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Reporting Community Struggles

Coillte broke rules when selling to Shell

Coillte refused to meet the community prior to the sale of land to Shell at Bellanaboy in County Mayo, even though it was required to under the terms of an international agreement, writes **Niall Hammett**.

Despite the efforts of numerous local people to establish a consultation process, at no stage did the semi-state forestry board acquiesce. Rosspoint people were rebuked everytime they tried to hold Coillte to their obligations.

Coillte's role in the Corrib gas scandal conflicts with the agreed principles of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which it signed in 2001.

This states that they are committed to respect the "legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources."

In March 2001, Coillte approved the sale of 250 acres of land at Bellanaboy for the Corrib Gas Project. In December of 2004, the final area of 395 acres was sold by Coillte to Shell for 2.75 million, to build the Gas Refinery Terminal at Bellanaboy. Subsequently Coillte granted Shell "wayleave" permission to build a high pressure raw gas pipeline through 3km of adjacent



Shell's pipeline through 3km of Coillte land at Aughoo, Co Mayo

land at Aughoo, County Mayo.

According to Coillte's own Consultation Policies, available from their website, their "policy on consultation is to consult at national, regional and local level to establish and maintain dialogue with relevant statutory and non-governmental organisations, special interest groups and general public".

This contradicts with the statement Martin Lowery, Chief Executive

of Coillte, made in a letter to Michael Ring, TD, on October 13. "Coillte," he wrote, "did not consult the local community prior to the sale of the land at Bellanaboy [because it] has no statutory obligation to consult prior to offering land for sale."

Ciarán Hughes of the Woodland League said it is obvious these policies don't apply when large amounts of money are involved. "2.75 million was enough to buy off Coillte's inter-

action with the people of Rosspoint, had Coillte ever actually wanted to interact with the community," he said. "After all, it wouldn't have been in Shell's interest for there to be any community input into the project."

Lowery's letter, said Hughes, "shows the real commitment of Coillte to Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), the FSC and community involvement, which is, in reality, no commitment at all".

Mary Coughlan, Minister for Agriculture and Food, outlined the State's commitments to international agreements regarding sustainable forestry in reply to a parliamentary question from Michael Ring, TD, on October 6 about the sale of the Coillte land. "Under Section 14 of the Forestry Act 1988 and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, Coillte has certain responsibilities and duties in the matter of sale of land.

"I am satisfied that all obligations and duties under these measures were properly discharged by Coillte in this matter. Notwithstanding the fact that Coillte is a private commercial company, I have made enquiries and I understand there was no consultation

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High noon at Tara

4-page pull-out section looking at the forthcoming battle to stop the M3. Pages 11-14



Sex workers have rights too

Interview with Ana Lopes, founder of a trade union for sex workers. Page 17



Dying for a drink

How direct action is reversing the privatisation of water in Bolivia. Page 19

Plus three pages of book and music reviews

Pages 20-22

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Ireland from Below is a new monthly newspaper written by and for people involved in communities across Ireland who are struggling "for humanity, against neo-liberalism"; people who are struggling to develop crèches, environmental projects, social centres, radical education, community media, solidarity work, local arts and a million other projects...

FOR INFO ABOUT IRELAND FROM BELOW TURN TO PAGE 19

Greyhounds, torture and rescuers



This is Fionn. He was found in the Moyne area of Tipperary with his ears hacked off. Bord na gCon, the Irish Greyhound Board, has put up a 15,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of those involved in mutilating him.

On page 2 we report on Fionn's plight, efforts to find his torturers and the larger picture of cruelty towards dogs in Ireland. Approximately 14,000 greyhounds disappear every year and only a few hundred end up in rescue or are rehomed.

Meanwhile there are animal-rescue related features on pages 8 and 18.

News

Reward offered over tortured dog

As animal groups demand the end of greyhound racing, Aynia Brennan reports the story of one dog who escaped its torturers



Bord na gCon, the Irish Greyhound Board, has put up a €15,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of those involved in the mutilation of a greyhound found with its ears crudely hacked off in the Moyne area of Tipperary.

Fionn, a black racing greyhound found a few weeks ago with his ears crudely hacked off, is now at a secret safe location following threatening phone calls to his rescuer Hannah Fitzgerald, welfare officer of Tipperary Friends of Animals SPCA. Bord na gCon launched an immediate investigation.

The greyhound was given painkillers and antibiotics. "Due to his overall muscle condition, it is believed he was raced during the week or two before being found," said Ms Fitzgerald.

"It looks like he was sedated and his ears hacked off. There was also tissue damage around the neck area which suggests there was also an attempt at strangulation.

"It's incredible," she said, "he shows absolutely no fear of humans and is one of the friendliest animals I've met in a long time."

Fionn came to the attention of Ms Fitzgerald through a phone call from a very distraught woman. Something had dashed past her and her kids into house while she was struggling to get in the door. They found Fionn with a glazed look and earless looking at them in the kitchen. Although the whole family were traumatised by what they saw, they managed to feed Fionn before handing him over to Tipperary Friends of Animals SPCA.

After speaking to vets and greyhound experts Ms Fitzgerald said it is likely that the dog escaped his torturers. "It's almost certain that this boy was either dumped and left for dead or he woke up and ran off during the 'operation'."

Those involved in Animal Welfare in Ireland are adamant that the ears

were cut off to avoid identification, as racing greyhounds are tattooed on both ears.

The IGB Welfare Manager DJ Histon has reported the case to gardaí. A DNA sample from the greyhound was taken and is undergoing a profile analysis. Bord na gCon has also taken the unprecedented action of offering a reward.

"I wanted the price of a good new car, that's €30-40,000," said Ms Fitzgerald. "There's people out there who'd sell their own brother for less!"

"Somebody knows something. Partners, neighbours and people in and out of yards, how could they not notice that the dog was missing?"

"Bord na gCon has the reward notice up on their website," she said. "But they didn't add the photograph. So how can anyone recognise the dog?"

Histon explained there was no picture of Fionn on the website because they did not have that technology available to them. "Posters,"

he said, "are in the Tipperary Star, the Nenagh Guardian and the Nationalist. We have posters up in all race tracks just in case anyone has any information."

"Bord na gCon's penalty for an act such as this includes a ban for life from owning a racing greyhound as well as a fine, but of course there is also the legal penalties following prosecution."

"The feeling on the ground is one of horror and shock. Nobody wants to see the likes of this happening again, though I believe there was another greyhound with mutilated

ears found by Bernie Wright, but she won't have anything to do with us so I cannot comment on the case."

Wright, from Greyhound Action, said the only solution is to close down greyhound racing altogether. She and other members of her group leaflet the main stadia in Dublin in the hope of educating the racegoers who only go for a bet and a drink.

"They don't know that if a dog breaks his leg during a race, it gets put down immediately, or if they lose often enough they end up in the pound where they get put to sleep for €15.

"There is absolutely no attempt made to rehome a greyhound that ends up in the pound. Although they are very trusting gentle animals, the public don't know this, so the nastier the image of the dog, the better it is for the nasty people who do things like chop their ears off, because no one will object."

"This mutilation is getting more and more prevalent," she said. "They just take the ID off whatever way they can and just dump them. There are 40,000 greyhounds killed every year between here and England."

"Between 22-25,000 dogs are born every year. They can't all win a race. They [the greyhound racing industry] are breeding dogs to die."

Fionn's story is not an isolated incident. Earlier this month, Eva, another greyhound with mutilated ears, turned up in a garden in Ballinasloe Co Galway.

"She was brought to a vet who said that the injuries to her ears were caused by battery acid or burning, as the hair around her ears was also

singed," said Bernie Wright.

"Her ears were septic, of a texture like charred fabric and one was burned right through with a gaping hole. The bluish ink from greyhound industry tattoos was apparent on the bits of her ear that were still hanging in tatters. Her left front leg had a large chunk of skin missing, it cannot be stitched and requires constant changing of dressings. Her ears were full of pus and she screeches if she thinks she is going to be lifted. Despite all this cruelty being done to her she is a gentle little lady."

"The b****s who did this, to dispose of Eva without being traced by her ear tattoos, deserve jailing. They are still out there with impunity from prosecution and will probably do this again, or possibly have done so already to other dogs of no use to them. A slow dog does not win them money. They are pure scum."

"This dog is not the first – the three found dead in Waterford, the black and white dog in Kerry, Fionn, who was almost scalped, and now Eva."

Mary Fox, who runs a greyhound rescue, said: "The cruel treatment of greyhounds is not done by everyone involved in racing but there's a large enough number of people doing it to have those in animal rescue concerned."

"It's part of the larger picture of cruelty towards dogs in Ireland. Approximately 14,000 greyhounds disappear every year and only a few hundred end up in rescue or are rehomed."

• See related features on pages 8-9 and page 18

If a dog loses enough it ends up in the pound and put to sleep for €15

40,000 greyhounds are killed every year in Ireland and England

Zero Waste Alliance launches *Rewind* CD

It was standing room only at the Bodega Bar in Cork as chef Seamus O'Connell, artist John Adams and musicians Diane Ward, The Lotion and The Grunts provided the entertainment during a night of fundraising for Zero Waste Alliance, writes **Robert Allen**.

About 200 people arrived to a wine reception and savoury hot snacks. Having feasted on O'Connell's Mexican gourmet food selection, they were treated to a musical extravaganza, kicked off by Ward, that lasted from 9.30 to 11.30. The party mood continued well into the morning with the Freakscene disco taking dancers to 2 am.

Adams created two live paintings, an abstract seascape and a classic beachscape that raised €630 for the environmental group from avid bidders. Sean Cronin, chairman of Zero Waste Alliance Ireland, said a total of €2,700 was raised from door sales, a raffle, sales of *Rewind*, a fundraising CD, and the paintings. "Lucy Daly did the groundwork over the past year persuading the artists and managers to donate tracks, some new, some

classic and some freshly recorded," said Cronin.

Songs were donated by Damien Rice, Rafter, The Frames, The Grunts, Juliet Turner, The Guggenheim Grotto, Mary Black, Sharon Shannon, Kila, Liam Clancy, Robbie O'Connell and Donal Clancy, Declan O'Rourke, Donal Lunney, Solas, Pat Crowley and Johnny McCarthy, Aleisha and Niamh Clune.

The money raised will allow ZWAI to prepare educational and promotional material in pursuit of its goals, said Cronin, "to adopt a Zero Waste strategy for Ireland and implement it".

Commenting on the EPA's decision to grant pollution licences to Indaver in Cork and Meath, Cronin said: "It's ironic that government policy is bringing about a situation in Ireland where we will be going against prevailing wisdom, as seen in the US and elsewhere such as Australia, New Zealand and Argentina, and entering an incineration era when other advanced economies are leaving it behind."



Rewind: an artistic statement

"At a time when the legislators of Buenos Aires have shown vision in adopting legislation to make Buenos Aires a Zero Waste city – the first in South America – we have legislators in Ireland with smoke in their eyes already."

"The people get the government they deserve ultimately and we must envy the citizens of Buenos Aires who can now look for-

ward to a future where more local jobs will be created, their environment will be safeguarded and costs will fall, while we will suffer the opposite due to a visionless government policy."

Rewind is on general sale. The CD will be promoted at a Dublin venue in another multi-band gig during the new year.

SQUARE OR ROUND:

• Zero Waste Alliance Ireland is a registered environmental charity, which promotes the Zero Waste approach to resource management through information and lobbying activities. ZWAI is part of a growing worldwide movement involving 66 countries.

• Zero Waste is a whole-system approach to addressing society's unsustainable resource flows. It encompasses waste elimination at source through product design and producer responsibility, aided by economic incentives, together with waste reduction strategies such as cleaner production, product dismantling, recycling, re-use and composting.

News

'We didn't do this'



Yes, people actually live here! Balcurris Road seen from the back of the block

Earlier this year young people in Balcurris Road were smeared by local politicians with charges of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Mick Burke talked to some local youth to get their side of the story

Tommy, aged 20

“They arrest you for hanging around your own block – you can’t even stand in out of the cold. Why do I wear a hood? Because it’s freezing, that’s why; and because we’ve nowhere to go. The way people look at you just because you’ve got a hood, it’s like they think you’re going to rob the socks off their feet. It’s freezing, that’s why we wear hoods. They haven’t given us a thing out of all the billions they’re spending – I mean it – nothing, not a single cent. There is a small playground, but that’s only for little kids.

All we’re getting out of it is hassle – like they’re trapping us in. The



Yes, people actually live here! Balcurris Road seen from the back of the block

fields where we used to go scrambling they’ve grabbed away from us. They used to be our fields.

They’ve taken them away now to build the superstore for Ikea. They don’t give us any options so what can we do? All our football fields have gone to build houses, where are we supposed to go? Santry Forest, that’s all private now too.”

Paul, aged 18

“We’ve all got brothers and sisters or nieces and nephews. Every time they go back and forth to the shop-van for messages we get nervous or have to go with them. You can’t just let them out anymore because it’s so dangerous with the construction traffic. They won’t let us drive our scramblers and quads, but there’s nothing they ever do about the enormous tractors and earth-movers coming down here all the time. The police do nothing about them. It’s all about money, isn’t it?”

Vincent, aged 19

“I’ll tell you about the guards. About 50 of them in a mob sur-

rounded us with big shields and batons at Halloween – like it was a war. They charged into the playground – battered everyone black and blue. I’m up on two counts now because I had a go back at them. But you can’t let them just get away with it all the time, can you? I’ve never been in trouble before; now I’m up on two counts. They’re turning the youth into criminals.”

Ger, aged 18

“Yes, I’ve been around the sites looking for work. They ask you to hand in a CV and that’s the last you ever hear from them. It doesn’t make sense. You’d take pride in things you were building if you had work on the sites. All the young people around here feel the same way. Look at the state they’ve got the place in. And then they say it’s us who are the vandals. How does that make me feel? It makes me feel really low – like on the ground-floor. It makes me feel low, and angry.”

Some names and identities have been changed

• Research by Martin Kaye of the BPBP

Ballymun: start the tribunal now!

Corruption issues have been raised by community activists in Ballymun

Accountancy giant Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), the original consultants for Ballymun’s regeneration, was presented to the local community back in the 1990s as a neutral and wise outsider. It was to provide Dublin Corporation with unbiased economic information on which to base future planning assessments.

The charges of criminal corruption made recently against PWC – especially those arising from its role as consultants in the privatisation of India’s water supply – have led Ballymun People Before Profits (BPBP) to question the PWC’s impartiality

and to call for a full investigation into that company’s involvement in the town.

In January 2000, two whole years before the demolition of Ballymun’s blocks began, PWC had already been found guilty by the American Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of “not only a lack of sufficient global safeguards, but also a systematic failure by professionals... to adhere to even their own firm’s existing controls.”

SEC’s investigation found thousands of instances of Price Waterhouse Coopers’ staff and partners holding shares in companies they



Paddy Haughey of Ballymun People Before Profits: local children have been excluded from the privatised swimming pool

audited. Paddy Haughey of BPBP agrees that a thorough examination is urgently needed into the money-men behind a regeneration that is increasingly being viewed by Ballymun people as nothing more than a big-business land-grab.

IFB interviewed Mr Haughey at a demonstration to highlight the exclusion of local children from Ballymun’s new and privatised swimming pool, which has replaced the previous public pool that the community had fought long and

hard for.

Putting things in a historical perspective, he said, “They call it a regeneration process when in fact it should be called a process of plantation – because that’s what we’re seeing unfold. The original community is being ousted here to make room for profit-hungry developers – as happened at the time of the plantations. It’s really a continuation of what occurred back then.”

From the outset Ballymun Regeneration Ltd spelled it all out in big, bold letters on a sign they erected along Ballymun’s busy dual carriageway: “Ballymun – your business opportunity begins here.”

Ballymun People Before Profits’ financial investigation committee has issued a call for assistance from people with accountancy skills to track and monitor the financial dealings that are bringing the business sector opportunities to make millions at the expense of the Ballymun community. In the words of one local, “The tribunal must begin now”.

MB

The committee can be contacted at: bpbp@oceanfree.net

News

Rosspport campers set up house for winter

Bob Kavanagh updates on the Rosspport Solidarity House in Mayo

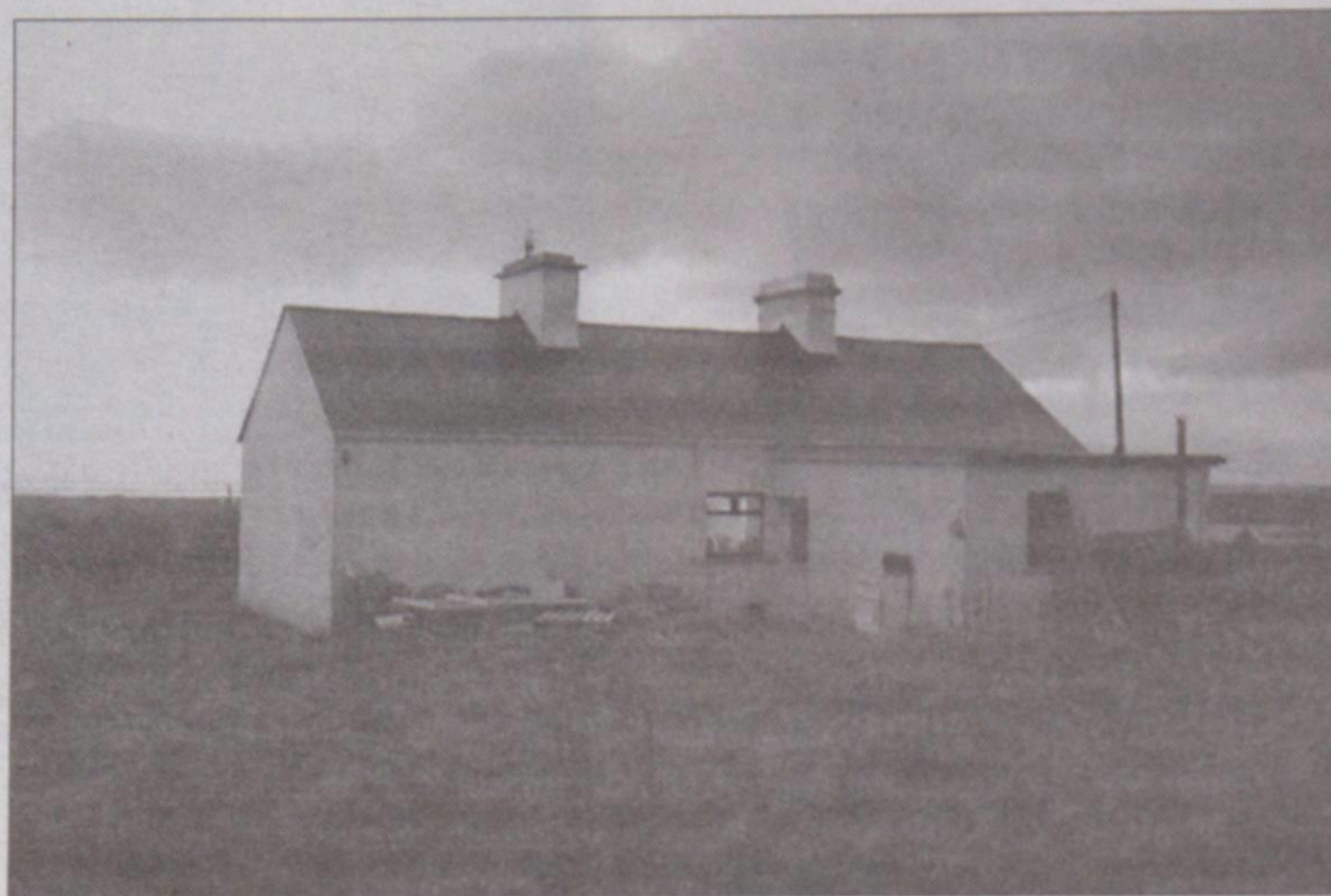
During the summer of 2005, the Rosspport Solidarity Camp provided a base for people from outside the Erris area who wanted to get involved with local resistance to the proposed high-pressure gas pipeline. It became a port of call for the many visitors to the area, where they could learn more about the issues at stake. The camp provided a physical show of support for the community and their struggle; the campers joined in with the pickets of Shell sites and the rallies in the area.

At the beginning of October the decision was made to decamp, as Shell had officially stopped work for the winter. The summer had been a success for the Shell To Sea campaign in many ways: pickets had prevented any work on the pipeline or terminal, huge public support had been garnered and the Rosspport Five were finally released.

However, with Shell still planning to return to work in the spring; the threat of further legal punishment hanging over the heads of the five and the disastrous "deal" between the State and the oil companies still in place, there was still a campaign to be fought.

Several of us who were involved in the camp over the summer were willing and able to remain in the area over winter. So we left the (by now quite soggy) campsite for the comfort of a rented house near Belmullet.

The idea was that the house would fulfill a similar role to the camp and be a place for interested people to come and learn more,



Preparing for a spring campaign: the Rosspport Solidarity House near Belmullet

while we would gather materials and recruit for a large and well-run camp next year. This way we could maintain our ties with local people and concentrate on other areas of the campaign.

We hosted a skill-share event at Halloween, with workshops on topics relevant to the camp and we are planning more workshops for the coming months. To further spread the word about the camp and the Shell To Sea campaign, camp participants have been travelling to speak at meetings. Two campers have just returned from a very well received speaking tour of England, while others have given talks to student societies in universities in Ireland.

Apart from this, our time is taken up with collecting and repairing camp materials, attending the local Shell To Sea meetings and drinking Buckfast to keep out the winter chills.

The house welcomes visits from

people who want to get more involved in the campaign. Student groups from Limerick and Galway have been to stay with us and we hope to see more visitors soon. Residents of the house are also available to give talks to any interested community groups, student societies, etc. We are enjoying life in Erris so much that we will be staying here for the festive season. Plans are already being touted for Christmas dinner in front of the gates of Shell's terminal at Ballinaboy!

To have an effective camp next year, we need all the help we can get. Donations of materials or money will be essential to building a camp strong enough to stop Shell in the spring (see our wishlist at www.struggle.ws/rsc). Contact us at 097-20944 or rossportsolidaritycamp@gmail.com For more info on the campaign go to www.shelltosea.com or www.indymedia.ie/mayo

State allowed Coillte to sell land to Shell

Continued from front page

with the local community by Coillte prior to the sale of this land."

Hughes said: "Minister Coughlan refers in her reply, to 'statutory obligations' but omits to mention Coillte's own obligations to the state, to the public and to the very principles designed to give the public a say as to how that land is managed."

"The Minister's reference here to Coillte as a 'private commercial company' is not a true representation of Coillte's company status and belies the fact that they are the stewards of public state land, entrusted to them for the purposes of Sustainable Forestry Management."

In 2003, Coillte accused the European Commission of "failing in its duties relating to co-operation in good faith, legal certainty and sound administration and breached the principle of legitimate expectations".

The European Court of Justice had ruled against Coillte, finding them to be a "public entity wholly owned and controlled by the state", after the forestry board had attempted to draw up to E50 million of European funding intended to compensate farmers for the loss of income incurred during the non-productive period of afforested agricultural land.

These premium grants may be paid only to farmers or private law individuals, not to public undertakings.

"In this case," said Hughes, "it was Coillte who were putting forward the arguments that they, while misrepresenting themselves, were expecting the European Commission to protect their position under the principles of 'the protection of legitimate expectations' and 'the duty to co-operate on good faith', when in fact it was they who were found to be in breach of these very principles."

In 2002, Rosspport resident and community representative Monica Muller wrote to Coillte's Forest Stewardship Council auditors, The Soil Association, stating: "Since our first complaint in 2001 local people have given up and despaired of any ethical behaviour or adher-

ence by Coillte to FSC principles of consultation."

