

A week is a long time in life's journey

Every week when I sit down to pen my usual masterpiece, I can't believe how quickly the time has gone by and it always seems like only yesterday since I wrote my previous piece. And because time passes so quickly you would be forgiven for thinking that not a lot happens from one week to the next. Now, that's where you would be wrong, and if ever a week proved it, the events of the last one just gone by proves that, just as they say in politics, a week can be a very long time.

As I scribbled away on Monday week last, Gerry Ryan was rambling on, in the background on his regular 2FM spot. Some people absolutely loved him, but I can't pretend that I was one of his many fans or admirers, but, nevertheless, his radio show was with us for 30 years or so, and for thousands of his followers was as natural after breakfast as the cornflakes and the fry and the toast. So, it was with a huge sense of shock that the news of his sudden death broke on Friday afternoon.

We now (Tuesday morning) have all sorts of stories regarding his financial affairs and his eating habits and his lack of exercise and his stress levels and everything else, but either way the inescapable fact is that Gerry Ryan is no more, and we as a nation have lost one of our more iconic radio presenters.

To give an idea of the diversity of stories regarding his financial position, I have read on one paper this morning that he was fairly broke, while another had his estate valued at €2.5 million. There's a fair big difference between the two. I suppose (although of course it doesn't apply to this piece) it just show you, you can't believe all you read in the papers!

Anyway back to the difference a week can make and last week all our retired politicians who are still working, were looking forward to banking their huge pension cheques, while still collecting substantial weekly wages. Today, except for Dr. Jim McDaid and one or two more who are hang-

ing on grimly to their pension (it's only €22,000 in McDaid's case but about the same amount as a lot of people have to live and feed a family on), the rest of them have bowed to public pressure and have 'parked' their pension to one side, until such time as they actually retire when their benefits will all kick in again. I see today that the bold McDaid barely attends the Dáil at all so you'd wonder whether he should even be collecting his TD's salary, never mind his pension.

Also a week ago the Greek nation were looking at collective bankruptcy while today thanks to a €130 billion bail-out by the rest of Europe they are at least temporarily sorted out! It baffles me how we Ireland can put up €1.3 billion to sort out Greece, when we have no money to sort out ourselves. I believe, however, that even with this massive injection, the Greeks are in for very severe austerity cuts and they are facing a really tough future. If we're not careful we too are capable of following them into oblivion.

In sport, a week ago the three Irish provinces - Connacht, Leinster and Munster - were all looking forward to possible European rugby glory. Today, they are all gone after defeats to French opposition, while for the western province, the dream of Heineken Cup qualification, which was open on two different counts has been closed, once again, for at least another year. The games were remarkably similar with all three Irish teams being soundly beaten in the scrums, and as a result spending a lot of time on the back foot. They all did their utmost against superior forces, and defended manfully and bravely, yet none of them could really have many complaints. At least none of them, except Connacht who in my opinion were very hard done by by the English ref Wayne Barnes, and they had a number of incidents to justifiably point to where the westerners seemed to be harshly dealt with. Not least of these was a blatant knock-on by Toulon, just before the series of scrums that eventually

led to the concession of the game-deciding try. However, as we all know the ref is always right, even when he's wrong, and so despite a valiant effort, Connacht followed the two 'big' ones out of Europe.

The week gone by also saw a wonderful hurling league final between Galway and Cork, in which the maroon and white tribesmen claimed their ninth crown and their first since 2001. Now I suppose you'll have lads saying that 'it wasn't championship' and that the championship is different, but I must admit that I thought the pace and intensity was pretty much up to championship level. Of course, league winners are notoriously fragile when it does come to the white heat of the championship, but even though Wexford will be licking their lips in anticipation, I think this Galway team looks to be the business and could go a long way in the race for the McCarthy Cup.

Also a week changed a lot in the life of golfer Rory McIlroy. He became the second youngest winner of a major American Tournament, after the great Tiger, when he put two wonderful closing rounds together to claim a four-stroke victory over Phil Mickelson in Quail Hollow on Sunday. His victory gave him a \$1,000,000 (million) dollar payday, which was a nice birthday present for his 21st birthday which is taking place this week. I'm sure there will be some party!

