



The Raven

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GLENSTAL ABBEY SCHOOL

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ADRIFT IN MADRID

I visited my brother in Madrid about three weeks after the bombing. I would have imagined the Spanish people to be still very shaken by the attack, but admirably they seemed to have gotten over it quite well. In fact, life in Madrid seemed no different from any other major capital – packed trains, busy streets etc. Undoubtedly, the incident is still deeply ingrained into the back of their heads, as the black drapes covering the city's balconies can verify.

We took a trip down to the targeted train station which, had the doomed train not been a few minutes late, might have been destroyed. Here I witnessed a marked difference between the rush-hour atmosphere of the city centre and the melancholic, eeriness of the station. The outside was plastered with flowers, crucifixes, candles, letters and photos. Families were making their routine visits to relight flames and replace their withered flowers – even 3 weeks after the attack, many couldn't hide their emotions.

Having paid our condolences, we went for a quick 3 hour stroll of the areas of interest in Madrid. I was surprised to see a stunning palace with matching gardens, the Pardo, to be so empty. This fabulous palace, the former home of Franco, shows just how much Spaniards want to rid themselves of the memory of their authoritarian ex-leader.

Obviously I had mixed feelings about bullfighting – I heard of its gruesomeness, barbarity and utter disregard for the suffering of the poor animal – but having seen one I am able to appreciate the cultural justification of this sport. The roar of the crowds and the unmistakable “Ola” when a thousand pound beast skims past the poised Matador, is incredible. The atmospheric build up climaxes when the Matador kneels in front of the oncoming bull and with outstanding agility lures the bull to his side with a wave of his cape – just inches from his head. The crowd go wild, children hold up pictures of their brave hero and this test of mental and physical courage is almost over. Now the lethal blow must take place. A one meter sword slid through the gap in the bulls' shoulders and the day is his – crowds cheer and the bull is dragged off. Yes it's brutal, yes it's gory but it is unquestionably entertaining and truly an ingrained part of Spanish life.

Unfortunately I am not able to comment on Spanish cuisine, as 'Lidl' pizzas satisfied our culinary needs. The pubs however are worth a comment. They are mostly small but spacious places, all wonderfully unique where sober, sophisticated people chat over a glass of wine or a tiny beer. There are even several Flamenco bars for those who want a true taste of traditional Spanish culture.

Watching a Madrid match in a city where soccer is a religion was undoubtedly the highlight – the ticket was bank-breaking but the atmosphere alone was worth it, to see world class players score 2 unbelievable goals, to me, was a bargain.

Shane Farrell (VI)

FRENCH CONNECTION

Mon épopée irlandaise s'achève avec regret. Les cinq semaines passées dans ce beau pays ont été excellentes, d'une part dans ma famille d'accueil, d'autre part à Glenstal.

Le système scolaire irlandais est très différent de celui français. Suivre les cours au début est difficile mais on s'y habitue peu à peu. On note les cours et on relit le soir pendant l'étude pour se familiariser avec le nouveau vocabulaire. Le travail personnel qui est donné par les professeurs est fait sans trop de problème. Si on a besoin d'aide, on n'hésite pas à demander aux autres, qui sont toujours là pour nous aider. Les premiers jours à Glenstal ont été un peu difficile, mais après tout se passe très bien, 'on suit le mouvement'. Après les temps de cours, la possibilité de pratiquer de nombreux sports est très bien. Les équipements sportifs sont proches et faciles d'utilisation. Il ne faut pas hésiter à joindre une partie de football ou de rugby. La vie à l'internat est très agréable, les chambres se composent de huit personnes et sont assez grandes. En général les élèves accueillent très bien les étrangers.

Le temps passé dans la famille est une très bonne expérience, car on est totalement plongé dans la culture irlandaise. La famille fait tout pour que son correspondant soit au mieux: au programme, visite de musées, découverte du paysage irlandais, initiation aux différents sports irlandais, comme le football gaélique, le hurling, le rugby, les courses hypiques, etc. C'est dans la famille que l'on parle le plus anglais et c'est là aussi où l'on fait le plus de progrès.

Venir à Glenstal pour améliorer son anglais est une expérience très enrichissante, c'est pourquoi je conseille de le faire sans hésitation.

