

Connaught Telegraph - Celtic Tigers' daft phrases

Written by Oliver Kellegher
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During the great tiger era our whole world changed. Our voices changed, our use of drab words changed to fancy lingo that was often hard to understand. Our universities were churning out experts in economics, accountancy, investment techniques and the legal eagles who needed to be up to date on issues for a country 'going forward'.

It also created another range of self styled, self-taught gurus in financial and consumer matters who in many cases weren't able to run a duck house. When they got their snouts on TV they could save us all from financial ruin and the ruthless people out there who were waiting to rip us off. Often the accent changed to suit the profession. The voices often resembled someone trying to explain something with a golf ball in his or her mouth. **The golf ball seemed to be a permanent fixture and it created the same type of sounds except when the beholder had too much drink taken.**

What used to be a car in another era now became a cor. In many cases the 'a' was dropped for the 'o' so as to make it more chorming. Amazingly, those people who were employed in banking never referred to themselves as being into 'bonking', nor did any commentator or economist ever refer to Minister Mary Harney as anything but Minister Mary H-rney.

Sure it was a time when a lot of people had to act the part and play to the times we were in. It was an international thing. We were looked up to by the rest of the world as a shower who couldn't go wrong. So to impress we added our own stamp to our own type of language 'going forward'.

To add to the confusion we threw in a few stupid phrases that meant nothing but covered a lot when one could not remember the next word. Bla, bla, bla covered a lot that didn't matter, but the No. 1 slot must go to 'absolutely'. It covered everything, yes, no, maybe, why not, ah to hell with it, it was the answer to 'absolutely everything'.

The number one political phrases of the last generation must be 'well, in hindsight' we should have seen the 'meltdown' coming but 'going forward' there is a way out of our 'economic woes'. 'Absolutely'. The same politician could be asked by the commentator: "Well, what's your plan to get us all out of this mess you and your government put us into, is there a solution?" "Absolutely".

This country has had a greater recession a few years back where a million people died and we pulled ourselves out of it with the help of the rest of the world, and remember there was no IMF, EU or ECB around in those days. So in hindsight we are a resilient nation 'absolutely'. **We hadn't the education in those days to coin the phrase 'recession' so it was simply called 'the famine'.**

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Another great phrase of the noughties was 'if you allow me to speak'. This phrase was nearly always used by someone who wouldn't shut up so instead of commentators being polite and saying the oldest phrase in the book - 'shut up' - he or she allowed extra time to explain the unexplainable. The end result of our woes would eventually be a 'soft landing'. The plane would land in a bog and we would be never being heard of again.

Another great one 'benchmarking'. This was something I did at school many moons ago where I left my 'benchmarking' as a mark for generations to come. This process was usually done using a nail or a biro to mark my initials (OK) on the desk for generations to marvel at. We are now in 'meltdown' with a few 'green shoots of recovery' on those far off hills. If Lehman's hadn't collapsed the Irish economy would not have been in 'freefall' and instead of the 'soft landing' we might have crashlanded on top of Croagh Patrick and we would be forgiven and forgotten forever.

I'm not going to 'undermine any investigation into Anglo Irish Bank' or any other bank was another number one hit. Why? Maybe in hindsight we took our eye off the ball and the meltdown occurred, which is now likely to put us in 'negative equity' for generations to come.

Another number one phrase is 'I absolutely believe passionately in this if you allow me to finish' or at 'this moment in time' we're in a 'vacuum with our colleagues in the IMF'. So without talking down the economy let's be positive and look at a soft landing. The result is you get out there and save all these builders whose downfall and soft landing on top of Croagh Patrick are moved to the Bog of Allen, i.e. NAMA.

But the phrase that 'property always goes up' gives a kick in the you know what to those people who believe in hindsight and foresight that 'what goes up must go down'.