

THE MAGAZINE FOR IMPACT MEMBERS

work & life

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BREXIT STRATEGY?

The Great Unknown

PLUS

PUBLIC SERVICE PAY COMMISSION
SLIGO ACTIVISTS
HEALTH JOB EVALUATION
PREGNANCY AND THE LAW

ALSO INSIDE

ADDICTION REVENGE TRAGEDY.
MEDIA & EQUALITY. LIFE IN 'THE JUNGLE'.
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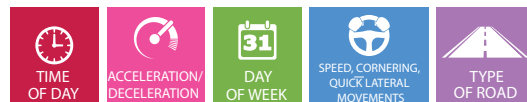
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THE BIG PICTURE - WORLD IN CRISIS

AS THE winter approaches, the greatest movement of displaced people the modern world has ever known continues. Some 65 million people have been displaced from their homes, 21 million (half of whom are children) are refugees for whom escape from countries like Syria and Eritrea was a matter of life and death. They are involuntary victims of political failure, war and climate change. In all, almost 1% of the world's population is homeless and seeking a better, safer life.

The Global Solidarity Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) recently visited the infamous makeshift city of 10,000 people in Calais, France, known as 'The Jungle'. You can read the committee's report on page 40. They encountered stories of torture and brutalisation, illness and injury, determination, resilience, generosity and hope.

As international borders harden, the plight of the world's migrants and refugees deepens. More of them become caught in a 'no man's land' in places like Calais or in the desert between Syria and Jordan, where 75,000 refugees are currently trapped.

The recent UN summit and subsequent adoption of the "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants" has provoked mixed feelings around the globe. Public Services International (PSI) notes: "On the one hand, there is hope in seeing UN member States reaffirming their obligation to human rights and humanitarian law. On the other hand, the declaration fails to make full and concrete commitments on responsibility sharing for refugees."

PSI is also deeply concerned about declaration's "overwhelming welcome" to the private sector to upscale its involvement

in migration and refugee services, as well as the potential prospect of poorer countries (who are hosting the bulk of the refugees) having to take on bank loans to support their refugee communities.

Forced repatriation, tougher policing and a hardening of attitudes by increasingly right-wing political interests across Europe suggest the crisis is set to continue, and there is a real danger that the world will become desensitized to the problem.

For most of us, the scale of the crisis is overwhelming. However, we should draw on the spirit of generosity and hope that endures within the improvised boundaries of Calais's 'Jungle', and upon our collective capacity to offer a hand of friendship and assistance to the world's most vulnerable people.

IMPACT members unanimously backed a conference motion in May calling on government to increase the number of refugees accepted into the country under refugee relocation and resettlement programmes.

Whether supporting the work of the many excellent agencies providing emergency aid to migrants and refugees, or simply holding our public representatives to account on Ireland's commitment to take in more refugees, we can all play a part in trying to solve the greatest humanitarian crisis of our lifetime.

Through its 25 year history, IMPACT has campaigned for a humanitarian and compassionate response to asylum seekers, as well as adequate funding and decent conditions for those who deliver services to them.

More than ever, we need to continue those efforts ●

FOUR LIVES - HARRY NICHOLLS



As part of our continuing series to mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, we look at the role of four members of the various organisations that form today's IMPACT organisation. These stories have been drawn together in the *Four Lives* publication by IMPACT general secretary Shay Cody. In this final summarised extract we look at the involvement of Harry Nicholls.

ON EASTER Monday 1916, early in the afternoon, Harry Nicholls hurriedly cycled down Earlsfort Terrace, dressed in civilian clothes and carrying an automatic pistol, his pockets bulging with bullets.

Nicholls was a captain in A Company, 4th Battalion of the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers, based at Larkfield in Kimmage. On Monday morning he cycled to Cathal Brugha's house to discover that he had already left for Kimmage to mobilise the 4th Battalion. It was as he was cycling into the city to locate his battalion that he turned down Earlsfort Terrace.

The Citizen Army, under the command of Michael Mallin, was taking control of St Stephen's Green. Nicholls decided that it was best to fight where he stood.

There was little in his family background to make this member of the Church of Ireland into a rebel. His father was English. Harry was born in Derry in 1890. His introduction to rebel attitudes was the Gaelic League, which gave the entry to the IRB.

Nicholls himself credited his radicalism to the experience of police brutality during the 1913 lockout.

He worked as an engineer with Dublin Corporation and, along with Ceannt, was a strong trade unionist in the Dublin Municipal Officers' Association (DMOA) founded in 1901.

Elected to the DMOA he used that association as a springboard to launch a series of increasingly national organisations that culminated, in the same week that the first Dáil assembled, in the Irish Local Government Officers Trade Union (ILGOU). The ILGOU was a national trade union for local government.

An aggressively militant campaign on pay was brought to a head with a strike by the Dublin Corporation officers in 1920, at the height of the War of Independence and at the moment when Sinn Féin was completing its sweep of the local government elections.

The strike, called by Nicholls, was the first strike ever in Great Britain or Ireland by local government officials. The Corporation agreed to wage increases and the ILGOU emerged as the nationwide trade union of local government officials.

He died in 1975 and is buried in the churchyard of Enniskerry parish.

FOUR LIVES is available from IMPACT trade union. If you would like to receive a free copy contact info@impact.ie or your union branch ●

THAT WAS THEN - IMPACT 25

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT

THIS YEAR IMPACT proudly marks 25 years of working on behalf of its members across the country. The union was created through a merger of three organisations with strong traditions of protecting and advancing the interests of working people, their families, and their communities.

The founding unions came together in 1991, and their shared vision of what could be achieved though IMPACT has driven its progress and development over the last quarter of a century.

The organisations that founded IMPACT were the Local Government and Public Services Union (LGPSU), the Union of Professional and Technical Civil Servants (UPTCS) and the Irish Municipal Employees' Trade Union. Over the years, other unions and associations – like the Irish Airline Pilots' Association and the Federated Union of Government Employees, threw in their lot with what quickly became one of Ireland's fastest-growing and most influential trade unions.

While the union prides itself on being forward-looking, there is much to take pride in from the past. IMPACT 25 is a special publication to mark this milestone in words and pictures. It is, by no means, the complete history of IMPACT's first 25 years, but it is a celebration of some of the events and issues – and the people – that have made their mark in this initial quarter-century.

Every IMPACT member and activist has contributed to the story, regardless of how long they've been a member, or how deeply they've been involved ●

To get your FREE copy of IMPACT 25 contact: info@impact.ie or your local IMPACT branch.



A passion for lifelong learning

Mark Wynne, from the union's Municipal Employees branch, was elected as IMPACT honorary health and safety officer at this year's biennial delegate conference in Killarney. MARTINA O'LEARY talks to Mark about his union activism and his passion for lifelong learning.

WHILE I was walking over to the civic offices on Dublin's Wood Quay to meet Mark, I was thinking about Mark's involvement with the union over many years, and about the power of an idea.

Mark has been instrumental in showing how one member's idea develops into union policy in two key areas of IMPACT policy. Back in 2002 Mark put a motion to his branch executive to support the smoking ban in public places. The branch took it to conference, and from that point on the union got behind one of the most significant changes in public health policy in our lifetime.

Four years ago Mark successfully put forward another motion suggesting the creation of a new elected position of IMPACT health and safety officer. Mark is now IMPACT's second elected health and safety officer. ►

Mark works in Dublin City Council, formerly Dublin Corporation. "I finished my education at group cert (the day vocational cert), and joined Dublin Corporation's cleansing department, where me and my handcart worked for two years."

Years later, while driving the bin lorry at work during the day, Mark decided to do a degree at night, progressing to a Master's degree in work and organisational psychology three years ago. Since 2006 Mark has been the health and safety officer for the council's housing department.

"One of my biggest regrets was not staying on in school and going to college as a young man. If I was an 18-year old out there pushing a handcart, I'd tell me to get back to college. This beautiful term lifelong learning, it's so important. There's a section of society that just doesn't get the third level thing, I come from that background. Within the cohort of my class, none of us went to third level, it's only that I went back as an adult. I was the first in my family to go to college, my Dad was still alive, he was there for the conferring and you've never seen a man as proud," says Mark.

He explains that getting involved in IMPACT opened the gate to all of that. "IMPACT is fantastic, the union allows you access to education, be it through your branch or head office. They encourage you, especially in my role as health representative, you are almost mentored to move on, to take that step further. I'm delighted the new Step Up mentoring programme for members has been introduced. Anytime we are out with people my wife would even say we are grateful to the union. My employer has been fantastic as well, once you start, you are encouraged. Education is so rewarding, you meet people from other walks of life, and it gives you a broader outlook."

Shop steward

I've known Mark a long time from being involved in IMPACT. Despite being a slightly reluctant interviewee, his sunny disposition and laid back approach stands out. As he puts it, it's as easy to be worried as not.

I asked Mark about the challenges of being a shop steward for the union. "At times it can be difficult to reach consensus, there is a skill to this. It just doesn't come about, it's being prepared to listen. You might have a particular opinion and feel this is the way things should go, but it takes time to get there."

So what possessed Mark to go for election? "I really think I have something to contribute. Where I come from, my outlook and thinking, I feel I can make a difference, it's not for any self-glory. I'm part of Dublin City Council Credit Union for the same reason."

"Being part of IMPACT is more than an insurance policy, it's more than cheap travel insurance, it's more than a car draw. It's a sense of a cooperative. I know it's hard to get this across, it's really about strength in numbers, it is simply that, speaking with one voice. There are financial benefits to being part of the union, we need to be able to sell the other benefits, solidarity, this old adage – a hurt to one is a hurt to all. It might seem old fashioned, cloth cap sort of stuff, but it's not, that's the bones of it. I think we need to get it across more," explained Mark.

"I think IMPACT is a great organisation, and we are making a difference in lots of ways. But I think our identity within IMPACT is diluted slightly. We are a modern, outward looking organisation, but we have to look after what's core. At the top level, we have almost become irrelevant to the boys sweeping the street, and they think, we are going to get the pay rise anyway, so I don't need to engage. The only time they engage with the union is when they get into trouble. We need to change that," says Mark.

What about the future? "I'm really looking forward to this new union project, if it goes ahead, I think it will be good for us in IMPACT and for the CPSU and PSEU."

Spare time

Mark has a wide range of interests. When he's not walking – he walked the 90 miles of the Royal Canal last year – he's on his little boat based on the Shannon, or travelling. This summer he travelled by train from Paris to Shanghai on the Trans Mongolian Railway, visiting Warsaw, Moscow and Beijing along the way. You might even find him tending his Japanese garden. "There's nothing as pleasant as sitting in the shade in my garden reading a book. It's paradise on earth, I know we give out, but it's the simple things that make me happy, and it's about good company too," says Mark.

While he's very relaxed, it's obvious too that there are inner reserves of strength. I ask him where this comes from? "My mother left home when both I and my siblings were very young, which had an indelible effect on us, it instilled a certain amount of resilience. My Dad was a staunch trade unionist, a good man, and thinking about him would get you through, and of course my wife and family."

Is he always that relaxed? "I don't watch TV very often, but when I do I shout and roar at it. I've no patience. The like of Trump and that right wing politics, drives me crazy. People's apathy towards this is scary, people don't seem that interested any more, it's sad and terrifying at the same time."

Our interview almost done, I can sense Mark's relief. Anything to add? "I'm grateful to IMPACT, for the opportunities I've been given. It's been wonderful. I would recommend it to anyone to get on the branch committee, it gives you confidence, and it allows you to speak up for yourself. That's sense of belonging, we can't lose that."

Mark will chair IMPACT's health and safety committee, backed up with the support of union staff Matt Staunton and Dessie Robinson ●

The great unknown

With the country only just emerging from the darkness of economic crisis, the unexpected obstacle of Brexit raises lots of questions about its potential effects on Ireland's future. Now that the Tory government has outlined a schedule for departure from the EU, NIAL SHANAHAN looks at the possible implications for Irish workers.

I BEGGED them not to do it. When I say I begged, I wrote a deliberately heartfelt appeal to my first generation Irish cousins in Britain. It was a long-winded note and maybe even a bit desperate, but the MP Jo Cox had just been killed and the referendum, on whether or not Britain should stay in the EU, had taken a dark turn.

My message to them concluded, "As you make a decision that is likely to have deep repercussions for a generation or more, I hope that the spirit of inclusivity and shared experience (and loving the differences) informs how you vote." This exchange took place online. The immediate silence was deafening. The short replies that eventually came my way revealed I was hopelessly out of touch with their voting intentions.

As the referendum results came in on the morning of 24th June, it became clear very early on what was happening. What was unclear then, and remains unclear now, is what happens next.

"They want to have their cake and eat it, by keeping the doctors, nurses and other qualified workers, and dismissing anybody who might look as though they need any kind of social welfare assistance."

– Patricia King

One of my cousins, who lives on the south coast of England, got in touch about a month later to say most people she knew voted 'Leave' in order to get rid of then Prime Minister David Cameron. Well, if that was the objective, they certainly achieved it. But the scale of unintended consequences remains vast, and largely unknowable.

Uncertainty

I spoke to Congress general secretary Patricia King in August, about what she felt might be the consequences of the Brexit vote for Ireland.

"The first word that comes to mind is uncertainty, that word is synonymous with Brexit at the moment. Some of the recent economic activity hasn't lived up to the negative commentary that came about in the immediate aftermath of the June result.

"UK services industry figures in August showed an improvement that hadn't been seen in two decades and the pound soared. There are fluctuations happening so it's too early to say how it's going to pan out for Britain, and indeed what effect it might have on us as a result," she said.

Since then, sterling has been in decline, and this has already affected Irish businesses that trade in the UK. Patricia noted, however, that there were potential opportunities and threats beginning to emerge.

"There are very clear signs in the UK financial services sector that there is huge uncertainty, particularly in relation to how and where it can trade without the 'EU' tag. There will certainly be signs that some of the investment that would have gone to London, as a financial centre, could actually appear here, as well as in Paris and Frankfurt.

"Looking at the foreign direct investment (FDI) sector, a sector that's attracted by our corporation tax rate, there are other considerations. Britain will now be free to put together its own package, including tax strategies, to attract FDI, and I suspect that there may very well be a level of FDI competition going on. These are investors that will only go where they can make money and pay the least amount of tax," she said. Our conversation, incidentally, took place before the European Commission's recent ruling on Apple. ►

Free movement

The question of the free movement of people remains the area of greatest uncertainty, one of the key features of the EU's single market. "They want to have their cake and eat it, by keeping the doctors, nurses and other qualified workers, and dismissing anybody who might look as though they need any kind of social welfare assistance.