Arthur Holenka—Fifth Year 2004

The proceeds from the Trócaire boxes and some private donations came to €1385. This is distinct from the €1200 which came from Mrs Maeve Casey and those who took part in the Trócaire fast during the month of March. This year students were invited into solidarity with the people of RWANDA to mark the tenth anniversary of the genocide. Our contribution is greatly welcomed.

MICHAEL JORDAN WATCH OUT!

Glenstal fielded two basketball teams against St Endas in Limerick recently. The 1st Year team acquitted themselves very well going down 16-13. Jonathan Frisby top-scored with 7 points and there were good performances from Shane Cosgrove and Brian Costigan.

The 2nd Year team lost 15-32 despite a courageous performance. Captain Malcolm Phelan was excellent and was top-scorer for the side. Other strong performances came from Jamie Hunt and David Thomas.

Gaelic Football

Glenstal took part in the annual U14, 4-team Gaelic blitz with Rockwell, Roscrea and hosts Newbridge College. Glenstal recorded a very rare win over Roscrea 2-2 to 1-7 in the playoff for 3rd place. Though defeated in all 3 group matches Glenstal showed continuous improvement as the day progressed. Players who shone were Donagh Hurley and Chris Clarke. Gerardo Tena became one of the very first Mexicans to score a goal under the GAA code.

The North Munster Sports will be held on Tuesday 11th May in Limerick and on Thursday 13th May in Castleisland. There are some promising athletes to watch out for. Conan Reilly in the javelin and Paul Collier in the shot and discus. Cathal O'Connor in 2nd Year and Sam Holt in 1st Year are two athletes who will compete in a number of events on both days. For further information you can visit www.northmunstersports.com

TIMEO DANAOS.....

The Classics Department does not fear Greeks bearing gifts of ancient Greek and Latin textbooks to Room 6. J.C.

SPORTSDAY '04



10.00	Mass
11.00-12.30	Tennis Finals
11.30-12.45	Music
12.45-1.45	Lunch
2.00-3.00	Athletics
3.00-4.00	Team Games
4.15-5.00	Tea Time
5.15	Awards



10.00	Mass
11.00-12.30	Tennis Finals
11.30-12.15	Music Part 1
12.30-1.30	Lunch
1.30-2.15	Music Part 2
2.30-3.30	Athletics
4.00-4.45	Tea Time
5.00	Awards

TENNIS NEWS

Many congratulations to the Glenstal boys for their magnificent success in the Tipperary tennis tournament.

Winner of under 14's boys singles-Daniel Heffernan. Winner of under 14s boy's doubles- Jack Holt and Paul Comerford. Winner of under 14s mixed doubles Andrew Ryan and partner.

UNDER 19 Plate Semi-Final

Abbey School 3 Glenstal 1

A close match in which the single were shared with Diarmuid O'Keeffe winning for Glenstal. In the doubles the Abbey School triumphed in the first two matches to secure a 3-1 victory.

Team: Matt De Vere-White, Diarmuid O'Keeffe, Kevin O'Callaghan, Jamie Morton

UNDER 14 Cup

Col. Spioraid Naomh 3 Glenstal 2

A very good performance against a talented side.

Team: Daniel Heffernan, Cathal O'Connor, Sam Holt, Jack Holt

SOCCER RESULTS

6th Year v Villiers

Glenstal dominated the game and took a four goal lead with Mark Shanahan (2), Carden Kent and a great shot from Peter Doyle all on target. Villiers scored two late goals.

3rd Year v Villiers

Villiers won 4-1 but the final score doesn't reflect the match. Glenstal had plenty of chances to score and failed, including a missed penalty. Villiers scored some good goals and at one stage led 3-0.

1st Year v Villiers

Glenstal recorded a good 4-2 victory in a tight game. Glenstal goals came from Sam Holt (2), Ross Ferrara. Villiers helped with an OG.

1st Year v Rockwell

Glenstal 2—Rockwell 5 (R Fullam x2)

Seniors v Rockwell

Glenstal 2—Rockwell 1 (P O'Malley, F Kiely)

2nd Year v Villiers

Glenstal 1—Villiers 0 (R Roche)

A Belgian in Scotland

My degree is Psychology and Business studies, it achieves a balance between the two which does not show much of a difference in workload besides having to do a dissertation in 4th year for psychology.

