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We fooled the world, says Collins



CHAMPION OF THE WORLD: Steve Collins celebrates his sensational victory over Chris Eubank last night

HE ENTERED the ring in a hood, his eyes shut tight and his mind switched-off to the outside world. The only thing that intruded into Steve Collins's trance were the words of his guru. When the new world champion held his arms aloft in the chaotic Millstreet arena 50 minutes later, he had ended the reign of the arrogant king of boxing, Chris Eubank, and made the WBO super-middleweight title his own. "We fooled the world," crowed Collins as he embraced hypnotist Tony Quinn. "He put me at my ease and confirmed what I

By KEVIN O'CONNOR and DICK CROSS

always knew." Eubank, the man who roared into the ring on a Harley Davidson motorcycle, left a humiliated man, giving a 'Harvey Smith' finger sign to the 8,000-strong partisan crowd who had booed and jeered his performance. A delighted Collins said Tony Quinn has given him the key to self help. And then he joked: "He tried to teach me to cope with pain, but I certainly felt pain tonight." About his mental preparation, he said: "I was totally ready for Chris Eubank and I never had any doubt about my ability to win - those who did doubt me, I forgive them." But Eubank, losing the first fight of his professional career, has already complained to the British Board of Boxing Control about the use of hypnotists

and mind-control techniques such as those used by Dr Quinn on Steve Collins. It is now set to become a major issue in boxing. Collins himself was too busy celebrating his good fortune to pay any attention. The purse of £160,000 will now seem paltry for the 30-year-old from Cabra who had promised much but seldom achieved until last night's bloody encounter in an arena famous for show-jumping and song contests. The man who describes himself as "the best pound

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Govt accused of 'macho' approach to currency crisis

Pressure on Punt threatens rise in interest rates

By JOSEPH O'MALLEY and MARTIN FITZPATRICK

■ ANALYSIS, Page 16

MORTGAGE holders and other borrowers, including the Irish industry, could be facing another rise in interest rates this week as the Department of Finance resists pressure to devalue the Irish pound. The Punt was placed on a devaluation alert this weekend, with rumours of an emergency meeting of the EU Monetary Committee planned for today. EU Finance Ministers will meet in Brussels tomorrow. One industry leader accused the Government of taking a macho stand on the Punt to the detriment of Irish exports.

"There was a fair degree of confidence a month ago when 88 per cent of companies said they were confident of their prospects in 1995. Now this could bring the whole thing down very rapidly," he said. "We were forecasting an interest increase of a half to one per cent for the year with the increase coming in the summer. Now we are facing an immediate increase in interest rates. We certainly were not expecting this and we have nine months of the year to run."

Pat O'Neill, chief executive of Avonmore, said mistakes had been made with the Irish currency and lessons had not been learned.

"The Irish food sector exports 40 per cent of its overseas sales to the UK, and given that the food business uses little imported raw materials, the value of the exports is about 60 per cent," Mr O'Neill explained.

"By taking a macho attitude to sterling, we are risking these exports. That's wrong."

"An Irish pound above 95p against sterling does not take account of the higher labour costs in Ireland or the import costs," Mr O'Neill said. Colm McCarthy, economist with DKM, said:

letting the Punt go above parity with sterling." Yesterday, the Department of Finance was dismissive of reports that the Monetary Committee, made up of officials from finance departments and central banks, might be planning to meet today. That Committee's meetings are never flagged in advance and are usually held on Sundays when the markets are closed. The last such meeting was called two weeks ago and led to the devaluation of the Spanish and Portuguese currencies. Yesterday Jim O'Leary, Continued on Page 2



Red Devil and the deep blue sea
INSIDE

Tax on Walkmans, car radios?
A GOVERNMENT green paper foresees funding the establishment of an overall "super authority" for broadcasting with new taxes on Walkmans, car radios and hi-fi equipment. The paper, to be published soon in its finished form, also suggests RTE should be allowed periodically to raise its licence fee to match its advertising income.
■ SEE PAGE 3

Comiskey letter to 'abuse' victim
A GARDA investigation into allegations of sexual abuse by a Wexford-based priest has established that the Bishop of Ferns, Brendan Comiskey, sent a letter of apology to one of the priest's alleged victims.
■ FULL STORY, Page 2

Kemmy calls for unity with DL
A MERGER between Labour and Democratic Left was "inevitable" at some stage in the future and the country was too small to have two left-wing parties, Labour Party chairman Jim Kemmy said yesterday. But Democratic Left leader Prionias De Rosa firmly ruled out any form of merger. A motion has been tabled for next month's Labour party conference calling for a "merger" with other Left Wing parties.