"There has to be a consequence for those Europeans, Polish, Lithuanians and others, who came into the UK after accession in 2004. Most of them got jobs and worked hard and, potentially, that is going to be stopped. How free movement is going to be managed nobody, not even the EU, can predict," Patricia says.

Patricia identifies free movement of people as a key question for Ireland. "The consequences for the Republic of Ireland will be quite different than for Northern Ireland," she says. Campaigning for a Remain vote in Belfast in April, TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady warned "Brexit would be a huge gamble with Northern Ireland's future."

And it is Northern Ireland's future that's proving to be a very vexed question. While the majority in Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU, Stormont shows signs of bitter division on the issue, as First Minister Arlene Foster cleaves to the Westminster-led Brexit agenda, and with almost all of the other political parties in Northern Ireland mounting a legal challenge to Brexit.

A 'great repeal bill'

Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit timetable includes the creation of a "great repeal bill" which would have the immediate effect of transposing existing EU legislation into British law, including worker protections and other progressive EU measures.

However, once it has severed its bonds with Europe, legislators are free to start tinkering under the bonnet of all that legislation. "A future [UK] Government would have pretty much unconstrained freedom of action in relation to those areas currently governed by EU social law relevant to employment," notes the TUC.

It adds, "Conservative Governments have repeatedly celebrated how the UK has one of the most lightly regulated labour markets among developed countries; the logic of its economic arguments is that further deregulation, along the lines of the USA model, will give it a competitive advantage."

"Provisions especially vulnerable to repeal in the name of deregulation or protecting business probably include legislation on collective consultation, working time rules, health and safety regulations, and legislation protecting agency and other 'atypical' workers" – TUC legal opinion

And it's the renewed "competitive advantage" that could trigger an aggressive race to the bottom on worker protections and wage levels. As the UK is our biggest trading partner, this would have a potentially contagious effect on the Irish labour market.

A stronger social pillar

Speaking to a Dáil hearing in September about Brexit, Patricia King told TDs, "The single most striking aspect of the response from EU leaders to the Brexit result is how they have failed to get the message. The result swung on working class voters in the UK who had suffered years of austerity and deregulated labour markets. Workers paid a high price for a crisis they didn't cause and there has been a consequential loss of confidence in the entire European Project. The only European project worth defending is one which delivers for working class people across Europe," she said.

Tom Healy, director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) says the survival of the EU will depend, among other things, on how it manages to bring down youth unemployment and exclusion.

He notes that, "The rate of exclusion from the labour market varies widely across EU member states with some states much more successful in integrating young people in the labour market. Countries such as Ireland (including Northern Ireland) have something to learn from these arrangements - imperfect as they are."

To avoid the disaffection that's sweeping across Europe, and the rise of far-right sentiment that goes with it, Tom's observation is absolutely correct. He lays down a stark challenge, "Right now 'social Europe' looks pretty much dead...The European economy needs a much stronger social pillar. Otherwise it is unlikely to stand the test of impending storms." ●

The politics of pay



BERNARD HARBOR says the new Public Service Pay Commission is likely to put pay back at the centre of political debate, and while some commentators will seek to populate the Commission with consultants and academics, the Commission must include the kind of expertise that can only be found within the trade union movement.

Photo: Dommick Walsh



Bernard Harbor

THE PROGRAMME for Government left plenty of scope for interpretation over the proposed Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC). We were simply told it would “examine pay levels across the public service, including entry levels of pay.”

At first glance, this looked like a nod to political concerns about a ‘two tier’ system, created by Government. However, recent negotiations within the Lansdowne Road Agreement have led to progress on this front, following the IMPACT and SIPTU breakthrough on the Fire Fighters allowance.

Next there was some concern that Brexit would prevent the body ever seeing the light of day.

But the announcement, in July, that the Commission will be established suggested that the Government (or the minister, at least) have made up their minds about what they want the Commission to contribute.

Public Expenditure and Reform Minister Paschal Donohoe made assurances that pay will continue to be set through direct negotiations between unions and public service management:

“It is vital that the Government retains the ability to negotiate directly with its employees. In no sense will the Commission duplicate the work of the State’s existing industrial relations bodies, the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court. Rather, its role will be to provide authoritative and evidence-based analysis on pay matters to assist officials in discharging their negotiation function.”

This indicates very clearly that the Commission’s role will be an advisory one.

But the ability of advisory bodies to determine public policy varies a lot, and the degree of PSPC influence over pay will rest largely on whether it’s perceived to be both expert and fair.

In what amounts to a broad welcome for the idea, trade unions reacted by saying the credibility of the proposed Commission will depend on it being chaired by “a highly qualified and fully independent expert with a deep understanding of public service pay determination and related issues, including from an employee perspective.”

It is vital that people with industrial relations expertise, including those with a trade union background, have a role in the Commission.

As part of the union’s pay strategy, IMPACT has sought to influence the formation of the Commission. IMPACT and other unions know the Commission will need to include some genuine experts who support quality public services and fair pay.

It is recognised that before the Commission addresses any comparisons for public service pay, it will have to make an initial report on how to address the issue of unwinding the FEMPI legislation and the associated cuts.

Evidence

In the long run, it’s believed that the minister wants the Commission’s evidence to be published along with its findings. This is the right approach, which should help avoid some of the criticism that benchmarking attracted.

However, the job of getting private sector employers and consultants to share their data with all comers – including their competitors here and abroad – should not be underestimated.

The Public Service Committee (PSC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has already warned that information on private sector earnings is only likely to be provided on the basis of confidentiality, and that this would generate difficulties in terms of transparency.

Responding to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform’s public consultation about the role and methodology of the Commission, the PSC has said the priority ought to be to make fair comparisons with the various grades/categories in the public service. The PSC’s submission states that “Under no circumstances could it be deemed acceptable for comparison to be made with the deplorable practices in some parts of the private sector.”

In any case, the establishment of the Commission will likely mean that public service pay – and all the many and various views and obsessions the subject sustains – will be at the centre of public and political debate for a good while yet.

Bernard Harbor is IMPACT’s Head of Communications ●

Public Service Pay Commission: Your questions answered

What is the Public Service Pay Commission?

The Programme for Government promised to establish a Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) to “examine pay levels across the public service, including entry levels of pay,” but gave no further details. Now public spending minister Paschal Donohoe has got Cabinet approval to establish the Commission.

What’s it going to do?

The body will “provide authoritative and evidence-based analysis of pay matters,” and assist the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in its negotiations with unions. It won’t replace direct union-management negotiations on pay and related matters.

It will be able to compare pay rates for specific public service grades and occupations with private sector trends in the context of recruitment and retention difficulties.

It will be able to make comparisons between the pay of Irish public servants and their equivalent grades in other countries. However, such comparisons will have to “have due regard” to the cost of living in each jurisdiction. This is signifi-

cant because Ireland has one of the highest costs of living in the EU.

It will also take account of things like pension benefits, security of tenure, and recruitment and retention issues. Of course, these have always been factors in public service pay determination.

How will it work?

It’s expected that the Commission will commission research, as well as using existing data on pay and conditions. It will seek submissions from unions. It is also understood that it will publish its findings and the evidence on which its findings are based.

What happens now?

The minister sought submissions as part of a public consultation during the summer months, to which the Public Services Committee of the ICTU made a contribution. The next step is for the membership of the Commission – including a chair – to be found and appointed. IMPACT believes the minister wants the Commission to start work before the end of 2016.

What does IMPACT say?

IMPACT deputy general secretary Kevin Callinan, speaking at the union’s conference in May, said IMPACT would welcome the Commission so long as it didn’t replace negotiated pay agreements or promote special deals for certain groups of public servants. “We are not leaving anyone behind on the journey to pay recovery,” he said.

The union believes that the Commission has the potential to assist in periodic evaluation of specific public service grades, which is in line with the policy adopted by the union at its most recent delegate conference.

IMPACT has said the Commission must have a fully independent and expert chair, and that its membership should not be packed with academics. IMPACT also said the Commission should include an adequate number of members with trade union backgrounds.

IMPACT and other unions have welcomed the assurance that the Commission will not replace pay negotiations, as well as the commitment to equity in its draft terms of reference.

Image: dreamstime.com

21st Century Revenge Tragedy

IMPACT members across several branches work in a broad range of addiction services. For example, IMPACT represents counsellors and therapists who help people through the difficult process of overcoming addiction. IMPACT also represents probation officers who deal with the harsh realities of addiction in our prisons. LUGHAN DEANE met MARK RONAN when they were at college together. Mark's story of addiction and recovery is one worth sharing. Here he shares his story, and reflects on Dublin's drug problem.

Growing up in Dublin's north inner city in the eighties, I witnessed the first waves of Dublin's heroin saturation. At 16, I left school with my Junior Cert and a drug habit. A common enough start; half of the kids in my class confirmation photo were on heroin, locked up or dead by the age of 20. I spent the next dozen years as a heroin addict in Dublin. For ten of those years I was also on a methadone programme. After 11 years addicted to heroin, I finally stopped using when I was almost 28. It took another year to wean myself off the methadone. I swallowed my last 2mls the day before my 29th birthday, nearly eight years ago.

Since then my life has transformed unrecognisably. I have a beautiful wife, two amazing sons, and a small council house in Dublin 5. After I stopped using/got clean/recovered (choose one depending on your own ideas of personal responsibility as it pertains to users/junkies/addicts and their own destructive patterns of behaviour), I worked in the construction industry until the work dried up.

Sanity

Not being one to sit around, unless stoned, I decided to return to education. I applied to the Liberties' College to study (what else?) addiction studies, was accepted, and began the one year course in 2010. Part of the course was a module in English literature, which soon became my favourite aspect of the curriculum. I had always been a reader and I genuinely credit my engagement with books with helping to maintain my sanity and perspective throughout my addiction. When asked can he read, Shakespeare's Romeo replies: "Ay, mine own fortune in my misery." Few lines about literature ring as true to me as that one.

I had been considering going on from the Liberties to study social work or maybe addiction counselling, but over the course of the year I realised that literature was where my heart lay. I sat the mature student application exam for UCD, got good marks, and was accepted onto the English undergraduate programme. I graduated with a first class honours in 2014 and achieved my MA in Medieval Literature and Culture the following year. I'm now studying for my PhD in UCD's Humanities Institute.

MARK RONAN

As an ex-addict and north inner city native, doing a PhD in medieval literature, it is hard not to view the current state of Dublin's feuding illicit drug gangs as a modern Renaissance Tragedy.

*Two households both alike in dignity,
In fair Dublin, where we set our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.*

The language of Renaissance verse is eminently relatable to the contemporary world of illegal drugs. This is not to attempt to valorise those involved, but we should never consider the language and themes of the works of Renaissance writers too lofty to describe our current situations. Renaissance writers, and Shakespeare in particular, covered all topics; from the transient to the transcendental, from the bawdy commonalities of humanity to the beautifully baffling questions of existence.

Why do inner-city kids opt into a life of criminality? Many reasons, surely, but I think that the main one is that their instilled expectations do not tally with their lived experience. Because they recognise from an early age that the game is rigged against them. Inner-city kids who turn to this life are like Othello's Iago. Iago's character was famously described by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge as possessing a 'motiveless malignity'. The excessive violence of drug feuds often evokes similar moral condemnation.

But where does this apparent malevolence come from? ►

Shakespeare's Iago is sold a dream by his society: a dream of upward social mobility; of promotion in his military career. These are not fantastical dreams; Othello achieves them all from an even more disadvantaged start than Iago. The dreams of Iago's society are not impossible, but they are impossible for everyone. In Iago's own words, "we cannot all be masters." Upward social mobility is only possible by passing others; there can only be so many generals.

Othello, until he falls apart, is worthy of his position, promotion and paramour Desdemona. His actions and services to the state "out-tongue" his racist detractors and he rightly earns his progression up the ladder of Venetian society. Othello is proof that Iago's dreams are possible. He is the Bill Cullen of Renaissance Venice. Othello is worthy of his good fortune, but Iago recognises that worth is not a guarantee of success. Passed over for promotion by a privileged, young and inexperienced officer of good breeding, whose knowledge of military affairs is purely academic, "mere prattle without practice," Iago's malevolence grows out of his sense of the world's unfairness.

Unattainable

So, what does this have to do with feuding gangs in 21st Century Dublin? The dreams our own society dangles in front of us are unattainable for most inner-city kids. Perhaps they want a different pair of Nike Huaraches for each day of the week, a Range Rover or something even more fantastical like a house? Sorry, there aren't enough Huaraches, Range Rovers and gaffs to go around. But Bill Cullen made it so we're sure you'll be grand. Stop making excuses and try harder.

Unfortunately, there is no end in sight for the issue of drug related gang violence when the best our elected officials can come up with is the so-called 'war on drugs'. We tabulate the measure of our success in Euros then surrender a multi-million Euro industry to the black market. We exclude people from disadvantaged backgrounds from legally achieving even the most modest of dreams in our society. As long as there are poor people who want to be less poor, and the opportunity to make quick money by selling drugs exists, there will always be those who will dispassionately take full advantage. As Shakespeare's own drug dealer, his apothecary in Romeo and Juliet, says of his own moral choice to sell drugs: "my poverty, but not my will, consents."

I believe in personal responsibility in these matters. Iago recognises the unfairness of his world, but this doesn't, and shouldn't, excuse his malevolence. Iago's problem stems as much from his own envy as from the inequalities of his society. He does not want a fairer world, he simply wants to be at the more comfortable end of the scale of social inequality. He hates Cassio while wanting what he has: "He hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly (by comparison)."

I believe that Iago is responsible, as are we all, for his own choices. I also believe, however, that our choices are influenced and limited by our environment. We cannot force anyone to make the right choice, but we do have it in our power to change their environment to give them better options.

Mark Ronan is studying for his PhD at UCD, he also works part-time at the ETB-funded Read and Write Scheme in Ballymun ●

The Huddle Initiative

Ed Harte gets hands on at the Sligo rally to oppose the closure of the county library in September.

“We decided we needed to get out (into the workplaces), put name badges on, and get out into an open area, where people could come and say hello. We didn’t want to call them meetings or workplace conferences, so Rodrigo came up with the name ‘Huddle’, to reinforce the idea of a more informal gathering.

“We then went out into the areas with the greatest member-saturation, the largest office buildings, and we linked up with the workplace reps because we wouldn’t know people in every location. We’d set up on a long table in an open area with our merchandise and refreshments, and people could just walk through. No speeches, no blurb, people could speak to us about an issue and we’d offer our take on it. If it was more of an individual issue we’d take their contact details and get back to them,” he explains.

Talent spotting

Ed says the approach meant that people could immediately identify both of them as points of contact for the union, but it also allowed them to identify the kind of people who would make good workplace representatives.

Members and non-members

Rodrigo is keen to emphasise the openness of their approach. “The huddles were open to everyone, members and non-members, and we got a few new members from those events too. At this stage we’ve covered just about every major workplace in the health sector in Sligo.”

