

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'

seamus@roscommonpeople.ie

No point fighting the Gardaí

I would back any person's right to peaceful protest but if even one Garda was even slightly injured in any such protest, then that protest is a total waste of time.

I understand the huge anger that is out there among ordinary people and I am sure that the people who are organising the protest marches in Dublin over the past few weeks have the best of intentions, but it is clear that there are groups who would seek to hijack these protests to cause trouble and that has to be stopped. There is no point anyone fighting with the Gardaí.

The guards have suffered pay cuts too and in fact many young Gardaí have been victims of the property crisis brought about largely by the Government and are themselves in negative equity. There is only way for the people to protest in my view and that is to wait until the next general election, whenever that is. We want protest definitely but no violence of any kind.

Rod is still rockin'

Last week I was off for a few days and we went to see Rod Stewart in the O2. The tickets were Christmas presents and it was the second time that we had seen him over the past twelve months or so and if anything he was even better this time than he was last summer in Thomond Park.

From the minute he took to the stage and belted out 'Love Train' to the final encore of 'Baby Jane', the veteran rocker was in brilliant form and it is hard to believe that here is a man approaching his middle 60's. He rattled out the hits one after another and he rocked the joint and the 14,000 people present for two hours.

The stage set, the atmosphere, the 13-piece band and the lighting was all top class. In contrast to Whitney Houston who is all of 18 years his junior, Rod Stewart knows how to entertain. A super night.

Differing opinions on Gerry Ryan

I received a number of letters and emails over the past two weeks on various subjects and here are two on Gerry Ryan:

Seamus,

I read your column every week and I want to comment on your article "Remembering Gerry Ryan. In my opinion Seamus, Gerry Ryan was the King of the Airwaves, a total professional, intelligent, honest, outspoken and very funny.

He was like a magnet that drew you to his show every morning regardless of where you were or what you were doing. He will be missed by the thousands and thousands of listeners that tuned in on a regular basis from the kitchen, car, office, lorry, or wherever.

Listening to the tributes since he passed away, you just knew that he was loved and respected by his staff and colleagues, which is the sign of a good boss!! Rest in Peace Gerry and thanks for the many, many hours of wonderful radio.

Helana Madden Feeney,

Liscaul,
Castlereagh.

Seamus,

I want to congratulate you on your typical honesty with regard to the death of Gerry Ryan. As usual you were not afraid to give your view, which may not have been that of the majority. His death was untimely and while he was a popular figure on radio he was not everyone's cup of tea. His passing, while very sad, hardly warranted the totally over the top reaction on RTE during a week that 900 people lost their jobs around the country in the Quinn Group. Keep up the good work.

Name and address with the Editor.

Note: There are as many opinions as there are people and it is nice to hear them all. On the death of Gerry Ryan I was most impressed by the article written by John Boland on last Saturday's Irish Independent Review which accurately sums up my own feelings on the matter. **SD**

In praise of 'Aftershock'

I would be the first one to criticise RTE when they are in the wrong, but I have to say that the 'Aftershock' series of TV programmes dealing with the economy and the aftermath of the recession last week were really well done, fair, informative and well researched.

The various programmes gave a balanced view of what is going on and just how much people are suffering at the moment. I know that most people are blue in the face saying it, but the economic priority has to be the provision of jobs for the people who are out of

work. Regardless of interest rates, the cost of living, or anything else, we have some chance of recovery if there are jobs in our economy.

To illustrate that, I met a man who is not really a friend of mine but a man that I know, on the Main Street in Roscommon Town last week. He is in his mid 50's and was in the construction industry. He lost his job last year and has had no luck since then trying to get work. He has two daughters who will be going to third level college this year and next year, and put very simply this man has

