would have her removed from the house - or remove himself - to escape it.

Venial sins were like pennies, she told us, adding up to make a pound, and if you didn't repent your pennies you would be left with a pound of mortal sin. I was sure that if she didn't stop talking about venial sins my father would commit a mortal one.

My mother was a sinner by virtue of marrying my father, who was soon forced to enjoy his evening whisky in the shed. I was a sinner for not finishing my vegetables and a heathen for watching cartoons. The newsreader was a sinner for wearing make-up, the weatherman for predicting God's wind, and the dog for being a dog. We were all doomed.

On the evening she finally departed for heaven, there was an air of quiet celebration in the house. I was allowed to watch television instead of doing my homework, my father was allowed his whisky in the living room for the first time in almost a year, and my mother sat peacefully while the colour that had drained from her face within days of Granny moving in began to return.

I wondered whether Granny was as happy as the rest of us that she was finally up in heaven, and whether her exacting standards would be too much even for the angels. My father, after a whisky too many, wondered aloud how long - if she had managed to get there - it would take for God to have her removed, now that she was living in his house, or whether the big man would simply remove himself and return to us mortals for an early second coming, just to escape that venial glint...

It was a sin to say such a thing. I was sure, but my mother said that God would understand, now that he'd finally met her in person.

Written by Chris Connolly

Illustration by Thomas McCarthy

Submit yer
flash fiction to
info@rabble.ie



Fashion Whores

DAAARRRRRLINGS. *MWAH *MWAH* IT'S SOOOO GOOD TO BE BACK AMONG THE COMMON PEOPLE. SAN TROPEZ WAS BUZZING DAARRRLINGS BUT DJ-ING IS JUST SOOOO LAST YEAR. ALL THAT POUTING AND FIDDLING WITH AUDIO CABLES, AND THAT'S BEFORE YOU EVEN PRESS PLAY ON YOUR IPOD! THE HEADPHONES REALLY LIMIT HOW YOU STYLE YOUR HAIR.

Anyway rabblers, hot on the heels of the Paris and London fashion weeks its time to think about the latest trends for next season. Darrrrlings 2013 will all be about sexy children honeys. Remember sweeties, fashion is an industry and industries need to expand. Now that most adult men and women spend more on fashion than they do on charity it's time to expand into developing markets so to speak. And nowhere is more developing than your five year old!

The word on the catwalks it that its called 'Lolita-chic'. Think 'Tiaras and tantrums' hits the high streets - animal prints, heels, make-up and waxing (or lack of it. Kids just have all the luck daarlings). And we're not sexist here in Fashion Whore HQ, sweeties we've a few ideas to make your little men into, well, men I suppose. Here's my 'Lolita-chic' top four:

1. SEXY SWIMWARE

Liz Hurley is a woman who knows how to market her assets and in her latest summer collection she is helping you market your little girls too. Her kids swimware collection included a selection of animal print bikinis for the under eights. Because obviously little girls have potential tits which are nearly as sexy as adult tits and need to be protected for future topless scenes Liz?

2. WAX AND SHAVE DOLLS

It all started with the Mattel's 'Clawdeen Wolf' doll which is aimed at 6 year olds and up. Clawdeen describes her 'freaky flaw' as 'my hair is worthy of a shampoo commercial, and that's just what grows on my legs. Plucking and shaving is definitely a full-time job but that's a small price to pay for being scarily fabulous' and her fav pastime as 'flirting with boys'. Its rumored that next season we'll have a hair-away barbie with special wipe away pubic hair but the same blank genitals.

3. LIVING DOLLS

Just about everything you need to know in the title. Exquisite objects which should make no noise, express no opinions and only exist to be gazed upon. Inspired by annie this trend has only recently made its way west. Young women and girls make themselves up to look like doe-eyed cartoons and take fashion-shoot style pics which they post online. If you're querying the sexual connotations play this drinking game - one drink for every glimpse of knickers (always white and lacey) whilst pursuing a living doll site. You'll be pissed in no time and also broke - kiddy porn don't come cheap!

