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## UNIVERSITY CONCEDES TO THE UNION'S DEMAND FOR AN IMPROVED MEDICAL CENTRE

The words medical centre have been flouted by continuous Students' Union representatives for what seems like decades. Year after year students bring-up the medical centre as one of the main grievances affecting them in this University. Candidates for Students' Union elections often place the words 'medical centre' at the top of their manifestoes. So it was a surprise therefore, not only to the Students' Union but the entire student body that the University's Governing Authority, agreed to an initiative tabled by Mr. Mick Phelan, SU President, and Ms. Siobhan O'Connell, SU Deputy-President, that the medical centre be extended and improved. The significance of this agreement is important and it is seen as one of the steps that have been made by the University to mend the inharmonious ties between the University administration and the student body. Mick Phelan, speaking after the four-hour meeting, said, "it was a good day for the entire student body and one

that I had long awaited, in my four years as a student on campus." He went on to say that when he was an undergraduate he had wondered why the Students' Union wasn't working towards getting an improved medical centre, but now he realises that previous student representatives had come-up against brick walls when the matter had been raised. They were often ignored or placated with promises, which in the end meant nothing. "The protest last semester", he said, "shook a lot of things up and gave me and the other officers of the Union a chance to make student voices heard."

The Governing Authority directed the management of the University to extend the old medical centre into what is now the student enterprise centre on the mezzanine level in block C of the main building. It is expected that this added space will improve on the cramped conditions that staff and students are occupying at the moment.

On a daily basis the medical centre has to deal with approximately fifty to sixty people, and as a result their service can be limited and inadequate. "The staff usually work under very stressful conditions and their resources are entirely inadequate

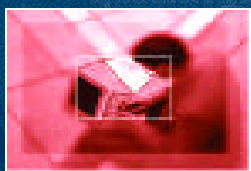


Site For the Extension to the Medical Centre

to the service that they should and can be providing," said Mr. Phelan. He went on to say that the service itself still needs much more improvement, but an extension will go some way towards a proper medical service for students. "The University is now obliged to provide proper and professional facilities for students, who are the most important and largest part of the campus community, but we should not be complacent as there is still a lot of work to be done with regards to lobbying for a building on campus dedicated to the area of Student Support Services" continued Mr. Phelan.

As the student representatives brought this matter directly to the Governing Authority, it will be continually monitored by that body. It is expected that work will begin on the new extension in the coming months and will be completed by September 2001.

## GRADUATES



Are you graduating this year with a BSc Degree in any of the following disciplines ?

- Computer Science
- Software Engineering/Development
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We have numerous Graduate vacancies throughout Ireland, so please forward a copy of your CV to our contact: Julia Connelly, Graduate Consultant, Marlborough IT 6/7 Steamboat Quay, Limerick. Tel: 061 419 007 Email: [jconnelly@marlborough.ie](mailto:jconnelly@marlborough.ie) Web: [www.marlborough.ie](http://www.marlborough.ie)



# Just To Let You Know.....

A word from the Sabats.

Each issue, we'll give you a quick dose of what we're up to.



This week in Governing Authority saw a big result for us in the area of Medical Centre facilities. By September 2001 the Medical Centre will be expanded, as will the counselling facilities. This has been a long time in coming, but we should not be complacent as there is still a lot of work to be done with regards to lobbying for a building on campus dedicated to the area of Student Support Services. There is still the aspect of the financial difficulties in these areas, which causes the high turnover of staff.

Also for the last number of months I have been working on a capitation report and hope to present this report to class reps at the next meeting in 2

weeks.

With regard to providing QCA accreditation for class reps, my self and Tom will be meeting with members of all departments with regards to formulating a proposal for Academic Council. After much deliberation and talks (*Myself, Tom, a member of the Maths Dept., Associate Vice President-Academic and Head of Student Services*) it was felt by all involved that the introduction of a new module was the best method of providing this accreditation.

Finally I hope that the Student Information page is of use to you all, and a big hello to all the girls in the Cedars, great party, let me know when your having the next one.



Tá suil agam nach bhfuil sibh go leir ró-ghnóthach leis an staidear – bain taitneamh as an seachtain seo, agus má tá fadhb agat, cuir ‘e-mail’ chugam, agus cabharóidh me leat...

Biódh lá deas agaibh ar an seachtú lá deag!

**Slán go fóill,  
Siobhán**

Laters

Mick



For the past two weeks we've been working on the ID Cards & to get everyone registered to vote in this constituency, which is going well. However, if you're a first year and have not registered to vote you could do so at any time.

All First years, should have their applications in all ready, and also by the end of this week everyone with a 99 ID numbers should return their application form.

This year's Kollege (Rag) Week is in Week 8 and I will be publishing a Preview at the end of week 7, so everyone will know what's going on, who's

who and what they're all about.