They estimate that they’ve met about 500 members since they began the ‘huddles’. “That’s based on people signing in to each event. With help from head office we issued a membership card to everyone who signed up, and we didn’t issue a card unless people had filled in and updated their details on a form that Rodrigo devised for that purpose,” says Ed.

“We were just trying to think about ways to get members more involved and more motivated.”

This approach has meant that everyone who attended has met Rodrigo and Ed in person, a key objective of the huddle approach – putting a face on the union.

Ed is confident that the sense of connectedness for members has changed. “I got an email last week from two people interested in becoming reps. Before now they didn’t know who to turn to, they felt a little bit isolated, and you’d get some of that ‘what has the union ever done for us?’ feeling from people. But having met us, knowing who the union was locally,

they felt a bit more confident and were able to have an informal, light hearted conversation that linked them into the union. I think it’s been very worthwhile,” he says.

My own impression of how Rodrigo and Ed work together is that there is genuine chemistry there, lots of energy, and I think it might even be infectious, particularly when you look at the response they’ve received.

Rodrigo is surprised at my suggestion. “I never thought about it that way. While we don’t necessarily agree on everything we do take a similar approach to solving problems, exchanging ideas, finding solutions and figuring things out”

Ed adds, “I think we are a good team. One of the things we did together was to go around and meet the senior managers of each service. We wanted to meet them because we didn’t want our first

interaction with them to be about a problem.

“The managers we met appreciated that contact, and before we left those meetings they all asked if they could contact us if they needed advice on something, and that keeps the lines of communication open with them. It’s proved very positive from the point of view of knowing what’s happening in the workplace.”

While Rodrigo and Ed have focused their initial efforts on the health sector, they are now planning to roll out the initiative in local government before the end of the year. Like I said, they’re firing on all cylinders ●

Rodrigo Frade and Ed Harte are two highly motivated IMPACT activists based in Sligo. Together they forged an idea to improve the sense of connection between members and the union in their area. Working together, their commitment and energy is getting results. NIAL SHANAHAN spoke to them about their unique approach.

I FIRST met Rodrigo and Ed through the IMPACT member activist training course a couple of years ago. They made an indelible first impression, as both of them made a huge contribution throughout the day we spent in training together. Lots of questions and lots of suggestions, keeping both myself and my colleague Martina O’Leary on our toes. They were firing on all cylinders.

Not long after that, Rodrigo was in touch with me regularly, as he was establishing a regular newsletter for IMPACT members in Sligo. Every time I speak to either Rodrigo or Ed, I’m always struck by their energy, and the consistency of their vision to improve the sense of connection that members feel with the union.

In the intervening months, every time I bump into them they’re planning their next initiative. Somewhere along the way, I remember they were talking about workplace ‘huddles’. I wanted to find out more.

Ed works in IT at the office of the Chief Information Officer in the HSE in Sligo, and Rodrigo is an occupational therapist working in mental health services. I asked them both how they

got started on this project. What were their first conversations about this?

Ed explains, “Our feedback on the ground was that, locally, the union was kind of faceless. People had an idea of some of the local high level activists, but sometimes they wouldn’t know who their local reps were, or how the union operated. So we asked ourselves how could we address that without turning people away.

Rodrigo adds, “I don’t think we ever had a formal strategy, we were just trying to think about ways to get to members and

how to get people more involved and more motivated. We started exchanging ideas, but we never sat down with a very set agenda, it was more informal, and as days and weeks passed, the ideas started to get more consistent and we just started working on them and putting those ideas into practice.”

Ed: “The feedback suggested that if we held a meeting in a meeting room, nobody would want to come to it because if they came for five minutes and felt the issues didn’t apply to them, it was like they couldn’t leave. ➤

“Rodrigo came up with the name ‘Huddle’, to reinforce the idea of a more informal gathering.”

Rodrigo Frade of the Sligo branch addressing the IMPACT biennial delegate conference in Killarney last May.



Photo: Dominick Walsh

“We started building our local database of member’s contact details through sign-ups, and we’d run small competitions and offers in order to drive that. We spoke to more people, identifying members who were interested in workplace activism. We got them involved in workshops and helping to build the database, and we got four very good workplace reps from that process.

“In every location we got names and contacts of people in every department and that allowed us to establish an active contact network which enabled us to distribute information to people, and we linked up with a lot of people that way,” he says.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Gender audit of Irish front pages

IMPACT is an organisation roughly two-thirds of whose membership are women. It interacts, on behalf of that membership, on a more-or-less daily basis with the print media. For this reason, the way in which national media represent women is a key environmental factor for IMPACT. To find out more LUGHAN DEANE and PATRICIA O'MAHONY conducted a study of the front pages.

OUR STUDY of Irish broadsheet newspapers' front pages takes partial inspiration from a paper called *Seen but not Heard: How Women Make Front Page News* by the Women in Journalism research group. Their study was on British national daily papers.

A newspaper's front page is its 'shop window', it is 'the face it chooses to present to the world'. The front page is ubiquitous – it is given prime real estate in newsagents across the country, it's analysed by pundits on morning television and has become something of a cultural meme.

Given that the front page is such a fixture of our everyday lives, it is worthwhile asking how much we truly know about it. Does analysis of front pages reveal any interesting patterns? We looked at the ways in which gender is represented on the front pages of Ireland's three national daily broadsheet newspapers: The Irish Examiner, The Irish Independent and The Irish Times.

We analysed a week's worth (Monday to Saturday) of each newspaper's front page.

Who writes the front page?

For each front page we recorded the number of male and female journalists whose bylines (named credit) appeared and whether the lead article was written by a man or woman.

Who gets written about on the front page?

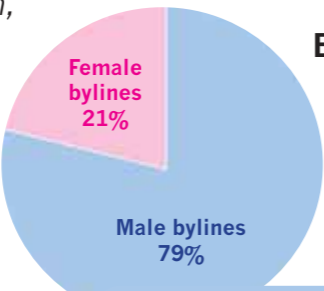
We also made note of every single name mentioned in the contents of the front page articles and divided them according to gender. Separately, we recorded the first name to appear in the front page lead article and made a note of the individual's gender.

Whose voices do we hear through the front page?

We counted all words within quotation marks – direct quotes – and, wherever possible, noted whether the quotes were attributed to men or women.

Who do we see on the front page?

We counted the number of men and women represented in photographs and pictures on the front pages.



Bylines

How often do female journalists secure a spot on the front page? Our analysis of bylines showed that just 21% of bylines on the front page are those of women. In total, 21 of the 98 bylines we encountered were female.

NEWSPAPER	No. of female bylines	No. of male bylines	% of female bylines	% of male bylines
Irish Times	10	35	22%	78%
Irish Examiner	7	25	22%	78%
Independent	4	17	19%	81%

Each of the three Irish broadsheets performed similarly in our analysis. The Women in Journalism researchers found almost identical results in a British context. They found that 22% of front page articles were written by women.

The lead article – bylines

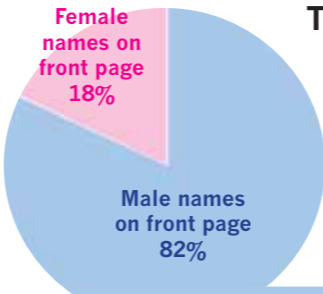
How often do female journalists secure the top spot in the entire newspaper – a byline on the lead story on the front page? We found, in our three papers, that women only wrote (or co-wrote) the lead article 8% of the time. Note that the percentages below should only be taken as indicative of a larger pattern as the sample involved is so small.

NEWSPAPER	No. of female lead articles	No. of male lead articles	% of female lead articles	% of male lead articles
Irish Times	0	6	0%	100%
Irish Examiner	1	5	20%	80%
Independent	1*	5	20%	80%

* Co-written with a male journalist.

Names mentioned on the front page

Over the three weeks and across the three papers, 235 names were mentioned within the contents of the front page articles. Men's names dominated the contents of front page news. We found that 82% of people mentioned or quoted (192 individuals) were male and that just 18% (43 individuals) were female. ➤



The first name mentioned in the lead article

We also recorded the gender of the first person to be named in the lead article on each front page (18 names in total). Of these names 17 were male and one was female. That's 94% male and 6% female.

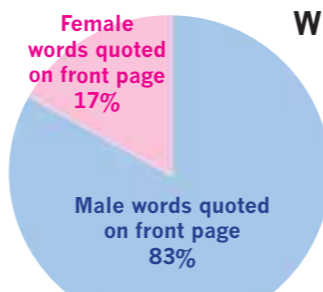
NEWSPAPER	No. of women named	No. of men named	% of female names	% of male names
Irish Times	9	64	12%	88%
Irish Examiner	21	100	17%	83%
Independent	13	28	32%	68%

None of the first names in the lead articles of the Examiner or Times was female. The Independent had just one example.

These are the 18 people who are mentioned first in each lead article (there is a clear gender bias):



Note that the only woman pictured is the late Caitriona Lucas, volunteer coastguard and IMPACT member, who lost her life in tragic circumstances in September.



Whose voices do we hear through the front page?

In order to answer this question, we counted all words on each front page that appeared between quotation marks. Quotes represent the direct channeling of someone else's voice through the front page.

NEWSPAPER	No. of female words quoted	No. of male words quoted	% of female words quoted	% of male words quoted
Irish Times	133	604	18%	82%
Irish Examiner	357	1630	18%	82%
Independent	0	156	0%	100%

Across the 18 front pages analysed we found 2,880 words of quotation. Of these, 490 were uttered by female sources and 2,390 were taken from male sources. In percentage terms, this means that 17% of front page quotation is from women.

Who do we see on the front page?

In order to examine who is visually represented on the front page, we counted the number of men and women to appear in photographs or graphics across our 18 individual newspapers. It is important to note that these figures are again no more than indicative as we only counted the subjects of photographs.

NEWSPAPER	No. of female photos	No. of male photos	% of female photos	% of male photos
Irish Times	18	53	25%	75%
Irish Examiner	17	44	28%	72%
Independent	16	29	36%	64%

We found that 71% of photographs and graphics on the front pages were of men (126 individuals). Given that women made up just 18% of those mentioned on the front page, the 29% of photographs is a relatively large proportion. Hence the WIJ researchers' remark that women are "seen but not heard" on the front page.

Why do men dominate the front pages?

The overall picture is a stark one – men dominate virtually every aspect of front page news. It is interesting to think about why this may be the case. Natasha Walter, the feminist writer and activist, suggests it may be because "the masculine establishment reproduces itself". In other words, men are already in senior positions within news-making and agenda-setting organisations and so it follows that front pages would echo this dynamic.

We are not accusing the media of being consciously sexist – this runs far deeper than any individual or organisation's prejudice. This overrepresentation of men is a structural problem – it reflects the manner in which our society is currently ordered.

The 22%

The Dáil is 22% female. 22% of all national parliamentarians are women. Last year, 22% of 'high-potential startups' backed by Enterprise Ireland were lead by women. PWC found that 22% of multinationals in Ireland are actively trying to increase their levels of female mobility. 22% of senior business roles in the G7 are held by women. On TV, 22% of protagonists are female.

In most of these instances, 22% representation equates to a marked improvement based on previous years if not an all-time record. Indeed, 22% of IMPACT's central executive is made up of women, a higher proportion than ever, but one that leaves more work to be done ●

Networking for success

As well as effective performance, don't underestimate the importance of networking to improve your career says ISOBEL BUTLER.

TODAY'S CAREER pathways differ from the traditional, unchanging, linear routes characteristic of earlier generations of workers. Within both the public and private sector, career paths are more divergent and involve greater levels of change and unpredictability. These factors, combined with the increased use of modern human resources practices across the public sector, create a strong imperative for employees to be more proactive in how they manage their own career progression.

While effective performance is vital to career success, research highlights the growing importance of 'social capital'. This refers to the connections a person has that enables them to function well within their society, workplace, profession or career. The key to accumulating this social capital is effective networking. In short, networking is a proactive and effective way to enhance your career.

So what is networking? It's the process of building and maintaining contacts that will help you to progress in your career. By maintaining connections to other like-minded people within your profession or work place, you develop a sense of belonging which provides motivation to us as social animals. We are unlikely to thrive when feeling isolated.

Support

Networks are also a source of support, help and friendship. They provide opportunities to discuss issues and share information, as well as informal opportunities to give or seek advice, voice an opinion or demonstrate your own skills. This can enhance both your reputation and your sphere of influence.

While this process of sharing and discussion can provide access to information to enhance performance in your current role, it can also create the possibility of future opportunities and invitations to become involved in projects or collaborative work opportunities.

In this way, it can create greater potential to advance your career. It can also enhance your professional knowledge and skills by providing opportunities to understand, in greater depth, the politics and decision making processes within your profession, organisation and related organisations.

Observing successful people in your field or organisation provides the opportunity to learn from them and model their behaviours.

Each person you connect to is connected to another set of connected people. Cultivating relationships within your network provides access to this much broader set of useful connections and events. Consequently, you may also hear about planned future job or career opportunities at an earlier stage. If you have friends or family members seeking to develop careers in the private sector, then they should also be aware that networking is one of the best ways to access what's known as the hidden, informal, job market. Not all jobs are advertised and employers frequently feel more confident recruiting someone with a personal recommendation from a trusted connection.

So how can you network?

There are a broad range of ways to network but it is important to recognise that it does take time and effort and should ideally start long before you are seeking an opportunity to change jobs or gain from a network. Research and anecdotal evidence highlights the importance of positively contributing to your network before you try and draw from it.

Sharing information, offering help and support, introducing others to your connections are all good ways of building and enhancing relationships making it more likely that those in your network will reciprocate. Networking in a way that is almost entirely self-serving is not a good basis to build upon, is unlikely to be useful or survive for long, and gives the whole idea of networking a bad name.

At its simplest level networking could involve staying in touch with former colleagues and managers with whom you have already developed a positive and trusting relationship. Maintaining relationships with people whom you've trained, attended college or university is a positive approach. Training sessions, workshops, seminars and conferences, or joining professional bodies, also provide opportunities to develop your network.

Social media

Social media provides opportunities to network, join discussions and share information through sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Setting up a private Facebook group after a conference or training programme can allow people to continue to share relevant information with the group or to discuss issues, try out ideas or seek help and support.

The use of Twitter hashtags has allowed networks of like-minded people to develop and 'meet', discuss and collaborate in Twitter threads. A good example of this is #Edchat which is a weekly organised discussion on Twitter of people from around the globe interested and involved in education. ➤

Finally, the most effective and useful networking happens when there a willingness to listen and work out what others need and how you can be of help to them. This builds the strongest, most valuable connections and networks. Those most successful at networking are genuine, build trusting relationships and are willing to give rather than simply take. Reciprocity and generosity are key to more effective networking ●

Isobel Butler is an independent organisational psychologist who works with people on a wide range of workplace issues including conflict management, dealing with change and solving problems. If there are specific issues you'd like her to tackle in these articles send them in via the editor, Work & Life magazine, Nerney's Court, Dublin 1 or info@impact.ie.

