



Local author Rory O'Keeffe has vocally opposed the air strikes in Syria

# Author hits out at Syria air strikes

Report By **Tom Martin**

AN international journalist from Crosby who writes about foreign conflict has hit out at the government's decision to bomb parts of Syria.

Rory O'Keeffe, a former Holy Family High School pupil, has previously visited Libya and Tunisia before penning his experiences in speaking with local people about war.

The author has recently questioned the logic in approving air strikes on terrorist-controlled parts of Syria and claims there are "serious flaws in the plan".

On December 3, MPs overwhelmingly backed UK air strikes against so-called Islamic State in Syria, by 397 votes to 223, after a ten-hour Commons debate.

Rory, who is an expert commentator on conflict and socio-political issues in the Maghreb and Western Middle East region, has sided with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in the belief that sending RAF jets to the war-torn country is not the answer.

Rory said: "The bombing will kill innocent civilians. We know this because it has in every single air campaign, everywhere in the world, ever carried out.

"Since the 'yes' vote in Parliament, representatives of the RAF have spoken on TV and radio about how the UK uses Paveway IV missiles, confidently declaring that these 'do not cause collateral damage'.

"The fact is, however, that what they mean is that Paveway IV missiles are less likely to cause collateral damage because their explosive charge and shrapnel production rates are deliberately designed to be lower than other missiles'.

"That is a positive thing. But it ignores the fact that in order for that to be effective in reducing collateral damage, the missiles will have to strike their intended targets. Not only is that impossible to guarantee, it is also heavily-reliant on on-the-ground intelligence, which in Libya led to the systematic bombing of schools, universities, houses and hospitals.

"Syrian people in Syria don't want this bombing; Syrian people in the UK oppose it; the majority of the UK population is against it, and NATO military experts and our own experience says it won't work. Yet, 395 MPs voted for it, and just 221 against it.

"That is not 'representation'. Nor is it 'expertise'. It is not even common sense. It is the commitment by the few to a potentially endless war in a state – and a region – which simply needs and deserves peace."

Rory was co-editor of the Everton FC fanzine 'Gwladys Sings the Blues from 1994-97', and went on to become a journalist at a local newspaper.

He left the UK in 2011 to work in Tunisia and Libya following the first Libyan Civil War to work in communications for international aid organisations in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa.

He then penned a book called 'The Toss of a Coin' where refugees from across Africa and the Middle East tell their own stories in their own words.

# Students cook up a treat at L20 hotel kitchens

Report By **Tom Martin**

BOOTLE students from the L20 Hotel School at Hugh Baird College are working with chefs from some of the region's top hotels and restaurants to help get some experience.

A group recently went to the award-winning restaurant at Chester's Grosvenor Hotel, 'Simon Radley at the Chester Grosvenor' where they are currently learning from Chef Simon Radley.

Over a series of visits, the students are being trained in the traditional 'corner system', meaning they each learn a particular section in the Michelin starred kitchen, moving around until they've



Steven Smith with some of the students Code NA

experienced every section. Curriculum manager for the L20 division incorporating Hospitality and Catering, Mark Amesbury, said: "The students absolutely love it and they can't wait to go back every time. For these young, aspiring chefs, the skills and knowledge

they're gaining with Simon Radley at the Chester Grosvenor is invaluable. "We're extremely grateful to Simon for his support and are already identifying talented Level 2 learners with a view to offering them the same opportunity in the New Year."



# STRAND SHOPPING

## Christmas OPENING HOURS

<b>Wednesday 16th December</b>	8.30 to 18.00
<b>Thursday 17th December</b>	8.30 to 18.00
<b>Friday 18th December</b>	8.30 to 18.00
<b>Saturday 19th December</b>	8.30 to 18.00
<b>Sunday 20th December</b>	8.00 to 18.00
	<b>FREE PARKING</b>
<b>Monday 21st December</b>	8.00 to 18.00
<b>Tuesday 22nd December</b>	8.00 to 18.00
<b>Wednesday 23rd December</b>	8.30 to 19.00
<b>Christmas Eve 24th December</b>	8.30 to 17.00
<b>Christmas Day 25th December</b>	CLOSED
<b>Boxing Day 26th December</b>	8.30 to 18.00
<b>Sunday 27th December</b>	10am to 16.00
	<b>FREE PARKING</b>
<b>Monday 28th December</b>	10am to 16.00
<b>Tuesday 29th December</b>	8.30 to 17.30
<b>Wednesday 30th December</b>	8.30 to 17.30
<b>New Years Eve 31st December</b>	8.30 to 17.30
<b>New Years Day 1st January</b>	CLOSED
<b>Saturday 2nd January</b>	8.30 to 17.30
<b>Sunday 3rd January</b>	10am to 16.00
<b>Monday 4th January</b>	9am to 17.30
<b>Tuesday 5th January</b>	9am to 17.30

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