

# Pub owners call time on troubled bar boss after criminal past laid bare

An Irish sporting hero who took over the running of one of Edinburgh's most popular student bars have been given his marching orders after The Edinburgh Reporter exposed his criminal past.

National pub operator Star Pubs & Bars have called time on Kevin McGourty and his partner Anushka Ponniah's management of The Earl of Marchmont after we revealed McGourty had been convicted of harassing a female solicitor and had been placed on probation for 18 months.

A spokesperson for Star Pubs & Bars confirmed: "The Earl of Marchmont in Edinburgh was leased to an independent operator on a temporary basis. Following their departure, we have appointed a new operator to take over the running of the pub."

The couple only took possession of the Marchmont Crescent pub at the end of October but just four weeks later were forced to hand the keys back after his background came to light.



Kevin McGourty – stripped of bar management role after criminal past laid bare

It also emerged that on their first weekend in charge of the

popular bar, McGourty hosted a stag party for a friend, which included a stripper who put on a raunchy performance in the cellar of the bar.

The Edinburgh Reporter has seen evidence of up to 12 middle-aged men descending in to the cellar, drinks in hand, to enjoy the sleazy strip show after the “stag” refused to go along with the original plan for the performance to take place in the corner of the bar.

One customer, who was present when the 28 October event took place, said: “This place is a respectable bar, full of students, but they seemed to think they were in an episode of Minder, or down on The Shore in the 1980s.”

The Edinburgh Reporter earlier quizzed Anushka Ponniah about the strip show but she denied all knowledge – even blaming the staff for holding the event behind her back.

She said at the time: “I’ve never heard anything about that, so I have no idea where this has come from. Kevin, being my partner, I’m sure he would have told me something like that. It’s not something that he would do, he doesn’t even go to strip clubs himself.



Anushka Ponniah – blamed bar staff for pub cellar stripper night

“At that time we did have five members of staff, I had literally just taken over, and for all I know it could have been any member of my staff (who organised it).”

But a source confirmed: “Anuska was in the bar that day and was going around telling punters beforehand that there was going to be a stripper coming in and she hoped they didn’t mind.

“When the stag refused to have the strip show in the bar because it was too public, they decided to move it down into the cellar – and Anuskha went down in the cellar with them because she didn’t want the stripper to be on her own with all

these guys.”

McGourty, 41, who comes from a famous Antrim GAA family, won an All-Ireland title in 2010 when he was an integral part of the St Gall’s team which secured their first championship title at a packed Croke Park.

Off the pitch, he was accused of sending hundreds of texts, emails and making phone calls to his victim, and turned up at family celebrations which caused the woman “distress and upset”. He threatened to send an explicit photograph and video of the woman to her brother and father if she did not speak to him.

He denied all of the charges, alleged to have taken place between April and May 2017, but in 2018 he plead guilty to disclosing a sexual photograph of his victim and of harassing her over a two month period. He was sentenced to 18 months’ probation and a five year restraining order prevented him from going within 30 metres of the woman or her brother, to whom he sent the photograph.

McGourty, who also goes by the name of Caoimhean MacDhorchaidh, is also under investigation after it was claimed he had posed as a solicitor in a Glasgow court when he attempted to represent an accused person.

In July, the Sunday Mail reported that McGourty, using the name Caiomhean MacDhorchaidh, had appeared at Glasgow Justice of the Peace Court, where he identified himself to court officials and the prosecution as a solicitor in an attempt to represent an accused.

He claimed that he and his firm – The 3 Nations Legal Consultancy/Services – was registered with The Law Society of Scotland and that he held a valid legal practising certificate. When his position was challenged, McGourty told his “client” that he would have to get another lawyer to represent him and then left the court building.





The Earl of Marchmont's old management are back behind the bar. It is a criminal offence for an unqualified person to pretend to be a solicitor and The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service later confirmed that there was no record of Caiomhean MacDhorchaidh or his firm on the Roll of Solicitors.

A spokesman for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service told The Edinburgh Reporter: "The Procurator Fiscal is considering this incident and is liaising with the Law Society of Scotland and Police Scotland."

The Earl of Marchmont is now being run by its previous management who marked the occasion with a Facebook post which said: "We're not going to discuss the reasons why we're back, but back we are! We've given the place a clean, reviewed some of the pricing and food, arranged a new wine list and developed some new cocktails. Small steps but purposeful

steps.”