

# Cahill briefs Labour TDs in advance of debate

Dáil to hold three-hour debate on claims of sexual abuse by republican movement

Tánaiste to focus on Sinn Féin attacks and how Adams has dealt with case

**STEPHEN COLLINS**  
Political Editor

Maíria Cahill, the Belfast woman who claims she was raped by an IRA member when she was a teenager, was in Leinster House yesterday on the eve of a Dáil debate on claims of sexual abuse by members of the republican movement.

Ms Cahill met members of the parliamentary Labour Party during her visit and had discussions with Tánaiste Joan Burton. It was her second meeting with the Labour leader.

More than 20 TDs plus members of the Labour Party staff attended yesterday's meeting, which lasted for more than an hour and a half.

Ms Cahill outlined the details of her case and told the Labour TDs why she felt impelled to challenge the republican leadership about their handling of it.

"Her courage is amazing," one TD said. "She outlined in a calm manner the sinister way in which her character has been attacked by Sinn Féin and republican sympathisers."

## Dáil debate

In today's Dáil debate Ms Burton is expected to focus on the way Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams has dealt with Ms Cahill's case and the parallels with the way he handled the conviction of his brother Liam for child abuse.

Mr Adams to account for the way Ms Cahill has been attacked by Sinn Féin which she went public with her claims.

A Fine Gael spokesman said last night that one of the main questions Mr Adams must address is where republicans suspected of child abuse in Northern Ireland were moved to by the IRA.

Last week, in a speech at a fundraising dinner in New York, Mr Adams told his American supporters that Enda Kenny, Joan Burton and Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin were prepared to employ any "dirty trick, any slander, any lie" to stem the rising tide of support for Sinn Féin.

He insisted that the "scurrilous accusations" being made against him and the party were "untrue".

## Leader statements

Today's debate is scheduled to last for more than three hours and will involve statements from the leaders of all the major political parties including Mr Adams.

Taoiseach Enda Kenny will open proceedings, followed by the leaders of Labour, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and the technical group, all of whom can speak for half an hour.

Once the party leaders have finished, other members of the Dáil will be allowed to speak for 10 minutes each. The debate is due to begin at



## Miller wins first Hennessy Portrait Prize

**AIDAN DUNNE**

The inaugural Hennessy Portrait Prize has been awarded to Sligo-based painter Nick Miller. He was selected from a shortlist of 12 for his painting *Last Sitting*, a portrait of the late Barrie Cooke, who died earlier this year.

The two artists were neighbours for many years in rural Co Sligo and were good friends. "There was an awareness during this last sitting," Miller said of the painting, "that the end of his road was approaching."

Nonetheless Cooke teased the painter about the unresolved background, whereupon Miller handed him a brush to set it right.

Miller, who was born in London and but who has been based in Ireland since 1984, is well known for the energy of his drawings and paintings based on the human figure and the Irish landscape.

His figurative work centres on the shared experience of the artist and the sitter. It is being true to this lived encounter, rather than a conventional likeness, that is important to him.

## Intense process

His intense working process has been documented several times on film, including his painting of journalist and writer John Waters.

The winner of the prize, instituted by Hennessy and the Na-

tional Gallery of Ireland, receives €15,000 plus a commission worth €5,000 to produce a portrait of an Irish sitter.

The 12 shortlisted artists included familiar and less familiar names. Comhghall Casey, Cian McLoughlin, Geraldine O'Neill and Una Sealy are known for their paintings of portrait subjects. Helen O'Sullivan-Tyrrell shows a bleached, blurred study of her daughter recovering from emergency surgery.

The shortlist also features photography and video. For her series *Breaking Point*, Erin Quinn photographed subjects as they surfaced for air having held their breath under water. Mandy O'Neill photo-

graphed pupils at a primary school in Cabra, Dublin and Hugh O'Connor photographed Bekah, a woman he saw at Dublin Airport. John Beattie's video is a study of artist Thomas Ryan and his studio, while Saoirse Wall addresses issues of seeing and being seen in the age of the internet.

The shortlist was drawn from more than 400 entries by a jury comprising National Gallery director Seán Rainbird; National College of Art & Design lecturer Declan Long; painter Donald Teskey; art critic Cristina Leach Hughes, and Janet McLean, a curator at the National Gallery.

When the judges reviewed images of the entries, they were

■ **Nick Miller, winner of the Hennessy prize, with his portrait of Barrie Cooke, entitled *Last Sitting*, at the National Gallery yesterday.**

PHOTOGRAPH: CYRIL BYRNE

not given the names of the artists to make the process as anonymous as possible.

Mr Rainbird said that as the National Gallery housed the State collection of portraiture, it was appropriate that it encouraged the practice in contemporary art.

The shortlisted works can be seen in an exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland until February 8th, 2015

## Extra €4m for Dublin homeless budget

**KITTY HOLLAND**

Minister for the Environment Alan Kelly will this morning announce an additional €4 million to keep homeless services open in Dublin until the end of the year.

In recognition of the deepening housing crisis in the capital, the Minister is allocating a supplementary sum to Dublin City Council, which oversees the provision of homeless services for all four local authorities. This will be in addition to the council's normal homelessness allocation for 2014.

## Pressure

With more than 300 families in emergency accommodation and more than 40 families becoming homeless every month, according to Focus Ireland, the pressure on the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) has been acute.

Sources in the DRHE have in recent weeks expressed concern about their capacity to maintain funding to services to the end of the year.

While it spent €1.3 million on emergency accommodation for families last year, it was projecting a spend this



■ **Minister for the Environment Alan Kelly: aware of difficulties**

year of more than €4.5 million, though it is likely to exceed this by year end.

"This further significant allocation demonstrates the Government's commitment to tackling the homelessness problem which is most acute in the Dublin region," said Mr Kelly last night.

"I am very much aware of Dublin City Council's difficulties in funding its homelessness programme and, in par-