

THE MAGAZINE FOR IMPACT MEMBERS

work & life

ISSUE 23 • AUTUMN 2013

LOCKED OUT

What the
1913
centenary
means
today.

PLUS

ZERO HOURS THREAT
AUSTERITY ALTERNATIVES
IMPACT MEMBER BENEFITS
FIRE SERVICE HEROES
COLOMBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

ALSO INSIDE

TWERKING. STYLE ICONS. THE SPINNING HEART. CHANGING CAREERS. MEN'S HEALTH.
WOMEN IN FILMS. LOCKOUT COMMEMORATION EVENTS. TASTY ITALIAN TREATS.
LAWN SURGERY. IR SCHOLARSHIPS. BOOKS. ALL THE NEWS. LOTS OF PRIZES.

WORK

- 6. ZERO-SUM**
The spread of zero hours contracts threatens us all.
- 8. LOCKOUT**
Why commemorate 1913?
- 10. BUDGET 2014**
Is austerity running out of road?
- 11. SAVE MONEY**
IMPACT members get financial benefits.
- 12. FIRE FIGHTING HEROES**



We meet Dublin's fire fighters.

- 14. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**
How IMPACT members are supporting Colombians.
- 17. YOUR CAREER**
Thinking about a career change.
- 35. INTERNATIONAL**
Colombian unions feel the heat.

LIFE

- 4. IMPACT PEOPLE**
IMPACT member Jeanette Rhenstrom on the Irish Writers' Exchange.
- 19. COMMEMORATE**
1913 centenary events.
- 20. FASHION**
How style icons help us.
- 22. FOOD**
Tuck into Italian treats.



- 24. GARDENS**
Draining the lawn.
- 26. HEALTH**
Addressing men's health.
- 28. MOVIES**
Women in comedies? It's not funny.
- 30. MUSIC**
When twerking ain't working.
- 32. BOOKS**
Donal Ryan's *Spinning Heart*.
- 40. SPORTS**
Triumphant triathlete Aileen Reid.

NEWS

- 36. ADMIN SLUR SLAMMED**
- 36. NEW HEALTH STRUCTURES**
- 36. SEÁN REDMOND**
- 37. BUDGET ALTERNATIVE**
- 37. BALLINASLOE PROTEST**
- 37. AIR STRIKE AVOIDED**
- 37. REFUGE WORRIES**
- 38. YOUTH JOBS PITCH**
- 38. WHISTLEBLOWER LAW**
- 38. HRA HOURS**
- 38. LIMERICK MERGER**

PRIZES

- 5.** Win Jeanette Rhenstrom's Book
- 32.** Win the award-winning *Spinning Heart*.
- 42.** Win €50 in our prize quiz.
- 43.** Rate *Work & Life* and win €100.



Work & Life is produced by IMPACT trade union's Communications Unit and edited by Bernard Harbor.

Front cover: Photo by Photocall Ireland. Eric O'Brien as Dennis in ANU Production's highly acclaimed Tenement Experience, which ran in 14 Henrietta Street over the summer. IMPACT was among the financial backers of the production, which was staged as part of the Lockout centenary commemorations.

Contact IMPACT at:
Nerney's Court, Dublin 1.
Phone: 01-817-1500.
Email: rnolan@impact.ie

Designed by:
N. O'Brien Design & Print Management Ltd.
Phone: 01-864-1920
Email: nikiobrien@eircom.net

Printed by Boylan Print Group.

Advertising sales:
Niki O'Brien.
Phone: 01-864-1920.

Unless otherwise stated, the views contained in *Work & Life* do not necessarily reflect the policy of IMPACT trade union.

Work & Life is printed on environmentally friendly paper, certified by the European Eco Label. This magazine is 100% recyclable.



Work & Life magazine is a full participating member of the Press Council of Ireland and supports the Office of the Press Ombudsman. In addition to defending the freedom of the press, this scheme offers readers a quick, fair and free method of dealing with complaints that they may have in relation to articles that appear on our pages. To contact the Office of the Press Ombudsman go to www.pressombudsman.ie or www.presscouncil.ie



All suppliers to *Work & Life* recognize ICTU-affiliated trade unions.



Photo: IMPACT Communications Unit.

Leading ladies

A RARE picture that captures together three women leaders of the international trade union movement. They were among the guests at August's State commemoration of the 1913 Lockout in Dublin's O'Connell Street. Left to right, they are Sharon Burrow, general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Bernadette Ségol, general secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation and Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the British Trade Union Congress ●

STRANGE WORLD

Cars for concern?



Photo by dreamstime.com

WHEN DOES a powerful right-wing Republican suddenly start believing the government should interfere in relations between an employer and its staff? They're all for rolling back the boundaries of the state, aren't they? Except when an employer starts talking to a trade union, that is.

Despite his party being so consistently prickly about so-called 'Big Government,' Tennessee governor Bill Haslem suddenly spoke out when Volkswagen decided to help the United Automobile Workers (UAW) unionise its factory in Chattanooga. The German car manufacturer wants to establish a European-style works council, but needs a union involved to avoid falling foul of US labour laws that rule out company-sponsored unions.

You might have thought it was a decision for the company, operating as it is in a free market in the land of the free. But, oblivious to the fact that VW's investment in his state is creating 2,500 badly-needed jobs, Haslem has waded in to opine that unionisation at the plant could somehow undermine the state's efforts to, um, attract investment.

Meanwhile, Volkswagen officials seem determined to have a union about the place and meetings are continuing in the company's German HQ in Wolfsburg.

"Volkswagen is a company that has extensive experience with union representation," says union rep Bob King.

And the investment-threatening union? "The UAW believes the role of the union in the 21st century is to create an environment in which both the company and workers succeed," says Bob.

Enough to set Republican ideologues quaking in their boots ●



Comic book hero

"LIFE IS a war of attrition" that revolves around "staying alive, getting a job, finding a mate, having a place to live and finding a creative outlet." So said comic book writer, music critic, public servant and, arguably, pioneer blogger Harvey Pekar.

The medical records clerk won late recognition through the 2003 biopic *American Splendor*, named after his 1970s comic books that documented the ordinary lives of Pekar, his neighbours and colleagues in the medical records department of Cleveland Veterans Administration Hospital.

The college drop-out saw the potential of comic books to relate ordinary experiences in the 1960s. But it would be a decade before his ideas reached fruition. Various illustrated by a hall-of-fame's worth of artists, *American Splendor* was an instant hit and remains an undisputed pillar of the comic world.

The 'poet laureate of Cleveland' anticipated today's social media by writing publicly about his and other people's ordinary lives. Not just in *American Splendor* but in graphic novels like *Our Cancer Year*, the story of his successful fight against lymphoma, and *Unsung Hero*, which documents the Vietnam experiences of a hospital colleague.

Despite achieving fame and respect for his work, Pekar retained his job in medical records until his retirement in 2001. He died, aged 70, from an accidental overdose of anti-depressants in 2010. A statue of the artist was installed at the library in Cleveland Heights University last year ●



THAT WAS THEN...

LOCKOUT: 100 YEARS AGO

On 27th September 1913 the SS Hare docks in Dublin laden with £5,000 worth of food and fuel for members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union after the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) pledges to support Dublin's locked-out workers. British unions go on to supply food, fuel and cash to the value of £93,000 – over £20 million in today's terms – over the course of the Lockout.

C & A Scheme

Meanwhile, a Board of Trade inquiry, chaired by civil servant and industrial arbitrator Sir George Askwith, opens in Dublin Castle on 29th September. On 5th October, Askwith's tribunal proposes a conciliation and arbitration system to resolve disputes. After a brief adjournment the unions accept the findings as a basis for negotiation, but the intransigent employers reject them out of hand.

There is widespread criticism of the employers' rejection of Askwith's recommendations. In an open letter in the Irish Times on 7th October, artist and writer George Russell (AE) issues a warning to "the aristocracy of industry in this city, because like all aristocracies, you tend to grow blind in long authority. You may succeed in your policy and ensure your damnation by your victory."

Larkin is guest of honour at a 10th October rally in London, where he says British trade union leaders, who've refused to sanction sympathetic strikes in Britain, are "about as useful as mummies in a museum." Socialist and feminist Dora Montefiore proposes that strikers' children should be cared for by British families until the strike was over.

On 19th November, Connolly declares that the men of the ITGWU must be prepared to enrol in the Citizen Army. On the following day, crops harvested by strike-breakers are destroyed in an attack on Baskin farm in Raheny. Farmer Sarah Carey is awarded £700 for malicious damage.

At the 1st December meeting of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, drapery store owner Edward Lee tries to force a debate on the Lockout by proposing a motion that "while determinedly opposed to the principle of sympathetic strikes" the Chamber "in the interests of peace and goodwill ought to withdraw the agreement they asked workers to enter into in respect of the ITGWU." The Chamber decides not to put the motion to a vote.

Visit www.1913committee.ie for a detailed chronology of the Lockout.

Brought to book

IMPACT member Jeanette Rehnstrom is a founder member of the Irish Writers' Exchange, which encourages writers and helps them get their work published. She's just published her first novel.

Tell me about yourself.

I grew up in Sweden with a Finnish mother and Swedish father. I left home at 17 and I've lived in London, Los Angeles and New York. I have also spent periods in France, South Africa and Ghana. I'm here in Ireland since 2004. I feel more settled now. I think that's partly my age.

What about your job?

I've recently been laid off from Cara Housing after ten years because the organisation has been disbanded. I was working with young homeless people. You could come in at points in a young person's life when you still had a chance to make a difference. It was a good job and I was the IMPACT rep for nine or ten years.

What's unemployment like?

I'm the eternal optimist and try to look at the positive angles. How I can make a living and maybe shift my focus in a slightly more positive way? It's a big shame that Cara Housing had to go. It was so beneficial to our clients. It's left a huge vacuum in the services available.

What's the Irish Writers' Exchange?

It is a collective of writers. At present we are all immigrants. It was formed in 2006 to give each other support in a new place. It gives a forum for other voices that are coming into this culture. We work to support each other; editing, finding printers, marketing and figuring out those deals. My novel *Bebove* is our fourth title and we're really pushing the publishing side of things. If anyone's interested in joining us, they can contact us through the website.

Tell me about your book

It is a play on the genre of thrillers, although it is quite spiritual and psychological. It's really to do with how we interact with others and how we come to belong to each other. It raises the question why we go for the same type of person▶

What's your earliest childhood memory?

Falling asleep in my dad's arms on an Icelandic horse galloping across a field.

What do you do to relax?

I have two rescue dogs and I'm out with them all the time. They keep me busy. I also go to the gym, read, listen to music and draw in my studio.

What small things make you happy?

Spending time in the studio. It doesn't matter if it is raining because you are in your own little bubble.

"I'd love to work with young people again. Young people in Ireland are fantastic. They're really resilient and just need a bit of guidance to get back on a path to more happiness."

What makes you laugh out loud?

The absurdity of life.

Who would you invite to your fantasy dinner party?

I would love to meet Patti Smith. She was one of my childhood heroes and was big in the punk scene in the mid-1970s. I recently went to a reading by a San Franciscan writer Rebecca Solnit, she writes on the environment, politics, place and art. She would be so interesting to sit and chat to.

What would your ideal holiday involve?

I've never been further south than Mexico, so I'd love to go anywhere in that region.

What do you like to read?

My colleagues in the group accuse me of having a strange taste in books. I like a lot of French writers. I'm reading James Salter at the moment.

What's your favourite dish to cook?

I have two at the moment. Spannakopita, which are Greek buns with feta cheese and spinach. You can buy them for breakfast in coffee bars in Greece. When I lived in New York I was always running late and would buy Jamaican beef patties for breakfast. I've just started to cook them. Puff pastry with meat, peas, curry and spices. Delicious!

What's the worst feature of your character?

I can get too excited about things. I don't like to sit still. This can be tiresome for others.

What really annoys you?

Irrationality. When things seem so clear to me but not to others. That can annoy me.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

Be careful what you wish for. Things aren't always greener on the other side.

What advice would you give to the 18-year-old self?

That things always change. That has been a big part with my work with young people. You won't always be as miserable as you are now.

What's next?

At the moment, I am busy with my book launch. I'd love to work with young people again. Young people in Ireland are fantastic. They're really resilient and just need a bit of guidance to get back on a path to more contentment.

Interview by Martina O'Leary. *Bebove* is available from Amazon or www.irishwritersexchange.ie priced €12.99

*Win a copy of *Bebove**

To be in with a chance to win a copy of *Bebove* send your name and address to: Roisin Nolan, *Bebove* competition, IMPACT, Nerney's Court, Dublin 1, by Friday 27th November.

Zero-sum

Zero hours contracts, where staff must be available for work but employers don't have to provide any, are becoming more common. We should all be worried says BERNARD HARBOR.

Photo by dreamstime.com

BACK IN the 1980s I worked as a 'casual' for the British removals company Pickfords, called in as and when I was needed. But most of the staff were full-time and permanent. And casuals, hired mainly during the busy summer months, had some hope of joining the mainstream workforce in time.

In any case, I got a lot of work and I was just out of college with no dependents or real financial commitments. I wasn't planning on a career in the industry either.

Things are different these days, with workers in entire sectors witnessing the widespread casualisation of working time. Most young journalists and PR staff can only expect to enter a career by working for nothing in exploitative unpaid internships, before enduring years of casual 'freelance' work on route to the holy grail of a permanent post.

Even in the public service, many new teachers and lecturers have to scrape together a portfolio of posts as employers

offer a few teaching hours here and there, rather than the full-time jobs of yore.

Now zero hours contracts, where staff have to be available for work but employers don't have to provide any – and only pay for time actually worked – are creeping into a growing number of Irish workplaces.

Serving

It's not easy to find figures on the prevalence of zero hours arrangements in Ireland. But an official survey in Britain recently revealed that 23% of employers with more than 100 staff used at least some zero hour arrangements in 2011 – up from 11% just seven years earlier.

Sectors like fast food, hospitality and retail have tended to dominate the headlines. It was recently revealed that 90% of staff in UK retailer Sports Direct have zero hours arrangements. But the practice is also becoming endemic ►



game

And a membership survey by retail union Mandate recently found that, while 70% had worked in retail for over five years, less than a third had full-time contracts. Half said their hours were changed at least once a month and only a third had stable working time arrangements.

