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Rise in Entry College Point Requirements Following Jump in CAO Applications



The CAO have seen a significant rise in the amount of applications to attend third level education this year, with a total of 74,499 applications received by the CAO, a 5 percent jump compared to

73,063 last year. The rise in applications shows a rise in the level of people coming through second level education.

In last year's CAO offers, points rose in subjects including architecture, science, engineering and law, with a record number of students passing

honour's maths in the Leaving Cert, receiving an extra 25 points in the process. Points also rose due to increased demands in those particular fields. The most popular subjects, architecture and engineering courses, rose by 20 to 25 points, and the popular courses in science and law rose by 5 to 10 points.

Higher birthday rates in Ireland over the last 15 years have played a part in the amount of people going through the school system, resulting in a higher amount of applications to the CAO this year. It has been predicted that by 2028, there will be a total of 212,000 enrolments, or even higher.

- Abby O'Sullivan

Taiwan Fatal Plane Crash

Incredible footage was captured of a TransAsia passenger jet ATR 72-600, crashing into a river in Taiwan. The airline which can seat up to 72 passengers, was heading towards the Kinmen Islands.

The plane, carrying

58 passengers, was seen clipping a taxi as it hurtled towards the river, instantly smashing the planes left wing and causing an extreme amount of debris to litter the bridge and river.

The plane took off at the nearby Sungshan

Airport at 10.53 am local time and then lost contact with the air traffic control just two minutes after taking off.

Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration has

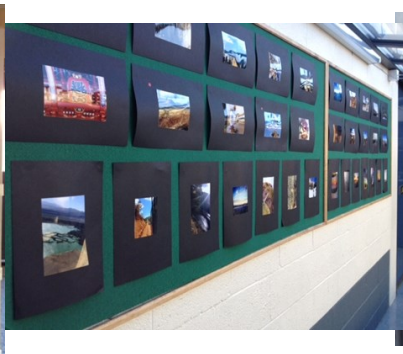
said that 19 people were confirmed dead, 15 injured and 24 are still missing.

- Jen Gordon

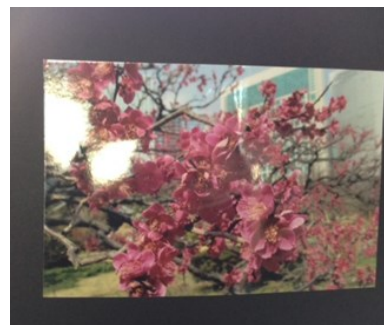
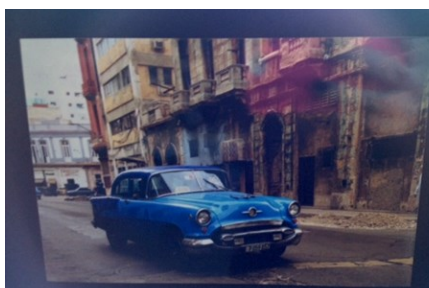


Geography Photo Competition

In House Area 2 last week, there was a display for all the geographical photos people have taken. The top 20 pictures had stars on them and the winner of the competition was Anna Reid 3MY with the Runner Up being Joe Oxley 2T..



My personal favourites are:



- Keelin Burns

Is Football becoming just a Money Game?



With modern day football at the peak of its powers, there has been a lot of speculation as to whether football is becoming just a game dominated by the use of money. Unfortunately even purist fans would have to admit that the game is slipping from their grasp and falling straight into the hands of the welcoming billionaires who are investing in the game. Money is always welcome in any sport, but it's the uneven distribution of this money that has the potential to ruin the modern game. In

the breakdown of every league in the game it is inevitable that the team with the biggest spending power tops the league, which sometimes is not a true reflection of which team is the best but instead which team has the most money.

This introduction of money is also banishing some of the true roots of football, with young players demanding a lot more money from the game at an early age and a consequent unwillingness to put in the hard yards and develop at a young age. The example being set is disappointing with players preferring to go to a certain club because of the money involved instead of choosing the right club for them to pro-

gress their career. Recent examples of this would be the likes of Ravel Morrison and Dele Alli who rather than choosing to go to a club where they would get real playing experience, chose Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur respectively just because they were offering substantial money in the contracts.