The line-up is almost complete and it's up to the usual high standard. My advice to everyone is, start saving now & also get lots of Sleep in the mean time.

I will be launching a questionnaire soon, to find out what you all actually think of An Focal, so don't be shy to tell us as it's your paper and you decide what goes in it and you won't hurt my feelings either.

Finally, what's in store for my final 3 editions? Look, out for .....

Oh, and one last thing: Ta se ag teacht.....

See Ya,  
**Fergal F.**

**PS Tune into Wired FM  
106.8fm (if you live in  
Castletroy, that is, otherwise  
96.8)**



Its week 4 and we are all well and truly into the run of things by now. At least we should be. So what have I to say for myself? Nothing much at this time. We have another edition before I need to start admonishing you to get down to your study as the time is pushing on. So I'm not going to start at that this week. Things are moving a pace at the moment. Mick has been busy pushing for more space for the Student Counsellors and the Student Medical Centre. It looks like he has gotten some assurances from Governing Authority that this will happen.

The registering to vote campaign has also gotten us some movement from the outside. It looks like some of the national

and local politician from a number of parties are beginning to look at the issues we are trying to highlight. We have heard one account that the junior minister for education has asked to see the city plan on the proposed bus routes. Weather this is accurate or not we still have to confirm but it is an indication of action in the right direction.

We have been having very productive meetings on Class Reps with representatives of the University. We may soon have a framework where we could guarantee a full complement of Class Reps as apposed to the eighty or ninety out of the three hundred that we should have. If your class hasn't a Class Rep yet then get one elected quickly. Otherwise if there is anything I can do for anyone then just call into my office and we can have a chat.

**Tom.**

## A NEW INITIATIVE IS LAUNCHED TO CLEAN UP CASTLETROY



By Eamonn O'Flynn

First and foremost we are students here in UL, but we should also remember that we are members of the greater Castletroy community. I'm sure one or two of you out there, might have noticed that there tends to be a build of litter, particularly on the main pedestrian thoroughfares. There are even examples of petty vandalism, such as the fencing alongside the green area approaching elm park and the bin which was kicked around the green in Elm park (Guess where I live). I'm not writing this article to highlight the problems, or even to determine who is to blame. There is no way of knowing which individuals are responsible, or of knowing from which part of the community they come from. I know of examples of littering where the students are not responsible,

however I think it would be fair to say that there's a good chance that some students are guilty of littering. It may have been just one paper that you threw away, but hey if everyone threw away just one paper, we'd have ourselves a serious problem here in Castletroy.

The reason I'm writing this article is simple; I want to heighten awareness of the issue. Most importantly I would like to say that we the student body should not be concerned about which individuals are responsible, but as a group we should ask ourselves what we could do to help clean up Castletroy. I have often heard the saying charity begins at home, well the same can be applied to the environment, a clean environment should start in our community. Even by saying "THE" environment, "OUR" environment is right in front of us here in Castletroy.

As community officer I intend to put a clean up crew together, this crew will be needed especially during Kollege week. To show appreciation to those who volunteer for the clean up crew, the students union

will be giving everyone on the crew an access all areas pass for Kollege week. Now for the first years out there you may not see the advantage of this, as you have not experienced the queues for Kollege week tickets and events. You get to skip all the queues and you can visit a number of events in one night at your leisure, not to mention your contribution to our community and our environment. If you want to be become more active on environmental issues, there is a meeting of the environmental society each Monday at 6 o'clock in the main canteen. I also wish to extend my congratulations to the environmental society for their outstanding work and for being nominated for society of the year.



## UL HAS THE THIRD HIGHEST DROPOUT RATES IN COUNTRY

By Sinead Kelleher

A disturbing article, which appeared in the Irish Times Monday 26th February states that U.L has the 3rd highest drop out rate at 20.5% while the average, is 16.8%. NUI Maynooth is the highest with 27.9% and DCU second at 21.4%.

This is the first detailed study to be done since 1985 and has been carried out on a group of students who entered college in

92/93. The highest drop out rate is in computer-based courses with TCD at 32.4% and UL at below average with 25.5%. science also has a high drop out rate with NUI Maynooth at 42.5%, DCU 33.5% and UL at 20.4% while engineering and architecture as 27.2% at UL the worst in this area followed by DCU at 19.4%. A number of reasons have been given for these dropouts such as students choosing the wrong course, those with lower CAO points more likely to drop-out as well

as those in lower socio-economic groups.