"Our local community group has started off enthusiastically in the spirit and belief of public participation and we have ended in regarding the FSC logo as a tool of salesmanship without any meaning."

"Nobody is interested anymore in wasting time with make-believe-complaint-procedures. Coillte have repeated the same actions, selling yet again land to a private company without informing or consulting the local community," she said.

Hughes said: "Coillte are guilty of being disingenuous when they say that they are not required to consult with local communities, and deceitful when they say to the rest of the world that they do consult with the local communities."

"Coillte's behaviour in relation to Corrib is not isolated, rather common practice throughout Ireland where state forestry land, our land, is being sold by Coillte to property developers and native woodlands are being destroyed for private gain."

"Whilst pretending to protect and improve our forest resources under SFM Principles, Coillte is in fact facilitating their irrevocable destruction, by selling public land to private entities in secret deals," he said.

WHAT IS COILLTE?

Coillte is a State-owned company, operating in forestry, land-based businesses and added-value processing operations. It was established in 1988 as a private limited company under the Forestry Act 1988, which set out its objectives and duties. Coillte's estate comprises 445,000 hectares of forest land (approximately 7% of Ireland's land cover). The company employs about 1,000 people and places a strong emphasis on achieving a balance between commercial, environmental and social objectives in managing its business. In 2004, Coillte had a turnover of E185m, a profit of E35m and was named Ireland's 181st largest company. All profits were re-invested in the business.



AONTAS

AONTAS is the Irish National Association of Adult Education, a voluntary membership organisation. It exists to promote the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education that is accessible to and inclusive of all.

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- Respect and protect the environment for future generations
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Shell's controversial pipeline cuts a path through the former Coillte woodland

News

Protests over Kinnegad waste facility applications

By Robert Allen

Campaigners in Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath are organising a series of events to protest against applications for eight large waste management facilities within an eight-mile radius of the town.

An umbrella group, Midlands Against Dirty Developments (MADD), representing committee members from various campaigns fighting the eight applications, has been formed.

The first group protest by MADD took place on 8 October last, when a public march was held on the main street in Kinnegad. According to organisers, hundreds turned up at the march to highlight to local authorities, the Government and the EPA the urgent need to draft a sustainable waste management strategy for the midlands region.

"Waste management planning in this area seems to have been shelved in favour of large private developments that could bring devastation to the local environment," said Denis Leonard, spokesperson for MADD. "This month, the new N4/N6 bypass is due to open, to take Dublin's traffic away from Kinnegad. We feel the area is being bypassed for Dublin's traffic, but not for Dublin's waste. There has been an unprecedented amount of applications in recent times for large landfills, for incineration, for builders' rubble, and for a large composting facility for Dublin's hotel waste."

The eight applications to which protesters are opposed relate to a super dump at Anniskinnan, a builders' rubble facility at Cloncrave, a large composting facility in Milltownpass, applications by both Lagan Cement and Edenderry Power to incinerate meat and bone-meal, an application for a super dump in Broadford/Longwood, dumps at Carburry, and an anaerobic digester at Ballyfore. Members of MADD have also voiced concerns about a dump at Colehill near Kinnegad, the large number of phone masts that have been erected in the region in recent years, and the "epidemic" of illegal dumping in the area.

According to Denis Leonard, the next step in MADD's campaign will involve inviting County Council representatives to a meeting with the group. "We hope to get the relevant Council officials and councillors from the four counties affected – Westmeath, Meath, Offaly, and Kildare – to come to a meeting in the New Year, where local residents from the eight areas affected by these applications can outline their concerns and their exact difficulties with the applications," he said. "We want them to hear our side of the story, and to have an opportunity to get our points across."

Further information on the MADD campaign is available from Denis Leonard, 087-6430783, Brian Coffey, 087-2501467, Richard Murphy, 044-74798, and Martin Plunkett, 087-9622071

McAleese opens Carrick-on-Suir community centre

By Robert Allen

President Mary McAleese has officially opened the Nano Nagle community resource centre in Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary.

More than 60 groups have been using the centre since it was opened at the end of last year when the former Presentation Convent building was refurbished at the cost of €1m.

In this short time, the centre has benefited the community with initiatives on jobs and education, and with meetings for carers, those with mental health problems, rape crisis, parent to parent, citizens' information and religious and fitness groups.

Funding came from a variety of sources, including the locally-based Community Business Enterprise Centre, Barrow, Nore, Suir Leader Group, FAS, central funds, county and town councils, Health Service Executive, RAPID and local service organisations and businesses.

Sister Bridget O'Keefe, an organ-

iser at the Nano Nagle centre, said the mission statement agreed upon set out to provide a centre that will enable and support the development of new personal and social services by the community for the community and encourage and sustain the development of an inclusive and caring community in Carrick-on-Suir.

She said: "In 1997, representatives from about 30 various community and voluntary groups in Carrick-on-Suir came together to examine ways in which some positive action could be taken to improve services and facilities for the people of the town and its environs with an emphasis on social inclusion."

"It was a common held view that the location of the town at the corner of three counties geographically had been a disadvantage to its development and some urgent action was needed."

Autonomous workers in Argentina face eviction

At 2am on Wednesday December 6, the Buenos Aires city legislature passed a law that will evict the workers' co-operative at the Hotel Bauen, writes Graciela Monteagudo.

This law, which was voted on by 29 legislators, "invents" a boss for a workplace without bosses.

When the workers decided to occupy the hotel to demand their unpaid salaries, the Hotel Bauen was bankrupt and the company had millions of dollars in debt, among them, the cost of the building located at 360 Callao.

As the ownership of the building was in dispute (the person who had bought the building paid only four of the 12 million peso price, and the person who sold it promised to return the four million and never came through) the hotel was legally without anyone to take care of it. So the workers decided to put it back into operation.

They started to work with nothing but the strength of their conviction. Now there are 140 men and women who maintain the hotel, 24 hours a day, opening a space for meetings, assemblies and social movement events, all entirely out of solidarity.

Ignoring all their efforts, the legislature decided to approve a law that ignores the dictates of justice and



A workers' protest in Buenos Aires

attempts to destroy all the work the co-operative has put into the hotel.

Despite the workers' protest at the time of the vote, the legislators ordered their eviction. They threw them out with batons and tear gas.

Now, the workers demand that Jorge Telerman, head of the Buenos Aires city government, veto the law. The veto must take place within 15 days of when the law was passed. If Telerman does not veto the law, the workers may be evicted.

On Thursday, December 15, at

2pm, Hotel Bauen workers will march to Telerman's office to demand that this law be annulled.

To support the Bauen workers co-operative, email the message below to: jtelerman@buenosaires.gov.ar

Today the destiny of the Hotel Bauen, recovered by its workers, is in your hands. Thousands of people all over the world are watching. VETO the law that creates impunity for the unscrupulous impresarios and support the 140 men and women that each day show how to create dignified work in this place that is a model of efficiency and solidarity.

Community radio beats NewsTalk in north east Dublin



Volunteer broadcasters at NEARfm in Coolock, Dublin

NEARfm, the community radio station serving north east Dublin, has a weekly listenership of 9 per cent of its Northside catchment area, according to a recent survey carried out by TNS MRBI. The figures translate into more than 20,000 listeners, claims Ciaran Murray, manager of the Media Co-op which runs NEARfm, and

the figures put the station ahead of commercial station NewsTalk 106 within that catchment area.

Murray characterises the typical attitude to community radio thus: "It's all very well and noble to make worthy radio in minority languages and have specialist music programmes and give lone parents and Travellers their own programmes, but will anyone listen?" The answer in NEARfm's case seems to be yes, lots of people.

"There is a widely-held belief that radio is primarily, if not only, about wall-to-wall chart music, interspersed with news headlines and competitions," Murray complains. "The alternative 'Talk Radio' is usually driven by PR companies, politicians' press releases and THE NEWS, taken from 'the line' as dictated by Murdoch, Reuters and the like."

NEARfm has no drive-time programmes, no chart shows, no competitions, no news headlines and no marketing budget. But it does have programmes in many languages, serving a multi-ethnic community. It does have specialist music programmes, ska, reggae, jazz, crooners, classical. It does have programmes produced and presented by scores of volunteers about their interests, from bee-keeping to marine history.

Murray points out that Dubliners have 14 stations to choose from and yet, "with practically no marketing budget, NEARfm manages to have as many and more listeners than Lyricfm, NewsTalk, Countryfm and other stations with big budgets." **WH**

• NEARfm is on 101.6 fm; Web: www.nearfm.ie

News



EU gets tough on Irish forestry abuses

The European Union is to take action against Ireland over forestry abuses, writes **Robert Allen**. Mr Liam Cashman, who deals with legislative infringements in the EU's Environment Directorate, told a delegation from the Woodland League that there was one case in the European Court over Ireland's failure to implement Environmental Impact Assessment directives in relation to forestry run by Coillte.

Cashman also told the delegation that Ireland is on a final warning on two other issues relating to forestry, and failure to comply will result in Ireland being taken to the court again. "That is all we know," said the Woodland League's Ciarán Hughes. "He said he could not go into details."

Andrew St. Ledger and Brendan Kelly of the Woodland League were

in Brussels between November 21 and 24 at the invitation of Kathy Sinnott, the independent Munster MEP. They presented a report, Irish Forest Policy – A Citizen's Perspective (see extract on this page), to the European Commission and had discussions with Mr Ignacio Seone, Commissioner for Forestry, Mr Andreas Lillig and Mr Piero Mora, from Rural Development, and with Cashman.

"Our aim was two-fold," Kelly told *Ireland From Below*, "to highlight the problems that are inherent in forestry in Ireland, as described in our report, but also to promote Agenda 21, which is being overlooked in Ireland."

The Woodland League's report covers major environmental, social and economic issues concerning current Irish forestry policy which

are impacting on communities throughout the country. These include acidification of rivers, lakes and soil; the lack of an official native tree planting policy; inadequate Environmental Impact Assessments; aerial fertilisation and eutrophication; lack of public consultation; the sale of publicly owned forests to speculators and multi-nationals; eco-label certification of forestry.

St. Ledger and Kelly also met with non-governmental organisations working on forestry issues,

and with Sinn Féin MEP Mary Lou MacDonald, with the emphasis on the failure of Agenda 21 in Ireland. "Agenda 21," said Kelly, "is massively important for local communities, as it gives them the right, nay the duty, to participate in developments in their areas – from incinerators and dumps to roads to forestry to windfarms."

"It is often misunderstood to mean consultation, however it goes further than that and compels citizens to participate in developments, and gives them power over developments," said Kelly.

"This is being overlooked in Ireland. For example, the people of Erris and Rosport weren't given the opportunity to participate in the development of the pipeline through their townlands.

"They weren't given the opportunity to even consult, never mind participate, with Coillte when they sold the couple of hundred acres of state forestry, our forestry, for that development.

"We have been told that Agenda 21 is dead in Ireland," said Kelly. "It is not dead, it is just dormant, and it is up to us, the citizens, to awaken it."



Lough Key Forest Park, Co Roscommon (above); Monivea Woods, Co Galway



IRELAND FROM BELOW

WHO WE ARE?

Ireland from below isn't affiliated to any political party, faction or group, and we don't receive funding from any organisation or agency. While we do accept ethical and informative advertising to cover our costs, we don't endorse any commercial activity or enterprise.

Many of the people who contribute to the paper in different ways are involved in other projects and organisations, but everybody who contributes does so freely and in an independent, individual capacity, not as a representative of any organisation or State agency (unless explicitly stated otherwise).

Ireland from Below is a voluntary work in progress, and relies on the support and participation of a huge range of individuals and networks for its success.

If you think we're doing the right kind of thing and want to get involved, you can join the collective via our discussion group at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/community_struggles/. We always need people. We promise nobody will come round to your house, try to sell you anything or brainwash you!

A Vision of Forestry for Ireland

It is accepted that the [Coillte] plantations cannot be removed over night; however, we would like to see a reappraisal of the simplistic mechanistic monocultural approach to forestry management in Ireland, which has been dominated by narrow economic interests for too long.

We would like to see environmental and social non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals funded to allow them to have a dignified and meaningful input into creating an Agenda 21 based partnership led new forestry policy, which acknowledges the realities of global warming, the need to conserve and create biodiversity, find alternative fuels, construction timbers and promoting same as naturally renewable resources. It is our understanding that the Nordic countries fund their NGOs directly and evenly without favour.

We wish to see the creation of new local craft industries contributing to local economies via wood and non-wood products (e.g. mushrooms, herbs, berries). We also understand the economic realities of multinationals moving towards cheaper labour markets meaning rural areas need to develop new sustainable economies more than ever, with the wisest management of local natural resources.

We are proposing a triple aspect forestry programme to satisfy the many areas of concern to stakeholders that have been raised during the FSC process in Ireland – one that satisfies and embraces the three main strands of Sustainable Forest Management, i.e. economic, social and environmental aspects.

We have formed relationships with Swiss, German, Austrian, American, South African, Welsh, English, Canadian and Irish

foresters, some of whom live in Ireland and would like to see change. These people have a passion for and understanding of continuous cover multi-use forestry.

We wish to form partnerships with these sources of knowledge and experience, along with the other areas of expertise, in which we have support. We are also aware of the latent talents of some of our newly arrived citizens, immigrants from Poland, etc., who may have useful knowledge to bring to the table. We would also like to include some of the current state foresters who have much to offer with open minds and who are restricted by the current regime.

This programme would consist of:

1: An economically viable programme continuing with non-native conifers, mixing larch, Scots Pine, Douglas Fir, some non-natives broadleaves such as Spanish Chestnut and Hornbeam with natives

such as Oak, Ash, Holly, Alder, Birch, etc. – mixing and matching trees to suitable sites. We would like to see old monoculture sites, deemed to be uneconomic by the current regime, gradually brought back to native woodland by phasing out non-native conifers while providing cover for the natives to recolonise within purposely made coups within the plantation (using non-destructive methods of extraction, such as horses). Perhaps REPS could fund this scheme?

2: Sustainably managed plantations with 30% mixed-broadleaf, local community input into management plans, reduction and eventual elimination of pesticides and fertilisers and no clearfell.

3: A programme of social and environmental forestry concentrating on creating continuous cover multi-use native woodlands, beginning with the creation of a country-wide network of native tree nurseries run as community enterprises, reflecting the understanding of local trees for local conditions from Rio Convention on Biological Diversity. With 30% coppice areas near local towns and villages which

would cater for the biodiversity, conservation and restoration commitments of the state along with social policy, recreation, crafts, spirituality, with some economic benefits via ecotourism, coppicing for local crafts and energy crafts, for example.

We realise this three stranded approach needs more research and time spent to make it ready for use, and would need to be accompanied by the establishment of new Centres for Excellency in Forestry, to disseminate information and conduct research into this approach. This is an extract from Irish Forest Policy – A Citizen's Perspective, available at: www.woodlandleague.org



News

What's in a name?

Tradition, language, identity? Aynia Brennan attempts to unravel the Dingle/an Daingean debacle

Speaking in the Senate earlier this year, Senator Joe O'Toole questioned the hierarchical nature of the state over issues that he claimed should be democratically decided. "In Dublin recently the residents of a small street wanted to change the street name. They had to have a full referendum of all the residents before they were allowed to do so."

"A few short years ago the residents of the town officially known as Newtownsands in North Kerry wanted to change the name of the town to a more popular Moyvane. They had a referendum."

"They had an overwhelming majority in favour of change but, because the percentage of residents who turned out to vote was less than 66% of the electorate, they were not allowed to change the name official-

ly. "Contrast the democratic nature of those experiences with the situation in Gaeltacht towns where a non-resident Minister sitting in a Dublin office can, at the stroke of a pen, with no consultation whatsoever and against the wishes of the residents and the local public representatives, change the traditional and globally recognised name of Dingle to An Daingean."

Éamon Ó Cuív, minister at Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, did this when he signed The Placenames Order (Gaeltacht Districts) 2004 on the 21st December 2004.

This Order contains the names of 2319 townlands from all the Gaeltacht areas in the country. Once the Minister has made an Order in relation to a placename in a Gaeltacht area, the English language version of that placename no longer has any legal function or effect. Although this will not affect the private usage and the majority of the public usage of the English language version, the Official Languages Act 2003 prevents the use of the English language version in:

- Acts of the Oireachtas

- Statutory Instruments
- Road signage
- Street signage
- The definitive large-scale maps produced by the Ordnance Survey

This Order means that only the Irish language version of placenames will be on road and street signs in Gaeltacht districts from March 28, 2005 on. The details of the specific maps covered by this provision are laid out in regulations. Initially, the definitive largescale maps of the country will be covered and the provision will be extended to cover other maps over a period of time. The Placenames (Centres of Population and Districts) Order 2005 came into legal effect on 28 March 2005.

Senator O'Toole stated: "I cannot find any person from the Gaeltacht or Gaeltacht of west Kerry who agrees with the daft proposal to change the name of Dingle to An Daingean. It is a form of cultural terrorism to pretend this does some good for the Irish language."

"Muintir na Gaeltachta believe this is an embarrassment with no sense in it. It is of no help or use to anybody and is counterproductive to the tourism business, the main industry in west Kerry. It only creates confusion and is the kind of daftness that embarrasses those of us who support and use the Irish language."

However, an internet poll on the Daingean/Dingle place name controversy has shown an overwhelming majority of voters in favour of an Irish version of the name.

The poll set up by a Dingle student, Diarmaid Ó Conchubhair was conducted between September 17 and September 26 and registered 4,326 votes.

More than half the votes were in favour of An Daingean, the town's new official name, and 1,748 favoured a change to Daingean Uí Chuis, which some claim is the true Irish version of the name. Only 70 votes wanted a return to Dingle.

The poll was extensively covered in Irish language newspapers and Radio na Gaeltachta ran daily updates.

Aidan O'Connor, writing on the subject in The Kerryman, provided a little bit of history. "When Minister Ó Cuív made his order, he changed the name of Dingle townland, Dingle parish and Dingle electoral division."

"But current law only allows a plebiscite to change the name of a townland and that can only be done by the electorate living in the townland. Many people living in Dingle do not live in the townland of Dingle because the actual town is made up of a number of different townlands dating back hundreds of years."

"The manager does not believe the relevant legislation – the Local Government Act (1946) – allows

the changing of the name of a town.

"This effectively means that most people living in Dingle would not be entitled to vote in the plebiscite."

The current population of Dingle town is 1,839 people but, it is estimated, only about 600 people would be entitled to vote.

At a recent public meeting, Senator O'Toole addressed the residents of Dingle/Daingean Uí Chuis. "If someone tried to change the name of a townland or village in County Dublin, there would be outright war. The people of the Gaeltacht are the only people in this country who are being deprived of their democratic right."

Fergus O'Flaherty said: "When we met Minister Ó Cuív lately he told us to get it into our heads that there's no such place as Dingle or Daingean Uí Chuis. I don't agree with that and I want the support of the people to get the names reinstated."

"I want to thank the county councillors for voting in favour of a plebiscite. But the Minister said that he will not accept the result of that plebiscite so now it becomes a question of democracy versus dictatorship."

Senator O'Toole said: "Talk about 'ag cur airgid amu'. Rarely did the Gaeltachts need money as much as now and rarely has so much money been wasted so foolishly as by the Minister for the Gaeltacht who will spend hundreds of thousands of euros confusing the geography of the Gaeltacht area in a manner requested by nobody."

Ironically An Daingean is still referred to by the public at large as Dingle, the Kerry County Council website still refers to the town as Dingle, while the Department calls it An Daingean.

Youghal community sets up farmers' market

By Éanna Dowling

A community group in East Cork has successfully established a farmers' market in the seaside town of Youghal. The market takes place every Friday at Barry's lane between the famous Clock Gate and the harbour.

Residents and tourists have enjoyed the selection of local and artisan products since it began in August this year.

Many farmers' markets have sprung up around the country recently as producers and consumers alike seek to bridge the gaps between them.

Consumers increasingly want quality locally grown produce and enjoy the social aspect of the open air market. Some farmers are responding to the changing realities of their business by seeking to grow produce for

their local customers rather than mass producing for supermarkets or export. What makes the Youghal experience different to other farmers' markets is in its origins.

Cumann na Daoine is Youghal's Community Development Project (CDP). It is core funded by the state as part of the National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, but managed voluntarily by local people. The project received funding from the Department of the Environment and from East Cork Area Development for environmental training.

They employed Mike Holden, the Global Action Plan (GAP) co-ordinator of the Cork Environmental Forum, to deliver the Global Action Plan series of workshops.

These GAP workshops have been successfully delivered across the



world to inform householders of simple tips to reduce their impact on the environment. This would include things like not leaving the TV on standby (energy saving); walking instead of driving to the shop (transport, energy and fitness); reducing the capacity of the cistern by inserting a bottle (water).

The GAP has been evaluated and demonstrates extraordinary results in changing people's behaviour. It would appear that a little bit of informal education is a better spend

The GAP has been phenomenally successful in Ballymun. Youghal in turn has taken to the programme. Over 60 households have benefited from the GAP in Youghal resulting in a reduction in waste diverted to landfill, energy consumed, water wasted and car miles travelled.

The final workshop of every GAP course asks the people to consider a community action. In Youghal a group of people found they had a common interest in food issues.

Over a year they met, week in,

week out, researching their areas of interest and agreeing on their goals. They agreed that they would like a farmer's market in their town. They collaborated with stallholders, local business, the town council and the Chamber of Commerce to come up with a detailed plan for the development of the market.

A steering group was established with representatives from each of the stakeholders and the market was launched in August.

RTE's Eco Eye show recently came to Youghal to film the market and to interview some of the people who helped establish it. Eco celebrity Duncan Stewart enjoyed his browse around the heritage town and sampled the diverse wares available – locally produced sheep's cheese, organic beef from nearby West Waterford and vegetables dug up from a local field that morning. The show will air in January, a rare example of a positive community action getting some recognition nationally.

Further information from Cumann na Daoine, Youghal's Community Development Project. Tel: 024-91900; Email: youghalcdp1@eircom.net

News Features

Santa comes early for GIFT beneficiaries

Despite having a rare genetic disease which results in tumours growing along the nerves of the inner ear, brain and spinal cord, Petra Madil has organised three giant Christmas hampers for animal rescues in Wicklow, Meath and Mayo. Petra speaks to Aynia Brennan about her fundraising efforts and her group GIFT

Ireland From Below: Why and when did you start GIFT?

Petra Madil: I have always loved animals, I even had an animal club for a while when I was a kid. But never really knew how I could help animals, in fact I didn't really know much about the rescue/welfare sector. In 2002 I joined a chat forum (Irish Animals DB) when I was seeking information on comforting my dying dog Brandon the cavalier spaniel. Initially it was all about learning rather than participating. I really wanted to help, there are so many animals suffering and in need of homes, but I wasn't in a position to foster

animals and with no car I couldn't volunteer at a rescue centre. In early 2003 I made and sold handmade greeting cards for the Stella and Bella fundraiser (held by TKC) and raised approx 140 euro. I wondered how I could do more!

One day in late 2003 a woman named Lyndsey Kenny suggested the idea of selling items on e-bay as a means of raising funds for rescues. This is something which had crossed my mind previously so I was all for the idea!

I did a lot of research and eventually we realised that it was not feasible without a credit card or bank account so we agreed to run various fundraisers instead.

The first thing we wanted was a name, I liked the idea of a name with an abbreviation that also had a meaning. After days of thought I suggested Give It up For The animals - GIFT. Which means 'give a little something for the animals - it's a gift, the gift of a happier life and in some cases THE gift of life'

Shortly after that I was in hospital and had a lot of thinking time on my hands! It was then that I formulated the GIFT ethos. GIFT would be entirely legit, no administration fees so that every cent went to the rescue and therefore no bank account. To give donors piece of mind,

a l l

donations would be made out directly to the rescue. GIFT would be about fundraising and awareness raising.