For workers, money is the obvious problem with zero hours contracts. How can you live if you can't get enough work? What chance of planning a family or buying a home when you've no idea what hours you'll be working from week to week? And how can you supplement your income with other jobs when you must be available to your zero hours employer?

“In a country characterised by benign business taxes, labour costs are effectively being passed from profitable employers to an empty exchequer and struggling taxpayers.”

But there are scores of other disadvantages too. No paid holidays or sick leave. The impossibility of arranging childcare or even guaranteeing you can make it to your kid's school play. The near certainty that falling out of favour with your employer will leave you open to losing hours and income. The facility for employers to manipulate hours to avoid or minimise redundancy payments.

It's bad news for the taxpayer too because workers who can't get enough hours to earn a living fall back on welfare benefits to make ends meet. Some 17% of Mandate survey respondents said they claim a social welfare payment. So, in a country characterised by benign business taxes, labour costs are effectively being passed from profitable employers to an empty exchequer and struggling taxpayers.

The protection provided under Irish working time legislation is better than in the UK, but it's still far too limited. The Organisation of Working Time Act says staff must be paid for at least 25% of the time they are required to be available for work, or 15 hours, whichever is less. This means you could be available for 48 hours with only the guarantee of 12 or 15 hours' pay.

Right now, all the advantages lie with the bad employer, particularly as unemployment has left workers – especially the young – desperate for any work they can get. In the absence of more jobs, it seems inevitable that more and more of us will end up in this zero sum game unless there is tighter regulation of what employers can demand ●

in universities, pubs, agriculture, cinemas, food processing and a range of other sectors.

The UK-based Rowntree Foundation has reported that large numbers of workers in health and social care now work on a zero hours basis – including eight out of ten employed by private care agencies. The contracts have popped up across a range of privatised public services from domiciliary care to security.

Widespread

There's no reason to assume that they are much less widespread in Ireland. It was recently reported that a majority of staff in Irish outlets of McDonalds and Dominos Pizzas are on zero hours contracts. In the public service, IMPACT and SIPTU recently won a Labour Court case on the issue, which means HSE-employed home helps – formerly on zero hours arrangements – will in future have a guaranteed minimum of hours.

Still living the

Life for most workers has improved vastly since 1913. But unions say there's still unfinished business left over from the Larkin era. MARTINA O'LEARY reports.

GROWN MEN and women dressed as early 20th century dockers, factory workers and policemen, recently assembled on Dublin's O'Connell Street on a warm, sunny Saturday morning. The unusual sight tickled the curiosity of tourists and shoppers, as well as Dubliners and trade unionists from across the country who had gathered for the official State commemoration of the 1913 Lockout.

Exactly 100 years after the first 'bloody Sunday,' they were there to re-enact the infamous police baton-charge of trade unionists and bystanders, who assembled on 21st August 1913 to witness union leader Big Jim Larkin defy the authorities and address a rally a few days after the Lockout began.

Just one of many initiatives being staged to mark an epic struggle that gave rise to modern Irish trade unionism, the State's official recognition of the Lockout was hugely significant. President Michael D Higgins led a commemoration that also saw wreaths laid by international and European trade union leaders and a minute's silence for the Lockout's many victims.

Forbidden

The great Dublin Lockout started on 26th August 1913 when members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU, now part of SIPTU) donned forbidden union badges and walked off their trams in a dispute over union recognition. A week earlier, the tram company had sacked over 200 staff for being members of the union.

Its owner, William Martin Murphy was determined to eradicate the ITGWU from his companies and, indeed, the entire city. He formed a cartel of virtually all the important Dublin employers who proceeded to lock out workers unless they refused to join, or have any dealings with, the union. Within a month over

20,000 workers were either locked out or had walked off the job in sympathy with locked-out workers.

It was much more than a battle between the larger-than-life personalities of Larkin and Murphy. Dublin's appalling poverty and deplorable housing conditions – a third of Dubliners lived in tenement slums – fuelled the first Irish struggle involving unskilled workers. Murphy and other employers were determined that they should not be organised into effective unions.

Starvation

Despite huge donations of food and clothing from the British trade unions, and cash raised in Ireland – the largest per capita donations came from the Corporation Workers' Union, now part of IMPACT – sheer hardship and starvation forced the resentful workers back after four months. They were made sign a humiliating pledge not to belong to, or associate with, Larkin's union.

Coming in the vanguard of a decade of centenary commemorations, remembering the Lockout is not simply sepia-toned nostalgia. Despite losing the battle, unions like the ITGWU won the war. Far from being destroyed, the union thrived in the years that followed and wages improved, along with housing and other social conditions. Most workers are far better off now than in 1913, but there are still shared themes and striking parallels for working people here and abroad.

President Higgins recently wrote of our role in the wider international world of work. "We are challenged to respond to the workplace tragedies of Pakistan where 300 textile workers were killed in a fire, or more recently in Bangladesh, where more than 1,000 textile workers were crushed in a building collapse. As global citizens, we are required to ►



Above: IMPACT official Phil McFadden lockout-style.





Photo by Photocall Ireland, courtesy ICTU

Lockout?

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: We still haven't won collective bargaining rights.

respond to such disasters, informed by our own past, and those who assisted us, but conscious too of the benefits we have achieved in the past century as a result of those with the moral courage of a century ago, in establishing and seeking to vindicate the rights of workers," he wrote.

Rights

ICTU, which has organised many – and initiated most – of this year's commemorative events, has pointedly linked 1913 to today's limited legal rights to trade union recognition. IMPACT general secretary Shay Cody says the issue at the heart of the Lockout – a worker's right to be represented by the union of their choice – remains unfinished business in 2013.

"As things stand an employer in Ireland is perfectly entitled to say they will not engage with the collective views of their workforce. We are using the commemorations to put

additional pressure on the Government to move on the collective bargaining deficit this year," he says.

Ireland is one of only four EU countries where workers have no legal right to collective bargaining. The Programme for Government includes a commitment that would strengthen collective bargaining rights by bringing Ireland into line with recent European legal judgements. A consultation process is underway and proposals are expected to go to cabinet soon.

But there is stiff resistance in business circles and among some politicians. The presence at the State commemoration of IMPACT member John Goss, recently sacked by Ryanair after speaking out about airline safety, was just one reminder of the unfinished business left over from the Larkin era says Martina O'Leary.

See page 23 www.impact.ie for details of other events commemorating the Lockout ●

Austerity juggernaut running out of gas?

For five years, unions have argued that austerity is preventing economic recovery. Is the message finally getting through?



Photo: dreamstime.com

THERE'S SOMETHING different about the pre-budget chatter this year. For the first time since 2008, there's a serious debate – among economists, the media commentariat, and even within the coalition – about whether, and how fast, the austerity juggernaut should keep on rolling.

The subtle yet significant shift has been provoked by a number of things: Austerity fatigue; the €1 billion annual savings from the 'promissory note' deal; persistent off-stage IMF whisperings that austerity has gone too far; the emergence of the trade union-backed Nevin Institute, which has at last provided a credible and consistent alternative to the economists' failed consensus.

And, of course, it's becoming harder to argue that austerity is working. Even if you set aside the huge cost of unemployment – particularly youth and long-term joblessness – or our damaged public services after years of savage cuts, we have still struggled to meet troika deficit targets as unemployment and low confidence hits consumer spending and, thus, exchequer income.

Cuts and tax

In this environment, more people are listening to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' (ICTU) view that Ireland can pursue an alternative to austerity and still meet its 2015 troika deficit target.

Launching its pre-budget submission in the summer, ICTU called on finance minister Michael Noonan to abandon plans for further spending cuts in health, education and other pub-

lic services. Congress also said further tax increases should be confined to the top 10% of households, which means those with a gross income over €109,000 a year.

The Congress alternative to austerity calls for:

- No further cuts in day-to-day public spending
- A reduced budgetary adjustment in 2014 and 2015 on foot of the promissory note deal
- An investment stimulus of €4.5 billion over the next two years to generate jobs and exchequer income
- Targeted tax increases for the richest 10% of households, along with an increased contribution from the corporate sector.

Congress has outlined ways that capital spending can be increased without placing additional burdens on the exchequer. And it says increased taxes on the highest earning households can be achieved without increasing tax rates or changing tax bands.

Speaking after the launch, Tom Healy of the union-backed Nevin Economic Research Institute said this could be done primarily by targeting tax reliefs enjoyed by businesses and higher income households, which would avoid hitting all but the very highest paid PAYE earners.

"The nominal tax rate for the highest earners is currently 52-55%. But tax reliefs mean that, on average, they pay a much lower percentage of their income – an estimated 27% in 2011 – in tax. If this average figure were increased to around 30% by targeting tax reliefs and other breaks, there would be no need for increased taxes for households that earn less than €109,000 a year," he said.

Jobs

ICTU general secretary David Begg says Government policy should become more job-focussed and growth-friendly. "There is no contradiction between our approach and meeting agreed budgetary targets. In fact, by adopting this strategy for budget 2014 we stand a better chance of reaching those targets, while creating more jobs and minimising social damage," he said.

In line with the unions' continuing emphasis on the jobs crisis, Mr Begg said recent good news on employment was welcome but not enough. "We still have one in four out of work or underemployed, plus collapsed retail sales and flat domestic demand," he said.

ICTU's has been a lonely cry in the wilderness during half a decade of cuts, emigration and mounting joblessness. Now – painfully slowly, but just as surely – other influential voices are wondering if it's time to shunt the austerity juggernaut up a side street.

Bernard Harbor ●

You're better off in IMPACT

IMPACT

IMPACT members can save a lot of money from the 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. You must be an IMPACT member to avail of these benefits and services.

IMPACT members are entitled to

- €4,000 specified critical illness or death benefit
- 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 members' children
- Industrial relations scholarships
- Benevolent grants for members in financial distress.



FULL
DETAILS ON
WWW.IMPACT.IE

IMPACT Trade Union

Phone: 01-817-1500

Email: info@impact.ie

www.impact.ie

MARTINA O'LEARY spoke to one of Dublin's fire fighters and found out about this varied and difficult job.

YOU COULD be on the way to a road accident. Or going to an overdose. Or picking up a night-time drunk. You just never know what you'll end up doing when you start a shift with the fire service, according to Damien Guilfoyle, Dublin based fire-fighter and IMPACT branch representative.

We're all familiar with the traditional fire-fighting role, but there's so much more to the job than this. For instance, it's reassuring to know that if a Dublin fire engine arrives to help you, there's a crew of fully trained paramedics on board. Dublin is one of just a few cities across Europe – and the only one in Ireland – where every fire fighter is also a trained paramedic.

"All the Dublin ambulances have a 12-lead defibrillator on board. We can read the ECG, anticipate a heart attack and respond accordingly. We can bring the person to a unit that will deal with it. Within an hour they could be having surgery," says Damien.

The fire-fighters also administer drugs. "When the paramedics turn up at a scene, we can do as much as a doctor can do in that situation. We are saving more lives and pushing the boundaries out all the time," he says.

Scary

Then there's the business of fires. "I'm not saying it's not scary. It is when you go into a building and there are people in it, and there's screaming and it's chaos. But we all know our specific role and we get on with it. You just go and do what you have to do.

"When the paramedics turn up at a scene, we can do as much as a doctor can do in that situation."

"When you go into a fire you can't see anything, not even your hand in front of you. You stick to the wall and search. If you stick to the wall you'll eventually find your way out the other side or find your way back if it is too dangerous," says Damien.

Is he brave? "You might think it is brave but we are so well trained. You know what you are doing," he says matter-of-factly. One depressing aspect of the job is the growing number of attacks on fire crews. "Violence has always been a problem but it seems to be getting worse. A lot of our guys have been attacked and abused on the ambulance. The fire engine has been stoned.



"People don't see what we see. There's a huge drug problem in Dublin. You could be on the ambulance and you don't know what you are dealing with. You don't know what people are taking and some are out of their minds on drugs and can become very violent. The Garda are there to back you up if you need them. We're there to help people. We don't take sides and it can get very dangerous out there. You have to be very careful," he says.

There are 220 fire stations across the country, including full-time professional fire fighters and retained part-time staff. Cities and larger urban areas are serviced by full-time fire fighters who work in shifts to provide a 24-hour on-call service. The national service is managed by local authorities with 30 fire services operated by 37 fire authorities.

It's a difficult and responsible job where a good sense of humour helps. "We're always bouncing off one another. You come back from a job and you could have seen things that no one else will see. A cot-death, somebody under a car or



heat of the moment



Photo: Conor Healy

FAIRVIEW FIRECREW: Ger O'Donoghue, Damien Guilfoyle and Ger Ryan. In engine: Damien Chaney and Mark Finnerty.

burnt to death, and you have to deal with that. The worst incident was a car crash involving a fire engine where one of the crew died. It was an awful experience. We came back and we talked it through amongst ourselves. There was no counselling back then." These days counsellors are available to help.



Photo: Conor Healy

Growing

The service is evolving to meet the developing needs of a growing capital city. For instance, Fairview station, where Damien is based, is responsible for fire safety in the Dublin port tunnel.

Damien Guilfoyle.

A year before the tunnel opened in 2006 a number of crews went to Switzerland to be trained in tunnel fire fighting.

"It's a different type of fire fighting to anything we've done before. A fire in a tunnel can be extremely dangerous. You could have tankers, lorries and cars. That was another danger we had to deal with. We have been called out to minor incidents but, thank god, there has been no major incident. It's not something we want to see," says Damien.

For all the difficulties and dangers, you don't meet many fire fighters who aren't fully committed to the professional job they do.

"Most people are running away from the fire, and we are running towards it. But that's what we're paid and trained to do. It's a difficult job, but it's a great job. It's very rewarding. Sometimes we don't have a good outcome. But when you have a good outcome, saving someone's life, it's a great thing." ●

IMPACT is helping human rights defenders in Colombia, where standing up for your rights means risking everything. MARTINA O'LEARY reports.

IMAGINE NEEDING protection from intimidation, violence, kidnapping and possible death while doing your work and travelling to and from your job. That's precisely what Lilia Peña, a member of the Magdalena Medio Victims Association, needed and got, because of financial aid from IMPACT members.