UL in its defence have said that these figures do not account for its flexible transfer system for example students can transfer from mechanical to aeronautical engineering. It is therefore unfair to count these students as non-completers bringing UL's drop-out rate to 6.3% in mechanical engineering from the HEA's stated 23.8%. UL also state that they have introduced a number of initiatives to combat this problem such as the intro-

duction of a formal annual repeats system, the commissioning of research into the causes, the appointment of Ireland's first dean of teaching and learning, the creation of a learning resource centre, the organisation of an annual teaching week and a new life skills module to provide support in adapting to university life. As a result of these UL has said that the completion rates have improved and with an institutional 5 year academic plan will improve further

## HISTORIC OCCASION IN UL GOES UNNOTICED

On Saturday the 25th of November the UL based Irish Peace Institute, presented a concert of peace and reconciliation in a capacity University Concert Hall. The concert was advertised as a cross-community and cross-border concert. This was certainly true, as the concert participants included a combined Garda Síochána and RUC band and the cross-border Millennium choir, as well as a locally based Tenor and mezzo-soprano. The choir was comprised of schools from the south and Catholic and Protestant schools from the North.

The band began with a Beatles medley, and it was ironic to hear two police bands playing 'Lucy in the sky'. Other popular medleys followed, including the omnipresent James Bond medley. This left this writer wondering can bands ever perform a concert without including this in their repertoire. Not a criticism really, merely an observation. The bands, the combined choirs and

opera singers gave a powerful rendition of the classic 'The world in Union'. This song was particularly apt, due to Limerick's strong connection with rugby and also because of the role rugby has played in bridging gaps in this country. Namely the presence of clubs from Northern Ireland in the AIL and presence of Unionists on the Irish team over the years. Many of these players played despite threats from Loyalist terrorists. 3 players were seriously wounded by an IRA car bomb. During the '80's an Irish front row included an Irish army officer and a RUC officer.

There were also Christmas carols played as well as other popular tunes. The chairman of the Irish Peace Institute Col. Shannon gave an inspiring speech at the interval about social and cultural inclusion. The second half continued where the first left off. We had an very well received Andrew Lloyd Webber medley and more Xmas tunes. All in all it was a

very enjoyable evening, even if the music wasn't to your particular taste. It was the congenial atmosphere and enthusiasm of the participants and the full house that made the concert the success that it was.

There may be those who say that the RUC aren't welcome in this part of the Island, but the two thousand audience members certainly made them feel welcome. Those who oppose concerts like this may argue with some justification that the RUC is an imperfect and on occasions a bigoted and disgraceful organisation. It is true that a sizeable minority of members of this police force were involved in collusion with Loyalists (notably the Hamill case), that the Police reserve was a complete disaster which served only the loyalist community and it is also true that drastic reform is badly needed. It is true many of its members have intimidated the Catholic community in the past. However it should also be noted that this is

a force which had hundreds of its membership murdered, that many of its members were first there to deal with bomb casualties. It should also be noted that the RUC band members are professional musicians, rather than policemen.

Reform is happening (albeit incrementally, it will take time even in South Africa, the police force is being reformed slowly) and events like the peace concert can only help the RUC become a more inclusive and accountable police force. Surely it is also time for the other sporting organisations in this country to follow the lead of the IRFU in furthering peace and reconciliation and that the sectarian hatred that manifests itself at some sporting occasions in Scotland and the North be consigned to the past. Hopefully one day we will be mature enough to have British and foreign military and police bands playing concerts here and there wont be a need for armed detectives to be at the door.

## The World at Large in Association with



### UNIVERSITIES STILL CLOSED TO POORER STUDENTS

There has been little improvement in the number of socio-economically disadvantaged school-leavers reaching third-level education, over the past five years, despite Government initiatives aimed at improving access, according to a recent review.

The review *Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative on Widening Access for Young People from Socio-economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds*, was undertaken by Prof. R.D. Osborne and Ms H. Leith, Centre for Research on Higher Education. Commissioned by the Higher Education Authority, the research evaluated the efforts made by universities to promote the participation of school leavers from less well off backgrounds in higher education under the HEA's Targeted Initiatives.

The Government's White Paper of 1995 promised to attract an extra 500 students a year from lower socio-economic groups into higher education. However just 130 students entered university on access initiatives last year. Commentators have described the situations as 'the biggest fail-

ure of social policy in modern Ireland'.

Judged solely on a number basis, the scheme has failed dismally in reaching the expectations nationally or those set out by the universities themselves, the review found. The problem of altering negative attitudes toward education in such areas, required a long-term commitment of effort and funding, it said.

The current booming economy and availability of jobs is posing a major counter attraction to studying at school and seeking entry to third level, the review said. The number of school leavers taking up educational opportunities after leaving school saw a 4 per cent decline to 39 per cent in 1998, according to the ESRI Annual School Leavers Survey 1998.