4. TEEN BOYS

With the celebrity worshipping twittersphere grunting over Justin Bieber, One Direction's Harry Styles and Edward Cullen (he is meant to look like a 17 year old) a 20 year age gap between a teen and their lover has suddenly become acceptable. Oh, its okay because it is a middle-aged women flicking her bean rather than a dirty old man in a raincoat. Sorry, I missed the memo about how women are so much less powerful than men that we couldn't even exercise it over a guy half our age.

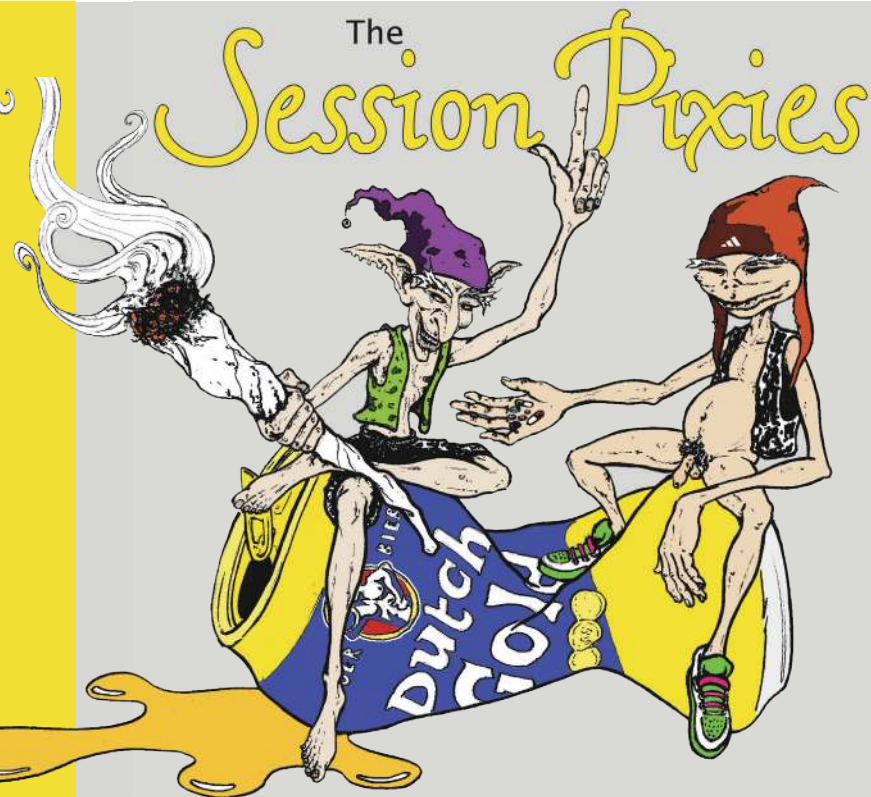
Illustration by Akofa



Felix Baumgartner broke the sound barrier on 14th October when he leapt from 39km above sea level. Covered from head to toe in Red Bull gear he managed to sprout

wings (i.e. a parachute) without actually imbibing any of that toxic rocket fuel. Most impressive was his landing, executed with aplomb as he walked off like the end of an Ocean's

Eleven flick. No doubt Old Spice or George Clooney will be looking to pimp him out soon enough.



YES FOLKS, THEY'RE BACK AND RESTED AFTER A SUMMER SPENT WRECKING HEADS AT 9AM IN FESTIVAL CAMPSITES. MEET OUR HOLISTIC LIFESTYLE, ADVICE AND COUNSELLING PEDDLERS - THE SESSION PIXIES...

Dear Session Pixies,

I stopped taking pills and smokin' dope 2 years ago. Now I'm bored by my mates banging on about getting high. If I have to listen to them express their surprise at how they got 'fucking wired!' one more time I'm gonna lose it. How do I make them shut the fuck up?

Rob, Ballybough.

Wee Robbie,

Don't be so hard on your mates. They clearly lead a simple existence which involves little more than getting blasted at the weekend and baked during the week. While you might have moved on, the grown-up world can be a scary place and sometimes it's just easier to shite on about the old reliables like which little fellas will leave ya more mashed than a pot of spuds.

If it's really bothering you, try shouting 'Booooo-ing' at the top of your voice when the topic comes up. Or you could enter an account of genital rot resulting from the yoke de jour on PillReports.com and bring it to the attention of yer mates to try scare them straight. Or just find some new mates.

