

AN FOCAL

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FREE

President's house causes controversy

By Aisling Hussey

THE development of a "lavish" President's house has recently come under attack by Minister Batt O' Keefe. Speaking on Morning AM, Minister O' Keefe said he will be asking for a report on the construction of the building, which is near completion.

The University of Limerick has been accused of spending €2million on the three-storey house for the UL head. The University maintains that the building was funded by private and philanthropic donations and that taxpayer's money was not used to fund the development.

Labour TD, Jan O' Sullivan, has defended the University's decision to go ahead with construction of a new building. "When the building was planned the economy was in much better shape, so it probably wasn't possible to withdraw from it when times got tougher. A decision was made when money wasn't as difficult to come by."

Students' Union Welfare Officer Derek Daly added that "the project was under construction before the current financial crisis began." The Students' Union has also hit back at the Minister's claims, saying that they are "more worried about the increase in the Student Services charge."

Students' Union President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin believes that taxpayer's money would be "far better spent and invested in

education", rather than on a report about the President's building. He also defended construction of the President's new residence, saying that the funds raised were earmarked for the project.

Furthermore, he thinks the building will become an integral part of the university. "It is part of the long term strategic plan for the University that will see it become a world class University in terms of infrastructure."

The building is located on the north of the campus, near Cappavilla student village. In addition to providing accommodation for President Don Barry, the residence will be used for hosting distinguished visitors of the University. It will also serve as a venue for public and private events. It was designed by renowned architect and member of Aosdána, Shelley McNamara, of Grafton Architects.

President Don Barry is due to move into the building sometime next month. The office of the President has responded to the controversy stating that the University has a history of funding projects through donations. "The University of Limerick has a long tradition of securing private sector funding to develop campus infrastructure and to support scholarships, laboratories and world-class researchers and teachers, having raised over €130 million from private sources."



A artist's impression of how the house will look

Students' Union plans to abolish CRO

By Chloe Slattery

THE Students' Union General Meeting will be held tomorrow, Wednesday, February 10 in the Jean Monnet Theatre from 2pm. Several motions will be brought by the Students' Union, the majority of which are concerned with amending the ULSU Constitution.

One of the main motions being brought forward is to move the dates of the Sabbatical Elections which are due to take place in Week 9 of the current Spring/Summer semester

to Week 10 so that they will not clash with this year's Charity Week. Another motion which will be brought before the house will be to abolish the Non-Sabbatical position of Community Relations Officer (CRO) and incorporate it into the role of Campaigns and Services Officer (CSO). The primary role of the CRO is to work and communicate with local residents. It is also the duty of the CRO to sit on local residents committees, the Executive and the Community Forum in order

to maintain a strong link and communication between the University and the local residents. The Students' Union feels that this is a demanding role and that it should be done by somebody on a full-time basis. Complaints from local residents often fall on the desk of the Students' Union President or CSO as the CRO is not available at that time. If this proposition passes it will only be effective from the next academic year. The Students' Union is also hoping to create a new Non-

Sabbatical position, the Fundraising Officer. This person will be in charge of Charity Week and the Raising and Giving charities. Paddy Rockett was elected as Fundraising Officer at the most recent meeting of Class Reps Council, but the position is not currently a Non-Sabbatical position.

All students of the University of Limerick are both invited and entitled to attend the UGM and to vote on the motions being brought to the General Meeting.

An Focal Digest

In Brief

Registration open for Student Media Awards
Pre-registration has opened for the Student Media (SMedia) Awards which will take place later this semester.

Students wishing to enter the competition much pre-register online at http://www.oxygen.ie/smedias_2010.PAGE2875.html before February 19.

The closing date for entries is March 10. If you have any questions or queries please email sucommunications@ul.ie An Focal has previously won the People's Choice Award in 2006 and last year UL student James Bradshaw won in the short story category.

Fundraising Officer elected

Paddy Rockett, 4th year Science Education, was elected as Fundraising Officer at the most recent meeting of Class Reps Council. The position, which was created by Council moments before, was created to ensure that someone is actively pursuing fundraising for the Raising and Giving Charities throughout the academic year.

Mr Rockett will be working from the office from the Campaigns and Services Officer and you can also email sugetinvolved@ul.ie if you have any ideas for fundraising activities.

Student Survey winners chosen

Two students were chosen to win an iPod Nano each as a way of saying thank you for completing the Students' Union survey. The survey, which was sent to all students before Christmas, questioned students on all manners of work done by the Students' Union.

Two ID numbers were chosen at random from the 4,500 entries. The winners were Tomas Crean and Baoyue Zhang. Congratulations to both and thanks to everyone who completed the survey. Remember, you can give us your feedback at any time by emailing sufedback@ul.ie

Lonsdale Building Temporarily Evacuated

The Lonsdale Building was temporarily evacuated on Friday of Week 1, following a fire in an Organic Chemistry lab. The fire was quickly brought under control by the Limerick Fire Service and no one was injured.

The cause of the fire is still unknown but it is believed a fire hood caught fire in the lab. The building was evacuated as a temporary measure but the situation was quickly brought under control.

Quotes of the Fortnight

"Sound as a bell when it's not ringing!"
We hadn't heard that one before.

"It's the couch, I've heard so much about the couch!"

Ruth Ní Chatháir regarding the couch in the Welfare Office

"My sister stole my balls"

Ciara Halliday just can't get a break
"It looks like an inverted vagina"
We're sure the architects will love Jason Kennedy's interpretation of the new President's House

"The rules don't apply to Fergal"

Communications Officer, Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

"Are you taking a photo of her gee?!"

Daihi MacGabhann isn't sure what he's seeing

"Don't say the R-Word"

Pretty much everyone at every meeting this fortnight

"He swallowed my ring!"

Ciara Halliday is shocked by Stevie Starr's antics

Dublin Institute of Technology

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Clearing manure before a match

And thanks to...

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Andrew Cleary	Daniel Bridge
Anthony Kennelly	Alan Keane
Rachael Power	Enda Dowling
Louise Hollywood	Niamh Lonergan
Seamus Ryan	Fiona Reidy
Nicole Ní Riordáin	Jamie Fitzgerald
Diarmuid Lucey	
John Rainsford	...and anyone else
Liam Corcoran	I've forgotten
Paula Jane Murphy	

Next An Focal deadline is Friday, February 12 for Opinion/Features/Columns/Arts/C&S and Sport. News deadline is Monday, February 15.

Email submissions to sucommunications@ul.ie

Students do their bit for charity

By Aoife Ní Raghallaigh – Editor

STUDENTS who did not obtain a CoOp placement for this semester have offered to donate their time to the Students' Union to help with fundraising. Jonny Dolan will be helping Welfare Officer, Derek Daly, with fundraising ventures for the Raising and Giving charities and Peter Shone is helping with the Special Olympics as a Volunteer Coordinator.

Mr Dolan is hoping to organise village tournaments in the student villages, including Milford Grange and College Court. He will also be arranging fundraisers such as cake sales, duck races and the much anticipated Great Race. The Great Race sees teams of four students racing around Ireland to complete a number of tasks in 24 hours. These tasks can include visiting every county in Ireland, having your photo taken with a famous person or manage to get yourself on the radio or telly.

Details of this year's Great Race are still being finalised but students normally have to raise

about €500 before they can take part in the race and bonus points are awarded to the team who raises the most money, travels the most distance or completes the most tasks.

More information on the Great Race, and how to get involved, will be available soon. Proceeds from the race will go to the four Raising and Giving charities which are Limerick Youth Service, Make-A-Wish Ireland, Mid-West Simon Community and the Irish Heart Foundation.

In addition to the work that will be done by Mr Dolan, Peter Shone, will be doing his bit for the Special Olympics by volunteering as a Volunteer Coordinator in advance of this year's games, which will be held in Limerick. The games will take place from the 9 – 13 June and 3,500 volunteers are needed to help the games run smoothly. You can contact Mr Shone for more information or with ideas for fundraising events by emailing peter.specialolympicsul@gmail.com



Celebrity Face of the Games, Keith Wood, and Athlete Face of the Games, Emily Hurley

UL volunteers raise funds for Haiti

By Amy Murphy

ON Wednesday of Week 1 (January 27) Students' Union volunteers collected €1,500 in the space of four hours. The money will go directly to an orphanage in Haiti where a member of the UL community is working. The appeal was organised by Campaigns & Services Officer, Fergal Dempsey, and the newly formed Development Society, who asked students to pick up collection buckets and encourage students to make contributions. Volunteers spent the day visiting different places on campus to collect donation.

On January 12, Haiti was struck by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake; the worst to hit Haiti in almost two centuries.

Every day since then the state has been living through horror and devastation and

“People across the World have acted with a sense of urgency”

the already impoverished Haiti now has to worry about how it will struggle through its immediate future. Over 150,000 people have been

killed. Over one million people are in need of shelter.

A massive portion of Haiti's infrastructure has been demolished. 500 UN workers are unaccounted for and two dozen countries have reported nationals dead or missing. \$1.2 billion has been pledged in aid globally, according to the UN.

People across the World have acted with a sense of urgency and generosity, the students and staff of UL have been no exception.

Mr Dempsey, DevSoc and all those involved in the collection are grateful to all those who contributed and are proud to add UL's contribution and to what has already been donated worldwide.

Results rush crashes student portal

By Jason Kennedy – News Editor

THE rush to find exam results on the UL student portal led to the site crashing on the morning they were released. The results were released at 9am and the system was reported to be crashing for a number of students.

Students' Union Education Officer, Aoife Finnerty claimed a number of students came to her due to problems with the site. “I received a number of complaints from around 40 to 50 students who couldn't gain access to the website.

They're just the people who came in to me as well. There were probably a lot more that were unable to access their results.” Many students were able to log in to the student portal only to

find a blank page where their results should be. The problem was solved by 12pm and the site began to run again as normal. Ms Finnerty claims the best was done to solve the problem. “They solved it as quickly as

“Ms Finnerty also advised students not to despair over bad results”

they could and the best was done to ensure that students got their results as soon as they logged on.”

Older students at the University will remember the intense difficulty facing students at results time as the system would invariably crash.

Ms Finnerty also advised students not to despair over bad results. “There is always time to pick up QCA's in the second semester and improve overall results.”

Development Society introduce Kiva

By Andrew Cleary

FOR those of us who want to make a long term difference in the lives of some of the poorest people in the world there is a new game in town; online person-to-person micro-finance.

Micro-finance entered the public imagination in 2006, when the Grameen Bank, a micro-lender helping poor communities in Bangladesh, received the Nobel Peace Prize. Micro-finance is the practice of giving small loans to producers in developing countries who struggle to get finance from larger institutions. The practice has had dramatic results in changing the daily lives of those living in poverty, particularly women. In awarding the Nobel Prize to Grameen Bank, the Prize Committee commented that "micro-credit has proved to be an important liberating force in societies where women in particular have to struggle against repressive social and economic conditions".

Now, an exciting new development has taken place in micro-finance circles. Kiva, a non-profit micro-finance organisation based in California, is revolutionising micro-lending by using the internet to directly

connect lenders with those in need. Kiva's website, one of Time Magazine's "Best 50 Websites of 2009", offers you the chance to browse the profile pages of thousands of budding entrepreneurs in fifty-two of the World's poorest countries. Potential lenders are offered the chance to help farmers, pharmacists, shopkeepers and a whole host of other people from Columbia to the Congo to Cambodia, all the while allowing lenders to follow the loan repayment process online. One person whom Kiva has helped is Rosa Mbabazi from Kampala, Uganda. Rosa, a widow and mother of eight children, wanted to improve her bean selling business so she could feed and clothe her children, maintain their school fees and pay the rent. Through Kiva, eight online lenders from the United States gave Rosa \$25-\$50 each. After fifteen monthly instalments, Rosa had repaid her loan in full and her business had grown sufficiently to support her family. The lenders in turn have re-loaned the initial money to other people in Rosa's position. In this way the initial investment continues to provide a crucial service. Twenty five US

dollars might seem like a drop in the ocean, and in reality it is. But many drops make an ocean. Kiva loans definitely represent more than just a drop. Since Kiva started operations in 2005 loans of over \$115 million dollars have been made with an overall repayment rate of 98.2%. Since the large majority of the capital is re-loaned, it continues to circulate to where it is needed. This makes for an extremely efficient means of helping people in developing countries and it is

set to get even more effective because the phenomenon is spreading to Europe. The potential for Kiva to change the world is huge, changing the world one loan at a time. The UL Development Society is hosting an information session on Wednesday 10th February, from 2-4pm, in the Red Raisin Cafe, Main Building. Visit Kiva at www.kiva.org or contact the UL Development Society at uldevsoc@gmail.com for more information.



National University of Ireland to be dissolved

By Anthony Kennelly

MINISTER for Education, Batt O'Keeffe TD, caused controversy recently when he announced the dissolution of the National University of Ireland. This measure was recommended in the report into public expenditure by economist Colm McCarthy.

In a statement on January 20, Minister O'Keeffe said that the administrative and academic functions of the body could be carried out by the constituent universities themselves.

The move, however, was criticised by the opposition. The move was also said to be "deeply regretted" by the chancellor of NUI who, in a statement on the NUI

website, said the Minister had accepted there would be no savings made. The NUI has its origins in the Queen's

"The move... was criticised by the opposition"

Universities of Ireland set up in Belfast, Cork and Galway and the Catholic University of Ireland, later to become UCD, all set up in the 1840's and 1850's. They became the National University of Ireland following the Universities of

Ireland act 1908. This Act also established Queen's University Belfast in the same year, separate to the other colleges. However, in 1997 the National University of Ireland Act devolved many of the functions of the NUI to the constituent universities, giving them greater autonomy.

The current members of the NUI are NUI Maynooth, NUI Galway, University College Dublin and University College Cork. The University of Limerick, in the form of the National Institute of Higher Education, was an officially recognised college of the NUI in the late 1970s.



Subway and Starbucks open in UL



The newly opened Subway

By Louise Hollywood

MONDAY of Week 1 (January 25) saw students in to see the grand opening of Starbucks and Subway on campus. The popular franchises, located on the first floor of the Main Building, have served hundreds of students for the last two weeks.

Subway has always been very popular among students, some travelling all the way to Groody for their favourite Sub of the Day. The manager of Subway explained that she

was surprised by how busy they were, right up until they closed for the weekend on Friday. She found out that students would usually go to Subway in Groody for a treat, whereas now they can get it on campus before heading off home for the weekend. She also stated: "We have received no complaints so far, so we are absolutely delighted."

Subway is often a favourite with students as it has promotional offers such as buy one

six inch Sub - get one free, foot long Subs for only €4, free muffins and upgrades on coffees. They also offer a wide selection of freshly prepared food such as salads, muffins, cookies, cakes, sandwiches and, of course, the infamous Subs.

Having Starbucks on campus is an exciting development as it is the only franchise in Limerick city as of yet. Starbucks offers an extensive range of beverages, ranging

from Lattes Infusia Creamices to Caramel Macchiato. Craig Dwyer, a UL student is in favour of the two franchises being available on campus. "It's a great addition to the campus, although there are still great places to eat and drink, opening these two places has given us more options." Starbucks opens Monday to Thursday, 8.30 to 16.30 and Friday 8.30 to 15.50. Subway opens Monday to Thursday 8.30 to 19.00. Friday 8.30 to 15.30.

Leading Scientist speaks in UL

By Rachael Power



Professor Paul McCutcheon, Vice President Academic & Registrar, Dr Robert C. Gallo, Director of Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland and Professor Paul Finucane, Head of Graduate Medical School

THE world renowned virologist who discovered HIV, Dr Robert C. Gallo, spoke at a lecture in UL last week about his hopes for the virus to be "conquered" within the next few decades. Speaking at the lecture, entitled: "Viruses, Epidemics and Putting an End to Deadly Diseases in the 21st Century", Dr Gallo addressed the question: "Can the field of medicine and the public at large remember the lessons of past epidemics for longer than a decade or two and will HIV be conquered within the next few decades?"

He explored this and other questions on the world's future on handling epidemic diseases. Dr Gallo discovered HIV and was the first person to show results that HIV was the cause of AIDS. From 1983 - 1984 Dr Gallo developed the life saving HIV blood test.

Foundation Head of Teaching and Research in Physiology at UL and chair of the Annual

Research Forum, Professor William O'Connor, said; "We are delighted to welcome Dr Gallo to UL.

Gallo's pioneering work into viral research has made him a leading figure in tackling one of the greatest challenges of our time, the HIV virus epidemic."

His visit coincides with UL's third annual Research Forum hosted by the Graduate Entry Medical School.

Thirty leading researchers from UL are covering a broad range of topics such as pharmaceuticals, nutrition, obesity, psychiatry and biomedical devices.

Speaking of the Research Forum Professor O'Connor said: "This forum embodies the spirit of collaboration and diversity that is central to the ethos of the Graduate Entry Medical School and the University of Limerick."

HSE Assistant National Director of Health Protection, Dr Kevin Kelleher, was the keynote speaker and delivered a lecture on "The human swine influenza pandemic:

recent developments". According to the HSE HIV and AIDS report 2009, the number of reported cases of HIV fell slightly from 212 in 2008 to 210 in 2009.

47% of the cases were heterosexual people, and two thirds were aged between 20 and 40 years of age.

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV attacks certain white blood cells in the body called CD4 cells.

When the CD4 count is low, the body's immune system is very weak and cannot fight off infections and diseases caused by viruses and bacteria.

Most people will develop AIDS as a result of their HIV infection. A person with HIV may have no symptoms and may appear completely healthy for a long period of time. The only way to determine for sure whether you are infected is to be tested for HIV.

President McAleese opens Living Bridge



UL Chancellor Peter Malone, Dr Martin McAleese, President of the University of Limerick, Prof Don Barry and President Mary McAleese at the official opening of The Living Bridge

By Seamus Ryan

IRISH President, Mary McAleese, officially opened the two-year old campus Living Bridge (An Droichead Beo) on Thursday, January 22 in a ceremony on the Limerick side of the Clare-Limerick pedestrian bridge. In use since November 2007, the 16 million euro 350-metre bridge is the longest pedestrian bridge in Ireland.

Before its construction, the only pedestrian access between the south and north campuses was via the vehicle University Bridge further down river, near Dromroe Village.

Professor Don Barry highlighted the importance of the iconic cross-campus link to the community at UL as he welcomed President McAleese, saying: "It was a priority for us during UL's impressive growth that the campus should remain united. The challenge was to create a "living link" between the campuses on either side of the River Shannon, to be of the highest engineering and architectural quality, reflecting the University's ethos of academic excellence within an inspiring campus environment."

