

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'

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Remembering Gerry Ryan



The news that broadcaster Gerry Ryan had died suddenly last Friday was certainly a massive bolt from the blue. He was a very young man to die so suddenly and his passing is a huge shock for his family, his friends, his colleagues and the hundreds of thousands of people who listened to him every day.

I met Gerry Ryan once but it was many, many years ago when he was doing a disco locally at the time when he was playing music in RTE

Radio 2, as it was known then. I didn't know the man at all personally so I cannot pass any judgement on what kind of a guy he was. According to his friends and those who knew him he was good company and generous and he was certainly a great family man by all accounts.

With regard to the radio programme, I was not a fan of Gerry Ryan. I just didn't like his style. I know that he was thought of as a pioneer in Irish radio because of his very direct way of

doing his job. There is no doubt that he was a very intelligent and clued in guy and he had a huge and loyal following. But he was too arrogant and pompous for my liking, especially in recent years. However there is no doubt that he was the cornerstone of the 2FM schedule and RTE will have a huge job to replace him.

There is no one obvious candidate that I can think of to step in but I think that it would be a great chance for RTE to go for someone new

and fresh. The death of Gerry Ryan was a great shock to many people and there is no doubt that his loss will be huge to the RTE radio business in Montrose. It underlines again just how fragile life can be. None of us know what's around the corner, and maybe it's just as well too. It's a good idea that 2FM are going to broadcast his funeral Mass live as it will give his listeners a chance to hear it. May he rest in peace.

Good news filters through

There are some signs that things are actually starting to pick up, or at least that the slide has stopped in some areas of economic activity. This week it emerged that there has been a 95 percent increase in car sales and that has to be good for a number of sectors.

It will help to keep the jobs that are already there in the motor industry and it will increase the amount of tax going into the exchequer. It shows that the scrapping scheme helped and also the more realistic prices for cars being charged by the manufacturers. There are also signs that there is a bit of light at the end of the tunnel for smaller tradesmen as there is a certain amount of renovation work going on in people's homes. The construction of new houses has almost stopped altogether as we know, but smaller contractors are still doing small jobs around the house that takes a few weeks to complete. It's a long way off a return to anything like normality but at least it's a start.

In praise of Irish generosity!

Dear Mr and Mrs Irish Taxpayer.....
I wanted to send you a note this week to express our thanks here in Greece to you all for your generosity in sending us the €1.3 billion as part of the bail out for our poor economy.

I also read in the papers here where your own economy was in big trouble and that you had to pay out €80 billion to bail out your own banks, so your kind gesture to help us out is much appreciated. We thought that we would go bankrupt here but our kind rich neighbours in Europe, including yourselves, helped us out.

They say that we might have to pay this money back, but it may take us a while so you won't mind if we will be a little late with the repayments. Even if we can't pay it back at all I know that you will understand. After all if you can afford to bail out your banks and lend us money too, you must have loads of money of your own.

The nice people from Europe have loaned us €120 billion in total, which is great and we have promised that we will cut back our spending by 30 billion over the next three years. We don't know yet where we will get the other 90 billion but sure that might not matter as long as we are able to keep going!

Please extend our thanks to your nice Mr Cowen and Mr Lenihan. The Irish are such a generous people. I suggested to my wife Nana that we might even consider moving to your country to live, but she says that she would prefer to stay in the sunshine, so we have decided to stay here.

However, we hope that your people keep coming to Greece on their holidays and we will make sure that they are looked after well. Thank you all once again for the €1.3 billion.

From
Dimitri Papadopoulos,
1 Main Street,
Athens,
Greece



A scene from the sheep dog trials which took place last weekend as part of Roscommon Lamb Festival. Pic: Andrew Fox.

Ash could disrupt the holiday season

The cloud of volcanic ash has struck again this week and while it has affected many people up to now and caused chaos, if it continues there is the prospect that there will be total disarray when the children are off school and the holiday season starts in earnest.

I realise that nothing can be done and that it is a safety issue, but there is going to be a huge problem for the airlines if this situation continues for any amount of time. They are cancelling flights and having to compensate people and that can only last so long. On Morning Ireland this week we heard the possibility that this situation could last for several months and even up to a year. The Roscommon football team and follow-

ers who are due to go to London at the end of the month will be praying that

the cloud will be blowing in a different direction that weekend!

Exciting election

The British general election result will be one of the tightest in living memory. At the time of writing, the polls show that the three main parties are neck and neck and that



a hung parliament is almost a certainty. Despite the fact that the Tories will probably be the biggest party after the election results are in, don't rule out a coalition between the Labour Party and the Lib Dems. The fact that the polls are so close means that the result of the election in the north will also be crucial as the parties in the UK seek support there too. The results programmes will start tonight (Thursday) at about 10 pm. It will be fascinating stuff for those of us who love to watch election results as they come in. It will be a long night I'm thinking!

Taxing us out of existence

The dreaded carbon tax took effect on the 1st of May and to be quite honest it is a total disgrace that The Green Party was allowed to get away with it.

It is simply another hammer blow for the hard pressed ordinary taxpayers who will have to pay more now for home heating oil, petrol, diesel and things like coal and briquettes. Everyone knows that the price of a litre of petrol and diesel has gone up by about 25 cent in the past two months and the last thing we want is for things to get even dearer because of Mr Gormley and Mr Ryan's madcap scheme to try and tax people out of existence.

Was there no one to tell The Greens that if they put up the price of petrol and diesel that everything else will go up in price as a result? The quicker The Green Party is put out of government the better it will be for everyone. This is not a carbon tax. It's a Keep The Green Party in Government Tax.

Successful Lamb Festival

Well done to everyone involved with the Lamb Festival in Roscommon Town over the weekend. All the events were well supported and of course it was a help that the weather was not too bad. The mini marathon on Monday was a massive success and it continues to grow and grow. I went to the start of the event on Monday and there were at least 500 people there running, jogging and walking. The Carers Association benefited from it all and it was great that the money went to such a good cause.