



Picture Diary

TWO'S COMPANY: Aisling O'Connor (left) and Grainne McParland, from Ballinlough, enjoying the sunshine at the Courtmacsherry Regatta

Picture: Martin Walsh

Collins, Pearse and Hitler are on the run

THAT people are obsessed with celebrity is news to no one. I may not completely understand the fascination nor condone it, but puzzled as I am about its origins in the human psyche, I do grasp that for every one of you reading this article, a thousand others would prefer to see paparazzi pictures of Lindsay Lohan on her latest drunken binge.

Where I draw the line in celebrity worship however, is at the door to the wax museum.

Take the bus down Marylebone Road in London any day of the week, come rain, come shine, and you will see a long line of huddled tourists queuing to enter Madame Tussauds. Waiting to see — I'm sure you all know — waxwork look-alikes of famous people.

Up until two years ago, we had our own National Wax Museum in north inner city Dublin (it was situated across from the Waxy Dargle pub). One day around seven years ago I was dragged in by an acquaintance who was easily amused by such nick-nacks.

All I can remember is that the waxwork Princess Diana bore a striking resemblance to former Finnish motor racing world champion Mika Hakkinen and a group of eight-year-olds had no idea who Mike Murphy was.

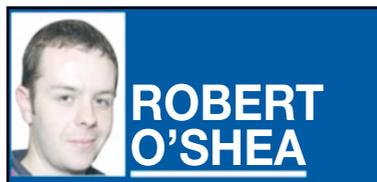
But apparently the old haunt used to hold some attraction for the hoi polloi milling around out there because 130,000 of us passed through its doors annually.

Some, it appears from a story that appeared in a Sunday newspaper last weekend, miss the place more than others.

This past June, thieves broke into the storeroom where the figures are being kept until a new home is found for them, and stole "Michael Collins, Patrick Pearse, Adolf Hitler, Franklin D Roosevelt, Bob the Builder and one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles".

The most worrying thing I garner from this list, released by the museum's manager Kay Murphy, is that she apparently has no idea which of the Turtles is missing.

Aside from that, two of our greatest



patriots, a former president of America, the most evil man in history and Patrick Pearse have been kidnapped by some fiendish devil.

So drawing on all my powers as an investigative journalist I spent the whole of yesterday on the case.

Or, to put it another way, I read the rest of the article that appeared in the newspaper and happened upon this phrase in the final paragraph, again from Ms Murphy:

"I get calls every day from regulars ... but I can't tell them where or when the museum will reopen."

How often exactly do you have to go to a wax museum to be considered a regular? Drop in on the way home from work each day?

Even more than one visit to a wax museum per year seems a little strange to me.

Anyway, I am fairly suspicious that it is one of these very regulars that did the bad deed itself, and right now they are planning dinner parties involving the wax statues.

The only other possibility is that it is the work of organised crime, who will melt them down and sell them on the black market as pure wax.

Whoever the person is, I would like to speak directly to you here: if you are feeling guilty, please do not return these waxworks to the relevant authorities. Instead, wake up early some morning and plonk them next to an isolated bus stop.

Trust me, this could be hilarious.

Considering we are on the subject of celebrity look-alikes, I received an interesting letter recently from a reader, who let's call Sandra, who wishes to know if the actor in the new Lynx ads is Morgan Freeman, or just someone who really, really looks like Morgan Freeman.

Again, using all my deductive journalistic vigour, I spent several minutes yesterday on the internet trying to get an answer for you.

Unfortunately, I have fallen up

short again and the best answer I can give you is that it is probably not him, although I agree it really looks like him.

It is more than likely a look-alike named Seth Sowah Laryea from the Splitting Images agency based in London.

However, in an interesting twist, Freeman as late as last December, had to admit on Jay Leno's *Tonight Show* in America, that he had completely forgotten about a mouthwash ad which featured him as a telephone repair engineer some 30 years ago.

Freeman was being interviewed on the show when Leno surprised him with the video. But before Leno ran the clip, he insisted he had never made a Listerine commercial.

On seeing the footage he realised he was wrong.

"I'd forgotten all about that. Okay, so I did a Listerine commercial?"

When you can't trust Morgan Freeman anymore, who can you trust?

You can trust me, that's who, especially when I say we will be running the Lindsay Lohan pictures next week.