



## John McGuirk v the Brogans

THE HEATED reaction to the housing of ‘unvetted military-aged men’ has reached fever pitch in recent months, spear-headed by a few key personalities on social media. One such maven of the new right is **John McGuirk**, whose *Gript* news website got its knickers in a twist last month when reporting on Dundrum House in Tipperary, where a group of Ukrainian refugees were scheduled to be housed. The ensuing row featured some names who will be familiar to fans of Goldhawk.

In the headline for its story, *Gript* reported that “a famous



John McGuirk

Dublin GAA family” had “established” the company that owns the hotel – the site of protests by local “concerned citizens”. While it is true that **Bernard Brogan Sr** (father of **Bernard Jr** and **Alan**) founded Brogan Capital Ventures Ltd (BCV), the reality is the family hasn’t been involved since 2017, when they exited the business.

For some reason, the roving reporters at McGuirk’s organ seem to have not bothered to ask the Brogans for a quote or clarification.

After a pile-on by the usual suspects on X, an understandably peeved Bernard Brogan Jr replied to *Gript* on the social media platform, highlighting that neither he nor any of his family “are involved in this hotel or any other hotels!” *Gript* eventually updated the article to include Bernard Jr’s comment in a note at the very bottom of the story.

Into this melee stepped none other than Goldhawk’s old pal, **Niamh Parker**. Replying to



“Bugger! Forgot me phone”

Brogan’s X post, Parker breathlessly wrote that the GAA star should have known better than to “get involved” with **Jeff Leo**, the sole director of BCV now listed in company documents.

Parker and her hubby, **Alan Beechinor**, will be familiar to readers of *The Phoenix* as the once-vaunted co-founders of artificial intelligence company Altada, which imploded in 2022 in a hail of litigation and recriminations.

The reason she was so exercised about the Dundrum House matter is because the Jeff Leo listed as the principal in BCV is the very same former Morgan

Stanley banker who invested in Altada once upon a time.

Leo subsequently played the opening notes of Altada’s funeral dirge when he petitioned the High Court to have a liquidator appointed to the embattled firm in late 2022. A subsequent investigation by liquidator **John Healy** found that Parker and Beechinor, who were co-chief executives at Altada until its collapse into liquidation/receivership, managed to lose a whopping €20m in a rather short space of time.

It’s no surprise that there is no love lost between Parker and Leo. Meanwhile, the exact details

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of how Altada's funds evaporated remain unclear and creditors were told in the summer of 2023 that a Garda and Corporate Enforcement Authority investigation into the matter was under way.

**FOXROCK-BASED money-bags Ger O'Leary had plenty to celebrate last month after the part-time racehorse trainer saddled Doyen For A Drink to land Cartmel's bank holiday Monday EWGA Handicap Hurdle on the 50th anniversary of the famous 'Gay Future Coup'.**

**O'Leary is best known for his control of the OKR Group, which includes high-profile franchises for Burger King and Apache Pizza. He also owns Lance Bloodstock Ltd.**

**The win by Doyen For A Drink, who is owned by his brother, Pat, was a sentimental one, given that the brothers father, Pa O'Leary, had been one of the players in a famous 1974 betting coup at the track.**

**Builder Tony Murphy and his pals had purchased Gay Future and 'sent' him to small-time Scottish permit holder Tony Collins with a view to landing a gamble over a busy bank holiday Monday. The horse sent to Col-**

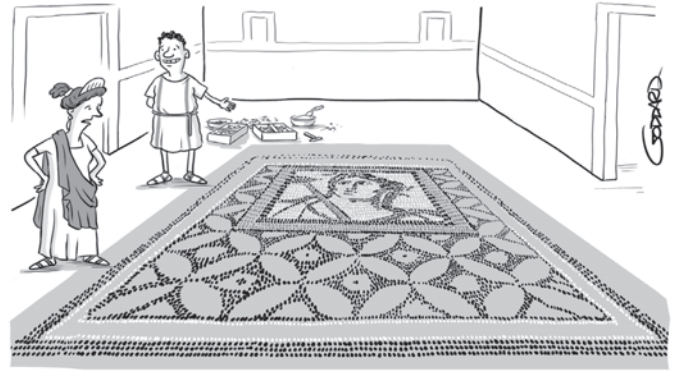
**lins was in fact a far inferior horse and the 'real' Gay Future remained in Ireland in training with Eddie O'Grady in preparation for the big day.**

**Collins entered three runners at three different meetings on that August bank holiday Monday and the readied Gay Future travelled over to Cartmel for the race, winning at an inflated price of 10/1.**

## Mark Quick's many hats

IT'S BEEN a challenging few years for entrepreneur **Mark Quick**, who has dipped his fingers in a great many pies but pulled up relatively few plums lately. His eclectic track record, however, suggests he won't be kept down for very long.