In the past two years, the HEA has provided £695,000 and £785,000 respectively in order to develop special schemes to improve the participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The universities all record a total cost in excess of £50,000, with universities indicated they

also used other internal and external sources to supplement the HEA funding. UCD derived almost two-thirds of the resources from external sources, while DCU managed to secure private sponsorship of individual students who have progressed into university.

The task of widening access is about altering expectations and aspirations, and shaping attitudes towards the value of education in communities that have little or no experience in third-level education, the review stressed. Speaking at the launch of the report, Prof. R.D. Osborne expressed the need to address cultural factors, contributing to the low level of school leavers participation in third-level education. Referring to Wexford's low third-level education participation, he said 'When examined, it emerged that this was on account of the county's agricultural excellence, attracting the youth from third-level education'.

A forthcoming report by UCD researcher Dr Patrick Clancy, is expected to show many college access programmes here have failed to deliver results.

# NATIONAL STUDENT DRUG-RAPE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY USI

The Union of Students in Ireland have just launched a campaign to raise awareness about drug rape in colleges nationwide. The campaign will operate in tandem with college Rag Weeks with the aim of showing students how easy a drink can be tampered with.

During the campaign stickers will be secretly placed on glasses to highlight how easy it is to tamper with a drink without the knowledge of the owner of the drink. This follows a similar campaign by Queen's University Student Union. Union members circulated the college bar putting stickers on people's glasses when they weren't looking which read: "This could have been a rape drug."

"From talking to students it is clear that although many are aware of the subject very little is known about it. More importantly, even less is known about what they should look out for if they believe they have had their drinks spiked," Alison Gibney, Welfare Officer with USI told [campus.ie](http://campus.ie). Rape is a crime difficult to prove on its own without the added complexity of the use of drugs. A spokesperson with the *Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit* in Harcourt Street, (part of the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation) revealed that a drug assisted rape has never been proven in court in the Republic of Ireland. One of the main reasons for this, according to Vera O'Leary, co-ordinator of the Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre, is that women often fail to come forward until it's too late to have urine or blood samples taken. If it isn't reported with 24 to 48 hours, there is no trace of the drug left in the victim's system. "Women often fail to report the incident because they do not have full memory of what happened, and they are very confused," she said. "They may only have snippets of memory, but know they have been raped. Often they feel they have nothing concrete to report to Gardaí," she explained.

When a rape is reported, a thorough medical and forensic investigation is carried out. The samples are sent to the Abbotstown specialist laboratory, the only laboratory acceptable for court use in Ireland. To date, none of the samples sent to the laboratory have tested positive for Rohypnol, Dr Mary Holohan, Director of the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit at the Rotunda Hospital told [campus.ie](http://campus.ie). Dr Holohan conceded that Rohypnol is metabolised very quickly, making it difficult to detect in toxicology studies. "The drug acts quickly when ingested, but quickly leaves the system," she explained. Rohypnol or "roofies", a prescribed sedative, appears to be the drug of choice in

drug assisted rapes. Even though a blue dye has now been added to Rohypnol for detection purposes, they remain tasteless and odourless; and the dye does not show up in red wine, cola or other dark drinks. But the danger does not emanate exclusively from the notorious Rohypnol tablets.

"There are all sorts of concoctions being used on women that basically act as anaesthetics. A host of benzodiazepines are used, including Temazepam or Diphenhydramme. Ketamine and Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB), or liquid ecstasy, can also leave a victim unconscious in minutes. Dangerous cocktails of drugs such as ecstasy or cocaine can be mixed with a benzodiazepine to reduce the victim's inhibitions, while preventing them from sleeping so they can participate in sexual activity. The victim has no knowledge of what they have been given, and will become dizzy and disorientated experiencing hot and cold flushes. They will experience difficulty in moving before passing out. The following day, victims experience a bad hangover, which can last up to 48 hours. By the time the victim remembers any details of what happened, no traces of the drug remain in their body.

The *Sexual Assault Treatment Unit* at the Rotunda Hospital's recent Annual Reports have noted the increase in the incident of drug-assisted rape. Of the 253 rape cases seen in 1997, (which was the first time drugs were believed to have featured in rape cases), 4 women believed Rohypnol was involved. In 1998, this figure increase to 14, from the 266 rape cases. Latest figures compiled for 1999 reveal that 25 rape victims believed the offender used the drug, out of 243 cases.

The increase in reports of drug-assisted rape has stunned counselors in Rape Crisis Centres around the country. Although the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre does not keep statistics on drug rape, Limerick recorded 11 cases of alleged drug rape last year, while Waterford recorded four cases, Galway seven cases, Sligo one case and Kerry five cases.

In 1999 five people contacted the Limerick centre complaining of having been slipped a drug before being raped. This figure doubled the next year, according to Ingrid Wallace, a counsellor at the Limerick Rape Crisis Wallace.

