

IF YOU HAVE A COMMENT TEXT PAT ON 0872953395
FOLLOW HIM ON TWITTER @patflanagan1

PAT FLANAGAN

email pat.flanagan@irishmirror.ie



ALE BE BACK Pat in Irish bar

Irish wing it to enjoy sun in Canaries

IT has always amazed me how we complain about foreigners coming over here and stealing our jobs when wherever you go in the world you find our own people in gainful employment.

I've been in Fuerteventura for the past week and the amount of Irish over there is incredible.

And who can blame them when there's year-round sun and a large beer in a bar for less than €2.

I also tried my hand at serving pints in Linda Murphy's Irish bar in Corralejo, which is a home from home for many expats.

You might say it never rains but it pours in the sunny Canaries...

» YOU'D imagine the last thing languishing Labour needs is to be reminded it was the water charges party but Alan Kelly won't let it go. Members know in their hearts and souls (they claim to have both) the unveiling of the levies was a disaster that pushed them to the brink. But the ex-Minister is still pushing for people to pay for something they are already charged for and is claiming the moves proposed to scrap them may be illegal. Face facts AI, water bills are gone and they may have washed away Labour with them.

Switch off TV licence plans

HUNGARY has been forced to shelve a proposed tax on internet data traffic after mass protests.

The draft law, which was even condemned by the EU, sought to put a levy on each gigabyte of information transferred.

Not alone would it screw the people, it would also restrict free expression and the public's access to data, something which the right-wing government of Viktor Orban has been trying to do since it took office.

Fine Gael and its stooges can expect a similar response if they try to force people to pay a TV licence for owning computers to raise an extra €5million for RTE.

Our corruption-riddled Garda is a lying shame

UP to 50 secret bank accounts, money laundering, fraud on a massive scale... and this is just the police force... welcome to the most corrupt country in the Western world.

While we might not be able to compete with Nigeria and Zimbabwe but after the latest Garda revelations we are getting there.

Name another country anywhere in the world that can



boast a police force that used an actual laundry to launder money that should have gone to the State.

Find me another nation where law officers could falsify up to one million breath tests and still keep their chief in her job.

Did I mention the 14,700 wrongful convictions and the smear campaigns against gardai who tried to highlight wrongdoing?

Each one of those wrongly convicted can now sue the State for damaging their good name in combined claims that could run to tens if not hundreds of millions of euro.

There are and will always be crooked cops but to have a crooked police force, that's something else.

It's not that the public are not concerned about the never-ending Garda scandals, it's just that they are finding it hard to keep up to speed with the new ones.

Still the disclosure that the laundry at the Garda Training College was being used to launder money is straight out of the Police Academy movies.

Think about it, the institution charged with training cops to uphold the law collecting rent of €124,903 for land belonging to the taxpayer and keeping the cash that should have gone to the State at a time when the country was on its knees.

And it gets better for there was another account held for laundry and services, where 37% of the funds were spent on meals,

entertainment, contributions to charity or to parish clergy, and the golf society.

It has now been revealed there was as much as €5million sloshing around in up to 50 bank accounts.

This week an internal audit into Templemore Garda training college recommended a host of changes. Why not a host of charges?

Sinn Fein TD David Cullinane claimed the college accounts were effectively used as "a slush fund".

Had these goings-on taken place in a private company the Garda would be investigating and not a team of accountants.

But this is Ireland where corruption is so endemic that it is almost impossible to find the line between lawmakers and lawbreakers... if indeed there is one.

What is even more worrying is the auditors couldn't give an assurance the financial controls at the Garda College were compliant with public procedures or the Garda Financial Code. So we can't even be sure anything has changed.

The Garda Commissioner yesterday accepted gardai may have acted dishonestly by inputting false breath test figures into the force's Pulse computer system.

Noirin O'Sullivan told the Oireachtas Justice Committee it has not been established why almost a million false breath tests were recorded.

Could this systemic falsification of

figures have anything to do with the fact that bonuses were paid for increased numbers?

The Commissioner sincerely apologised for the "grave mistakes" and "wrongdoing".

This being corruption central, no one says words like fraud, crime, or criminal activity.

Such descriptions are only applied to the guys in tracksuit bottoms who sell drugs and steal cars.

For years we wondered why there were so few convictions for white-collar crime; the latest revelations provide all the answers we need.

Is it any wonder the public have lost confidence in gardai when there are 17 separate inquiries, investigations, reviews and reports being carried out into a police force that is one-third the size of London's Met.

There are also Garda internal section audit reports and disciplinary reviews, GSOC reports, Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee and Independent Policing Authority hearings.

Ireland is by the day becoming less a republic than a series of tribunals, investigations and inquiries.

To think the breath test scandal came about because of an anonymous tip-off from a reserve who didn't like what was going on when it didn't seem to bother the regular force.

But if people are expecting change they shouldn't hold their breath. In the meantime we can't confirm the force's website has been changed to garda.lie.

An actual laundry was used to launder cash

I'm Brownd off with Andre

JUST when you think Mrs Brown's Boys couldn't get worse they only go and hire Peter Andre.

The Mysterious Girl singer told his fans (don't ask) this week that he was on the set of the hit comedy, saying: "How cool is that? It's gonna be awesome."

I can think of other words to describe it.

The last time he did a bit of TV work, I'm A Celebrity back in 2004, he ended up with Katie Price. Maybe he'll try to shift old Agnes, above. Now that would be funny.



FOR PETE'S SAKE Singer to star in show

Psychics' spell of bad luck on airwaves ban

THEY should have seen it coming but spare a thought for the psychics who have been banned from placing adverts on the airwaves by the broadcasting watchdog.

Under new guidelines to kick in this summer, fortune tellers cannot make "claims that future events may be predicted" or purport "to make contact with deceased persons".

Funny that, I was told by a man last Sunday that the bit of bread in his hand was the actual body of Christ and that if I was good, he predicted we'd all go to heaven.

Isn't it strange psychics can be kept off the airwaves yet the jingle bells of an organisation which raped, tortured, enslaved and sold tens of thousands of children can be broadcast before the Six O'Clock?



RULING Psychics snubbed