It was indeed me who laid the foundations for GIFT and built it, I didn't think it would end up being 'me' and wasn't really aware of what I was getting myself into! I don't regret it at all.

IFB: What was the first fundraiser you ever did?

PM: The original GIFT website (it is different now, and new management) was designed and set up by Lyndsey who had her own web design business she was in the process of launching.

While it was decided that e-bay was not suitable for our needs/ aims, I still very much liked the idea of online auctions. And I thought it was something which would attract people as it was one of the GIFT aims to implement unusual fundraising ideas where possible. It was decided that the first fundraiser would be a silent auction using the GIFT website. The idea was to collect unwanted goods, gifts etc both new and (good cond.) previously owned items which would interest people and auction them.

We had handmade jewellery, gift sets, electronic gadgets, houseware and even a little garden dog statue. There was a minimum bid price on everything and people e-mailed us their maximum bid, no one was aware of the current highest bid. Some people chose to be informed of outbids during the last few days of the two week auction - in an effort to boost funds raised - with the option to bid higher if they wished (no obligation).

This fundraiser was in aid of Dogs In Distress.

IFB: How do you pick your causes?

PM: To this day I am still active on several chat forums and so I can keep an eye on which rescues are most in need of help. At the moment I focus on helping rescues which are not well known but who are established. Generally these rescues are run out of the pocket of the person who runs it and it is those rescues who don't have their regular supporters.

ALL rescues large and small need help so it is impossible to say that one is more 'deserving' so what I do is, find those who rarely if ever ask for help but who obviously need it. That does not mean I don't help those who ask for it!

This is a list of rescues helped so far:

Dogs In Distress -

online auction and also 'kennel a dog for a day E7 and get a toy'

Marie who rescues dogs from meath pound - raffle

Kitten Adoption - Dog training and behaviour seminar

Celtic Animal Life Line - online auction

Tipperary Friends of Animals SPCA - xmas raffle

Animal Sanctuary Hubasha - hamper

Jird Rescue (small animals) - hamper

Mayo Cat Rescue - hamper

IFB: How much have you raised to date?

PM: Total monetary funds raised to date is approx 4,200 euro. The estimated value of the three hampers is in the region of 1,000

Let's not forget the educational value of what GIFT does, every time we advertise we tell a little story and I strongly believe that education in welfare matters is a major reason for the problems that rescues face.

IFB: How do you publicise your events?

PM: Advertising is one of the biggest barriers GIFT faces. I want to make it grow and to do that I need to get out there, make GIFT head of and reach people. Very difficult to do.

GIFT and it's events started out as being solely advertised on the Irish Animals discussion board, now it is also advertised on the Pets Ireland board and several international animal boards/ forums, you never know!

I encourage members of the Irish boards to tell their friends, family and work colleagues about GIFT events and this has proven quite successful!

In addition, there are times when volunteers are sought to put posters up in their local vets. I reckon if everyone did just a small thing it would all add up. If twenty people put up a poster in their vet or work notice board then that is potentially several hundred people whom it would reach. Even if the public elect not to donate or participate in an event, they will have heard about GIFT and know what we do and why. That is just as important as getting money out of people.

I am trying to find people willing to help out with advertising, maybe someone with contacts at a magazine or radio who could get us a little ad space at little or no charge. As I have said, every cent goes to the rescues so there is no money for ads etc apart from what I myself can donate and I like to put as much money as I can into the actual fundraisers to make them successful.

IFB: What is the most unusual event you have organised?

PM: As I have mentioned before, one of the GIFT aims is to implement unusual ideas where possible. They are a great way to get people interested!

At the time the silent online auction was very unusual but it has become quite popular now, I know for a fact that the success of the first GIFT auction prompted others to hold them as well. Although we seem to be the only ones who hold SILENT auctions.

The 'save a dog for a day..' fundraiser was run via our rescue shop on the website. A lady in the UK had 100 dog toys that came from a pet toy supplier and she asked GIFT to help me sell them with the idea that kennelling a

Petra: not as grumpy as she looks. Neurofibromatosis, type 2, has paralysed some of her facial muscles leaving her unable to smile



THE BIG PICTURE



On Grafton Street, Dublin ©Lee Newman Gallagher

SEND US YOUR PICTURES

A picture is worth at least a thousand words – more when the education system fails so many people that a quarter of us have problems with reading and writing. We're always on the lookout for good photos, in any digital format, black and

white or colour, and artwork of different kinds. Of course we want lots of pictures of community projects in action, photos of moments of confrontation, landscapes under threat and happy group pics! We're also delighted to get more unusual photos – pieces of protest art maybe,

unexpected events caught by the camera, "subverted" advertisements and more. Artwork – line drawings, cartoons, graphic images and more – is also very welcome. In all cases, please email photos and artwork to irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie. Make sure we know

the name of the artist or photographer – we can't pay you, but can give you a credit so other people see your work. If it's a photo, we also need the caption details; if it's artwork, we need to know the title. If you have technical questions about the format, please email irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie

dog for a day (which has to be done if a rescue has no shelter) costs 7 euro. And so if you paid for a days kennelling (time to find the dog a home etc.) you got a Christmas themed toy for your own dog. That was a really lovely idea and raised a lot of money for Dogs In Distress – pretty basic idea BUT unusual.

IFB: The most successful fundraiser?

PM: No doubt about it, the most successful fundraisers were the first auction and the 'save a dog for a day...' which both raised in the region of 900 euro. I learned from the second auction that the time of year you hold it has a huge effect on it's success.

IFB: What do your family and friends think of your involvement with GIFT?

PM: My parents are very supportive and I would be lost without my dad's transport help. Some friends think it is 'cool' but most of my family don't really understand what it is that I do. They think I help the animals but without realising I was the one who really made GIFT what it is and that I do a lot. To them I just wave a raffle book in their faces or ramble on about animals and leads!

Slowly they are becoming more aware of it, my own 10 year old

cousin donated a pile of her cat stuff to the hampers and my grandmother who has very little money bought lots of food and treats. I'm more proud of the fact they are helping the cause than realising what I do.

IFB: The GIFT website – who else is involved?

PM: Originally the website was managed by Lyndsey who had experience with website design however since she had less time, a friend of mine; Christine Jonnson in Sweden offered to host the site on her server to save us money and to do a professional web design. She did a fantastic job and she updates the site now too. A professional website is very important in this day and age. I hope to expand the site over time. I recently introduced Pets Corner which features pet stories.

IFB: The 2005 Christmas Hampers – how much is in each one?

PM: Each hamper is a lot bigger than they look in the photos. There are several enormous bags of food, tons of toys and treats, grooming products and bed, there are even travel water bowls and bottles. Each hamper, when packed up, took up about 5 big baskets/ carriers each and that does not include the food bags, cat scratches and kits.

IFB: Who are the hampers for?

PM: Animal Sanctuary Hubasha; Jird Rescue (small animals – rabbits, gerbils, hamsters etc); Mayo Cat Rescue

IFB: Was it difficult to get people to donate stuff?

PM: It was very slow going so it is a good job I started collecting in late August! As well as advertising on the usual chat boards I made a plea for old good condition pet items on the Leinster Freecycle group on yahoo and got a good response, lots of beds and one kind woman donated several bags of food too. A big problem when seeking donations of anything is that people are afraid they will donate too little and be laughed at but in rescue every little counts and every little is greatly appreciated.

IFB: How did they get the donations to you?

PM: People who donated smaller items posted them, which was handy. Of course a lot of the hamper items were too heavy or large to post. I have to thank Berni Murphy in Carlow for acting as a drop off point in that region. Several donators also volunteered to help transport the pet stuff to me, for which I am very grateful. My father did a lot of collections around

Dublin / Wicklow / Meath.

The biggest feat by far was a stash of pet goodies donated by pet suppliers in the UK and transported to Ireland by Dave Coulson of Leitrim Animal Welfare. Everyone who donated was very helpful.

IFB: How are you going to get the hampers to the various rescues?

PM: Animal Sanctuary Hubasha is in Wicklow and the couple who run it often meet the lady from Mayo Cat Rescue to pass on food etc. Thankfully Remi at ASH agreed to pass on the Mayo Cat Rescue hamper. Both hampers will be dropped off at ASH.

Jird Rescue is in Meath and my saintly father will deliver that too.

IFB: Being deaf, how do you communicate with others in everyday life?

PM: My parents and some friends know the single handed alphabet signs which makes communication so much easier than using a notepad which I often have to do with other people. I have trouble focusing my eyes to lipread.

Wouldn't it be great if I had a hand help speech translator, speech recognition software seems to take hours of tuning for each voice so is not helpful.

IFB: With all this organisation, do you have a mainstream job?

PM: I am currently in between jobs.

My last job finished a few weeks ago. I worked as an administration assistant within the mental health support service and I also ran a job seekers service for clients. Finding work can be very hard for people at a disadvantage and I used my own experiences and knowledge to help them.

IFB: Hobbies – how do you relax?

PM: I spend an awful lot of time browsing the animal forums! But that isn't relaxing is it? I love art and craft things but I rarely have the time for it. Such as making cards and sewing outfits for beanie babies.

I love to lounge in front of a dvd with a tub of Ben and Jerrys.

Love a good swing on the golf club on the driving range or the pitch and putt course but it is way too cold this time of year!

IFB: How you can help animal rescue and GIFT.

PM: We are always looking for items to auction or raffle. Unwanted Christmas presents or second hand items in mint condition are always welcome. Ideas and suggestions are also sought for an online live auction.

Contact by email: giftteam@gmail.com

Opinion

Dr Jonathan Derham, bless his woolly socks, comes across as a nice man. Despite suffering the wrath of the Cork communities opposed to the licensing of Indaver Ireland's two toxic burners at Ringaskiddy, he managed to conduct himself with dignity and a fair amount of humour during the Environmental Protection Agency's oral hearing in February.

By the end of the three week hearing, some of the EPA's harshest critics were wondering why they had given the job of dealing with their complaints to such a good-natured person. Some suggested he was out of his depth. Others, less kindly, said he was the wrong man for the job.

A geologist by trade, it seemed there was no way he could deal with the complex issues that come with incinerator licence applications. Derham was clearly at the high table to adjudicate a whitewash – Indaver were getting their licence no matter what anyone said. That's what the people said.

Most of the time he had to field angry admonishments, more often than not about why EPA's hierarchy were not in Cork to answer specific questions. That wasn't their role, he repeatedly declared, it was his role to hear the submissions and then report back to the EPA in Johnstown Castle.

Still, he came across as a nice man. That warm feeling towards him has now dissipated. All it took was a careful reading of his report on the hearing. Derham indeed was out of his depth; his report, people said, was a waste of good trees. The EPA senior inspector is now seen as a pawn in a game where he got to play the bright forward moves for the King and Queen.

Sadly, he has followed the path across the squares of all those state pawns who came before him, whether they be American, British or Irish. He is a pawn alright – a pawn for industry and for the industrial lobby that influences state policy on things like incineration and its health implications.

Derham has ignored these implications, he has ignored the thousands



No more Mr nice guy

The EPA thinks that incineration is not a threat to human lives. Robert Allen says they are wrong

of scientific reports that link the combustion of chemical compounds with human health. According to him, the literature is clear. There is no cancer link with incinerators; respiratory impacts are also inconclusive. It gets better, or worse – depending on your perspective. He said in his report: "The inconclusive results of the health impacts from incinerators recorded by the Health Research Board reflect the findings of the US National Research Council in their study published in 2000, and the UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (the lat-

ter for municipal solid waste incineration only) in their 2004 publication."

That's right Jonathan, roll out the state science – the flawed, inconclusive, state science. As a report, it is a piece of whitewash; as a document that forms the basis for a licence, it is seriously flawed. Quite rightly, the communities around Ringaskiddy who will be affected by Indaver's burners are deeply unhappy.

Mr Nice Guy wore a mask.

The following is a key sentence in Derham's report.

"The protection of human health

in relation to the operation of waste facilities is assured through the use of standards."

Derham was aware during the hearing that the objectors to the Indaver licence were unhappy with, as he put it, "this standards approach – implying that it is not sufficient".

In fact, what the objectors really said was that they rejected these standards because they are set by industry and applied to legislation by the state; they are not the consequence of an holistic approach to the issue, the burning issue, that incinerators create deadly poisons. (See the relevant passage in the adjoining box.)

Derham's boss, Mary Kelly, once had an interesting view on standards, when she was asked about them during the years when she worked for IBEC, the industry confederation. Her reply? "Do we want to be waitresses and organic farmers, or do we want to get on with it?"

It seems we are getting on with it and the evidence that incineration creates chemical compounds that lead to cancer, hormonal, immune, developmental and reproductive system breakdown, heart disease, liver damage, bone and skin diseases and reduced sperm counts has been made up by a whole host of people with nothing better to do with their lives; in other words, they are lying. Apparently, that is what the EPA believe.

Truth and lies about the chemicals that come out of incinerator stacks dominated the 20th century. Yet while some countries have managed to sift out the accurate information and have changed their legislation to protect the health of their communities, here in Ireland we follow the American and British model.

Interestingly some of the most damning research about incinerators and their implications for communities has come out of good old US of A, notably in the opening chapter of the 900 page book *Dioxins and*

Health by specialists Arnie Schecter and Tom Gasiewicz (a reference, by the way, that is missing from the EPA report; it is remarkable that Schecter, the world's most prominent specialist on the health implications of chemicals like dioxin, is not once included in Derham's report).

In an overview of the dioxin debate, Tom Webster and Barry Commoner put the fears of the Cork communities in perspective. "In our opinion, the public fears are largely justified. The current scientific evidence [pre-2003] argues not only that dioxin is a potent carcinogen, but also that the noncancer health and environmental hazards of dioxin may be more serious than believed previously."

They go to state: "Perhaps the most troubling consequence is the possibility of reproductive, developmental, and immunological effects at the levels of dioxinlike compounds now present in the bodies of the average person."

Dioxins cause cancer, that is a fact. Dioxins, specifically the most deadly dioxin – 2,3,7,8-tetra chloro dibenzo-p-dioxin, are emitted from incinerators, along with a whole host of other chemicals and it is this chemical concoction that causes a range of illnesses. This isn't inconclusive, it is established evidence available in the scientific literature – which Derham has not read.

The sad fact is that the people who presented this evidence to the oral hearing got it wrong, they only told part of the story. Incinerator applications have been defeated before, but other factors (economics, politics) were applied to the argument; never in Ireland has a licence been determined by all the facts known about incineration and its implications for human health. That is the real tragedy here.

Robert Allen is the author of four books that feature the implications for human health from incinerators – *Guests of the Nation*, *Waste Not, Want Not*, *The Dioxin War* and *No Global*

The EPA has ignored the thousands of scientific reports that link the combustion of chemical compounds with human health

Whose standards?

The following is an excerpt from the EPA's report on the oral hearing into Indaver's licence

"It was argued by many of the third party objectors that the EPA is not – or is not claiming responsibility for – protecting the health of the local community in relation to its decisions.

This is not the case. The legislation that the EPA is working to specifically provides for the protection of human health. I refer in particular to §40(4)(a) & (b) of the Waste Management Acts 1996 – 2003, in which it states that the EPA is prohibited from issuing a licence for an activity unless it is satisfied that, in the carrying on of that activity, emissions will not breach any relevant standard, and that a legally operated activity will not cause environmental pollution.

Environmental Pollution is defined in §5 of the same Act;

Environmental pollution means, in relation to waste, the holding, transport, recovery or disposal of waste in a manner which would, to a significant extent, endanger human health or harm the environment, ...

So the EPA has to ensure that human health is protected. This legal obligation is confirmed in the Decision and Reasons for the Decision section on page 1 of the Proposed Decision issued (Appendix B-4).

Moreover, I would also note that in relation to the Board of the EPA whose primary functions are informed by §52 of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 & 2003, the provision of subsections (2)(c) and (2)(d) make it legally binding that the Agency shall

ensure a high standard of environmental protection as well as the prevention of significant environmental pollution.

Again, the concept of environmental pollution embraces the potential for harm to human health. The EPA has to ensure human health is protected in the execution of its licensing functions.

This position is confirmed in a letter issued by the Director General of the EPA (Dr M Kelly) to the Secretary General of the Department of Health & Children dated 25 March 2003 (Appendix H). This letter is also introduced by CHASE and others in support of their case that no-one is protecting health. It is my view that the this is not an accurate interpretation of the EPA letter: what the EPA say is that they are not responsible for the monitoring of human health in the community or the collation of such statistics – this being a matter for the Department of Health & Children and the Health Boards. I would support this position. Further discussion on the

matter of community health monitoring is included in part 4.1.2 of this report.

The EPA March 2003 letter states that the protection of human health in relation to the operation of waste facilities is assured through the use of standards: the third party objectors reject this standards approach – implying that it is not sufficient. It is my experience that a limit based (also known as performance based) standards approach to regulation is, internationally, a common approach to environmental protection employed by legislators and regulators. Society only functions in a safe and structured way because standards are established governing a whole range of environmental factors that impact on our lives (e.g. drinking water quality, bathing water quality, air quality, waste acceptance, food hygiene, etc.). The World Health Organisation (WHO), for example, relies heavily on limit standards in many of their publications."

WHAT IS THE EPA?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is an independent public body, established under the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992. The EPA has a wide range of functions to protect the environment. Its main activities include:

- Environmental licensing
- Enforcement of environmental law
- Environmental planning & guidance
- Monitoring and reporting on environmental status in relation to air, water, waste, noise, land, and soil
- Environmental research.

The EPA is managed by a full-time Executive Board, consisting of a Director General and four Directors. The current Director General is Mary Kelly. The organisation's headquarters are located in Wexford, and it also has regional offices in Dublin, Cork, Kilkenny, Castlebar, Monaghan, Letterkenny, Athlone, Limerick, and Mallow.

Saving Tara



Left: visitors at the Hill of Tara last summer. The area does not just belong to archaeology; Tara is also the literary, historical and traditional centre of early and prehistoric Ireland

There will always be Tara

As Tara heads for the High court, a series of sideshows threaten to obscure the main issue, reports Robert Allen

The quest to save Tara's Gabhra Valley shifts to the High Court on January 12 when Vincent Salafia's challenge to the proposed M3 motorway will be heard.

Salafia argues that the area is "a national monument, due to its historical, traditional, archaeological, architectural, and spiritual importance" and that this is the "essential thrust of the campaign".

In recent months the campaign has been diverted by a series of sideshows that have caused disquiet among those who are concerned about the real issue, which Salafia argues is to "protect the archaeological complex and landscape that is directly associated with the Hill of Tara from interference by brutal archaeological digs, from being dissected by the construction of a major motorway and from inappropriate real estate development that would ensue".

Muireann Ni Bhrolchain, of the Save Tara/Skryne Valley Campaign and a lecturer at Maynooth, is aware that the campaign has also touched on transport issues, on the role of state archaeology and on issues that have nothing to do with saving part of Ireland's heritage.

"It must be said as well, that the campaign has always drawn attention to the immediate necessity of bypassing the existing towns that are clogged with traffic - Navan, Dunshaughlin and Kells," she said.

"The original bypass for Dunshaughlin was brought before Meath County Council in 1999. If that had been proceeded with then, that logjam would have solved by now.

"The campaign has also insisted on the necessity of re-opening the existing railway line to Navan. The railway line was closed in the 1960's and most of the line still exists."

As a result, the campaign has drawn attention to the need for an integrated public transport system, and this has been provided by the Meath Multiway.

Ni Bhrolchain said: "The Meath Multiway is one of the visionary alternative options available to the Government. But as they want the revenue that comes from cars (VRT, tolls, petrol, etc) they are highly unlikely to opt for a public transport alternative."

She said she believed the option would sink into oblivion, despite its obvious appeal. "The provision of

excellent public transport and seeing the TaraSkryne/Gabhra Valley as an area of high heritage amenity is the most screamingly obvious solution to the problem."

"But the Government has targeted Meath as the next area to be highly developed, moving Dublin people far away from their jobs, forcing them to commute (by road) to their jobs in Dublin and back again."

The second sideshow has intensified since the High Court date was announced in mid-December. A row has developed over the role of the state archaeologist in the proposed road. In a letter to the Meath Chronicle, Ni Bhrolchain said: "The Chief State Archaeologist's nine pages of advice to the Minister for the Environment (3rd December 2004) concentrate on the engineering aspect to the near exclusion of archaeology and heritage."

"He defends the Environmental Impact Statement, the An Bord Pleanála hearing and the chosen route. He does concede that the sec-

tion between Dunshaughlin and Navan will be 'costly and time consuming to excavate'."

"This is a direct contradiction of the NRA's position that the excavations will only take six to 12 months. He remarks incomprehensibly that 'none of these 38 sites is a national monument within the meaning of the act'."

"He seems unaware of the fact that a national monument is not just confined to an archaeological site."

Brian Duffy, chief archaeologist of the Department of the Environment, has been the subject of a fair amount of vitriol since several specialists questioned his expertise and his stance on the proposed road.

All of a sudden Tara became an archaeological issue, and the primary theme - to save the Gabhra Valley - became a secondary issue.

When Dr Pat Wallace, director of the National Museum, said the area should be excavated, it appeared to be in response to the position of the state and its officials. "who for some

inexplicable reason seem to think it would be better covered over".

Edel Bhreathnach shifted the emphasis back to Tara during the launch of her book, *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara* - about its history and archaeology, in the Royal Irish Academy in December.

Tara was important to Irish heritage, she said. The reason why Tara appeared on virtually every page of medieval Irish sources is that it was the "icon of kingship" in Ireland. "Other nations have attempted to measure success in economic and political terms alone and have set out to obliterate their past."

"Are we to say that Tara's role as icon is no more? Perhaps modern progress needs no icons, in fact detests icons."

The road through Tara, she said, would be "a cultural travesty unworthy of our country".

There has also been concern among the campaigners that the heritage issue was completely obscured by those who insisted on no motorway at all. This, some said, confused people who initially believed the campaign was about saving the Gabhra Valley from destruction and found instead that it had become a green issue - focusing on transportation, the use of public funds and specific environmental issues such as climate change.

Muireann Ni Bhrolchain is in no doubt what the real issue is. "Anyone who stands on the site of the archaeological dig just beside the existing N3, at Blundelstown, will see that the top of the hill is visible from the site. The archaeological landscape will be completely destroyed, not only by the enormous land take necessary for a motorway but even further by the development that will follow, regardless of the empty assurances of the Minister."

"Those in favour of the road assure us that the motorway will not be seen from the Hill, that is not the point. The point is that the landscape between Tara and Skryne is a relatively undisturbed landscape consisting of dwelling and small roads that do not destroy the landscape," she said.

"But this area does not just belong to archaeology, Tara is also the literary, historical and traditional centre of early and prehistoric Ireland. It is the ancient capital of Ireland. The Gabhra Valley, the very area that would be primarily destroyed by the proposed motorway, is where the last battle of the Fianna took place, that is their last resting place along with Cairpre Lifechair (son of Cormac mac Airt), the king of Tara at the time."

"All this will be completely destroyed and annihilated, the present dig, on the route of the proposed motorway, is on the edge of the Gabhra River. Again, a visit to the area will reveal this better than any words that I can add."

Over the page: interview with Vincent Salafia and Muireann Ni Bhrolchain

THE M3 MOTORWAY

The M3 Motorway is a key part of the Government's plan to upgrade the overall roads network for the country. The existing road (the N3 national primary road) is struggling to cope with the increased volumes of traffic brought about by the population explosion in towns such as Dunshaughlin, Navan, and Kells. The new motorway will enable motorists to by-pass these towns, and will significantly improve road transport connections between the northwest and the east of Ireland, catering for approximately 22,000 vehicles daily on completion. This figure is predicted to more than double in the ten years after construction of the motorway.