The Belfast Rape Crisis Centre has recorded a dramatic increase in women who believe they were drugged and sexually assaulted. Cases have risen from eight to around 150 in the last two years. While acknowledging the associated danger of Rohypnol, the Rotunda's Dr Holohan believes that females often leave them-

selves vulnerable by consuming large amounts of alcohol, and that alcohol is more likely to be a factor in rape than Rohypnol. While recognising alcohol as a factor in rape, it could not be confused with drug-assisted rape, co-ordinator of the Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre pointed out. "Even after large amounts of alcohol, people will still remember what happened to them and have some memory, unlike with Rohypnol," she said.

Last year, Kerry's Centre saw 5 allegations of drug-assisted rape, up by four the year before. 1999 was the first year that drug assisted rape featured as a factor in the clinic. While many students reported such incidents, none were reported to the Gardaí.

A study of rape statistics from 1994 to 1997 inclusive by the *Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit* revealed that 87 per cent of victims knew the offender. So does drug assisted rape follow this trend? "You can go into a pub and start chatting to someone for a few hours, that you may recognise from around your college. You get to know them during the night. So that isn't a stranger, it's an acquaintance at that stage," she explained. A spokesperson with the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit dispelled the notion that drug-assisted rape is a myth, highlighting the documented cases in the UK and the USA. Standing at 260-280, the number of rape incidents has witnessed a noticeable increase. One reason for this is that a rape is recorded in whatever year it was reported as opposed to the year it was occurred. "So if a rape is reported now that happened in the 1970s, it will be included in this year's rape statistics," he said.

There are a number of precautions, which can be taken to minimise the risks of drug-related rape.

1. Don't drink beverages that you did not open yourself.
2. Don't exchange or share drinks with anyone.
3. Don't drink from a container that is being passed about.
4. Don't leave your drink unattended.
5. Don't allow yourself to be isolated with someone you do not trust.
6. Watch out for each other and be aware if your friends begin to act strangely.
7. Never accept a drink from a stranger.
8. Never walk home at night on your own.

## Fast Writers Get Better Results

Students who write faster get better results in exams, according to a recent study.

The study which was carried out for Britain's *Teacher Training Agency*, suggests that pupils who achieved higher than expected GCSE English grades wrote faster than under-achievers. Handwriting quality and quantity are strongly associated with examination achievement at all levels, "except the very highest levels of ability", the report revealed.

Handwriting characteristics of almost 1,200 students across the 11 to 16-age range were examined for the study.

The report highlighted that boys tend to have more handwriting problems than girls of a similar age, and suggested that handwriting should be taught throughout secondary school. Further research into developing effective teaching strategies in schools was also called for in the report.

Results from a similar study in France correlate with this study. The findings suggest that once children have mastered flowing joined-up handwriting, their minds are liberated to release their ideas more efficiently and creatively on paper. On the other hand, difficulties in flowing handwriting have a negative effect on achievement, the report stated.

## Youth Pub Culture under Scrutiny with New Campaign

A national campaign to make people more aware of the dangers of alcohol has been launched to coincide with the report which shows that Ireland tops the European league when it comes to young people drinking.

The National Alcohol Awareness Campaign by the Department of Health which carries the slogan "less is more - it's your choice" will involve role models from the worlds of music, fashion, sport and TV providing messages that reinforce how sensible drinking has affected their lives and careers. It will highlight the importance of cutting down on alcohol, as well as encouraging people to maintain a healthier lifestyle.

Health Minister, Micheal Martin described the campaign as long range, lasting three years, and said the target groups are 12-14-year-olds, 15-17-year-olds and 18-24-year-olds. A new website [www.coolchoices.ie](http://www.coolchoices.ie) has also been established.

Mr Martin said that figures from the World Health Organisation are startling when it came to hard drinking among young people, and pointed out that in 1999 alcohol related problems cost the country £1.7 billion.

He also announced his personal opposition to the de-regulation of off-licenses and pubs saying the public health risks would be intolerable.

## Heart disease and diabetes under UCC's Microscope

Cork and Kerry have one of the highest rates of obesity in a European population sample, with over 25 per cent meeting current international criteria for obesity. So concludes a recent collaborative report involving University College Cork.

The *Report of the Cork and Kerry Diabetes and Heart Disease Study* was conducted on 1018 participants, to ascertain the prevalence of major cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors, in 50-69 year olds.

The collaborative project involved UCC's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, the Training Programme for General Practice, UCC/Southern Health Board, the Department of Medicine, Cork University Hospital and the Department of Public Health and the Southern Health Board.

One in seven of this population have a high risk of cardiovascular disease events and require intensive risk factor modification, the three-year project revealed.