Before officially cutting the ribbon to open the bridge, President McAleese joked to the assembled

crowd that UL building a bridge linking Limerick and Clare was "a big challenge in itself" as well as her first opportunity to open a bridge, despite setting herself a task to be a bridge-builder at her presidential inauguration. She also spoke favourably of the spectacular view of the structure from the air and declared it "something for the university to be very proud of".

The bridge was paid for with a partnership of private and public funding, including the assistance of American billionaire Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Phaltrophies foundation. The funding of the bridge was controversial with students due to the permanent rise in campus car parking charges from €2 to €3 to part-pay for it.

Designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects, London and built by Eiffel Construction Metallique, the bridge has become known to many students as the "wobbly bridge" due to the vertical motion pedestrians can experience as they cross it. Since construction, the bridge has won some major international awards, including the StructE Structural Top Award for a Pedestrian Bridge and the CEI 2008 Bridge Award.

Languages Building officially opened

THE Minister of State for Overseas Development, Peter Power T.D., officially opened the new Languages Building on Monday of Week 2, February 1. The building cost €6.15million to complete and hosts world class language learning facilities, multimedia and language laboratories, seminar rooms, a Languages Support Unit, open learning areas and academic offices.

Speaking in advance on the opening, Minister Power said; "this building will provide a focal point for students, teachers and researchers, helping to promote language learning on campus and throughout the region.

The ability to communicate in foreign languages and an understanding of different cultures, are major advantages for Ireland's standing in the world and international business. By focussing on such skills, UL graduates will have a competitive advantage and be better equipped to operate in the dynamic, emerging markets of the future. As a former Governor of the University I am delighted to be associated with this excellent, new development."

University of Limerick President, Professor Don Barry highlighted the importance of languages for Ireland. "As members of Europe with a total of 500 million citizens and 23 official languages, we in Ireland, recognise the importance of learning languages. Through trade, business, academia and tourism more and more people are interacting with their counterparts from other countries."

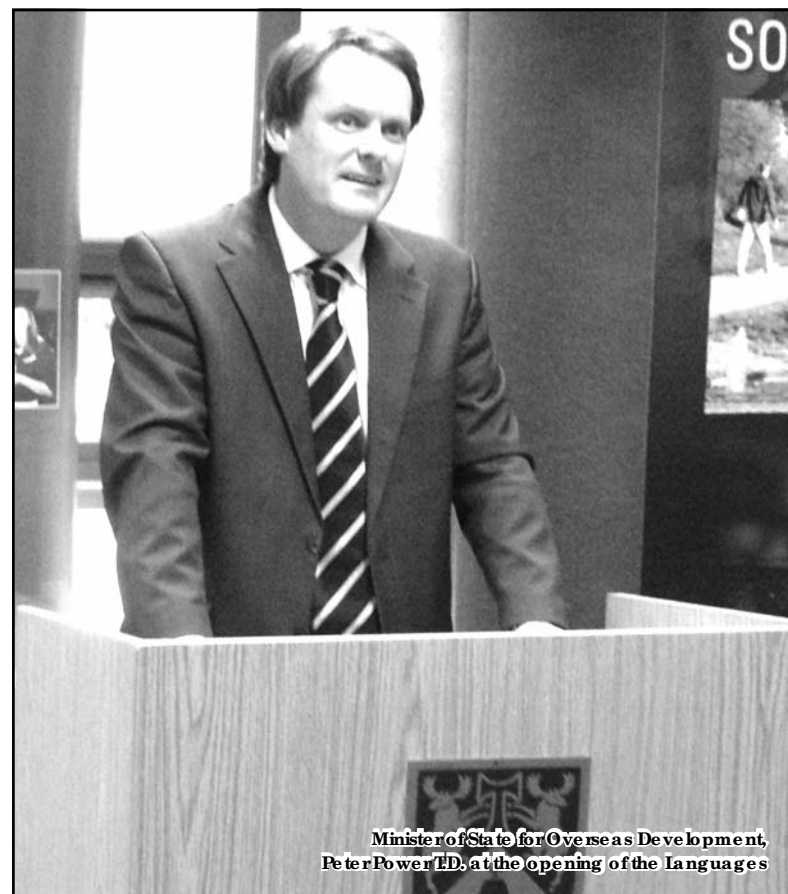
Professor Pat O'Connor, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences said; "The existence of the Language Building provides a vital opportunity for our students to be exposed to the most-up-to date

language learning facilities, where they will be taught by faculty who have won European Awards for Language Teaching over a number of years. It reflects the university's commitment to provide students with an outstanding and distinctive student experience" The building is also home to the offices of Eurocall and Aonad na Gaeilge, the unit dedicated to promoting the use of the Irish language across campus. The building also houses the Seomra na Gaeilge which is a designated room for speakers of Irish from all sections of the campus community. The building will also be used by members of the general public for

evening language classes over the summer months to facilitate the language programmes run by the UL Language Centre.

Dr Jean Conacher, Head of the School of Languages, Literature, Culture and Communication said; "In the last year, the University of Limerick has attracted students from over 40 nations. UL now provides state of the art languages facilities that will further attract students from all over the world to experience all that this university has to offer."

The Languages Building was designed by Murray O'Laoire Architects and developed by Frank Murray Construction.



Minister of State for Overseas Development, Peter Power T.D., at the opening of the Languages Building

UL Lecturer elected President of the Irish Association of Law Teachers



UNIVERSITY of Limerick (UL) lecturer, Jennifer Schweppe has been elected President of the Irish Association of Law Teachers (IALT) for the Academic Year 2009-2010.

Commenting on the fact that this marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Association, Ms Schweppe state; " It has always been difficult to balance the dual pressures of producing outstanding works of scholarship and being an engaging, informative and inspiring teacher. Today, these pressures are all the more present with budget cuts and increased administrative workloads. Nonetheless, the quality of scholarship of teaching and research amongst Irish law teachers remains at an internationally high level."

The IALT is a distinctive organisation in Ireland in a number of respects. Since its inception in 1979, it has been bringing together legal academics and teachers of law from both sides of the border. It is committed to furthering excellence in legal education and research through conferences, research projects and acting as a collective

voice for law teachers. This year the Council of the Irish Association of Law Teachers will showcase the outstanding work being done by law teachers on the island of Ireland in three key ways.

First, a 30th Anniversary seminar will be held in Trinity College Dublin where three highly regarded legal academics will speak on the topic "Thirty Years of Legal Scholarship in Ireland". The event will be chaired by The Honorable Mr Chief Justice Murray and the three speakers are Professor Paul McCutcheon, Vice President Academic & Registrar, University of Limerick, Professor Brice Dickson, Professor of International and Comparative Law, Queens University, Belfast and Professor Blanaid Clarke, Associate Professor of Law, UCD.

Second, the Council will continue the tradition of holding an Annual Conference towards the end of 2010. Finally, the Council will launch prizes which reflect the dual activities of the Association: law teaching and legal scholarship.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK STUDENTS' UNION Agenda *Union General Meeting*

Meeting	:	Union General Meeting
Date	:	10 th February 2010
Venue	:	Jean Monnet, DG016
Time	:	14:00
Quorum	:	200
1	Apologies	
2	Minutes of Previous Meetings	
3	Matters Arising	
4	Officers Reports	
4.1	Questions for Officers	
5	Ratification of Unopposed Officers	
6	Items for Discussion	
6.1	Playing Pitches Campaign	
7	Motions & Resolutions	
7.1	Amendments relating to Article 28.4 the election of Sabbatical Officers	
7.2	Motion to Abolish the Community Relations Officer Position and move the CRO functions under the Co's remit. Remove Article 24 Community Relations Officer Position.	
7.3	Motion to amend Article 25 and Article 30 to clarify ownership of the Equality Officer	
7.4	Motion to amend Article 11.7 change the way the Faculty Officer is elected in Council to being elected by the Education Working Group.	
7.5	Motion to amend Article 28.2 regarding the pay increases for Sabbats to go to general meeting.	
7.6	Motion to amend Article 49.1 to state polls can be closed early with agreement of the campaign managers.	
7.7	Motion to create Fundraising Officer as a non sabbatical position. Insert to Article 24 to create Fundraising Officer and 17.2.6 shall amend the table of contents	
7.8	Motion to amend the Preamble to update Schedules 1-5 of the Constitution	
8	Audited Accounts	
9	Ratification of Auditors	
10	AOB	



Union De brief

Ruán's Rundown

President's Working Group

I am looking for students who would be interested in meeting as a group to discuss issues that I am dealing with in my office. The group would be like a focus group where you can have an input in decisions being made. The group would only need to meet two or three times in the semester. Anyone interested can email me at supresident@ul.ie.

Student Service Charge

FEES BY THE BACK DOOR; this was the general consensus from the Oireachtas Committee meeting on education which met on January 28. I attended the meeting in Leinster House which the seven University Presidents were required to attend.

The committee questioned the University Presidents on their spending of the €1500 Student service charge that every student pays.

Until recently the library did not fall specifically under the heading of "Student Services" but with the recent increase in the Student Service charge the library has been re-categorised to fit under this heading.

This move to re-categorise core functions of the Universities has meant that the €1500 fee specifically ring fenced for student services is now being used to fund core activities of the University.

The "Student Service Charge" was first introduced in 1998 at a charge of £250 per student to help fund specific student services such as the Students' Union, Club and Societies and other such services.

The charge is now being used to fund such activities as the library or, in Trinity's case, animal testing.

The committee have asked for a specific definition of what the Student Service Charge is to be spent on, so we can ensure your money is spent appropriately.

Pitches

At a meeting of the University Playing Pitch Committee it was agreed, after much discussion, that the brief being prepared to look at the redevelopment of the Pitches would include flood lighting.

This decision will ultimately result in a delay on the start time of the refurbishment, but will result in a facility that is suited to Clubs' needs. I will keep you posted on any further movement on this issue.

Charity Week

As you know Charity Week will be taking place in Week 9. We will be looking for every student to make a big effort to make this a success. We have loads of events organised so far such as bag packing (Weeks 2, 3 and 5), the Great Race, tag rugby and soccer tournament, raft race and a duck race. If you have any other fundraising ideas or want to get involved please email sugetinvolved@ul.ie and check out our website, www.ulsu.com.



Ruán, ULSU President

Postgrad News

Howdy folks - you got your ticket yet?

It's Week Three and you should all be settled in nicely and getting ready for the PSA Annual Charity Ball 2010. This year's ball will be in aid of the Irish Alzheimer's Society and all proceeds will be used right here in the mid-west to build the first specialist respite service located outside of Dublin. This will be of huge benefit to sufferers in the region and their carers. There are currently 44,000 people in Ireland suffering from dementia, and between 2002 and 2036 it is predicted that there will be a 303% increase, bringing to 104,000 the number of sufferers in Ireland. Caring for those suffering from dementia is quite costly; the baseline cost of dementia in Ireland in 2006 alone was €400m. Much of this caring is done by close friends and family members who often bear many of the costs. In Ireland there are currently 50,000 people caring for people with dementia.

The Ball will take place in Limericks luxurious Strand Hotel on Friday the 26th of February, where the highly talented head-chef has promised a banquet to delight, and if last year was anything to go by we're in for a treat! There will be a band to get the

party started right after the meal and a DJ to take us into the small hours. The Strand are offering us special rates so if you wish to book a room make sure you say that you're attending the PSA Ball. This is the biggest postgrad party of the year and you are guaranteed a great night. Tickets are on sale now and can be brought from the PSA Presidents office, the Students' Union reception and from the Events Working Group. Once you buy your tickets you can reserve your table to make sure you're sitting with your friends. Tables are of ten and if a class rep emails me beforehand I can pre-book tables for class parties. Check out the website for more details www.postgrads.ie.

In other news, the Childcare Bursary fund is now closed for the academic year 2009/2010. Payments should be made shortly and all payments are going directly to childcare providers. This Easter we hope to have our final event for the children of postgrads and we hope that it will take the shape of an Easter family movie with an egg-hunt. Pre-registration will be essential so watch this space!

Finally, it is still quite early in the semester but if you are having a problem please don't wait until it's too late to come to talk to someone. My office is always open to you whether it's for a quick chat or to put you in contact with someone else who can help.

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter (ULpsa) and become our friend on facebook (PSA UL).

See you at the ball!

Michael Bourke
PSA President

Policy Explained Equality Policy

Throughout the years a number of policies have been passed by the student body, particularly through Class Reps Council.

A policy motion can be brought to Class Reps Council and needs a proposer and seconder. A policy motion can propose a change to an old policy or the implementation of a new policy. A student can object to a policy, but a seconder is needed also. If there is an objection the policy goes to a vote. If there are no objections the policy is deemed passed by the Chair and this policy is then adopted by the Students' Union.

One such policy is the ULSU Equality Policy which was brought before Class Reps Council on November 14, 2006 and was amended on October 15, 2009. The policy notes the University of Limerick Equality Policy, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the diverse nature of the University campus. It also believes that no member of the University community should

be discriminated against on any basis.

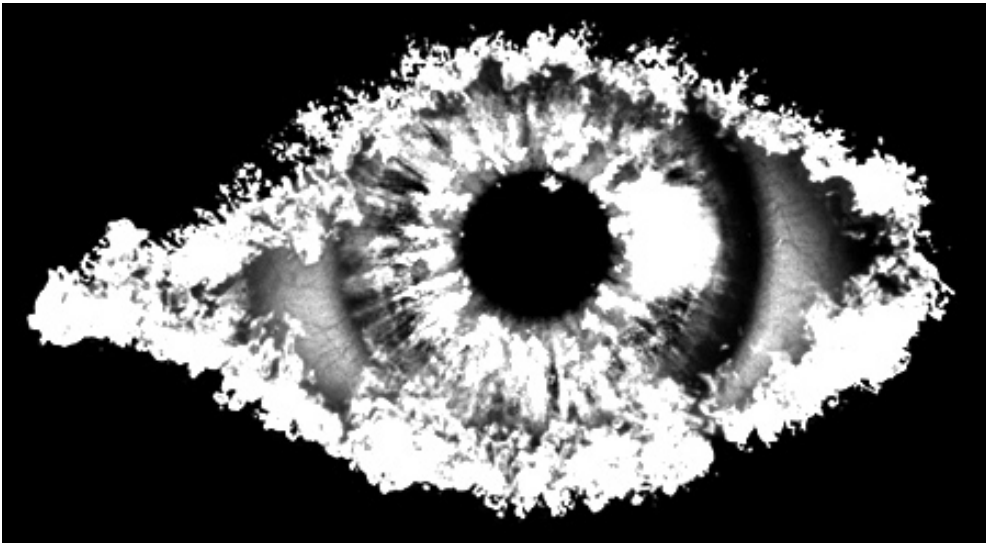
The Equality Policy calls on the Students' Union to actively work towards and encourage a working and learning environment in which all members of the campus community are treated with dignity and respect. The SU must also elect an Equality Officer each academic year who will act as a point of contact for anyone who feels that they have been discriminated against.

The policy also requires the SU to refuse any group or body access to the campus if their actions are found to go against the Equality Policy. Material from such groups are also not permitted on campus, unless express permission has been granted by the Communications Officer. This policy was officially passed by Class Reps Council in November 2006. The policy was subsequently amended by Class Reps Council in November 2007 and October 2009.

Insight into ...

Fame seeking

By Jason Kennedy - News Editor



FOR ten years, a certain show has caused infinite controversy. It has created stars and ruined people's lives. It gave us all an insight into the mindset of the craziest people in Britain. That show is Big Brother, and with only one year left to go there was only one thing to do to see how the fruitiest personalities are really picked: Audition for the most hated show on television.

The auditions were only starting up when my friend Tighearnan and I meandered into the RDS. We waited in the queue, along with former Big Brother tartlet, Noirin, who seemed to take a shining to yours truly. When the photographers wanted picture, she grabbed on to me and another hapless loser and posed. She then managed to trip on top of me. For the duration of my time with the reality TV loser, I couldn't help but think of the amount of magazine I saw her nude in. Classy bird, our Noirin. After around half an hour in the queue, Tig and I begun our team building exercises. We were split into two teams and had to complete a number of harmless tasks, like over-under and passing the balls without the use of our hands. However, the losing team had to complete an embarrassing forfeit, like pretend to be a farm animal or do the Single Ladies dance, Glee style.

After this, the real work began. We were split into groups of eight and given a partner. We had to get as much info from the person about themselves and then tell it to the group. I was paired with Becky, a 22-year-old Airport Security worker from Ballymun, who used to work in Mountjoy with her twin sister, who also tagged along to the auditions. From then, we had to rank ourselves in how much we deserve to get on the show. I told the group about my encounter with the scientologists, my recent break-up and all those interesting things

about my life. I managed to come second in the group, which I'm not sure is a good thing.

Following this, came the difficult dealings. We had to pick two people from the group to be "evicted" from the auditions. We chose a loud-mouth woman, who cheated on her fiancé of six years with his best friend, and a guy who was barely able to speak and was shaking quite a lot. The motor mouth woman was not impressed and began to say how we were all boring and she was the star. However, it was all a big joke. The skank and the quiet guy were still in with a show of being a Big Brother 11 housemate. Then came the news of who, if any, progressed to Round 2. This was decided by one of the producers, who would give a stamp on the person's hand, which featured the infamous Big Brother Eye. So as the stamp came out, we all had to stick our wrists out in front of us. I found myself being nervous. I really wanted to see what was up next, behind that mysterious black curtain, where the successful candidates were gathering. So next thing people were getting stamped and then wham; a big eye stamp appeared on my hand. I was though Round 1, but unfortunately, for Tighearnan, the day was done. The only other successful candidates from our line was the cheating loud-mouth and a 23-year-old devout Christian virgin, who had never been kissed, which leads me to ask what the hell is wrong with me? So then, the three of us were rushed behind the black curtain of mystery. There we faced Round 2: a seven-page questionnaire of extremely personal information and a contract to sell our rights away. I read through the contract which stated that we could not hold liable for embarrassment and they could use our character. My journalistic integrity signed my life away to Endemol UK and Channel 4. Next came the questionnaire, which such gems

as "where's the strangest place you had sex?", "what do you not want to talk about today?" and "what's the biggest lie you ever told?" I was honest and filled out the form like I would any legitimate survey. A producer read through it to decide if I was abnormal enough to go on to Round 3. She gave me the thumbs up and I was rushed upstairs to wait for a video interview in a mock up diary room.

Another producer led me into the room, where a bog-standard seat, black curtains, a big camera and a pleasant woman met me. She asked me about my answers to the questionnaire, and I answered her as humorously and eccentrically as I could. After this I was led to yet another waiting area. I then met the stereotypical English producer I was expecting. He thanked me for coming, but said that it was the end of the road for me. I breathed a little sigh of relief, I may be odd, but at least I'm not that odd.