Working in Colombia's capital Bogota, Lilia received a death threat via text message after participating in a press conference during the commemoration of a 1989 massacre in La Rochela. That year, a paramilitary group kidnapped a 15-person commission of judicial officials, who were investigating civic and military involvement in various massacres in the region. The paramilitaries shot at the group, killing 12 and injuring three.

Death threats are taken extremely seriously by human rights workers and, indeed, trade unionists, in Colombia. Since she received hers, a group of human rights defenders called Peace Brigades International (PBI) has been increasing its visits to Lilia's office. They also accompany her on her way home.

Since last year, IMPACT'S developing world fund – made up of 3% of all IMPACT members' union subs – has been supporting Peace Brigades International through Christian Aid. Lilia told *Work & Life* that PBI's help was crucial for her personal safety, and to ensure that she can continue to work to defend human rights. Without PBI she believes she would not be able to continue with the work.

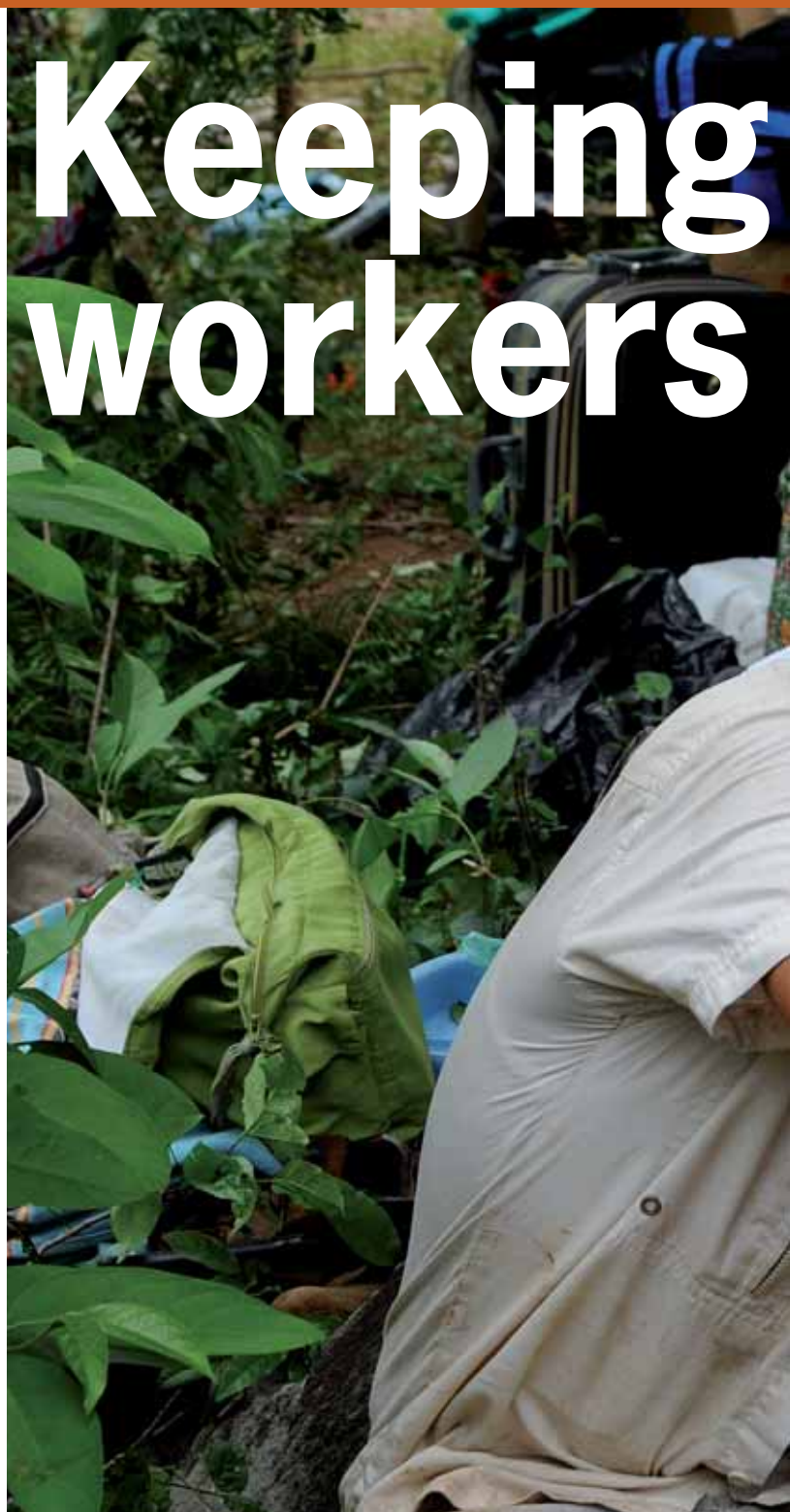
Real threat

The intimidation suffered by Lilia is part of the job for human rights defenders in Colombian and other countries where PBI works, including Guatemala, Mexico and Nepal. Peace Brigades International provides protection and support to local human rights defenders and advocates for human rights accountability at all levels, from the soldier at a local checkpoint to national governments and international bodies like the United Nations. PBI's international volunteers send a powerful message that the world is watching and is prepared to act.

Even with these efforts, the threat of attack, kidnapping and death are all too real. Manuel Ruiz and his son Samier belonged to a local community council in the Curboad river basin. Manuel was a member of a committee which was identifying the region's inhabitants in order to facilitate land transfers in an official process aimed at returning 11,000 acres of stolen land to displaced families.

Manuel and his son were kidnapped and subsequently killed, sending a harrowing message to the people of a community seeking economic justice.

Keeping workers



Incidents like this, combined with the high number of threats since the beginning of the land restitution process last year, have prompted PBI to activate an early warning and reaction system of physical accompaniment and advocacy work.

Killed

According to the International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia, attacks against defenders increased in 2012 compared to the previous two years. Twenty-nine defenders were killed, 13 of whom were leaders of indigenous communities. Defenders working on peace and land restitution cases were among those identified as particularly at risk. ►



Photo: Christian Aid

human rights alive

Peace Brigades International also works with communities, including children, helping them to manage their fears and concerns. After these sessions community members feel better prepared to return and each person knows what role to play in the case of an attack.

IMPACT's central executive committee agreed to allocate almost €80,000 to the project over three years. It's just one of many projects funded by IMPACT members through its developing world fund, which has donated over €7 million to trade union and other development projects since its establishment in 1991.

Most of the money supports medium and long-term projects aimed at supporting ordinary people through education, health and workers' rights projects. The bulk of the projects are managed in partnership with the international trade union

federation Public Services International (PSI), which has a network of trade union organisers in every corner of the global map.

Through PSI, IMPACT has supported workers' rights campaigns, equality initiatives, health and education projects, and union capacity building programmes in the Middle East, Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, Cameroon, Brazil and many other countries. By and large, these are not charitable donations as the fund focuses most of its resources on projects that involve and empower local communities or trade unions. ►



Photo: Christian Aid

After a year of displacement the Nonam community decided to return to their land. One community member said: "There were still births due to poor medical attention; other children died because of inadequate attention. There was no water and our hunger tormented us. We saw that they were going to kill us here, just as they had wanted to do in our territory. So going back was a question of our dignity. Our history with our mother Earth was calling us to return. We said no more deaths here. We will live and die on our reserve."

The United Nation says almost four million people are internally displaced in Colombia. Peace Brigades International reports that armed conflict continues to forcibly displace civilians, who mostly live in rural areas. The organisation is continuing to work in partnership with local communities to facilitate non-violent proposals to resist armed conflict. This work is in line with PBI's long-term objective to work with vulnerable populations to prevent displacement.

Concern

PBI has become increasingly concerned at the growing need for an international presence in conflict zones. By training and developing their staff, the organisation has been able to deepen its knowledge and build expertise, which will enable it to improve its work with human rights defenders and vulnerable populations.

PBI also produces reports, briefings and campaigns in support of human rights defenders in Colombia to encourage the Colombian Government to publicly support human rights organisations and recognise their role in the search for peaceful alternatives. The organisation attends court hearings and visits human rights advocates in detention. It's also urging the Colombian Government to follow-up on prosecutions against human rights defenders.

Financial Support from IMPACT members is helping to ensure that human rights defenders

can continue to work in one of the world's most hostile environments for trade unionists and human rights advocates ●

Another prominent Colombian trade Unionist has been arrested and detained. See page 35.

TRADE UNION MEMBERS AT RISK

COLOMBIA IS the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. Every year union leaders, activists and members are assassinated simply because of their trade union activities. Over 2,500 trade unionists have been murdered in the past 20 years – more than in the rest of the world combined.

Most of the killings are carried out by right wing death squads with links to the Colombian security forces. Other murders are committed by members of the army. A few years ago it was revealed that the Colombian secret police were drawing up death lists of trade union members to be shot.

The Colombian regime does little to bring the perpetrators of anti-union violence to justice. In over 98% of cases, nobody is brought to justice when a trade unionist is killed. This impunity is a green light for the assassinations to continue as those responsible, whether they are soldiers, paramilitaries or anyone else, know they can get away with it.

As well as helping fund Peace Brigades International, IMPACT is working with ICTU and Justice for Colombia to highlight and combat human rights abuses against trade unionists and others in the country. ●

www.ictu.ie/globalsolidarity
www.justiceforcolombia.org

Time for a change?

CONFUCIUS said 'choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life.' ISOBEL BUTLER says it can be done – with a bit of thought and planning.

ON AVERAGE we spend 32% of our waking time in the workplace. So it's not surprising that work is a major influence on our happiness levels. We're happier and more satisfied when the work we do is meaningful and plays to our strengths and interests.

But what if your career leaves you dissatisfied and wanting more? Even at school we make choices that influence the careers we pursue. But not all of us are clear about our strengths, or what we really want to do, at that early age. It's not surprising if some of us feel mismatched and dissatisfied with our chosen careers in later years.

US research suggests people have as many as seven career changes throughout their working lives. Sometimes it's a choice; sometimes circumstances force the change. Which-ever it is, you're entering a long process of transition if you're thinking about changing careers.

Start by reflecting on why you want to change. Is it a real burning desire to start a different career or are you simply running away from problems in your current job? Running away isn't a good starting point for career change. So try and resolve the issues and identify the real source of your current discontent before making any big decisions.

continued on page 18 ►



Photo: dreamstime.com

Once you're sure you really want to make the change, identify what you want from your career. What are the key components that will make it meaningful and interesting? What are your core values; the things you think are important in life? What are your interests and strengths?

Advice

If you're not sure, you can get advice from a careers counsellor specialised in adult guidance. They can help you sift through the mire of information, which can be confusing and overwhelming at this stage of your deliberations.

They can also help you build awareness of your aptitudes, interests and personality through the use of psychometric testing, revealing work environments and careers that best play to your strengths. But, as Marie McManamon of Clearcut Consulting points out: "A career counsellor can support you in your career decision making process, but it is what you think and feel that matters. No one can tell you what career direction to choose. You must make that decision yourself."

Research

As you begin to identify possible careers, do your research and find out exactly what's involved. Will they actually provide the opportunities you want? What qualifications or experience do you need to work in the field? Will you have to retrain and, if so, where can you get training and how long will it take? Can you retrain on a part-time basis if you need to continue earning an income?

Here again, a careers counsellor can help identify appropriate accredited and recognised courses required to gain entry to specific careers. You'll also have to assess the realistic opportunities of getting a job. Will you have to move to find work?

Now get out and network. Meet and talk to people who work in the field and get an honest view of what's involved. Talk to potential employers to find out what they want from employees in terms of qualifications and experience.

In today's constrained labour market, employers don't take on new staff who lack the necessary skills and experience. You need to identify how you'll gain experience, perhaps through an internship or by volunteering whilst pursuing a qualification.

This research will help ensure you choose a new career because it really suits rather than being seduced by a professional title or the perceived status of the job. If it doesn't match your interests and values it won't be meaningful, motivating or a good match for you.

Money

Think about how you'll manage financially whilst retraining or getting experience. Can you afford to live on a reduced income? Will you earn as much as you do now even after you're qualified in your new role?

Talk to family and friends. Explain your decision and make sure you have their support. This is especially important if there's a financial consequence for family, or when it impacts on the time available for them while retraining or gaining work experience.

Being clear and realistic about your choices, dis-

covering your strengths and abilities, researching the realities and marshalling the support of friends and family will give you the confidence and direction needed to make this career transition ●



Find out more

Here are some useful websites, which will help you reflect and research possible alternative careers.

- **www.qualifax.ie**
This one-stop shop for learners lists all further and higher education and training courses in Ireland.
- **www.careerguidance.ie**
For career guidance and educational information.
- **www.gradireland.com**
Offers careers advice, highlighting issues around career selection and gaining experience.
- **www.onetonline.org**
This site lists all careers and their associated knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, interests, work values and styles. Useful for identifying the type of career that would offer opportunities to use your strengths and abilities.
- **www.careerkey.org**
This site provides more in-depth information on matching careers to interests and abilities.

1913 Lockout

Centenary events

The Irish Congress of trade Unions is organising and supporting a wide range of events to mark this year's centenary of the 1913 Lockout.

Get more information and a full list of events from www.impact.ie

Dublin Lockout exhibition, National Library of Ireland

Until
March
2014

This important commemorative exhibition includes archive material from the Lockout period, much of it on view for the first time. An on-line study resource has also been prepared to enhance access to the material, which will also be used for the special Lockout schools' programme.

Dublin Divided, Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, Dublin

Until 2nd
February
2014

The Hugh Lane Gallery's collection contains many portraits of those active in the Lockout, plus works by artists like William Orpen and George Russell (AE) who were involved in the dispute. This exhibition also includes images of Dublin life in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century with works by John Lavery, Sarah Purser, John and Jack B. Yeats, Casimir Markievicz, Auguste Rodin, Sarah Cecilia Harrison, Maurice MacGonigal and Louis le Brocquy.

Commemorative stamp

Now
available

An Post has produced a series of special edition stamps to mark the Lockout. Now on sale.

Liberty Hall installation

A three-sided wrap depicting the story of the Lockout has been installed around Liberty Hall. The three-sided image forms a 'graphic novel' telling the Lockout story.

Food ship re-enactment, Dublin port

5th and 6th
October
2013

The 100th anniversary of the first food shipment from the British TUC to support striking workers and their families will be re-enacted with the participation of present day TUC leaders. A ship will be 'off-loaded' in Dublin city centre to acknowledge the role of this aid in supporting the struggling workers.