Cardiovascular disease risk factors and glucose intolerance are common in the 50-69 age group, and almost 4% of the population sample had a form of diabetes, of whom 30% were undiagnosed, the study found.

The report recommends preventive measures targeted at the whole population, as well as measures to improve the detection and management of individuals at high risk of CVD events.

The study was recently presented to the Minister of Health & Children, Mr. Micheál Martin by Professor Gerard Wrixon, President of UCC.

For more information, visit [www.ucc.ie/ucc/depts/pubh](http://www.ucc.ie/ucc/depts/pubh).

**For more information on The World at Large stories**

**& Other Stories including:**

Video Conferencing - Lectures  
College Drop-out Rates Nationally  
Languages Open Doors  
Student Protests Continue

**Visit [www.campus.ie](http://www.campus.ie)**

# A Word In Everyone's Ear

Get everything off your chest!!!!

**Dear editor,**

I got a bit of a shock when I opened up last weeks edition of An Focal to see so many articles devoted to the subject of politics. It made (for me anyway) most interesting and thought - provoking reading. I hope this may be a start to getting the issues of politics more central to the daily life in UL, though the more cynical side of me doubts that very much.

The situation of political apathy is not only in UL but is mirrored in young people across the country with the result that young people simply don't have a voice in the political arena. As everyone knows politicians depend on votes to stay in power, and quite simply if young people don't vote why would any sensible politician adopt policies and measures which benefit young people when it might alienate another section of potential voters who do actually vote and have the power to take away his/her seat. It is this simple in the end.

Dail Eireann and politics in general is a reflection not of society, but those in society who vote. One x on a ballot paper will have consequences for the next five years of your life. If politicians see young people as a voting bloc who might have an influence in their gaining power, they will be taken more credibly. This means that measures benefiting young people will be given a fair hearing and will be adopted through necessity. However if young people themselves don't vote for the parties who adopt these measures and policies, how can we expect the parties to adopt them.

For those who say that voting isn't worth it, I usually point out the current pathetic level of the student grant. If student votes formed any threat to our politicians it would have been increased to a decent level years ago, it's that simple.

What I'm saying in one sentence is, whenever you do it, wherever you do it and whoever you do it for, please, please, please, please, please, please vote!

**David Garrahy,**

**Second year Law and European studies.**

**Ps. I'm a member of Young Fine Gael.**

**Dear Editor,**

On Friday the 23rd, after a hard week at college, my mates and I ventured to the Scholars for a few pints. It was roughly 9pm when we arrived and like the majority of people there, we weren't dressed for 70's fancy dress competition, in which a DVD player was the star prize. We weren't too interested in the competition until a guy from our course arrived, looking the biz. He was funky out with a black Afro wig, fur coat and some serious golden rings, shades and serious flares.

The point of this letter is that there were only three or four more contestants and a dressed up barman. All the others were only excuses for costumes and from what I could see they were wearing normal clothes and trying to pass them off as 70's gear.

There was no announcement of the winner

but I'm pretty sure the Scholars pulled a fast one. Basically a barman who had the hots for one of the girls decided they should win. When a course-mate of mine, being a bloke, was totally ignored even though he totally deserved to win it.

What's the point of entering a competition when you have no chance of winning it. If they had any sense of fair play they should give him the DVD player or some sort of worthwhile consolation prize.

**Yours,**

**John Dee**

**Editors Note:** *I was given three other letters of complaint about this competition. I printed only printed one of them to be fair to the Scholars,*

*The Scholars Club have been approached on this matter, & would like the guy in question and the people that complained to approach them to straighten out the entire situation.*

*I'm sure it was just a misunderstanding and so this weeks £15 goes to the guy with Afro, it's no DVD but at least it's something. E-mail me your details and the money is yours.*

**If you've got something to say, or even nothing to say but you can say it in a clever way, drop us a line in An Focal. You might get it printed, and you might just win yourself £15.**

**Either drop it in to An Focal Letter-box in the Students' Union Building ,  
or e-mail it to**

**fergal.fennessy@ul.ie**

# Education Tirade

## The Week In The News.

UL saw itself in the national papers a lot this week (Wk. 3). The Irish Examiner ran a nice piece on student accommodation and section 50 housing in Thursday's edition of their Commercial Property supplement which featured the on campus villages. The Irish Times ran a more damning story on its pages Monday, when it published the HEA findings on third level non-completion rates. UL fared badly according to these figures with the third highest percentage, nationally, for non-completions.

The University authorities were very quick off the mark to counter these claims with a press release coming almost immediately from the Vice President Academic, Professor Kevin Ryan. That the press release was warranted there is no doubt. The information from the HEA report is flawed from its methodology and no account was taken of internal transfers and others suchlike in the UL system. This had to be pointed out as it could damage the Universities reputation and thus damage the value of UL awards.

