

'McCabe smear' texts to gardai found

John Mooney

GARDA Headquarters have identified text messages sent and received by former garda press officer Dave Taylor to a number of officers, which said that a journalist had interviewed a woman who made an abuse allegation against Sgt Maurice McCabe.

It had been thought Taylor texted only Níorín O'Sullivan about the issue but an analysis of phone data has discovered that several other senior officers received similar messages.

Records of the texts and call logs are to be passed to the Charleton tribunal, which is

investigating whether there was a conspiracy among gardai to smear McCabe in 2014 after he exposed abuse of the penalty points system and raised concerns about policing in Cavan/Monaghan.

Among those who received similar texts about McCabe was Martin Callinan, the garda commissioner at the time, who has since retired.

An analysis of messages found on mobile phones used by Taylor has uncovered ongoing communications among a small group of senior gardai relating to O'Sullivan, her promotion to commissioner, Callinan's resignation,

and allegations made by McCabe.

A large volume of texts was exchanged after O'Sullivan transferred Taylor out of the garda press office in May 2014 for allegedly disclosing private correspondence between Callinan and the Department of Justice. Some texts are said to contain vulgar comments about O'Sullivan, while others described garda officials as "rats".

The frequency of the texts appeared to change following Taylor's arrest in 2015 on suspicion of disclosing information to journalists following his departure from the garda press

office. Security sources suspect the officers involved began to use unregistered mobile phones to communicate with each other, as they suspected force management might have become aware of the earlier texts once they seized Taylor's phones as part of an internal inquiry.

Some officers, including Callinan, appear to have ceased communicating with Taylor following his arrest and suspension from the force.

According to security sources, the contents of the text messages indicate that O'Sullivan's promotion provoked bitterness among some

colleagues, who appear to have either disliked her style or resented decisions she made.

Taylor has denied having any agenda against O'Sullivan and maintains he decided to reveal details of his own role in smearing McCabe out of remorse.

One of the central allegations made by Taylor is that he sent a text message to O'Sullivan, then deputy commissioner, to say Paul Williams, a special correspondent with the Irish Independent, had interviewed a woman who made a sexual abuse allegation about McCabe. The director of public prosecutions had already

decided not to prosecute as no offence was disclosed.

Taylor claims O'Sullivan responded to his text with a one-word reply: "perfect". O'Sullivan maintains she received a large number of messages from Taylor because she had instructed him to alert her to the publication of any story which could have an impact on the force. The instruction was contained in a circular dated November 2013.

O'Sullivan has also claimed she used the word "perfect" or "thanks" as a "perfunctory" reply to the large number of messages she received as deputy commissioner and was

unaware of Taylor's activities to tarnish McCabe before he admitted to doing so in a protected disclosure.

The commissioner previously denied being aware of any smear campaign against McCabe when she appeared before an Oireachtas committee. She has resisted calls from opposition politicians to stand aside until the Charleton tribunal completes its work. The government has endorsed her position.

Security sources believe O'Sullivan will allege that she herself was the subject of a whispering campaign by some colleagues when she appears

before the Supreme Court judge Peter Charleton.

McCabe and his family are suing the HSE and Tusla over the false allegations of child sex abuse made against him.

McCabe, his wife, Lorraine, and their three children issued proceedings last Wednesday for malicious falsehood, negligence and emotional suffering, as well as for breaches of their constitutional rights under privacy and data protection legislation.

This followed the discovery that Tusla, the child and family agency, sent a file containing the allegations to gardai in 2013.

TIMMY CARREY, DOMINICK WALSH



The UC-42, now a war grave for 27 German mariners, on the seabed at Roche's Point just outside Cork harbour



Great War shipwrecks off Irish coast labelled national monuments

Justine McCarthy

MORE than 1,000 First World War shipwrecks in Irish waters are to be declared national monuments by the end of 2018, when they reach the centenary of their sinking. The wrecks include warships, U-boats, passenger liners and fishing vessels that lie off Ireland's coast, from Cork to Donegal.

By November, 903 of 1,054 war wrecks will have come under the remit of the National Monuments Act, as they turn 100 years old. They are primarily owned by Britain, though some have been bought privately and others are held by Lloyd's insurance company.

Many of the wrecks lie in waters off both the north and south coast, known during the war as "killing lanes" because of a submarine offensive by the German navy.

Most of the wrecks turn 100 this year because the highest number of wartime sinkings in Irish waters, 650, took place in 1917. Among them was U-58, the first submarine destroyed by the American

counter-offensive after it entered the war in April 1917. It sank off Power Head, in Cork harbour.

UC-42, another submarine, lies 5.2km off Roche's Point, also in Cork harbour. It blew itself up on September 21, 1916, while laying mines. All 27 German mariners on board were killed and the wreck has been deemed a war grave. Live mines and at least one torpedo remain on the wreck.