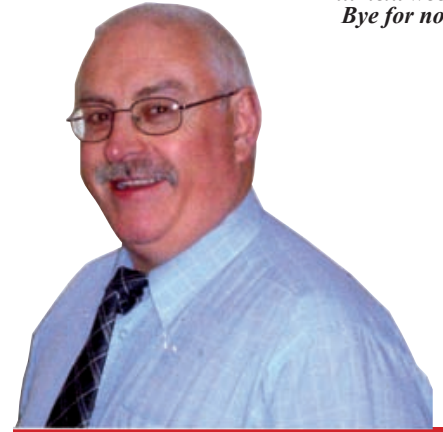
Anyway a lot of stuff can happen over a few short days, and in our own immediate area we had great night on Sunday night, in Gannon's at 'Cois Tine' and our own local superstar, Mattie Clarke. A great crowd turned up to listen to the talented duo of Linda Welby and Peggy Higgins (Cois Tine) while Mattie yet again wowed the crowd with his Big Tom medley.

We had a friend over from Glasgow in Scotland and she was very impressed with both the band and Mattie and who knows they may be on the way to international acclaim. I wonder do

they need a manager?

Finally for this week, the funds for the Barrie Harris Walk are to be distributed on Saturday night in Mikeen Roarke's. Anyone that has still to come up with the few bob for sponsorship, can they please give it in before Saturday. Also on Saturday night, over the road in d'Alton's, Fuerty, Theresa McKeague tells me she has a pig to be roasted on the spit and music by Duffy. It should be great craic and I'll do my best to put an appearance in both places! Life can be tough!!!

*Till next week.
Bye for now.*



Frankly
Speaking ...
with Frank Brandon

Musings



with
Marta
Kaminska

martakamykova@wp.pl or news@roscommonpeople.ie

Tea or coffee?

It's a popular question and is also the title of a Polish breakfast TV programme. I regularly watch this programme, especially just before I leave for work. It covers lots of different topics, so it's easy viewing and it's not interesting enough to make you late for work and it's also the topic of this week's column.

In Poland, it's definitely coffee, especially the favoured 'small black'. Even if time is tight, there's always enough time for a small black. Small black is usually shared with our good friends and over this tiny coffee we make small talk, about what happened yesterday or the fact that the bus timetable is about to change. In this nice atmosphere time passes quickly and our body gets an energy boost. But it's not always that great. We should be careful about the company we keep while having this coffee. I well remember someone suggesting 'A little black?' I didn't have much time, but then again, it's just a small coffee. Suddenly this person disappeared into the kitchen and I was left waiting. I was waiting for almost 20 minutes. After that time elapsed, he returned with a huge almost-two-litre container of strange-smelling coffee. It wasn't even in a glass, it was more a jar or even a mini bucket more suitable as a receptacle used when milking

cows. It was really difficult to drink it and I was afraid to ask about sugar because I was afraid that he would disappear again. But even that wasn't the worst thing. Unfortunately, all this time, he remained mute. When I tried to chat to him, his answers were monosyllabic and inane. The only sound to break the silence was my slurring and perhaps the voice in my head screaming 'run away'. After this experience, I won't drink coffee with strangers. In Poland, people, whether it be summer or winter, drink coffee with friends and chat.

In Ireland, as you probably know, tea is the more important of the two. Even a short break at work is called 'tea break'. I remember my first day at work in Ireland. The day started with the question 'tea?' and I had my first ever cup of tea with milk. Unfortunately I am the kind of person who only drinks milk with coffee or cereal. I still remember the stupid look on my face as I drank it and I even tried in my mind, to separate the milk from the tea, but trust me, it's impossible. Later, I regretted this but I didn't confess to my antipathy to tea with milk and every day when I started work my boss presented me with tea with milk and he must have thought that the stupid look on my face was normal. Now, everyone who drinks tea with me knows that for me, it tastes better with lemon. So, people in Ireland, if they're not working, they're definitely drinking tea with milk.

My conclusion is that the question 'tea or coffee' would be great in mixed



company of Polish and Irish people. By using the question, we could determine which country the people hail from. But the flip side of this is that, it is not always true. My Polish boy always drinks his tea with fresh Irish milk and I'm sure, that at the same time, in a few Irish houses, people are chatting over a 'small black'.

Kawa czy herbata?

To pytanie jest do... popularne i jest te... tytu... em programu polskiej telewizji... niadaniowej. Program ten mam ostatnio w zwyczaju ogl... da... tu... przed wyj... ciem do pracy. Tematy w nim poruszane s... ró... ne i przez to nawet przyjemne. I na tyle nie wci... gaj... ce by o odpowiedniej porze wy... czy... telewizoriniesp... ni... si... do pracy. W... a... niet... kwest... chcia... abym dzi... poruszy... : Kawaczymo... eraczej Herbata?