However, for a statement that welcomed the report as it, "draws attention to an issue that is of great interest and importance to all educators." the University in this press release is only addressing an issue because it is worried about the perception the institution is held in by the outside world. Paying lip service to its problems as these are perceived outside of the institution by the general public but ignoring issues that are a reality for every student currently on campus.

Professor Ryan points out in great detail the lengths the University has gone to of its own accord to address issues such as those highlighted by the HEA report. He mentions annual repeats (gotten only after the student body went on strike!), Ireland's first Dean of Teaching & Learning, Learning Resource Centre and an Annual Teaching Week among others. All of these are commendable and are of benefit to the student body. But he is

addressing an issue that we know here on campus is not an issue. Non-completion rates in UL are not as high as The Irish Times reported them to be. Non-completion is always something an institution involved in education should be monitoring but only in line with observing other aspects as well. It should only be given the priority it warrants at the time.

The priority here at the moment is not non-completion rates but support services. In 1992 UL had about eight thousand students. It now has increased to over eleven and a half thousand in total on the Universities books. About eight thousand on campus in a semester. The practice of increasing the campus both physically and in its student complement without at the same time enlarging the support services, absolutely necessary to the business of educating students, is what will be increasing the non-completion rates in the future. What's more, as more and more dissatisfied UL students air their grievances in their home towns and villages around the country there will be less demand for places in UL making non-completion a non-issue.

UL students are competing with students in other Universities who have better educational resources. Libraries that have enough books to deal with the demand that is placed on them. As has been mentioned on these pages before, because of our distance from the main resource centres in the Dublin and the relative youth of our University we haven't had the time to develop the same resources as our counterparts in Cork and Galway. This means UL must put more into these areas not less as is the case now. Areas such as Student Services and Student Personnel Services (Student Counselling and Medical Centre) must see investment so that the increased demand on their resources by the increase in student numbers can be met.

### Student Co-op Focus Group.

We tried to get a group of interested students to meet on Tuesday Week 3 to discuss various aspects of their co-op experience. We have had a

number of students into the office on the issue over the year and it was felt that maybe by getting a few together that some of the biggest issues, common to all, might be addressed. It was therefore surprising when so few did show up on the night. We know this is a very contentious issue for students, as nearly every UL undergraduate must go on co-op and many have difficulties. It was also one of the areas identified in the Universities Student Survey as a problem area.

Of the students who did show up many of them were there on behalf of others who didn't feel comfortable turning up even though they have serious issues to raise. We are therefore going to run the focus group again, Tuesday night Week 5, the 13th of March. We would like to assure any student who is interested in coming along that everything that is said will be kept in confidence and that no ones name or ID number will be used in any way from this meeting. This is purely a brainstorming session looking at the main problems and possible solutions so that we have a starting point for our discussions with the various departments involved in the co-op process. This is a student run initiative and our focus is on the student problems with the co-op experience.

### College of Business FYP.

At the College of Business Faculty Board Meeting on Wednesday the 28th of February the college voiced their worry at the reaction of the students' to the FYP proposal and promised that it would not be fast tracked. The sentiment in the college now is that they will be trying to have this ready for the current first years and not the current second years as earlier thought.

The surveys on the FYP from the Centre for Small Business have at this stage been printed up and should be ready to go out early week 4. Five hundred employers and five hundred graduates in employment are being canvassed for their opinions on the FYP and its place in a UL degree. The Students' Union will also be looking at the practices in other institutions where they offer FYP type programmes.

## Views of the Chair of Class Reps.

### By John Mulcahy

The first few weeks back have been fairly quiet as far as class reps are concerned. I think like everywhere else in UL the main talking point has been the introduction of the new ULSU ID card. Like everyone I've heard an awful lot of bitching about this and to be perfectly honest I'm sick of it.

When you think about it, it's not really that much of a big deal. You have to fill out a form, hand it in with two photos and get an ID card back. Of course there is always the hassle of carrying this around with you, how will we manage with all the extra weight in our pocket!!! Obviously the more logical thing to do would be to carry around our UL card to prove we were members and a passport/driving license to prove we are over 18.

What planet do some people come from?? It's not going to change anything; you'll still be able to bring your mates up from Cork or Dublin or wherever else they're coming from, and sign them in as guests. The only thing that will change is that you'll be using your ULSU ID instead of your UL one. It's not like you have to pay for it, it's FREE, and I personally think

that if it ensures that the Scholars and the Stables keep their license, it's a small price to pay.