So, come Summertime, when Davina McCall is ushering in the last batch of wannabees,

I'm hoping a little Irish Christian virgin goes in there. I have no idea how far he got, but he seemed like an interesting and friendly young fella, who was actually genuinely interested in going onto the show, and not just taking the proverbial, like Tighearnan and I. However, for her own sake, I hope the cheater is kept away from that house. She would be eaten alive by crowds baying for her blood, and, frankly, maybe she deserves it. I find the fact that she tried to use her infidelity as a springboard to become a Z-list celebrity absolutely despicable. Imagine how crap that guy would feel, watching his ex boasting about that on international TV.

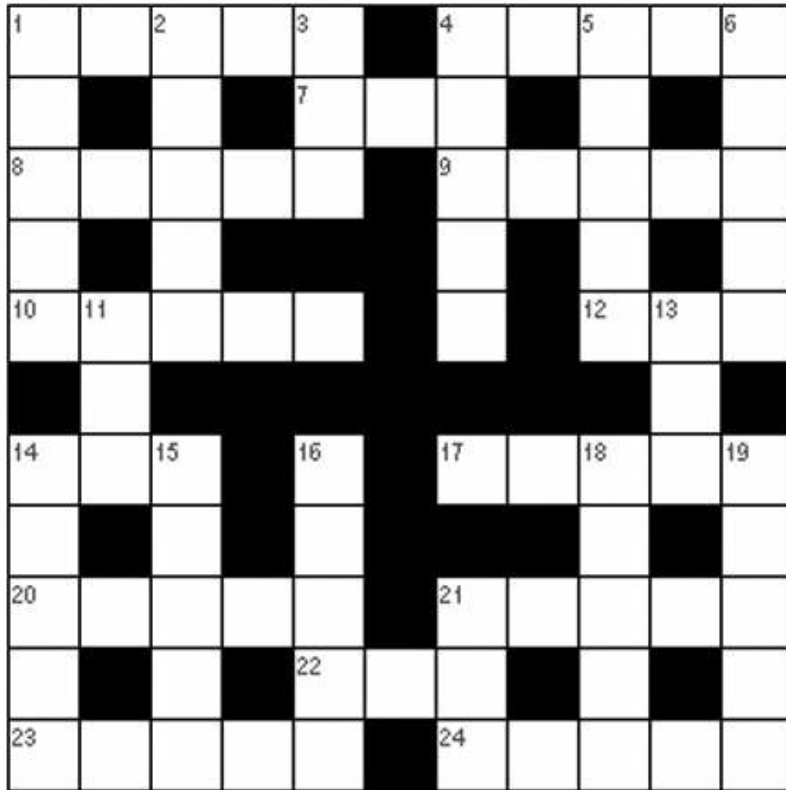
Nevertheless, whether you loved or hated Big Brother, this time next year it will be but a distant memory, to be replaced, undoubtedly, by another reality show. So, I may not be going into the most infamous house in Britain, but I'm sure there'll be plenty of people ready to humiliate themselves for the nation's amusement before the house closes their doors for good.



Jason with the BB stamp

Fun Page!

Crossword



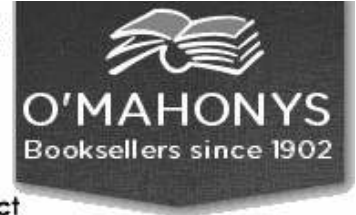
Across

- 1. Edible fruit of a small tree
- 4. Glide or slide smoothly along
- 7. To obtain victory
- 8. Waste product secreted by the kidneys
- 9. A shade of green
- 10. A place of ingress
- 12. A dry fruit consisting of an edible kernel
- 14. To find the sum of something
- 17. C.S. _____, writer of The Chronicles of Narnia
- 20. Scent or smell
- 21. Divide into equal parts
- 22. A single unit
- 23. Mournful sound made in pain or grief
- 24. Meditated on something

Down

- 1. Sharp or severe in effect
- 2. A sharp or tapering end
- 3. Female sheep
- 4. A pig's nose
- 5. Characteristic of Asia
- 6. A happening or occurrence
- 11. Downward movement of head in agreement
- 13. Abbreviation of University
- 14. In the course of...
- 15. Italian term for Cathedral
- 16. Item worn to protect clothes while cooking
- 18. Spends time in a leisurely manner
- 19. Rate of motion
- 21. Edge of clothing

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The lucky winner will receive a €20 voucher to spend in O'Mahony's Booksellers or online at www.omahonys.ie For all your college needs Submit entries with name & ID number to the entry box in SU reception

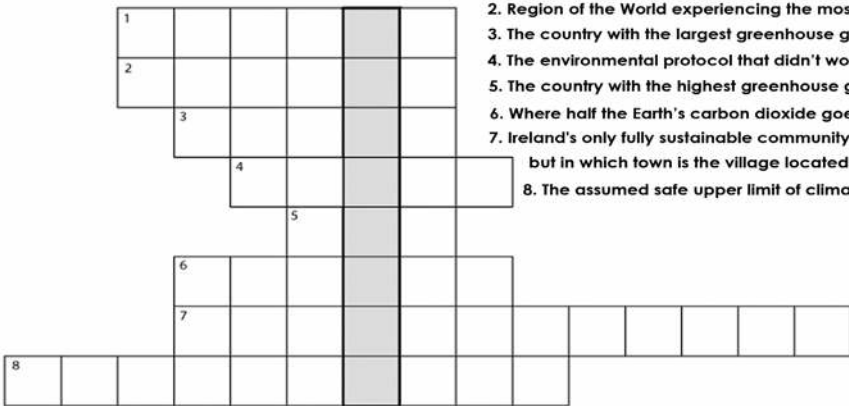
EnviroCom University of Limerick **EnviroCom Puzzle Competition**

Get out your googles and internets. Complete this crossword to be in with a chance to win a prize that will change your world. Use the clues to fill in the rows. The shaded column will reveal a hidden word.

Email the hidden word to marc.carroll@ul.ie to enter our draw.

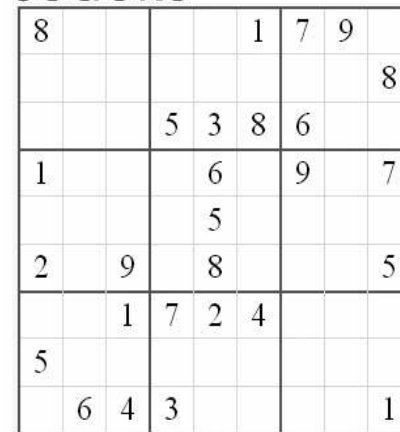
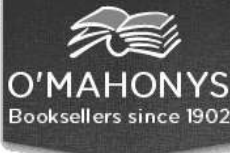
Clues

- 1. The rate at which the Earth reflects sunlight back into outer space.
- 2. Region of the World experiencing the most warming.
- 3. The country with the largest greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4. The environmental protocol that didn't work.
- 5. The country with the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita.
- 6. Where half the Earth's carbon dioxide goes.
- 7. Ireland's only fully sustainable community can be found at thevillage.ie, but in which town is the village located?
- 8. The assumed safe upper limit of climate change



Sudoku

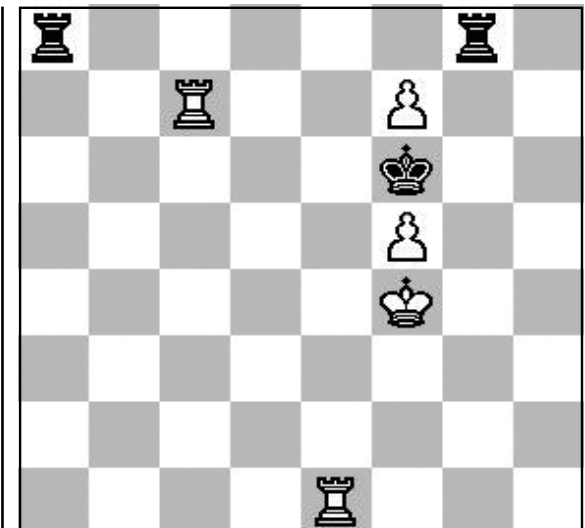
Sponsored by:



Instructions:

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow in a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:
 * Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
 * Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
 * Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.

The winner will receive a €20 voucher to spend in O'Mahony's Booksellers www.omahonys.ie For all your college needs Submit entries with name & ID number to entry box in SU reception



1. fXr8=Ng8+ RxN8 2. R6++

Diary of a Co-Op Student

By Nicole Ní Ríordáin

LABA diena! Well, I've been in Lithuania for two weeks and time has flown. So far I'm really enjoying it. Everyone has been so nice, the teachers at the school I'm working at held a special assembly to welcome me and the students are treating me like a celebrity!

The biggest issue for me so far is the weather; it's unbelievably cold. The city has been under a cover of snow and ice since I arrived, and my Irish winter clothes just aren't warm enough for the coldest Lithuanian winter in three years. The weather here is much more extreme than I expected; when it snows, it doesn't just last ten minutes like it does at home; it snows constantly for two days. And then it hardens on the ground. The school has a policy that lessons are cancelled if the temperature goes below -25C; that's happened three times in the two weeks I've been here. While these days off seemed great first thing in the morning, they can be a bit boring as in those temperatures you can't really go outside (without getting frostbite, anyway). The school itself is massive and looks more like Summer Bay High than any Irish school I've visited! The students range from ages 6-7 to about 16, at which age they move to a different school. They start learning English in grade two, so the students I'm dealing with have a few years of English classes under their

belts, and thankfully we can understand each other well enough. They strike me as different from Irish students in that they (mostly) seem extremely motivated to learn. They gobble up any information I give them about Ireland and I've already inadvertently taught them a few slang words because they listen so closely to everything I say.

They're very eager to learn English so they can watch American television and movies, and also because a lot of them want to travel when they grow up. It's humbling to come to a new country and realise that their knowledge of Ireland is limited...when I asked one class if they knew what currency we used their consensus was "Dollars". Oh, and another class thought that Ireland was attached to England! One of the most exciting aspects of living abroad for Co-Op is getting to explore a new city. There's so much to see in Vilnius, and I'm slowly learning my way around the old Town.

The buildings are so beautiful and the shopping is pretty great! So far I don't like the food that much though; one of the traditional dishes I've tasted is a bright pink soup, made of sour milk and beetroot, served cold with potatoes. As my friend commented, "The best thing about this soup is the colour!". Well I've run out of space so until next time, visio gero!

Chicken and Vegetable Pasta Bake

Ingredients:

2 Chicken breasts
Garlic
Pasta Sauce
Pasta (around 400g will do a lasagne dish)
Butter (a cube)
Spices - Salt, Pepper, Basil & Oregano
Grated Cheese
Onion (peeled)
Mushrooms (washed)
Red Pepper (deseeded)
Spinach (washed)

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Slice the chicken, the onion, mushrooms & pepper into strips preferably or small cubes.
3. Peel the garlic and crush/chop it up as small as possible.
4. Put the pasta into a pan of boiling water and cook until soft. When cooked, drain

- the pasta and pour cold water over it.
5. Add the butter to a large frying pan and heat.
 6. Add the chopped garlic to the hot pan, along with the salt, pepper and a pinch of oregano and basil.
 7. Add the chicken to the pan and cook.
 8. Add the vegetables to the pan and cook for a few minutes.
 9. Put a layer of cooked vegetables and chicken on the lasagne dish, followed by a layer of pasta, followed by some grated cheese. Repeat.
 10. Pour the pasta sauce of the contents of the lasagne dish and stir until evenly distributed.
 11. Sprinkle grated cheese over the top and bake in the oven for 10-15mins or until the cheese is golden
 12. Eat!

A different kind of Co-Op

By Diarmuid Lucey

WELL my fellow ULers, I hope Week 1 was a blend of reunifications, slave driving lecturers and of course the infamous Lodge! While you guys were grumbling about assignment deadlines I've been tested for malaria, injected against swine flu, interrogated by the Chinese Embassy and tried to learn how to order a taxi in Mandarin Chinese.

Thankfully ye need not run for the hills when I return to UL because, I'm now a holder of a medical certificate stating that I'm malaria free; not one of my greatest achievements I must admit! To add to this, I've had to be reminded of the pandemic that crippled the nation with worry only a few months ago; Swine Flu. As a person who suffers from a chronic phobia of needles, the sight of the needle first made me break into a sweat, then into faint dizzy spells and then my red rosy cheeks turned a gaunt ghostly colour. To avoid embarrassment, let's just say the nurses were relieved to see me leave.

Who thought getting a Chinese Visa would be such a hindrance? Last Monday, when I hand delivered my application for a Chinese Visa, in a surprising location in Ballsbridge, Dublin. I was to collect the Visa next week, but, after receiving a phone call instructing me in Quasi-English to an interview, my mind went into a flurry of thought. Had the Chinese Embassy unravelled a deep seeded secret of mine and/or my murky past or did they uncoil my devious plot? Of course not, because I had no anterior motive or a criminal record.

Still though, as I sat down in front of two Chinese Embassy officials, I felt nervous and, for some reason, guilty. The 45 minute interview probed me regarding my intention during my duration in China and what definite plans I would pursue on my return to Ireland.

To make light of the situation, for the first 5 minutes of the interview I must have spoken real fast as, the only response I got were the puzzled looks of the Embassy official first starring longingly at me and then, between themselves. Luckily, 15 minutes after the interview, I was granted my reward; the Chinese Visa.

Now, feeling a lot more relaxed and my needle encounter now a faded memory and my precious Chinese Visa in hand, I have decided to begin learning Mandarin. To be honest, I plan to only perfect how to order a taxi and to give directions from Beijing Airport to the College in Beijing. For some reason, each has been told to order their own taxi to the Beijing College and costs will be reimbursed.

This is a disaster waiting to happen! Suspecting that my Irish country Chinese mutterings won't be understood, I've scoured Google, for essential Chinese phrases and I plan to just hand a piece of paper to the taxi driver and hope I won't get ripped off! Here is a taster:

Wo qu ... (pronounced woh chew ...) I am going to...

Hope to keep ye all updated in the next issue, and hoping I won't be lost somewhere in Beijing!

First Year Diary

By Amy Murphy

IT'LL BE different this semester, really. As the season of resolutions draws to a close and I settle into my second semester I find myself chanting this to myself like a protective mantra.

My desk is organised, my module outlines are tacked to my wall and my timetable has been lovingly filled in all that's left is to find some resolve, or a bottle of glue. Already the excuses are sneaking their way past my mantra; I'm too tired to work, I'm too hungry to work, I have to make time for social activities as well, and all that just to make my deadlines for An Focal! At least I can't make the excuse that I'm getting used to the place anymore. It's odd, fifteen weeks last semester and I feel like an old hat here, despite the fact I only just discovered the Computer Science building. I'm sure, however, as the semester progresses I will find surprises lurking for me

here, there and everywhere. I still have to encounter my first "Charity week", and I have more exams than last semester, anyone feeling the pressure?

Oh, and as a warning to my fellow pedestrians; imagine my surprise when walking home I was asked by some lads how do you get to UL? Baffled by the fact they had clearly just come from that direction and were of the appropriate demograph to be attending UL I pointed over my shoulder, which sparked off splutters of giggles and a "you study!". Then clearly amused by their prodigious wit they drove off. I suppose in their defense at least this time I could decipher them. Usually on my way home from a society meeting I will encounter shout-bys that amount to nothing more than the bellowing of boars or grunting of excited geese. Are the creatures evolving?

Do we even want a Students' Union anymore?

By Amy Murphy

DO WE even want a Students' Union anymore? Every fortnight An Focal struggles to encourage members of the student body to write articles that matter to them and their fellow students.

Every time you enter the common room it is covered with piles of rubbish despite the numerous bins, but where student apathy in UL really shines is the Union General Meeting. The UGM, due to be held Wednesday of Week 3, allows students to bring their concerns to the Union and for action to be taken on those concerns. Important, beneficial and drastic changes could be made; however, the quorum of two hundred students, out of a cohort of thousands, is rarely met, rendering the UGM useless.

The SU has tried a number of tactics in the past to attract attendees; food, free stuff and entertainment, things that would, in any other circumstance attract hoards of students but has had no effect on attendance of the UGM. I decided to ask the student body directly, on a popular forum, what is it about the UGM that is so repelling but even responses to this were difficult to procure. Those that did reply offered some valuable insight.

The general feeling could be boiled down to boredom. Others are intimidated by a feeling of over formality. Students complained of the length of the meeting and that the items on the agenda rarely held any relevance to them. Those items that might be interesting and engaging to students were pushed off the agenda by what is seen as excessive bureaucracy – one example was the officer reports, unnecessarily reiterated from 'An Focal' articles. It is felt that the students that do bother to attend aren't given proper opportunities to participate and are drowned out by Class Reps and Clubs and Socs members. They also feel the format of the UGM, lacking debate and discussion, encourages student inaction. There was also a general consensus that the UGM fails to affect any of the issues that

immediately matter to students.

There were also reasons that did not directly involve the UGM. Some students have commented on what they consider to be the unfavourable conduct of the Students' Union. The most popular response amongst my fellow first years was that they didn't know about it, although I was disheartened when one or two replied, "I have a life." Of course these reasons are completely logical and understandable but for the suggestions to be taken into account we need attendance at the UGM. Furthermore, people will be more than willing to endure dull and lengthy but vital meetings when they feel passionately about something. Why is it that our students don't care enough about the Union to make this sacrifice? Having asked a friend about the relationship students have with the Students' Union in C.I.T., where they are currently attending, I discovered this apathy isn't seen in other campuses. My friend described how students are regularly involved with their Union, in protests, petitions and fundraising; sometimes it's for issues that affect them directly and other times it's just to right the wrongs of the World. As for meetings and official proceeding within the Union, the students make sure they are well informed and when they prefer not to attend proceedings they ensure, one way or another, that their voice is adequately represented. The first line of the second year's reply was "we love our Students' Union".

Imagine UL without the Students' Union. No An Focal, no SU shop, no experienced and knowledgeable help or advice when things go wrong. No Charity week, no Clubs and Socs, and no common room. These are all things I use in my daily student life, as do my friends. You may not think that attendance at the UGM will immediately affect these facilities but when the student body ceases to care about its Union, it ceases to be a Union and eventually will disappear from UL altogether. So, where do we go from here?