UNBEATABLE
Just Betty Bacall and me



HUGH LEONARD
Page 3L
Arms and the Sinn Fein man
JOHN A MURPHY
Page 15

Papal plea on abortion 'sin'

POPE John Paul said yesterday that Catholics should atone for "sins" such as abortion and theft by helping society. But in a speech to Italian priests he said that penance should always be moderate and never excessive.

"An appropriate penitential response to the crime of abortion, which today has become tragically widespread, would be a commitment to the defence of life in the form of charity work for individuals or society as a whole," he said.

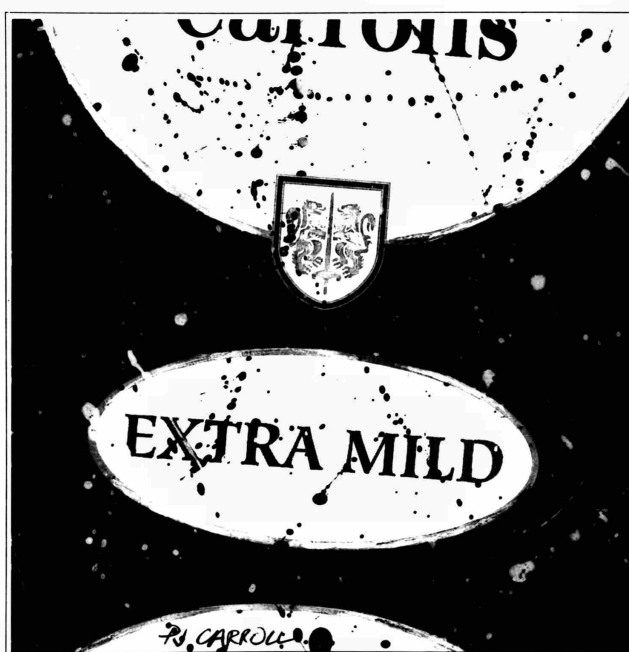
We should withdraw with dignity from the ERM

By SHANE ROSS

WE ARE back at the bottom of the league. The Irish pound is playing in the wrong division. All last week, the markets were sending us the same message: go and play with sterling, the currency in your own zone. Forget about the Deutschmark. It is sailing away into the sunset. The Irish Government knows better. On Thursday, the Central Bank began to fling Ireland's foreign currency reserves at the problem. It was actually supporting the Irish pound on the foreign exchanges. *Dear God!* Tomorrow, it could easily raise interest rates again. This week, we may see a series of one per cent mortgage hikes. Pay more for your house to keep up with the Deutschmark. Believe your Government it will be a worthwhile sacrifice. It will not. The ERM is now a total shambles, disintegrating before our eyes. Ireland should withdraw with dignity before we are sucked along with sterling, the lira (already outside the system) and probably accompanied by the Spanish peseta and the Portuguese escudo. There is no place for

weak currencies in the Deutschmark zone. Ours is a weak currency. On Thursday, the Central Bank wasted your money. Next week, it could put up the price you will pay for your house. Today, a meeting of the EU Monetary Committee is being mooted. The committee usually assembles to devalue currency. Ireland is a possible target although our pound still stands at 2.07DM, 6 per cent above the 2.07DM floor. Yesterday, Dick Spring put his foot in it. He was asked at a Foreign Ministers' meeting at Carcassonne in France whether the Irish pound was on the point of devaluation. The Tanastie replied weakly: "Hopefully not."

The value of our currency is a matter completely outside Mr Spring's control. It is decided elsewhere. Even Bertie Aherm vigorously denied devaluation to the end. The Punt could be in for a bumpy session in the markets tomorrow, thanks to the Tanastie. If the pattern of recent weeks continues - when the rise in the DM has been matched by a fall in sterling - we will tear ourselves asunder in a hopeless effort to keep pace with the German currency. Our exporters will be crippled, small businesses will close down, hundreds will be consigned to the dole queues, the cost of mortgages will return to 1992-93 levels. Eventually we will be humiliated, forced to devalue once again, in another admission that we are a sterling, not a DM, satellite. But a quick fix devaluation is no longer the solution for Ireland. If we want to avoid further crises we should consider leaving the DM-dominated ERM before it collapses in ignominy or worse still we are summarily ejected as belonging elsewhere.
■ ANALYSIS, Page 16



SMOKING CAUSES FATAL DISEASES
Irish Government Warning