

In the air

Bloom for Windows

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As James Joyce fans will recall, the day after tomorrow is Bloomsday – the day during which Leopold Bloom makes his *Odyssey* around Dublin, as described in *Ulysses*.

Setting his book on this particular day was Joyce's way of commemorating – or as we now know, immortalising – the day in 1904 when he first walked out with Nora Barnacle, the Galway girl he was to spend the rest of his life with – in Trieste, Paris and Zurich – and whom he married in 1931.

The two first met somewhat casually in Nassau Street, Dublin, and had arranged a second meeting for 14th June. Nora stood him up, but Joyce tracked her down and they made another date. The fateful rendezvous came to pass on 16th June 1904.

Bloomsday is celebrated in over sixty countries all over the world, although the most important and imaginative festivities are predictably held in Dublin. Here Joyceans foregather to re-enact the events of the famous 18-hour journey, following Bloom's itinerary round Dublin.

Not every place on his route can still be visited: the Blooms' house at 7, Eccles Street and Nighttown, among others, have meanwhile been razed. But plenty of the other landmarks still exist and they fortunately include not just streets, bridges and churches but also a pleasant hostelry (Davy Byrnes's Pub in Duke Street).

Bloomsday is the only public holiday in the world, as far as I know, to be inspired by a novel.

Luxembourg doesn't (yet) officially commemorate Bloomsday but *kulturrissimo* (as of now) does. To mark the event in a thoroughly modern way, I thought I'd see how *Ulysses* would get through the Scylla and Charybdis of the Windows Spellchecker.

I took a page at random (more or less) and much to my delight, relief even, a considerable part of the text came up underlined in green or red (you know, the things Windows respectively doesn't much care for, actively objects to, or hasn't heard of).

Here are the errors diagnosed and alternatives suggested for words or syntax that fell foul of Gatesian grammar:

„You move a motion? Steve boy, you're going it some. More bluggy (**buggy bulgy**) drunkables (**drinkables drinkable**) **Fragment (consider revising)?** Will immensely splendiferous stander (**sander standee slander standard sander**) permit one stooder (**stored stoker stouter stoner stopover**) of most extre-

me poverty and one largesize (**large size**) grandacious (**predacious gradations**) thirst to terminate one expensive inaugurated libation? Give's (**Giver's Given's Jibe's Jive's Five's**) a breather. Landlord, landlord, have you good wine, staboo (**taboo taboos**)? Hoots, mon (**moon monk mom men man**), wee drap (**drip drape drop dap dram**) to pree (**preen puree purée peer prey**). Cut and some again. Right Boniface! Absinthe the lot **Fragment (consider revising)**. Nos omnes biberimus viridum toxicumdrip diabolus capiat posteriora nostra Closingtime (**Nose nosh nosy nods no Omens ones Tiberius iridium no suggestions no suggestions diabolism diabolist diabolise diabolic diazoles capital capitals casita posterior posteriors posterior a nostra Closing time**), gents. Eh? Rome booze (**booze boos oboes boozes boozed**) for the Bloom toff (**tuff tiff tough doff tofu**) **Fragment (consider revising)**. I hear you say onions? Bloo (**Bolo Blood Bloom Boo Bolus**)? Cadges ads? Photo's papli (**pupil apply apple poplin pale**), by all that's gorgeous! Play low, pardner (**pardonner partner pardoners**). Slide. Bonsoir la compagnie (**companies company companied**) **Fragment (consider revising)**. And snares of the poxfiend (**pox fiend**) **Fragment (consider revising)**. Where's the buck and Namby Amby (**Nimbi Nimby Hamby Numbly Numb Amboy Amy Ambry Abbey Am by**)? Skunked? Leg bail. Aweel (**Adel Adele Awes Awed Awe**), ye maun (**main man menu maul Manu**) e'en (**even emend**) gang yer (**year your yet dyer yew**) gates (**Fragment (consider revising)**). Checkmate. King to tower. Kind Kristyann (**Kristin Kristina Christian Kristy Ann Kristen**) will yu (**you**) help, yung (**young yang hung**) man hoose (**hose house hoses hosed choose**) frend (**friend frond fend freed fiend**) tuk (**tuck took tusk tux tub**) bungalo (**bungalow bungalows**) kee (**keep keen keel eke kea**) to find plais (**plays plaits plaids plains plaid**) whear (**wear where whe-at whirr whir**) to lay crown off his hed (**heed had hid held herd**) 2 night. Crickey (**Cricket Cricked Rickey Crockery Cracker**), I'm about sprung. Tarnally (**Tarn ally Carnally Tonally Eternally Atonally**) dog gone my shins if this beent (**bent been beet bents**) the **Order of Words (consider revising)** bestest (**bestest besets bests bastes basest**) putties longbreakybet (**no suggestions**). Item, curate, couple of cookies for this child **Fragment (consider revising)**. Cot's plood (**plod plods**) and prandypalls (**no suggestions**), none! Not a pite (**pate pâté pita pit pie**) of sheeses (**cheeses sneezes sheerest**)? Thrust sy-



Davy Byrnes Pub Red Facade

philis down to hell and with him those other licensed spirits. Time. Who wander through the world (**world?**). Health all. A la vôtre (**voter vote vortex voters**)!“

I don't imagine Joyce would've been unduly perturbed by Windows' warnings; after all, Dear Reader, how many times have even we humble mortals not told the spellchecker to f... off (**ignore always**) or take something on board (**add**)?

But it seems even Windows can show discernment. In an oft-repeated anecdote, Frank Budgen, a friend of Joyce's, learns the Master has been working all day on *Ulysses* and has produced just two sentences.

„You have been seeking the mot juste?“

„No“, says Joyce, „I have the words already. What I am seeking is the perfect order of words in the sentence. There is an order in every way appropriate. I think I have it.“

The sentence is: „Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore.“

The Windows Spellchecker must have agreed: it didn't a red or green eyelid bat.