The woes of a Connacht supporter

By Liam Corcoran

SUPPORTERS of Connacht rugby can be a strange lot. Condemned to prop up the poor man of the Irish game's battered frame, many have developed an unusually thick skin to deal with the inevitable post-defeat abuse from the enemy's followers and an ethereal, mid-distance gaze which is deployed in times of talk of past triumphs amongst their Leinster/Munster supporting acquaintances.

A highly developed inner code dictates that things must get only slightly worse before prospects become drastically poor, and then the team may actually draw a game. It is on such principles that Connacht fans build their hopes and are able to avoid absolute disillusion.

However, even armed with these superhuman traits and such an intricate belief system, being a Connacht supporter in the midst of the Munster stronghold of Limerick can be a trying affair sometimes. Declaration of allegiance to the forgotten province will inevitably provoke an air of patronising bemusement or incredulity on the part of the seasoned Munster fan. Housemates will scoff; associates will display eyebrow acrobatics in their questioning of your obviously deluded loyalty. Why would anyone feel the need to be tied to such an unsuccessful and talentless team when the cockpit of European rugby is on the doorstep of UL they ask? And yet despite the lack of success, the familiar place at the bottom of the Magners' League, the apparent inability to build on any rare fruitful periods and score lines like the Stephen's day 35-3 drubbing by Munster, the province has a retained a healthy and dedicated support base.

In many ways, Connacht cannot be held fully responsible for its misfortunes. Many fans will gripe that the province is nothing more than a nursery for younger, inexperienced players. Once they have been tested in the world of professional club rugby, a game where money and brute force reign supreme, the bigger and more successful clubs will flock around, like diners at a lobster-tank, and take their pick. Well-known players such as Paul Warwick and Bernard Jackman are among those who had important developmental playing time with Connacht, before leaving due to the lure of the professional games' brighter floodlights and contracts. In reality, Connacht can't do much about this situation. On

several occasions, the IRFU have come close to winding up Connacht rugby as an entity entirely, citing lack of success and financial difficulties among the main reasons. To me however, these two woes will forever be inextricably entwined with regard to Connacht rugby.

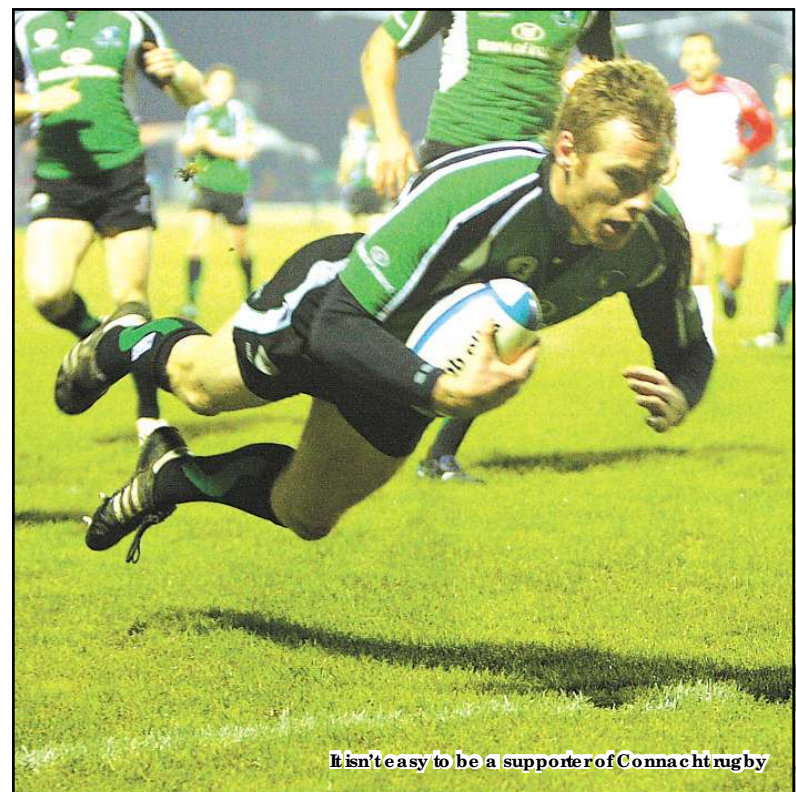
Each season, the Connacht players will rally to their (soon to be replaced) coach, Michael Bradley's aspirations for some moderate European success in the Challenge Cup and perhaps a few smash-and-grab victories in the Magners' League. The glamourless Challenge Cup, circuit of the lower-tier clubs and starring exotic contributions from the "cream" of Italian and Spanish club rugby is Connacht's annual shot at the limelight enjoyed by other the Irish provinces. Unfortunately, the competition will also inevitably feature the odd high-profile club who have succumbed to poor form in their home league and must suffer the indignity of second-tier European rugby for a season or so, as well as those teams who finished second in their Heineken Cup group and are therefore secured a Challenge Cup quarter-final place. And whereas Connacht may initially have been serious contenders in the Cup, the addition of the likes of London Irish, Wasps or Northampton makes this a significantly more difficult task.

2009 was a phenomenal year for Irish rugby. And yet in the IRFU and general media's look-back at the year's triumphs, mention of Connacht was awkwardly glossed over, like the unavoidable inclusion

of some obstreperous child at a school awards ceremony. Idealistically brilliant victories over both Leinster and Munster in the 08/09 Magners' League season, an unjust yet final defeat to Northampton Saints in the Challenge Cup quarter final and the termination of several key players' contracts due to financial shake-ups were all that Connacht had going for it last year. Blinded by the glitz and international approval which came with the more notable Irish victories, the IRFU continued to fail to realise that inaction with regard to Connacht is not an option. Lack of development in the province will mean that many talented young players will fail to continue in the sport and that rugby may dry up completely in the West of Ireland.

Fanciful as it may seem, the cessation of Connacht as a club is not all that unreal a prospect due to the West's demography, big business and rugby centralisation, like what resulted in the collapse of long time Scottish strugglers, Borders. Smaller clubs in Connacht (my own included) have already felt the pinch of the province's malnourishment and have had to adjust through amalgamations and competition withdrawals.

However, despite this malevolent backdrop, the faithful remain confident. Genuinely decent European victories so far this season against the not-insubstantial opposition of Montpellier and Worcester have given reason for hope. And as any Sports ground veteran or high stool analyst in The Skeff will tell you, hope is vital.



Isn't easy to be a supporter of Connacht rugby

Student Speak

Jason Kennedy takes to the Courtyard to find out what you're most looking forward to in semester two.

"More boys than now. Mmmm...boys."



Julieann Evans
3rd year business

"The weather heating up. I'm decked out and all."



Daithi Mac Gabhann
1st year woodwork teaching

"Remixing Pendulum"



Jennifer Allen
3rd year Industrial Biochemistry

"Watching Triona fall into another hedge."



Barry Kennedy
3rd year Computer Systems

"Lots of students buying lots of delicious brownies."



Helen from Gingergirlie

"Being on co-op and drinking and having no exams like you people!"



Naomi Barrett
3rd year Industrial biochemistry

Supporting online publishing

By John Rainsford

A revolutionary new programme which assists academic authors to publish online, in websites called Institutional Repositories (IRs), will become fully operational at the University of Limerick this February. The project is part of a joint response to support so-called Open Access (OA) publishing by all seven Universities in the Republic of Ireland. John Rainsford explains what the process will mean for the world of publishing.

The winds of change were blowing around Plassey House this week. Not since Gutenberg (1398-1468) invented the mechanical printing press in the mid 15th century has so much been promised by one technological advance. The germ of this transformation is the establishment of Institutional Repositories (IRs) in Irish universities which will greatly support the drive towards universal 'Open Access' (OA) publishing.

Under the traditional model of academic publishing authors are not paid for producing articles but give their work free of charge in return for publication in peer reviewed journals. Their reasoning may be summed up by the phrase "publish or perish". Now, with support for IRs on the rise, the prospect for a radical new departure has never been better.

Aoife Geraghty, who is UL Library's Head of Information services, explained: "Libraries are all very interested in the possibilities presented by Open Access (OA). All seven Universities in the Republic of Ireland have fully operational IRs under the government funded IREL-Open project where authors can upload their work free of charge. "Currently these are accessible via individual University sites, and via search engines, including Google Scholar. We are currently piloting a national web portal giving access to all sites from one domain called RIAN."

OA means free, immediate, global online access to scientific and scholarly research. Currently it does not exist in its purest form but two methods of attaining this Holy Grail are being pursued vigorously namely Gold OA, also called the "Gold Road", and Green OA, called the "Green Road". Critics argue that neither model is scalable from a business point of view but proponents disagree and cite the importance of OA to freedom and democracy.

Gold OA involves authors paying to publish in specific OA journals and Green OA involves authors themselves self archiving on so

called "Institutional Repositories" (IRs), using free "open source software" available online.

Publishers fear unrestrained access to either model and have managed, thus far, to avoid the worst excesses of a wholesale changeover. Increasingly, however, the old model of publishing is being progressively challenged by a new revolution in media technologies. Demand for free access to the internet, weblogs and podcasts is increasing all the time.

It is no surprise, therefore, that authors, and their institutions, as well as many governments, support moves to OA. The Budapest OA Initiative (2002) supported self archiving by authors on Institutional Repositories (Green Road) and the creation of OA journals by publishers (Gold Road). Only around 4,000 journals, out of a worldwide catalogue of 25,000, are currently available on Gold Road but the numbers are increasing at a rate of two per day. Self publishing has expanded to encompass more than 200,000 titles.

The Irish Universities project was launched in 2006 when the very first submissions were made to the Irish University repositories. The official launch took place two years later on May 16, 2008. IRs are populated by academic research ranging from special collections like the "Limerick Chronicle" to postgraduate theses for research masters degrees and PhDs.

Students are, however, allowed to embargo the uploading of their work. This allows them a valuable breathing space to publicise and write articles based on their own copyright.

Aoife stated: "Publishers will have policies on copyrights, as will funders, stipulating what authors can and cannot do when uploading their work. Usually six months must pass, after publication in a peer reviewed journal, before an author can upload a paper to an IR. The various stakeholder policies can be accessed via the website www.sherpa.ac.uk.

Libraries are very conscious of the cost of subscribing to journals and in some cases book purchases have suffered over the years as cut-backs have to be made. The UK Houghton report shows the potential economic savings to be made from OA so we are definitely moving in the right direction."

She continued: "Libraries accept that Publishers need funds to maintain the peer review system of publishing that is currently in place. However there is a huge debate as to how, if OA comes into being, they

can continue to generate those funds. For authors, the best line to take for now is to self-archive, at no cost, in an institutional repository, thus gaining the open access advantage, while continuing to publish with peer-reviewed journals, thus retaining peer credibility. There has been a big sea change in the culture of publishing recently and I feel that a tipping point is being reached in the drive towards OA."

In 2006 the EU published an independent report showing that the price of academic journals had risen by 200-300% in the period 1975-1995, amounting to a staggering 11 billion dollars. Libraries, the primary purchasers of academic journals, face increasingly tight budgets and are, therefore, attracted to the cost reductions offered by OA technologies.

Not surprisingly, Green OA is very much supported by libraries and academic institutions. Indeed, there is now considerable momentum on the side of OA enthusiasts for change.

US research has indicated that 95 pc of authors would self archive if mandated to do so by their institutions. Nearly 100 pc of authors have done so, using the arXiv server available to physicists and computer science researchers, since the 1990s.

Legislation encouraging "self archiving" exists in 37 countries worldwide and in the USA the Obama Administration plans to advance similar laws. The world's largest funding agency, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and most Universities, fully support OA. Commercial publishers have, up until now, developed and purchased new journals on the basis that libraries would continue to buy them at increasing prices. Now their business is being progressively threatened by advances in OA. For example, students are increasingly working from home using digital and e-products.

They object to being charged "pay per view" fees for access to academic papers-in some cases written by their colleagues. Critics of publishers say that there is an increasing democratic and moral obligation to ensure academic scholarship is available on the internet for libraries and academic institutions to use. OA has, therefore, huge implications for publishers, research libraries, copyright and scholarship.

Today more than ever "content is king" and the world's biggest publishers create and sell such content for profit. Currently around 90% of journals support the author's

right to self archive. The numbers of scientific authors alone has increased by 3% per annum over the last 300 years with the quantity of journals rising by as much as 3.5% per annum.

Special programmes called "Web spiders" can search for data uploaded to IRs with rights of ownership and accessibility protected by new types of copyright called "Creative Commons Licenses". Closely associated with these new licenses are so called "Addendum Engines" which bolster the rights of the author to reuse their own work.

There are many agencies capable of utilising online content for commercial purposes. The state, for example, could benefit via increased indirect taxation from the sale of online products as could the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI), the Land Registry, Post Office and Patents Office. Less developed Countries (LDCs) might also gain from OA.

Most institutions, even in developed countries, can only afford a fraction of the journals on offer to them and those in LDCs cannot afford them

at all.

While online documents, in themselves, cannot be eaten or cure any diseases they may help scientists in these societies to help local communities adapt and prosper. Authors from LDCs would have to pay submission fees but could receive assistance from funding agencies to support their participation in OA.

Green OA, which involves authors uploading to IRs, is not a form of publishing in itself but rather a means to an end. Supporters argue that if 100% Green OA was to be achieved full OA might inevitably follow.

While pure OA represents a sort of Utopia for activists self archiving only requires the determination of institutions like Irish Universities to achieve. Were this process to be implemented fully it might well act as a catalyst for real and lasting change.

The University of Limerick's IR, available at <http://ulir.ul.ie>, is part of an OA movement that may well revolutionise the world of publishing and communications.



Aoife Geraghty

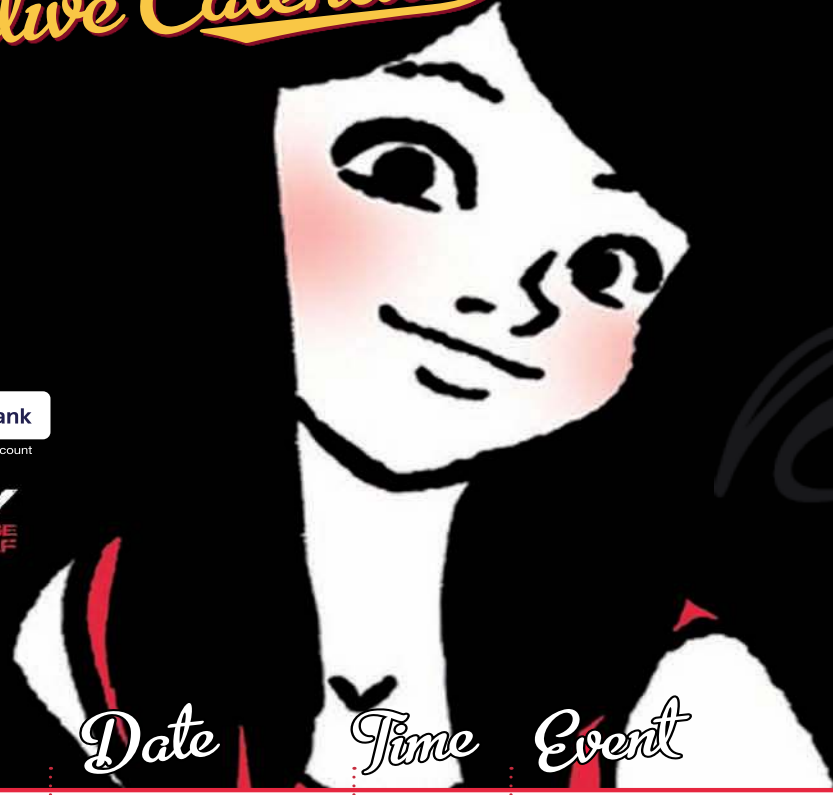
Students

Use the Ulsu Ents Alternative Calendar

All tickets are available from the Students' Union

For more info & extra events yet to be announced check us out on:

- www.facebook.com/ulsuents
- www.ulsu.ie
- sufeedback@ul.ie



Week	Date	Time	Event	Venue	Price
<i>Week 2</i> <i>Re-freshers Week</i>	Tues 2nd February Thurs 4th February	9pm 8pm	Stevie Starr Andrew Maxwell	Stables Monnet	€free €10/12
<i>Week 3</i> <i>Choose a Challenge week</i>	All week Thurs 8th February		Choose a Charity week challenge Late Bar	Students' Union Stables	Varying €Free
<i>Week 4</i> <i>Wedding Week</i>	Mon 15th February Tues 16th February Wed 17th February Thurs 18th February	8pm 10pm 11pm 6pm	Quick Flirt Speed Date The Hen & Stag The Wedding (Late Bar) The Honeymoon	Java's Trinity Rooms Stables Mystery Tour	€free €5 €free €12/15
<i>Week 5</i>	Thurs 25th February Thurs 25th February	8pm	Mick Flannery Late Bar	Jean Monnet Stables	€10/12 €Free
<i>Week 6</i>	Wed 3rd March Thurs 4th March Fri 5th March	11pm 8pm 8pm	The Oscars Ball Neosupervital Neil Delamare	Trinity Rooms Javas UCH	€5 €5 €25
<i>Week 7</i>	Wed 10th March Wed 10th March	12pm 11pm	Charity Week Ticket Picnic Charity Week Ticket Party	TBC Trinity Rooms	€free €free
<i>Week 8</i> <i>The 'Save-Your-Money' Movie Week</i>	Mon 15th March Tues 16th March Wed 17th March Thur 18th March	6 & 9pm 6 & 9pm 6 & 9pm 6 & 9pm	movies of the week movies of the week movies of the week movies of the week	Storm Cinema Storm Cinema Storm Cinema Storm Cinema	1/2 Price 1/2 Price 1/2 Price 1/2 Price
<i>Week 9</i>	3 CHARITY WEEK CHALLENGE YOURSELF				
<i>Week 10</i>	Mid-term Break				

Caring for Carers

By John Rainsford

AT A time when the charity aspect of human existence is being lauded both at home and abroad the role of the “carer” in Irish life should elicit a special note of sympathy.

It is rightly said that everyone, at some time or another in their lives, is either being cared for or is a “carer”. For many, however, this reality brings bitter sweet memories of how things might have been had illness or misfortune not intervened in their lives.

One person who knows intimately about the plight of Irish Carers is Renee Geary. Ms Geary is the Limerick based Director of “Caring for Carers”, an organisation that seeks to cherish the role of the “carer” in Irish life.

“A lot of carers get very distressed and they can neglect themselves. They come from all age groups. For example you can have teenagers looking after stroke victims or young parents with special needs children. The biggest problem carers have is that they do not know where to go for help. There needs to be a “one-stop-shop” where people can get this advice,” she said.