Networking tips

- Always seek opportunities to expand your connections.
- Remember first impressions count.
- Be generous and genuine and reach out.
- Discover the value in each person you meet.
- Ask questions, listen, show your interest.
- Remember networking is a two-way relationship.
- Follow through with people.
- Strive to build trust, people won't share information without trust.
- Remember networking is a long term investment of time, effort and relationship building.
- Keep in touch.
- Social media is a useful tool but it takes time and practice.

Health service job evaluation scheme

Your questions answered

The job evaluation scheme for health service clerical, administrative and management staff reopened on 1st September 2016 after IMPACT members gave a huge endorsement to industrial action over the issue. The Department of Health sanctioned the reactivation of the scheme following intensive talks between the union and the HSE on foot of that ballot. Here we respond to members' most frequently asked questions about the scheme.

IMPACT WON agreement in principle to reopen the job evaluation scheme – unilaterally abandoned by management at the height of the economic crash – during last year's negotiations on the Lansdowne Road agreement. In preparation for the reopening of the scheme, IMPACT has already trained teams of assessors, and the union believes that the first job evaluations could take place from October this year.

Management has also accepted the union's proposals on the method of filling posts upgraded on foot of job evaluations, and has agreed to further talks on the union's ambition to see the scheme extended to health professional posts and more senior management grades. IMPACT national secretary Eamonn Donnelly has said the union's Health division is now putting together a job evaluation training programme for members and branch committees.

Is job evaluation a performance assessment?

No. Job evaluation schemes are not the same as performance assessments. They assess the skills and responsibilities required of a particular post, rather than the individual performing it.

What grades are covered by the HSE scheme?

The agreement covers clerical and administrative grades III to VI, and related grades. (A grade VI post holder can apply for upgrading under the scheme). To apply, a post holder must have been in the post for two years.

Will the scheme be extended to other grades?

Right now it's only open to clerical and administrative grades III to VI, and related grades. But IMPACT says the scheme is

capable of being applied to more senior administrative and management grades, as well as professional and technical staff. Health employers have agreed to discuss this.

Does my line manager need to sign the application form?

Yes. Your line manager must verify that the description of duties expressed on the form is accurate.

How long will the process take?

There's a significant backlog because the scheme has been closed since 2008. Therefore, it's impossible to assess how long the process of evaluating a particular job will take. IMPACT is providing a number of assessors for the (joint union-management) evaluation teams in order to clear the backlog as quickly as possible.

Initially, priority will be given to applications which were in the system at the time the scheme closed in 2008, applications which were referred to job evaluation by a third party process (eg the Labour Court), and applications which were referred to job evaluation through the process of regularising long-term acting positions.

IMPACT is also seeking to include clerical officers as a priority category.

Who conducts the evaluation?

Independent evaluation teams consisting of one HSE representative and one IMPACT representative. Evaluations are usually carried out using a combination of the application form and a face-to-face discussion with the post holder. In some cases the application form alone may suffice. ➤

Can I get assistance when filling out the form?

IMPACT will be rolling out a training programme to branches over the next two months in order to ensure that local IMPACT reps can assist you when you make an application.

What information should I include on the form?

The application form is very structured and targeted. It covers nine areas of competency and knowledge. Applicants should list their duties and answer all the questions, which are designed to map the duties onto the competency and knowledge in each category.

Am I guaranteed an upgrading if I apply for job evaluation?

No. Posts will only be upgraded if the assessors agree that it should be.

By how much can my post be upgraded?

The evaluation assessment awards a post a total number of points. This is based on the skills, responsibilities, qualifications and other requirements necessary to carry out that specific job. Each grade in the structure has its own points range, and the evaluated job is matched to the correct grade.

Some job evaluations will result in no upgrading. Where upgrades occur, they will most commonly move a job up one grade. But it is possible to move it up two grades if the points are sufficient.

How will my post be filled if it's upgraded through job evaluation?

It has been agreed that staff who have been in post for four years or more at the time of a job evaluation will stay in the position if the post is upgraded. If you have been in the position for less than four years, the post will be filled by competition.

Do my terms and conditions change if my post is upgraded?

Appointment to an upgraded post is treated as a promotion. The salary would increase, but any red-circled conditions (like annual leave and working hours) would be set aside and replaced by the new standard conditions under the public service agreements. In some circumstances, a post holder could end up working longer hours or having less leave if their post is upgraded.

If my post was upgraded would I receive back pay?

Generally, the effective date for upgrading is the date when the evaluation team certifies that the post should be upgraded. There would be no back pay in such cases. However, the effective date can be the subject of negotiation and agreement if an evaluation has taken place as a result of a referral by a third party.

Will my application still be considered if I move position during the process?

No. An evaluation can only be processed for an existing post holder.

My current position is split between two services. How do I reflect this in the form?

A complete list of duties comprising of both elements of the post should be listed on the form.

When will I know if I have been successful?

The evaluation team will generally certify the outcome of an evaluation, and confirm this outcome to the employer, within a couple of weeks of the evaluation.

Can I appeal if I am unsuccessful?

A request for a review can be facilitated if the process was flawed or if important factors were overlooked.

Download a copy of the job evaluation application form at impact.ie (follow the homepage link for 'Health service job evaluation scheme') ●

Pregnancy and Work - A refresher on the law

As women's participation in the labour market increases, pregnancy is becoming a more common feature of the Irish workplace. Forty-three years on from the abolition of the 'marriage bar' LUGHAN DEANE looks at the law and the protections it provides today against pregnancy-related discrimination.

PREGNANCY-RELATED discrimination is prohibited in Ireland under the Employment Equality Acts. Because pregnancy is a uniquely female condition cases tend to be taken on the grounds of gender discrimination. Alongside Irish law, pregnancy-related discrimination case-law from the European Court Justice (ECJ) is also used in hearings in Ireland.

In the case of a pregnancy-related dismissal, the Unfair Dismissals Act and the Maternity Protection Acts may also be relevant. Pregnant women may not be dismissed from the beginning of pregnancy to the end of maternity leave, except for reasons unrelated to pregnancy.

Protection

In two ECJ cases (Browne vs Rentokil and Webb vs EMO Cargo) the court ruled that the period of pregnancy and maternity leave is a 'special protected period'. This is due to the harmful physical and mental effects that dismissal during pregnancy may have on the woman in question.

The Maternity Protection Acts allow for time off for medical visits during pregnancy. The acts also say that illness arising from pregnancy cannot be treated like regular illness and that sick-pay cannot be reduced regardless of the duration of absence. Employees are entitled to time off work for antenatal and postnatal care. An employee may also take time off with pay for one set of antenatal classes.

Health and Safety

The European Pregnancy Directive obliges employers to conduct a health and safety assessment of the pregnant worker's work-environment. Where there is a risk, adjustments must be made to rectify it. If the adjustment is impossible, employers should grant health and safety leave.

All women are entitled to 26 paid weeks of maternity leave and an additional 16 weeks unpaid. The payment normally comes via the Department of Social Protection. A woman can go on maternity leave within 16 weeks of the last day of the week in which the baby is due.

An employee must take at least two weeks' leave before the due date, and at least four weeks after the due date. In the event of the hospitalisation of a child, a mother may agree with her employer to postpone and then resume maternity leave.

Benefit

The amount of money due during the leave depends on income. The sum is arrived at by dividing a worker's gross annual income by the number of weeks she works in a year, and 80% of this figure is the amount to be paid. Some employers will provide additional payments or benefits.

In the event of a miscarriage or stillbirth at any time after the 24th week of pregnancy, women are entitled to full maternity leave.

The Maternity Benefit is liable to tax, but not to Universal Social Charge (USC) or Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI). Any additional 'top-up' payments made by the employer are liable to tax, USC and PRSI.

Returning to Work

Anyone returning from maternity leave is entitled to return to the same work they had prior to becoming pregnant. The terms of their contract must remain the same upon their return to work.

If it is impossible to return the employee to the same position, the employer must offer a suitable alternative under the same terms and conditions.

Under the Maternity Protection Act 1994, an employee who is breastfeeding her child is entitled to any one of the following:

- A break of 60 minutes
- 2 breaks of 30 minutes each
- 3 breaks of 20 minutes each
- Another configuration of breaks to be agreed with her employer (including an arrangement for reduced working time which is paid). ▶

The employer should also provide a clean, hygienic and private area with a lockable door in which the employee can breastfeed. There should be a secure and dedicated refrigerator for storing breastmilk, a secure cupboard for storing sterilising and pumping equipment and a facility for washing hands.

In the event that her employer refuses to grant her one of the above arrangements, the employee can bring a claim under the Maternity Protection Act. The maximum possible compensation is 20 weeks' remuneration.

Alternatively, the employee could bring a claim against her employer under the Employment Equality legislation. This would be on the grounds that lactation is a medical condition and refusal to grant her the necessary breaks amounts to discrimination. In this case the maximum compensation possible is 104 weeks' remuneration.

The employee could, finally, bring two claims against her employer - one under each piece of legislation.

Sources for this article: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Richard Grogan Solicitors and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).

ICTU says:

There are inequalities amongst women when it comes to maternity leave. Women with higher earnings potential, better levels of education and an employed partner are more likely to avail of the extended period of unpaid maternity leave and to receive top-up payments from the employer. On the other hand among women with lower earnings potential, not only are they less likely to receive employer-provided top-up payments, but financial pressures result in a lower take-up of unpaid leave and an earlier return to work.

Women who have had a positive experience cite protective factors - such as the existence of an equality policy, and flexible working arrangements - all of which are more likely to be present in unionised workplaces ●

The lighthouse keeper

*First time author Cat Hogan has had a busy year. After giving up her career in the hospitality industry to become a full time writer, she's hit the Irish Times best seller list with *They All Fall Down* and her next novel is already in the works. She talks about her love of words, books, bold decisions and storytelling with MARTINA O'LEARY.*

Cat Hogan

"IT'S BEEN brilliant. I'm waiting for someone to tap me on the shoulder and tell me there has been a huge mistake, I'm the wrong Cat, they've been talking about someone else," she exclaims.

Cat Hogan lives in Wexford, so we'd agreed to meet each other at the halfway point in Arklow. As I drove down on a glorious sunny morning I was thinking about the combined challenge of being a mother to two young children, a full time writer, trying to get published, and putting bread on the table. Cat's response to the challenge isn't understated: "I think you turn into an insecure paranoid wreck at times!"

Cat started her career in the hospitality industry. "You have to have a certain gene in you to work hospitality, it's so anti-social and the money is terrible, but nothing compares to the fun, and the mischief you get up to behind the scenes, while always very professional front of house.

"I remember many nights after a gala dinner on New Year's Eve, standing in the service area, with buckets of cutlery to be polished, a stock take to do, then wrapping bundles of plates in tens with cling film, thinking 'How has my life come to this?'"

So how did Cat get from catering to writing? "Books came first for me. I couldn't have been born into a more perfect family as far as books are concerned. I just can't get enough of them! There's nothing like the feeling of curling up in bed and just having to read one more chapter."

When Poolbeg made the offer to Cat for a two book deal, she says it was "like a sign from the gods." Cat's late father worked in the merchant navy and later for the Commissioner of Irish Lights, so the sea is never far away from Cat's heart. Poolbeg's logo includes a lighthouse, something she always wanted on the book as a nod to her Dad.

Change of direction

The ink wasn't dry on Cat's degree in hospitality and business studies when she realised her first child was on the way. "I knew then that hotel management was completely out the window. Working a 60 or 70 hour week with a new baby just wasn't on. I changed tack slightly and did a part-time law degree and that was when it really started. I realised how powerful words can be. You take a piece of legislation and you could have two opposing opinions over just one word."

Epiphany

Cat had an epiphany. Paul O'Brien (author of *Blood Red Turns Dollar Green*) was launching his third novel, with famed Wexford writers Eoin Colfer and Billy Roche in attendance, at the Spiegeltent during the Wexford Opera Festival. "I was in my work uniform, a bank holiday weekend at the height of the Opera festival. I said to my employer, 'you can sack me, but I'm going to this event'." She went to the launch and never looked back.

"Come December I thought, right, something has to give here. I've two small kids, I'm trying to write a book, I'm working part-time for minimum wage really. The hotel was in receivership at the time. It was quite a lot of pressure. The only thing I could let go of was the job, so I said right I'm going to do this, and I'm going to make it work.

"I took the jump. It was scary. It was three weeks before Christmas (2014). I could stay on that wheel, or I could do what I was put on this planet to do. That's what it felt like. I thought the worst that can happen is it will be a rip-roaring disaster and I can just go get another job. Catering is one of

the easier industries to get work in, particularly when people know you," she explains.

The plot

They All Fall Down is based in a fictional Wexford fishing village.

Why a thriller? "I thought I was going to be the next Marian Keyes. I like the way she looks at quite serious issues at times. *Rachel's Holiday* is about addiction, but it's so funny in parts. I thought maybe that was the route I would go down, but my novel got dark very quickly."

The book touches on the issues of addiction, violence, infidelity and financial struggles. "The stuff that happens to ordinary people, every day, for the purposes of fiction you are just turning up the heat a little and seeing how would this group of people react in that particular situation," says Cat.

The plot involves Jen Harper who likes to play it safe. She is settling into life on the outskirts of a sleepy fishing village with her little boy, Danny. Life by the sea – just how she wanted it.

When she meets Andy, she feels the time has come to put her baggage and the scars of the past behind her. Then she is introduced to Scott, Andy's best friend, and is stung by his obvious disdain for her. Why is Scott so protective of his best friend? What is the dark secret that threatens all of them?

In her attempt to find answers, Jen must confront her demons and push her relationships to their limits. By digging up the past, she puts Danny and herself in danger.

Cat explains it started out, with just two characters, Scott and Jen. "The rest sprung up out of the fog. The story of six characters is woven together, the dynamic between them drives the story."

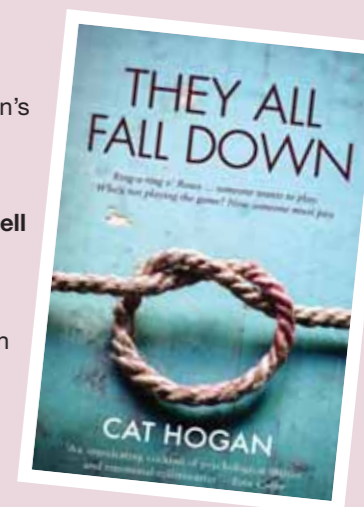
Her follow-up novel is due mid-2017. While Cat admits to censoring herself to a certain degree while writing *They All Fall Down*, she plans not to do that in her next book. "I had a fear, my Mother will be reading this, I can't write that. I think that is a skill you learn from disassociating yourself from the book," says Cat ●

Competition

We have two copies of Cat Hogan's excellent *They All Fall Down*, courtesy of Poolbeg Publishing.

