

BOD takes radio debut in his stride

By Eamon Donoghue

BRIAN O'Driscoll has had many debuts over the years from Leinster and Lions to Ireland and the country's captaincy - but last night he made his broadcasting debut on Newstalk's Off The Ball show.

And BOD was put straight into the deep end on his first show when confronted with the task of taking on 6ft 7in former English captain Martin Johnson.

As fellow presenters Ger Gilroy and Colm Parkinson sat back, old foes O'Driscoll and Johnson discussed the ins and outs of their Lions Tour disappointment in 2001.

The show's new guest presenter also quizzed his former Lions teammate on that infamous match in Lansdowne Road when Johnson's antics forced President

Off topic: Wife Amy wasn't discussed



Mary McAleese to walk through the grass.

Prior to their 2003 Six Nations clash, England's rugby players, led by Johnson, stood defiant, on the wrong side of the pre-match red carpet. Across the field, the Irish team were refusing to get in line, incensed the opposition had been directed to the wrong place, to Ireland's place.

Finally it was explained to McAleese, that as a result of England's stubbornness, she would have

to muddy her feet on the pitch in order to embark on her introduction to the players.

'England were an exceptional team irrespective of what did happen before the game, if you're listening on the other

A tense exchange with Johnson

end,' said O'Driscoll. 'So what happened before the game? England lined up first and we always line up on the left-hand side and surely they knew this.'

Despite the often tense exchange with Johnson, Brian did manage to evade the revelations that his wife Amy Huberman is pregnant with the couple's second child. Drico did discuss the return of former Leinster teammate Jonny Sexton from Racing Metro in Paris, explaining that the likes of Biarritz 'can be ghost towns during the winter', and despite the attraction of life during the summer, 'it's not all that'.

It'll be two more weeks until we hear Brian again though, as he has only been signed up to appear on Off The Ball every second Friday.



Giving it a try: BOD at the Newstalk studios

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'Slave-like' exploitation of embassy employees

By Kevin Keane

DOMESTIC staff working in embassies here are to be given more employment rights to curb possible exploitation.

The move follows a number of controversial cases of alleged mistreatment of workers in the homes of foreign diplomats.

Gráinne O'Toole of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland said her colleagues have encountered nine separate cases of exploitation in foreign embassies in Dublin in recent years.

'Over the years we have dealt with some serious cases... conditions were tantamount to slavery,' she said.

According to the MRCI, embassy staff from African countries, Asia and the Middle East have made the most allegations of exploitation levelled at them. Ms O'Toole said: 'In some cases



Concern: Gráinne O'Toole of MRCI

didn't have any connection with my family,' she said. The woman eventually escaped the house but the family have returned to Africa and never paid her for her two years of work.

Ms O'Toole said a number of cases are still under investigation but gardaí are powerless because the diplomat in question simply leaves the country or claims diplomatic immunity.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has now published guidelines which requires diplomatic personnel and their domestic staff to sign up to agreed minimum terms and conditions of employment before a worker is provided with a visa. Employers are also required to provide health insurance for their workers.

The new guidelines also require that employees visit the Department of Foreign Affairs to obtain an ID card with evidence that they have had a bank account in Ireland and health insurance. Upon the annual renewal of the ID card, the domestic worker can be asked to show evidence of payslips.

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'Tantamount to slavery'

there is extremely low pay but in many cases there is no pay at all. In all of the cases they are working very long hours... 77 to 80 hours a week and are paid €1 an hour if you break it down.

'There are no rest breaks, no time off and very limited liberty. They have to get permission to go out and to contact family members,' Mrs O'Toole said. She added that the MRCI has rescued people from very wealthy diplomats' homes where their domestic staff are 'physically tired, very unwell and dehumanised'.

One woman who spoke on condition of anonymity to the Irish Daily Mail told of how she arrived in Ireland at the age of 17 and worked as a carer and housekeeper for a diplomat's family in a West African embassy building for two years without pay and without being allowed to leave the house. 'No holidays, no day off and I wasn't allowed to make international calls so I