

A Greedy Ireland, A Greedy Ireland: get maps, pictures, castles, travel, tourism and information of Ireland.

It is the 3rd of August 2007 and in Ireland it still raining! Where is the nearest mental home??? I want to see the men in the white coats!

The biggest event of the Irish summer season is the Galway Races. This is where the wealth and the power in Ireland is congregated, for a full week, into the various commercial marquees, to talk and work the floor, in a classic networking emporium that suits the Irish business psyche the best. The politicians will mix with shakers and movers and every conversation will have a motive for taking place.

There is drink and food in abundance, the opportunity to meet anybody who is anybody, and deals will be done in a haze of alcohol and gambling, probably to be regretted when the implications are realized back at the office a week later.

The Galway Races are, however, still a wonderful mix of the sophisticated socialites and the rural dwellers and farmers, young and old, who are there for the craic which in this case means drink, gambling and sex, not necessarily in that order! For many people the horses are a secondary attraction, and the fillies in the bars and clubs merit more attention.

The races run for seven days now and bring massive revenues to the city of Galway and its environs. This year that income will be particularly welcome because of the recent water contamination problem that hit parts of the city and county. This has scared many potential tourists from visiting the area as well as making life very difficult for families and commercial enterprises. This problem, of course, is being blamed on local county council who had not upgraded sanitation plants in line with the massive increase in population of the area. The blame really should be directed at the government who had not allocated adequate finance to the local authorities to carry out the necessary improvements.

This brings me nicely to the gripe of the week!

Yesterday the final link in the M1 motorway from Dublin to Belfast was opened between north of Dundalk to Newry. There is now what is known as the North/South Corridor in existence. Needless to say all the politicians and assorted hangers-on were out in force at the official opening to bullshit about the wonderful opportunities this will create. These are the same politicians, from successive governments, who should have this road (and many others for that matter) built in the 1980's when they were getting funds specifically for that purpose from the EU in Brussels. Instead, because of their mismanagement of the economy and gross incompetence, these funds were unlawfully diverted to day to day spending because of the huge current budget deficit that they, and not the people, had allowed to accumulate.

Ireland is light years behind the rest of Europe in terms of infrastructure. Last week a survey found that, per capita, the country is one of the richest in the world, ahead of America and the UK no less. Nobody, from anywhere in the world, who spent time here would realize that so called "fact".

Our medical service is probably lesser in quality than many African countries that the Government sends money to each year to improve their health system. People go to A+E and lie sick on trolleys for days on end. There are very few regional health centres that treat cancer, for example. Thus, unfortunate people and their families travel long distances to get treatment in Dublin hospitals which are themselves under huge pressure to service the needs of the areas to which they are allocated. The system is top-loaded with administration staff on high wages thanks to the crazy benchmarking process that Bertie Ahern agreed to some years ago.

This monster that has been created will haunt the country for decades to come. In his permanent pose of trying to please all people at once, Bertie has bent over and given into greedy union demands for equalisation of pay in the public sector. Thus if the firemen get a rise, the Gardai will have to get one and so on and on. All the various public sector services are therefore linked into this benchmarking process. In return the unions promised greater productivity from their members. How laughable this is! Public service workers do not live in the real world. They are cosseted in warm wool, provided by the rest of the country's workers, self employed and businesses paying taxes to get a service that should be provided by half their number, and half of their cost. They would not know what productivity was if it hit them in the face and then gave them a French kiss!

This giveaway by Benchmark Bertie has already cost the country 1 billion euro and that is just from Phase 1 of the process. Ireland really is a country that is living on borrowed time. Around the corner and fast approaching is a recession. Jobs are being lost left, right and centre. Why?

The answer is that we have priced ourselves out of the market because of unnecessary wage inflation. No wonder the multinationals are leaving in their droves, to East European countries and further abroad.

The good times are about to come to an end. The first people that will be hit are the ordinary workers and self employed, together with small business owners. The very last people that will feel the pinch will be the protected public sector who will continue to suck the life out of the economy to the very end. These leeches will not face reality because they do not have ability to do so. They will play their violins while the Titanic sinks!

Here is a proposal that might save the day.

The country is managed by incompetents and their minions, the public service workers. These people are not managers. So get in some hard nosed business tycoons to do the job for a price.

Pay Dermot Desmond 50 million euro to design the concept that will run the country right. When Dermot has the concept drawn up (in probably 2 weeks), get Michael O'Leary to implement it. Michael will not be cheap, but he will do the job. His cost will be probably be less than price that is paid

every year for the storage of obsolete electronic voting machines. Public servants will quiver in their boots for the first time and soiled underwear could be the order of the day.

But what a great day that would be!

Seamus Maguire

lookaroundireland.com

About the Author

John lives in Ireland with his wife Jackie and their three sons. John's work has been used by various organisations in Ireland and the USA. He was invited to the Milwaukee Irish Festival in 2003 to show off Ireland in their Culture Tent. Recently he has teamed up with Michael Londra to produce a DVD called Look Around Ireland to the tenor voice of Michael Londra.

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