UC-42 was found during a survey for a Kinsale gas storage project in 2010. Two years later, safety signs and protective covers were removed from the site by unidentified divers. Last September the National Monuments Service warned that the wreck posed a safety risk to divers.

HMS Audacious was the only British dreadnought sunk during the war. It fell foul of a German mine off Tory Island, in Co Donegal, in October 1914.

Not all the vessels were war casualties, however. The German-owned Aud was packed with arms destined for use in the 1916 Rising when it was



An expedition to recover two anchors from the wreck of the 1916 gun-running ship the Aud in 2012, off the coast of Cork, above, and, left, a diver swims alongside a wreck off the northwest coast of Ireland

detained in the Atlantic by the British Navy. While being escorted to Cobh, in Co Cork, it was scuttled by its German crew just outside the entrance to Cork harbour.

British Navy divers later conducted a salvage of the Aud, recovering some of its cargo.

This provided material evidence for the prosecution of Roger Casement, who was hanged in England for treason.

Ireland's most famous shipwreck, the RMS Lusitania, which sank off west Cork killing 1,198 passengers and crew, was already protected by an under-

water heritage order before its centenary on May 7, 2015.

Last week, the Oireachtas heritage committee was told by Terry Allen, a principal officer in the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, that the Lusitania's bridge telegraph

machine had been lost when it fell 27 metres to the seabed during a licensed but unsupervised dive last July.

Allen said the accident occurred when a flotation bag deflated. Subsequent dives failed to locate it. A smaller, less important, telegraph machine has since been retrieved from the Lusitania.

The wreck is owned by Gregg Bemis, an 88-year-old American, who has donated a filigree brass-framed window from the first-class deck, recovered six years ago, to a heritage centre on the Old Head of Kinsale.

A 20-metre bronze sculpture bearing the names of the 1,962 people on board will be unveiled in a memorial garden there in May. There are plans to build an underground Lusitania museum on land that has been leased to the organisers by the Office of Public Works for 50 years.

Envoy's Vienna flat 'was like a student bedsit'

Ken Foxe

FURNITURE reminiscent of a 1970s Dublin student flat, a mysterious room locked up for 14 years, stained carpets and a pervasive smell of damp were among the reasons cited by an Irish diplomat for wanting to move house.

Mary Whelan, as the Irish ambassador to Austria, eventually transferred from a property in Vienna which had been leased for €7,200 a month to a new residence costing €9,000. A letter she wrote to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin shortly after her appointment in late 2014, which has now been released under the Freedom of Information Act, outlined her case for an upgrade.

Whelan spelt out a series of problems with the building, which was said to be rapidly deteriorating. First rented in 1977 from a local businessman, it was proving impossible to have improvements carried out.

Parts of the basement were unusable due to leaks and damp, she said. The ground floor had an ornate "marble room" which should have been available for receptions but could no longer be used due to a "strong smell of damp".

Above that level, there were two bedrooms, one of which was now being used as a changing room for catering staff. When damp spots appeared, the landlord suggested the bed could be moved away from the wall.

"The library is a pleasant space, albeit sparsely furnished," Whelan wrote. "The very large, ornate and dark reception room could be described as cavernous or having the 'whoa factor' depending on your point of view."

Paintings borrowed from the National Gallery Ireland were described as "very dark" and in need of rehanging, and in some cases had chipped cases.

The ambassador's submission continued: "This very large room also houses the landlord's piano, which is not in good condition. A wonderfully elaborate clock over the fireplace is broken but was undoubtedly state of the art 100-plus years ago."

She reserved the harshest criticism for the master bedroom and one of the upper floors. "The master bedroom is frankly in a bad state and the condition of the furniture recalls student accommodation in 1970s Dublin," claimed Whelan.

"While there is some new furniture on this floor, some of it could not be given away because of its decrepit condition."

Carpets in the corridors were "permanently stained" and "fairly worn", while

rugs were not big enough to cover anything except the centre of the rooms.

The top floor was called a dilemma, with carpets that appear to be "as old as our [Ireland's] tenancy" — that is, almost 40 years.

There was also a mysterious room, which had a sign with the name of the landlord. A cleaner, who had worked at the Irish residence for 14 years, said no one had ever set foot inside.

Plumbing and wiring were also a problem, with radiators breaking down and being "too old to repair". There were not enough electrical outlets, with extension cords in use throughout the building. "It takes some dexterity to avoid tripping over all of this," said Whelan, but added that, with considerable

expenditure, the premises could be outstanding and among the best that Ireland had overseas.