Dear Session Pixies,

My girlfriend is really angry because I keep printing pictures of her sister off of Facebook and sticking them into a special scrapbook. How can I study in peace when she keeps at me all the

time?

John, Portobello.

Dear John,

Try to find quiet times during the day to set aside as 'me' time, and in which you can work undisturbed. Sit your girlfriend down and explain to her in no uncertain terms that she is not to bother you during these times. Routine is essential, so try to stick to a schedule as much as possible. Perhaps set your alarm to wake an hour earlier in the morning, as often the most quality learning is done when the mind is fresh after a good night's sleep. Good luck!

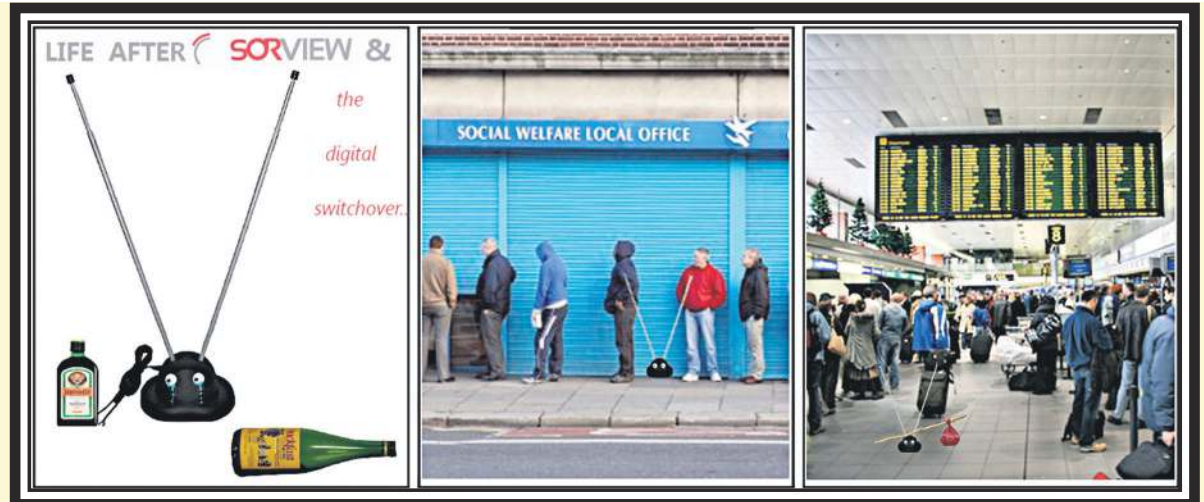
Dear Session Pixies,

I'm a 32 year old solicitor, living a skinny latte lifestyle in the gritty gaybourhood of D8. Me ma has me head wrecked. Her phone calls are an interrogation - she's OD'd on Liveline and keeps warning me to stay away from water cos some dude drowned in Oz. Now some biddy down her Silver Surfer course told her about email scams and she thinks my Nigerian neighbours are trying to steal my wages and transfer chickens into my bank account. What am I to do?

Risteard, D8.

Dear Risteard,

The Pixies believe that honesty just gets you into trouble. However, on this occasion, invite the Ma up to the big smoke for a day out. Bring her along to the food co-op for a latte and introduce her to your mate, Adejola the nice Nigerian guy from next door. While the coffee drains and the truth dawns she'll forget all about the inherent dangers of D8 living (dog poo, scarcity of arborio rice and the occasional street 'character').



Miley's Purgatory

WASN'T IT THAT PRINCE VALIANT FELLAH THAT ONCE SAID "TO DIE WOULD BE A GREAT ADVENTURE"? WELL I CAN TELL YA ONE THING, IT T'WAS THAT.

I suppose the best thing I could liken it to, would be smoking a fat bowl of DMT in a plush egg chair inside Salvador Dali's skull. 'Twas fierce unheard of, I can tell ya that much. Now, I would have thought my track record with the heavenly powers that be was spotless. But as fate wanted it, there was a mix up at the pearly gates. I had gotten used to being called 'Miley' in supermarkets. The price of fame, as they call it sure. Yet, you can imagine my shock to hear no less than Saint Peter himself confuse me with the aforementioned character from the acclaimed RTE rural drama. In shock and protest, I stammered briefly, attempting to formulate the words that would distinguish me as an actor merely portraying the man they had flagged as an offender. But I found myself being ushered into a side office by broad shouldered, square jawed, Eastern European looking Angels, to face judgement from the Almighty himself.