“We operate a drop-in centre where people can get information. I have seen people walk in here who are clearly very distressed. It gives us great satisfaction when the person can go away reassured that there are people there who understand and can help them. We are a focal point for this. We can do a lot to help others in life I feel.”

Carers are people drawn from all levels of society. Currently there are 161,000 family carers in Ireland (4.8% of the population) dealing with disabled adults and children. Renee estimates that the real figure may be closer to 360,000. Most (62.28%) are women. They work an incredible 3.7 m hours per week. In effect they do the work of 77,000 full-time workers but get paid as little as 3.68 Euros per hour, less than the minimum wage.

For most the health of their loved ones and the accompanying physical and mental demands will never change. Everyone in a lifetime will experience one or both roles; of being cared for or having to give care. Yet the minimal and often means tested state benefits available for carers mean that they continuously struggle both financially as well as psychologically. The role is 24/7 care with little respite, financial help or support.

Perhaps surprisingly, in an increasingly self-centred world, the

family continues to be the strongest source of care for older people, the ill and disabled. Today the vast majority of people in need are cared for in their own home. Renee, helped by her brothers and sisters, cared for her own mother after she developed Alzheimer’s disease at only 63 years of age. Renee’s mother continued to live in the family home until she was 87 years old.

Like many carers Renee and her family were forced to take on the role after their father died but their caring responsibilities did not end there. Later Renee’s mother-in-law moved in with her family after she developed Parkinson’s disease and suffered visual impairment. Renee looked after her mother-in-law from 1999 until 2006 after her own mother’s health deteriorated to such an extent that she had to go into a nursing home. Renee cared for her mother, with the help of her brothers and sisters from 1983 until 1999. It is an amazing but not untypical example of the selfless role that carers play in Irish society.

She explained: “At the beginning it was very difficult but I found that I was able to grow into the role. There were a lot of tears and anxiety along the way but a lot of funny moments also. My mother was a funny lady and was relatively easy to manage for most of her life. The fact that we were such a large family was a great bonus.”

She continued: “A lot of people would be in denial about the illness. They cannot cope with the fact that this has happened to them. There are different types of Alzheimer’s also. Some sufferers can be aggressive and hard to manage, others not so. The illness causes a major problem in families. You could have a physically large husband with the

illness and a little wife. The person may not be in control of themselves anymore. It can lead to a family member not wanting to be a carer anymore and becoming increasingly isolated from the world around them.”

“Caring for Carers” was established in 2003 by Sr. Damian Kelly, a former Matron in St. Camillus’ Hospital



and Anna Casey, a former Matron in Barrington’s Hospital, Limerick. There were both “Soroptimists”, an international voluntary organisation, founded in 1921, by women wanting to serve local communities. They started the organisation with the help of Judith Ironside, an English lady then living with her husband in Spanish Point, Co. Clare. The late Mary Hanley was the first Development Officer.

The women saw a need to assist family carers and met frequently to further their project. The main office today is located at Carmody St. in Ennis. The remaining offices are in Galway and Limerick. In 1991 Professor Joyce O’Connor, in association with Soroptimists

International and numerous carers’ groups, drew up the “Carers Charter” to recognise and support the role that carers play in society.

Renee stated: “As a carer you tend to lose your friends also. You can’t go out and your friends eventually stop asking you to join them. It is very difficult for people who have families and who are out of work.

They find it very difficult to cope. What happens usually is that the carer’s health fails and the person ends up in hospital.” She continued: “I mean nobody asks to get into this area of being a family carer. It is usually left to one person. In some families the view is taken that because a person is getting a carer’s allowance that they are being paid but in fact it is only a very small amount and it is means tested. This situation can result in depression, stress, isolation and grieving for a life that has been lost.”

The Limerick Office is open 25 hours per week, Monday to Friday from 9.30am until 2.30pm, but in practice the work extends well beyond these opening times.

They also run courses for support groups four times a year and are developing their services all the time. 42 people, in all, are employed by the Limerick branch catering for some 500 clients. The Ennis-based CEO is Mary McMahon.

Renee said: “The best place for a person being cared for is in their own home. They are used to their own environment. They have easy access to familiar things like old music. I found that very beneficial with my mother. Today people have different priorities and they do not call to each other as much as they used to. There is a decrease in neighbourliness you might say. People haven’t the time I suppose. They are busy cooking meals. The only time they go out is

to work. They hardly ever meet their own neighbours anymore.”

Carers opt to keep their relatives at home for a variety of reasons—finance being one crucial aspect. The sheer cost of nursing homes can be prohibitive and many people simply want to care for a loved one. Others feel acute guilt at the thought of having to put relatives into institutions. There can be intense bitterness also in families compounded by the fact that many carers are intensely private people who do not share their feelings easily.

The Irish Government currently save around €2.5 billion by keeping such people out of nursing homes. There are huge financial implications also for the families of carers themselves. The kinds of illnesses involved include Alzheimer’s disease, Depression, Parkinson’s disease, strokes, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Heart disease, Arthritis and special needs.

“Caring for Carers” is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with charitable status funded partly by the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Lottery and by a myriad of voluntary contributions and fund raising events.

Staff and volunteers participate each year in the Limerick mini-marathon and organise social events. They also run “bag packs” at supermarkets, hold draws at Easter time and sell Christmas cards. The latter were designed this year by one of their own carers, an artist looking after her sick husband. 70 family carers are taken to the Woodlands House Hotel in Adare for an annual meal in December.

“There is great job satisfaction here. From my past experiences I suppose I have an empathy with people in this situation. It is great to see people go away feeling better about themselves after a chat. I wouldn’t call it a counselling session but a sharing of problems anyway,” said Renee. The role of the “carer” is one of the most underappreciated roles in Irish society today. Organisations like Renee’s are trying to express the strong sense of gratitude that society owes carers all year round.

If you are interested in receiving further information about “Caring for Carers” please contact Renee at E-mail: caringforcarerslimerick@eircom.net or phone: 061-469484 (Lo Call: 1890 469484).

The Weblog is: www.limerickcaringforcarers.wordpress.com

JD Salinger's legacy is not what it might have been

By Damagh Roche - Arts Editor

THE death of JD Salinger made the headlines for only one reason: The Catcher in the Rye. Unlike most other beloved American authors, who are celebrated for exhaustive oeuvres (like Norman Mailer and Tom Wolfe), Salinger is almost exclusively remembered for his 1951 tale of a sixteen-year-old boy's feelings of alienation and uncertainty.

Salinger's novel was controversial in its day, suffering censorship, criticism for indecency and sometimes outright bans. It has been lauded as the seminal novel of the teenage era, examining teen angst at a time when the idea of the teenager was not yet a part of social discussion. For many young people who read *Catcher in the Rye* in their teen years, it was a formative part of their maturing experience.

However, in the decades between the publication of Salinger's acclaimed work and the dawning of the modern age, the teenage experience and the perceptions of young people generally have undergone subtle but important changes, which have made *Catcher in the Rye* less and less relevant.

Holden Caulfield, the suffering sixteen-year-old boy in Salinger's book, has endeared himself to generations of teenagers. He is awkward, unhappy and isolated; the cruelties of the world and his deep sadness at the death of his little brother have combined to make him apathetic towards life, self-loathing and without ambition. Many have identified with his awkwardness and rejection of the perceived absurd cruelty of their world.

Indeed, it is understandable that many self-doubting teenagers identify with Holden's position, especially successive generations who felt repressed under the heel of their parents, whom they felt were out of touch. Holden's sexual frustration and fear of interacting with a seemingly wicked world in which he doesn't feel he belongs is a common motif for the teenage experience.

But things have changed. Our generation still feels further from our parents than they would like, we still question the apparent absurdity of the world and still harbour fears of growing up and possibly becoming our parents or fitting in to the society that we can be so critical of.

However, this generation is less inclined to be sympathetic towards Holden Caulfield. Holden is childish, un-ambitious, essentially selfish and unable to see beyond the narrow confines of the world in which he lives. Even those of us who feel no sense of identification with our parents or homes and who see university as a safe haven, could not justify Holden's disinclination to do anything to improve his situation. His habitual failure to achieve or even try to achieve anything and his flunking out of school after school are unthinkable to our generation, particularly we university students. It's not that we can't feel sympathy for Holden; he has had a hard time. The death of his brother, the cruelty of his schoolmates, and the apparent apathy of his parents are not things to be taken lightly. Yet he blames everything but himself for his unhappy position and, though he does not subscribe to nihilism or absurdism, his behaviour amounts to the same thing but for less philosophical and noble reasons. His thoughts and experiences are comparable to those that many of us go through when we experience teen angst, his reaction is neither laudable nor excusable.

JD Salinger's face is not well known, nor is the man himself. It is known that he despised the notoriety and attention that *Catcher in the Rye* earned him. It is doubtless that his magnum opus will be read by many in the future who will have their own unique interpretation of it. It will remain part of the history of the development of the teenager as a concept and some will still see it as an adolescent rite of passage but today's youth are not the rejectionist, isolated individuals that they once might have been. Time will judge Salinger.



JD Salinger

The Road: An Unnecessary Path?

By Paula Jane Murphy

CORMAC McCarthy won the Pulitzer Prize and countless other awards when he penned the much renowned novel, *The Road*. Indeed it was the most alive, original and poetic novel of its time. However the story it tells, although superbly told, is shocking, harrowing and somewhat frustrating.

Some of the images the book conjures up in ones imagination are quite difficult to stomach so the thought of seeing these images

first hand on screen is downright daunting. The plot tells of a father and son, who remain nameless, and their journey south through a post apocalyptic world. They travel across a grey and charred landscape almost devoid of other life.

The other life present is scattered around and consists of people like themselves clinging to life and trying to avoid the inevitable and what are called "the bad people" who travel in armed gangs and partake in cannibalism.

Director John Hillcoat and screenwriter Joe Penhall stay quite true to the book, almost too true. The film is obviously not light, funny or romantic nor is it farfetched. It cannot even be called a horror movie.

It is believable and real and that is what is most terrifying. As an audience member you will want to leave and forget about it but you will be drawn into seeing the story out in the hope of a happy resolution.

Viggo Mortensen plays the father and acquits himself quite well although at times I felt the relationship between him and the son Kodi Smit-McPhee was too mechanical. Charlize Theron plays the part of the mother, a character almost negligible in the book here made more significant to render the film a little more human.

The picture is too graphic, while it clearly shows the human will to survive there is no need for it to show the human will to lock

others in the basement and chop them up limb by limb for food. I found it hard to understand why the father in the story would put his son through an unnecessary nightmare as there is simply nothing left to live for, but that is a question for each individual to contemplate. The film is beautifully made as the book was beautifully written but that is where the beauty ends.

I would not watch it again nor would I expressly recommend that anyone go to see it. Those who have read the book will no doubt be compelled by curiosity to attend a viewing but I warn that they will find little new in it and definitely not the resolution they will be seeking.

Maybe some will think this story needed to be told, but I am not so sure. It is one of the hardest films you will ever have to watch and one of the hardest you will ever try to forget.

Warsaw, Poland

By Louise Hollywood

HAVE you ever dreamt of a place where a beer is €2, a steak dinner is €7, and an abundance of history and a crazy nightlife are on offer? Well Warsaw is the place for you.

After just returning from Poland on Monday, my memories of Warsaw are still fresh in my mind. With startling history, beautiful architecture and fine cuisine, Warsaw is fast becoming a cosmopolitan city, once only associated in western European countries. I must say I instantly fell in love with the city and all it had to offer.

What is there actually to do in this fast moving city? Sightseeing is plentiful, as buildings are saturated in history and culture. One such building is the Palace of Culture and Science (in Polish, *Palac Kultury i Nauki*), which is located in the city centre.

This beautiful building stands 757ft tall, and was a gift from the Soviet Union during Stalin's reign. Although this building holds mixed reviews from the locals, visitors to Warsaw can only admire the building in all its glory. For only 15pln (that's €3) one can be whisked up to the 30th floor and take in the breathtaking landscape of the city.

Hop on the number 175 bus at Centrum transports you through Nowy Swiat and into the Old Town. One will feel like they are travelling back to the 17th century, as the architecture resembles that of the Renaissance period.

The Castle Square is the usual place to begin one's exploration.

Happy snappers are in their element as the square's centrepiece is that of Sigmund III Vasa Column. You should also look out for

the statue of the mermaid, or syrenka, which is the symbol of Warsaw. Right before you get to the Old Town, Saxon Gardens should be visited. Soldiers constantly guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The ceremonial changing of the guards is magnificent to see and it takes place every Sunday at noon.

Whether history is an interest of yours or not, the Warsaw Rising Museum is certainly a place I would recommend you to visit. It is located on the edge of the former Jewish Ghetto, in a beautifully restored red brick power station.

Its three floors hold exhibits with photographs, written accounts and other testimonies of how life was like for the people during 1944. The museum is open everyday until 6pm and an entrance ticket is 5pln (€1.25) for students and is free on Sundays.

So after all this sightseeing you're going to want to go for some good food and by God, Warsaw will not disappoint you. To satisfy your hunger, authentic Polish cuisine will not fail.

Restaurants known as "Milk Bars" offer really tasty Polish food and they will not put a dent in your pocket. Dishes I would recommend trying are *perogi* (dumplings filled with cheese, spinach or mushrooms) and *plaki* (potato pancakes). These are both delicious, especially when the restaurant prepares them fresh. An instant favourite of mine was *Bar Mleczny Pod Barbakanem*, *ulica Mostowa 27/29*, Old Town.

The nightlife in this city is one of the best I've experience so far with an array of bars, clubs and music scenes on offer. If lubbing

and dancing is your thing, I recommend *Enclawa*, a plush two-story club with red and orange décor and mirrored ceilings. *Opera club* is another spectacularly designed club with an Oriental style running throughout. It's located in the basements of the National Opera of the Grand Theatre. If you're tired from dancing you can relax on stylish couches, while a chef prepares fresh sushi from the kitchen.

One of the many treasures of Warsaw is located in *Nowy Swiat* where there are a number of bars hiding from the world.

From the outside they look like empty allotments but inside they hold cool, funky hangouts with really cheap beer, a friendly staff, and retro décor. A beer can be as cheap as €1.50 and is a great place to just hang out and relax.

Accommodation in the city is relatively inexpensive, some of the hotels located in the city centre which boast good reviews are *Novotel Warszawa Centrum* and *Polonia Palace Hotel*, they are both four star hotels and can be up to €48 a night.

There are an abundance of hostels scattered around the city, which are good, clean and affordable. I would recommend *Oki Doki Hostel*, where a bed can be as low as €7. Others can be found on hostelworld.com.

Its true Warsaw is an acquired taste, and not everyone is going to love it. When you step off the train in the city centre the site of drab, grey buildings might persuade you to turn back around.

But, go a little further in and you will be overwhelmed by Warsaw's "hub and bub" atmosphere. If you open up and let Warsaw take you in, you will not be disappointed.



Japanese Film Festival 2009

LAST semester, on November 2 and 3, UL added another cultural event to its ever expanding list; the Japanese film festival. The festival ran at Cork, Dublin and Limerick last year to a very appreciative audience and sell out screenings, sparking this year's return and extended repertoire of movies.

The event is co-organised by access>CINEMA, the Japanese Embassy and the Ireland Japan Association with the aim of creating a greater understanding of Japanese culture in Irish society and greater cultural links between the two countries. It was brought to UL with the help of the UL Arts Office and the Anime and Manga Society. Japanese films are no stranger to our culture. You don't need to think too far back to remember the craze that came with *The Ring* and *The Grudge* or even the *Matrix* trilogy – unabashedly influenced by anime and manga aesthetics, and hardly anyone would deny having seen the Oscar winning *Spirited Away*. However, before you decide that Japanese films are the territory of horror fanatics or comic geeks, look again, and this

festival presents the perfect opportunity to do so. The movies were free to attend and four were screened over two evenings.

The first, *Kamikaze Girls*, or *Shimotsuma Monogatari* in Japanese, hits its audience full force with the eccentric style and taste modern Japan is renowned for. And while the plot and narrative was equally eccentric, watching the two main characters become reluctant friends keeps the audience hooked on the action. Barbara Geraghty, who attended the screenings, describes the film as "A sort of teenage *Thelma and Louise* in the Japanese suburbs. There were good jokes about Japanese consumerism and the *yakuza* also. It was vital and heart-warming if a bit unbelievable."

The second movie featured on the 2nd was *Blood: The Last Vampire*. This anime was remade and released in 2009 as a live-action feature but when it was first released it was noted for its ground breaking animation. The drama is set in a U.S. Air Force base in Japan, 1966. The action is fast paced and the plot mysterious, creating an unusual blend of

detective and action genre. On November 3 both *Instant Swamp* (*Insutanto Numa*) and *Ghost in the Shell 2.0* (*Kokaku Kidotai*) were shown. Geraghty notes: "If *Kamikaze Girls* stretched credulity, then *Instant Swamp* didn't bother much with logical plot at all. This film made Haruki Murakami's novels seem realistic and was a hoot. The ending was brilliant and completely unexpected.

However, if you were looking for a plot or any kind of internal logic, you'd have been frustrated by this film. Films like this remind me how eccentric and wacky Japan can be, and why I enjoyed living there."

Ghost in the Shell is considered a classic of the anime genre and the screening of *Ghost in the Shell 2.0* allowed fans of the genre to appreciate the re-mastered version, including a new recording of the voice actors and new or altered scenes. It also gave the curious a chance to discover the medium at its best. Gavin Fitzgerald, treasurer of the UL Anime and Manga Society, praised *Ghost* "for being beautiful, intense and eerily philosophical as to the nature of the soul."

He also mentioned "the society felt really honoured to be involved and associated with the event." A sentiment Rory Kelly, founder and president, shared. "The festival was particularly important to me in a way. I had been thinking of founding the anime society for a while but the film festival last year was finally what made me push to get the society actually made...it's nice to revisit what gave the motivation to me."

A number of the attendees, including Gearoid Harrahill, Public Relations Officer of the Society, and Simona Sampaolo, of first year, were delighted by the range of films on offer, suggesting there was something for everyone, although, judging by an observation from Gavin the females may have enjoyed the festival that bit more:

"In fact it's interesting to note that all four movies shown had female protagonists, once could hypothesis the theme was that of heroines." The one thing everyone can't stress enough though, is that they can't wait for next year's event, which promises to be bigger and better than ever.

Advice Bureau

Welfare Corner

Where to start?? It's been a blur, it seems like I'm just finished writing the last one of these things when Aoife tells me I'm late with the next one (and I am, again, sorry Aoife).

Well, there's been a meeting of the Welfare Crew, two actually, and I'm delighted that Jonny Dolan has taken some of the charity fundraising organisation stuff off my desk (which is still waiting on the clearing I promised it in week 12) allowing me to concentrate on committee work and such like.