The first two readers that can tell me where Cat is from will each win a copy.

Send your postal entries to Roisin Nolan, Book Competition, IMPACT, Nerney's Court Dublin DO1 R265 or info@impact.ie (include the subject heading 'They All Fall Down' by Thursday 1st December 2016.



Why is footwear such a big deal in fashion? While shoes serve a very obvious and practical function, they also convey status and may even reveal something about our state of mind. PATRICIA O'MAHONY digs a little deeper.

Footfetish

WHAT'S THE big deal with shoes? Why do some people (men and women) have such a love affair with footwear? Does the ensemble start with shoes or end with them? Does footwear make or break the outfit? What do shoes tell us about the wearer? Are shoes some kind of statement or status symbol? What are the trends for Winter 2016?



Sean Connor

amount of shoes. Although her awful singing, during an interview with Ruby Wax for the BBC, is at least equally memorable.

There's been a lot of fuss about footwear recently. A lot of newspaper editors struggle to credibly talk about women in politics, and can default to obsessing over their outward appearance, or indeed whether or not they have children. And while her rival Andrea Leadsom ran aground when she talked about the latter, it was Theresa May's leopardskin kitten heels that generated disproportionate interest when she first stepped into David Cameron's size 11s.

Similarly, we never think of Imelda Marcos as the widow of an oppressive dictator with vast wealth reserves hidden in offshore bank accounts. We think of her as someone who is rumoured to own a huge

“The average woman falls in love seven times a year. Only six are with shoes” – Kenneth Cole

While I'm interested in fashion, I don't have that obsessive love affair with shoes. Don't get me wrong, I can tell my Jimmy Choos from my Manolo Blahniks, but I don't own a pair of either. I decided to talk to some shop owners in Dublin city centre to get an insight.

My first stop was China Blue in Merchants Arch, Temple Bar where I spoke to Sean Connor, the owner. Sean is in the shoe business for more than 16 years stocking both men's and women's footwear.

He told me that in his experience “people's love affair with shoes is based on need, rather than status. They will buy particular brands alright. Maybe the status thing existed some years ago when people had more money and more credit.” ➤

Sean notes the kind of fashionable (and recession-proof) shoes he stocks in China Blue – Doc Martens, Converse and Sketchers – are not so much status symbols, but are his best sellers all the same.

“Today people buy shoes when they need them and obviously when they can afford them.” He told me he notices that people don't look after their shoes. So while people may not have enough money to buy new shoes whenever they feel like it,

they still have enough income to allow them to treat shoes as though they are disposable.



Orna Fitzpatrick

Thomas Patrick was established by their father and has been retailing here for 38 years, with a reputation built on high-end quality. When I asked her about shoes and status she told me “I see it more as a sort of really good investment from a personal shopping point of view. You can really dress up an outfit by having a good pair of shoes.

“Even a simple pair of jeans, if you have a good pair of shoes on, you really look the business. If you focus on quality and style, it pays off,” she says. Orna adds that if you care for your shoes wisely they will repay you. When I asked her about style and trends she said “The trends are going in two extreme directions, flat boots and over the knee boots, as well as chunkier and more solid heels than in previous seasons.

“I still have my feet on the ground, I just wear better shoes” – Oprah Winfrey

Some research suggests you can accurately judge a person just by looking at their shoes. Research by Kansas University found that people were able to correctly judge a stranger's age, gender, income, political affiliation (ahem), emotional and other important personality traits just by looking at their shoes.

I don't quite get all that psychology about a pair of shoes. To me footwear is something we have no choice but to buy, we choose what we like, based on what we can afford and what we find comfortable and suits our lifestyle. It's as simple as that. But I do believe that footwear can make or break an outfit.

Killer heels

What about killer heels then? Following the recent *Work & Life* feature 'Walk a mile in her shoes', I no longer feel I can comfortably recommend high heels, so I'll recommend wedges instead. All sorts of research suggest that, as well as changing the way a body moves, wearing high heels makes women look more attractive.

This is only true if you wear those high heels by choice. If you want to appear taller, without inflicting the long term physical effects of high heels, try wedges. According to the Canadian Federation of Podiatric Medicine “heels that are two inches or higher propel the body forward, turning the simple act of walking into an awkward chore.”

Advantages of heels include confidence and style, posture, appearing taller and slimmer, working leg muscles. Disadvantages include long term back pain, knees, feet and hip pain. And they're treacherous if they're too high.

Vogue's ultimate shoe guide for Autumn/Winter 2016 tells us “heels are back, buckles are proliferating, platforms are burgeoning and long boots show no sign of dropping off the radar.” Expect to see luxurious velvet, metallics and patent finishes in materials like leather, suede, and reptile skin. Pointy shoes with rounded or square heels, with varieties like kitten heels, chunky, wooden and square, as well as platforms and multiple straps, with lots of embellishment like sequins and pearls ●

“Business is steady, it's not getting any worse but not getting hugely better in the short term. Luckily in Temple Bar we have a good tourist business all year round, and a weekend tourist business as well, so that makes a big difference.” If there's a current, identifiable trend Sean says it's sports brands, like Nike and Adidas.

My next stop was Thomas Patrick on Grafton Street where I spoke to Orna Fitzpatrick, co-director of this independent family company, along with her sister Eilis.

Rising intolerance

With the whole world seemingly obsessed with gluten avoidance, a quiet revolution is happening in the world of bread, with slow fermentation gradually taking over in popularity from rapid industrial baking. DANIEL DEVERY offers a guide to the sourdough revolution.

IN THE early 1990s I remember reading an article in the (now-defunct) *Sunday Tribune* about making your house more attractive to prospective buyers by filling it with the smell of baking bread and freshly brewed coffee. By the end of that decade, your house could smell like a bin at the back of a Chinese restaurant on Parnell Street on a hot summer's day, and you'd still manage to get ten grand above the asking price.

The intervening decades saw our taste in coffee grow ever more sophisticated, and practically every town in Ireland now has a resident *barista* digging the trenches to resist invasion by the tax avoiding behemoth of Starbucks.

But when it came to our taste in bread, the culinary high point of the boom years turned out to be the breakfast roll, which went on to influence the outcome of the 2007 general election. Having invented 'Breakfast Roll Man' in the Eurospar shop in Inchicore in Dublin, David McWilliams unleashed a culinary stereotype which caused more than its fair share of national indigestion.

Intolerance

Maybe it's no coincidence that, post-economic crisis, the national taste buds have begun to drift away from one of the world's oldest staples. In 2015, bread lost market share in Ireland despite a growing market for other baked goods. While the pre-packaged sliced pan still tops the charts, sales are in decline as consumers seek out healthier options, drifting towards gluten-free products, with a sizable number of people convinced they have a gluten intolerance.

It's estimated that up to 43,000 people have coeliac disease in Ireland, a digestive condition where a person has an adverse reaction to the protein gluten. Apart from those living with this very real disease, there has been a surge in people pursuing a gluten-free diet, driven largely by celebrity endorsement.

But are we becoming more intolerant to gluten? There is a school of thought developing that it's not the fault of the gluten, but rather the industrial processes involved in baking commercial bread, that are responsible for the bloating, indigestion and weight gain that non-coeliacs are so worried about.

Commercial bread has more than 30 ingredients per loaf. These include the replaced nutrients that are removed during the refining of white flour; palm fat, a hugely popular and cheap commercial fat that is contributing to the rapid decimation of the world's tropical rainforests; and refined sugar, enemy number one in the fight against growing levels of obesity worldwide.

Less is more

Now take an older approach to baking a loaf of bread. Flour, water, yeast and salt are the only ingredients you need to bake a loaf of bread (in Tuscany, Italy, they don't even bother with the salt). This simpler approach is growing in popularity. In San Francisco, artisan producers have tapped into the hipster zeitgeist by popularising sourdough bread. Sourdough involves using the wild yeast, which lives in the air around us, captured in a batter-like sourdough 'starter'.

"Flour, water, yeast and salt are the only ingredients you need to bake a loaf of bread."

The starter (often referred to as 'mother culture' or simply 'mother') is kept alive by feeding it regularly with flour and water. The natural acidity of the starter (it tastes and smells like something halfway between craft beer and natural yogurt) helps to break down the gluten as the bread slowly proves.

The final essential ingredient is time. If you're baking a loaf at home using commercial yeast (fresh or dried), you can ➤

generally produce something that's ready to go in the oven within an hour or two. Sourdough is different, and the recipe included here takes place over 24 hours from mixing to baking. But trust me when I tell you that it's no more complicated and it's totally worth it.

The producers

While some of those San Francisco bakers are getting global attention, the process is one of long standing tradition in the Poilâne bakeries in Paris (poilane.com), who ship their signature loaf all over the world as each bake comes out of their wood-fired ovens.

Closer to home the Tartine Organic Bakery, based in Baldoyle (tartine.ie), is bringing the authentic taste and quality of sourdough to retail outlets all over Dublin city and county. Baking up to eight varieties of bread using only organic ingredients, Tartine proves its bread for 24 hours and says "the long process allows for the protein of the gluten to be broken down and results in bread that is easier to digest and full of healthy nutrients."

For those who want to learn how to bake sourdough using a more hands-on approach, Fumbally Stables in Dublin (thefumballystables.ie) run a couple of workshops a year with chef turned baker, Shane Palmer. Palmer learned his craft during a year in San Francisco working in some of the world's finest bakeries, and the workshops also provide you with some take-home starter to get you going.

Flours and starter

My own sourdough obsession began in the spring, when I finally managed to nurture my own starter to life, beginning with a little milk and yogurt and some flour. Six months later, I'm baking one or two loaves a week that are quickly devoured, and managing to keep my precious starter alive, which is a simple enough process. There are lots of useful sites offering instruction on how to develop your starter, a quick search online is all you need.

I feed the starter with a mix of rye and semolina flour, and keep stocked up on strong white and wholemeal flours to make sure there's always the makings of a good loaf close to hand.

For more on sourdough and fermented foods, check out Michael Pollan's excellent Netflix series, *Cooked*, and his book of the same name. Also check out Justin Gellatly's excellent *Bread Cake Doughnut Pudding*, from which I've taken his sourdough recipe ●

Sourdough loaf

This recipe makes a 1kg loaf of bread and all ingredients are weighed, including water, which I find gives better results.

- 400g strong white flour
- 50g Rye flour
- 50g Wholemeal flour
- 350g water
- 220g sourdough starter
- 14g salt

In a mixer, using a dough hook, mix the flours, starter and water slowly for the first two minutes, then faster for another four minutes. Allow the mixture to rest, uncovered, for 20 minutes.

Next, add the salt and mix on a medium speed for six minutes. Scoop out the mixture into a bowl and cover. Over the next 90 minutes, turn the mixture with a spoon or spatula every half hour. You'll feel the mixture thickening and transforming from a loose, wet dough into a firmer mix.

Put the covered bowl in the fridge and leave overnight, this helps intensify the natural tanginess of the bread.

Remove the dough from the fridge about three hours before baking. Tip out onto a floured surface and fold the bread into a round. Put the loaf into a floured bowl (fold side up) and cover with a cloth.

Preheat the oven to 220c, and then tip the loaf mixture onto a floured, pre-heated oven tray. A few ice cubes in the bottom of the hot oven will create steam and help the bread to rise. Score the top of the loaf with a sharp knife and bake for 30-35 minutes. Remove the bread from the tray and continue to bake on the rack for another ten minutes, to give it a nice deep golden crust.





Ich bin eine Eurotrash

As the EU awaits the implications of a British exit, RAYMOND CONNOLLY laments the unintended consequences for pop music, and the failure of the Remain campaign to highlight Europe's popstastic legacy.

LET'S GET this on the record. Britain is indeed great and I am particularly fond of England, both the place and its people. I love going there (while I still can). Before anyone flaps into '800 years of oppression' mode I would counsel that 'love thy neighbour' is the way forward here folks.

The recent Brexit vote has provided us with plenty of pie 'n' mash for thought. Speaking of mash, the campaign by Brexit's own Beavis and Butthead – Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson – evoked memories of the classic 1970s 'For mash get Smash' TV commercial.

As you may recall, the aluminium aliens end up in fits of uncontrollable laughter, as they observe human customs: "They boil the potatoes in water for 20 of their earth minutes ha ha ha ha... they chop them with their little knives ha ha ha ha... and then they re-invest the 350 million pounds per week they will save by not being in Europe straight into the NHS ha ha haaa."

Hungarian writer Angela Kiss's *How to be an Alien in England: A Guide to the English* best explains the difference in sensibilities between the English and the rest of us Europeans: "Dating in England is different. First of all because English people don't like at all other people knowing them and second because English people are romantically impaired."

She adds, "In the mind of the English, kissing in the rain, as well as other public displays of affection, belong to the category of soft porn. Sane people don't do soft porn in public. Only animals do. And foreigners."

As plain as pie n' mash, there's no appetite for any Latino Lothario stuff (including the public displays of affection you might see outside Copperface Jack's of a weekend). Stiff upper lip and all that.

On the subject of food, I always marvelled at the choice of world foods on offer in England. While I don't rate traditional Irish food, a recent visit to rural England revealed to me that traditional English food is actually traditional Irish food. In a pie.

England's first gesture to implement Brexit was to get out of the Euro 2016 championships as early as possible. Three Lions on My Shirt? Next time try three goalkeepers fellas.

Pop charts

Imagine if similar anti-European sentiment had prevailed down the years with the UK pop charts. I have mixed views on whether or not this would have been good or bad. Growing up in Finglas in the late 1970s we had punk rock and we had ➤

Abba. Needless to say we were all tough street punks. Or maybe daft punks.

Secretly, however, we knew that Abba were wonderful songsmiths, maestros of the catchy tune. Try hawking that notion around '70s Finglas – to the likes of Wacker, Rasher and T-Bone Boland – and you'd be picking up your teeth with broken fingers.

So if the Brexit strategy of demonising all things European had been applied to the pop charts back then, the adoring British public would have missed out on *Dancing Queen*, *Take a Chance* and *Knowing Me, Knowing You* (Aha!) and never would've got to say thank you for the music, or revel in the numerous Abbamania West-end theatre opportunities.