Personally, the introduction of billions of euros into the game is tarnishing the reputation of football and providing an unbalanced advantage to some teams over others. Also, this money and a renewed success for some clubs is introducing a new generation of 'football fans' who are more commonly known to purists as 'glory hunters' who have

followed only recent success stories because these teams are winning trophies.

How this can be rectified is a tricky question which many are struggling to answer. Perhaps the solution is to promote the local game more and to convince young fans to attend and support their local teams rather than being drawn to support the more generic big spenders in Europe.

- Andrew Blair White



Brady Leads Patriots to Super Bowl

Tom Brady cemented his Hall of Fame reputation after playing an influential role in the New England Patriots 28-24 win over the Seattle Seahawks. After a shaky semi-final performance and the controversial 'Deflate Gate' incident, Brady had every right to be nervous before one of the biggest games of his career.

But he carried the pressure and the Pats team on his shoulder admirably, throwing 37 pass completions and four touchdown passes, a Super Bowl record. 'He's the best and it showed again

tonight' said the Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels. The game also marked a fourth Super Bowl title for Patriots head coach Bill Belichick. Brady and Belichick are the most successful player-coach combination the NFL has ever seen, the American football combination of Lionel Messi and Pep Guardiola.

The Seahawks came moments away from winning a second consecutive Super Bowl title when they reached 4th and inches on the last play of the game. But madness ensued when Seattle

QB Russell Wilson decided to throw the ball instead of giving it to Marshawn Lynch to run it over the line. Wilson and Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll received heavy criticism after the game for this naïve call. As disappointing as it was for Seattle to lose such a close game, it would have been worse for the Patriots who have lost two Super Bowls in 2008 and 2012 to the New York Giants. This

win will allow the 38 year old Tom Brady to retire with a clear conscience and secures his path into the NFL Hall of Fame.

The Patriots Super Bowl parade took place in Boston city on Wednesday February 4th.

- Brian Coronella



Luck of the Irish

Paul McEvoy and Richard Whelan Two NFL fans from Ireland have an amazing tale to tell as to how they snuck into the super bowl with no tickets and managed to score seats worth \$50K. Basically their game plan was to be incredibly confident and thought that if they looked like they were supposed to be there they wouldn't be questioned.

They managed to get past two layers off security and then hid behind

a bunch of about 20 first aid workers, straight up to the front door and hid in behind them.

Once they were through they skipped past another security guard that wasn't paying attention. By this stage they could already see the field. "The atmosphere was insane" they described. Neither of them could believe that they got in.

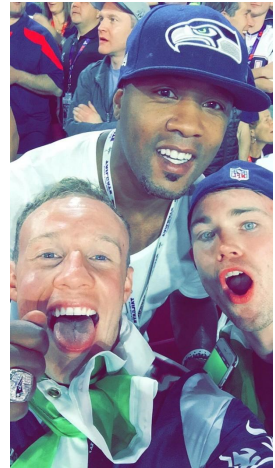
After bouncing around seats for the first half of the game, taking seats of those that got up to get

food or use the restroom. During this time they spoke to a man who told them that the two girls he was sitting with were performing in the half time show and wouldn't be attending the second half.

These seats they occupied in the second half were a whopping \$25,000 apiece. They also got a chance to sit beside former super bowl winner Lawyer Milloy. The only downside to their day was that the two fans watched

their team, the Seattle Seahawks, lose to their opponent the New England Patriots.

- Kate Gallagher



Tom Brady's Irish Heritage



Last weekend, the well-known quarterback, Tom Brady's team the New England Patriots won the superbowl. This is Brady's fourth time winning and had not gone unrecognized. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Charlie

Flanagan, is planning to honour the quarterback and his Irish roots by presenting him a Certificate of Irish Heritage.

Brady has said, "My father is 100 per cent Irish. We took a trip over there together and visited some of the places where my family came from. That was a great experience for me and obviously I am very proud of my Irish roots". Brady's great-grandfather

came from County Cavan and his great-grandmother came from County Cork, they both immigrated to America during the Great Famine.

The certificate has previously been presented to Tom Cruise, whose great-grandfather was born in 1799 in Dublin, US vice-president Joe Biden, and Daniel Day-Lewis. The first certificate was given to Joseph Hunter who trag-

ically lost his life in the World Trade Centre on the 11th of September 2001.