W Polsce chyba jednak bardziej jest modna kawa, szczególnie tzw. ma... a czarna- niby nie ma si... ju... czasu ale

na ni... zawsze znajdzie si... chwilka. Tak... ma... czarn... pijesi... zazwyczaj w towarzystwie i to najcz... ciej przyjaci... lub dobrych znajomych. Przy takiej niedu... ej kawce rozmawia si... najcz... ciej o rzeczach ma... o istotnych- jaki... tam przygodach z ostatniej doby czy zmianie rozk... adu jazdy autobusów. W przyjemnej atmosferze up... ywa sobie czas a organizm dostaje przys... owiowego kopa. Jednak nie zawsze jest tak ró... owo. Trzeba uwa... a... z kim si... pije... ma... czarn... Kiedy... taki jeden powiedzia... do mnie : Mo... e ma... a czarna? I ja o zgrozo si... zgodzi... am. Niemia... amwprawdzieza du... o czasu ale przecie... taka malutka kaweczka jeszcze nikomu nie zaszkodzi... a. Tencz... stuj... czynnik... gdzie... w kuchni a ja czeka... am. I tak zlecia... o dobre dwadzie... cia minut. Po tym czasie zjawi... si... z chyba dwulitrowym naczyniem pe... nym dziwnie pachn... cej kawy. Nie by... a to nawet szklanka, przypomina... os... oikalbominaturowe wiadro u... ywane w dawnych czasach do dojenia krów. Pi... am to ohydztwo z trudem prze... ykaj... cko lejny... yk i nawetnie... mia... amprosi... ocukier-an... znów, by gdzie... znkn... ! To jeszcze nie by... o najgorsze. Niestety przez ten ca... y czas on milcza... . A kiedy próbow... amzaga... rozmow... , odpowiada... zdawkowoiznówby... os... ycha... tylko chlipanie ohydnej kawy i mo... e jeszczemoj... pod... wiadomo... ,któradar... a si... w niebog... osy: uciekaj! Obecnie staram si... unika... ma... ych czarnych z bli... ej mi nieznanymi osobnikami. Tak to wi... c w Polsce obywatela, czy to zim... czy latem popijaj... z przyja-

ció... mi kaw... i plotkuj... . W Irlandii jak zapewne ka... dy wie do... popularna jest herbata. Nawet krótka w przerwa w pracy jest nazywana, przerw... na herbat... . Pami... tam dok... adnie mój pierwszy dzie... pracy w Irlandii: zacz... si... s... owami: Mo... e herbaty? Ioczywi... ciesi... zgodzi... ami dosta... ammójpierwszym... yciukubek herbaty z mlekiem! Niestety ja osobie... cie z mlekiem pijam tylko kaw... lub zjadamp... atki. Dodzi... pami... tamgrymas na mojej twarzy, który mimowolniepojawia... si... zaka... dymkolejnym... ykiem. Nawetpróbow... amwustach odseparowa... te dwie cieczy- jednak nieztegoniewychodzi... o. Pó... niej... a... owa... am, ... eodrazunieprzyczna... am si... , ... e nie lubi... herbaty z mlekiem ,bo od tamtej pory ka... dego ranka mają szefcz... stowa... mnietak... zakrapiana herbat... i pewnie my... la... , ... e ten mój g... upi wyraztwarzy jestumnie czym... naturalnym. Dzi... ju... ka... dy, ktomia... okazj... pi... zemn... herbat... wie, ... enajlepiej smakuje mi ona z cytryn... . Tak wi... cobywateleIrlandii, je... liw... a... nie nie pracuj... to na pewno pij... herbat... z mlekiem.

Wychodzi na to, ... e pytanie „kawa czy herbata?”, sprawdz... oby si... idealnie w polsko-irlandzkim towarzystwie. Od razu by by... o wiadomo kto z jakiego kraju pochodzi. Cho... z drugiej strony ta teoria jest do... naci... gana. Mój polski ch... opiec w... a... nie w tej chwili delektujesi... herbat... ze... wie... utkim irlandzkim mleczkiem. I pewnie w tym samym czasie w niejednym irlandzkim domu kto... plotkuje przy ma... ej czarnej.