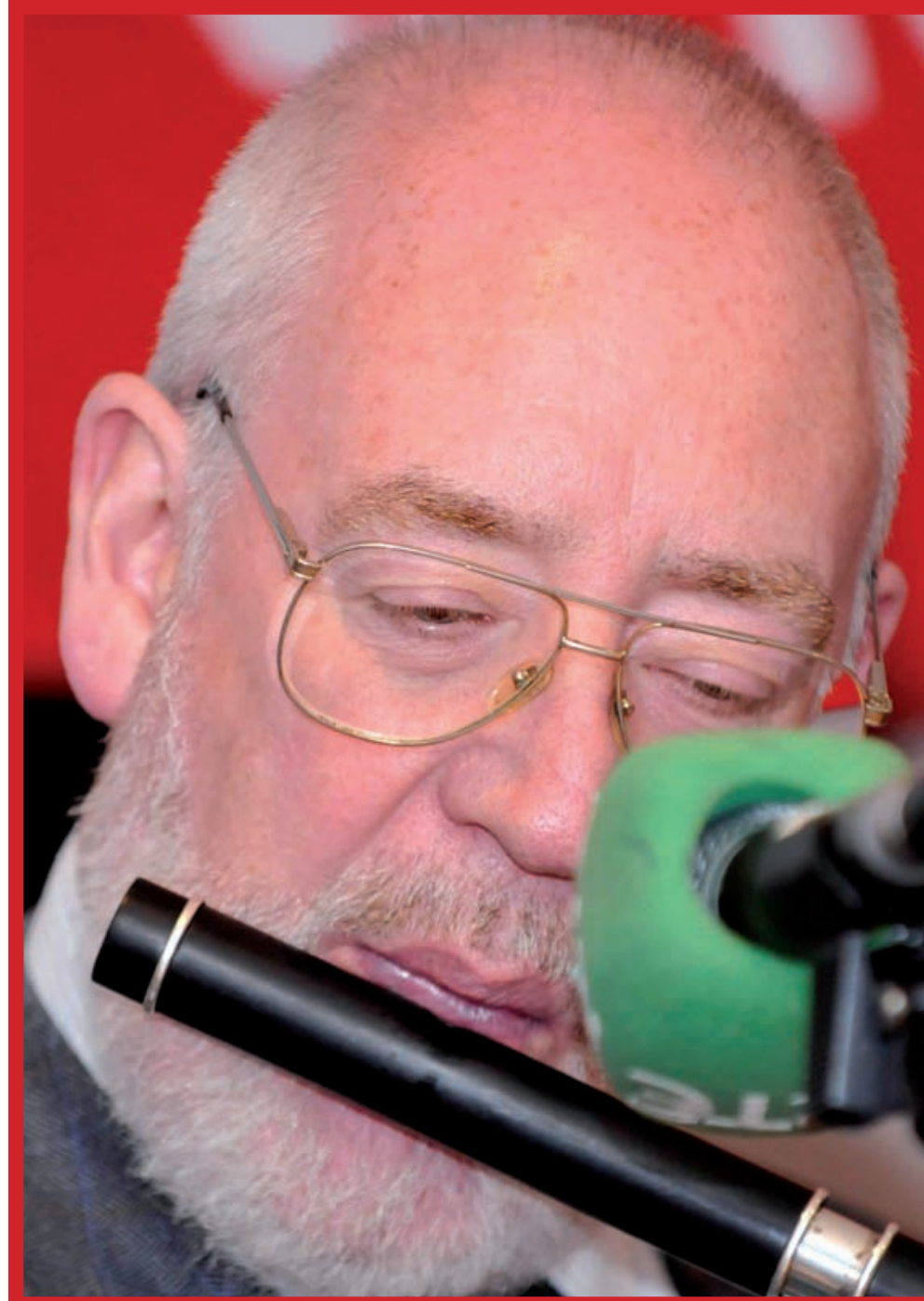
no money. He was self-employed so he is not entitled to any kind of pay related benefit. He had some savings but that money is gone now. He doesn't own a second house or a house in Turkey or Portugal or anywhere else, and when he was telling me about the bills he was facing later this year, the tears rolled down his face. He does not know what he is going to do. It was so sad and it could be any of us.

Anyone who thinks that the economy has turned the corner should have listened to what that

man had to say last week in the street in Roscommon town. He has no one to turn to. The banks won't lend to him, and even if they did, he has no way of paying back that money.

He can't get a job and he cannot emigrate either. There are so many people like him. Something has got to be done for these people and fast.

I know that there are honest efforts being made to straighten things out but we have at least two more savage budgets ahead of us, that's the reality.



'Countrywide' highlights importance of local GAA

Well done to the St Faithleachs GAA club on hosting the RTE radio programme Countrywide last week. Presenter Damien O'Reilly did a preview of the All Ireland championships and they also looked at the importance of the GAA club to the local community.

There were also pieces about the local sub aqua rescue unit and Lough Ree. The programme was recorded at the splendid new clubhouse in Ballyleague and I got there at the end of the programme. It was great to see Patsy Cox, Danny Murray, Paddy Lindsay, Henry Kenny, Derek Thomson, Frank Curley, Eamonn Bolger and all the other St Faithleach's people there on the night. People columnist Tony McManus and Liam Horan was there too to add their expertise to the night and we had a great chat afterwards about who might in the All Ireland title this year.

I got up early on Saturday morning to listen to the programme and it was excellent. Well done to all concerned.

RTE Radio 1 recorded 'Country-Wide' from the clubhouse of St. Faithleach's in Ballyleague last week. Patsy Hanly opened the recording with some traditional music. Picture: Andrew Fox.

Sweetness and light in Downing Street

It has been interesting to witness the shenanigans in the UK in recent weeks as David Cameron and Nick Clegg form a new Government. It is all sweetness and light at the moment but I wonder what will happen when the really

tough decisions have to be made.

There was consternation after the election in the UK at the thought of a hung parliament, but the rest of Europe have had to put up with coalition governments for most of the past 50

years, so the UK will just have to get used to it. I have a feeling though that choppy waters lie ahead because Cameron strikes me as a man who will not bow to any unnecessary demands from Clegg and the Lib Dems.