I have sent a letter to be circulated to the Directors of Finance in each city and county council in the country asking them to get the finger out on sending grants.

I did also mention that if they didn't I would have to further pursue the centralisation of the grant system (which I am working on, but haven't had time just yet to put something together)

Governing Authority sat on Tuesday of Week 1, and pressure was put on the Sports Department to clarify a number of things, usage of the synthetic pitches being one. We can gladly report that student clubs will have prime time usage of the pitches, though a formal agreement is yet to be worked out. Following that the Access and Student Affairs Committee of

GA sat and heard a presentation on access programmes. We will be scheduling a meeting in the Access Campus in Roxboro to see the work that takes place there.

This programme is quite good in providing educational support to secondary school students to encourage them to attend third level.

As I write this, the IT'S OK mental health campaign hasn't yet started, but by the time you read it, it will have happened. So hopefully it went well and a lot of you attended Free Tea day.

Checkout www.pleasetalk.ie for more links to websites that can help with mental health questions you might have.

Finally, we have bag-packing for the Raising and Giving charities on Wednesday of Weeks 3 and 5 at Dunnes on Childers Road from 5pm-10pm, so if you have a bit of time to help, email me derek.daly@ul.ie, suwelfare@ul.ie or suwelfarecrew@ul.ie.

If not, try and get your shopping in on these days between 5pm-10pm.

Daly out!

Let's talk about sex

So there I was in the Lodge, bopping away, having the time of the life. Poker Face comes on and I'm delighted; I own this song.

Then I look up and, across the dance floor, I spy what can be only described as a goddess of unnatural beauty. Hair falling perfectly over her shoulders; a real Irish lasher this one. So me being brave and full of Dutch Gold courage I wandered over to her. Much to my surprise this cailín álainn had also been looking at me so, when I started to poke her face, she responded with what could only be described as enthusiasm! We locked arms and with Lady Gagging for it playing in the background we locked mouths. I whispered into her ear that "baby this love won't be fun unless its rough" and with that she grabbed me hand and we marched off the dance floor.

Pushing me way through the crowds I felt like Big Paul O'Connell heaving a Munster Maul. There was more than a try on offer for me tonight so I continued rolling on, high fiving a few of the lads as they saw my conquest. Up the ramp we went and made it out the gate. I gave the bouncers the nod, not for the first time, and they looked at me in envy! We had to go to Superdine for a few high energy snacks. We knew we'd be needing it! So off we went, in my right hand a bag of the finest curry cheese

chips in the country and attached to me arm is this shtunner! A fat kid in a pie shop wouldn't be happier!

This girl was in for the time of her life; I had read up on the sex column's in An Focal - fuck all indeed! For once in my life I knew what lay ahead of me and I was looking forward to it. Having recently looked up urbandictionary I had a few other tricks up my sleeve that you wouldn't hear of in the papers! We finally got back to the house and the butterflies weren't the only thing moving around in me stomach. The curry chips weren't mixing with the jagerbombs as much as I would have liked!

We got to the bedroom; the theatre of dreams I like to call it! Under the bedsheets I put my skills into practice and let me tell you, it wasn't only her face I was poking! This was great and all but the aforementioned butterflies feeling had turned into a feeling more like caterpillars trying to get out. The to-ing and the fro-ing wasn't helping the situation! What happened next is history and brought a few tears to my eyes.

After I came back from the jacks, my bed was empty, my trophy had disappeared and I was left by meself. So basically I was left standing thinking of what could have been. In a word; shafted.

Ed's Education

So it's Week 3; how's your timetable going? If you read last week's column, one of the biggest pieces of advice that I can give in relation to effective study, is to get organised. And the best way to do that is to get yourself a timetable. It can be as light as you want to make it, but just having it will make exam time a whole load easier!

But moving on from last week for a bit, there's no point having the best intentions in the world if you haven't got the energy to follow through with them. So for the next couple of weeks I'm going to focus a little on energy; how to increase it, how to maintain it and how to use it effectively.

Almost everyone eats rubbish food, drinks too much, smokes too much, gets next to no exercise, or all of the above from time to time but the important thing is to get a balance. It's fine to indulge every so often but if good clean living becomes the exception rather than the rule, then your health and energy levels are going to suffer for it. Don't get me wrong I'm not in the habit of lecturing about the virtues of uber clean living. I can frequently be spotted queuing up for jambons in the SU shop and I know all the barmen in the vicinity by their first names.

However, I do know that I feel better if I've eaten fairly healthily and had a sensible amount of alcohol, sleep and exercise for a couple of days running. I also know that I was much better able to balance college, work and activities when I was feeling like that.

This week I'm going to focus on healthy(ish) eating and how it can contribute to having the energy to do everything that you have to do. The biggest barrier to healthy eating for a lot of students is effort, so hopefully once you've

finished reading this column, it won't be a barrier anymore!

Effort:

It can be really tough to force yourself to prepare ingredients and cook something healthy when you've just spent all day in college and you're knackered.

But it's not so tough to cook something if you're off at the weekends or if you've got a lecture light day.

It's also not so tough to heat something up in the microwave on those days when you are knackered! The conclusion? Set aside an hour (just one) and make something that can be refrigerated or frozen like;

1) Pasta bake – if it's made with chicken and vegetables for example, this is loaded with vitamins, protein and carbohydrates!

So just go easy on the cheese and you've got a really easy (everyone can boil pasta), healthy(ish) dinner that doesn't cost the earth to make (all you need is pasta, sauce, cheese and whatever you're putting in it, meat, vegetables, etc)

2) Homemade burgers – if you want to make them with the minimum of ingredients then all you need is minced meat of your choice and some egg. If you're the experimental type then you can add a little garlic, lemon juice, cumin, onion, etc. Hardly rocket science now, is it?

With all that in mind do you really have any excuse for eating noodles and takeaways every evening? If you say yes, the cost, then bear in mind that you could make an entire pasta bake and 4-6 burgers for the cost of a Chinese.

Campaigns and Services

Well guys how are ye getting on?

Can I just start out by saying thanks so much to every single person that helped out in the bucket day collection for Haiti? We raised over €1800 in 5 hours with 8 buckets! That's some effort from all of yis! A big shout out to the guys in DevSoc who came out volunteering; great effort there. It was an unreal response from everybody in the college. These people have nothing and thanks to the generosity of the people here on campus, they can have shelter and food. Thanks guys!

I've been chatting to the Gardai and they're delighted with the response they got from the return of stolen property. We'll get another date fixed on this and hopefully return a few more things. If you have been the victim of crime or have seen any suspicious stuff in or around the campus don't hesitate to contact the Community Policing Unit in Henry Street, they're sound, on 061 212458. Guys we're lucky where we're living that we've got some really sound residents around us. They don't mind people having a good time and enjoying themselves just as long as there's no major noise pollution or random acts of vandalism! So as a few of ye might be hearing we've changed the name of RAG this year to Charity. This is just one way in which we are trying to change the focus of the week. In no uncertain terms, there will not be another

Charity/RAG week if this one goes to shit. That's just being brutally honest. So please lads/lasses, remember that this is a week of raising money for people that don't have any. Have the craic, find a young wan to cuddle up to at night, enjoy it, but please show a bit of respect and that for the residents, Gardai and Security of the college as it's easier in the long run for everyone. We're finally getting around to meeting students in their houses. Its' class to meet people and talk about stuff that actually affects them. Can I just say here that everybody is welcome to come into the Students' Union with any questions they might have. We're here to give everyone a hand and if there are any major issues effecting students we're only delighted to help.

Don't forget as well that Special Olympics Ireland is taking place on campus in June. They're looking for 3500 volunteers to help out with all aspects of the event. There will also be fundraising events happening between now and the end of the semester. We're gonna try for a world record hair dye on St. Patrick's Day in the Stables. If anyone is interested in helping out at all please contact myself or sugetinvolved@ul.ie

G'luck
Ferg
sucso@ul.ie

Wijk Van Zee Report

By Jennifer Lynch

Wijk Van Zee, a small town a half hour away from Amsterdam in the Netherlands, lays virtually unknown to many people. This village would just have been a quiet empty seaside town over the Winter months, but during the month of January it became buzzing with an unlikely activity, chess. Every year since 1938, the Corus Chess Tournament is held here and this year the UL Chess Club decided to travel there to be apart of it.

Despite being called after its sponsor, the tournament feels more like a festival, where anybody is welcome to come down and learn the ropes of the game. The interest to compete here is high, even in the amateur events, and they are capped at 600 people with a lottery system deciding on those who get to play. In these amateur events it isn't limited to people from The Netherlands as people have traveled from all over the world to be part of this festival, some as far away as China. Those that weren't selected to play in these events still made their way to the tournament.

Here they met up with others in pubs near the venue, playing friendly games of chess against one another, while others listen to a live commentary on moves the top players are playing. These commentary sessions are easily accessible to anyone with the concepts and strategies of the top players being explained to complete novices.

Chess is an odd one where age or disability doesn't affect anyone's ability to play the game. For example the current World Number 1 is only 20 years old, while his peers are approaching into their late 40's and 50's. Several blind people play in the main hall engaged in a tactical battle with their opponent.

This was a really great learning experience for all members who went, seeing the worlds oldest and one of the most prestigious tournaments in the world. Anyone who wishes to attend any Chess Club meeting, the club meets every Monday in EG-010 from 6pm and every Thursday from 6-8pm in Student Union Room 3.



OPC on tour – Scotland 2010

By Jennifer Lynch

On a Tuesday evening in mid January a group of enthusiastic “mountaineers” met, chatted and packed their belongings into the UL minibus and headed north on an epic adventure to the Scottish highlands.

The annual OPC trip to Scotland had begun! A mixed group (abilities and personalities!) were brought together (quiet close at times!) to take on what ever the Scottish highlands would throw at them for the next 10 days.

A long journey northwards, through cities, hometowns and ferry ports eventually brought this motley crew to the valleys of Glencoe and Lochaber, which would act as base camp for the trip. The trip began with the all important training; snow school for some, and advanced training for those in the know.

Snow school involved learning the essential techniques needed to survive in the somewhat alien winter conditions. Pupils learned valuable techniques starting with the simplest (how to walk in the snow, cut steps with rigid boots etc.) and progressed to using ice axes (cutting steps, platforms, digging anchors and ice axe arrests) and walking with crampons. Over two days members got a chance to practice these skills in a safe controlled fashion, before being unleashed into the Scottish hills. While the newbies were mastering the basics, the advanced groups were scaling icy heights climbing classic Scottish routes in the hands of their capable guides.

After training the group took to the hills in different capacities.

Some were happy to navigate their way through forests and valleys while others took on the summits and scaled new heights using their acquired skills. Peaks included Stob Corrie Na Lachan, Buachaill Etive Beag, Beinn na Bheithir, and of course “The Ben” the highest peak in the UK and Ireland at 1344m.

In between the physical onslaught, there were rest days. Days when we sampled some of the other local delights including ice factor and the leisure centre, for some much needed R&R. Scotland isn't all about the hills, all climbing and no socialising makes unhappy mountaineers. Evening activities included chatting up local bar maidens, tearing your stomach to shreds with cheap cider, and aggressive games of cards results in various states of embarrassment the following morning.

My lasting memory of the trip will always be the early morning wake up calls; nothing beats being woken in the stillness of silent dark cold morning with “gay bar” blaring at an unbearable level and a fully rigid boot through the door. Roll on Scotland 2011.

To get more information on the OPC call down to our home at the Climbing Wall in the PESS building any Monday Tuesday or Thursday from 7 to 10 pm.

All levels catered for. We are not a one trick club but offer five fun outdoor activities to suit all our members. We do Hill walking, Rock-Climbing, Caving, Mountaineering and Orienteering. You can do as much or as little of the activities as you wish this semester.

More information from www.ulopc.com



Ógra Fianna Fáil

The University of Limerick Ógra Fianna Fáil Cumann held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) last semester where we elected our new committee for 2009/2010.

The new committee as it stands is;

- Chairman – Raymond O’Mahony
- Vice chairman – Eamonn Quinlan
- Secretary – Adam Davis
- Treasurer – David O’Sullivan
- Vice Treasurer – Daniel Reid
- Public Relations and Web & Events Officer – Fiona Small
- 1st Year Rep. – Cian Grogan

Each person elected will bring competence, coherence and conviction to their positions, which they will use to direct and lead the Cumann throughout the academic year and to build on previous accomplishments.

In the past year our Cumann has achieved much as at the recent National Youth Conference in Donegal, three of our members, Eamon Quinlan, Niamh O’Donovan and Adrian O’Higgins, were unanimously elected to the key positions on the national Ógra committee. During the summer in County Derry we won the national debating competition,

the DeValera Cup, for debating through an excellent performance from members Derek Daly and Eamon Quinlan. This year we hope to replicate such achievements and boast the image of our Cumann and also our University to the whole country. Our numbers have grown since previous years, but we are still looking for new faces, new ideas and new initiative to help us achieve further accomplishments. If you wish to become a member of Ógra Fianna Fáil then you can contact us at ulogra@gmail.com or you can check out our Facebook page, University of Limerick Ógra Fianna Fáil. We hold our meetings every Monday at 6.00pm in Room 3 of the SU building, all are welcome to join!

What is Ógra Fianna Fáil?

Ógra Fianna Fáil is the political youth wing of Fianna Fáil. It was first established in 1975 by former Taoiseach Jack Lynch and has grown to become the largest youth political organization in Ireland, with a membership of nearly 7,000 members. It is active in every major Third Level Institute and in every Dáil constituency. Ógra is also active in recruiting members in

Northern Ireland with thriving Cumanns in the University of Ulster and Queens University Belfast.

What do we do?

We discuss a broad range of contemporary issues, e.g. third level fees, the banking crisis, Arab- Israeli conflict, etc. with all of our opinions and recommendations recorded and then emailed to the relevant Minister or TD. We are actively involved in all elections; local, national, E.U., and referenda. We go on trips to the Dáil, Stormont and Brussels, where we meet various politicians who explain to us the structure and processes of the political institutions of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the EU.

We attend National Youth Conferences and every annual Ard Fheis, where we have highly constructive workshops with various people of society and where we meet and liaise with every other Cumann in the country. We actively engage with various other clubs and societies for charity and fund raising purposes, and for organising various other activities, e.g. soccer matches, paintballing, quizzes etc.

How does Ógra benefit you?

Ógra Fianna Fáil gives its members an in-depth understanding of how politics works in practice. Our members who are in humanities courses benefit from easy access to politicians whom they can interview and accumulate information for the purpose of FYP’s or mid-term assignments.

Through active participation, all members, past and present, have developed skills such as communicative, organizational, and leadership skills. By getting actively involved within the Cumann and participating in events, members exercise and develop their personal skills, learn from others, build up their personal confidence, enhance their public speaking and express their own opinions, all of which are vital for any future career prospects.

Furthermore, through the activities and events that we engage in, members have gotten to know and meet many different people from across the country. The people they meet, they have developed positive working friendships with. Socially, being a member of Ógra is an excellent way for people to bond with one another.

DevSoc Fundraises for Haiti

In light of the recent earthquake in Haiti and the terrible situation which the people of Haiti find themselves in, Wednesday of Week 1 saw several UL Development Society members helping with the Students’ Union bucket collection for the Gena Heraty Appeal.

Donations to this fund are being used for emergency relief in the Nos Petit Frères et Sœurs orphanage and other projects in Haiti. Gena herself has spoken about her plans for the future and use of the funds donated: “What now?... there are so many people without limbs that we must see how we can help them and our center might just be the place to start a new program to serve these people – children and adults.”

Student donations were very generous with €1,500 being raised by the Student Union for this appeal. Thanks to everyone who donated to this worthy cause. More information on the Gena Heraty appeal can be found on www.nph.org.

In other news, DevSoc are currently building links with groups who support development and human rights projects around the world such as microfinance charity Kiva and human rights organisation Amnesty International. We are also in the process of planning events to promote Fairtrade Fortnight which runs

from February 22nd to March 8th. The theme this year is “The Big Swap” and students are encouraged to switch their normal tea, coffee and chocolate to Fairtrade goods.

A Fairtrade bake-off is planned and the society has been invited to take part in a “Fairtrade ThinkTank” with the other third level colleges in Limerick. Peter Gaynor, the Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation has been pencilled in as a guest speaker. We hope to have more speakers and events ranging from a talk on sustainable forests to a pub quiz and coffee morning.

Last semester DevSoc members attended a conference in Dublin on NGOs and Human Rights, the highlight of which was meeting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Members also attended various events at the Irish Aid offices in Limerick. DevSoc meetings take place every Monday at 6pm in the Student’s Union and all members and potential members are welcome.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Development Society, please email us at uldevsoc@gmail.com or find us on Facebook at ‘DevSoc University of Limerick’. You can also follow us on Twitter, just look for ULDevSoc.

UL Finance & Investment Society

The UL Finance and Investment Society (ULFISoc) was set up at the end of last semester by three 2nd year students, Brian Foody, Robert Mortell & Andrew O’Doherty. A rapidly growing society, we already have over 40 members.

Brian O’Neill, co-founder and Chief Executive of WorldSpreads is coming to talk to us on Wednesday of Week 3 @ 19:30 (see website for venue confirmation). Brian’s presentation, “Trading Sensibly”, will be a walk through his experience as a trading provider, of what clients do right and do wrong, combined with a brief history of the company from its formation. A Q&A session will follow and there will be refreshments available – kindly sponsored by The Paddocks – where everyone can have a more casual chat with Brian.

ULFISoc are currently planning a trip to the Irish Financial Services Centre in Dublin, which will incorporate a visit to some of the top finance houses in the world. NCB Stockbrokers have already

expressed their interest in hosting us on this trip.

An industry expert from Goodbody Stockbrokers is being arranged to come in to us some time over the coming weeks.

Regarding the trading floor, we have been approved access, and are currently scheduling times for the lab assistant to train us on the Reuters system in there.

The KBS Accounting & Finance Department has kindly approved access to some daytime talks by industry speakers from Dublin and London. All information about the Society can be found on our website and our Facebook group. Any queries should be directed to our email address below.

Looking forward to seeing you in the coming weeks. Robert Mortell, Andrew O’Doherty, Anna Rybalchenko, Shona Connellan & Brian Foody. **Website:** <http://ulfinanceinvestmentsoc.webs.com>
Email: ulfisoc@hotmail.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=237735238285>

UL Boarders: Passo Tonale 2010



A LEGEND is told that the dream of a boarding club in UL was born whilst one man sat in his apartment a week early for college. While no one can confirm whether this story is true or not, it is a dream no more. After a semester of fundraising and of weekly wakeboarding, this new UL Boarders club recently undertook its biggest adventure yet; to conquer the slopes of Italy.