"N-Now... hold on a second, t-there ahem... seems to be some element of confusion here, your

Greatness.... With all the respect in the world, sir... I am simply an Actor by the name of Mick L..."

"SILENCE MILES!!!!" Boomed the angry creator, with a vehemence comparable to Blackie Conors after a drop too many of the pure.

"FOR THE SIN OF INFIDELITY AGAINST YOUR SOUL-MATE, BIDDY, YOU SHALL BE BANISHED TO YOUR OWN PERSONAL PURGATORY, WHERE YOU SHALL REFLECT ON YOUR ACTIONS FOR AN INDEFINITE ETERNITY!"

Well Holy God.... before I had opportunity to protest my innocence, I found myself engulfed in a flash of pure white energy, and vanished. I awoke and immediately recognised the Kilcoole hay-barn from our days on the set of Glenroe. Yet as I staggered to my feet, I felt more youthful and spritely, and indeed glad to be returned to this earthly realm. But what a shock as I caught a glimpse of my own reflection in a trough. The fecker had reincarnated me as a calf! Sure what else could I do but stand there on four legs, pondering the significance of it all. Shortly after dusk, I heard approaching footsteps, and my own voice, playful and giggling like a schoolgirl in May.... and then hers.... Fidelma, the siren Cailín, leading me on with her woven curls, faking that fall onto the hay bails. It was happening again before my very eyes, black and wide as they now were.

And so, I was forced to watch it all once more, as a mere ignorant beast. Although... as I watched my pelvis gyrating with that age old circular rhythm, I wondered who the bigger beast truly was. Well Holy

God, the torment! When it was all said and done, I watched my youthful self exit the barn filled with regret, just as I had done so many moons ago. I felt like Marty McFly at the 'Enchantment under the Sea' hop in Back to the Future 2, except that t'was I was the one getting the sandbags over the head, not Biff's goons. A bovine tear ran down my snout. I laid my head in my hooves and tried to get some shut-eye, unsure of where tomorrow was to lead me.

But just then, an intense white light enshrouded me once more, sorta like the intro to Quantum Leap. And there I was, back at the beginning of the same day, now living as a Tyre bolt in a Tractor, parked in a conveniently tortuous position to give me a view of the sequence again, from an alternate angle.... And so I was forced to witness the events over and over for evermore, like that that film with yer man who was in Ghostbusters. As livestock, machinery, and most mercilessly - inanimate objects, where the lack of genitalia makes even reflective arousal an impossibility. At the time of writing I am a splinter of wood in a ceiling beam of the barn, which whilst offering one of the most splendid views of the proceedings to date, is in equal measure the most disturbing, as I have just noticed that Dinny has been hiding behind a drum of Diesel enjoying a voyeuristic indulgence all of his own the entire time. Well Holy God indeed.... this truly was the 'fillet' of personal purgatory scenarios.

Words by John Leech

Illustration by Dara Lynch



All That Glitters...

THE CORNERS CUT AND SHORTCUTS TAKEN DURING IRELAND’S PROPERTY BOOM MEAN THAT PRIORY HALL, NEGATIVE EQUITY AND HALF-FINISHED GHOST ESTATES ARE BUT THE VERY TIP OF A CONTINENTAL-SHELF SIZED ICEBERG, AND EVERY DAY BRINGS NEW TITANIC TALES OF GRIEF AND MISERY. THE LATEST MAYDAY TO REACH OUR EARS CAME IN A SHORT, SINGLE WORD: PYRITE.

Pyrite occurs naturally in certain rock formations. Left alone in the ground it’s grand, but when a quarry in North County Dublin sold this ‘fool’s gold’ to developers for use as infill beneath floor slabs, disaster beckoned. Aoife McGee’s house was built in 2003 and tested positive for Pyrite in 2009. She discovered the problem when cracks began to appear and grow; “it was really when the kitchen floor snapped in half and I investigated by pulling up a few tiles I saw that the concrete slab had snapped in half underneath”.