The government has presented this certificate to over 250 well-known personalities with an Irish heritage. Approximately 2,500 of these certificates have been bought from Fexco, the company which produces the certificates on the government's behalf.

- Keelin Burns

Irish teenager still detained in Egypt

"You can't only choose to be human in one country and the ignorant in another." These are the words of the family of Ibrahim Halawa, the Irish teenager who has so far spent more than 550 days in an Egyptian prison, awaiting trial for crimes he did not commit.

Halawa is among 493 prisoners facing a mass trial with charges including murder, attempted murder and preventing people from

praying in a mosque – all of which carry the death penalty. His sisters were also arrested over multiple trumped up charges. They were held for three months before being released on bail and returning to Ireland, leaving their younger brother behind.

Ibrahim and his family were on their annual holiday in Egypt when the military coup to oust President Morsi began. His sisters wit-

nessed the Rabaa massacre, where 817 people were killed. One sister was shot 20 times by rubber bullets, and it was after this that the siblings decided to join the peaceful protests that had started to fill the streets of Cairo. Security forces quickly opened fire on the protestors, forcing many – including the Halawa siblings – to flee the Al Fath mosque and try to barricade themselves

in. By next morning, they found themselves in custody.

The Egyptian court has postponed the date again to March 19th, without stating a cause.

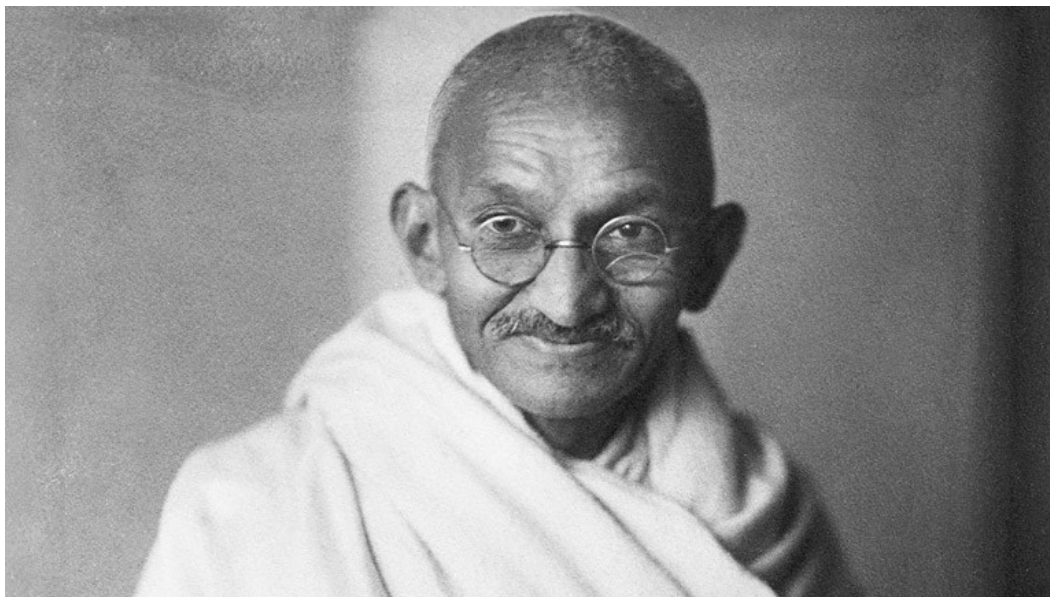
- Kate Malone



Quote Corner

'The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.'

Mahatma Gandhi



Fighting terror with terror

As 2014 drew to a close, so did the USA's longest war in its history. December 31st marked the official ending of combat in Afghanistan, by President Obama, after thirteen years of occupation. The war has spanned over four presidential terms, and was the initial target of the Bush administration's international military campaign, the 'War on Terror'. Although the speculation and theorising of the USA's basis for invading Afghanistan is still rife and ongoing, the official reasons given by the Bush government was to dismantle al-Qaeda, and deny it a safe basis of operation by removing the Taliban from power. By and large, these aims were achieved. Within the first two years of the war, the US military overthrew the reigning government of Afghanistan and replaced it with a democratic model. While the forces of al-Qaeda were not eradicated completely, they were undoubtedly weakened by the USA's relentless attacks. So yes, the brutality of the world's largest and best equipped military, gained results, but it seems important to ask: at what cost?