Kraftwerk

Two of the most iconic and masterful UK popchart successes are also Johnny Foreigner productions. I cannot imagine 1980s pop without A-ha's *The sun always shines on TV* or Kraftwerk's *The Model*, probably the two best singles of the decade. As the Cold War raged around us, Gabriele Susanne Kerner, better known by her stage name Nena, gave us 99 *Red Balloons*.

Don't just sit there and pretend it wasn't a piece of pop genius, it was a metaphor about nuclear war! Let's not forget the French either. *Moon Safari* by Air still rates among my top albums of all time.

Please allow me to bring a little balance to my own debate. A 'no euro' policy might have spared us from the combined awfulness of the *Lambada* and *Macarena*. Ironically though, the soundtrack of a foreign holiday is incomplete without them. As I'm trying to sip away on a quiet San Miguel in a sun soaked bar, who leads the charge for the ridiculous dancing award when these tunes appear? The bloomin' Brits of course!



It speaks volumes that the ultimate tale of British courage and heroism, *Chariots of Fire* was soundtracked by a man from Greece. Take a bow Vangelis and you'll find your way home son.

The challenge I set for the reader (note the use of the singular) is to listen to Moldovan outfit O-Zone's *Dragostea din tei* in both Romanian and English. If you think you don't know it, think again. It reached number three in the UK charts in 2004. While you're doing that, I'm off to listen to a bit of Jan Hammer. Ciao ●

Even better than the real thing

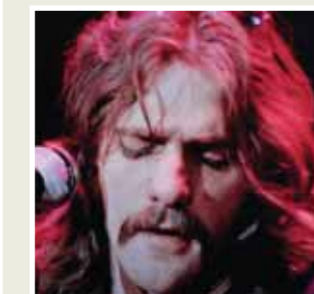
Legacy acts and tribute bands are everywhere now, proving there's a living to be made from nostalgia. MARTINA O'LEARY has discovered that her fondness for americana is best served in a long narrow smokey bar in Leopardstown.

DON HENLEY'S greatest hits tour in the 3 Arena last July got me thinking about how I used to constantly play the *Hotel California* album by The Eagles along with their greatest hits. While I'm a little young for the band I used to 'borrow' my older sister's albums. That's my excuse anyway.



Don Henley

Tasked by my editor to write about my memories of this legendary band, I played one of my old Eagles albums. It brought me back to my early twenties, when a gang of us would trek the nine miles from the Laurels pub in Perrystown, Dublin on a Sunday night, to the pub at Leopardstown race course to listen to the band 'EZ Feelin'. As the name suggests they played a mix of rock classics but with a particular focus on Eagles tunes.



Glenn Frey

I can still remember standing in the long, narrow smoke-filled bar, which was always packed with the band's regular followers, bopping away my two favourite Eagles songs *Peaceful Easy Feeling* and *Desperado*, the latter enriched by Don Henley's vocals and the late Glenn Frey's piano.

The music, singing and craic of those Sunday nights was fantastic, with a few drinks thrown in for good measure. I did get to see the Eagles in the RDS a few years ago. They were... well, they were just alright. Faced with a choice between EZ Feelin' and The Eagles themselves, it turns out that imitation was even better than the real thing.

For the record, my least favourite Eagles song is *Hotel California* but I was nicely surprised by *Hole in the World*. Listening back now it's good to be reminded of how great some of their songs are, but I'd had enough after an hour or so. An all-night Eagles session needs a few more ingredients. I'd have to call up the crowd from The Laurels for a start ●

Autumn-Winter 2016 solutions
(From page 42)

8	4	3	2	5	1	7	6	9	5	6	7	3	4	8	1	9	2
6	7	9	3	4	8	1	2	5	1	8	9	5	2	4	4	7	3
1	5	2	6	7	9	3	4	8	2	3	4	1	7	9	5	6	8
4	8	5	7	3	6	9	1	2	7	1	3	2	9	4	8	5	6
9	1	7	8	2	4	5	3	6	4	5	6	8	3	1	7	2	9
2	3	6	1	9	5	4	8	7	9	2	8	6	5	7	3	1	4
5	2	4	9	8	3	6	7	1	8	4	2	9	1	5	6	3	7
7	9	1	4	6	2	8	5	3	3	7	5	4	6	2	9	8	1
3	6	8	5	1	7	2	9	4	6	9	1	7	8	3	2	4	5

Easy

Difficult

Summer-Autumn 2016 Crossword Solutions

See page 42 for the competition winners from issue 34.

ACROSS: 1. Fewer 5. Prank 8. Aphelia 9. Aired 10. Turbo 11. Anguish 14. Taser 17. Stank 20. Rashers 21. Swat 22. Amid 23. Hoariness 24. Aside 27. Anise 30. Ingests 32. Doing 33. Tests 34. Heather 35. Digit 36. Annoy. **DOWN:** 1. Feast 2. Warns 3. Radar 4. Peru 5. Paths 6. Aorta 7. Kiosk 12. Gathering 13. Infringes 15. Answers 16. Earthed 18. Treason 19. Nations 24. Added 25. Icing 26. Eight 27. Astra 28. Ibsen 29. Essay 31. Eats.

Turning music into light

The modern music documentary has become an art form in itself, blending backstage atmosphere, performance, the bones of a good story and a look at wider social and political issues says MORGAN O'BRIEN.



Legendary documentarian DA Pennebaker made a big impression with *Don't Look Back*, following Bob Dylan on his 1966 tour of England, and *Monterey Pop*, which documented the titular music festival in 1967. Both offered a glimpse of the wider potential of the documentary form.

In the case of the former the film offers a close up view of Dylan in equally contrary and charismatic form; while the latter, along with Michael Wadleigh's *Woodstock* and The Rolling Stones documentary *Gimme Shelter*, distilled the social and political context of the 1960s counterculture.

Often documentaries of major acts, particularly those authorised by the artists themselves, tend to be self-promoting ego vehicles (we're looking at you One Direction). However, there have been a growing number of filmmakers that have been drawn to the topic of music in attempting to expose wider personal and social issues that lie behind the surface.

Some Kind of Monster, documented metal pioneers Metallica as they recorded their album *St. Anger* while *Dig!* contrasts the developing careers and love-hate relationship between The Dandy Warhols and The Brian Jonestown Massacre over a seven year period.

Both were made with the involvement of the bands. This is something at least some of them now appear to regret, but both films faithfully caught the internal struggles and conflicts that erupt inside the creative relationship of a rock band.

The last number of years has seen a growing range of music documentaries, which have attracted commercial and critical success. This has included films that have sought new ways to examine popular acts, offered explorations of forgotten figures and cult bands, or provided insight on different forms

MUSIC DOCUMENTARIES from rock 'n' rolls early days tended toward concert footage, at times interspersed with some backstage colour. In general concert movies can often be viewed as primarily for fans. With perhaps an exception being Jonathon Demme's *Stop Making Sense* which presents a Talking Heads concert as an energetic art installation.

of music. The best music documentaries are those that offer a previously unseen dimension to the music, or that can draw the viewer's interest by exploring wider issues.

Oscar wins

The robust nature of the form is evident in the fact that in three of the last four years, a film focusing on music has won the Oscar for Best Documentary, with each managing to gain public interest across diverse topics.

In 2013, *Searching for Sugar Man* followed two South African fans who sought to find out more about American musician Sixto Rodriguez, who had considerable success in their native country but remained a figure of mystery beyond his music. The film wonderfully explores music fandom, it's significance and what can happen to musicians after a brief moment of popularity.



Another film that, in part, resuscitates forgotten figures is *Anvil! The Story of Anvil*, a comic, yet poignant tale of a likable bunch of also-rans still dreaming of fame. In a similar vein, *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* tells the complicated story of the eponymous musician who has garnered a cult following and reputation for genius, while also struggling with bipolar disorder.

20 Feet from Stardom, which examines the experiences of back-up singers, won the award in 2014. On the one hand the film is a touching story about the women that sang on countless hit records without, for the most part, ever being recognised; however, it also explores deeper issues like the treatment of women in music and the challenges of making that move from the background to the spotlight. ➤

The film shares a style and focus with *The Wrecking Crew*, which charts the experiences of a set of session musicians that played on a range of hit songs in the 1960s, and *Muscle Shoals*, which reflects on the titular Alabama studio that was used by The Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan in the 1960s and '70s. Both offer insights into the behind the scenes work that went into creating some of the best loved music of the period.

This year's winner was *Amy*, made by Asif Kapadia, who had previously made *Senna*. The film, focusing on the recognisable figure of Amy Winehouse, uses archive footage and interviews to chart both her rise to success and ultimate descent into addiction, while also drawing out wider themes about celebrity and our complicity in making the singer a target of both adulation and opprobrium.



Kurt Cobain

Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck, like *Amy*, challenges the notion that we know all there is to know about modern celebrities. The film offers a fascinating looks at the life and career of the Nirvana frontman that is far more satisfying than 1999's *Kurt and Courtney*. Director Brett Morgen uses archive footage and material assembled from Cobain's own personal journals to construct a complicated image of the revered Nirvana frontman.

The appetite for music documentaries shows little sign of abating. Both Ron Howard's Beatles documentary *Eight Days a Week* and Andrew Dominik's *One More Time with Feeling*, which follows the recording of *Skeleton Tree* by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds after the death of the singer's son, are currently on release. Later in the year we'll have the Oasis documentary *Supersonic* and *Gimme Danger* an in-depth look at legendary proto-punks The Stooges ●

COMING TO A CINEMA NEAR YOU

The Girl on the Train

(7th October)

A mystery thriller based on the novel of the same name by Paula Hawkins. Emily Blunt stars as the recently divorced woman, who becomes embroiled in a series of increasingly troubling events.



Inferno

(14th October)

Tom Hanks returns as Robert Langdon in this adaptation of the preposterous series of Dan Brown novels. In this instalment, I can only imagine the redoubtable professor solves a series of arcane clues and foils some nefarious plot.

Jack Reacher: Never Go Back

(21st October)



A welcome sequel to the at times silly yet enjoyable Jack Reacher. While Tom Cruise may not resemble the character in Lee Child's novels he can be relied upon to deliver the usual action packed gusto.

Dr Strange (28th October)

Another film based on the seemingly inexhaustible stable of Marvel characters. Benedict Cumberbatch stars as a surgeon whose career is ruined by injury but is trained by a sorcerer to assume mysterious powers.

The Accountant

(4th November)



Ben Affleck stars as a former child prodigy who, as an adult, has taken to working as an accountant for criminal organisations and is drawn into conspiracy and violence. The strong support cast includes JK Simmons, Anna Kendrick and John Lithgow.

American Pastoral

(11th November)

Ewan McGregor makes his directorial debut with this adaptation of Philip Roth's 1997 novel. Set against the backdrop of American social and political upheaval in the late 1960s



and early 1970s, McGregor stars as a businessman whose successful life and family are thrown into disarray.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them

(16th November)

JK Rowling's spin off of her Harry Potter series is set in the 1920s and features Eddie Redmayne as a wizard that must capture a series of magical creatures while being pursued by dangerous enemies.



Bad Santa 2 (25th November)



Sequel to the hilariously irreverent *Bad Santa*, which offered an askew form of Christmas cheer. The film sees Billy Bob Thornton and Tony Cox return as Willie and Marcus planning to rob a charity on Christmas Eve.



Winter hot pots

ITA PATTON offers advice on how to bring a splash of vivid colour to the patio or balcony to sustain you through the winter months.

STANDING AT the kitchen sink while washing the dishes (yes I'm an old fashioned gal) I like to gaze out at the garden. While trying to ignore the weeds and clutter, I can admire the colourful summer and autumn displays in my pots at the edge of the patio. However, I have to admit that during the bleakest months of the year I have left many of these containers rather bare and empty. This winter, I plan to change that.

When planting pots for winter, it's important to remember that the weather is likely to be very cold and wet and plants will put on very little growth (if any at all). Therefore the chosen plants must be of a decent size to give an immediate impact. Rather than bright flower colour, the winter emphasis should be on features such as colourful stems, evergreen foliage and berries.

Always aim to buy frost-proof containers. Bigger is better, as this will offer greater scope for interesting plant combinations and also greater frost protection to young root balls by insulating them with the surrounding compost. If the weather does turn very cold and frosty, the pots can be wrapped in fleece or bubble wrap. However, with our recent mild winters, it's possible that this won't be necessary.

Water please

There's no need to use water retention gels as they can make the compost too wet for long periods. Regular watering is important nevertheless. Liquid feeding isn't needed throughout the winter and early spring, although a top dressing of fresh compost and, perhaps, an application of an organic fertiliser at planting time should be considered. Try to position the pots where they will get as much sun as possible to ensure green and healthy foliage.

I always find it best to begin with a Potted Bay.



Bellis Perennis in an old stone pot.

specimen key plant, for example the bright red stemmed Siberian dogwood or 'Baton Rouge' dogwood which provide a unique and striking look which offers height, but not too much bulk. The accompanying planting will be very much down to personal taste. Perhaps the red berried skimmia 'Chilan Choice', edged with the perfectly mounded Heuchera 'Marmalade' with its peachy bronze foliage, or a low growing evergreen grass such as the dramatic Black Mondo or 'Black Dragon'(Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens') or slender sweet flag 'Ogon' (Acorus gramineus 'Ogon') with its brilliant gold and lime green striped foliage.

Just a few examples of specimen plants are the yellow-green dogwood, witchhazel, with its spidery shaped yellow flowers on bare stems, the reliable evergreen winter box Sarcococca ►

A selection of winter plants: Erica varieties and Skimmia.



Winter pansies with tall Conifer.

hookeriana or Choisya 'Sundance' with its limey green yellow leaves, which exude a refreshing citrusy scent when crushed. All provide a rich palette for making up your colour combinations.

Colour

Winter/spring bedding plants can make all the difference to a container by providing the finishing touch. Of course a jumble of mismatching colours won't look as good as a well-planned combination. Cyclamen, winter flowering pansies, ornamental kale and cabbages, polyanthas and the ever cheerful bellis perennis are available in garden centres throughout the winter.

Bulbs which flower in late winter are invaluable as harbingers of spring and should also be included. Try the winter aconite with their bright yellow flowers surrounded by a frill of green, snowdrops, dwarf narcissus and grape hyacinths. In fact, bulbs can be planted in layers in a container, with the larger and later flowering bulbs at the bottom, such as Fritallaria imperialis (a member of the lily family) covered with a 10cm layer of compost, then a layer of tulips topped with a layer of compost, then a layer of narcissus topped with compost. Place a layer of hyacinths or muscari on top before top-dressing the container. Make sure to remove the dying foliage which can look ugly.

This winter, when I'm confronted with a large mound of dirty dishes, at least I will have a cheerful display to look out on ●



Heuchera garden.