A four-year planning process was undertaken for the motorway, whereby a number of route options were explored. The M3 Route Selection reports were published in 2000 and 2001, and over 4,000 people attended public consultations on the planning of the road scheme. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project was

published in March 2002, and was followed by a 28-day oral hearing in autumn the same year. The scheme was approved in August 2003, and became operative in September of that year.

Campaigners against the motorway are opposed to its construction because the road will pass between the ancient Hill of Tara and the nearby hill of Skryne, with a floodlit junction to be located within a couple of kilometres to the north of the Hill of Tara. Protestors are not against the construction of the entire M3 motorway - just the 3km section that passes through this valley, which contains a number of archaeological sites. They also maintain the new motorway will open up tracts of land for commercial, retail and residential developments, and fear some of this development could be within sight of the Hill of Tara. In contrast, the Government and National Roads Authority argue that the route approved by the planning process is farther from the Hill of Tara than the existing N3 road, and avoids most of the known archaeology.

Saving Tara



IRELAND FROM BELOW:

What is the essential thrust of the campaign?

VINCENT SALAFIA: The essential thrust of the campaign is to protect the archaeological complex and landscape that is directly associated with the Hill of Tara from interference by brutal archaeological digs, from being dissected by the construction of a major motorway and from inappropriate real estate development that would ensue. The specified geographical area is a national monument, due to its historical, traditional, archaeological, architectural, and spiritual importance.

MUIREANN NI BHROLCHAIN: The thrust of the campaign is to prevent the M3 motorway from passing through the Tara/Skryne (Gabhra Valley) and to move that section of the motorway either east or west, preferably west, of Tara.

It must be said as well, however, that the campaign has always drawn attention to the immediate necessity of bypassing the existing towns that are clogged with traffic – Navan, Dunshaughlin and Kells. The original bypass for Dunshaughlin was brought before Meath County Council in 1999. If that had been proceeded with then, that logjam would have been solved by now.

The campaign has also insisted on the necessity of re-opening the existing railway line to Navan. The railway line was closed in the 1960's and most of the line still exists.

IFB: What is the status of the legal challenge?

VS: There is only one legal challenge under way at present. On July 4 I was given leave in the High Court to

judicially review the decision of the Minister for the Environment to grant directions, under the new National Monuments Act (2004) for excavations to proceed in advance of motorway construction.

This is officially listed as Vincent Salafia -v- Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Meath County Council; The Attorney General; and Ireland. The National Roads Authority has joined in the case as a notice party.

I am alleging that the Minister has breached his constitutional duty to protect the heritage of Ireland, and that the Act itself is unconstitutional due to its failure to provide adequate protection for cultural heritage. There will be a full hearing on the matter on December 14 in the High Court. An appeal is expected to the Supreme Court, no matter who wins in the High Court.

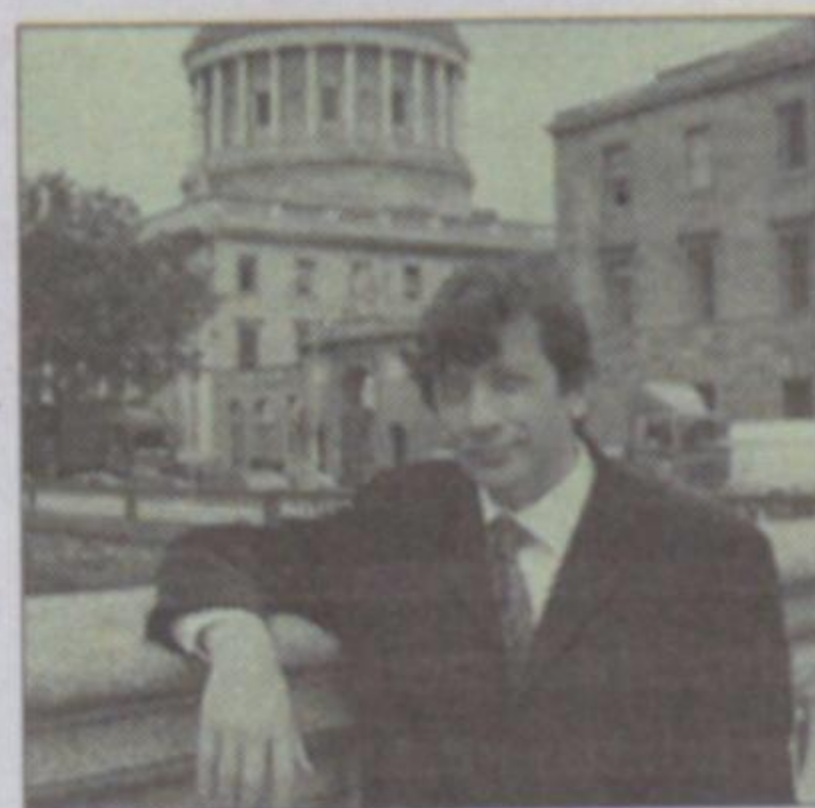
IFB: Do you feel that you have managed to raise political and social awareness on this issue sufficiently to make a difference?

MNB: Yes, I do feel that we have managed, against the odds indeed, to raise this issue to the level of national awareness.

Political awareness has been raised at every level possible. Tara and the proposed M3 was a key factor in the

by-election in Meath 2005 and it was even an issue in the neighbouring constituency of Kildare during the coeval by-election.

At local level, the campaign held a long meeting with Meath County Council and the National Roads Authority, April 2004. The campaign



VINCENT SALAFIA
There are many problems with the motorway, other than the location of it, such as tolling and lack of alternatives. But those issues often go beyond the central theme of the campaign, which is to protect a specified geographical area

made two presentations to both the Environment and the Transport committees in the Dáil during 2004 and 2005. As a result, the Environment Committee visited the Hill with the archaeologist, George Eogan in November 2004.

The new chairman of the Environment Committee, Seán Haughey (Fianna Fáil) said that the route bordered on 'vandalism' in 2005.

The Labour Party, supported by other opposition parties and independents, tabled a motion in Private members time in November 2004.

The debate took place over two evenings. All parties and the independent TDs spoke and participated, with the opposition parties speaking

strongly against the chosen route.

At the same time, November 2004, a motion was tabled in the Seanad by Joe O'Toole. The route was criticised by such speakers as David Norris, Joe O'Toole, Shane Ross and Maurice Hayes.

In May 2005, I myself was called

in to talk to the Taoiseach and to Minister Roche for 45 minutes just before the Minister made his decision to go ahead.

We have been told that it is a topic of conversation in New York and Washington.

The political awareness is as high as possible and the Labour Party, Sinn Féin and the Green Party in particular along with many independents are committed to changing the route.

The social awareness has also been raised to an enormous extent. An independent survey carried out by Red C showed that three out of four people interviewed were against this particular route.

Through an international mailing list and the 350 academics who signed the statement in March-May 2005 awareness was raised throughout the wider community world wide.

It has been covered in newspapers, radio programmes, TV programmes to an astonishing extent. The Save Tara/Skryne Valley group was particularly effective in using the media and leafleting at the Hill itself, on the streets of Navan and Dublin and country wide and getting members of the public to sign letters to the Ministers and the Taoiseach himself. These were then presented to the various committees involved in the Dáil.

The group has drawn attention to the various alternatives to the route as well and has pushed for the inclusion of Tara on the World Heritage Site list. There is little that can be done in this area as the Government itself has to nominate an area for inclusion on the list and this Govern-

ment is not prepared to nominate Tara – for obvious reasons.

The level of inclusion of the academic community in this debate is unheard of in any other campaign, the statement signed by 350 academics and presented to the Taoiseach shows their concerns and involvement.

The Magnetic Music Tour, Tunes for Tara, also raised great awareness in Germany and potential tourists were horrified about the proposed road and cannot understand why the Government is intent on destroying heritage and tourist potential.

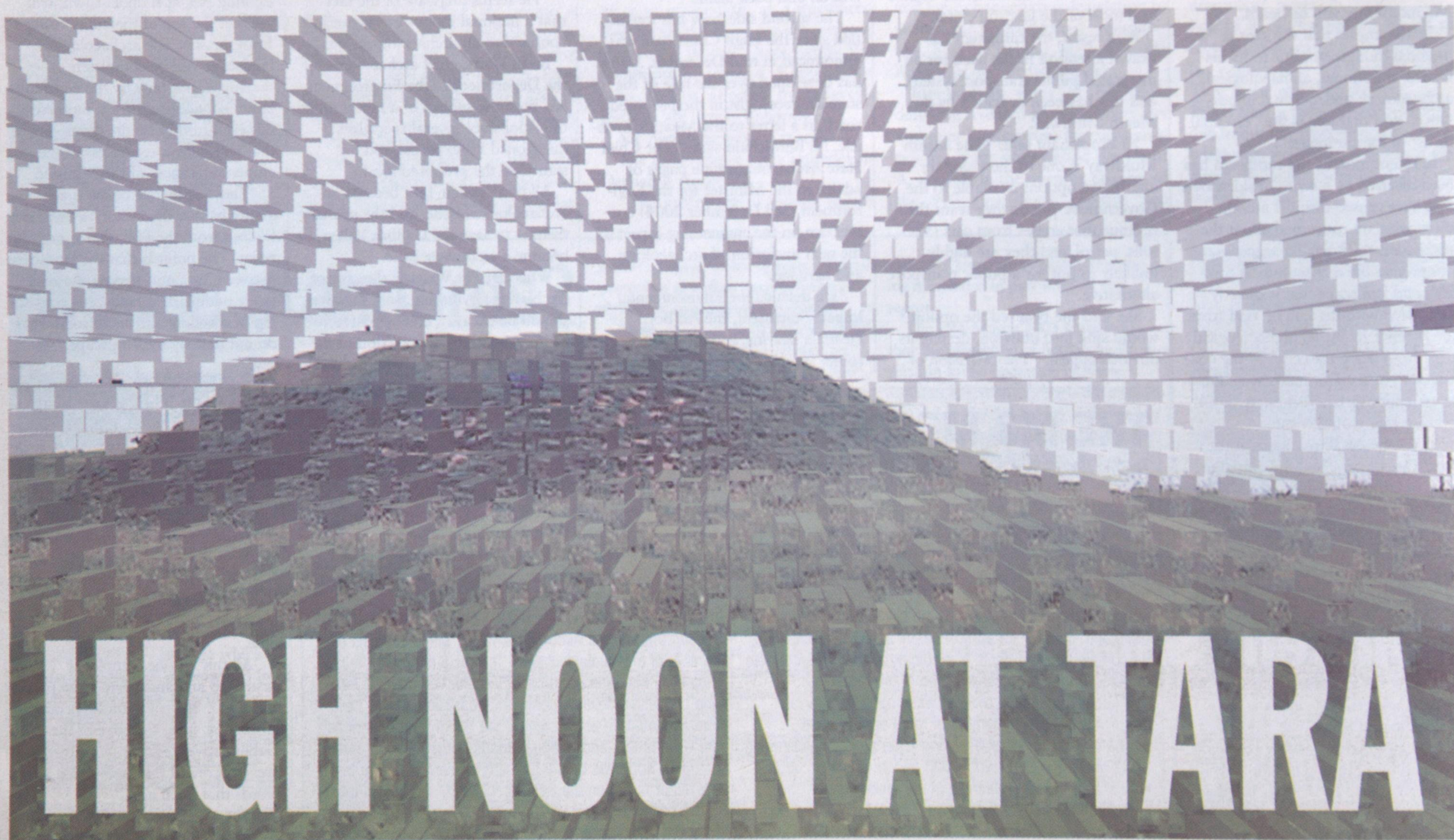
The campaign has also brought into being other pressure groups such as Tara Heritage, M3 to the West, Meath on Track.

There has also been a heavy involvement by the non-Christian, druidic, wiccan community who see Tara as being a present-day icon of their beliefs.

The Artists 4 Tara, where a large group of eminent artists were brought together to have an exhibition in aid of Tara and they raised awareness and much needed finance for the campaign as well. Jim Fitzpatrick, the well known artist, was pivotal in this.

Another well known name, who contributed greatly to the profile of the campaign, was Stuart Townsend who visited the hill in October of 2004. His support heralded huge media exposure.

I also believe firmly that making personal contacts with particular journalists was a crucial part of the campaign. This was done by various individuals, not on a concerted way, with various key journalists in all types of media.



Saving Tara

VS: I was elected Public Relations Officer for the Save Tara Skryne Valley Group in September 2003, and resigned to pursue litigation in April of this year. During that time I believe I was successful in raising considerable political and social awareness, both nationally and internationally. A national survey in May 2005 showed that 70% of people wanted the road re-routed. We also forced the Minister to make certain public statements, which will be detrimental to his case.

Ultimately, I feel we did what we could, and that the entire planning process has been undemocratic. Expecting democratic pressure to bring about a change was a long shot, and I always expected this to end up in court. In fact, I feel the Government wants it in court was well, so they can introduce even more draconian laws in the immediate future, just like they did after losing twice in the Supreme Court at Carrickmines.

IFB: Community opposition to undesirable development over the past three decades reads like a succession of failures. Do you believe this campaign will be one of the few successes?

VS: I believe the campaign to save Tara is over, and that the decision now lies with the Courts. There has been no campaign activity over the last six months, and none is likely to occur in the future, other than some protests outside the courts. The political decision was made, and that will not be revisited voluntarily.

But I do not believe that the campaign failed. The Government simply made the wrong decision. We effectively

put them on notice of the error of that decision. We cannot take responsibility for their decision.

MNB: This is probably the most difficult question to answer. I believe if there was a referendum tomorrow that the people of Ireland would vote against this route. Indeed this is borne out by the Red C survey mentioned above. Those who carried out the survey say that it equals a referendum result to within 3%.

Yes, I still believe that this will be a success. I believe that the people understand that a huge mistake, even bigger than Woodquay, is being made here.

IFB: Is the campaign about the needs of the communities in Meath or about safeguarding the cultural and historical aspects of our heritage?

MNB: The campaign is primarily about the safeguarding of the Gabhra Valley and the extended landscape of Tara from the motorway and the concomitant disastrous development that will undoubtedly follow.

But the people of Meath would be much better served by the re-opening of the railway line to Navan, the bypassing of the towns snarled up by traffic instead of shunting the traffic jam faster to the M50 at Blanchardstown. They will pay two tolls for this privilege and Tara will be lost in the process.

There are also the options of the Multiway, the Heritage Park and also of course moving the route of the motorway to one of the other routes further away from Tara.

VS: It has been about both, but primarily focused on national issues. There are many problems with the

motorway, other than the location of it, such as tolling and lack of alternatives. But those issues often go beyond the central theme of the campaign, which is to protect a specified geographical area.

IFB: An Bord Pleanála inspector Brendan Devlin said in his report that the proposed route of the motorway 'would not have a significant impact on the archaeological landscape' of the Hill of Tara and the Hill of Skreen. What in your mind is the real impact on the archaeological landscape?

VS: Catastrophic. It is a great pity that nobody who was in a position to challenge the decision did so. Only those who participated in the hearings could do so. I was busy with Carrickmines at the time.

MNB: Anyone who stands on the site of the archaeological dig just beside the existing N3, at Blundelstown, will see that the top of the hill is visible from the site. The archaeological landscape will be completely destroyed, not only by the enormous land take necessary for a motorway but even further by the development that will follow, regardless of the empty assurances of the Minister.

Those in favour of the road assure us that the motorway will not be seen from the Hill, that is not the point. The point is that the landscape between Tara and Skryne is a rela-

tively undisturbed landscape consisting of dwelling and small roads that do not destroy the landscape.

But this area does not just belong to archaeology, Tara is also the literary, historical and traditional centre of early and prehistoric Ireland. It is the ancient capital of Ireland. The Gabhra Valley, the very area that would be primarily destroyed by the proposed motorway, is where the last battle of the Fianna took place, that is their last resting place along with Cairpre Lifechair (son of Cormac mac Airt), the king of Tara at the time.

MUIREANN NI BHROLCHAIN
I believe that the people understand that a huge mistake, even bigger than Woodquay, is being made here



All this will be completely destroyed and annihilated, the present dig, on the route of the proposed motorway, is on the edge of the Gabhra River. Again, a visit to the area will reveal this better than any words that I can add.

IFB: In April 2004, Muireann Ni Bhrolchain said, after a statement by the Archaeological Institute of America and others in support of the campaign: 'Basically these worldwide experts are supporting the Irish experts, who are telling the authorities that they are about to make one of the biggest mistakes this country has ever made.' Is this still the general position of all those who are opposed to this road?

MNB: Did I? Well then I still completely agree with myself! Actually,

what happened in the interim proves my words prophetic. The 350 signatories to the statement handing to the Taoiseach and Minister Roche included the most eminent archaeologists, historians, literary historians, Celticists and modern Irish scholars in the WORLD, as well as Professors of Irish Studies, English and all sorts of disciplines all over the world. They are all still in a state of disbelief and absolutely horrified that Ireland can commit the sin of Woodquay again but this is even worse.

VS: I don't know. There has been very little said in the wake of the Minister's decision. I am not aligned with any group, and am acting individually. The decision is made, and the courts will determine its legality, rather than its morality or wisdom.

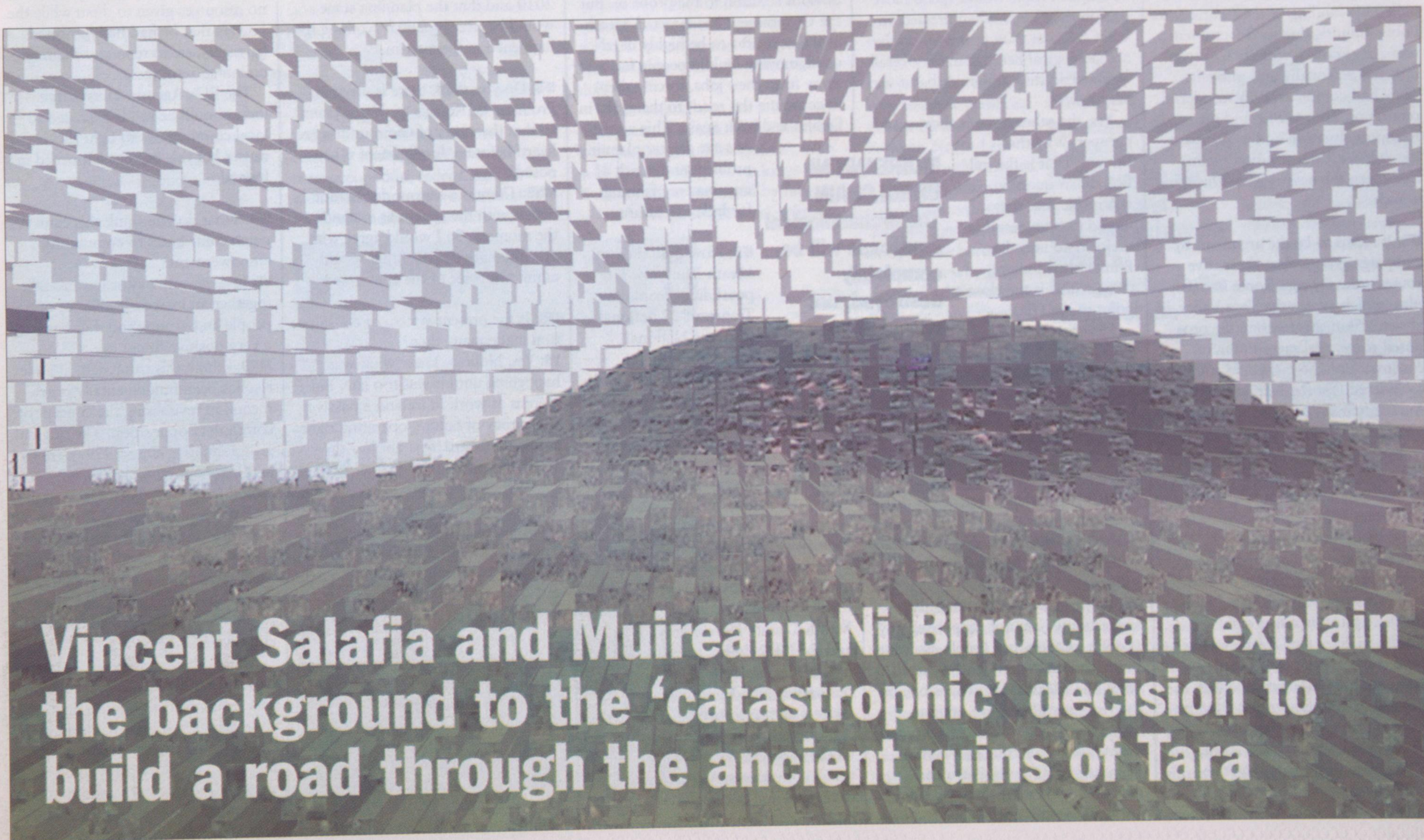
IFB: Earlier this year it was claimed that Dr Pat Wallace, Director of the National Museum, was prevented from attending an Oireachtas discussion on the proposed motorway. So, are people being 'muzzled'?

VS: I don't know, but it would appear so.

MNB: Dr Pat Wallace was 'muzzled', no claim about it. Seán Haughey, the Fianna Fáil chairman of the Environment Committee, tried again and again to have Dr Wallace attend the Committee but he was prevented from doing so by the Minister for Tourism.

Yes, people are being muzzled at all levels. I would contend that the media itself is being silenced. Attempts have been made for example to raise the issue on the Joe Duffy Show and all have failed. Emails and comments on Tara are frequently

Continued on next page



Vincent Salafia and Muireann Ni Bhrolchain explain the background to the 'catastrophic' decision to build a road through the ancient ruins of Tara

Saving Tara

Archaeological sites in Tara area

A total of 156 sites have been identified along the route of the M3, of which 132 (approximately 85 per cent) are prehistoric, dating from 7000 BC to AD 400, five sites are early medieval (400 to AD 1169), nine medieval, and 11 post-medieval. The sites range in function from settlements to cemeteries, and from burnt mounds to brick kilns. Archaeological resolution of these sites began in June 2005.

According to the National Roads Authority (NRA), discovered archaeological sites on the M3 will be excavated and recorded by hand within the fence-line of the road, subject to directions issued by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Any sites found will be reported to the

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, to be recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). All discovered sites will be subject to very thorough archaeological excavation and post-excavation reporting. All findings from the sites will be recorded, while all artefacts will be removed, conserved, and passed to the National Museum for safe-keeping.

Opponents of the motorway say its construction will eliminate at least 38 archaeological sites and forever destroy the integrity of this world-renowned historical area.

It has been estimated that the full cost of excavating sites along the Dunshaughlin-Navan section of the motorway could be as high as €40million.

Tara: Seat of the High Kings

Tara Hill was one of the most venerated religious spots in early Ireland and the seat of the High Kings from 300 until 1022. Despite its importance, the superficial visitor may be disappointed in what he sees.

At Tara there are no signs of regal past, nor impressive remains, only simple earthworks. But there are many megalithic monuments on the hill, and many historic and legendary events are connected to this place.

The most prominent and oldest monument on the hill is the Mound of the Hostages. On excavation, it proved to be a small passage grave dated around four thousand years ago.

Aligned to it is the so-called Banqueting Hall. This name originates in medieval literature, which wrongly identifies it as the place where thousands of guests enjoyed banquets and the feis, a pagan ceremony held at the beginning of November. This rectangular earthwork of 230x27m, Neolithic in date, could just have been the ceremonial entrance to the Hill on which all the major roads of ancient Ireland converged.

