

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'

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Lots of anger over economic mess

Last week's piece in this column on the mess in the Irish economy generated much comment and I received several emails on the subject. Thank you to everyone who contacted me, but I cannot publish them all. Here are just two....

Dr Mr Duke

I have never written to a newspaper before now but your article in last week's paper on what has happened in the country over the last year or so and the bail out of the banks etc., prompted me to write this week. I read your column each week and while I certainly would not agree with your views all the time, you hit the nail on the head last week.

I am a public servant married to a man who works in the construction industry and we have really suffered over the last twelve months between pay cuts, job losses etc.

We have three sons, one of whom is doing the Leaving Cert this year, and I really fear for the future of the children as a result of what our politicians and big bankers have done to the country.

We have our priorities all wrong. We have €80 billion to bail out the banks, yet the chances are that there will not be a job for my children when they are finished their education, that's if my husband and I can afford to send the children to third level college in the first place.

I would march in the morning if there was one held in Dublin or Athlone or Galway or anywhere else to protest at what has happened. I agree with what you said a few weeks ago, that if you didn't have a family you would have emigrated in the past year. We would too.

I read on the Sunday paper where the big bankers, the people who have robbed us blind, are all living in mansions in sunny countries and that they are laughing at the rest of us who are here struggling to get by.

It is great to read people like yourself in the local media who are not afraid to express your opinion and I admire that. I listened to you when you were on Shannonside and you were never afraid to express your opinion there either. I hope you have the courage to keep it up. We have been let down by our politicians, the church, and by almost everyone we looked up to in the past. It's depressing but I suppose we have to keep going.

Maria

South Roscommon

(full name and address with the Editor)

Mr Duke

Your analysis of the terrible mess that we find ourselves in last week's paper was spot on. Jean Kennedy Smith was right when she said of Ireland years ago that Ireland "was a great country but the people have no sense of outrage". Keep up the good work.

James - Castlereagh

(full name and address with the editor)

Calcutta calling

Kate McManus, daughter of People columnist Tony, is going to Calcutta for ten weeks during the summer to help with the SUAS project, which works with some of the poorest people in the world. This weekend she is raising funds for the project. She will have volunteer bag packing in SuperValu Roscommon on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and on Friday night (9th) she is holding a table quiz at The Green Rooster, Church Street. Tables are €40 each and there will be a raffle on the night and a DJ later. Quizmaster Dermot Cox. Should be a bit of craic. Please support this very worthy cause if you can.

Quinn has to be saved

I do not understand enough about the situation at the Quinn Insurance Group to be able to comment on what is going on but if there are 6000 jobs at stake then we have got to try everything to save those jobs.

The only comment I will make is that a lack of financial regulation is largely responsible for the mess we are in at the moment and now that the regulator has stepped in there is uproar too. It would seem that there is no happy medium.

Interesting UK election

Those of us who like to follow politics will be very interested to see what happens in the UK general election, which will happen on May 6th.

Labour are hoping for a fourth election win in a row, but they will struggle to do so. In common with the situation here, there is voter fatigue with a Government who have been in power since 1997. However, the big question

is, can the Tories take advantage? I'm not so sure. There could well be a very close election result with the Lib Dems holing the balance of power.

It is also interesting to note that although the economy is one of the main issues, they are not as obsessed with the recession as we are here and that's for one very simple reason. The recession on the UK has not been near as

severe as it has been here which again shows that the Government blaming Lehman brothers for our problems is very dishonest indeed.

The UK election will also mean that there will be a poll in the north too. It was be interesting to see if Sinn Féin's strength has been maintained and will the DUP have to give way to the official unionists. All will be revealed in the next three weeks.



Images from Roscommon's very successful Easter Parade. See more photographs pages 24 and 25. Pictures: Mick McCormack.

Enjoying Easter

I had great relief over the weekend. Last Thursday I decided that I would not listen to any Irish news programme until Tuesday morning and I really enjoyed the Easter weekend as a result.

I attended a couple of football games, I played a few holes of golf, worked in Mid West Radio playing music, watched soccer, golf and racing on TV and brought the kids to the parade. Not a mention of NAMA, Sean Fitzpatrick or Bertie Ahern. It was super!

Best ever Roscommon Parade

Well done to everyone who was involved in the parade in Roscommon Town, which I attended on Sunday. It was by far the best parade that we have seen over the many years of its existence.

Well done to the organisers and to the many community organisations that took the time and made the effort to take part. I really enjoyed it. I heard that the Strokestown parade was excellent too and I think that there is a message in there for us all. The people who will fix our broken country will not be the politicians or the higher civil servants or the economists or the bankers. It will be the ordinary people. The people who we saw taking part in the parades last weekend. What we saw last weekend was community effort on a voluntary basis which is something that our politicians and others simply do not understand. The greed factor has meant that there are many people who will not get out of bed in the morning if there is not money involved.

It's time that the ordinary people called the tune in the future because those that have been in charge over the past decade have shown that they have not been able to run our affairs properly.

Local families bereaved

I was very sorry to hear of the passing in Dublin at the weekend of Eamonn Curran.

A native of Roscommon town, Eamonn was a member of the Roscommon minor football team that won the All Ireland in 1941 and was always a great GAA man.

When he moved to Dublin he became very involved in the golf scene and he rose to become the president of the GUI. In fact Eamonn

officially opened the clubhouse at Roscommon Golf Club when it was rebuilt in recent years. Eamonn never forgot his Roscommon roots and was a regular visitor to the county and to the town.

I was also saddened to hear of the deaths over the past week of Stephen Croghan, who was one of the great characters in Roscommon Town over many decades and also of Myles

Jameson from St Ciaran's Park who died in Spain. Myles was a very well known businessman in the UK for many years and in his time he was the owner of many horses who won many times and provided people in the Roscommon area with much entertainment over many years past.

To the families of all the three people I extend my deepest sympathy.