National tapestry project

From 9th
October
to 14th
November

SIPTU's national tapestry project tells the 1913 story through 50 richly embroidered panels with accompanying film and TV documentary. Organised in collaboration with community groups, artists, the National College of Art and Design and the Embroidery Guild. On display in National Museum, Collins Barracks, Dublin, from 9th October until 14th November.

Banners Unfurled, National Museum

9th October
to 14th
November

An important exhibition of historic trade union banners and badges in the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin.

www.lockout1913.ie



Piles of styles

Audrey Hepburn is one, but Katherine Hepburn isn't. TRISH O'MAHONY wonders what it takes to make a style icon, and what it means for our wardrobes.



Style icon
Audrey
Hepburn

WHAT COMES to mind when you hear the term 'style icon'? I tend to think of the fifties and sixties, but there are plenty of modern day icons too.

Is your preference the slightly distant Jackie Onassis, Marilyn Monroe in her tight-fitting clothes that showed off her assets, or Audrey Hepburn in her demure, but still sexy, little black dress and ballet pumps?

How come the equally beautiful Katherine Hepburn (no relation to Audrey) tends not to feature? Perhaps because she was known to be her own woman and comfortable in trousers and turtleneck sweater? ►

Stylish
Jackie
Onassis



How about Lady Di, who single handedly revived the British fashion industry. And Twiggy, with the face of a 1960s angel? Some of the recent autumn-winter fashion shoots were replicas of the swinging sixties style.

Modern

Let's not write off living icons like Johnny Depp, Michelle Obama, David Beckham and Kate Moss. Kate Middleton has acquired the top position in Hello magazine simply because she knows what style suits her best and dresses appropriately whatever the occasion.



Alexa Chung

I know I go on a bit about model turned TV presenter Alexa Chung, but she's undoubtedly my No. 1 style icon of the modern day. She knows how to mix things up, incorporating a mish-mash of different looks in one ensemble from tomboyish to bohemian and trendy. The end result is always original, ultra feminine and flattering to her svelte shape.

Despite always looking good, she claims in her style book *IT*, to be "a ball of anxiety," battling with her weight and surviving serious heartbreaks. Maybe that's the price you pay for being in the top 100 icon lists.

I haven't seen Tilda Swinton's name on any style icon listings but I'd include her because she does androgynous dressing so well and has her own unique style. One thing is sure the list of names is endless and each icon has their own unique style.

Personal

Everyone has their personal favourite fashion icon and my choice might be your least favourite. The one you admire most probably most closely resembles your own style.

But what have the style icons ever done for our wardrobes? Just as we're attracted to them because they reinforce our own preferences, we can plunder their look to help our own. Emulate what you admire from the stars, but don't be a pure copycat.

Take a feature from your favourite fashion icon and incorporate it into your style. If that icon was around in the 60s, you're right on trend.

Go to fashion shows and freebie style events in the big department stores. They run them to encourage you to spend, so be disciplined if you're only in the market for inspiration. It doesn't cost to look.

Johnny Depp



Style on show

TRISH O'MAHONY checked out the global style icons on show in Newbridge.

YOU CAN pore over top style icons' clothes and artefacts at Newbridge Museum of Style Icons, which is rated in the top five free tourist attractions in Ireland. Here you'll find collections belonging to stars of the silver screen like Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, Princess Grace, Greta Garbo plus Princess Di, Michael Jackson, the Beatles and many more.

As well as its own permanent collection, the museum regularly hosts visiting exhibitions from around the globe. Collections from the Oscar-winning costume designer William Travilla were showcased in September. The never-before-seen collection included gowns from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *There's No Business Like Show Business* and *The Seven Year Itch*.

Located in the Newbridge silver-ware visitor centre, you can shop while you're there. And enjoy breakfast, lunch or afternoon tea in the award-winning Silver restaurant.

The shop and flagship showroom carry the full range of jewellery and cutlery made in the adjacent craft workshop. Homeware, glassware, giftware and collections by Irish designers are also available and parking and admission are free. Open seven days a week, it's genuinely worth a visit – especially in the build up to Christmas and during their annual sale. Visit online if you can't get there in person.



Marilyn Monroe is one of the exhibition's staples.



Tilda Swinton

"Everyone has their personal favourite fashion icon and we can plunder their look to help our own. Emulate what you admire from the stars, but don't be a pure copycat."

Wear a consistent hairstyle. Maybe you love rockabilly queen Imelda May's blonde quiff or Anna Wintour's bob. Pick the hairstyle, length and colour that best suits you and stick with it. Play up your best features and wear colours that make you feel good.

Dare to be as original as you want to be, but dress to suit your personality and lifestyle. Have an individual trademark and develop a signature look, though this is easier said than done for us impulse shoppers who tend to buy on a whim!

Above all, remember to be your own style icon. If you like what you see in the mirror, that's good enough. Fashion's there to be enjoyed, so don't become a ball of anxiety about it ●



Vogue's Anna Wintour

La bella

Pizza. Pasta. Nutella. Italian cuisine has it all. And MARGARET HANNIGAN says it's easy to do.

LET'S PAUSE for a moment and just ever-so-briefly consider the debt we owe the Italians. For giving us pasta, pizza and Nutella. Not to mention mozzarella, ice cream and fish n' chips.

Sadly, our gratitude is not the kind that can be converted into hard cash, which Italy badly needs right now. It is the nobler, everyday kind that fills long speeches and column inches, but regrettably adds value to reputations only.

Italy in its current format is actually quite new. The component parts go back to the Roman empire and beyond, but it was only about 200 years ago that 27 different states agreed to join hands and sing the same anthem. Old loyalties linger however, and the cuisine remains fiercely local.

Each region, if not every village, is certain only their way is the right way and that others are getting it so wrong it would be laughable if it weren't so tragic. But all are in agreement about the importance of fresh, high quality produce, eaten in season when it's at its best, and cooked simply so that the food shines through.

Domestic

It's a cuisine shaped by the needs of the domestic kitchen rather than grand chefs with Michelin stars in their eyes. Most dishes use four to eight ingredients, and do not require a battery of sophisticated equipment or any great technical knowledge.

Once you've mastered the art of cooking pasta to the point where its al dente (or firm to the bite) rather than mushily soft, you're pretty much there.

It's important to have an abundance of boiling water, into which you've splashed some olive oil, to allow the pasta to swell without clumping. Some add a swirl of salt to the water as salted water boils at a higher temperature, and may reduce cooking times. But it's a matter of personal taste.

In Italy, there's actually a law that says dried pasta can be made only from durum wheat flour or semolina as only this ➤

Italia

kind of pasta can be cooked al dente. It's not possible to get what Italians consider the proper texture – where there's still some bite, but no dryness – when pasta's made from other kinds of flour.

Italian cuisine is shaped by the needs of the domestic kitchen rather than grand chefs with Michelin stars in their eyes.

Again, it's a matter of taste and pasta is very forgiving. While potatoes require peeling and can collapse into watery mush; where rice can be sticky or grainy and tasteless; pasta is always just wonderfully, blissfully, pasta.

Pizza

Our other Italian best friend Pizza began its life as street food in Naples. From these humble beginnings it conquered the world or, more importantly, America. And you can put your cutlery away; the correct way to eat pizza is in rolled up slices.

It's plain sailing once you get the hang of making your own dough, which is really easy, very relaxing, and a great way of making a little go a long way. It's probably best not to overload the base with toppings, as you want the dough to cook quickly (it shouldn't take more than ten minutes) and be puffy and crisp.

It's essential to have a really hot oven, so turn it up to the highest setting and let it pre-heat thoroughly. Jamie Oliver suggests getting a piece of marble or granite, about an inch thick, cut to fit your oven. When pre-heated it will absorb heat almost like the base of a wood-fired oven and give an authentic wood-fired pizza result.

Calories

And as for Nutella, it originated in Piedmont where hazelnuts flourish. But be warned. It contains 20% palm oil, which makes it very high in calories. I suppose if you left out the tomato sauce and cheese you could conceivably spread it on your pizza. But I don't think I'd recommend it ●



THIS RECIPE makes 6-8 medium-sized thin pizza bases. Use only strong white flour suitable for making yeast bread. You can use any spare dough to make garlic bread. Roll it out like a base, then mash 1-2 garlic cloves with 2-3 tablespoons olive oil and spread it over the dough. Scatter over some chopped parsley if you have it. Season generously with salt and pepper. Just before cooking, make little slashes in the dough and gently pull them open, then cook until crisp. Perfect for sharing.

Ingredients:

- 800g strong white flour
- 200g fine ground semolina flour (if unavailable, use strong white flour)
- 1 level teaspoon salt
- 2 x 7g sachets of dried yeast
- 1 tbsp golden caster sugar
- Around 650ml / 1 pint lukewarm water.

Pile flours and salt onto a clean surface and make a well in the centre. Add yeast and sugar to the warm water, mix up with a fork and leave for a few minutes, then add to the well. Using the fork in a circular movement, mix the flour from the edge into the water. It will eventually come together into a dough.

Flour your hands and knead as hard as you like, pushing the dough away from you, until it's smooth and springy. About ten minutes. Flour the top of the dough, cover with cling film, and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

Divide the dough into as many balls as you want pizzas – six will work well for this quantity. Roll out the pizzas about 15 minutes before cooking. You can put them on pieces of tinfoil that have been oiled and floured, then dust the tops with a little flour, stack them up, cover with cling film, and keep in the fridge until needed. It's essential to have the oven preheated to its highest setting. Lash on the toppings, and it should be ready in 7-10 minutes.



Ditching that

ITA PATTON took drastic action to confront her soggy lawn.

PEOPLE OFTEN say to me: "I bet you have a lovely garden." My usual response is a nod and a somewhat forced smile. The reason for my less-than-enthusiastic reply is the fact that the main feature in our back garden has frankly looked miserable for years. The lawn.

Our lawn is green but contains very little grass. It's mostly made up of clover, plantains, daisies and dandelions. As the grass gets weaker and weaker, the more aggressive and opportunistic weeds take over.

One of the main reasons for its woeful state is very poor drainage. Despite the fact that the garden is south facing, the lawn feels like a bog underfoot for many weeks of the winter. Waterproof shoes or boots are essential wear for a simple short trip to the clothes line.

So this summer we finally took action to remedy the problem.

The excess water had to go somewhere and the best way to deal with it was to dig out a French drain.

French drains, which are commonly used in the building trade, are trenches filled and covered with gravel to redirect surface water from an area. These drains often have a perforated hollow pipe laid along the bottom, though this is not always necessary. We didn't use a pipe in ours. They're named after Henry Flagg French (1813-1885) an agriculturist, judge and assistant of the US Treasury.

Sodden

The area around our garden path was particularly sodden, so we decided to lift the slabs and dig our trench there. The soil we dug out was set aside to make a new raised bed.

Using spade, shovel and pickaxe, we dug and hacked down to a depth of 45cm at the house end, inclining to 60cm at the far end. The old paving slabs when broken up made the perfect infill, which we covered with approximately 20cm of gravel (€40 per tonne).

All we needed then was to test our hard work. On 15th August we had a deluge of badly-needed rain and we were so relieved that the area around the new drain was perfectly dry following the downpour. And no more squelchy sounds accompanied our footsteps!

Woeful

Our next job was to deal with the lawn itself. As it was in such a woeful condition, I decided to ►



sinking feeling



get rid of it altogether and lay a new one. I sprayed it with a Glyphosate-based weedkiller. Glyphosate must always be handled with caution – it's best to wear protective equipment, such as a face mask and gloves. And never spray weed killer in windy weather.

Our lawn is green but contains very little grass. It's mostly made up of clover, plantains, daisies and dandelions.

Glyphosate is absorbed through the foliage and translocated throughout the plant, so it's only effective on actively growing plants. The effects of the spraying were evident after three days, with complete death after two weeks.

The now very dead lawn was then lightly covered with a 50-50 mix of topsoil and sand into which I sprinkled fertiliser. Autumn is the ideal time for laying or sowing a new lawn. We

went for the more expensive but instantly rewarding option of laying turf rather than sowing seed. I paid €150 for 64.5 metres from Turf Lawn Sales, Maynooth.

Newly-laid turf needs frequent watering, especially after the very dry summer and autumn we've had, and starts rooting

into the soil within a few weeks. The first cut can be done three weeks later with the blades at the highest setting.

Workout

We will begin the feeding regime next spring with a high-nitrogen fertiliser and continue every six to eight weeks until late summer. Most weeds can be controlled by regular mowing, but a combined granular or liquid lawn feed and weedkiller will do the trick if they persist. Cylinder mowers are best for maintaining a good quality lawn, and it's best to use them in dry weather. Rotary mowers (the type I have) are tougher machines and can be used on long and wet grass.

The autumn lawn workout will require a little more physical work – raking the grass with a hollow tine rake to remove moss and old dead mowings. New young healthy grass will take over any gaps left by the raking especially if you apply an autumn feed, which is lower in nitrogen.

So I can feel a little more relaxed now when someone assumes how well my garden looks. That is until I think of another problem with it ●

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

DON'T MISS THIS!

Sculpture in Context, Ireland's largest outdoor sculpture exhibition at the National Botanic Gardens, will end on 18th October.

Time to cop on



KAREN WARD urges the guys to take more care of themselves.

STATISTICS SHOW that men are more likely than women to 'soldier on' with niggling discomfort or illness, rather than have the early warning signs checked out. That's why many health care professionals and worried partners have to deal with suffering men folk with serious conditions, when early detection could have nipped the problem in the bud.

The good news is that there's a growing movement focusing on men's health in Ireland. Not just at medical and official level (Ireland and Australia are the only countries whose health departments specifically deal with men's health) but also aimed at empowering men to look after their physical, mental and emotional health.

Physical health issues faced exclusively by men include prostate and testicular cancers. But there is also the mental and emotional strain of feeling that they have to give their families

protection and financial support in a difficult economic situation. This may seem like an old-fashioned view of modern family life, where both men and women work and share the expenses of childrearing and housing. But it's a reality for many nonetheless.

Prostate mojo

You'll probably notice large numbers of men growing moustaches in November. It's to do with 'movember,' a movement started by a group of Australian men whose friends suffered from prostate cancer. The fundraising and awareness-raising initiative took flight and now takes place across the globe every November.