Between the Mound of Hostages and the Banqueting Hall is a ringfort with three banks known as the Rath of the Synods. In 1899 it was 'excavated' by the British Israelites who were searching for the Biblical Ark of the Covenant. They found only some 3rd century Roman coins, which had been hidden there a few days earlier so that they would not be disappointed. By a curious coincidence, the excavations made by Seán P.O'Riordáin fifty

years later produced genuine Roman material (a seal, a lock, glass, and pottery), dating from the 1st to the 3rd century.

On the Hill of Tara there are the remains of many other earthworks. To the South of the Mound of the Hostages, inside the bank and the ditch of the so-called Royal Enclosure, stand two linked ringforts known as the Royal Seat and the Forradh. The Forradh has two banks and two ditches around it. In its centre lies the Lia Fáil, the Stone of Destiny. It once stood near the Mound of the Hostages, and it is said to be the stone of the coronation of the kings of Ireland. It roared three times when the future king stood on it.

To the south of the Royal Enclosure are the remains of another circular earthwork known as the Fort of King Laoghaire, where the king is said to be buried fully armed and in an upright position in order to see his enemies coming. To the north of the Royal Enclosure there are other round earthworks, two of them known as Sloping Trenches and one Gráinne's Fort, named for King Cormac's daughter who was the heroine of the tragic love tale of Diarmuid and Gráinne.

Half a mile to the South of Tara Hill there is another hill-fort called Raith Meidbe (after the legendary goddess-queen Medb Lethderg). It is about 230m in diameter, part of its bank and ditch is well preserved near the road.

Paola Arosio and Diego Meozzi, Stone Pages
www.stonepages.com

Write for Ireland from Below!

Ireland from Below is all about collecting stories of what's going on in different communities around the island – rural communities, urban ones, different ethnic communities, community-building projects and more. We want your news, your stories, and your reflections on what you're doing, so we can share them with people in other communities.

We're happy to get press releases, longer news stories on local struggles, features covering what you're doing in a longer perspective, photos, events listings, and even little handwritten notes on paper aeroplanes... We have plenty of space for all kinds of material! If you don't feel up to writing a full article – or don't have the time – just send us the basic facts and your phone number and we can work with you to

put an article together. We don't want to turn all the different voices of community struggles into a single monotone – we'll do the very best we can to help your own voice come out in the published version.

We're particularly interested in constructive projects within communities and in the struggles of communities against marginalisation and destructive development. Things like the state decision-making processes, discussion of the issues, etc. need to be connected up to this basic question of "what we are doing about this in our community", which is what people can learn from in other communities faced by the same or other problems.

Contact us at: irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie
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Continued from page 13

ignored by RTE radio shows. But other, independent stations, like FM 106 have given excellent coverage.

As I reply, Chuck Feeney has pulled his funding of the Centre for Public Inquiry, due to Government pressure. Frank Connolly has been targeted personally and publicly. They had completed two wonderful reports on Trim Castle and the Rosspoint situation and it was possible that the Tara situation might have been the next report. One must wonder ...

IFB: It seems to be the argument by campaign groups that alternative routes – the Orange Route in particular (which avoids the Tara Valley, is about 3.5km shorter than the proposed route, and saves €60m on construction costs) – should still be considered. Yet the National Roads Authority insist that the alternative routes would have a 'greater impact on the environment'. Obviously you don't agree; why is that?

VS: Any route that is outside the archaeological complex and landscape of Tara is acceptable. The Orange route seems to make the most sense, as long as it is readjusted to pass outside Ringlestown Rath. But there must be a new public process to determine the best route, if the current route is blocked.

MNB: No, I do not agree and this depends on how important 'environment' is on the NRA's agenda. When the campaign met them in April 2004, when pushed on why this route, the reply was 'cost benefit analysis'. That reply was given by

the engineer. When pushed further, his reply on what this meant was that if the other option were chosen, the lead in roads etc. would have to be longer. People would spend more time in their cars. When pressed on what consideration was given to the archaeological heritage in the overall assessment, they admitted that it was very low.

Yes, the other route is shorter and cheaper. Why this option? That is the million dollar question – it is possible that they intend to bring another major road into the Blundelstown interchange (this is the closest point to the Hill).

The criteria used by MCC and the NRA would not be those used by the experts on Tara – Edel Bhreathnach, Joe Fenwick and Conor Newman.

IFB: If environmental and social factors are also part of the campaign, does this mean you support the Meath Multiway proposal?

VS: While making common sense suggestions, I am not supporting any specific solution, but simply asserting that a certain area of land is sacred.

MNB: The Meath Multiway is one of the visionary alternative options available to the Government. But as they want the revenue that comes from cars (VRT, tolls, petrol, etc) they are highly unlikely to opt for a public transport alternative. The pro-

vision of excellent public transport and seeing the TaraSkryne/Gabhra Valley as an area of high heritage amenity is the most screamingly obvious solution to the problem. But the Government has targeted Meath as the next area to be highly developed, moving Dublin people far away from their jobs, forcing them to commute (by road) to their jobs in Dublin and back again. This is part

of a far greater planning problem and a lack of imaginative planning for Ireland's future.

IFB: How does the Meath Multiway proposal differ from the Transport 21 national plan, the National Development Plan, 2000-2006 (NDP) and the Meath County Development Plan?

Meath Multiway is a properly thought out integrated transport system. It is doable, less expensive than the

motorway alternative and visionary. Transport 21 is aspirational, but as with so many Government strategies, I believe it will sink into oblivion. Meath County Development Plan and the NDP do not consider all the possible aspects of transports, rail, bus and car, the Multiway does address all these possible alternatives.

It also considers the future, the CO2 emissions, our present violations of the Kyoto Agreement and environmental considerations in general.

Also, the opening of the railway line has been lauded from 2000 when Noel Dempsey was heralding the re-opening of the Navan line by 2010 and that the planning stage would be over by 2005. Nothing has happened in the interim.

IFB: Do you think there is merit in Proinsias de Rossa's 'petition system' so that the views of communities are heard before a development is proposed?

MNB: There is a serious democratic deficit with the system as it stands at the moment. So I would agree with any alternative system that would admit the voice of the community.

IFB: Is the present system of consultation inadequate, then?

VS: Yes. Nobody knew what was happening until it was too late. But there is at work in Ireland a passive conspiracy of failure, operating right across the board. It is not just the authorities that are to blame.

The routes were proposed in 2000, but the issue did not receive national attention until late 2003. Non governmental organisations, academics, political parties, international bodies, and indeed all citizens, must accept responsibility for allowing things to go as far as they have, without putting up a good fight.

MNB: Yes, the system is completely inadequate. The Government has plans to fast track planning, indeed the Taoiseach famously declared on a visit to China this year that he wished that he could have infrastructure build as they do. This would eliminate the public completely.

Indeed, as the Public Hearing for the M3 was held in Drogheda and lasted for weeks, ordinary people were forced to take time off work and had no resources given to them while the powers that be had high powered barristers, etc to represent them and unlimited resources.

The EU's Agenda 21 says that there should be funds allocated to local communities to fight these causes but this has not happened in Ireland.

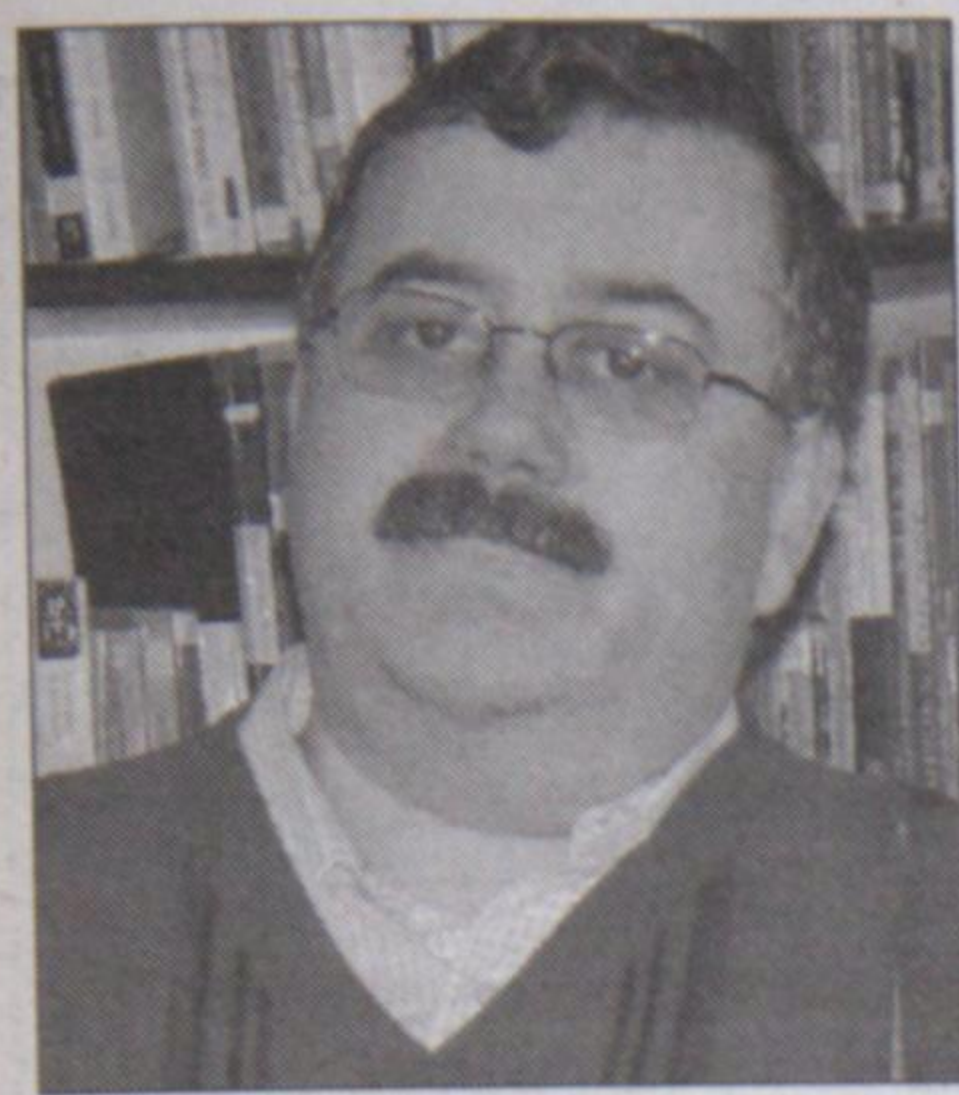
IFB: What do you think this campaign contributes to community empowerment?

VS: In a general way, it has brought together an incredible alliance of people and groups and that has been a very positive thing.

MNB: I think this campaign, at all levels, has been fundamentally instrumental in revitalising the concept of community opposition. The original group, fighting since 1999, were by and large ordinary citizens who would never have been involved in such a campaign before. I believe that they originally trusted the process and never believed that An Bord Pleanála would sanction the route. They were politicised as a result and learned how to become empowered.

Many other pressure groups have looked to the wider Tara campaign as a template as to how to fight a campaign. On a personal level, for example, the Media Department in my own University [Maynooth] has suggested to me that I should talk to the students to explain how the high profile was attained.

Features



In the second of his series exploring place

and community through his own village, historian Chris Lawlor looks at Dunlavin's early history

Aynia Brennan



The centre of Dunlavin, Co Wicklow, as it looks today

Dunlavin enters the Celtic age

One interpretation of the name 'Dún Liamhain' is the 'Fort of the Elms'. The modern Irish word for elm tree is 'Leamhan' and the natural vegetation of the area in question was once deciduous forest. The grassland of our modern agricultural landscape is actually secondary vegetation, introduced after the clearance of the native forests. No doubt there was an abundance of elm trees about in Celtic times, so it is quite possible that the Celts named the settlement of Dunlavin for these trees.

The Norman form of the name, 'Dunmaloen', could provide an answer, not alone to the question of the name itself, but also to the mystery of the third syllable within it. 'Dun' remains as fort and while we might take 'Loenn' as another corruption of "Liamhan" (which it may be), it may alternatively be a corruption of 'Leamhan' – elm tree. The middle part of the word is now 'Ma', so we now have 'Fort of the plain of the elms'.

However, Dunlavin is not on a plain! Or at least the modern village is not – but it only dates from 1689. If the original settlement of Dunlavin was on Tornant moat, the picture is somewhat altered. Viewed from atop the moat, the rolling landscape around could certainly be described as a plain. Traditionally, the view from the top of the moat extends over seven counties.

The case for Tornant as the original settlement of Dunlavin is strengthened by an entry in 'The list of Ballymore feoffes' (c.1260), which recorded that 'Yvo de Dunlovan holds a carucate of land, le Rathe of Dunlovan'. 'Iveston' (from 'Yvo's town') is a former name for Tornant and there is no doubt that this is named after 'Yvo de Dunlovan'. The reference to the rath of Dunlavin provides further evidence that Tornant moat is the site of the original dún of Dunlavin, or of Dunmaloen.

However, the fledgling settlement of Iveston existed in violent times (of which more later) and eventually it fell victim to continued unrest in the area and was abandoned.

The name "Tornant" means the 'Mound of the Nettles' (or the overgrown or disused mound). Obviously the old dún fell on hard times following the decline of the Anglo-Norman settlement. In 1326 Iveston was referred to as 'Iveston alias Tornant' at present. Hence, the 'Rathe of Dunlovan granted' to Yvo in 1260 had become an overgrown mound by 1326, a mere sixty-six years later. It is possible that the Normans erected a wooden ring-work castle atop the pre-existing dún. This was the dún from which Dunlavin got its name.

The Tornant/Dunlavin area was certainly settled long before the Norman occupation; indeed the 'Tornant stone', now in the national museum, indicates pre-Celtic settle-

ment. What is certain is that this whole area witnessed much bloodshed from Celtic times right through to the early modern period.

The word 'Celtic' is bandied about quite a bit these days. There is a revival of interest in Celtic all things Celtic, particularly Celtic mysticism and music, which has recently become fashionable. Everything from books through tapes and CDs to premium telephone call lines markets the 'Celtic' label. This notion of 'Celticism' views the Celtic period in Ireland as something of a 'golden age', the Celtic way of life as a simple and peaceful existence within a homogenous Celtic state. However, the reality was somewhat different.

Celtic Ireland was not a homogenous state. It was divided into about 150 'tuaths' (small kingdoms), each with its own king. These kings (Rí Tuathes) were protected by more powerful kings (Rí Rúires), who, in

turn, were protected by Rí Coicids (which translates roughly as 'provincial kings'). In return for protection, the kings received tribute (usually livestock) from their underkings. When the Southern Uí Neills (roughly, the Kings of Tara) styled themselves as high Kings of Ireland (Árd Rís), they demanded tribute from the kings of South Leinster.

Technically, the South Leinster kings were Rí Coicids, and should not have to pay tribute to anyone. The tribute was called the Bóruma or Bórama. This was never paid willingly, and many of the Uí Neill – and other – kings fell in battle in an attempt to levy it. In

Celtic times, the Dunlavin area held a very strategic position, almost on the border between North Leinster and South Leinster. Cattle raids and wars were commonplace, and perhaps this proximity to the border is one reason why the defences of Tornant were once so impressive... and Tornant was only one of a number of forts. Invading

North Leinster kings faced a tough task in west Wicklow!

One such king was Aedh Mac Ainmirech, 'High King' in the sixth century who invaded South Leinster when the local king, Brandubh, refused to pay the bórama.

The invasion route toward Brandubh's territory took Aedh's army through Hollywood Glen, along the old Belach Dhún Bolg. Legend and local oral tradition have it that Brandubh concealed many of his men in panniers on the backs of cattle which he was supposedly offering as tribute to Aedh, thus belatedly accepting his authority. This Trojan horse ploy ensured that Brandubh's army won the day. Brandubh's seat

of power was at Stratford (the old name for which was Rathbran – after Brandubh), and local oral tradition placed the battle in the 'Red Field' in Kilbaylet; whether this exact spot was at the centre of the battle is debatable, but the battle itself took place near the fortress of Dún Bolg – the present Brusselstown Ring on Spinan's Hill, an impressive hillfort site covering 320 acres.

These sites are quite close to Dunlavin, and – more importantly at the time – to Tornant. There was definitely settlement in the Tornant area in the pre-Norman period.

Given that Tornant was so close to Rathbran, it is probable that the inhabitants of Tornant supported Brandubh at Dún Bolg. Aedh Mac Ainmirech was killed in the battle and is reputedly buried in nearby Kilranalagh graveyard. Aedh's men fled in disarray, some of them probably retreating into the Tornant area, only to be attacked by the men of Tornant Moat, who would certainly have supported Brandubh

once they knew the outcome at Dún Bolg! Such was the nature of the fluid and ever-changing pattern of allegiances in Celtic Ireland. This battle of Dún Bolg was fought c.598. (There was also a later battle in the same area c.870.)

The peace that followed this battle was relative. Ireland entered the monastic 'golden age' ... although, given the continuance of wars, (some of them monastic wars) perhaps this term is a misnomer. Certainly many monasteries flourished, but violence was never very far away. However continued local disputes and cattle raiding paled into insignificance in the face of a new threat – Viking invaders.



Left: one of numerous small raths, dating from Celtic times, which survive in the Dunlavin region. This one is in Tynte Park demesne

News Feature/Opinion

Alliance for Choice and the battle to be heard

The right to choose has been denied for decades. Alliance for Choice is a group which speaks out for the rights of the thousands of women who must travel in secrecy and in silence. Níav Keating tells their story

The debate surrounding the provision of abortion services in Ireland has been both emotional and vital. Abortion is a dirty word in this country. However, we can no longer continue to ignore the fact that Irish women in crisis pregnancy situations travel to the United Kingdom and mainland Europe to terminate pregnancies. In the last 25 years, we have held four referendums on abortion. Despite the fact that abortion was made a criminal offence in Ireland one hundred and forty four years ago, abortion is very much a reality for women in our country. Whether you know it or not, most of us know someone who has had an abortion – it could be your friend, your mother, your sister, your daughter or a work colleague. Seventeen women a day leave Ireland and travel to the United Kingdom to terminate a pregnancy. Most of them do this shrouded in a cloak of secrecy and shame.

The Republic of Ireland has one of the most archaic abortion laws in Europe. At present abortion may only be performed where continuation of the pregnancy poses a "real and substantial" risk to a pregnant woman's life. The Irish government denies the option of abortion to victims of rape and to women who have suffered incest or sexual abuse.

The 'Abortion Information Act 1995' severely restricts Irish people's access to information about abortion services abroad. The Act makes it illegal for a doctor to "refer" a patient to abortion services abroad, or make an appointment with an abortion clinic on behalf of a pregnant woman, even if her health is at risk. This has serious implications for the protection of women's welfare when they are faced with a crisis pregnancy. Under the terms of the Act, information can only be given in the context of face-to-face counselling. Non-directive counselling (which provides women with information about all their options – adoption, abortion and parenting) is only offered by the Irish Family Planning Association, the Dublin Well Woman Clinic and One Family. Counselling services in Ireland are not regulated, meaning any individual or group can establish a counselling service and as such, clinics which are aligned with anti-choice groups have harassed and intimidated women who attended these clinics requesting information on abortion.



body
bold • open • decisive • youth

Cura, a pregnancy counselling agency which was established by the Catholic Church, receives E600,000 a year in funding from the Crisis Pregnancy Agency. While Cura will not provide women with information about abortion providers, it is obliged to give women information about organisations that will, such as the Irish Family Planning Association. In the summer of 2005 Catholic Bishops instructed Cura not to distribute the Crisis Pregnancy Agency's 'Positive Options' leaflet to women who requested information about abortion services.

Away from the lawyers, politicians and clergy, ordinary people are

fighting Ireland's abortion legislation. Alliance for Choice is a diverse group of pro-choice activists that are campaigning for free, safe and legal abortion services to be introduced in Ireland. They are the radical voice of the pro-choice movement in Ireland.

Alliance for Choice was formed from the Alliance for a No Vote, a group who campaigned against the Abortion Referendum in March 2002. Since the formation of Alliance for Choice we have engaged in a wide range of pro-choice activities. In September 2003, in order to mark the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Eight Amendment Referendum, Alliance for Choice launched a pamphlet entitled '20 years since the 8th Amendment'. This is a collection of short articles written by pro-choice activists reflecting on the 1983 campaign against the referendum and activities and campaigns since then. At the

Summary of Alliance for Choice's 5-point policy statement

- Abortion must be decriminalised. In no circumstances is it appropriate to criminalise women who terminate or attempt to terminate their own pregnancies.
- Abortion is a health issue which should be regulated by health guidelines not constitutional provisions.
- Article 40.3.3, equating the life of the unborn with the life of the pregnant woman, should be removed in full.
- Women, faced with unwanted or problematic pregnancies, should be able to access free, safe and legal abortion services within the Irish State.

ABORTION: THE FACTS:

- Statistics from the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) from 2000 illustrate how almost 90% of all abortions in England and Wales took place in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (154,908).
- For Irish women, abortions after 12 weeks are very common because of the many obstacles they face.
- A surgical abortion (up to 14 weeks) costs between E650 and E750. In addition, women also have to cover the cost of travelling by plane or by ferry as well as accommodation costs. The overall cost is approximately E1,000.

ABORTION AND THE LAW: A HISTORY

Abortion was declared illegal under the Offences against the Persons Act in 1861.

In 1983, Article 40.3.3 of the Irish Constitution was amended as follows – 'The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right'.

In 1992, under the terms of the X case, where a pregnant 14 year old rape victim was prevented from leaving Ireland to have an abortion, the Supreme Court ruled that if there was a real and substantial risk of suicide, a termination could take place in Ireland.

In 1992, two referenda were passed. Article 40.3.3 was amended to allow women the right to travel and the right to information about abortion services outside the state. Successive Irish governments have never legislated for the terms of the X case.

In March 2002, the government's attempts to reverse the X case ruling were defeated.

The launch of BODY at the Dáil in mid-December. BODY (Bold, open, decisive youth) is an open campaign for safe and legal abortion services in Ireland

press conference to publicly launch the pamphlet, Youth Defence (a staunchly right-wing Christian anti-abortion group) attempted to disrupt the conference.

In November 2003, Alliance for Choice held a pot-banging protest outside the Dáil. To

mark International Women's Day, in March 2004, we challenged the 1995 Information Act on the steps of Department of Justice in Dublin and at a ceremony to mark the 21st anniversary of the Rape Crisis Centre attended by former Minister of Health, Micheal Martin, in Cork. We publicly distributed leaflets that contained the names, addresses and telephone numbers of clinics in Britain and Europe. Activists from the Cork Women's Right to Choose Group demonstrated outside the EU Health Ministers meeting in Cork City in May 2004.

This year has marked a departure for the Pro-Choice movement. Instead of reacting to various referendums, the Irish Family Planning Association has proactively launched a major campaign to secure safe and legal abortion services in Ireland. The 'Safe and Legal' campaign initiated by the IFPA has the support of Alliance for Choice, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, the National Women's Council of Ireland, Well Woman, One Family and the Women's Human Rights Alliance.

This is not without its difficulties, however, as press conferences organised by pro-choice groups and family planning clinics are constantly targeted by anti-choice activists. Women attending the IFPA clinic on Sunday afternoon are often harassed by activists from Youth Defence. Activists across the world often engage in clinic defence actions. I have no doubt that when abortion services are legal in this country, it will be necessary to protect the employees of clinics and the women attending these clinics.

As an anarchist and a feminist, I

strongly believe in a woman's right to choose. Many of my close personal friends have made that long, lonely journey across the Irish Sea. The continuing illegality of abortion in Ireland will not change the fact that women choose to terminate a pregnancy. The legal situation just places more stress and strain on women in an already stressful situation.