The psychology side of things avoids a historical approach and focuses more on introducing a number of concepts which are basic to psychological reasoning (eg. perception, cognition, social psychology and research methods). The three lectures a week from 11-12 and tutorials every two weeks, are more than enough to grasp these general concepts. My opinion of this course is that it is interesting despite originally being more scientific than I expected, but I was soon grateful that it wasn't a bunch of hypothetical banter.

Business studies has shown itself to be a suitable step up from leaving cert business. This is because many of the same concepts are presented, but are then developed further to give more relevance and practical credibility. As with psychology, the first year gives a general overview of many areas in business (marketing, finance, organisational studies, etc), usually spending between four and ten lectures on each area. This gives a good idea of how each module is taught in a university environment and helps the decision for which courses to specialise in second year. There are three lectures a week from 5-6pm and a tutorial a week, for which some work is due (but the tutors are very understanding). At first I found business to be disappointingly boring but soon discovered that that was more due to the lecturer and presentation, the standard of which, in my opinion, has varied in both psychology and business.

For someone who is not particularly interested in the numerical side of business and constantly learning formulae, as you would in economics or accounting, I find psychology and business to be a good combination. Also, the statistical side of psychology is dropped in this combination. If either of the courses were to be taken separately, such extra courses would compulsory here. For example to take a business degree requires following courses in accounting and economics also, but psychology cancels one of these.

What I didn't know when I came here was that I was required to follow 3 courses and so I needed to choose another course in addition to psychology and business. To fill this gap I originally took French (higher) because I was not yet sure how much work my other two courses involved, but it turned out to be a disappointment because there was very little French involved and when there was, it consisted of learning vocab. For the rest the course consisted of French political history during the second world war. After realising my mistake I took Philosophy instead of French which, despite my lack of knowledge of the subject and dislike of what I now know to be folk philosophy,

turned out to be an interesting introduction to philosophical concepts and reasoning.

Each course requires me to do three 2000-word essays a year in addition to an end of year exam. However, an average of 60% across the three essays of any one of the subjects would grant an exemption from the relevant summer exam.

The halls that I'm staying in (Pollock Halls) have around 2500 students in them and have been integral to my meeting a lot of people and overcoming the original administrative disaster that I had to go through to get started here.

To say any more would be to start about the city itself which is a different experience in itself. Bars, night clubs, comedy clubs and student unions take up most of a student's life here as they would anywhere else.

Brendan de Belder (Class of 2003)

Musical Notes

The last few months have been particularly busy for all those involved in music at Glenstal. March saw the presentation of the inaugural Glenstal cup to Jake Boland of 4th year at the Feile Luimní competitions in Limerick's Georgian house. Mary Fulham who teaches many students voice in the school came up with the idea for the cup. The competition was open to all male voices of under 19...perfect for all the talented singers of Glenstal!!

Much hours of practise and hard work went into the weeks coming up to the competition. A total of 14 Glenstal students entered and sang a variety of songs in a variety of languages. Congratulations to Jake Boland and many thanks to Mary Fulham for all her hard work.

Friday Lunch time recitals resurfaced again with the third years and 6th years impressing the school with their talents. The recitals were held in preparation for the leaving cert and junior cert practicals which took place in the school before the Easter break. This is an important occasion for both groups especially Leaving Certs as the practical accounts for 50% of their leaving cert grade. All students performed exceptionally well and the examiners were impressed with the standard and variety of the music. Congratulations and good luck to all with their papers in June.

For the next few weeks the corridors should be filled with music as students prepare for Piano, woodwind and voice exams. Also preparation is underway for Parents' Day. This year's concert should be better than ever as there are not only talented students through the school but also some talented bands. All those hoping to make a star appearance should get practising!!!