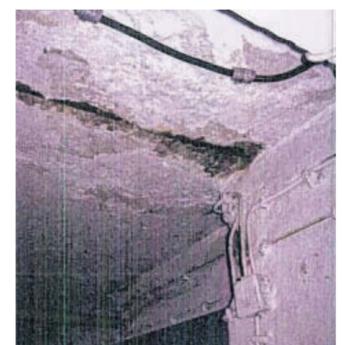
At a meeting with the agent responsible for the property, health and safety concerns were raised over the "pervasive smell of damp" and the proximity of leaks to electric cabling. "The issues raised were not disputed by the agent (they were often acknowledged by vigorous nodding) although it remains to be seen how far any follow-up will go to address the underlying issues," said Whelan.

The problems remained intractable, however, and the Irish ambassador began looking for a more suitable home. She was given a generous rent ceiling of €150,000 a year, and the chosen property on Theresianumgasse cost €8,964 a month. The move itself, in 2015, cost €146,000, including €25,504 to transfer the "very dark" paintings.

Other costs included €26,900 for a security deposit, €20,000 for curtains, and €12,738 for a security system.

In a statement this weekend, the Department of Foreign Affairs said it had rented the original property for a number of years, but it had been deteriorating with little input from the landlord. "It had substantial issues in terms of wiring and general health and safety; it also contained asbestos, was in a poor condition of maintenance, had considerable damp, was poorly insulated and would not be in line with current building regulations," it said.

"The replacement property was in the same rental range as the existing building. [It] is located in a suitable area with adequate representational areas, with considerable savings of over 50% forecast in relation to utilities (gas and electricity bills)."



The envoy's former residence had the 'whoa factor', according to our woman in Vienna

Ireland backs pesticide lobby on chemical ban

Valerie Flynn

IRELAND is pushing to water down an EU regulation on protecting people and wildlife from hormone-altering chemicals.

The European Commission wants to establish rules for identifying endocrine-disrupting chemicals to allow their use in pesticides to be banned, but member states have reached a stalemate over how stringent these rules should be.

At a meeting in Brussels last week, the Department of Agriculture indicated it would not back the commission's proposal without a derogation to allow endocrine disruptors to remain on the market in cases of "negligible risk" to human health and the environment. The pesticide industry is lobbying for this derogation, while

environmentalists say it would create a worrying loophole.

Without this derogation, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, once identified, would be regulated in the same way as carcinogens, which are usually banned in pesticides.

The Department of Agriculture claims a reduced range of pesticides, particularly fungicides, could lead to problems with pest resistance.

Ninja Reineke, a senior policy adviser at ChemTrust, a British non-governmental organisation, claimed the derogation Ireland wants could be "easily exploited to enable continued use of identified endocrine-disrupting chemicals".

A 2014 study estimated the annual cost to EU countries of male health problems caused by endocrine-disrupting chemicals at €600m.

The study examined only the health problems for which there was the strongest evidence of a causal link with exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the womb: undescended testes, hypospadias (abnormality of the penis), testicular cancer and low semen quality.

A study published last week by the European Crop Protection Association, the pesticides lobby, found that the proposal without the derogation could remove 16 pesticides from the EU market with a knock-on effect on crop yields, which could fall 6%-17% for potatoes and 4%-7% for barley.

The Department of Agriculture said, when a final version of the criteria was presented for a vote, "human health and the environment will be the primary concerns". @valerie_flynn

No going back on water charges, says Dempsey

Stephen O'Brien

NOEL DEMPSEY, the former Fianna Fail minister who negotiated Ireland's EU derogation from water charges, has said the opt-out has lapsed. He believes water charges are now required to pay for a sustainable supply and clean waterways.

Dempsey has differed from the stance taken by his former cabinet colleague Micheál Martin, and the Fianna Fail policy of having no charge. He said the government should provide a generous allocation of water to meet a family's domestic needs, and impose punitive charges on those who use excessive amounts.

The former environment minister and TD for Meath said it was clear when he negotiated Ireland's opt-out clause in the EU water framework directive (WFD) in 2000 that

the derogation would lapse if water charges were introduced, as they were in 2013.

"We should charge for water. Somebody has to pay for it, and we need to pay for it in accordance with usage, subject to a minimum allowance that will allow people [to meet] all their needs," said Dempsey.

"Once you go above, you should pay. I would be happy to be double charging somebody that wastes water, and to finance [Irish Water] that way if you could, but I am not sure the maths stack up.

"All of us should be entitled to enough, and Irish Water should now be in a position to tell us the average use per head of population. I would give a generous allowance and after that, I would have heavy penalties, but it doesn't look like that is going to come out from the current stalemate."

Dempsey said Ireland was under intense pressure from the European Commission and other member states to adopt the WFD when Fianna Fail won the 1997 general election and he was appointed environment minister by Bertie Ahern.

He was instructed to seek a derogation for Ireland and he secured an opt-out on the basis that we would continue "in accordance with established practice", without domestic water charges.

"It was my view that if we ever introduced charges, then we were in a position where we couldn't go back on that," said Dempsey. "So when we introduced the charges in 2013, we were caught. We got all the derogations we could, but once we moved away from that, it was gone."

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