The fight for reproductive rights will be a long and arduous battle. Even in 2005 the intrusion of the Catholic Church into the lives of Irish men and women was never more evident when it was announced that trials of a lung cancer drug, Tarceva, would not take place in two Dublin hospitals. The Mater hospital and St. Vincent's refused to allow the drug trials as the treatment required women to use contraception. The use of the pill was not in keeping with the hospital's principles and ethos. While Tarceva does not cure cancer, it can allow patients a chance to extend their life by several months.

We have to question how relevant these conservative views are in modern Ireland, which across the board has become more secularised. Do we still want the views of the Church to determine our health and lifespan due to their moral standpoints, which may be very different from our own?

A recent poll conducted by the Irish Examiner/Landsdowne revealed that Irish voters aged under 35 are overwhelmingly in favour of legalising abortion. The choice to have an abortion is a difficult and emotional decision for any woman to make and women should be free to make this decision without the intrusion of the Irish State and Catholic Church.

If you are in a crisis pregnancy situation, you should consider all the options available to you. The IFPA offer non-directive counselling sessions. This means that they will talk openly about all the options available to you – adoption, abortion and parenting.

Irish Family Planning Association

Centres located in Cork, Dublin, Galway and Limerick.

Tel: 1850 495051

Website: www.ifpa.ie

For more information about Alliance for Choice contact:

allianceforchoice@yahoo.com

Features

Ireland From Below: What are "sex workers" anyway? And who takes these jobs?

Ana Lopes: A sex worker is a person who receives money or goods in exchange for sexual services and consciously defines those activities as income generating. This applies irrespective of their gender and whether they do this on a full, part time or occasional basis. Implied in this is the person's capability to negotiate with and reject specific clients or acts on an individual basis.

Sex workers of all genders and sectors of the industry are welcome to join the union. At the moment, we represent workers in prostitution (indoors and outdoors), exotic dancers (including strip-tease, table dancing and lap dancing), models, actors and phone sex operators.

They come from all walks of life. Some have no formal qualifications, others have degrees and dropped out of other successful careers to work in the sex industry. Some love what they do and others hate what they do – the vast majority just gets on with it, as in any other job. One thing is certain – we all do it for the money, so that we can pay the bills at the end of the month, just like everybody else in all other jobs... It's a job! Who takes these jobs? Those who want to earn some money!

IFB: Where did the idea of a sex workers' union come from?

AL: I was working in the industry myself as a phone sex operator. I wanted to do research in this area because I found it so interesting and rich. I started by conducting pilot interviews in which I asked people who worked in the industry what they thought was necessary to study. But what they told me

was that what was needed was not further study, but action. They were very disillusioned with the conditions they faced in their work lives and they felt they didn't have a platform from which they could demand their rights or improve their situation. So, rather than a topic of study, I found a call for action...

IFB: Tell me about your first march.

AL: In the year 2000, we were a small group of sex workers and some students who attended my university. We met regularly but we were very informal. We decided that our first street action would take place on International Women's Day. We organised a parade through the streets of Soho. We came out in flamboyant costumes, accompanied by a students' samba band. We distributed leaflets about our demand for labour rights. This was our way to say we are not ashamed of ourselves or of our work.

IFB: What kind of response did you

Ana Lopes of the International Union of Sex Workers visited Dublin recently. She spoke to Laurence Cox about her experiences as a union organiser



Sex workers of the world unite

get from other sex workers when you asked them to join a union?

AL: There is no tradition of trade union activism in this industry at all. So many people are not aware of the benefits of joining a union. Many people don't know what a union is for. So the process of developing a membership has been slow and difficult. Having said that, many sex workers have read about the union in newspapers and have called to ask for joining forms...

IFB: How did the owners and the pimps respond?

AL: Some responded in a very negative way, as you would expect... some of us even received anonymous threats! But others have been on our side. The fact is that many owners and managers just want to run a decent business – they are not

all evil people. It is in those owners' interest to be on board with labour rights and the union.

IFB: How easy is it for people to join a union if they're illegal or if they don't want to give their real name?

AL: Our joining form is really basic. We don't ask and we don't need to know any one's migration status, where they come from and exactly what they do. We do need to have a name and an address (so we can send out membership cards and meeting calls) but many people choose to give us their working name and the address of their local project, their working flat or whatever. That is fine. And of course joining the union may be a stepping stone for those who want to legalise their situation...

IFB: Do you think unionisation has

really made a difference?

AL: Yes, I do. It has made a difference in terms of working conditions in some (few) places, where we managed to sign recognition agreements with owners. The first requirement for this to happen is that the establishments must be legal. That is, we can unionise table dancing clubs but not "flats" or brothels (which are illegal). That's one of the arguments for our campaign for the decriminalization of prostitution...

But more than that, I think unionisation has made a difference, in the sense that it has helped establishing sex work as legitimate work and hence diminishing the stigma against sex workers. A lot is still to be done, but unionising and conquering a place alongside other

workers in the trades union movement has been a good start.

IFB: Tell me about training the police!

AL: That was a good one. London's Met police have several Independent Advisory Groups. It was through one of this groups (the LGBT one) that we arranged to organise a training day for the police, in order to make them aware of issues that have to do with the sex industry and how the police have an impact on the well-being and quality of lives of many sex workers. It was a truly inspiring and empowering experience: there was a room full with 40 or 50 police officers and a small group of sex workers teaching them impor-

tant things. It was the reverse of the usual dynamics of power and it was a true ego boosting experience for some of us. The problem is that one swallow doesn't make a summer... The Met should be running training for every single officer who is likely to deal with sex workers – with our help, of

'Sex workers have always fought for their rights collectively. Sex workers came together to build their own cemetery in India, because they couldn't be buried in the 'normal' cemeteries'

course!

IFB: Could you say a bit more about the broader international movement?

AL: Sex workers have always fought for their rights collectively. There are records of a group of sex workers coming together and building their own cemetery in India, because they couldn't be buried in the "normal" cemeteries... Sex worker organisations sprung up in the 1970's both in Europe and in the US. Nowadays there is a vast network of organisations and individual sex worker activists, covering all regions of the world. We keep in touch through the internet and discussion lists. We participate in major international events, such as the International HIV/AIDS Conferences and organise our own regional events, such as the European Conference on Migration, Labour and Human Rights, held in Brussels last October.

IFB: What are you hoping for from your Irish visit?

AL: I hope to share the experience of unionisation we're having in the UK. This will hopefully draw together potential allies, create a networking opportunity and act as a catalyst for sex worker mobilization in Ireland. Who knows if sex workers, with a little help from other activists or project workers, won't soon demand their place alongside other workers in the Irish trade union movement?

For more information contact the International Union of Sex Workers at: contact@iusw.org or email analopesius@hotmail.com

News Features

Greyhounds make great pets

Greyhound rescue centres are now commonplace in the country, reports Mary Fox

For many years now, in parts of Europe as well as North America, ex-racing greyhounds have been increasingly and successfully promoted as pets. Once their racing days are over and they are no longer on an "athlete's" training and feeding program, greyhounds have been found to quickly and easily settle down to become quiet, affectionate household pets.

It is ironic then that in Ireland, where more greyhounds – approximately 22,000 – are born every year than any other country in the world except for the US, greyhounds do not enjoy such a positive image.

Often thought of as vicious and high strung, "not like other dogs", and unsuitable for living in a home, greyhounds have become much-maligned and easily disposable dogs. Every year, at least 13,800 greyhounds disappear, most of them put to sleep by the age of five, their prime racing years over.

This practice is so universal that most people would be hard put to consider when they last saw an old greyhound. Some greyhounds are sold on to breeders and trainers in other countries, the most unfortunate of them going to race tracks in Spain, where the well-documented conditions for greyhounds are notorious.

But a few hundred lucky greyhounds in Ireland every year end up in dog rescues across the country. Some are picked up by rescues at the county pounds, where they have been surrendered to the pound by their owners. Others are given to rescues by trainers and owners, who do not wish to see a successful racer get callously put to sleep. Some are found wandering, often in very poor condition, having been lost or, more often, abandoned by their owners. And some, like Fionn, are luckier still (see news story on page 2).

Besides general rescues, which take in all breeds of dogs, there are some rescues that specialise in greyhounds and related breeds, or seem to end up with greyhounds on a regular basis. Due to the abuse many of these dogs experience before being taken in, however, many rescues are reluctant to re-home the dogs too quickly, and often a questionnaire, references and home check are part of the adoption process.

Some rescues refuse to re-home dogs in Ireland at all, fearful they might sooner or later end up in the wrong hands again, as greyhounds and lurchers (dogs which are half-greyhound) can at times be the target of thieves. For those who do re-home, however, it is as difficult to find the right homes to begin with as it is for potential owners to get past the nega-



Lewis and Claudia Mitchell with Lily at the Wag and Bone Show in London where the greyhound, which had been in Mary Fox's care for 10 weeks, won third place for Best Rescue Dog

tive image of greyhounds impressed upon them by family and friends.

For all rescues involved, there is no end to the numbers of greyhounds coming into rescue, and to many it is nothing less than a conveyor belt of greyhounds: for every one adopted, there are a dozen more waiting in the wings to come in and take that one space. Owners and trainers anxious to get rid of a poor racer are often asked to hold on to a dog until space becomes available, which often is not practical, and a young healthy dog then gets put to sleep. The sad fact is that rescues can manage only to take in a small number of the thousands of greyhounds which are out there.

Perhaps the largest and yet least known of all the rescues is Avalon in County Galway, a greyhound sanctuary in the truest sense of the word, run by the German organisation Pro Animale. In a remote location south of Portumna, up to 90 greyhounds and lurchers live quite comfortably in a well-secured environment, with plenty of space and the very best of care.

These dogs are most often re-homed to Germany, where greyhounds are considered excellent family pets.

Next would be PAWS in Sallins, County Kildare. Although they have a range of rescue dogs available, their rescued greyhounds and lurchers number up to 50 at a time. With their tattooed greyhounds supported by the Bord na gCon (the Irish Greyhound Board), these dogs are homed to a range of countries in Europe, though there has been very limited interest in Irish adoptions.

Limerick Animal Welfare (LAW) has been a strong advocate of greyhound welfare for many years, and almost always have a number of greyhounds in their care. Many of their dogs are picked up wandering, while others are turned in by owner/trainers and others still are purchased at the Limerick Greyhound Sales. With a website that has a special section just for greyhounds, LAW presents itself as an avid activist organisation when it comes to greyhound concerns. These concerns range from transport issues to cruelty in Spain to basic welfare issues with the Irish Greyhound

Board. LAW has also created ties with Greyhound Friends, a rescue in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, and formed the AmerEuro Greyhound Alliance. Together they arrange for some of the greyhounds and lurchers rescued by LAW to fly to Boston several times a year to be re-homed in the US.

Tipperary Friends of Animals SPCA takes in a range of dogs, but, being in the heart of Tipperary and not far from Thurles racetrack, often gets calls about greyhounds. From picking up dogs left to die in the bog to taking in dogs like Fionn and others still in road traffic accidents or otherwise injured, Tipperary does more than the usual amount of greyhound rescue.

The Orchard Sanctuary in County Offaly, near the Tipperary border, also takes in a small number of greyhounds and sometimes other sighthounds, but differs from the other rescues in that the dogs are raised in a home environment. Often taking in those in poor or even worse condition, the dogs are brought back to health and learn their individual names, are housebroken, socialised and receive general training.

Kerry Greyhound Homefinders in Beaufort, County Kerry also always has a small number of greyhounds available for adoption. Started only three years ago, greyhounds from KGH have found homes throughout Europe and the US. KGH has been very active in promoting them as generally child-friendly pets.

Bord na gCon also has about 100 ex-racers in kennels, available for re-homing through their Greyhounds as Pets Trust. Formerly the Retired Greyhound Trust and with an annual budget of about €250,000, in 2005 about 400 dogs have been supported by them. Some have been re-homed in Ireland and in Britain, some go to France, Belgium and Germany. A launch to promote their greyhounds-as-pets campaign is planned for February 2006.

The relationship between Bord na gCon and the rescue community varies, and where some greyhound rescuers refuse all and any support from them, others accept limited support while still others seek complete support. Greyhound welfare was overlooked by Bord na gCon for many years.

There is a re-homing pilot program at Dundalk Stadium for ex-racers. Run by Jenny Ní Breathnach, it relies on public and private donations. There is a hope that it will be duplicated at other tracks. And that this will convince trainers and owners to attempt to re-home their dogs rather than simply putting them down.

Anyone looking to adopt a greyhound does not have to work hard. The top pet website in Ireland, www.irishanimals.ie, has a special section on greyhounds as pets, as well as a separate listing for all greyhounds and lurchers available for adoption. With most of the rescues mentioned

here participating, and a photo and description available for each dog as well as contact information, it has turned out to be a one-stop greyhound viewing place. Even rescues that do not normally have greyhounds can post them on this separate greyhound site, which enjoys about 1300 views every month, and has resulted in greyhound adoptions both within and outside of Ireland.

Greyhound rescues have a long way to go in Ireland today, mostly convincing potential dog owners they make great pets. Within the past year, however, there has been some progress in that direction. A network of owners and interested people have formed a group simply called Rescued-Greyhound Owners, with the purpose of promoting greyhounds as pets, and helping rescues with transport needs or finding temporary space for the dogs.

A stray injured greyhound taken into rescue in County Mayo, for example, once finished at the vet's and wearing an awkward cast, had nowhere to go. Arrangements were made for a chain of drivers to take the dog from the Mayo rescue to another rescue in the far south. This has since been repeated several times, in all sorts of directions, even with rides to Britain.

Despite Bord na gCon planning to tighten up its rules so that registered owners of stray greyhounds will be made accountable for them, the effects of such changes will probably not be realised for years. The problem of finding responsible Irish homes for Irish greyhounds remains the greatest challenge.

• **Mary Fox** is a researcher by profession. She cares for and re-homes ex-racing greyhounds and is the convener for Rescued-Greyhound Owners

Ireland From Below

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... is one of the questions people always ask us.

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Features

Dying for a drink

A general strike forced the reversal of water privatisation in Bolivia's El Alto, writes Daniel Finn

Bolivian activist Julian Perez had a message for the people of Ireland when he spoke in Dublin last month: "You must take account of our unhappy experience and make sure that water stays in public hands."

Perez described the struggle against water privatisation in his native country, where the role of foreign companies in the supply of water has provoked massive popular opposition. A general strike in the city of El Alto earlier this year put pressure on the government to restore water to public ownership.

According to Perez, the motivation behind the protests was simple:

nine months to afford the charge.

Perez says the people of El Alto came to one conclusion: "This company was sucking our blood."

The *Fejuve*, a federation of neighbourhood committees, assumed the leadership of the movement against Suez. They lobbied the government to cancel the contract. After six months of inconclusive negotiations, the *Fejuve* decided to call a general strike in El Alto for January 10th 2005.

The president of Bolivia, Carlos Mesa, went on national television to denounce the organisers of the strike as "extremists", and predicted that it would be a failure. The following day, the city was brought to a standstill. According to Perez: "That was the people of El Alto's answer to the President."

After two days of unrest, and a march of 500,000 people to the capital La Paz, the government announced that it would annul the contract and restore the water supply to public control. But it quickly faced opposition from Suez and its international backers.

Suez demanded payment for all of the anticipated profits it would have made over the contract's 30-year duration – the princely sum of \$150m. When the government offered to buy

out its shares instead, Suez demanded an identical payment of \$150m.

The World Bank and the IMF have supported the company's demands, along with a number of European governments – Germany, Spain and Switzerland. Bolivia has been warned that foreign loans may be cancelled, and Suez has threatened to launch a multi-million lawsuit.

The *Fejuve* has proposed that Suez receive compensation – but only for the money it invested in the water network. They estimate that \$10m was spent by Suez on improving services. Suez claims that the figure is much higher, but is refusing to allow an independent audit that would establish the truth of the matter.

Perez says that the movement in El Alto will stick by its key demand: "The new company will have to be public and social ... we are not against all private capital per se, but the experiences we have had of water privatisation have been failures."

He insists that some services should always be kept out of the private sector: "It's not right that water should be a profit-making enterprise."



Tom Kruse

'This company was sucking our blood ... It's not right that water should be a profit-making enterprise'

"Water, in Ireland or in Bolivia, is a human resource and we have the right of access to it."

Water and sewerage services were privatised in El Alto in 1997, after pressure from the World Bank. The contract was granted to the

French multinational Suez. At the time, the Bolivian government assured the citizens of El Alto that foreign capital was needed to improve services for poor areas.

But Perez insists that these promises were hollow: "They did not fulfill the terms of the contract." Seven years after the contract was signed, 208,000 households were still not connected, out of a total population of 800,000.

The cost of being connected to the water and sewerage grid had risen steeply in the meantime, reaching \$445. A resident earning the average salary would have had to work for



Polyp's (aka Paul Fitzgerald) *Big Bad World*: cartoon molotovs in the face of corporate rule is published by New Internationalist Publications, www.newint.org; cartoons described by John Pilger as 'in the finest traditions of political cartoonists. He is incisive, brilliantly ironic and a bit ruthless. We need more like him.' And with that last comment, we agree: send your cartoons to us: www.Irelandfrombelow.ie

ISSUE TWO – CONTRIBUTIONS

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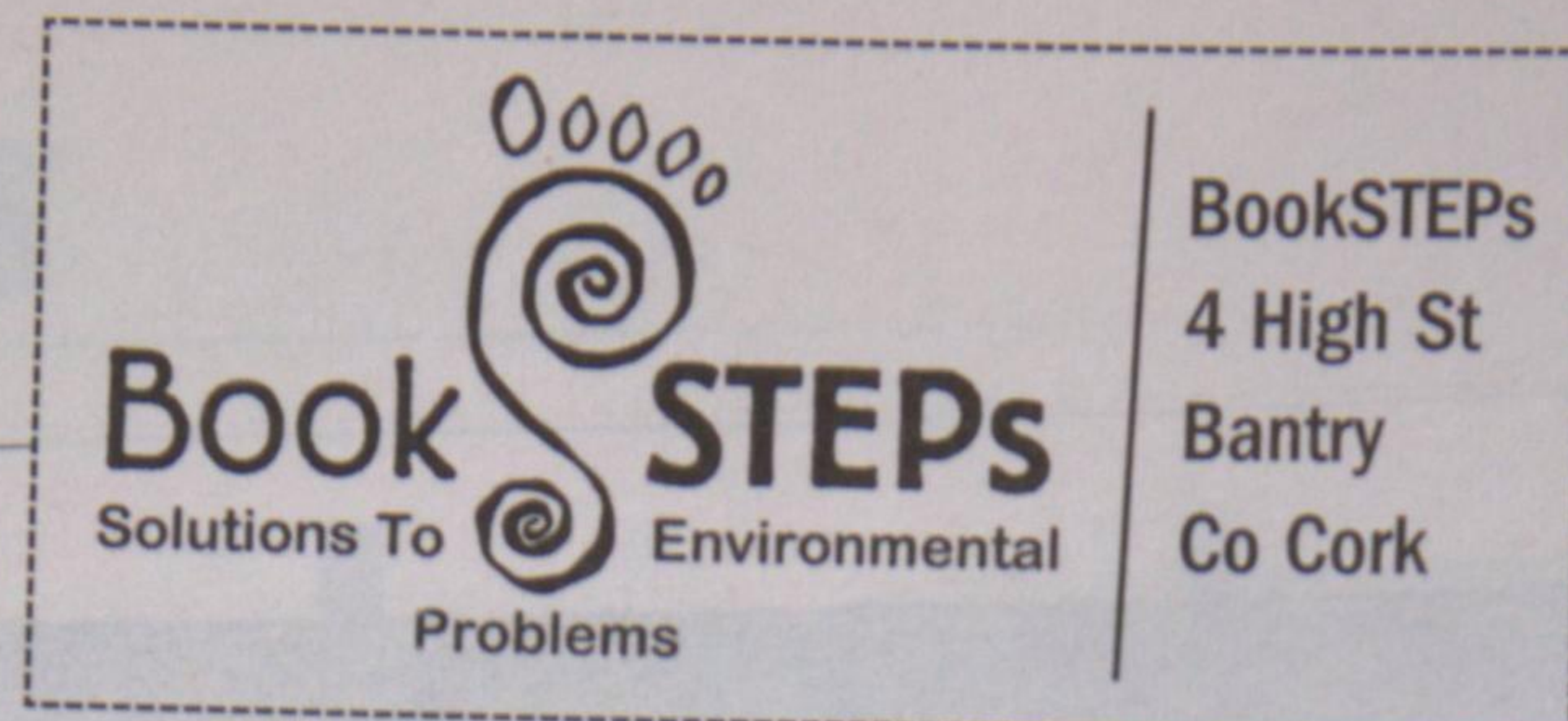
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Reviews



Yet more triumph over adversity

Teacher Man, Frank McCourt, Fourth Estate Review by Michael Wagstaff

Frank McCourt is compulsively readable. He creates characters that you care about. He makes you laugh out loud, he brings tears to your eyes. At the end of *Angela's Ashes*, his masterpiece of ignorant, bigoted poverty-stricken 1930s and 1940s Limerick, you felt you had collected a new range of, if not friends, then at least good acquaintances that you were keen to keep up with. I would still like to hear how Billy Campbell got on, and whatever happened to Mike Molloy.

McCourt's third book, *Teacher Man*, is an account of the 30 years he spent teaching in state schools in New York from the late 1950s after his time on the docks. Obviously those of us who have read *Angela's Ashes* and *Tis*, the first memoir of his time in the United States, will already have some idea about all this but in *Teacher Man* he spells out the highs and lows and weaves in a bit of his own personal history in between.

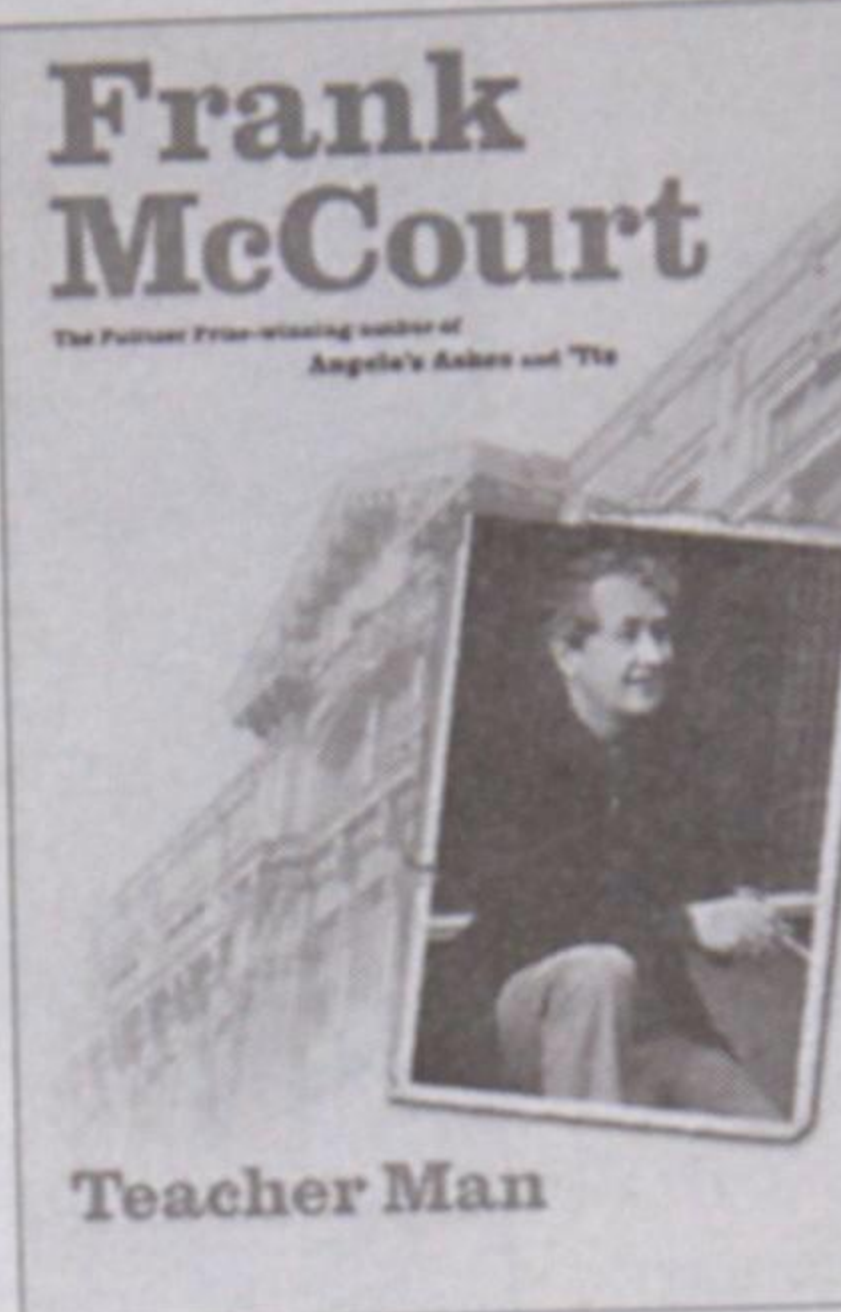
But I have to admit that the book had a strange effect on me. Though ostensibly another account of triumph over adversity (it reads a bit like a print version of *Rocky III* at times) with eloquent lessons teaching creative writing at Stuyvesant High School in New York, it's "the bits in between" that I don't understand, as Kevin Kline used to say in *A*

Fish Called Wanda, and would like to have known more about.

