

Straight talking



with 'The Duke'

seamus@roscommonpeople.ie

At last the penny drops

At last, the penny has dropped, after two years in which every single Fianna Fail Minister, TD, and most of its members, were in total denial that they had anything at all to do with the terrible recession that we have in the country.

It is no surprise though that it has been Brian Lenihan who has put his hands up and said that he is very sorry for the part that the Government played in this recession and he has acknowledged that the Government has made some serious mistakes over the

past few years. I hope the local Fianna Fail people who have been taking me to task for saying the very same thing over the past two years have been listening to Brian Lenihan and the speech he made last week. When you hear Brian Lenihan admitting that serious errors were made by Government ministers, then you know that we are in serious trouble.

Brian Lenihan is the one really bright light in all the gloom. It's a pity that the rest of his colleagues would not stop their arrogant carry-on and

be a bit more humble about the whole thing. It is almost beyond belief what Anglo Irish bank and Irish Nationwide were allowed to away with. What really infuriates people is to see the likes of Sean Fitzpatrick returning home from his holidays at the weekend with not a care in the world. He and Michael Fingleton and the rest of the people who have bankrupted the country should be brought before the courts and made to answer for what they have done.

The waste of public money continues too. This week the Dáil returned

after its three week break for Easter and despite all the great things that we have heard about the spending of public money being watched closely from now on, there is hardly a word about any of that now. The Seanad is back too and it will continue to waste money as it has done for many decades past. Enda Kenny called for its abolition in a half-hearted way but there is not a word about that now either. Why is there no one with the political gumption to go in and made sweeping changes for once and for all?

We are right in the middle of the recession now and no matter what way it is dressed up, there are at least two more savage budgets to go before there might be a light at the end of the tunnel. I heard John Gormley say this week that we will all be paying water charges by 2012. It's all right for him. He is earning over €200,000 per year. It won't bother him too much to have to pay the water bill, or to buy his daft new electric car for €38,000 either. A lot of Government politicians have to get real.

Terrible tragedies

There have been three terrible tragedies in the region over the past week. The untimely and tragic deaths of John Glancy, Michael O'Callaghan and Leitrim player Philly McGuinness have brought an air of gloom to the whole region and to north Roscommon and South Leitrim in particular. It proves that a lot of what we talk about in these columns is unimportant in the larger scale of things. To everyone affected, families, friends, colleagues, club members etc, I extend my deepest sympathy. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anamacha.

UK move swiftly to ban methodrone

The dangers posed by a lot of the rubbish on sale in the head shops is underlined again in the past week with the decision of the UK Government to ban a substance called methodrone from last Friday.

This so-called 'legal high' was found to have been directly responsible for at least five deaths in the UK recent months. There was no messing around in the UK. They banned the drug immediately. It shows that the local anti head shop group has been very accurate during their campaign. Of course those who operate these shops will flout the law and come up with a different way of selling this stuff but it does not mean that the campaign should not continue. The Roscommon anti head shop campaign has been a huge success and they can be proud of their efforts so far. But it is a tough battle.

Best wishes

Best wishes to two colleagues on recent events. Noel Fallon leaves The Champion after 15 years there to take up a new career and I wish him the best of luck. I wasn't able to attend his farewell party last week in Foxe's but I heard that it was an enjoyable night. Congratulations to Ian Cooney of the Roscommon Herald, and his wife Catherine on the birth of their son last Friday. Both men are Liverpool fans so they will need all the joy they can muster elsewhere in their lives!

Dust settles on volcanic ash crisis

The volcanic ash cloud that has brought such chaos to the transport system over the past week is unprecedented and has caused such huge problems for a lot of people. It was the last thing that anyone needed but given that it never happened before, governments were not sure how to go about dealing with it.

The safety of passengers had to be the priority and given that no one was sure about what damage the dust cloud could cause, it was the right thing to do to close down the skies until the airlines were sure about the situation. When the dust settles (sorry!) I would wager that the airline industry will be in even more trouble

than it was before all this happened. I am glad that I was not caught away somewhere because I could just imagine what it would be like to be stranded with children on holiday somewhere in France or Spain. It is lucky in some ways that that this happened during a school term because if it happened during the school holidays, there would have been even more chaos.

The airports and schedules will start to get going again from yesterday and today and hopefully there will not be too much disruption. Watch out for huge rows about compensation and travel insurance as things return to normal.



Ah ref! An 'exchange' in front of the watchful eye of the referee during Saturday's Roscommon v Dublin All-Ireland U-21 semi-final in Cavan. Roscommon's Niall Kilroy is on the receiving end. Picture: Ken Nolan.



No encore for Whitney

Last weekend my better half and myself went to the O2 in Dublin to see Whitney Houston on the first of her three nights on Dublin as part of her world tour and I have to say it was a massive disappointment. I know that callers to Liveline were venting their worries in advance of the concerts but like everyone else there on the night we are ready to give her the benefit of the doubt. But it was painful to watch as this once great singer struggled badly on almost every song she attempted. It was

like watching a once great footballer who just went on far too long. The facts are that she just can't do it any more. When it came to the high notes she turned the microphone out to the crowd for them to sing the songs. She rambled on and on at times and spent a long time off the stage too. The crowd were very, very mannerly. There was no booing and there was huge goodwill. People wanted her to do well. It was the first concert that I was ever at where there was no call for

an encore. People just stood up and left when she was finished. I hope she enjoys this concert tour because she will never do another.

A word about the O2. I had not been there before and it is a magnificent venue. I can imagine that the atmosphere is fantastic at a good concert. The LUAS pulls up outside the door and the acoustics and layout in the place is top class. I will be looking forward to going there again. But it won't be to Whitney Houston.