Hazel O'Herlihy

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

I'm just about to complete my 1st year of Environmental Health at the Dublin Institute of Technology. Most people are not quite sure what Environmental Health is all about and I think that is because it's such a broad area. You may think it's about preventing pollution for example. But really Environmental Health is a study of the links between the environment and human health. For example the food we eat, the buildings we occupy, the water we consume and the air around us all have an effect on our health. So although it's hard to express what Environmental Health is all about it fits into a few areas: Food Safety, Building Control/Safety, Water Quality and Environmental Protection (Air, Waste etc.). In my experience the two main areas of focus seem to be food and built environment (building control etc.).

The course is a 4 year science degree, with 3rd year being a paid professional placement. This placement is with a health board where students undertake real work such as auditing food premises including restaurants, slaughterhouses and even school kitchens! Other work may include taking water samples for analysis, dealing with a food complaint from a member of the public, inspecting a pre-school for any potential hazards or analysing food products for quality. This is the work of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO). EHOs have enforcement powers which they can use as necessary. So you are making a real difference in protecting people. Graduates are automatically recognised as EHOs. but of course you don't have to work as an EHO you can go on to further study, work in private industry or even as a consultant, advising companies on such matters as compliance with health and safety regulations.

The subjects we actually study are mainly sciences along with law and communications among others which all link together under a number of broader headings. Not all of these subjects are studied in 1st year, and it seems accepted in college that 1st year is the most boring of the four years. There is also a lot of practical work in labs which makes the course more interesting and hands-on.

It's important to note that Environmental Health in Ireland can only be studied at DIT. DIT is different to other colleges like Trinity or UCD as it has no main campus; it is based at several different sites all over the city. Although you will be based at only one of these sites there are occasional lectures in another one, and some of the facilities such as the gym or swimming pool are in other sites also. This can be a pain sometimes, but students can use the facilities in any DIT site. I found DIT unusual because of this and it seemed less student friendly than the likes of UCD. That said there are lots of good points like the city centre location and it's easy to make friends as the Environmental Health classes tend to be very small with only 39 students in my class.

Overall I am happy with my choice of course and college. I think it would suit anybody who likes science and who is interested in making a positive difference in people's lives.

Matthew Morris (2003)

Chess competitions, both internal and inter-school are over, and the chess evenings on Tuesdays and Wednesdays have become pleasant quiet evenings with nothing more demanding than a relaxed friendly game. Not too relaxed, mind, or you find yourself making some really stupid move! I think the competitions this year have provided valuable experience, even though our greatest achievement was to get into the third round of the "Secondary Checkmate" competition. It is worth noting that Limerick is a very strong chess county, having provided almost one fifth of the schools in the national competition: so the challenge is greater, and consequently the opportunity to improve. Finally, congratulations to Charles de Belsunce, who won the Burke-Neerman Trophy competition, and who will receive the award on Sports Day.

CHOIR NEWS

We may be at the end of the academic year, but the work of the school choir isn't showing any signs of tapering off. Much credit and gratitude is due to all the choristers for their continuing dedication and commitment.

During Holy Week, when the school was on holidays, the eight Sixth Year boys in the choir took the very unusual step of returning to Glenstal, where they joined the monastic community in the singing at the major liturgies of the Easter Triduum. Their presence added a whole new dimension to the music at these ceremonies and was greatly appreciated by the community and by the many guests who came to join us. It was very tough work indeed, with a lot of new and difficult music to master. Many thanks to them and the four altar servers for their generosity.

Thursday April 29th was the date for our musical visit to Kylemore Abbey School, in Connemara – the only other Benedictine school in Ireland. This was a return visit, following on from the very successful visit which Sr Karol and her stunning choir paid to us last year. It's a long drive from here to there, and back again from there to here, and it was a long day, so special thanks are due to the Third and Sixth Year choristers for giving up a day so close to exam time. Twenty-six boys, together with Ms O'Herlihy and Br Martin, made the journey. After lunch with the girls, our boys were whisked off on a tour of the abbey's beautiful Victorian Walled Garden, before returning to the school for a concert. As well as a number of selections from the choir, the audience was treated to tunes on the 'bosca ceoil' from Justin Sammon, along with songs from Rory Booth, David Hayes, Thomas Holt, Stephen Murphy and Gavin Rowan. The girls responded with vocal solos and duets, a number of piano and flute solos and a traditional music group. After afternoon tea, and a bit of mobile phone number exchanging (!), it was time to get back on the bus, and face the long road home.