More disturbing is the undertow of incipient panic at the possibility of rejection that seems to pop up all over the place like a bad penny. He makes a point of telling us again and again that his students say "I like your lessons Mr McCourt" so that's all right then, and if there is a "but" we can live with that because they have paid some kind of emotional subscription, first. When gay Brian pipes up that he doesn't see what doing recipes has got to with creative English and he's out of here, good old James is quick to snap in with, "If you don't like it get a transfer," and anyway Brian's bark is worse than his bite as he comes around in the end, bringing his oboe along to the musical cook-in in the park.

Perhaps it's just me but I sense that sitting in the wings beyond all this hail-fellow-well-met liberalism is the brutal priesthood still kicking in its two penny worth. Still out of control.

This is, of course, in one sense part of the established oeuvre: public humiliation (especially at the hands of women) as social events unravel into anger and shame because of his thin-skinned fragility. Clearly it is an intended effect, for instance, in *Tis* when he goes back to Ireland decked out in his GI uniform to impress the Limerick girls and still gets blown out of the water; in *Teacher Man* a set-piece McCourt episode occurs over a woman called



I sense that sitting in the wings beyond all this hail-fellow-well-met liberalism is the brutal priesthood still kicking in its two penny worth. Still out of control

June, whom he turns his back on in a compulsively defensive way after another perceived display of disrespect.

There are also a fair few other "bits in between", especially in relation to his former wife, but the reader is invariably left gasping for clues as to what it all means, like a goldfish that's just been kicked out of its bowl.

The reason for this must be partly because McCourt is writing a memoir, not a novel, and has to write in more measured terms than would a writer feeding off his own experiences in a fictional vehicle. (A lawyer for the ex-wife of the late Joseph Heller, author of *Catch 22*, once bitterly described his third novel, *Good as Gold*, as "The Mein Kampf of marriage.") But his reticence seems to be more deep seated

than that. His description of his time "in therapy" at the behest of his wife is gnomic and spare. Woody Allenesque it is not.

His sojourn at Trinity College Dublin, ostensibly doing a postgraduate thesis on "Irish-American literary relations, 1889-1911" as his marriage begins to slide, is another case in point. His ambitions to "become a Dubliner" come to nought, he berates himself for worshipping false gods, envies the ducks their carefree life, has an affair: "I met a woman, a Protestant, and we went to bed. She fell in love with me and I don't know why," and never even mentions Limerick, let alone goes there.

At times like this you feel him rising to the surface again, sloughing off the reassuring fantasies of *Rocky III* or *Rocky* anything, even as we still cheer him on for his heroics in *Angela's Ashes*.

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Burning issue

Laurence Cox reviews a book that documents the Galway anti-incineration campaign

Liam Leonard's book on Galway for a Safe Environment (GSE) is certainly an important contribution to the academic literature on Irish environmentalism. For activists, it offers a wealth of information, but the format will put many people off.

The book reads suspiciously like a lightly edited PhD thesis, and illustrates why even academic publishers are wary of such things. A lot of energy is expended on engaging with a very narrow spectrum of "the literature", Leonard does some interesting things with this, but for an audience (Irish social movement researchers) which almost certainly numbers a few dozen people at most.

However, the political value in having this book now – just after the EPA's approval of the Ringaskiddy and Carranstown incinerators – cannot be denied. Particularly relevant is the author's documentation of GSE's attempts to build broader networks and their successes and failures in this respect.

From a community perspective, the

author's arguments for the key role of middle-class professionals in GSE (and Irish movements generally) is challenging. However, since his theoretical framework starts from the importance of movement elites and their interaction with the state – and his methods privileged academic, party-political and well-networked activists (pp. 12 – 13) there is a certain circularity to this.

Professionals can be helpful, but only where there is a movement for them to help.

This top-down approach is highlighted by the author's comparative lack of attention to those Irish authors (notably Hilary Tovey, Robert Allen, Tomás Jones and Michael Murray) who have taken the opposite tack, in highlighting the community roots of environmental protest and developing methods for researching it.

Nevertheless, there are all too few books taking contemporary environmental conflicts seriously and with this level of detail, and the second and third volumes in the series (on environmental disputes in Ireland and on environmental policy) should be worth reading.

Liam Leonard, Politics Inflamed: GSE and the campaign against incineration in Ireland. Greenhouse. Available via www.choicepublishing.ie (tel 041-9841551)

What's the story?

Liam Leonard explains the issues behind his book Politics Inflamed

Following the recent announcement by the EPA that licenses had been granted for incinerators in Cork and Meath, I would feel that a review of community campaigns against incineration is both timely and necessary. My book *Politics Inflamed* focuses primarily on the campaign of Galway for a Safe Environment (GSE), but also looks at events in Cork and Meath. The book uses social movement theory to provide an analysis of how GSE mobilised internal resources such as leadership and expertise as well as the external resource of political opportunity structure.

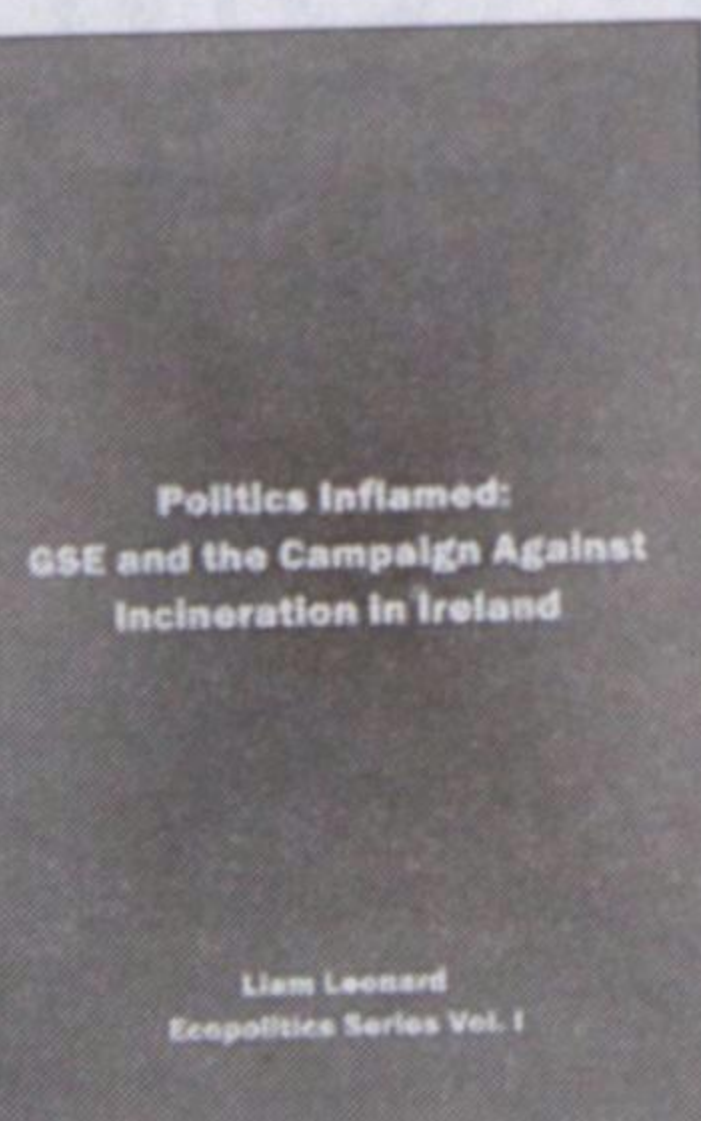
It also examines the manner in which GSE framed the key issues which I divide into three main frames: Moving beyond NIMBYism*; Highlighting of Health Risks; Challenging Democratic Deficit. In so doing, I have attempted to address the question posed by the sociologist Hilary Tovey who asks "when does a movement become a campaign".

An answer is provided by GSE's campaign, which emerged from its NIMBYist inception to embrace wider political issues such as promoting "zero waste" nationally and globally and attempting to influence the 2002 general election, as most parties came to alter their waste management manifestos.

Ultimately, GSE's campaign declined in the wake of the FF/PD government being returned to power. However, no license for an incinerator has been issued for Galway, and the demands of electoral politics which GSE exploited in a more extensive manner than their Cork and Meath counterparts may be a factor in this.

In other words, GSE's campaign may have made more of the political opportunity of the 2002 general election than other campaigns in a way which resonated at the centre of the political establishment, as electoral concerns are shown to supersede local alliances or policy frameworks in the fragmented coalition politics which characterises the Irish electoral system."

*NIMBY = not in my backyard



Reviews



Pushers Out:
The inside story
of Dublin's anti-
drugs movement
By Andre Lyder
Trafford
Publishing

Walk five minutes from O'Connell St, or five minutes from Christ Church Cathedral, and you will find yourself in a very different world from that depicted in the tourist brochures. Pushers Out tells the story of how people living in the North and South inner cities (and later the suburbs, and some small towns) organised to save their communities from heroin. Not relying on the state to solve their problems, they started to organise themselves. One such working class organisation was Coalition of Communities Against Drugs (COCAD).

The campaigns began with meetings in local area called by residents concerned about the open dealing of heroin and all that came with that – hallways and greens were littered with dirty syringes, and those who overdosed lay where they fell.

Andre Lyder lived in the south of the city. A member of a small socialist party and interested in community politics, he joined the anti-drug group COCAD in 1992. His account of the Dublin anti-drug movement doesn't pretend to be objective and is all the better for it. He describes the complexity and tensions within both of the campaigns, and while I would not agree with all his conclusions he has done a great service in dealing with many difficult issues in a clear and frank manner.

There were two campaigns against drug use in Dublin. The, first known as the "Concerned Parents against Drugs", began in 1983. It was superseded in many parts of Dublin in 1996 by COCAD.

The Irish ruling class showed utter contempt for the poor inner city areas of Dublin. Charles

Haughey famously bought shirts worth five grand each and stole cobblestones from Dublin streets to pave the drive at his home; meanwhile areas of the city were suffering over 80% unemployment. An epidemic was ravaging certain parts of the city, destroying lives, families and communities and the ruling elite were happy to ignore it.

Lyder argues these areas always had a tradition of using alcohol as an escape from grinding poverty, such that the way was paved for heroin.

The campaigns began with meetings in local area called by residents concerned about the open dealing of heroin and all that came with that – hallways and greens were littered with dirty syringes, and those who overdosed lay where they fell.

A spectrum of strategies were adopted to deal with the problem. Mass meetings would march to a suspected dealer's house and tell him or her to get out of the area. Meetings would forcefully evict suspected deal-

Lyder has done us a great service in documenting an important moment of working class history, a moment when the people of Dublin organised themselves and took back control of their communities

ers, making a line of people to remove the furniture so that no one person could be charged with any offence. Smaller groups of people (often from other areas to limit the possibility of revenge attacks) would call to the houses of suspected dealers and tell them they would have to leave. Posters with the photographs and addresses of dealers would be posted around the

area locally. The communities would mount permanent vigil at the entry to their estates, preventing any suspected dealer or addict from outside the area from entry. These pickets were manned day and night and became a permanent fixture of inner city street life.

Lyder also addresses two of the most contentious features of the anti-drug campaigns,

namely IRA involvement and the extent to which physical violence was an aspect of the campaigns.

Heroin is big business, and those standing in the way of that business can be putting themselves in considerable danger. Des Whelan, an anti drug activist, was stabbed to death, as was the fourteen year old son of another activist; others were shot at but survived. Lyder argued that while there were Sinn Féin members in the campaign, sometimes in prominent positions, they did not (as the media argued) control it or use it as a front. Their presence did, however, allow the anti-drugs activists to imply that they were under

the protection of the IRA.

However, he also suggests that while officially the IRA were not involved, IRA volunteers on the ground, unofficially and at times against the command of the IRA, were involved in killings and attempted killings of drug dealers. In addition he describes a campaign that operated in parallel to COCAD (and was never discussed at COCAD meetings). Known as the "military campaign", this was made up of groups of men who had access to weapons and were willing to respond, like with like, to attacks made by drug dealers. If a drug dealer parked a fancy car in an estate, it would more than likely be burnt out.

A much more difficult case to deal with is the death on 14 May 1996, at the hands of anti-drugs activists, of heroin user and small time dealer Josie Dwyer. After his death, the media reported that Dwyer had been the victim of a frenzied attack that included the use of iron bars and lump hammers.

Lyder argues that the coroner did not find this to be the case and that the blow that killed Josie Dwyer would not have been fatal to a healthy person. Thus he describes Josie Dwyer's death as "tragic, if unintentional", but his sympathy remains squarely with the activists who were subsequently tried and with those who were convicted.

However, if the strategy you adopt includes beating up junkies with AIDS, it shouldn't be a surprise if one of them dies. In addition a criticism made frequently about the Concerned Parents (and less so with COCAD) was

that in reality there is little distinction between being a junkie and a small time dealer, and the Josie Dwyer case seems to provide evidence of this.

The police were always highly hostile to the anti-drugs campaigners, many of whom faced serious intimidation; they were stopped in the street, they were brought in for questioning, their houses were raided, they were beaten. It was widely suspected that some police were very close to major dealers; it is not mentioned in the book, but there were rumours that heroin appeared on the streets in police evidence bags. With Josie Dwyer's death the police went into overdrive. Thirteen activists were eventually arrested, of whom six were convicted and given twenty-month sentences.

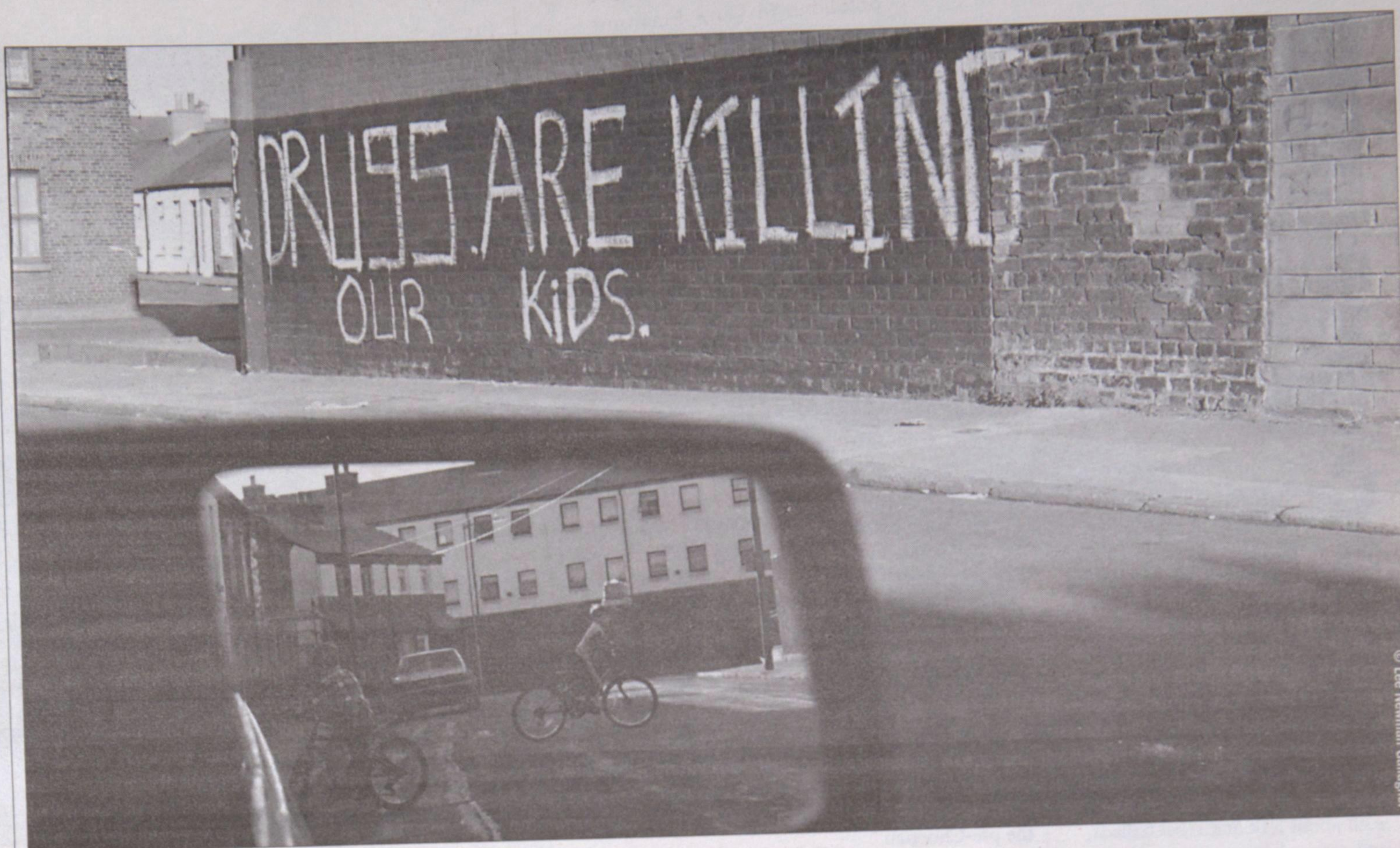
1996 was also to see an explosion of anti-drug campaigns throughout the city, this time mostly organised under the COCAD banner. The vigil began with renewed vigour and there were a number of large anti-drugs marches in the centre of Dublin. The political climate changed slightly, with the defeat of Fianna Fáil and the election of a coalition government that included Labour. This was the era of social partnership and Lyder is particularly scathing about the incorporation of community resistance by "professional" community workers. Neglect now has a benign face.

The end of the book details the turn towards electoralism (Lyder stood

unsuccessfully in one general election and Sinn Féin made significant gains in terms of electoral politics) and the winding down of the campaign. Strangely (to my anarchist eyes anyway) no link is made between the two processes.

What was the end result? Lyder argues that the anti-drugs campaigns stabilised the extent of heroin users in the city, they moved drugs up the agenda, secured funding for treatment services, youth facilities and lead to a growth of local pride and sense of community. The drug problem wasn't "solved" but it was contained (and in this respect, Lyder is critical of government responses which rely on methadone maintenance rather than support for detoxification and rehabilitation).

There is an entire history of the city in this book, a history that without it would remain mostly hidden. The story told here is far from simple, the dilemmas faced difficult. This is a book that raises as many questions as it answers. Yet these are questions that continue to be important to those of us who hope to build a better world. Lyder has done us a great service in documenting an important moment of working class history, a moment when the people of Dublin organised themselves and took back control of their communities. *This is an edited version of a longer review that appeared in www.indymedia.ie, reprinted with the kind permission of the author*



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Taking on the pushers

Aoife Fisher reviews an account of Dublin's anti-drugs movement

Reviews

Burning hearts

Robert Allen traces the history of *Burning Times*, a song that has long been part of Christy Moore's repertoire

Christy Moore once sung of Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne, James Connolly and Bobby Sands – men who would never succumb to the English oppression. Then he sang about the faraway martyrs Salvador Allende and Steve Biko. Closer to home he told the stories of Nicky Kelly and Whacker Humphries. He also sang about the anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

You could be forgiven if you thought Christy Moore's repertoire is all about folk and rebel ballads, and songs about martyrs and the oppressed. After all, wasn't the struggle about freedom, injustice and oppression? Over the years and the albums, Moore has moved away from this male dominated world towards a world of healing, into the company of women.

A few years ago he said he felt closer to women than men. "Their strength of character, their humanity, their warmth and kindness, their practicality, süss and pragmatism – they leave us standing in the battle of the sexes," he wrote in *One Voice* – his autobiographical song book.

The song *Burning Times* has been part of the journey that has taken him closer to femininity. He recorded it first on the 1991 album *Smoke and Strong Whiskey* and re-recorded it on *Traveller* in 1999. Yet it was a

song he struggled to sing in his native land during the 1990s. "When I sing it at home I always feel a stiffening in the audience and a discomfort."

To find it again here on his latest album is not surprising, for his audience in the fin de siècle of the 20th/21st century has been mostly younger and largely female. So *Burning Times* reflects the changes in his own life. He sings here about Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Innanna – all goddesses of the pre-Christian and pre-Muslim communities. He also sings about Hattie Carroll, about a girl called Joanie, more specifically he sings about motherland, and about mother earth.

Now the Earth is a witch
and we still burn her,
stripping her down
with mining and
the poison of our wars

Still to us the Earth is a healer,
a teacher and a mother,
a weaver of a web
that keeps us alive

She gives us the vision

to see through the chaos,
she gives us the courage,
it is our will to survive

Burning Times is now one of the essential songs in Christy Moore's repertoire. "I feel this song allows me to express my own feelings about the femininity of the Deity – my mother nature, my love of the natural way and my belief in the The Healing Powers," he wrote back in the late 1990s.

As usual, the songs on *Burning Times* are diverse. Listening to Christy Moore over the past four decades is like a trawl through the alternative history of our land, and of the world beyond it.

Wally Page's *Fishermen Raving* is a jocular start to the album

– Why face the angry squall when you could go Go-Go dancing – while Natalie Merchant's *Motherland* brings the man back down to earth and a sorrowful song, *Butterfly (So Much Wine)* from Rennie and Brett Sparks of *The Handsome Family* grounds the listener in reality.

John Spillane's *Magic Nights in the Lobby Bar* is hardly the right prelude to Morrissey's ridiculously



Christy Moore with Declan Sinnott: Moore's strength is his ability to take another songwriter's lyrics and add poignancy and gravitas

ironic America, *I Love You* but it sums up Moore's style – not that he was able to convince a Texan woman at a gig in Castlebar when he sang Morrissey's song.

"You called me a pig, Mr Moore, I want my money back," she demanded.

Her money was refunded, despite Mr Moore crying that it was only one song she did not like.

"No," she retorted, "there was another one. Who is this Allende guy we are supposed to have killed?"

Page's *Mercy* is another glimpse into the world that Moore inhabits, while his rendition of Richard Thompson's *Beeswing* is, along with *Burning Times*, a poignant highlight of the album.

