

Why do the competitions seem to over run so much? (A special report by Irish Dancer)

It has long been a closely guarded secret but unfortunately the FeisResults guys have inadvertently let it slip about the special *An Coimisiun Time (ACT)* that applies at all Oireachtas.

So what is ACT?

First you need to understand the background to its introduction.

Many visitors to Ireland over the years will have found themselves feeling tired and jaded towards the end of the day, and the locals will have suggested it's the change of air and being outside that does it. For visitors from farther afield Jet Lag is also attributed as a cause.

At the same time we've all wondered how the local Irish people seemed to never be in a hurry, but always seem to get everything done in a working day, and still have time to get to the pub.

The secret is something known as *Irish Standard Time (IST)* which was introduced during the British occupation to wear down the invaders.

As Ireland is lucky to benefit from long daylight hours, being more Westerly than England, the Provincial Irish leaders realised that they could confuse the British by splitting daylight hours into an even number of Irish Standard Hours. Each hour between 8.00am & 12.00 midnight actually contains 67 "normal" minutes, thus making the day nearly 2 hours longer.

To compensate, and to not raise suspicion, the Night time hours are adjusted to be shorter by 12 minutes, making a "Good eight hours sleep" actually only 6½ hours approximately. That's why we all get up feeling like we've hardly slept. Obviously the locals are now used to this after several hundred years.

The leaders of An Coimisiun long ago realised that due to numbers it is impossible to fit a timetable into a normal 18 hour day, so adopted IST as their standard at all Oireachtas, even those outside of Ireland. This was subsequently modified by adding an additional 3 minutes per hour to IST to create what is now known as ACT.

This adds yet another hour a day, which means all those within the confines of the Oireachtas will actually believe that yesterdays competitions only ran to Midnight. It is only those of us observing from outside who see this in Real time.

As a footnote, the additional 3 minutes per hour in ACT is not corrected by further shortening of Night hours as 5½ hours sleep is insufficient even for the Irish! This therefore has a knock on effect during the year meaning that an additional correction needs to be made to correct the cumulative time shift. This explains why major Oireachtas occasionally change dates, to regain the lost hours and reset the clock. For example the Worlds is usually in April (generally Easter) but last year was 2 weeks earlier in March, to correct the calendar, in much the same way as February 29th in a Leap Year does.

So the competitions do not actually over run if you are there, only if you are waiting on hearing results back home.

As Einstein once said about his theory of Relativity.....

Time is Relative to where you are viewing it from!