Until the 2010 leak of the Afghan War Logs, by whistle-blower, Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning), to *WikiLeaks*, the operations of the war seemed ambiguous and the true magnitude of human loss was kept from the public. It has since been released that over 20,000 Afghan civilians died as a consequence of the thirteen-year combat. The War Logs called into question the legality and morality of the USA's conduct during the war, and engendered new and better-informed discourse on the topic. The records are surprisingly honest, and reveal numerous incidents in which Afghan civilians were killed, unnecessarily and recklessly. These details were tactfully kept from the US media. Incidents, such as the killing of Shum Khan, a deaf and mute civilian, who was shot dead before he could make attempts at communicating with US Marines and the machine-gunning of a city-bus, in which fifteen unarmed Afghans were killed, are abundant in the documents. MIT professor and political theorist, Noam Chomsky, has called the omission of these events and the details of the brutality of the US army towards the Afghan population, propaganda on the part of the government. Similarly, Daniel Ellsberg, writing for *The Guardian*, has claimed that Bradley Manning's leak was on par with his own disclosure of the Pentagon Papers in 1971, revealing how the US public was misled by the media about the nature and events of the Vietnam War.

Afghanistan's history is tumultuous. In the 20th century alone, the country suffered through eight periods of conflict and civil unrest and the USA's invasion, codenamed Operation Enduring Freedom, came directly after five years of civil war, which rendered the country fragile and unstable. Now, as the military withdraws from Afghanistan, the country is left as fragments of what it once was – economically and culturally. The effects of the war linger on Afghanistan's population and with the civilian death toll at over 20,000, there is immense emotional suffering in the country. In 2009, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health claimed that over two-thirds of the Afghan population suffer a mental illness, caused directly or indirectly from the trauma of the war, but it seems as though these 'invisible wounds' will take years to treat, as Afghanistan's hospitals are already over run with wounded civilians and soldiers from the war. Indira Gandhi, Kabul's largest children's hospital, has the beds and facilities to treat about 350 patients, but today, it has over 500 admitted. Most of the children, a doctor at the hospital explained, have not been wounded directly from the war, the overwhelming majority of patients suffer from diseases contracted from unclean water and poor sanitation, malnutrition and other very controllable infections that have not yet been treated due to the lack of widespread health care in the country for the past thirteen years. As well as this the United Nations have stated that Afghanistan is littered with undetonated explosives and have estimated that over one million Afghans live within 500 metres of a 'landmine contaminated' areas.

The failing of NATO forces to remove these deadly devices will mean even more casualties in Afghanistan.

The Guardian editorial described the Manning leaks as 'a devastating portrait of the failing war in Afghanistan, revealing how coalition forces have killed hundreds of civilians in unreported incidents, Taliban attacks have soared and NATO commanders fear neighbouring Pakistan and Iran are fuelling the insurgency.' Before the War in Afghanistan is written into history, it seems worthwhile to briefly look at Iraq, and its current state. Iraq was invaded as part of the War on Terror in 2003, and was viciously bombarded by the US military for eight years. The USA withdrew their occupying military in 2011 and left the country feeble and insecure. And now, four years

later, almost half of Iraq is controlled by the extremist rebel group, ISIS. With captives of the militia being beheaded and burned at the stake, the terrorist forces the USA thought they had eradicated in Iraq have re-emerged, arguably worse than before. Undoubtedly, the fragile and desperate state Iraq was in after the invasion, and their lack of a strong government, was the very thing that allowed the sudden surge in ISIS's control over the country. Now, CIA officials are warning that Afghanistan could become a 'haven' for ISIS forces, just as Iraq did.

So, the USA's war in Afghanistan gained results, and time will tell whether or not they will be as short-term as those seen in Iraq. As it stands, it seems that the large number of lives lost in Afghanistan was inhumane and reckless. It cautions that the very thing the US military claimed to wish to defeat, could emanate again, in a larger and more destructive form. With 20,000 dead in Afghanistan and 100,000 in Iraq, the USA has bred desperation in the people of these countries and has not rid them of tyranny but has fuelled it. The historian Howard Zinn said: 'How can you have a war on terrorism when the war itself is terrorism?'

- Lili Mae Boorman

