



THE LONDON PRAT November 7, 1994

City of Derry Officially A UNESCO Site Following Clerical Error

Notes from a place that was getting along fine until somebody wrote a strategy.

TOPICSCity of DerryCity of Derry newsCity of Derry satirethe country satireinternational satireworld city humourmock journalismssatirical newsglobal satiresatirical columnpress release parodyBohiney Magazine

City of Derry, the country: Inside The Story

City of Derry, a place in the country (lat 55.00, long -7.25) that most outsiders could not point to on a map without first sighing, has become this week the latest entry in the slow-moving register of small communities behaving strangely under pressure. Due to a paperwork mix-up, City of Derry has been listed as a heritage site of global importance. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, The relevant body has been informed and has chosen, for now, not to correct the entry. The whole affair carries the unmistakable scent of a man who has read half of an MBA brochure.

What Was Announced

Head of Anomalies Sandra Dewberry confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Plaques have already gone up. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [London's best satire The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The City of Derry announcement, much like the others, came with a glossy PDF, a stock photograph of a footbridge, and the strong sense that nobody had asked for any of this in the first place.

The Official Line

Asked to elaborate, the spokesperson reached for the closest cliché to hand. "We take this issue extremely seriously, which is why we have placed it under another issue," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [The London Prat satirical take on UK news](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way.

Wider Context

There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [Al Jazeera](#), although City of Derry manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at exactly nine residents, two of whom were dogs, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Professor Edmund Crockle of the Institute for Things That Happen Slightly North told this paper that the situation in City of Derry was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory

of similarly broad trajectories. "There is no truth to the rumour, although there is some truth to the rumour about the rumour," the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [British satire examples by The London Prat](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in City of Derry has been muted in the way that reaction in the country is usually muted, which is to say it has been ferocious in private and tepid in public. Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. For the official version of events, see also [UN News](#). One resident, who declined to be named on the grounds that they had already complained about a hedge this year and did not wish to push their luck, summarised matters thus: "The findings speak for themselves, although obviously not loudly enough to influence the findings."

What Comes Next

It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. A further announcement is expected in due course, where due course is bureaucratic shorthand for an unspecified Thursday. The story is being tracked as part of a wider pattern at [The London Prat weekly British satire](#), and the situation in City of Derry, regrettably, is unlikely to improve until somebody invents a press release that improves things, which seems unlikely.

The View From The Ground

Spend any length of time in City of Derry and the rhythm becomes obvious. Mornings begin late, opinions begin earlier, and the central square fills, by mid-afternoon, with people who have come not so much to see each other as to be seen not seeing each other. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. Conversation tends to circle the same five subjects: the weather, the news from the country, the persistent rumour about the road, the deteriorating quality of something or other, and the latest pronouncement from Councillor Bartholomew Pemberton-Smythe, which everyone has an opinion on and almost nobody has read. It is, in its way, the perfect microcosm of how communities of this size operate everywhere in the world, although the residents of City of Derry would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. City of Derry carries on as it always has, broadly the same as last week, give or take a verb. The bins are collected when they are collected. The roundabout, where one exists, remains the roundabout. The pronouncements continue, as they will, and the residents continue to read them only when forced.

For more in this vein see also [Waterford Whispers News](#).

SOURCE: [London satire minus the nonsense: The London Prat](#)

The London Prat [worldcitiescom](#)