On a cold dark night at approximately 1am, boarders rose from their beds, gathered their gear and began the trek to Dublin. As many of the UL Boarders had not met before due to the large numbers associated with the club, it was a case of gingerly checking out and trying to guess who else was travelling on the trip. The flight over was uneventful apart from the customary rush for Ryanair's only seats designed for normal people; the emergency exit seats. With that the wait was over and we were soon to set foot on the fine soil that is Bergamo, Italia.

The cool crisp air was welcomed by all but we were shocked to see no snow. This was soon to be rectified by a bus trip and, two hours later, we couldn't get enough of it. Welcome to Passo Tonale. One thing that stands out in my own memory of our first day in Italy is the organisation. We had been travelling all night and the last thing we wanted was to be waiting hours for a bus or to collect our

gear, but from both the UL Boarders and our new Italian friends, we were never left wanting. The accommodation was spectacular. Surrounded by the Italian Alps and snow so deep you could get lost, the scenery was breath taking. Home from home was one way of describing our rooms

in the massive house that had been provided for us all to ourselves. There was room for everyone and most importantly it was warm all the time. It was the perfect place to relax after a long day snowboarding and a nice get together in the common room. Without sounding too much like a travel review, I shall quickly describe the food. Italy has some of the best food in the world and I'm sure that we experienced it on our trip. Whether it was the all you can eat breakfast, the four course dinner (both included in the price of the trip) or the pizzeria just off the slopes, the food was something special. Moving on to the most important part of our trip; the snowboarding. At a point of 2775 meters, -4 degrees Celsius and 4+ feet of snow, Italy in January was the only place on Earth where the elusive UL Boarder could be found grazing on its staple diet of powder covered slopes. This year it was clear the grazing was nothing short of excellent as 40 UL Boarders tore down

the slopes surrounding the village of Passo Tonale. Picturesque doesn't even describe the view and the hot chocolate is made with REAL chocolate topped with sweet cream. Absorbing it

all for the first time you begin to periodically pinch yourself while carving the snow to make sure you're not asleep back home in Ireland where, for some reason, the

snow is a bad thing. From a beginner's

perspective there isn't much fun to be had while falling on one's ass like clockwork during the first few hours of boarding but once it all clicks the massive feeling of satisfaction numbs the pain as you start to wear your bruises as a badge of pride. As one particular Belgian put to us; "If you don't get hurt by the end of the day then you aren't doing it right." We were some of the luckiest boarders out there due to the fact we had our slaves, I mean teachers (more experienced boarders on the trip), on hand to take us aside and teach us the tricks of their trade. Nicholas Ryan, Tom Gems, Anton Vancauwenberghe, Frederik Baert, Josef Pichler and Richard Altersberger are to blame for 25 new snowboarders entering the world this January.

One can go on and on about exactly how good the feeling is to finally snowboard down a slope so steep its impossible to walk up or the banter on the numerous nights out with the locals and I'm also sure that anyone who wasn't on the trip cannot understand the friendships that were made that, I for one believe, will last a lifetime. After a week with the UL Boarders, I'm hungry for more snowboarding.

For more information about our Wakeboarding, Surfing, Kiteboarding, and much more, go www.ulboarders.com or join our Facebook page for more info. Bring on Snowboarding 2011!!!



All Ireland success for Freshers Ladies

By Enda Dowling

UL LADIES footballers captured the Division Three league title in style with a comprehensive defeat of NUI Galway on Pitch One. The home side was in control of this scrappy contest from the outset and has sent out a message of intent with this 18 point demolition which probably flattered their opponents.

Even by half time it was clear that the Galway based side was struggling to keep up with the raw pace and skill of the UL forward line. The first 15 minutes were somewhat even as the sides leveled several times until UL's Claire Keohane planted a low shot into the corner for the game's first goal. UL tapped over four more scores to leave the half time score at 1-07 to 0-03. The contest was effectively over at the start of the second period as NUI Galway's goalkeeper Fidelma Brown failed to deal with a high ball from UL's Sarah Dolan, allowing it to creep into the top corner of the net. However, the goalkeeper recovered magnificently to make a string of top-drawer saves for the remainder of the match and was one of the few

to show real character in the face of adversity. UL then added to their tally courtesy of Edith Carroll, Maire Curran and Keohane while NUI Galway responded with a Breda Lyons free and a fine effort from Helen Moran. Substitutes Ciara McGrath and Edel Murphy finished the rout with two goals in the final ten minutes. Catching the eye for UL included Maire Curran and Carloline Reen, although the whole team put in an excellent performance. Fidelma Browne and Lisa Maloney were better performers for NUI Galway.

UL: N.Walsh, C.Hackett, A.Higgins, A.Langton, B.McManus, F.Cooney, N.O'Brien, M.Lynch, J.Moore, C.Reen, E.Murphy, E.Carroll, M.Curran, S.Dolan, C. Keohane.

Subs: C Burrell, S O'Gorman, C O'Regan, N Cronin, R O'Donovan, K Maher, F Mulligan, E O'Connor, A Nolan, D Collins, C McGrath, A Dunphy, L Murphy, S Roche, E Kennedy, S Darcy, N Brogan, R Holland.

Management: Ciaran Dowd and Joe Costello.

UL 4-13 NUI Galway 0-07



Freshers Ladies show champion spirit

By Tomás McCarthy - Sports Editor

IT WAS the calm after the storm; the UL Ladies Fresher football team took the field against NUIG in a League final after a Sigerson thriller on pitch one the day before.

Those who attended however couldn't help but be taken back by a comprehensive performance from UL on the day. At an earlier league match one of the few supporters made an interesting observation. He pointed out that the Sigerson and the Fitzgibbon matches will always bring out the crowd and that these ladies deserve just the same credit. And maybe it is time to pay credit to those teams that represent UL with pride that goes unnoticed to the wider body of UL students. This Ladies Fresher team is one such example. The team was very well drilled, the result of dedicated training and good coaching. Their composure on the ball and overall skill levels were most impressive. Wing back Beckah McManus claimed the player of the match award but it was a prize that was hotly disputed. As whole, the defence hunted in packs leaving

the NUIG girls to over carry, lose possession or shoot wide. Up front the quality of the team work left the Galway defence in knots. Captain Edith Carroll led by example with her finishing just as note worthy as her tracking back. Edel Murphy caught the eye through her timeless work rate and silky scoring touch. Claire Keohane was another who took her scores in clinical fashion. Off the field is where the strength of this team lies. In a squad of 33 everyone is supportive of each other. All of the substitutes on the side line were cheering on their colleagues, giving them every encouragement. Edith Carroll paid tribute to two injured players who weren't able to line out in her acceptance speech. It was a nice touch and displayed the close bond within the camp. These players are friends on and off the pitch. The strength of team spirit cannot be underestimated.

This team is a credit to the management team of Ciaran Dowd and Joe Costello. The future of UL ladies football looks to be safe in their hands.

UL Ladies set to raise the bar higher than before

By Niamh Loneragan and Fiona Reidy

UL LADIES Rugby team are looking confident after an impressive start to their League campaign last semester with emphatic wins over DCU and UCC with final scores of 31-0 and 26-5 respectively. The team are busy preparing for the remaining league games which see them away to DCU Wednesday of Week 3, at home to arch rivals UCC on Wednesday of Week 5 and finally away to NUIG in Week 7. The league finals are due to take place on 31 March with UL's sights firmly set on the silverware. After UL's success in the league and varsities last year the girls are hungry for victory in both once again.

UL aims to set the standard for college rugby even higher than before this year. The league and varsities have become more competitive in recent years with many close games creating a good spectacle for those few who turn out to watch. The UL Ladies rugby team is driven by the natural talent, commitment and pride that the squad has and, with such great recruitment this year, the team is looking very strong for

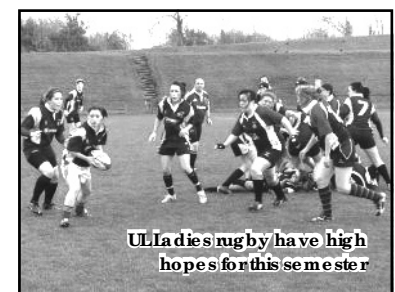
their coming games. As always UL Ladies Rugby are keen to mention that new players are always more than welcome to come along and give this challenging, but enjoyable, sport a go.

Another exciting development is the fact that UL is set to host 2010 CUSAI Women's Rugby Intervarsities. The committee has been working very hard organising the varsities. UL plans to host the best ladies rugby varsities yet, with talks of marquees, mini golf tournaments, karaoke nights and a banquet. This is truly going to raise the bar for other future hosts and hence raise the level of professionalism and other standards in the tournament and the Ladies Rugby College game in Ireland. There is the prospect of the final of the Intervarsities being held in the prestigious Thomond Park which would also hugely promote the interventions and women's rugby in general. This really would be a dream come true for UL Ladies Rugby.

The girls have also been busy fundraising for the club with the team taking part in a bag packing

session in Dunnes Stores recently. The Kilmurray Lodge has also agreed to sponsor the team. This year has been the strongest in years in terms of administration and also numbers. UL Ladies Rugby has increasingly improved in the past few years and is now proud to say that they have the strong structures in place both on and off the pitch for this team to continue winning competitions for years to come as has happened in the past decade.

The team is very excited about the coming months, and would urge everyone interested in Rugby to come and support the Ladies as they aim for their 11th Varsity title in 12 years and their 8th All Ireland League title. Check out ulladiesrugby.com for updates on fixtures and results.



UL edge out Carlow in a thriller

Daniel Bridge reports from Pitch One

THE UL senior footballers made a winning start to their Sigerson Cup campaign with an enthralling game against Carlow IT. Roughly 400 people braved the weather to support the side and cheer them on in their first round tie against the team from Leinster.

The new scoreboard was a welcome addition to Pitch One, or so it seemed. UL made a slow start to this match despite forcing the boys working the scoreboard into action for the first time.

However a goal a minute later from Carlow's Craig Rodgers put UL on the back foot. In fact, it was Rodgers which kept UL off top gear.

An impressive first half performance from him failed to continue in the second half as

UL seemed to prohibit his threat.

Whilst UL weren't able to gain any sort of first half dominance they still managed to keep in touching distance with Carlow, and just before the interval UL's Paul Larkin hit the back of the net, giving them a 1-5 to 1-4 half time lead.

The second half was full of drama and excitement with the teams reversing roles as UL picked up their performance to pile the pressure on Carlow. Despite UL's dominance they were unable to put Carlow to the sword, mainly due to UL's wide count.

The wide count didn't worry manager Cian O'Neill as he pointed to difficult conditions over the previous weeks which meant that the team were yet to reach full match sharpness.

14 minutes from time, following a foul on David Niblock by the Carlow full back, UL were awarded a penalty which Mike Tim O'Sullivan duly slotted home. After that it looked as if UL were home and dry (unlike the spectators on the sideline) with a 5 point lead but Carlow rallied and put over 3 unanswered points to give the UL players, management and supporters a nervy last few minutes.

UL's Enda Varley took a bit of pressure off with an exceptional individual point, in which it seemed he beat the entire Carlow defence to coolly fist the ball over the bar.

Carlow then hit back with a controversial goal from JJ Smith which was deflected on the way through. The goal was given despite the appeals of a square ball.

UL 2-10

Carlow IT 2-9

With one minute of injury time played, Varley received the ball on the right side of the pitch and curled the ball over beautifully with his left boot from 30 yards. It was a fine way to win a compelling and exciting game. Although saying that, the referee played an extra 5 minutes of injury time, causing the crowd to get agitated and shout at the referee to bring the game to a close.

A great start for the UL side that now have Athlone IT in the second round and will look for another victory. Here's hoping the intensity of that match will equal or even trump the Carlow game.

UL hurling make ideal Fitzgibbon preparations

Enda Dowling

CONFIDENCE is surely high among Ger Cunningham's senior hurlers after hearing of their quite favourable draw in the Fitzgibbon Cup. UL's Group C opposition includes UUJ and St. Patrick's college as the campaign to banish the memory of last year's final defeat to UCC in Parnell Park begins. The only way in doing so however would be to go one step further this time around, but that's easier said than done. One can't help but set the bar high for the current panel of players as they have withstood challenges from all major opposition thus far.

Their successful league campaign has no doubt provided a solid foundation for what lies ahead. The seniors found themselves in a quarter final spot in rather fortuitous circumstances after winning only one group match, but scraping through on score-difference. DIT were the opponents, with the match being a home encounter for UL on pitch one. From start to finish UL showed their awesome potential, as forwards created and took scores at frankly rude regularity, ending the game with a twelve point victory. UL's defence also had a huge part to play in this win with goalkeeper James Dempsey making two separate point blank saves and Martin Walsh snuffing out numerous DIT chances.

After beating WIT in the semi-finals, UL travelled to Graigcullen to face UCD in the Division 1 senior hurling league final. A sluggish start had UL trailing five points to no score ten minutes into the game. However, once UL found their stride UCD simply couldn't cope. A succession of scores including a goal

from a 21 yard free by Andrew Quinn ensured a UL lead of 1-07 to 0-06 points at half time. Credit again must be given to the defence who held UCD to just four points in total in the second half, allowing UL to march on and be crowned league champions (3-14 to 0-10).

The Waterford Crystal Cup campaign began in Tralee against John Meyler's Kerry in his first game in charge. 10 points on the day from Shane Brick couldn't give Kerry the victory in a lack lustre encounter at Austin Stack Park, with Kilkenny's Matt Ruth grabbing the clinching goal for the Limerick students ensuring a 3-15 to 1-15 win. This set up what was to be a thrilling quarter final tie against the old enemy, LIT. A spectacular goal by Joe Canning from the last puck of normal time brought this exciting match to extra-time at the LIT Grounds. UL finished much stronger and a goal from substitute Michael Gleeson along with points from Brian Carroll in extra time made sure of a 3-22 to 2-18 win for UL. Canning was overshadowed on the day by the performance of Tipperary and UL's Willie Ryan who scored ten points, four coming from frees.

On January 30 UL lost the semi final of the Waterford Crystal Cup after being once again being taken to extra time by UCC in Buttevant in a match which finished 4-16 to 2-14. The game was decided by two UCC goals in extra time from Eoghan Murphy and Darach Honan. Despite this defeat all signs are pointing in the right direction and the squad is preparing perfectly to be in contention for a Fitzgibbon Cup final spot in NUIG later this year.

Who Are Ya?

The Basics

Name: Dan Goggin

Age: 21

UL Club: Men's Soccer

County: Waterford

Position: Centre half/Right Back

Nickname: Goggs

Sporting Heroes: Of late Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong, John Mullane and Ray Kelliher (for his competitiveness in FIFA)
Biggest sporting achievement: Winning All Ireland League last year

Best thing about the club: Collingwood trips

Worst thing about the club: No budget to do anything

Favourite s

Food: Chicken stir fry

Drink: Cosmopolitans

Song: One More Time (in honour of our captain Brian Cleary) or Caledonia (by Mary Fahy)

Movie: Brokeback Mountain

Jersey: All Blacks or South African away jersey

Take Your Pick

Lodge or Trinity Rooms: Lodge

Dunphy or Giles: Dunphy

Tea or coffee: Tea

Simpsons or Family Guy: Family Guy

Four to Finish

Describe yourself in 3 words: Horny, hungry, happy.

Who will win the 2010 World Cup? Spain (Hopefully after knocking out England on penalties in the semi)

Best chat-up line you've heard: I'm Alan, I drive a red Audi. Do you want a drink?

What will you be when you grow up? Mature hopefully!!!



Dan Goggin

O'Neill happy with win, but not performance

By Alan Keane

CIAN O'Neill was pleased with the character shown by his players in the first round match against Carlow IT. In an interview with An Focal the Sigerson manager praised the effort put in by the players in the hard fought tie.

He said, "When you lose two of your back seven in the first fifteen minutes, it really put us on the back foot. The character, I absolutely couldn't fault." O'Neill nevertheless believes the player's performances have to improve before the next outing in the Sigerson, against Athlone IT. However he was delighted to see the players themselves admitting they didn't play to a high standard. "I'd be very concerned if I went in after the game and everyone was shaking each others hand and telling each other what a really good job they did. So full credit to them for owning up to that."

O'Neill went on to admit that the preparations for the Sigerson weren't ideal due to the weather conditions which hampered training in the last few weeks. He was glad UL got a first round match as it can only help the players gain match sharpness. The lack of this commodity was

apparent in the high wide count in the Carlow game. O'Neill also praised Carlow IT for the way they've made themselves into a force to be reckoned with in GAA circles, due to the large amount of sports scholarships they've made available. He said "They were very unfortunate not to come out with a draw." On the day however, O'Neill was just pleased that the senior players on the UL team stepped up to the mark in terms of leadership to secure the win. Enda Varley in particular showed a cool head to slot over the winning point with ten seconds to go. His manager was delighted with his work ethic and that of the whole team.

When asked about the referee for the day, O'Neill remained tight-lipped save for to say "I think the three or four-hundred people here today will have made up their mind on what the referee was like." However it is unlikely he would agree with the Irish Times's assessment which said that referee Mike Meade had "a splendid outing". It would be fairer to say that with the amount of cards he was handing out that Meade thought Valentines had come early.

Sporting Predictions 2010 - Part 2

By Daniel Bridge

July

England play France in the semis and you can hear a pin drop as for once the "Anyone But England" rule isn't in force. Provincial football finals - Dublin, Tyrone, Cork and Mayo win. Provincial hurling finals - Tipp, Kilkenny and Antrim win.

August

Usain Bolt breaks his World Record in the Diamond League Series, and in an homage to Michael Jackson, breaks the 1 second mark... moon walking. New Premier league season starts with Stan leading his Liverpool team to the top of the league with new signings David James, Stan Collymore, Patrik Berger, Jamie Redknapp, Alan Hansen, Mark Lawrensen, Kenny Dalglish and Twink.

September

Football and Dublin lose horrifically in the final... pffh! Nah, they didn't. They lost horrifically in the quarters. Tipp beat Kilkenny with Shane Long coming back to turn out for the hurlers once more and scoring 2 goals, one more than he scored last season for Reading.

October

Europe win the Ryder Cup as the Europeans find a way to combat Tigers danger - barmaids on the first tee. The Commonwealth games also begin with, well no one knows, nobody was there. Shergar makes a dramatic appearance to win the Prix de l'Arc, giving Paddy Power the smuggest grin that has yet to be seen on the Pat Shortt look-alike.