This is Moore's strength, his ability to take another songwriter's lyrics and add poignancy and gravitas. So it's not a surprise at all when he takes Dylan's *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll* and brings the human tragedy out of the ballad.

The religious, rightly, take a hammering on this album. If the Pope is condemned for his inquisition against nine million women thought to be witches, the priests themselves

are exposed in Joni Mitchell's story of the Magdalene Laundries's girls, thought to be temptresses.

Peg O'Connell died today, she was a cheeky girl. They stuffed her in a hole. Surely to God you'd think, at least, some bells should ring

To find out who Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali and Innanna were, take a quick look at the sleeve notes, read Charlie Murphy's lyrics and then get down to your local library, but start with James Fraser's *The Golden Bough*.

On a lighter note that will delight the deep ecologists and primitivists, Moore sings *The Handsome Family's Peace in the Valley Once Again* and then moves gently into Phil Ochs's *Changes* – as good a place as any to end this magnificent album.

• *Burning Times*, Christy Moore with Declan Sinnott is out now; *One Voice: My Life in Song* by Christy Moore is published by Hodder and Stoughton.

• Christy Moore will play *The Point*, in Dublin, on January 5 and 6, 2006. Tickets are E49, E43.50 and E38.50. Tickets and Information: www.aikenpromotions.com/

Kíla take it easy with Oki

By Éanna Dowling

Tóg é go bog é – take it easy – is a powerful heartfelt goodbye song, written by Rónán Ó Snodaigh. It has long been a live favourite of Kíla and the original version comes from the 1997 album of the same name.

Kíla recently released a four-track CD with Ainu musician Oki, featuring two versions of *Tóg é go bog é*; an Eoin Dillon led uilleann pipe instrumental called *The moon on my back*; and a tune from Oki's *Dub Ainu* album.

The Ainu people are an indigenous people from Northern Japan, and Oki has been learning his ancestors' music and adapting it to



a contemporary sound.

He first worked with Kíla in Japan at a festival when the festival director informed them that they'd

be playing together on stage within a few minutes.

The collaboration proved successful and Kíla have successfully modi-

fied their powerful anthem to incorporate Oki's contribution and to reveal a more mature take on a great tune.

Eoin (left) and Rónán of Kíla: Incorporating the best of traditional Irish with rhythmic influences from Africa and Eastern Europe

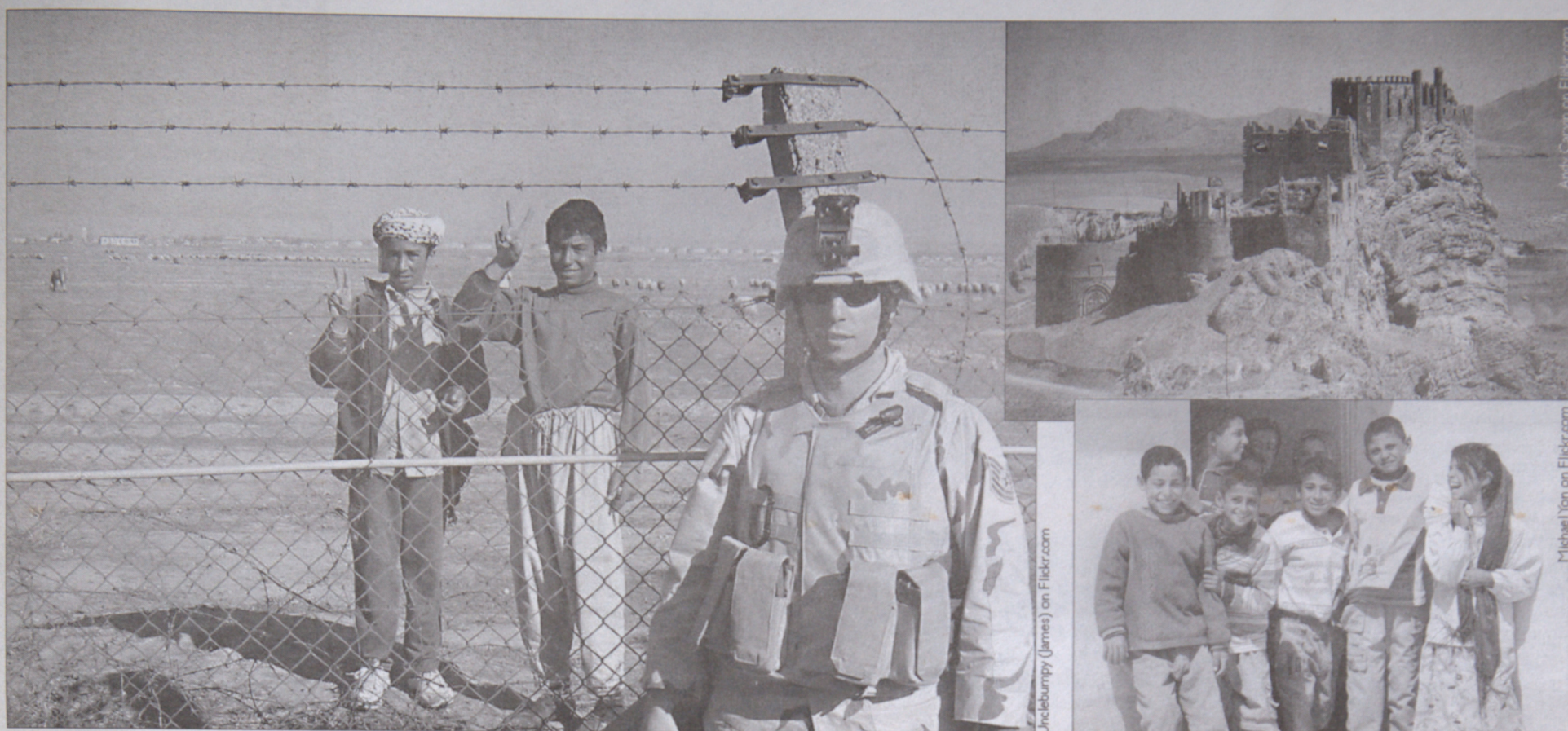
The recording celebrates their performance at the Festival of World Cultures in Dún Laoghaire this year when Kíla played a slower and more reflective set than usual to a sit down audience in Monkstown Church.

The CD includes two versions of the Kíla classic *Tóg é go bog é*. One of the versions is a remix by Japanese artist Sakana, who also remixed a version of *An Tiománai* on Kíla's previous single release. For Kíla fans, this is essential, buy the thing, you won't go wrong for a fiver.

If you don't know Kíla, now's the time to tune in, the best band in Ireland by a mile, a powerful sound, showcasing top class musicianship, incredible arrangements incorporating the best of traditional Irish tunes and instrumentation, with rhythmic influences from Africa and Eastern Europe.

• Available from www.kila.ie

On the road



East of hell

Erik Valencic continues his journey through the Middle East, travelling from Istanbul to Iran via Kurdistan

I had no intention of staying in Istanbul, even though I had friends I could visit there. Instead I bought a bus ticket to the town of Erzurum in the far east of the country.

I love and hate Istanbul at the same time, this historic metropolis of 12 million people (unofficially, the number is between 16 and 20 million). On the one hand, it's a magnificent and mighty city rising from the sea over the hills. Countless minarets, rising towards the sky above thousands of rooftops that glitter in the golden morning sun, announce that this is a city of God and Islam. On the other hand, it seems to have been completely overtaken by signs of western-dominated capitalism.

Everywhere, especially around Taksim square, one can see big billboards for Nike, Coca Cola, Nokia, McDonald's etc., proudly announcing that this is a city of numerous consumers. Whoever thinks the so-called Americanization of our planet is a good and enriching thing should visit Istanbul sometime. Or the rest of the country. It seems that Turkey has been bought by Nestle and Pepsi. It almost doesn't matter which food or drink you buy in the shop or gas station as you travel across the land – it has the name of one of these two corporations displayed on the wrapper.

Erzurum was still quite cold and windy when I got there after a long day's bus drive. The mountain tops

surrounding the town looked white and unfriendly. I knew Erzurum already from last year, when I travelled towards Iran for the first time. It's a beautiful town with many empty hotels. Here lies the invisible border beyond which you won't see any more tourists and you only rarely come across fellow travellers.

In an Internet cafe I read that the Turkish army had encircled the Kurdish town of Tunceli after alleged PKK rebels shot several state troops. I was very upset by this because I have great friends in Tunceli – two Kurdish teenagers and their families who hosted me in their home last summer. I couldn't really understand anything from the news and my connections in

Diyarbakir (human rights activists) were unreachable, so next morning I took a local bus towards Tunceli, which lies in the heart of Kurdistan.

After the town of Bingöl, a Turkish army patrol stopped the bus at the checkpoint. This was nothing new in itself; there are such checkpoints all over Kurdistan. The army mostly checks ID cards. What was new this time was that I was taken off the bus and told I would have to turn back "because it is dangerous for tourists to be here. There are many terrorists".

No negotiations with the troops

were possible, and even though they were kind towards me, I saw that they disliked me and my intrusion on their area. They stopped a car going in the opposite direction and ordered the driver, who was in his thirties, to take me to Bingöl. I'm pretty sure they gave him more orders as to how to behave towards me. As I climbed into the car, I told them "Zor spas!", which means "Thank you very much!" in Kurdish, the forbidden language.

The state, in the name of rapprochement with the EU, legalised the Kurdish language, but from what I saw last year this works only on paper. My friends in Hakkari (next to the Iran-Iraq border) explained to me that the owners of coffee bars don't play Kurdish music, because the army or police would pay them a visit and make trouble. The same is true in Tunceli and other towns. The Kurdish language is still very much suppressed along with many other things, which is exactly why foreign nationals might have problems when trying to

enter certain parts of Kurdistan. We are not supposed to see what's happening in there.

I didn't say "Zor spas!" to the troops to provoke them, but to earn the trust of the car driver who was

taking me to Bingöl. He was Kurdish and I suspected the soldiers had told him not to talk to me. I asked him a bunch of questions, but he didn't answer them, saying he didn't speak English. Or German. Nothing. He just kept his eyes firmly fixed on the road as if this was the first time he was driving on it.

I decided not to bother him any more, so I used those few sentences of Kurdish that I know to introduce myself, and it was this that made him visibly happy and cheerful. He bought me a bottle of water and drove me to a bus station. I was

glad. It was obvious he did this not because he had been ordered to but as a sign of goodwill.

I was back in Erzurum the same day and quite displeased with everything since my first "adventure" had ended in defeat. At the same time I knew that whatever road I took it would end the same way. My connections in Diyarbakir later explained to me via e-mail that the situation is tense, specially in the southern regions bordering Iraq. The bombings we saw across Turkey throughout the summer, which are being attributed to PKK rebels, and Iraqi Kurds' growing ambitions for autonomy, make me believe that the entire area could once again burst into full scale violence quite soon.

Next day I went to the Iranian embassy and got a tourist visa, valid for one month. From then on it was quite easy: I took a bus to a small town called Dogubayazit, and from there a taxi straight to the border. I arrived there at around 7 pm.

The Turkey-Iran border crossing at Dogubayazit is enormous. On the Turkish side you have to walk for about a kilometre and show your passport at least three times. Nobody cared about my luggage; as a traveller by myself I very rarely get searched at any border. Usually custom officials are only interested in where am I going and what am I going to do there. These are maybe the only two questions about myself that I can never really answer, not even with some guessing.

On the Iranian side of the border the first two people that greeted me were Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor Ayatollah Khamenei, two religious fanatics, the worst among

their kind. They looked at me with smiles on their faces from two big billboards welcoming me to the Islamic Republic of Iran. From here on there were to be no more billboards advertising Coca-Cola and Pepsi, only state leaders and Islam. I had left one fundamentalism behind and entered a new one.

Many people don't realise the most important fact about how Iran became an Islamic republic. It was shortly after the people's revolution against the corrupt Shah that Khomeini and his ultra-religious militias took over the country and introduced sharia law, which follows a fundamentalist interpretation of the Koran. Thus they betrayed the hopes and dreams of millions of Iranians who were in fact leaning towards socialism.

When the new regime ordered women to cover their hair in public (including if a stranger enters their home), tens of thousands of women marched through the streets of Tehran protesting against this. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians openly opposed the Islamic codes that were imposed on them.

All the opposition's leaders were thrown in jails or killed on Khomeini's orders. Others that could, escaped from the country.

The revolution of 1979 went down into mainstream history as an Islamic revolution, but this isn't the case. It didn't belong to any religion but to the people. With this betrayal, Khomeini did nothing more than apply the old rule: the revolution dies when a new leader takes the throne and supervises the shooting of the revolutionaries.

•Eric's travels continue in the next issue of *Ireland from Below*

Ayatollahs Khomeini Khamenei looked at me with smiles on their faces from two big billboards. From here on there were to be no more billboards advertising Coca-Cola and Pepsi. I had left one fundamentalism behind and entered a new one

STRUGGLES AROUND THE ISLAND

DIRECTORY

Alliance for Choice (abortion rights in Ireland): <http://struggle.ws/Ireland/allianceforchoice/index.html>

BLUE magazine (online community/ecology magazine): www.bluegreeneearth.com

The Commoner (online anti-capitalist magazine): www.commoner.org.uk

Community Exchange (online newsletter for the community and voluntary sector): www.activelink.ie/ce/index.html

Community Media Network (community TV, video, radio, print, etc.): www.cmn.ie

Community Workers Co-operative (national network of community workers): Tel: 091-779030; www.cwc.ie

Cork Autonomous Zone/Barracka Books 61 Barrack St, Cork; corkcaz@yahoo.ie, barrackabooks@yahoo.ie

Cork Harbour Alliance for a Safe Environment (against incineration) Tel: 021-48155654; www.chaseireland.org

Craol National network of community radio stations: www.craol.ie

Direct Action Against Apathy (Belfast-based direct action): PO Box 3345, Belfast BT9 7LP; www.geocities.com/directionagainstapathy/

Dublin Community TV www.connect.ie/dublintv

Gluaiseacht Network (Limerick-based campaigning group): Tel: 056-7756796; www.gluaiseacht.net

Grassroots Gathering (bi-annual get-togethers): <http://flag.blackened.net/infohub/grassroots/>

Indymedia Ireland (alternative news) www.indymedia.ie

Irish Links directory (list of Irish community and voluntary groups): www.activelink.ie/irish/index.php

Midlands Against Dirty Developments (against commercial dumps in Kinnegad area): Tel: 087-6430783

Organise! Working class resistance www.organiseireland.org

Pavee Point Travellers Centre 46 Nth Gt Charles St., Dublin 1; 01-8780255; www.paveepoint.ie

Red Ink (radical books and zines) 4 Fowles St, Dublin 2

Residents against Racism 24-hour helpline 087-6662060; www.residentsagainstracism.org

Save Tara/Skryne Valley (M3 campaign): Tel: 087-9249510; www.tara-skryne.org

Seomra Spraoi (Dublin social centre project): seomraspraoi.blogspot.com

Shell to Sea (opposition to Rosport gas pipeline): Tel: 087-9591474 or 087-9023687; www.corribsos.com

Social Movements directory: www.social-movements.org

Street Seen (Belfast/Dublin homeless organising paper): www.streetseennews.blogspot.com/

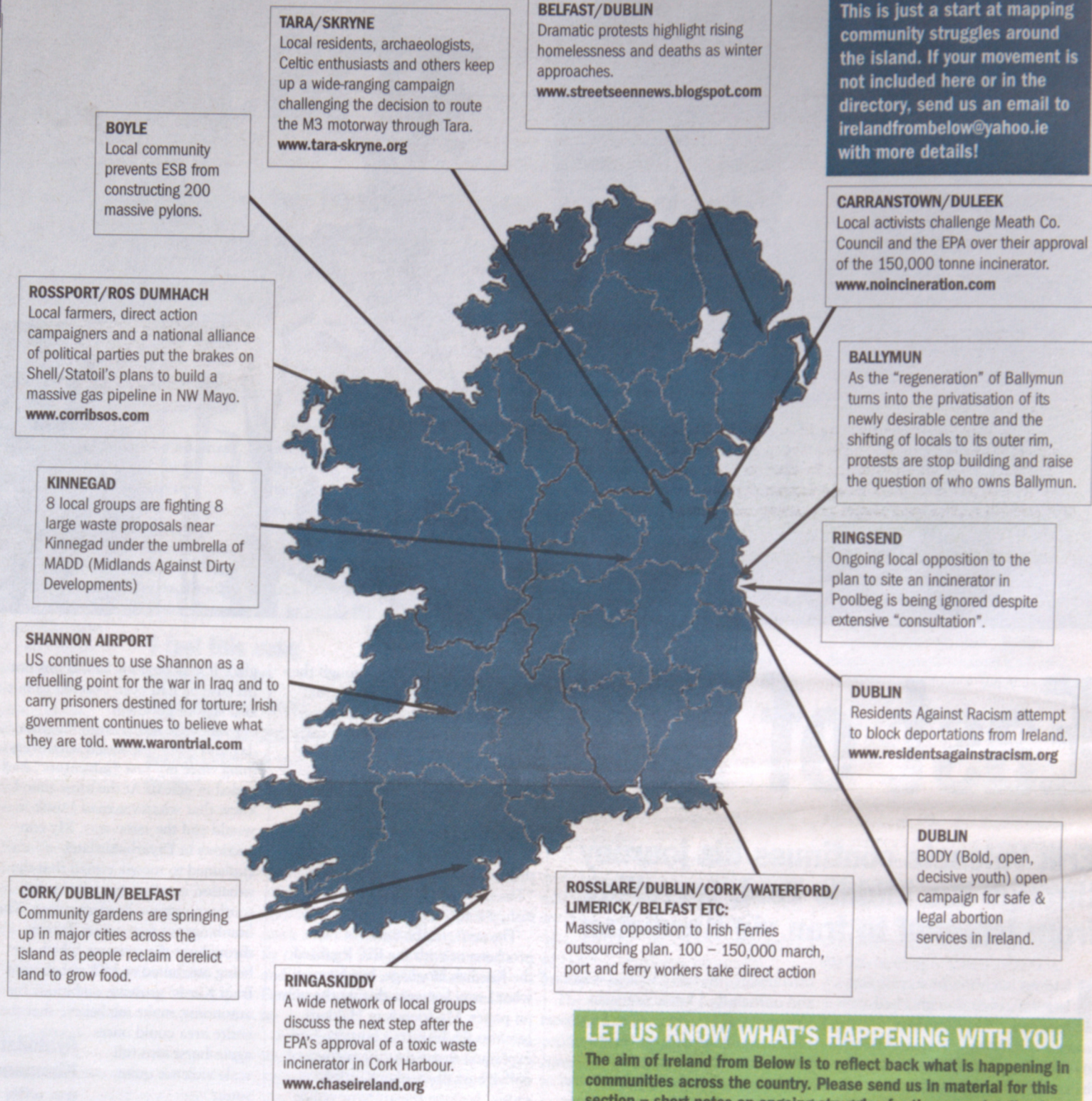
Tenants First! (new forum for tenants & community activists): St Michael's Estate Family Resource Centre, Inchicore, Dub 8

Tools for Change (collection of activist pages and more): www.iol.ie/~mazzoldi/toolsforchange

Useful Guide for Social Transformation in Europe www.europeanguide.tk

Workers Solidarity Movement (Irish anarchist group): <http://struggle.ws>

Zero Waste Alliance: www.zerowastealliance.ie



GET ON THE MAP

This is just a start at mapping community struggles around the island. If your movement is not included here or in the directory, send us an email to irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie with more details!

CARRANSTOWN/DULEEK

Local activists challenge Meath Co. Council and the EPA over their approval of the 150,000 tonne incinerator. www.noincineration.com

BALLYMUN

As the "regeneration" of Ballymun turns into the privatisation of its newly desirable centre and the shifting of locals to its outer rim, protests are stop building and raise the question of who owns Ballymun.

RINGSEND

Ongoing local opposition to the plan to site an incinerator in Poolbeg is being ignored despite extensive "consultation".

DUBLIN

Residents Against Racism attempt to block deportations from Ireland. www.residentsagainstracism.org

DUBLIN

BODY (Bold, open, decisive youth) open campaign for safe & legal abortion services in Ireland.

ROSSLARE/DUBLIN/CORK/WATERFORD/LIMERICK/BELFAST ETC.

Massive opposition to Irish Ferries outsourcing plan. 100 - 150,000 march, port and ferry workers take direct action

LET US KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOU

The aim of Ireland from Below is to reflect back what is happening in communities across the country. Please send us in material for this section - short notes on ongoing struggles for the map, details of upcoming events for the listing, links to campaign websites for the directory. You can contact us at irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie

EVENTS

Comhlámh debate:

Can GM foods end famine?

4 January Bewley's Café Theatre, Grafton St, Dublin (6.15pm - 7.45pm)
One of a series of debates about global issues on the first Wednesday of each month. This month's debate will be chaired by RTE's Rodney Rice. Come along, get involved or just find out about the various issues over a cuppa. Admission free, all welcome. Further details on www.comhlamh.org

Troubled images

23 October-20 January Glencree Centre for Reconciliation, Co. Wicklow
Imagine a wall plastered with the posters of all the parties to the Northern Ireland conflict during the three decades of "the Troubles". It is of course inconceivable in a divided world of one-sided walls where parties tend to mark their own terrain. Except, that is, in Belfast's historic Linen Hall Library, where the "Troubled Images" exhibition created new space for all sides

of the community in October 2001. For further information contact Philip Boxberger or Eileen Kennedy at (01) 2829711 or email bridge.centre@glencree-cfr.ie

Marx in Soho

5 & 6 January
Conway Education Centre, Conway Mill, Falls Road, Belfast
The Just Books collective present Howard Zinn's play "Marx in Soho" with Jerry Levy as Karl Marx. Imagine what Marx would have to say after one hundred years of just being able to watch... This is a benefit for the Just Books Collective and tickets are just £5. For tickets email jst_books@yahoo.co.uk

Evening Vigil to remember those who have died in the "War on Terror"

7 January
Shannon Airport approach road, 4 pm
This vigil remembers the thousands of people killed in Bush's "War on Terror", including thousands of Iraqi children. We will show the Shannon premiere of Margaretta D'Arcy's award winning film "Big

Plane, Small Axe", documenting the trials of Mary Kelly. There will also be a tree planting service in memory of peace camp founder Emma O'Carroll who has sadly passed away after a long battle with cancer. Tel: Joe (086) 8228032 or Mary (087) 9112961

Noam Chomsky speaks on "The War on Terror"

18 January
Shelbourne Hall, RDS, Dublin 4
The lecture is open to the public, and tickets will be free. The Q&A session will be chaired by Olivia O'Leary. Bookings via the Amnesty office (01) 6776361 or email info@amnesty.ie. Tickets will be allocated on the basis of one per person, or two for household memberships of Amnesty Ireland.

Alternative Social Forum, Caracas

24-29 January Caracas, Venezuela
This January the 6th World Social Forum - WSF - will take place in Caracas and in other parts of the world. The Venezuelan capital will also host the 2nd Social Forum of the Americas.

"From Venezuela we extend an invitation to an international event of and for social movements in the struggle, as a more valid option to the bureaucratic spectacle the World Social Forum has become." More details: www.fsa.contrapoder.org.ve

Integration and active citizenship Generating the inclusion of immigrant communities

27 January
National Library, Dublin (10.30am-2.30pm)
The European Network Against Racism - Ireland invites you to attend a national seminar. The purpose is to generate dialogue on the issue of integration and citizenship in promoting the inclusion of immigrant communities. In particular the role of anti-racism in enabling integration and active citizenship will be considered.
Registration: contact Siobhán O'Donoghue, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland. Tel. (01) 8897570; email Siobhan@mrcl.ie; web www.mrcl.ie

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