Fans of Goldhawk will recall that Quick's 9th Impact gaming company got a €170,000 wallop from the taxman recently. The company had previously been the subject of lavish coverage from hacks who rhapsodised about its Big Brother: The Game, developed over three years at a cost of around €1m (see *The Phoenix* 23/8/24).



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The company had another setback when the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) ordered it to pay an Indian employee compensation on the grounds of racial discrimination. The complainant said 9th Impact cut off his salary for months due to financial problems at the company but did keep paying some of his Irish colleagues.

**Kumar Swapneel Shreyansh** is one of four workers who recently obtained orders for non-payment of wages this year. It is unclear why Quick *et al* at 9th Impact did not make any appearance at the WRC hearings but maybe it is because Mark has personal experience of that

particular forum.

In a hearing in 2022, Quick gave evidence in a case he took against Nephin Whiskey Ltd, a Mayo-based distillery company in which he was a co-founder along with **Jude** and **Paul Davis**. The distillery had raised a tasty €6m from investors but the pandemic brought about significant delays.

Quick subsequently claimed that he was unfairly dismissed and that his business partners had "concocted" a contract on which his signature had been forged. In his own evidence, Paul Davis described the claim

*Brief Cases continued on page 30*

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as “quite simply rubbish... There was no need for me to concoct it” since Quick had “written the contract himself.”

Quick also sued the Davises, claiming shareholder oppression, while they, in turn, lodged proceedings against him for allegedly diverting business away from Nephin “in plain and obvious breach of his fiduciary duties”.

The case was settled in 2022 and Quick is now *in situ* as managing director of Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Ireland.

He was surely unfazed by his whiskey adventure, having a long career in business that exhibits an appetite for giving it a go. One example was Quick’s involvement with Blackhall Properties, which is owned by the **Cosgrave** veterinary family, who sold their Village Vet business to Mars Capital in 2022. Quick was a director here from March 2021 before exiting in January 2024.

He has been listed as a director of several software companies

that never seemed to get off the ground and was also a director for a couple of years of an interesting company called Sound of Water Ltd, set up with architect **Cathal Curtin**.



Mark Quick

This entity changed its name to Twin Spaces in 2015, having come up with what looks like a prototype of the (controversial) Portal on Dublin’s North Earl Street.

The Twin Spaces installation featured large video screens that sought to “connect [Trinity College’s] Front Square with Brooklyn”.

## Norah orbiting once more

ONE OF **Norah Casey’s** ventures is about to enter a new dimension as she gears up for the launch of *Planet Woman Travel*. Edited by her good self, this new quarterly magazine – aimed at “intrepid women travellers” – will “curate the best of female-focused travel and destinations for solo adventure, wellness retreats

and incredible experiences”.

Fans may recall Planet Woman Academy, which Casey launched to help women “fulfill their true potential” in life and business. She held events in high-profile venues such as the RDS and Mansion House circa 2017/8, but alas the venture ceased to operate in 2019.

Tumbleweed blew through the academy’s social media pages and *planetwomanacademy.com* went offline. By the end of 2022, a Casey company called Planet Woman Ltd was sitting on accumulated losses of a less-than-starry €425,000.

Happily, Norah cashed in elsewhere, when she sold most of her Harmonia magazine titles to Irish-American investor **Liam Lynch’s** Irish Studio in 2017, including *Irish Tatler*, *U Magazine*, *Food & Wine Magazine* and *Auto Ireland*. Business Post Group subsequently acquired some of the titles in 2019, which are now published as free supplements with the *Business Post*.

Norah retains assorted companies and kept *Woman’s Way*

magazine, which is edited by her sister, **Carissa Casey**. Family members have always featured in central roles. Norah’s late husband, Richard Hannaford, was editorial director of Harmonia, while brother **Ciaran** was CEO and niece **Shauna O’Halloran**, was editor of *Irish Tatler* and *Ireland of the Welcomes*.



Norah Casey

Carissa featured briefly in the news in 2014 when former subscriptions manager **Susan McDonald** claimed in the Employment Appeals Tribunal that her problems “really started” when Carissa took an active role in the company in 2012. (Almost a decade earlier, Carissa had

her own employment schemozzle and went to the High Court in 2003 seeking to stop Moranna Ltd from dismissing her as editor of *Business and Finance*, less than a year after she took that job.)

Happily, all that unpleasantness is long behind her and Carissa is now helming *Woman’s Way*, which is where her big sister’s “incredible experiences” have recently featured.

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