Last year, partners, families and friends sponsored over a million men to grow a moustache for a month and raised €113 million in the process. Here in Ireland the Movember Foundation's partner is the Irish Cancer Society and funds go directly to their programmes as well as worldwide research.

Like cervical smears and breast checks for women, prostate and testicular examinations are not for the fainthearted. But they are just a temporary discomfort that can mean early detection of cancers that could otherwise be fatal. If you're over 40, a bi-annual visit is recommended – in the same way you bring your car for its NCT.

Prostate cancer affects your urinary system. Early warning signs include feeling the need to urinate frequently, especially at night, but not finding it easy to do so. If caught early, the condition is treatable in a number of ways.

Certain groups have a higher risk. They include older men, those with a family history of the condition, and African-American and African-Caribbean men. Guys who eat a lot of red meat and high-fat dairy products, and too few green vegetables, have a slightly higher risk too.

Testicular

Testicular cancer affects your reproductive system. Early warning symptoms include small lumps or growth in the testicles, or pain in that area of your body. The exact cause is not known, but certain things are known to increase the risk of contracting the condition. ▶

to men's health

Men with family or previous history of testicular cancer are at increased risk, as are men who suffered certain complications when they had mumps. Fertility problems can suggest a small increased risk, although having a vasectomy does not increase your risk. White men, and men who've had an undescended testicle or who've suffered from Klinefelter's syndrome, are also at higher risk.

Again the condition is treatable and early detection is vital.

Mental health

Irish men's health organisations are now taking part in the worldwide 'men's health week' initiative, which takes place every June culminating on Father's Day. It aims to heighten awareness of preventable health problems, support healthier lifestyles choice and activities, and encourage early detection and treatment.

Each year the initiative adopts a theme, with mental health featuring strongly in recent years. As with physical health issues, men are traditionally reluctant to seek help on mental health issues. If anything, men and boys are more likely to adopt a 'stiff upper lip' attitude to their mental than their physical health. This isolationism can mean

problems go untreated. Men experience higher rates of drug and alcohol misuse and other destructive behaviour and, of course, higher incidence of suicide.

Improved communication is hugely important to addressing men's mental health issues. We'll cover this in more detail in a future issue of *Work & Life* ●

The Irish Cancer Society, www.cancer.ie carries lots of information on prostate and testicular cancer (and other cancers).

Mental Health Ireland, www.mentalhealthireland.ie carries information on men's mental health.

Find out how you can participate in Movember at www.movember.ie

If you feel emotionally distressed call the Samaritans in confidence on 1850-60-90-90.

Karen Ward, holistic therapist from RTÉ's Health Squad and energy therapist from BBC's Last Resort, is author of the best selling *Change a Little to Change a Lot* and *Heart Space: Restore and Renew Body, Mind and Soul* relaxation CD. www.karenwardholistictherapist.com

Photos by dreamstime.com

It's no joke

MORGAN O'BRIEN says the lack of women in comedy film roles just isn't funny.

THE BECHDEL test assesses whether a movie has two female characters who speak to one another about something other than a man. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, there are plenty of films that fail this simple challenge.

Comedies rate particularly badly, with female actors getting short shift when it comes to comedic roles. Recently female characters have tended to be shrewish killjoys of male arrested adolescence. Elsewhere any number of anodyne rom-coms, and the edgeless, airbrushed *Sex and the City* films, portray women in thrall to rampant consumerism or in constant need of men.

However, the recent success of *Bridesmaids* and *The Heat* belies the myth that women don't have the comedy chops to carry a film. It doesn't necessarily indicate a sea change in filmmaking. But at least it reminds audiences that female-led comedies can be every bit as witty and enjoyable as the rest.

Indeed, it's a return to form. Strong female characters were a hallmark of the classic screwball comedies of the 1930s and 1940s. Irene Dunne, Katherine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell more than held their own alongside Cary Grant in *The Awful Truth* (1937), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) and *His Girl Friday* (1940) respectively.

Hepburn and Ruth Hussey had perhaps the best lines in *The Philadelphia Story* (1940) alongside Grant and James Stewart.

Snappy

As an ensemble piece, *Bridesmaids* shares a heritage with films such as *Stage Door* (1937) and *The Women*

(1939) albeit with more toilet humour. The former featured Katherine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers and Lucille Ball as aspiring actresses rooming together in New York, while George Cukor's *The Women* (woefully remade in 2008) had an exclusively female cast with Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell and Joan Crawford trading snappy barbs.

oriented fare such as *Clueless* (1995) and *Mean Girls* (2004) which skewered the female ecology of high school.

In contrast, *The Heat* channels the more recent buddy comedy model, with opposites Melissa McCarthy and Sandra Bullock forced to work together. History fondly remembers 1980s male-oriented buddy movies like *48 Hrs*, *Midnight Run* or *Lethal Weapon*. But the equally successful female-led comedies of the period – *Outrageous Fortune* with Better Midler and Shelley Long and *Big Business* with Midler and Lily Tomlin – tend to get forgotten.

Successful comedies with central female characters like *Election* (1999), the offbeat *Ghostworld* (2001) and *Juno* (2007), with Ellen Page's excellent turn as an acerbic teenager, remain the exception rather than the rule. The light and engaging *Romy and Michelle's High School Reunion* (1997), with Lisa Kudrow and Mira Sorvino, is long forgotten

More recently, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, both *Saturday Night Live* alumnus, starred in the mildly distracting *Baby Mama* (2008) while Whit Stillman's *Damsels in Distress* (2011), featuring Greta Gerwig, is a quirky acquired taste.

These days, writers and performers who've honed their skills on the small screen are carving out stronger female comedic roles. Paul Feig, who directed *Bridesmaids* and *The Heat*, cut his teeth working on cult classic *Freaks and Geeks*, while Fey and Poehler have built strong reputations with *30 Rock* and *Parks and Recreation* respectively.

Whether they can parlay this work into further big-screen success remains to be seen ●



Melissa McCarthy and Sandra Bullock in *The Heat*.

It's not necessarily a sea change in filmmaking, but at least it reminds audiences that female-led comedies can be every bit as witty and enjoyable as the rest.

Equally, Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe formed a spiky and spirited double act in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953). A line from these earlier films can be charted through the likes of *Nine to Five* (1980) where Jane Fonda, Dolly Parton and Lily Tomlin kidnap their sexist boss, and later teen-



Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

Coming up

The Fifth Estate (11th October)

Big screen treatment of the Wikileaks story with Benedict Cumberbatch as Julian Assange.



Gravity (18th October)

Alfonso Cuarón's thriller, featuring George Clooney and Sandra Bullock as astronauts stranded in a damaged space station, got a positive reaction at the Venice film festival.

Captain Phillips (18th October)



True story, directed by Paul Greengrass and starring Tom Hanks, about a man taken hostage by Somali pirates.

Ender's Game (25th October)

Adaptation of Orson Scott Card's cult sci-fi novel about a

boy fighter pilot battling an alien invasion. Attracted controversial pre-release controversy following Card's statements on same-sex marriage.

Thor: The Dark World (1st November)

The sequel to 2010's successful comic-book adaptation Thor, with Chris Hemsworth once again wielding the hammer to save the world from destruction.

Philomena (1st November)

This Stephen Frears-directed drama stars Steve Coogan as a journalist who helps Judi Dench's titular Philomena track down a son she was forced to give up for adoption.

Don Jon (15th Nov)

Writer and director Joseph Gordon-Levitt also stars as a modern-day Don Juan, who grows dissatisfied with his life. The impressive support cast includes Julianne Moore, Scarlett Johansson and Tony Danza.

Hunger Games: Catching Fire (22nd November)

Second instalment of the dystopian series based on Suzanne Collins novels. Jessica Lawrence returns as Katniss Everdeen, with support from Josh Hutcherson, Donald Sutherland, Elizabeth Banks and Phillip Seymour Hoffman,

A Most Wanted Man (22nd November)

Adapted from John Le Carré's spy thriller, this Anton Corbijn film stars Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Rachel McAdams and Willem Defoe.

Carrie (29th November)

Remake of the Brian de Palma's 1977 classic. Chloe Grace Moretz takes the role of the teenager with telekinetic powers exacting revenge on high school bullies.



Play it loud

Women at twerk

*Miley Cyrus is
too tame to
appeal or appal,
says RAYMOND
CONNOLLY.*

NEVER WERE the words 'controversial' and 'provocative' pressed so unnecessarily into service as when August's news bulletins described the grind that bumped Syrian genocide into second place on CNN.

The adjectives were applied generously and gratuitously to the gyrations of one whose existence I'd managed to ignore up to now. Not Louis Spence (great dancer, but imagine sitting next to him on a bus to Kilbarrack) but the progeny of Billy Ray 'Achy-Breaky Heart' Cyrus and his early nineties ponytail.

Miley Cyrus managed to raise a few heckles and slacken Will Smith's jaw at the VMA awards (no, I don't know what they are either, but every class of mediocrity has its own awards show now) by doing something called 'twerking.' You can Google it, but I got out the old YouTube machine and satisfied myself that it was all a storm in a teacup.

Young Cyrus was merely trying to make a name for herself doing what generations of young performers have done before. Badly. That's the real controversy here. The dancing was dreadful. Really cringe-worthy, and your average hooper (what they called dancers when I was a lad) would surely say the same. ➤

Miley could learn a thing or two from punk singer Amanda Palmer.

Photo: dreamstime.com

Elvis Presley's 1950s gyrations caused a similar fuss. But time has passed and, let's face it, we tend not to remember the King for his dancing. The Sex Pistols' TV swearing generated lots of mock outrage, but the world moved on. Anything the Pistols did is utterly eclipsed by the goose bumps I get every time I hear Pretty Vacant's opening riff.

Goose bumps

But the really bad news for Cyrus is that nobody's talking about the music. Because, when women manage to make a big impression in the man's world of pop and rock, there's generally a lot more substance at work.

Kate Bush freaked everyone out with her first *Top of The Pops* appearance. A mere 16 years old, she popped up with a voice like nobody's heard before, dancing like an uninhibited hippy in a field, with a wild shock of hair and that wild look in her eyes, singing a song about Cathy and Heathcliff's deathly romance on the moors. We stared in disbelief and bought her records by the truckload.

Queen bee

The queen bee was Debbie Harry. Fronting a tight R'n'B crew who honed their craft alongside Talking Heads and The Ramones (I know, you've got the tee-shirt) in the rough, ready and dangerous surroundings of CBGB's in lower Manhattan, Harry was the embodiment of Blondie. Staring into the camera and singing her sassy, modern, urban and knowing songs of love, betrayal and fun like she meant it.

The band's legacy is an impressive back catalogue of solid tunes and a secure place in the hearts of everyone who ever paid attention. And we couldn't help but pay attention.

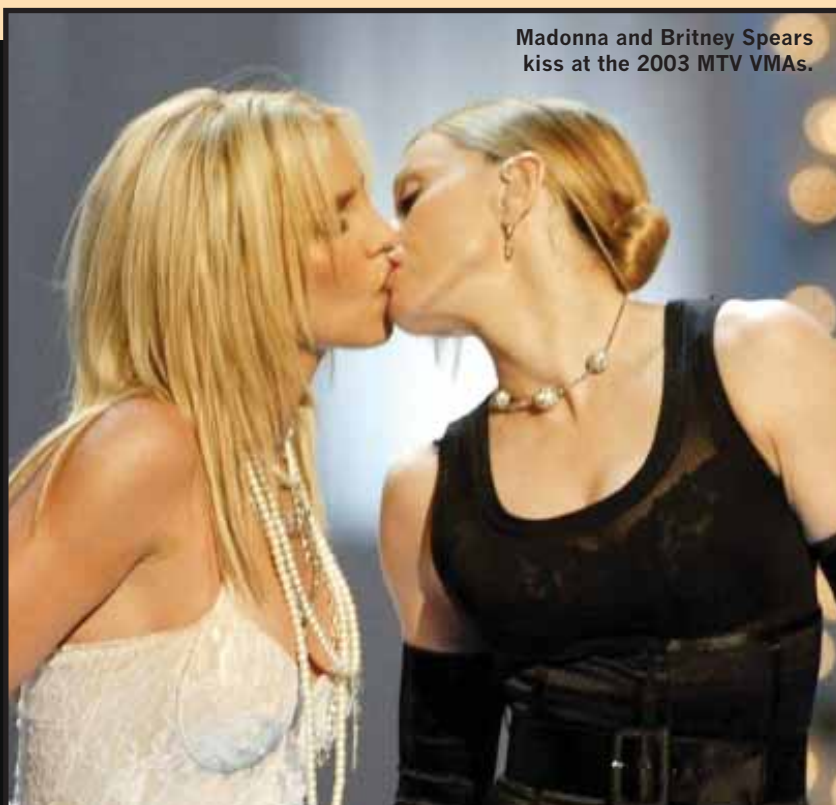
Madonna might be a more obvious predecessor to Miley's high jinx. But even Ms Ciccone had the ambition and nous to work with the best DJs and producers on the scene, as she moved effortlessly from the 1980s New York club scene to a sustained period of global domination. Love her or loathe her, it's a formula that's rarely failed. And the music has mostly managed to overshadow the fevered tabloid headlines.

Trumped

Come to think of it, Madonna, Britney and Aguilera pretty much trumped later attempts to shock when they staged that three-way lesbian-wedding-snog thing at some other awards show (or was it the same one?) all those years ago. Yet the stunt is barely remembered ten years on.

Let's also give an honourable mention to Lady Gaga, who manages to combine bizarre stage performance with some

Madonna and Britney Spears kiss at the 2003 MTV VMAs.



Lady Gaga guested on X Factor, playing the piano while sitting on a toilet. We now know that Simon Cowell is immune to the power of the metaphor.

fairly solid pop tunes. She really won me over when she guested on X Factor, playing the piano while sitting on a toilet. I still can't quite believe she got away with it, but at least we now know that Simon Cowell is immune to the power of the metaphor.