Aoife also has a “visibly growing gable wall where you can see that the house is actually leaning forward. You come in from work every day and you are looking at the cracks and you assess what new damage there is. It completely takes over your life. Some days it gets to you so much, there have been times that I have driven into my estate and it’s just gotten too much and I have turned around and driven right back out again, it’s really devastating.”

Pyrite causes damage when it comes into contact with water and expands. Then it heaves and cracks leaving structural damage in buildings. Remediation work typically involves removing the concrete floor slabs and the infill beneath the floor, then replacing it with high quality material before replacing the floor slabs and repairing the walls and any other structural damage. This can run into the tens of thousands of euro.

Pyrite emerged first in North County Dublin in several new housing developments in 2007. Since then schools and community buildings have also tested positive. While the quarry that was selling Pyrite-infected materials has shut down and a number of houses in the first estates which discovered the problem have been sorted out, others are still waiting for their homes to be fixed.

Derek Cribbin, another homeowner living in a Pyrite-damaged home, explained; “it’s the psychological impact of it. I have three young kids... we try our best not to talk about it in front of them but the little lad, the five year old, the other

day wanted to know when we were going to move out of the house and when were we going to get the Pyrite out”.

“Our careers are on hold because we can’t focus on doing any courses. Your attention is taken away from everything because when you are in the house you see the damage that is being caused everyday. There is also an awful sense of helplessness because we are outside the six years statute of limitations so we can’t go after anybody... there is nothing from a legal point of view that we can do. Our house is only seven years old but it is as if that’s tough shit, the law doesn’t see us as having a case against anyone.”

While the Government-appointed Pyrite Panel Report puts the number of Pyrite claims lodged with a structural guarantee insurance company at about 850, this is considered to be a conservative estimate of the numbers affected. All new homes that are sold come with a structural guarantee included. The main structural guarantee insurer in Ireland is Homebond which provides a low cost, minimal cover structural insurance system. The result has been disastrous for homeowners.

Sandra Lewis of Pyrite Action told rabble that, “everybody felt very comfortable that they had a structural guarantee from Homebond which was the industry leader”. However in August 2011 Homebond sent letters stating that they had no legal liability whatsoever and weren’t going to have any hand, act or part in repairing homes. The insurance, according to Sandra, was “not worth the paper it was written on. It’s like picking and choosing what you will and will not cover, what they did is they started to remediate them but then realised the extent of it and pulled back from it”.

While Pyrite damage in Ireland is a relatively new phenomenon it emerged as a significant problem in the UK in the 1960s and also in Canada in the 1990s. Since then most Western countries insist on rigorous and ongoing geological testing of quarries to ensure that Pyrite-infected materials cannot be sold. Despite recent problems with Pyrite, Ireland still fails to insist on any level of

geological testing.

The response from County Councils, who have specific legal responsibilities as building control authorities, has been minimal. Fingal County Council, which was home to the quarry selling Pyrite, recently published a report claiming knowledge of only a handful of Pyrite-affected homes in their area. This is despite conservative estimates already published by the Government indicating that 570 homeowners in Fingal have lodged claims for Pyrite damage. Local authorities have generally failed to take enforcement action against developers who have breached building control regulations by using defective materials such as Pyrite.

Householders seeking to address the Pyrite problem have also had to contend with a culture of silence. Sandra told us that “it won’t get fixed if people won’t put up their hands and say they have a problem and unfortunately it is one of those things that people have been quite secretive about because they don’t want to be the one person on their road raising their hand about the problem. [They] don’t want to bring their property value down, or they don’t want to let it be known that their development has Pyrite, but at the end of the day everybody knows, Ireland is so small. Every engineer worth their salt going into your house will spot it straight away, there will be no mistaking it. So you won’t sell your house anyway, you know you have to acknowledge the problem to fix it and hopefully get certified. It won’t go away, it’s a one way thing, it will only get worse unless it is remedied.”

The pot of gold at the end of the Celtic Tiger rainbow is a steaming pile of Pyrite. While the lives of Aoife, Derek and hundreds of others have been destroyed, yet again those responsible are beyond reach, untouchable and laughing all the way to the bank. Unreachable, that is, until people stand up and speak out.

Photo by Paul Reynolds