GARDENING JOBS THIS WINTER

- ✿ Check that climbers and wall plants are securely fastened to a support framework.
- ✿ Cut back faded herbaceous perennials.
- ✿ Check dahlia tubers in storage for signs of rotting.
- ✿ Tie in wayward branches on wall-trained fruit trees.
- ✿ Wash glass panes in glasshouse and clean out seed trays and pots.

Ita Patton is a craft gardener in the National Botanic Gardens ●

Travel and trips

I have scaled these city walls...

In search of a blast of continental summer sun, and to visit a country he'd never been to before, NIAL SHANAHAN took a family trip to Dubrovnik in Croatia this summer. In the end, it was the simple pleasures that won him over (just don't mention the food).

IT'S A big world out there and there's a big chunk of it I haven't (yet) seen. Ever cheaper global travel makes it tempting to look to Asia, Australia and the Americas for recreational travel. Sometimes I think this means we tend to overlook the complexity and variety of what Europe lays out in front of us, right on our doorstep.

I was just out of my teenage years when the Berlin Wall fell and the political landscape of Europe wriggled free of its Cold War boundaries. Europe suddenly became a bigger, more complicated place. The Balkan conflicts of the early 90s transformed the former Yugoslavia into a bitterly divided collection of states struggling to assert their own independence, while some attempted to assert a violently nationalist agenda.

Sunny

More than 20 years on from the Croatian War of Independence, the country is independent, a member of the EU since 2013, and boasts a thriving tourism industry. Dubrovnik, a city of more than 42,000 people, provides a hub at the heart of southern region of Dalmatia (the capital, Zagreb, is in the northeast). Sitting opposite Italy's eastern coast on the Adriatic, the city is almost as far south as Rome and, consequently, is as hot and sunny in July as you'd expect it to be.

We rented a nice family apartment (via TripAdvisor) in the town centre of Dubrovnik on the edge of the Lapad peninsula, offering a fine view of the busy marina and the mountains that overlook the city. From

...but I still haven't found what I'm looking for

here we were within easy reach of the old city, the nearby islands and the cool clear waters of Lapad beach.

Dubrovnik's ancient walled city, or 'old town', dates back to the early middle ages, with the current walled fortification said to have been originally constructed in the 13th century.

The grand city walls are punctuated by an intricate and complex system of defensive bastions, towers and detached forts. From the top of the walls you can see the old town and the sea beyond, and this attraction drew close to a million visitors in 2015. They run for almost two kilometres around the city, and are up to six metres thick.

Despite demilitarisation of the area in the early 1970s – in an attempt to prevent it from ever becoming a casualty of war – Serbian forces attacked the city in 1991. An estimated 114 civilians were killed during the shelling that took place between October and December that year. After ➤

the war the old town underwent meticulous repair and reconstruction. It's a relatively small city within a city, and thousands of tourists make their way through its narrow residential streets every day.

King's Landing

The old town and its walls have, however, taken on a new guise as the fictional city of King's Landing in the hugely popular HBO television series, *Game of Thrones*. The same location will also make an appearance in the next instalment of the *Star Wars* franchise.

"The old town is beautiful and well worth a visit, it's UNESCO world heritage status recognises its unique beauty."

And it's this aspect which has, unfortunately, slightly overwhelmed the old town with themed walking tours and multiple shops selling *Game of Thrones* and *Star Wars* merchandise. A sort of *Game of Thrones*-themed Temple Bar, and like any other tourist destination it's taking full advantage of its new-found celluloid fame.

Don't get me wrong, the old town is beautiful and well worth a visit, its UNESCO world heritage status recognises its unique beauty. And while the restaurants of the old town are overpriced and underwhelming (a common problem in Dubrovnik which I'll come back to), there's a really good ice cream shop on the main street (just beyond the water fountain to the right) which boasts gloriously cooling treats and surprisingly friendly staff (I'll come back to that too).

The islands

Once you've visited the old town (one hot afternoon was enough for me and the seven-year old), you have the option of taking a trip further south to Cavtat or, if you like to get the sand

between your toes (Dubrovnik's beaches boast lovely water but they are rocky outcrops), it's time to head out to the islands.

While there are lots of street vendors hawking day trips to the Elaphite Islands (Koločep, Lopud and Šipan) around the town, you can buy inexpensive tickets at the main office of Jadrolinija Ferries (www.jadrolinija.hr/en/ferry-croatia) in Gruž harbour, who run regular sailings throughout the day.

We took a mid-morning ferry to Koločep (about 30 minutes), a friendly island with sandy beaches and a few decent and inexpensive places to eat. Based on our own experience and the testimonials of friends who've been to this part of the world, the islands are a better option for a longer, more relaxed holiday. Throw in a day trip to Dubrovnik and I reckon you'll get the balance just right.

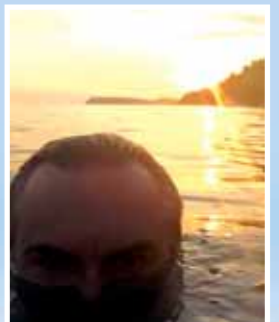
Food fight

While the coffee (a national obsession) here is as good as you'll find in Italy, the food options aren't great. Most cafés and restaurants have the type of menu you'd see in most Mediterranean hotspots (pizza, pasta, fish etc.), the quality leaves a lot to be desired and, depending on where you go, eating out can seem extortionate (don't bother eating in the old town). On top of that, service tends to be a bit patchy and characterised by a surliness that seemed to affect most people we encountered. Maybe it's still early days for the hospitality industry.

Sunset swims

We paid a visit to Lapad beach every day of our holiday. It's a laid back place, maybe even a bit shabby, but watching the glorious sunsets on this west-facing inlet while having a swim is a great way to cool off and finish the day's activities. Our sunset swims became the highlight of our short visit to Dubrovnik.

It's the simple pleasures really ●



NEWS SHORTS



Caitriona Lucas

Clare branch tribute to Caitriona Lucas

IMPACT's Clare branch has paid tribute to Caitriona Lucas, who died in September while on duty with the Doolin coast guard in Kilkee. Caitriona worked as a librarian for Clare County Council and was a member of the branch.

Seamus Ryan, a colleague and fellow branch member, paid tribute to Caitriona. "All of us who were fortunate to have known Caitriona and to have worked with her are devastated by her loss.

"She was a valued colleague, a good friend and a dedicated public servant. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to her family," he said.

IMPACT meets health minister

A delegation from IMPACT's Health and Welfare division attended an introductory meeting with the Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, at the end of August. The union outlined its current programme of work in the health sector, and informed the minister about the composition of IMPACT's health membership.

The minister expressed his support for IMPACT's work to highlight the value of clerical and administrative staff working in the sector. IMPACT national secretary Eamonn Donnelly described the meeting as positive and constructive.



New Union talks continue

The presidents, vice presidents and general secretaries of IMPACT and two other unions – the CPSU and PSEU – continue to meet to develop structures for a new union following a proposed amalgamation of the three organisations, which received huge backing at the conferences of all three unions earlier this year, where it was agreed that the final decision would be made by members in separate ballots in 2017.

The latest talks have focused on membership services, democratic structures, finances, and organisational issues. It has been agreed that all the existing branches of each union – along with their rules and standing orders – would be carried into the new organisation.

Unions demand accurate pay comparisons

IMPACT has insisted that future pay comparisons between the public and private sector must be based on a fair assessment of individual public service grades and comparable private sector workers, not "absurd crude averages" of pay across the two sectors.

In its submission to the Government's consultation on the soon-to-be-established Public Service Pay Commission, IMPACT and other public service unions also warn that comparisons of lower-paid public servants with "deplorable practices in some parts of the private sector" would not be acceptable (see page 8).

CRC pensions review agreed

IMPACT and management of the Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) have reached agreement at the Workplace Relations Commission, following a dispute over the CRC's decision to terminate the staff contributory pension scheme in June.

IMPACT official Ian McDonnell explained: "The parties have agreed to the appointment of an independent actuary to forensically assess the pension scheme. This process should provide us with the necessary information to seek specific resolutions on both issues."



over a five year period, as well as the environs at the Oberstown campus, new building developments, the historical buildings and suitability to meet the behavioural challenges of young people.

The review will be carried out by an agreed independent external assessor. All parties agreed the review should be carried out as soon as possible. The health and safety audit is separate to the operational review of the Oberstown campus announced by the Minister for Children, Katherine Zappone, in September.

Call for third level investment

The Coalition for Publicly Funded Higher Education, a group comprised of IMPACT and the USI, SIPTU, IFUT and TUI, has urged all political parties to support the publicly-funded third level education option put forward in the Cassells report, and to avoid an income-contingent loan scheme option.



Ballot on staffless libraries due

IMPACT's Local Government divisional executive committee (DEC) has advised branches representing library staff that members will be balloted on the issue of staffless libraries in the near future. IMPACT national secretary Peter Nolan said the union's opposition to the proposals was due to concerns that they would further effect staff reductions in the sector.

The DEC has set out a list of critical requirements that IMPACT will be seeking in the event that the management side proceed with their proposals. These include ensuring adequate staffing at all grades in every library authority; seeking guaranteed access to family friendly hours; and ensuring equality in availability of library services.



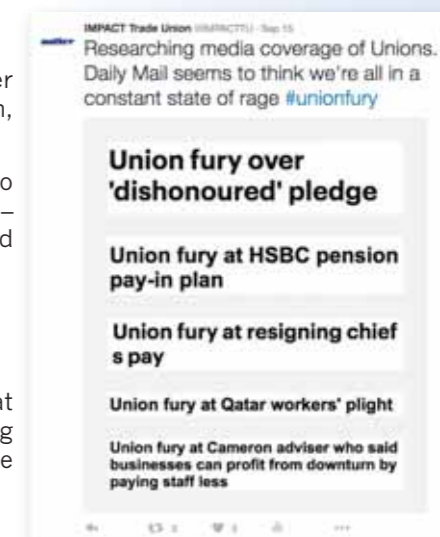
Previous water funding failed

Ireland is unlikely to ever get a high quality and environmentally responsible water infrastructure if the Government reverts to funding the service solely from general taxation, according to IMPACT.

In a submission to the Expert Water Commission, which was set up by the Government to look at water charges and investment needs, the union says that other public services – like health and education – will always 'trump' water when finite resources are allocated out of general funds.

To find out more...

For more on these stories see impact.ie and follow IMPACT on Facebook or Twitter at twitter.com/IMPACTTU. Subscribe to our fortnightly members' ebulletin by contacting info@impact.ie. The ebulletin and all union news, as it happens, are published on the IMPACT website at impact.ie and on Twitter.



Pedal power

IMPACT OFFICIALS Eamonn Donnelly and Dessie Robinson together with IMPACT colleagues and members raised €28,500 in the IMPACT charity cycle/run. The money was raised during the IMPACT charity cycle/run from Limerick to IMPACT's conference in Killarney, last May. Four charities involved with suicide prevention and good mental health including Kerry Life, SOS, Spun Out and Living Links all received cheques for €7,125.

This is the fifth time Eamonn and Dessie have led the charge and organised this event, with other IMPACT staff and members participating in the 110km cycle. For the first time there was also a 10k run. In total €110,000 has been raised for various local and national charities over the five years.



Photo: Brian Gavin, Press22

Family fun day

Dublin North Health & Welfare branch is the new name for the old Dublin North HSE branch. To celebrate this new beginning members of the branch and their families were invited to a family fun day held in Malahide. The weather was kind and revellers enjoyed inflatable games, archery, face painting, balloon modellers, a DJ and lots of food.



Members of DNHWB branch and IMPACT staff at the family fun day.

Community and voluntary sector pay restoration

IMPACT trade union, which represents approximately 5,000 workers in the community and voluntary sector, has said that workers in the sector are at risk of being left behind as pay restoration begins to take hold in other sectors of the economy.

The union hosted a pre-budget briefing focusing on the community and voluntary sector, and presented the findings and recommendations contained in the union's Caring- At What Cost? research document.



Eamonn Donnelly, National Secretary

Sligo Libraries

IMPACT members in the Sligo region joined forces with the Sligo community in September to rally against library closures in the county.



Sean MacDonnaill, Sligo branch and Ceiline Kilcoyne.



Maria Collery and Ray O'Reilly, Sligo branch.



Pat Fallon, IMPACT president being interviewed by RTE's Eileen Magnier.

Gralton unveiling

A special event to unveil a memorial to Leitrim socialist Jimmy Gralton at his birthplace in Efrinagh, Co Leitrim, took place in September. Gralton campaigned for the rights of tenant farmers and workers, clashing frequently with clergy and politicians and was deported by the Government in 1933. He died in New York in 1946, without ever returning home. Gralton is the subject of Ken Loach's acclaimed 2014 film *Jimmy's Hall*. Pictured (left to right) at the event are SIPTU president Jack O'Connor, ICTU president Brian Campfield, Chair of Leitrim County Council, Cllr Mary Bohan, Sabina Higgins, IMPACT president Pat Fallon, President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, and Cllr Declan Bree, Secretary of the Gralton Labour History Committee and Patsy Guckian, member of the Gralton Labour History committee, which organised the event.



Public funding for higher education

The Coalition for Public Funding of Higher Education, which consists of unions representing staff and students in the higher education sector (IMPACT, SIPTU, USI, TUI and IFUT) launched a briefing paper making the case for public funding for Higher Education. Gina O'Brien, Cathaoirleach of IMPACT's Education division is pictured second from the left.



Welcome to 'The Jungle'

ASHLING SEELY and YVONNE O'CALLAGHAN of the Congress Global Solidarity Committee report on a visit to refugee camps in Calais and Dunkirk, against the backdrop of a disappointing outcome from the recent UN Summit on Refugees & Migrants in New York.



The Congress delegation in Calais, including IMPACT organiser Joan McCrohan (third from left).

THE RECENT New York Declaration falls far short of what is needed to tackle the global refugee crisis. It's an affront to the millions of refugees making unsafe journeys, to those enduring squalid living conditions and the 33,000 people forced to flee their homes daily.

It epitomises the critical failure of all official and governmental efforts to deal with this crisis.

In this context, the onus is on each one of us to raise our voices and make clear that we demand better for people forced to flee their homes.

Our delegation visited the refugee camps in Calais (known as the 'Calais Jungle') and Dunkirk on the 16-18 September.

The delegation got to meet some wonderful volunteers working in the camps, people who took the time to discuss the incredibly important work they do and recount the stories of

camp residents: stories of torture and brutalisation, illness and injury, determination and resilience on the part of those who persevere with dignity and strength.

On entering the camps, we experienced new, arbitrary security checks by the CRS (French National Police), in which passports had to be produced and details were taken.

In the midst of torrential rain, we saw residents of the Calais camp scramble to save their few belongings from the downpour and prevent their shelters (basic camping tents) from being washed away by the rivers of water cascading through the camp.