But for a lesson in brilliantly subversive stage performance, the top prize goes to Boston's (and my) favourite punk cabaret performer Amanda Palmer. When the *Daily Mail* mocked her minor wardrobe malfunction at Glastonbury this year ('Making a boob of herself!' ran the headline – chortle, chortle!) Palmer spoke on *Newsnight* about the fact that her whole body quite often popped out on stage, before performing a musical response in waltz time at a fashionable London venue:

*Dear Daily Mail,
It's so sad what you tabloids are doing,
Your focus on debasing womens' appearances
Devolves our species of humans,
But a rag is a rag, and far be it from me,
To go censoring anyone – oh no,
It appears that my entire body is currently
Trying to escape this kimono!*

And with that, Palmer disrobed and performed the rest of the song naked. Two fingers to the *Daily Mail*. And eat your heart out Miley Cyrus ●

Autumn
2013
solutions
(From page 42.)

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

Sudoku easy solution

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

Sudoku difficult solution

Summer/Autumn 2013 Crossword Solutions

See page 42 for the competition winners from Issue 22.

ACROSS: 1. Names 2. Balsa 3. Edith 4. Egos 5. Asked 6. Niall 7. Yield 12. Inchicore 13. Artichoke 15. Talking 16. Sorters 18. Onrario 19. Everest 24. Aster 25. Ideas 26. Turn 27. Astro 28. Reins 29. Angus 31. Lair. **DOWN:** 1. Noble 5. Annoy 8. Dragons 9. Multi 10. Knave 11. thistle 14. Stash 17. Doled 20. Rathlin 21. Skit 22. Airt 23. Coheir 24. Agist 27. Aorta 30. Useless 32. Their 33. Thing 34. Insider 35. Resin 36. Oasis

Straight to the top

*Former union rep DONAL RYAN keeps his head as his *Spinning Heart* wins acclaim.*

HAVING YOUR first novel long-listed for the Booker prize and *Guardian* first book award, all after winning the 2012 Irish book award, could be enough to swell a young writer's head. But Tipperary-born Donal Ryan, author of Ireland's most talked-about debut *The Spinning Heart*, is a modest man.

"It is unbelievable alright. The standard of Irish writers is just so high at the moment," he says. And the fact that he's been described as one of the best writers of his generation? "I would be very uncomfortable with that. Kevin Barry is one of the best writers in the world. There are so many good writers at the moment."

The critics take a different tack. And when the *Guardian* compares Ryan to JM Synge and Patrick McCabe, and the *Independent* draws comparisons with William Faulkner, people start to pay attention.

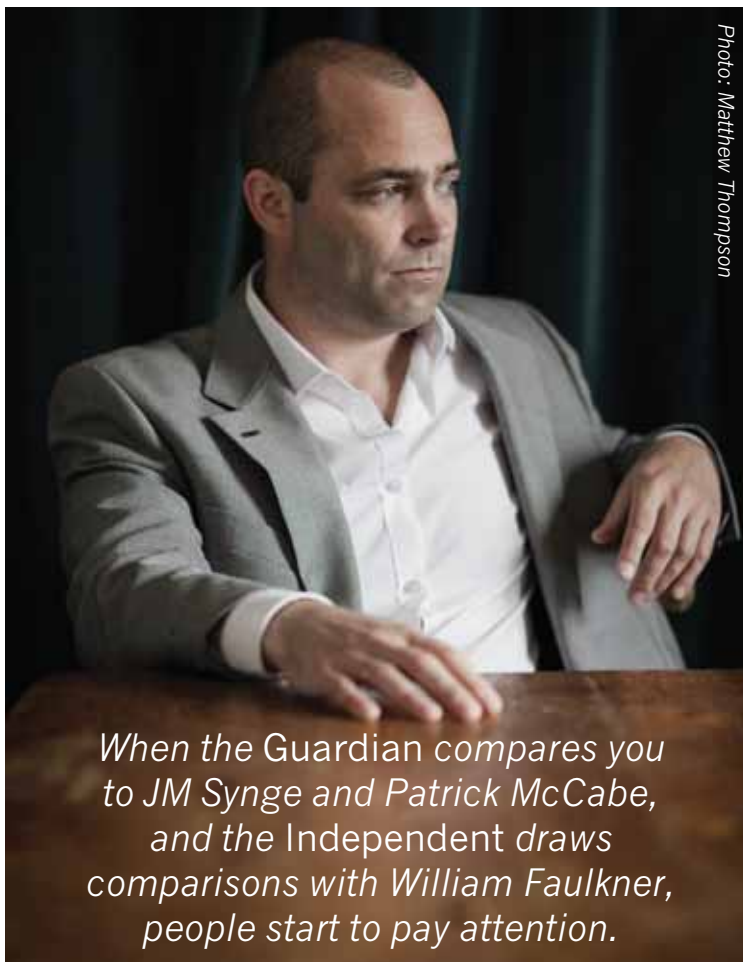


Photo: Matthew Thompson

When the Guardian compares you to JM Synge and Patrick McCabe, and the Independent draws comparisons with William Faulkner, people start to pay attention.

demands of work, two young children and writing eventually put a stop to his union activity. "I really enjoyed being involved in the unions, but it is a difficult job," he says.

Donal was rejected by over 40 publishers before Dublin's Lilliput Press became interested. Another novel, *The Thing About December*, was actually the first to be written and was accepted by Lilliput. Donal kept pushing *The Spinning Heart* and eventually Lilliput and Doubleday Publishing came together and the deal was done.

The Thing About December is due out in the autumn. Set in the same village ten years before the spinning heart story unfolds, it tells the tale of a young guy who inherits rezoned land. Against his better instincts, he reluctantly succumbs to pressure to sell, becomes a multi-millionaire overnight, and watches his life go crazy. It sounds like another mad plot that's entirely plausible in the context of Ireland's boom and bust.

Drama

The novel follows the fallout of Ireland's financial collapse, which provokes dangerous tensions in a small Irish town where the drama of a child's kidnap and a man's murder unfold. Its overarching narrative is provided by 21 characters who struggle with their take on the economic catastrophe in separate chapters. The result is a powerful polyphonic novel that's difficult to put down once you start.

Bobby Mahon is the foreman of a building development who's left high and dry when local boss Pokey Burke does a runner having paid no stamp or pensions for his staff. "It's a situation many workers found themselves in at the end of the boom. The novel captures the language and spirit of rural Ireland, putting the characters in the context of the recession and all that comes with it," says Donal.

His moving depiction of the impact of the crisis on workers and their families should come as no surprise since Donal was a trade union activist for many years, while working in the National Employment Rights Authority in Shannon. The

If it's anything like as good as *The Spinning Heart* this modest Tipperary writers place in the Irish literary tradition looks assured.

Interview by Martina O'Leary ●

Get your heart spinning

You could win a copy of *The Spinning Heart*. Simply send you answer to this question to Donal Ryan Competition, Roisin Nolan, IMPACT, Nerney's Court, Dublin 1. Get it to us by Friday 27th November to be in with a chance of winning.

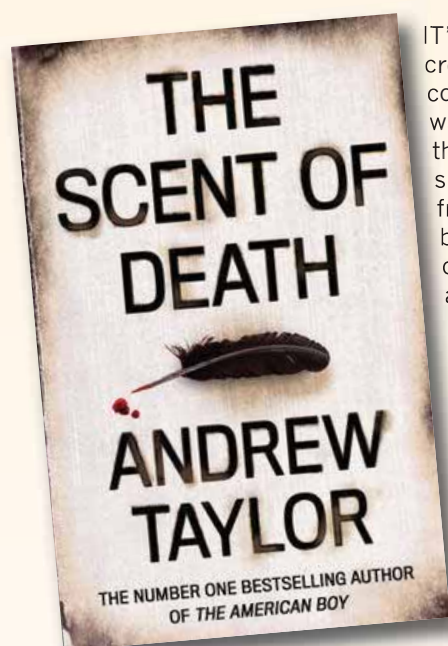
What county is Donal Ryan from?



An understandable kind of murder

The Scent of Death

Andrew Taylor (Harper, £7.99 in the UK)



IT'S AUGUST 1778 and a crewman hooks a bloated corpse from the water as Edward Savill's ship pulls into the New York dock. A pall of smoke hangs over the city from an overnight blaze set by rebel forces keen to repudiate English King George and establish an American republic.

Within a few hours Edward will see a second corpse and his work as an emissary of the American Department in London will begin in earnest. It's an exciting beginning for the type of man you would expect to find sipping afternoon tea in a Jane

Austen novel rather than flicking flies off a blood-stained corpse in a shantytown.

Placing this mild-mannered protagonist in such a highly-charged environment seems almost reckless. But the author is keen to test Edward's mettle, and has already engaged our sympathies with his descriptions of acute sea-sickness, and an absent little daughter.

Caught in the periphery of this strange and unnecessary war, Edward must record the claims of dispossessed loyalists for adjudication in England, and report on the administration of justice in the city. This latter charge takes him from the drawing room to a burnt-out Virginian mansion via an up-market brothel and a couple of attempts on his life. Simmering away in the background is his attraction to Mrs Arabella Wintour.

From these and other diverse ingredients, Andrew Taylor concocts a tasty dish which looks like historical romance but leaves a smell of blood in the air. It's always refreshing to read a character-driven detective story, where observation and deduction unravel the mystery.

The rise of the historical thriller in popular fiction could well reflect a yearning for a kinder, more understandable kind of murder, driven by intimate motives of desire, revenge, and fear rather than the modern near-obsession with serial killers.

This is a very well-written book, skilful and engaging with vivid characters and a real story at its heart. Taylor has the historian's ability to reveal the spirit of the period and a true command of plotting and pace.

Margaret Hannigan

Gut instinct

Cold Killing

Luke Delaney (Harper Collins, £7.99 in the UK)

THE VICIOUS murder of a young gay man, known to have worked as a male prostitute, looks like a homophobic attack or a lover's rage. The killer has left no forensic evidence, leading detective inspector Corrigan of the south London serious crime unit to believe it was a premeditated killing.

When the body of a young runaway turns up, also the victim of a cruelly violent death, and again with no forensic evidence, Corrigan is convinced that the murders are linked. He has a prime suspect but how can he get a conviction without any evidence? And could he be wrong?

Outwardly a handsome, wealthy, married man, the killer is an extremely cruel and intelligent sociopath who can move among his victims without causing alarm. Tension mounts as the killer picks each victim. The responsibility for stopping him weighs very heavily on the shoulders of DI Corrigan and his team. Outwitting such a skillful adversary is not easy, especially when there seems to be something else working against them.

A former CID officer in London, the author's inside knowledge of location and procedure give the novel its authenticity. There are no good-looking detectives in shiny offices with the latest in modern technology. Here we have ordinary people doing a very hard day's work in challenging conditions.

Despite following a well-worn formula, this is a gripping read with a satisfying number of twists and surprises.

Kathryn Smith

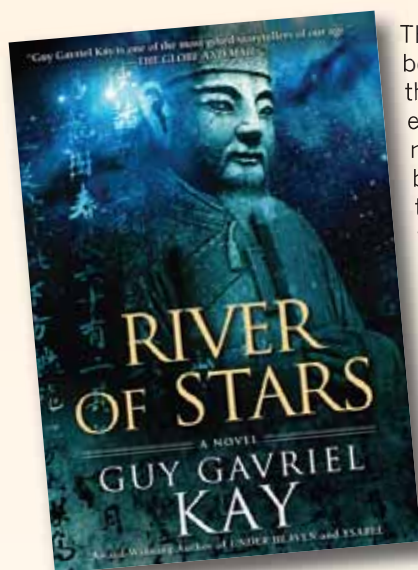


continued on page 34 ►

Northern songs

River of Stars

Guy Gavriel Kay (Harper Collins, £18.99 in the UK)



THIS IS a big, engrossing book in the fantasy genre. Although it is set in the fictional empire of Kitai, and no era is mentioned, the author has based his novel on characters and events associated with China's northern Song dynasty. While the broad sweep of the story is the tragic destruction of the Kitan empire, it's very much character-driven.

Ren Daiyan is only 15 years old when he's forced to kill seven men using his very considerable archery skills. For many years he lives as an outlaw himself

until he becomes a commander with the Kitan army. Incidents throughout the early chapters depict Daiyan as a man of high values and an appealing combination of strength and intelligence. Following a meeting with an intriguing fox-woman known as a daiji, Daiyan's fate is written on his back in the calligraphy of the Emperor.

Meanwhile Lin Shan, educated by her loving and scholarly father, is still a young girl when she dares to speak her mind to important men. She becomes a well-known poet and song-writer, who becomes a favourite at court.

There are too many fascinating characters to mention here and their lives become linked by their great intellects and sense of purpose. If you love tales of heroism, attractive characters and bitter warfare you will love this book. The writing is clear and concise but the tone is also conversational as though a great legend is being retold by someone who witnessed the events.

Kathryn Smith

Glamorous affair

Melting The Snow On Hester St

Daisy Waugh (Harper Collins, £12.99 in the UK)

DAISY WAUGH occasionally writes caustic, observant, and interesting columns in newspapers. She's also written a book called *I Don't Know How She Does It*, which completely refutes many of our dearly held notions about good motherhood.

I particularly enjoyed her list of unnecessary and useless equipment that many new mothers feel compelled to buy, only to send them to the nearest charity shop within a few weeks (hello and goodbye Moses basket, breast pump and sling). My point being, the woman can write. It's been proven.

The novelist's skill is certainly very different to that of the columnist. One is a marathon requiring planning, pace and commitment; the other is an intense sprint. The skill involved in producing 500 words of magazine copy does not always expand to produce the novel's warehouse of words.

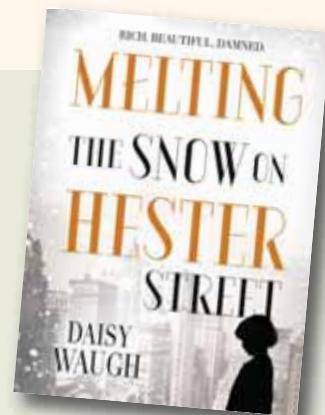
The dice is even more loaded against Ms Waugh as she's the daughter and granddaughter of very successful writers. But as any of you who have read *Game of Thrones* will know, blood alone does not guarantee anything.

This book is quite a combination. The two central characters, Max and Eleanor Beecham are a movie director and his even more famous wife. At their fabulous annual supper party they entertain real-life long-dead luminaries like Charlie Chaplin and Marion Davies, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, Gary Cooper and Gloria Swanson, and so on.

But behind the tinkle of champagne glasses, Max and Eleanor are not (gasp!) what they seem. They have a past with secrets and stuff, and they're both having affairs. And as the story is set in 1929, guess what, the stock market crashes.