November

Schumi wins the World Title but is thrust into controversy as he blinds Lewis Hamilton on the podium with the champagne. The PDC Grand Slam of Darts is held (cue bad music, fat, drunk lads and kids sipping lager out of glasses bigger than themselves) and Phil "The Power" Taylor wins, and picks up the "Most Arrogant Person of the Year" award for his constant referral to how much money he has.

December

Nothing happens in December... ever. Although Michael Owen scores his first goal for new club, Donegal Celtic, claiming he is ready for a run in the England team.

Is South Africa a ready for the World Cup?

By Stephen Kelly

THE numbers don't lie. In Johannesburg 76% of car owners will get carjacked before they've even left the dealer's showroom. In Cape Town there are 26 armed robberies every second.

By the time the average South African reaches the age of 30 he or she will have been murdered at least four times. Okay, maybe those particular numbers do lie but they can only be a slight exaggeration if the recent media hysteria about South Africa's crime rate is anything to go by.

The overwhelming message has been that Africa remains the Dark Continent; a terrifying, lawless wasteland. The negative coverage has deterred potential ticket buyers according to Fifa General Secretary, Jérôme Valcke. "It is sad that every morning you wake up and there are articles from the world's football family saying that there is no way people should fly to South Africa because it is a crazy country," he lamented. He has a point. The recent attack on the Togo team in Angola has been exploited to add further fuel to the fire despite its complete irrelevance to South Africa. It would have been like someone arguing that the civil war in Kosovo made France an unsuitable host in 1998.

The scaremongering hasn't been restricted to the tabloids either. One Guardian columnist, looking for a new angle, even warned of the "looming dangers" of prostitution given the country's 18% HIV infection rate. That's right. If you go to the World Cup and you're lucky enough to make it home alive you'll probably have AIDS. None of this is denying that South Africa has a serious crime problem. Its murder

rate is the highest in the world. The carjacking and sexual assault statistics there don't make for pretty reading either. Just like everywhere else, however, the crime is mainly concentrated in small areas. According to the UK Foreign Office "there is a very high level of crime, but most occurs in townships and isolated areas away from the normal tourist destinations."

The fact is that over eight million tourists visit South Africa every year. The country has successfully hosted World Cups in cricket and rugby as well as the Confederations Cup, Tri-nations rugby and last summer's Lions' tour. All passed off without major incident and there was no media furor about travelling fans getting robbed, mugged and or shot. While the World Cup will attract more visitors than all the aforementioned events combined, the authorities have had plenty of time to prepare. It is almost six years since South Africa was announced as the 2010 host and in that time an extra 41,000 police officers have been recruited and trained. Realistically, it's a statistical certainty that some foreign fans will get into trouble but a little common sense will ensure that the overwhelming majority stay safe. Danger should be easy to avoid (and no I don't mean England supporters). In fact a serious concern at the moment is that the South African authorities will spoil the tournament for fans by overreacting and imposing virtual martial law during the tournament. Either way, the security of travelling fans will be a priority. South Africa knows the eyes of the world will be on it. It can't fail. There's simply too much at stake.



Sports stars restricted by commercial interests

By Tomás McCarthy - Sports Editor

MANY eyebrows were raised when the "Draft Development of Sport Pitches Brief was released in December 2009. Not only were floodlights left out of the plans, but the new all weather pitches, which will be built on the North Campus, will be a 100% commercial venture. Clubs and Societies Development Officer Paul Lee spoke to An Focal about this problem.

At the time of going to print Lee was awaiting a further report from the STRI after the Students' Union rejected the first proposal. Lee voiced his displeasure at the fact that free Wednesday afternoons were being discussed at the negotiations. This policy has been rendered meaningless in recent years despite a Walkout Wednesday protest by the Students' Union in 2007. A shining example of this was a Senior Men's soccer match played before

Christmas. The UL v CSN clash took place on 11 November, which was a Wednesday. UL could only field a squad of 14 with only two outfield players on the bench. This was mainly due to a number of players being unable to leave class to play the game.

ULSU President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, in his letter to the Playing Pitches Committee, also wasn't pleased with this aspect. "The suggestion of the Universities Wednesdays afternoons policy as a feasible idea to offset lack of daylight hours is not in any way a realistic solution."

Another factor in the ongoing pitches battle is the presence of the Munster and Irish rugby teams on campus. Lee admits this is an issue. "It looks like the balance between the commerciality and the students has been challenged. When you talk to the clubs on the

ground they are delighted that these profile people are here." He also talked about the difficulty facing the GAA Development Officer regarding parking around the Arena and the PESS Building, while the Munster team don't experience any disturbance. "I'm pretty sure that the Munster team, when they arrive, park on the blind side of the Arena and that those registrations are noted and they don't get clamped." While Lee wants students to be accommodated he does stress that "there's room for all them". Lee is confused by the idea of UL providing the ideal University experience. "The buzz word around campus is that it is all about the University experience. It's a marketing tag; you come here and your experience as a student is above and beyond. Unfortunately for our playing field sports that's not case."

Even those sports which don't use pitches are experiencing problems. Lee cites the example of the Sub Aqua Club.

At the start of term the Club and Societies Executive proposed a new three year plan. Clubs Officer Keith O'Neill wanted to make sure that all clubs have the facilities to reach their potential.

The main cause of frustration for all concerned is the length of time these talks are taking. Lee is looking forward to a "definitive timeline" from the upcoming proposals. All UL students want is a fair opportunity to compete on level playing field with other colleges.

The hard work from the likes of Paul Lee and Ruán Dillon McLoughlin in negotiations may eventually reap dividends and create facilities worthy of a sporting campus.

Soccer stars for Haiti proves successful

By Tomás McCarthy - Sports Editor

WHEN Vincent Hogan wrote a piece about how professional soccer players could contribute to Haiti relief effort in the Irish Independent on January 18, most people would have read it and went on with their normal everyday lives. Not so for Ronan Kenny, a UCC student who set up a Facebook group that has exploded into life in recent weeks.

The idea is very simple. Hogan wrote: "Imagine if every professional footballer in the world donated one day's pay to the relief effort in Haiti."

He then took the examples of a variety of famous footballers. "Cristiano Ronaldo alone could write a cheque for £25,000. Ibrahimovic and Kaka? Just under £24,000 each. Put it this way. If John Terry, Frank Lampard, Michael Ballack and Didier Drogba bought into the idea over morning coffee at Chelsea, together they could deliver a cheque for £71,555 to one of the humanitarian agencies now dealing with unimaginable horror in Port-au-Prince".

As a final year student in Business Information Systems, Kenny knew how effective social networking could be. Once he saw the article he set up a Facebook

group entitled "Soccer stars for Haiti". It comprised of 2,000 fans after just one day. UL student Tomás E Leamy has been integral to the success of this project. Deirdre Delaney, Noel Rock, Brian Hickey, Ed Leamy and Frank Hayes are also heavily involved. The group received a major boost when Diego Forlan contributed his daily wage to Haiti.

The former Manchester United and Villareal striker who currently plies his trade with Atletico Madrid donated a sum of €4,800. At time of going to print two League of Ireland players had also donated to this more than worthy cause. Although these wages are small compared to Forlan's, the group appreciated the gesture. Hogan wondered if the idea was maybe too simple to become real.

The Facebook group currently has close to 20,000 fans and is growing by the day. It is a credit to all involved for utilising social networking to launch an effective initiative for those who are suffering in Haiti. The group are planning to increase the media exposure of the campaign in the coming weeks. "Soccer stars for Haiti" is now very real.

Cup dreams dashed for ladies basketball

By Tommy Crean

UL Ladies Basketball has been knocked out of the National Cup at the semi-final hurdle. The Limerick side were defeated by DCU Mercy on a score line of 62-58.

DCU enjoyed an 18-16 lead by the end of the first quarter with Lindsey Peat and Fiona Lynch's three big three's being the highlights. Shauna O'Connor hit two long range shots to extend the Dubliners advantage, but UL's Michelle Aspell was keeping UL close behind with some excellent play. DCU again held the lead at half time with a score of 31-24. UL owned the third quarter, thanks in part to a change in defensive strategy. They made several crucial steals in the quarter and 4 points from Rachel Vanderwal, and managed to build a six point advantage. DCU's Peat fired in three points in the closing seconds to reduce the gap to two.

Anne Marie Healy presence was significant as DCU regained the league in the final quarter.

Vanderwal hit a big three for UL but DCU showed excellent composure to hold out for victory.



The UL Ladies were knocked out of the National Cup by DCU

Sports Writers Diary

By Tomás McCarthy - Sports Editor

- 16 January**
Stoke continue to drag teams like Liverpool down to their level. Would Lucas, Degen or Kyrgios make Tony Pulis' team though?
- 17 January**
The new rules are in place with the hand pass proving the most controversial. At least give the rules a chance this time lads!
- 18 January**
One week until the return to college as most UL students wonder if the break will ever end!
- 19 January**
The Limerick hurling crisis continues to run with the players issuing a statement. Looks like a carbon copy of the Cork situation but here's hoping it gets resolved soon.
- 20 January**
Liverpool defeat Spurs at Anfield to begin a one game winning run!
- 21 January**
Results day arrives and the Sports Editor survives yet another semester!
- 22 January**
Munster once again defy the odds to edge out Northampton at Thomond Park.
- 23 January**
Johnny Sexton puts the pressure on Ronan O'Gara again with an equalising drop goal against London Irish in the Heineken Cup.
- 24 January**
UL edge an extra time thriller against LIT in the Waterford Crystal Cup. Will they meet again in the Fitzgibbon?
- 25 January**
A sizeable crowd make their way through the fog to the Stables for the first night back of the college year.
- 26 January**
While having a little bit of dinner in the Sports Bar something seems a small bit strange. "Last Christmas" by Wham is played over the speakers much to the amusement of many customers!
- 27 January**
The rain pours and the wind howls on pitch one but that doesn't take away from a tense Sigerson thriller sealed by a brilliant Enda Varley point.
- 28 January**
The UL ladies fresher football team win the All Ireland league title and win possibly the smallest GAA trophy ever seen!
- 29 January**
An Focal sport writer Liam Togher begins another show in his local Sixmilebridge. Break a leg Liam!

Forgotten Footballer – Jon Goodman

By Stephen Kelly

WHEN most people hear the name Jon Goodman they don't think of football. They think of Fred Flintstone, King Ralph and Walter Sobchak. Not Irish football fans. To anyone old enough remember the late 90's the name conjures up a single word; Macedonia.

After a miserable 0-0 draw at home to Iceland where the geriatric strike force of Cascarino and Kelly failed to threaten, it was widely accepted that Ireland's main problem was a lack of pace up front. Goodman was flying high in the Premiership with Wimbledon and, when his Irish ancestry was uncovered, it seemed like the answer to Mick McCarthy's prayers. There was genuine excitement when he was handed his competitive debut in Macedonia but what followed was a hilariously abject 3-2 defeat best remembered for Ireland's hideous orange kit.

Goodman didn't start another match for Ireland. At club level that season he helped Wimbledon to seventh place, their highest ever league finish, but things soon went downhill for the player. He was plagued by injuries in the following seasons and was just 28 when forced to quit the sport in 2000. After retiring he completed a sports science degree and now runs a successful fitness consultancy firm that counts Spurs and the FAI among its clients.



Jon Goodman

The Rumour Mill

By Conor McGrath

LATE January and early February; the throes of winter. A time of predictable boredom, increasing and, for some already, decreasing deadlines.

Those fantastic pre-semester plans have a worrying habit of suffering due to this post Christmas and New Year lull. However, all is good for the squealers. This is their time to thrive as a dull atmosphere certainly heightens the tattle talk.

America's war has come to UL! That got your attention. Apparently, members of the Softball Club made quite a scene at the UL Vikings Superbowl party in College Court last weekend.

According to an anonymous resident of the house in question, "them softball yokes brought some of our lads to tears after what they said about the sport we love. Half of our defence had the tissues out". It appears that relations have hit an all time low between both codes as "them softballers ruined our big night". Well it seems that the Americanisation of UL is already in motion. How will those seemingly brutish figures respond to such derision? One can't help but feel that peace talks will probably take place in the new Americanised Red Raisins.

Surprise, surprise, Tiger Woods was a very serious target for the Welfare Office to spearhead its new campaign for health and protection of the sexual kind. However, in a common move with Tiger these days, he was ruthlessly dropped from review. "Fair play to him in his career and all that but...you know yourself" was the cryptic response from a prominent female source in the Union.

Quotes of the Edition

By Liam Togher

"I'll just say Meath won."

Dan chooses to spring his get-out clause into action while reporting on Pitch 1. Nothing like a good generic, credible headline, is there?

"He's not pulling him down. He's giving him a hug."

Setanta Sports commentary on a penalty claim during the Reading-Burnley FA Cup game. Somehow that sort of challenge doesn't quite carry the same intimidation as a two-footed lunge.

"Hit him, O'Connell, hit him!"

A Munster fan begs the team captain to land a right hook on the French referee who hardly endeared himself to the Thomond Park faithful. Suffice to say the ref wasn't spotted in Clohessy's Bar afterwards.

"I have to keep turning my head, Jeff, because there's no monitor here."

The ever-energetic Chris Kamara explains his motions while reporting for Soccer Saturday. No monitor at Fratton Park? Unbelievable Jeff!

"I hope he shot himself."

Alan Keane marks his return to the Sports Writers team by wishing Robert Earnshaw well. Judging by that remark I'd recommend caution when hanging around with Spurs fans!

"He's not the Messiah. He's a very naughty boy." One of the less venomous banners displayed by Burnley fans at the Reebok for their re-acquaintance with Owen Coyle.

Give It A Lash Quiz

By Tomás McCarthy - Sports Editor

- UL gaelic footballer Paul Larkin hails from which county?
- Which country won the 1994 World Cup in USA?
- Name the two players sent off in the 1996 All Ireland final between Mayo and Meath?
- Who scored the first goal of the 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan?
- What number does Jonny Evans wear for Manchester United?
- Who won the IRB Player of the Year award for 2009?
- What province does Gavin Duffy play rugby for?
- Glen Crowe recently transferred to which League of Ireland club?
- Which horse won last year's Cheltenham Gold Cup?
- Kilkenny inter-county hurler TJ Reid plays with which club team?

4. Papa Bouba Diop (Senegal)
Liam McHale (Mayo)
3. Colm Coyle (Meath) and
2. Brazil
1. Meath
Quiz Answers
10. Ballyhale Shamrocks
9. Kauto Star
8. Sporting Fingal
7. Connacht
6. Richie McCaw
5. 23

AN FOCAL SPORT

Horse play on UL pitches

By Tomás McCarthy – Sports Editor

CONCERN has been rising in recent weeks over the presence of horses on the UL pitches. This has led to hazardous conditions for players on pitches which are already in a substandard state.

Before the Christmas break the UL soccer club were forced to remove almost a dozen piles of horse manure off the Ten Acres field in order to play a match. The game against Mary I eventually went ahead but could easily have been called off. Martin Hayes, of the UL soccer club, thinks Mary I could have been aggrieved by the situation. “At the

time I thought that we were fortunate that Mary I agreed to play the game, as they could quite easily have claimed the points on Health and Safety grounds”. A pre-Harding Cup training camp was also disrupted as a result of damage caused by the horses. The Harding Cup is the premier college competition for fresher soccer players. It’s not just soccer that has been affected. Clubs and Societies Development Officer Paul Lee recalls events at a Softball IV which was held in UL a couple of years ago. “I have pictures from a Softball varsity when those horses

run across while they are playing.”

This problem is an ongoing one. During the course of the Sigerson Cup encounter between UL and Carlow IT on Pitch One further disturbances could have been caused. A horse and trap was spotted on the path beside the Ten Acres fields.

The horse exited the grounds shortly after, but the ease of access is concerning on a big day for UL GAA. Martin Hayes suggests one solution. “This is a problem that needs to be addressed urgently by the installation of proper fencing.

It has dragged on for months now.” The current wire fencing on the perimeter of the grounds is damaged and in some parts, non-existent. Paul Lee agrees but realises the financial cost of such plans. “There is an incredible cost associated in fencing off the entire perimeter. I think it runs to hundreds of thousands.” Paul Lee believes that getting rid of the horses is easier said than done. “Legally this is quite a difficult thing to remove the horses.” He explained the work of the Building and Estates Department. “My understanding is that they had the horses impounded

last weekend and they were broken out of the compound. They had to shell out money to create a compound to close off those stray horses and take them off campus.” He added that they have been “incredibly helpful” in the whole process.

After complaints from UL GAA Development Officer, Patsy Morrissey, and Martin Hayes the issue is finally being discussed as a serious matter. It will be raised at the UL Pitches Committee as the battle for better facilities for UL’s sporting stars continues.

ULRC Members selected for Irish National Crew & Club

By Jamie Fitzgerald

WELCOME back to all the students and staff after the long Christmas break. Over the past few months there has been a flurry of activity at the Boathouse. Though the flooding threatened to wash us all away, the training continued unabated and crews continue to progress at a breakneck speed. Between the deluge of water and freezing of the river, much of the training has been indoors.

This has been a challenge for every rower but has proven worthwhile as the fitness of all members has increased dramatically. New members this year are learning the difference between being fit and being rowing fit and the level of mental and physical stamina required to succeed. U.L.R.C travelled to Kerry in January and thanks to the new training schedule and some excellent work by the coxswains in each boat we secured wins in the men’s senior eight and women’s senior four. Three of our Rowers went on to secure places for

selection in the Irish national crew and the club would like to extend our best wishes to Paul Noonan, James Brinn and Andrew Hurley as they continue to excel in this sport. Throughout the winter the rowing club run series has proven to be extremely successful thanks to the sterling effort of our run organiser, Liz Gabbett, and all our marshals and time keepers. While

there was a brief period where the run could not proceed due to ice it has begun again and anyone who is interested should be at the boathouse at 6.30pm every Thursday with their running gear on and a high viz jacket. The cost of entry for students is €3.00 and for non students €5.00. The last weekend of January saw the running of our first ergathlon where athletes

compete through a mix of running and rowing on a rowing machine.

While this article has gone to press before the event takes place it is envisioned that it will be a tremendous success and a great day of competition will be had by all concerned. We would like to ask again that anybody interested in rowing to contact the club as we are

continuing to recruit for competitions in the spring and summer. At this stage crews are really beginning to step up their training so time is short. If you feel like challenging yourself and achieving a level of fitness you hadn’t thought possible then you need to contact us. Any enquires should be made to irow@ul.ie or you can check out our website www.ulrowing.com.



Training hard despite the weather