The camp itself is built on an old commercial dump. The non-government organisation, L'Auberge de Migrants, completed a census in recent weeks and the camp population is now in excess of 10,000, with approximately 50 new arrivals each day.

Volunteers at the L'Auberge des Migrants warehouse told the delegation how donations have dropped significantly because of the negative media stories put out about the Calais camp, including misinformation earlier this year about its destruction, but more importantly the use and abuse of the migration issue in the Brexit referendum.

The delegation heard of the story of a 14-year-old Afghan boy named Rahim, who was killed the night before we arrived in a hit and run. As Rahim was an unaccompanied minor his teenage friends had to identify his body. He had been trying to reach his uncle and brother in London.

"The future is uncertain for every one of the more than 10,000 people in these camps."

The French police will not be investigating his death, nor do they investigate reports of children that go missing from the camp.

The camp residents are aware the threat by the French government to destroy the camp is imminent and said they were not being offered any concrete alternative. ►



The makeshift camp is home to 10,000 people.

We heard countless stories of police brutality, with groups of police up to 20 strong entering the camp and beating up residents, along with ongoing teargassing of the camp at night.

We also heard many stories of families torn apart, of people losing everything they owned over and over again, of the dangers facing women and unaccompanied minors and they systemic discrimination they faced.

But there are high points too. One evening the delegation attended a live musical performance by two Welsh musicians, in a makeshift restaurant. They were joined on stage by a rapper from Sudan, a rapper from London and a beatbox performer from Libya. It was an unforgettable evening of community and togetherness, with people from across Africa, the Middle East (and Europe) dancing and singing along.



Shelter and sanitation facilities are basic and improvised.

The camp residents tend to fall into two categories. There are the young able-bodied men who continuously try to make the dangerous crossing to the UK, frequently attempting to jump on moving trucks at night.

Then there are the many older men, the people with disabilities and women who feel they are stuck here for an unknown length of time and face a very uncertain future.

But in the face of these huge odds and difficulties, the delegation also witnessed some remarkable examples of humanity and community solidarity, as well as incredible resilience and resourcefulness.

Above all, we were humbled by the hospitality and warmth that met us throughout the visit, from people who had lost virtually everything.

They are resilient people but hope is diminishing.

The future is uncertain for every one of the more than 10,000 people in these camps, many of them under 30, a lost generation searching for no more than a safe place to live and the ability to raise families with dignity and respect.

To access the Congress delegation's full report from Calais, visit ictu.ie/blog/2016/09/22/welcome-to-the-jungle/ ●

The scale of the European refugee crisis



ACCORDING TO the UNHCR – 1,015,078 people made it into the EU zone by sea routes in 2015. As of June this year, 2,868 people have either gone missing or died trying. Seventy-six percent of arrivals came from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries.

Most people pass through Greece via Turkey and go on through the Balkans; others travel by way of the central Mediterranean, starting in Libya and ending in Italy – where many get stuck in reception centres.

These people are generally trying to move north to Austria, Germany and Sweden.

With the number of displaced people across the world tripling in the last decade, the number of people attempting to reach Europe is expected to continue.

Refugees from across the world have attempted to reach Europe for decades, so why are people paying so much attention now? Medecins Sans Frontiers (Doctors Without Borders) say the number of crises across the Middle East and North Africa have created the 'perfect storm' for a refugee crisis:

- **SYRIA:** 7.6 million Syrians have been internally displaced, with a further 4.8 million having fled to Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey (the countries bearing the brunt of the refugee crisis) since the start of the nation's civil war in 2011 as of 2 June, 2016. Combined, this is more than half of the country's 23 million people. Since April 2011, an estimated 1,037,760 Syrians have sought asylum in Europe.
- **YEMEN:** The war in Yemen, where entire neighbourhoods have been designated as military targets, has led more than 178,000 people to leave their country.
- **IRAQ:** In Iraq, the advance of the so-called 'Islamic State' has led many to flee for their lives. The UNHCR estimate that 400,000 Iraqis are currently seeking refugee status.
- **Other** countries from which people are fleeing conflict and brutal regimes include Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Somalia and Ukraine.

Source: msf.ie

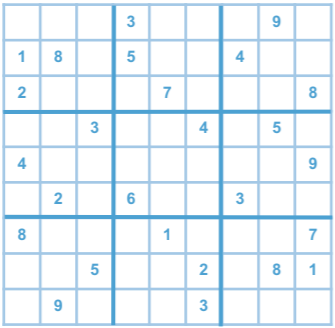
Prize quiz

Just answer five easy questions and you could win €50.

YOU COULD have an extra €50 to spend by answering five easy questions and sending your entry, name and address to Roisin Nolan, Work & Life prize quiz. IMPACT, Nerney's court, Dublin 1. We'll send €50 to the first completed entry pulled from the hat.* You'll find the answers in this issue of *Work & Life*.

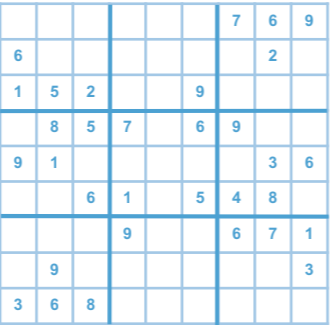
1. Who have we featured in this edition of the Four Lives Series?
a. Con O'Donovan
b. Seán Connolly
c. Harry Nicholls
d. Éamonn Ceannt
2. Our Sligo activists created a project known as
a. The Cuddle Initiative
b. The Muggle Initiative
c. The Huddle initiative
3. A sourdough bread starter is often referred to as
a. "Culture vulture"
b. "Culture club"
c. "Mother culture"
4. The Eagles tribute band from Dublin are known as
a. EZ Feelin
b. EZ Goin
c. EZ Peasy
5. Our cartoon is inspired by the hit Netflix TV series
a. Daredevil
b. Black Mirror
c. Stranger Things

The small print*
You must be a paid-up IMPACT member to win. Only one entry per person (multiple entries will not be considered). Entries must reach us by Thursday 1st December 2016. The editor's decision is final. That's it!



Difficult

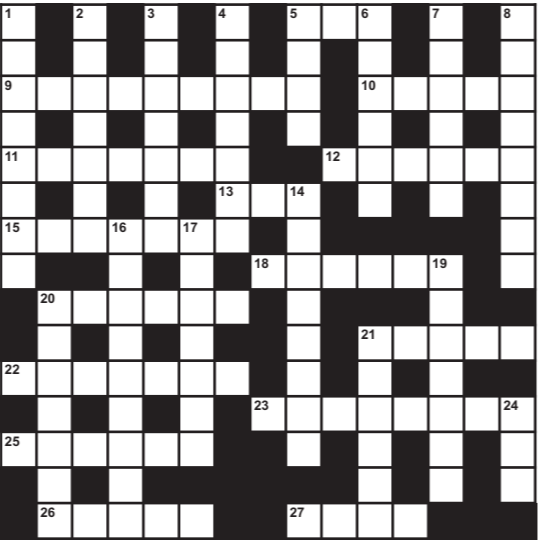
HOW TO PLAY:
Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1–9. There is no maths involved. You solve it with reasoning and logic.



Easy



PRIZE CROSSWORD



Crossword composed by Seamus Halpenny

- ACROSS**
5. See 21 Across
9. Composer may divert Mom from common fraud; this clue is thus
10. Insurance letters just go back and forth
11. It's confusing and personal but she is a poor nun
12. It's a sign that at least it isn't freezing
13. 3rd level college
15. You go to great lengths to meet a Roman King
18. See 27 Across
20. To tempt encouragingly
21. And 5 Down and 5 Across According to the Internet, spiders are very pervasive
22. To serve is OK, noble and good he changes his order but not for food
23. Eric will tour to finish in Royal circles
25. To separate emotionally from others
26. The subject he met is an important part. For this you see is integral to Art
27. And 18 Across Confusing chores draw parallel to present pursuit.

5. See 21 Across
6. And 7 Sounds like a lighthouse, but does it operate in the dark?
8. It might seem unkind to describe a student's success thus
14. BANG! This could cause a reaction
16. A logical reason to curb drinking
17. Scotch character does chat about an English Honour
19. See 24 Down
20. Place where First Lady took a nap
21. Redefine boundaries and redraw your role. Look out for others but look back also.
24. The Communist is in deep water if I'm not being misled

- DOWN**
1. It's what you do now, it's rich and deep
2. This companion is a type of fraudster
3. You might need this to enter a pub or exit a supermarket
4. There's plenty money about this place

Win €50 by completing the crossword and sending your entry, name and address to Roisin Nolan, Work & Life crossword, IMPACT, Nerney's Court, Dublin 1, by Thursday 1st December 2016. We'll send €50 to the first correct entry pulled from a hat.

Winners! The winners from competitions in the summer-autumn issue were:
Crossword: Michael Foley, Dublin South HSE. **Survey:** Alan Osborne, AMROB
Quiz: Síle McManus, Dublin South HSE.

Lots more competitions to enter in this issue!



How do you like *Work & Life*?

WE HOPE you enjoyed this issue of *Work & Life*, the magazine for IMPACT members. We want to hear your views, and we're offering a €100 prize to one lucky winner who completes this questionnaire.

Simply complete this short survey and send it to Roisin Nolan, Work & Life survey, IMPACT, Nerney's Court, Dublin 1. You can also send your views by email to rnolan@impact.ie.

We'll send €100 to the first completed entry pulled from a hat.*



The survey

1. What did you think of the articles in the autumn-winter 2016 issue of *Work & Life*?

Excellent ☐

Good ☐

Okay ☐

Bad ☐

Awful ☐

Comments

2. What did you think of the layout, style and pictures in the autumn-winter 2016 issue of *Work & Life*?

Excellent ☐

Good ☐

Okay ☐

Bad ☐

Awful ☐

Comments

3. What were your favourite three articles?

1

2

3

4. What were your least favourite articles?

1

2

3

5. What subjects would you like to see in future issues of *Work & Life*?

1

2

3

6. What did you think of the balance between union news and other articles?

The balance is about right ☐

I want more union news ☐

I want less union news ☐

7. Any other comments?

Name

Address

Email

Phone

IMPACT branch

The small print*
You must be a paid-up IMPACT member to win. Only one entry per person (multiple entries will not be considered). Entries must reach us by Thursday 1st December 2016. The editor's decision is final. That's it!



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Commercial membership services


IMPACT has facilitated the provision of a number of national membership services and discount schemes on behalf of its members. These include Additional Voluntary Contribution Schemes (Pensions), Life Assurance, Salary Protection in the case of illness and Car, House and Travel Insurance Schemes. A number of local discount schemes are also negotiated by local branches.

The Union uses the size and composition of its membership base and, where possible, competition between the various service providers, to seek the best possible deals for the widest possible sections of our membership. It is probable that the majority of members will get better value from these schemes than if they sought the same service individually. However, this will not be true in all cases and there will be occasions where individual members may, because of their specific circumstances, be able to get better value elsewhere. It is not possible always to ensure that all schemes will be accessible equally to all members and the scheme underwriters will not depart totally from their normal actuarial or risk assessment procedures and rules.

IMPACT does not make any claims as to the quality or reliability of any of these products/services and while advising members of the availability of the National Membership Services and Discount Schemes does not endorse or recommend any particular product or service. IMPACT's role is that of facilitator to ensure that such schemes are available to its members. All contracts are directly between the product/service provider and the individual member. IMPACT is not in any way a party to these contracts and will not accept any responsibility or liability arising from any act or omission on the part of the product or service provider. Neither IMPACT nor any member of its staff receives any fees or commissions or other rewards from these product or service providers arising from such schemes.

While IMPACT does occasionally provide such product/service providers with limited information regarding IMPACT branch and/or workplace representatives for the purpose of advertising such schemes, the Union does not make any personal data relating to individual Union members available to them for any purpose.

The Union requires that product/service providers agree to ensure that all such schemes comply with all lawful requirements including the Equal Status Act 2000.

Advertisements for agreed membership services will have an  logo on them.

Some of the companies providing agreed membership services may offer other products or services (that are not as a result of any agreement or arrangement with IMPACT) directly to IMPACT members. The Union has no role whatsoever in relation to such products or services. Likewise, other product or service providers may make offers directly to IMPACT members through advertisements in the Union newspaper or otherwise. These do not arise as a result of agreements or arrangements with IMPACT and the Union does not ask members to consider availing of such products/services and accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any such offers.

The product/service providers with which IMPACT has agreed the provision of membership services and/or discount schemes are as follows:

KennCo Insurance.

Travel Insurance – all Divisions.

Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

Car Insurance – all Divisions.

AVC Schemes – all Divisions, excluding Municipal Employees.

Salary Protection and Life Assurance – Local Government, Health, Civil Service, Education and Services & Enterprises Divisions.

Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT) Ltd.

Car Insurance – all Divisions.

House Insurance – all Divisions.

December 2004

DISCLAIMER (Approved by CEC 10th December 2004)

You're better off in IMPACT

IMPACT

IMPACT members can save a lot of money through a wide range of financial benefits provided or negotiated by the union. Some of these are free to all IMPACT members. Others are optional benefits, available only to IMPACT members, which can mean savings on insurance, salary protection, additional pension coverage and more.

IMPACT members are entitled to*

- €5,000 personal accident insurance
- €5,000 specified critical illness or death benefit
- Spouses now covered for death benefit too
- Free legal help in bodily injury cases
- Free 24/7 legal advice helpline
- Free 24/7 confidential counselling helpline
- Free 24/7 domestic assistance helpline.

Members can opt to avail of IMPACT-facilitated financial benefits

- Car insurance
- Home insurance
- Travel insurance
- Additional pension benefits
- Salary protection and life cover.

IMPACT members can also apply for

- Gaeltacht scholarships for their school-age children
- Industrial relations scholarships
- Benevolent grants for members in financial distress.



For more information visit
www.impact.ie

How would you cope without your salary?



There has been an 82% increase in Salary Protection claims received since the changes to Public Sector sick pay.*

Since Public Sector sick pay was significantly reduced in 2014, long term and short term claims have dramatically increased. More members now need to claim than ever before, for everyday illnesses like flu, back injury and stress.

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The IMPACT-Facilitated Salary Protection Scheme provides you with an income if your salary is reduced to half pay** or stopped altogether. It is your best defence against long term and short term illness.

Call us on **(01) 408 6283** to join over the phone today!

www.cornmarket.ie/impact

*Across all Cornmarket Schemes from 2013-2015. Source: Cornmarket, March 2016. **To be eligible to claim benefit, a member must have accrued two consecutive weeks sick leave (i.e. 10 working days) after the date that their pay reduced to half pay. Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd. is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Cornmarket is part of the Great-West Lifeco group of companies, one of the world's leading life assurance organisations. Friends First Life Assurance Company Limited is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.