And it just goes downhill from there. No strand of the story is convincing or engaging. It's all as obvious as Ryan Tubridy's interviewing technique, and just about as interesting. Cliches and stereotypes are thrown around like snuff at a wake, and the author's powers of observation seem to have left her; perhaps sent in error to the charity shop, along with the breast pump.

Margaret Hannigan



Unions seek Colombian justice

The recent arrest of a prominent Colombian trade unionist has thrust the country's appalling human rights record back into the international spotlight. SIOBHAN CURRAN reports.

COLOMBIA IS once again on the lips of trade unionists across the world, and for all the wrong reasons. Brutal violence is being meted out to rural peasants who are exercising their right to protest and strike.

Agrarian organisations, students, teachers, miners, transport and health workers are among the groups that have been on strike since mid-August to demand social and economic reform from a Government that's running the country for the benefit of national and transnational elites.

They want an agrarian policy to feed the people of Colombia, social investment in infrastructure and services for the benefit of local communities, a review of environmentally destructive mining policies, a review of free trade agreements that are hurting ordinary people, and an end to the militarisation of the countryside.

Paramilitaries

This militarisation has brought devastation to working communities. The right-wing paramilitary groups that roam the countryside act with impunity in a state where the judicial system seems only interested in prosecuting human rights defenders and trade union activists.

The organisation International Rights Advocates has brought a number of lawsuits against major US corporations like Coca-Cola, Chiquita, Nestlé and the Drummond mining company, who stand accused of hiring right-wing paramilitary groups to kill and intimidate union leaders in contravention of US laws designed to hold corporations accountable for human rights violations abroad.

These armed groups are responsible for Colombia's unenviable reputation as the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists, virtually on an annual basis. According to the US trade union federation AFL-CIO (the equivalent of our Irish Congress of Trade Unions) roughly 4,000 Colombian trade unionists have been murdered in the past 20 years. The International Trade Union Confederation reports that 29 were murdered in 2011 alone. It is within this volatile climate that Colombian trade unions continue to campaign for justice and seek international solidarity.

British trade unions set up Justice for Colombia (JFC) in response to the appalling human rights crisis and Irish trade unions have set up an Irish branch to help raise awareness and garner support here.

Arrest

Tensions have escalated since 25th August when trade union leader Huber Ballesteros was arrested. Huber has worked with JFC for years. Last July, he met a JFC-led delegation of trade unionists and politicians from Britain, Ireland, Canada and the US, and he was due to speak at the British Trade Union Congress in September.

Ballesteros was involved in organising the recent strikes and protests in his role as national organiser of the 'Patriotic March,' the movement for change in Colombia. This progressive social and political movement has had hundreds of thousands of people on the streets and is seen as a new cohesive organisation for both rural and urban working class in Colombia.

Outrage

His high profile arrest won't come as a surprise to some, but his continued detention has helped push the human rights crisis in Colombia back into the international spotlight with a successful awareness campaign being launched in Britain and Ireland. Irish Congress of Trade Unions general secretary David Begg has written to President Santos to communicate our outrage at Huber's arrest and call for his immediate release.

JFC is now calling on the international community to support its call for an end to the persecution of trade unionists in Colombia.

Read about IMPACT's support for Colombian human rights campaigners on page 16. Sign the petition and join the Justice for Colombia campaign via www.justiceforcolombia.org.



Sean junior, his mum and Tommy Murtagh.

Seán Redmond remembered

IMPACT'S MUNICIPAL Employees' division recently unveiled a commemorative plaque in honour of former national secretary Seán Redmond. Seán, who died last year, was general secretary of the Irish Municipal Employees' Trade Union (IMETU), which he led into a merger with IMPACT in the early 1990s.

The event was attended by activists and staff from the Muno, IMPACT and other unions, as well as members of Seán's family, including his son Seán who travelled from Australia to be at the event. Seán junior is pictured here with Seán's wife Susan and Muno president Thomas Murtagh. The plaque can be found at Hart's Corner near Seán's former home on Dublin's northside.

HSE admin myth exposed

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE minister Brendan Howlin has failed to back up his claim that the HSE has identified "at least" 1,500 surplus administrators on its payroll.

In a letter to IMPACT national secretary Louise O'Donnell, the minister's office merely claimed there was "scope for up to 1,500 targeted voluntary redundancies" in the health sector. However, the letter clearly refers to all grades across the health service.

Ms O'Donnell said most HSE areas had identified shortfalls in admin staffing and the HSE was currently employing 500 agency admin staff to meet them. She pointed out that less than 10% of staff who applied were allowed to take unpaid career breaks earlier this year.

"Once again, a politician has made a populist claim that health service administration is over-staffed, but has failed to back it up when challenged. It's not the first time this figure has been floated in the last few years, yet nobody has been able to identify where the alleged surpluses exist," she said.

The number of HSE administrative staff has been reduced to 2002 levels, a far more significant reduction than in any other area of the public service. The letter from the minister's private secretary acknowledged the efforts and hard work of IMPACT members.

HEALTH CHANGE PLAN DOUBTS

THERE ARE huge doubts over how health minister James Reilly's plans to make 'money follow the patient' can work. That's according to a new IMPACT publication, which explains health service changes including hospital clusters, trust structures and the transfer of corporate functions to new divisions within a new HSE directorate.

The union says experience of the roll-out of new structures has so far been mixed, but warns that outsourcing will continue to be a threat as the plans are implemented.

The 'money follows the patient' system is meant to ensure that funding for each hospital is directly linked to the number and type of procedures it delivers to patients. The HSE aims to put a standard value on medical procedures and, in theory, hospitals will only be funded for procedures they actually perform.

The IMPACT information bulletin says it remains to be seen whether, and how, this will operate in practice. "There are no

international examples of how the 'money follows the patient' system envisaged by the HSE would work in a public hospital," it says. The union says that, while the system could work for straightforward procedures, it will be much more difficult to place a standard price on treatment for patients with complex or multiple conditions.

It says it's "virtually inevitable" that new funding problems will emerge if the HSE persists with plans to deliberately underestimate the cost of procedures in order to promote competition.

The union also criticises the scheme for failing to distinguish between the age and condition of facilities at different hospitals, and says the proposals will introduce new administrative burdens in already understaffed health services.

Read the full document on www.impact.ie.

Budget alternatives outlined

FURTHER SPENDING cuts in health, education and social welfare could be avoided if the Government introduced “small increases” in effective tax rates for higher income households in the forthcoming budget. That’s according to the trade union-backed Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), which has set out an alternative to austerity that can still meet deficit targets by the 2015 troika deadline.

NERI defines “higher income” households as those that collectively earn over €109,000 a year, including employers’ PRSI and pension contributions – the top 10% of households by earnings.

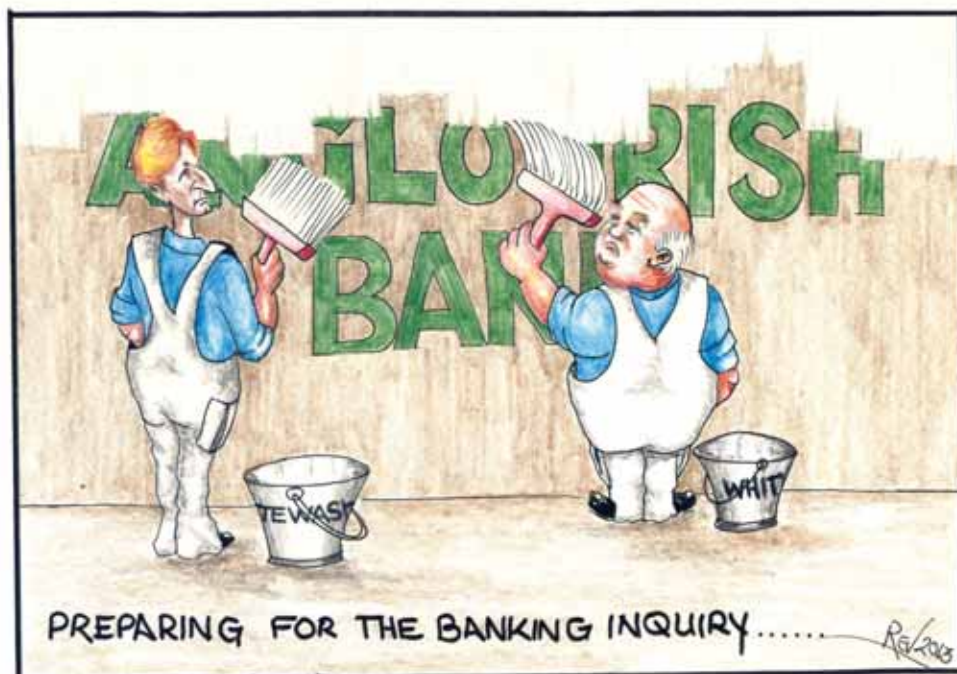
Even within this group, the economists identify scope for progressive tax changes so that the very highest income households bear the biggest tax increases. NERI quotes Revenue figures that show 22,000 individuals or couples earn over €200,000 a year and 3,300 earn over €500,000. Senior NERI researcher Dr Micheál Collins said: “There are choices open to Government and it is possible to pursue a jobs-friendly, growth-friendly and equality-friendly fiscal adjustment.”

NERI says tax breaks and allowances see the highest earning households pay about 27% of their income in tax on average. An average 1.5% increase in this could raise an additional €400 million in 2014, plus €200 million in 2015, without changing tax rates or bands. This could be done by:

- Increasing the minimum effective tax rates currently allowed under the ‘high earners restriction’
- Increasing the 30% target effective tax rate for higher earners, and
- Reforming the structure and availability of tax breaks that are “predominantly availed of by high earners.”

The alternative budget strategy also calls for:

- No further cuts in day-to-day public spending
- The proceeds of the promissory note deal to be used to reduce the budgetary adjustment by €1 billion in 2014 and 2015, and
- A jobs-boosting stimulus of €4.5 billion over the next two years, which NERI says can be done without additional exchequer spending.
- Research by the institute informed the ICTU pre-budget submission, which was published in the summer.



SHORT CUTS

Ballinasloe protest

IMPACT WAS among the organisers of a 2,000-strong protest against the planned closure of a psychiatric unit at St Brigid’s hospital in Ballinasloe. Union official Padraig Mulligan said that the HSE was closing down services before community-based alternatives were in place.

Strike off

A PLANNED strike by Aer Arann pilots was called off in the summer after IMPACT won improved pay proposals. An agreement, which re-establishes incremental progression suspended in 2008, and establishes a retention bonus, was accepted by members in a ballot. The outcome also paves the way to reconvene a pilot pay tribunal next year.

Refuge worries

IMPACT AND SIPTU have been working to ensure that full services at Wexford women’s refuge will resume from 1st December. The move came after management told the unions emergency accommodation would be suspended for three months because of a financial deficit. IMPACT official Shay Clinton said it was shameful that the essential service was being reduced for three months. “This decision puts service users at risk and could have terrible consequences for staff as well,” he said.

Letterkenny lauded

STAFF AT Letterkenny general hospital have been commended for their response to the disastrous flooding that closed large parts of the hospital in the summer. In a joint statement, officials from IMPACT and other unions said the quick thinking of staff and management had saved lives. Union official Richy Carrothers said there had been a heroic response from hospital staff and management, Gardaí, fire services, council workers and community volunteers.

IN SHORT

Hours raised

IMPACT RAISED the implementation of Haddington Road working time arrangements with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform after the HSE claimed management could stop staff opting for reduced pay instead of increased hours. The union says this breaches the agreement and warned that it would not cooperate with the implementation of new working time patterns on this basis.

Limerick locations

IMPACT MEMBERS have backed a deal on a single set of terms and conditions for office-based staff in Limerick city and county councils. The two authorities are merging into a single local authority under Government reform plans. Under the new agreement, existing office-based staff, up to and including SEO/AO cognate level, will work 35 hours and 15 minutes a week.

Development jobs

DELEGATES AT the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' biennial delegate conference unanimously demanded that the jobs, pay and conditions of staff in local leader partnership companies be protected when their organisations are incorporated into local authorities. An emergency motion, proposed by IMPACT and SIPTU, called on the Government to consult with staff unions on the issue.

Cregg criticised

MANAGEMENT AT Sligo's Cregg House care facility has been slammed in a no confidence motion, which was overwhelmingly backed by staff. The union has been in dispute with management for more than a year over service cuts and the Daughters of Wisdom order's indecision over its continued involvement in the service. Despite saying it would withdraw from the service by last June, the order has refused to sign a termination agreement or negotiate with unions.

Unions seek youth

THE IRISH Congress of Trade Unions has joined students' organisations in a call for immediate Government action to address the youth jobs crisis. Together with the Union of Students in Ireland and the IMPACT-supported Irish Second Level Students' Union, Congress has proposed a national jobs strategy for young people.

A joint publication, *Locked out: Investing in a Future for Youth*, calls for an end to the 'lock-out' of young people from the jobs market. It proposes a range of measures to improve access to the workplace and enhance employment skills including:

- A national jobs strategy for young people
- A jobs stimulus
- Major investment in the EU 'youth guarantee'
- A legal framework for work placements
- The creation of a new career information service
- The creation of a national skills map.

Speaking on behalf of the Congress youth committee, Lorraine Mulligan said Ireland couldn't afford to lose a generation to precarious work, joblessness or emigration. "We need a clear strategy to tackle the problems facing young people, including investment in a youth guarantee and decent pay and working conditions for those in the labour force," she said.

The youth guarantee is an EU initiative which would compel member states to offer genuine employment or training opportunities to all unemployed young people.



Lorraine Mulligan.

WHISTLEBLOWER BILL OUT

IMPACT AND other unions have been in discussions with departmental officials over proposed legislation designed to protect workplace whistleblowers.

The union welcomed the publication of the Protected Disclosures Bill, which will improve protections for whistleblowers. But it said there was scope to strengthen the legislation by providing instant remedies for workers who are victimised for revealing illegal or unethical practices in the workplace.

IMPACT national secretary, Matt Staunton said the bill was welcome but long overdue. "The proposed legislation still means whistleblowers must seek retrospective redress for victimisation, including in cases where workers lose their job because they have revealed wrongdoing in good faith. Whistleblowers should be able to go to work the next day and carry on with their lives," he said.

The union also wants a statutory code of practice to be drawn up by the Labour Relations Commission to give staff and employers certainty over how whistleblowing cases should be dealt with.

Social work action demand

IMPACT HAS called for the immediate recruitment of additional social workers in Kildare and West Wicklow to deal with an emerging crisis in services to children and families.

The union says that 900 referrals of children are currently awaiting assessment in the area, including around 150 cases with potential child protection issues. Yet the failure to fill vacant posts and provide maternity leave cover has left the service badly understaffed, with less than two-thirds of the approved social work complement in place.

IMPACT Third Level Grants Scheme

Applications now open

Applications for IMPACT's third level grant support scheme are now open. The deadline for receipt of applications is Friday 25th October 2013.

The purpose of the scheme is to financially assist IMPACT members to participate in certified educational courses, up to degree level, that help them to better carry out the role of union representative. While the course content does not have to be exclusively related to industrial relations or trade union matters, the primary or substantive purpose or content of the course (and not just incidental material) must assist in achieving the grants scheme objective.

Grants to successful applicants are based on the gross cost to them of the course fees, subject to a maximum cost of €3,000 per annum. Applicants must be current paid up members of IMPACT.

Courses designed primarily or substantially to provide or enhance qualifications to assist in the member's normal, or proposed alternative, professional development or career are not covered by this scheme. Masters degrees and other postgraduate qualifications are not covered by this scheme.

All applications are considered by the union's Membership Services Committee. The Committee then makes recommendations, based on the scheme criteria, to the union's Central Executive Committee.



How to apply

Go to www.impact.ie for terms and conditions and application forms. Applications must arrive no later than 5.30pm on Friday 25th October 2013. Applications received after that will not be considered.

www.impact.ie



The Informed Choice
for Ethical Consumers

Fair Hotels is an initiative of hotel workers and their trade union representatives. **Fair Hotels** are hotels that treat their staff fairly. Our objective is to support and promote quality employment in the hotel industry in Ireland by encouraging consumers to choose **Fair Hotels** for leisure, meetings and conferences.

For your holidays or weekend breaks, view all the latest special offers & discounts in Fair Hotels throughout Ireland, log on to:

WWW.FAIRHOTELS.IE

Irish triathlete Aileen Reid made a triumphant return to London in September, garnering a silver medal in the world triathlon series. KEVIN NOLAN assesses the Derry star's bright prospects.

STANDING ON the podium to receive her silver medal after the final event of the 2013 world triathlon series brought the full mix of emotions for Aileen Reid.

Competing under her maiden name Aileen Morrison, Reid crashed out of the London Olympics on the same Hyde Park course just over a year before, after she twice skidded off her bike. The Irish woman had gone into the event ranked top ten and an outside medal chance. She finished a very distant 43rd, covered in cuts and bruises.

There were hugs and tears from several family members, including fiancé David Reid. They were married in New Zealand later that year. Around the same time Reid made the big, bold decision to

Tri, tri,

leave her close-knit training group at Triathlon Ireland to base herself in Canberra to work with esteemed coach Darren Smith.

Timely

Stepping onto that London medal podium after equalling her best ever finish was a just and timely reward. Her family were once again watching. This time the hugs and tears were of a very different sort.

All world series events are staged over the Olympic distance (1.5km swim, 40km cycle, and 10km run) yet Reid only secured her silver at the death, out-sprinting the Australian Emma Moffatt. "I'm totally delighted with second place and almost more happy for my family to be here after the disappointment of last year. I suppose I felt this course owed me one too," she said.

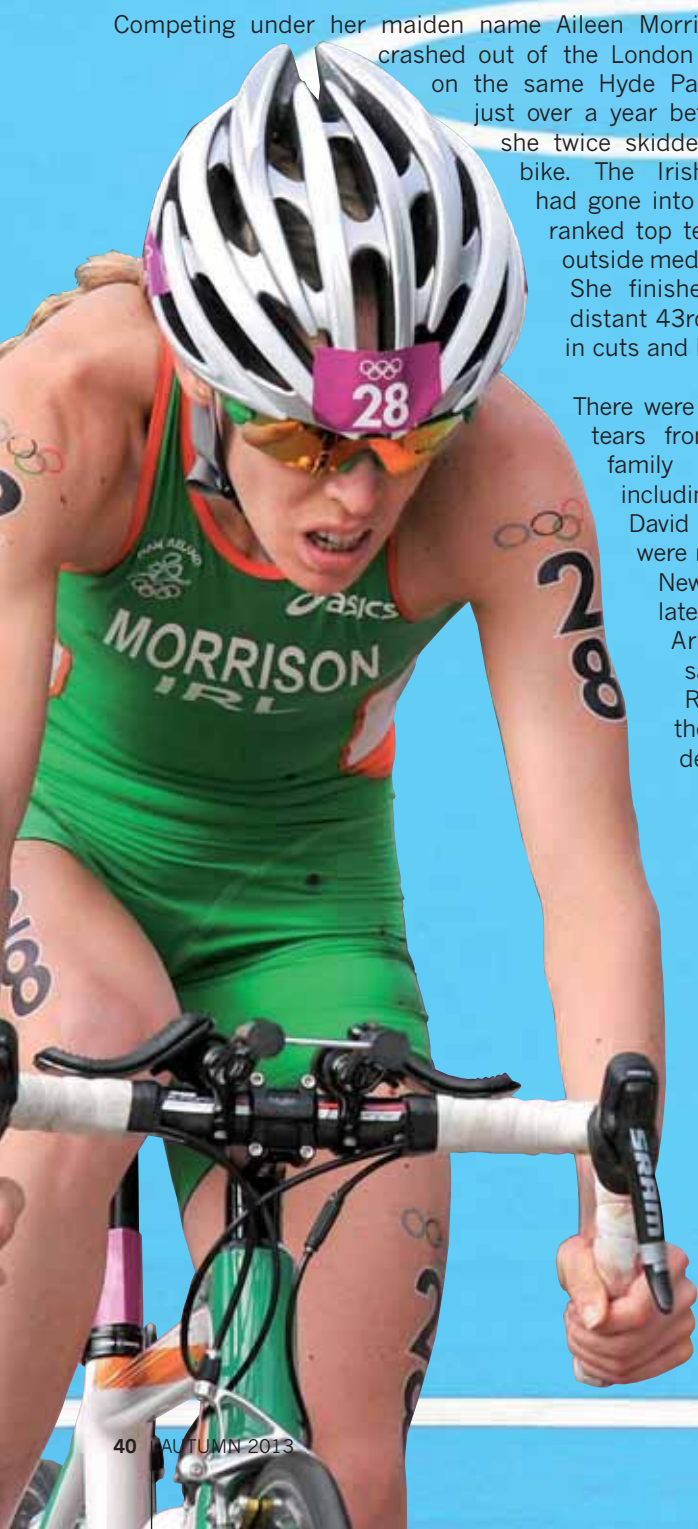
It certainly had been a long year for Reid, who reckoned she'd spent nine months and seven days either training or competing on foreign soil this year. Aileen and David share a house in Lisburn, although Derry is home and where she first fell in love with the sport she describes as both ridiculous and crazy.

The question of why Reid is so good at the combination of swimming, cycling and running has been asked many times. In the five years since taking up competitive triathlon she is at least sure of one thing: She loves the sport, as mad as it is.

Talent

Her talent was discovered by Chris Jones, the former high performance director of Triathlon Ireland, back in 2007. That was the year Reid won the national championships in Lough Neagh while still a part-timer.

Like many triathletes, swimming was her first sport. Her family spent most summers at Malin Head and the surrounding beaches, and were inevitably drawn to the water. Her dad was keen to ensure they were all strong swimmers too. She was then attracted to cross country running at secondary school. ►



tri again

and it was there she first tried the triathlon, on a borrowed bike, in a minor schools race.

She spent seven summers working as a lifeguard on Donegal beaches, which she describes as the “best job ever” and, before going full-time into triathlon, also worked for two years as a development officer with Athletics Northern Ireland.

Elite

At 31, she's now at the age when most elite triathletes hit their peak. Reid believes she still has plenty more improving to do, especially on the bike where fearlessness is as important as ruthlessness. Finishing the 2013 season on such a high note, her enthusiasm for the future is further renewed. The kind of enthusiasm that can carry her all the way, no doubt, to the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Triathlon is now among the fastest growing sports in the world. Triathlon Ireland is staging around 70 events around the country each year – the main events are Tri-Athlone, Tri-Athy, and the Dublin City Triathlon – and the numbers of participants continues to swell.

Most people who take part in triathlons will tell you they are motivated by health and fitness, but that isn't necessarily the full story. For all the cheap thrills at our fingertips these days, most of us lead pretty dull lives and, bored with our daily routines, need to find something less ordinary. Triathlon seems to be the answer to that need for a growing number of Irish amateur enthusiasts.

The golf course might be alright for some. But for others, motivated by fearlessness and a little craziness, it is swimming, cycling and running all in quick succession. This is what gets the adrenaline pumping for the proper life junkie, and if it helps keep the veins free of cholesterol then that's a bonus.

www.triathlonireland.com

REID IN NUMBERS

1,500

hours training
a year.

6,200

km running
a year.

15,600

km cycling a year.

2,080

km swimming
a year.

83,200

lengths of a 25m
pool a year.

1.6

million swim
strokes a year.

260

hours in the gym.

1,000,000

hours training a year.

23,200

calories burnt
training each

29

litres of sweat
each week.

20

pairs of runners
a year.

Photos: Sportfile



Prize quiz

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

YOU COULD add €50 to your wallet or purse 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. Send your entry by Friday 27th November 2013. We'll send €50 to the first completed entry pulled from the hat.* You'll find the answers in this issue of *Work & Life*.

What percentage of Sports Direct staff have zero hour contracts?

- A 100%
- B 10%
- C 90%.

Confucius said: Choose a job you love and...

- A You'll never walk alone
- B You'll never work again
- C You'll never have to work a day in your life.

Pizza was originally:

- A Naples street food
- B An American gangster
- C Part of a calorie-controlled diet.

The Movember men's health movement has:

- A Raised eyebrows across the globe
- B Raised €113 million in 2012
- C Raised the cost of living.

Which households should be taxed more, according to NERI?

- A 100%
- B The top 10% by earnings
- C The bottom 90% by earnings.

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 Friday 27th November 2013. The editor's decision is final. That's it!



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.

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

Difficult

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

Easy



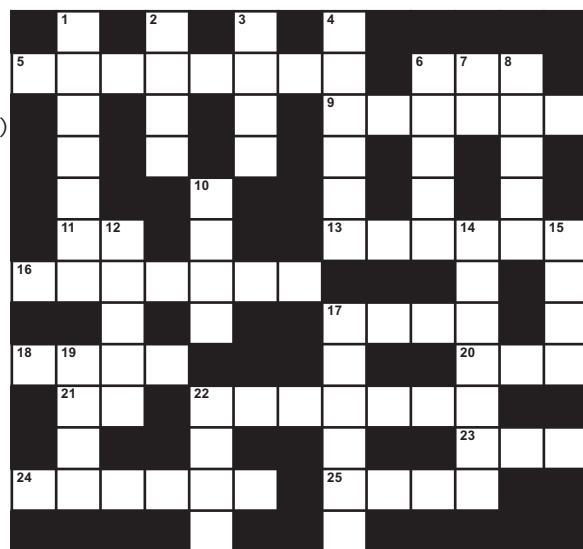
PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

5. Tipperary village at the foot of the Knockmealdown mountains (8)
6. Par of a circle (3)
9. Tremor, excited sensation (6)
11. In short an advertisement (2)
13. The of Ballintrae. RL Stevenson's novel, set in 18th century Scotland (6)
16. Disperse (7)
17. 19th century English poet (4)
18. Very dry, parched (4)
20. Gloomy 19th century American poet (3)
21. Ourselves (2)
22. Arab Country (7)
23. Cork people love to sing the praises of its banks (3)
24. Secure, fasten (6)
25. Wood wind musical instrument (4)

DOWN

1. This annual calendar may provide much useful information (7)
2. Hideous person; in legend a man-eating giant (4)
3. Mourn, grieve (4)
6. Wall tapestry names after its place or origin (5)
7. A king in Gaelic Ireland (2)
8. The banner county (5)
10. Obligation (4)
12. Mallow - born 19th century poet and patriot (5)
14. Young frog (7)
15. Could he come from Mallow or Kildare? (4)
17. A person or object brining bad luck (6)
19. Devastation, decay (4)
22. Member of mixed Arab and Berber race; inhabitant of 22 across (4)



Crossword composed by Sean Ua Cearnaigh

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 Friday 27th November 2013. 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: Pamela Ryan, Kerry **Quiz:** Stephen McCabe, DIY **Survey:** Valerie O'Connell, Probation

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 2013 issue of *Work & Life*?

Excellent ☐

Good ☐

Okay ☐

Bad ☐

Awful ☐

Comments _____

2. What did you think of the layout, style and pictures in the autumn 2013 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 Friday 27th November 2013. The editor's decision is final. That's it!



Health Services Staffs
Credit Union

We're Growing

Nationwide Membership

Join one of Ireland's biggest and best credit unions!

6.99% (7.2% APR) & 8.5% (8.9% APR) Loans

Regular Savings Incentive Accounts

Deposit Accounts

Tele-Loans

Payroll Deduction

Electronic Funds Transfer

Online Accounts

Budget Accounts

Car Draw

Insurance

Community Support

Educational Bursary

Death Benevolent Fund

and more!

Health Services Staffs Credit Union Limited is regulated by the Financial Regulator

5 High St., Christchurch, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 6778648. Lo Call 1890 677 864 from outside the 01 area. Fax: 01 6778664 email: info@hsscu.ie

www.hsscu.ie

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:

Brassington & Co. Ltd.

Travel Insurance – all Divisions.

Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

Car Insurance – all Divisions.

Salary Protection and Life Assurance – Local Government and Health Divisions only.

Group Insurance Services (GIS)

Car Insurance – all Divisions.

House Insurance – all Divisions.

Marsh Financial Services Ltd.

AVC Schemes – all Divisions excluding Municipal Employees.

Salary Protection and Life Assurance – Civil Service and Services & Enterprises Divisions only.

December 2004

DISCLAIMER (Approved by CEC 10th December 2004)