Along with the form for the new ID you'll also get a green form. This is a voter registration form. This is being done so as to encourage people to register to vote in the Limerick East constituency, or more importantly the council district of Castleconnell. While this may seem like an extremely personal thing to ask, it makes a lot of sense when you think about it. You are after all going to be living in the general Castletroy area for at least four years, this doesn't include the need to repeat a year, do a link-in. or even do a post grad. You might as well use your vote somewhere it might actually benefit you. With 8-10 thousand registered voters out here the politicians might actually acknowledge our existence and our quality of life might improve as a result. How bad!

As always we're looking for more class reps, so if your interested call into the SU for a form, and if anyone wants to contact me my e-mail address is 9923586@student.ul.ie.

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# So You Want To Be President!

The Students' Union elections are coming up again in week 9 of this semester. I would just like to take this opportunity to give an outline to the job of president.

No matter how much you think you know about the job or how ready you think you are, you really don't know until December / January into your term of office. The reason behind this is simple; you take over the job on July 1<sup>st</sup> when most committees are wound down, most students are off campus and you generally get a false sense of security.

Then come the end of September, all the meetings commence and all students are back on campus. So after nearly 3 months (one quarter of your term) reality kicks in and you are brought down to earth with a bang.

When you run for president, you will have many issues on your manifesto that you intend to work on. However, there are two other areas that influence your working day as president:

1. Whatever crops up on a day-to-day basis, for example a student facing disciplinary action or problems associated with the Union shop or either of the clubs, and

2. Issues directed to class reps by students which I am mandated to deal with by Class Reps Council. An average week for me would be about 50 to 60 hours on a salary of £11,000 a year.

The job does not pay well and its not a 9 to 5 day, but it is a great experience and can be very rewarding. Also the Union and Shop staff are the best bunch of people you could possibly work with and do not receive enough recognition for all the work they do behind the scenes.

The largest part of the job of president is as the student representative on the following committees:

## Students' Union

SU Executive  
Class Reps Council

## Class Reps Sub Committees

Finance  
Entertainments  
General Affairs

## Clubs & Societies

Clubs & Societies Executive  
Clubs & Societies Council

## University

Governing Authority  
**GA Sub Committees**  
Finance Committee  
Nominating Sub-Committee  
Campus Development  
Library Development  
**Academic**  
Academic Council  
Scheduling Review Committee  
Discipline Committee

## Faculty Boards

Informatics  
Engineering  
Science  
Humanities  
Education  
Business

## Board of Directors

Plassey Campus Centre  
University Arena  
ULSU Services Ltd.  
Plassey Trust Company  
Kilmurry Village

## Management Committees

Stables Club  
Scholars Club

Students' Centre

## Other

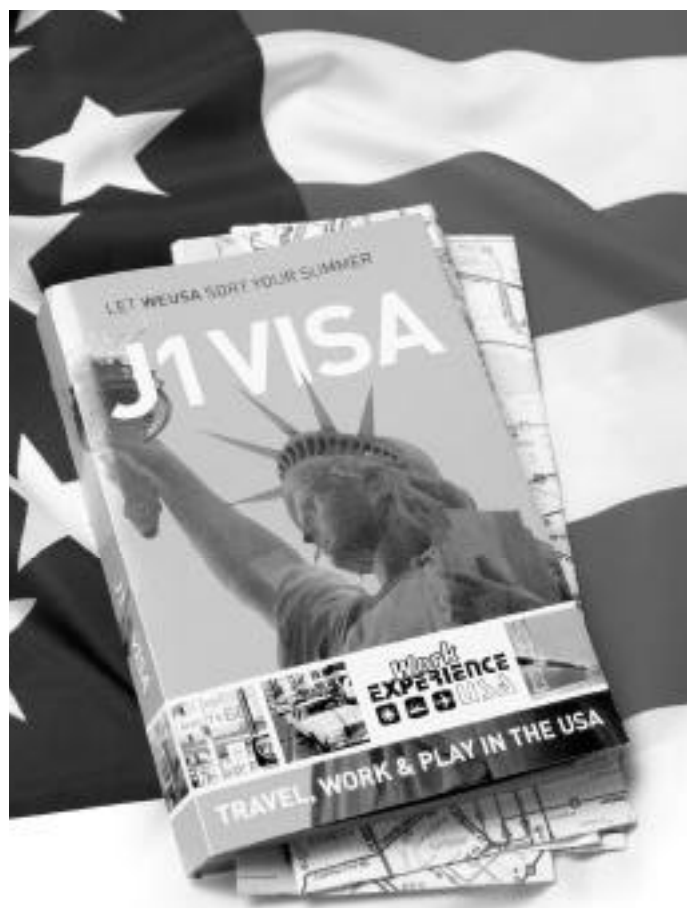
New Sports Arena  
Buildings Committee  
Campus Watch  
Equal Opportunities

As you can see from the above list, I sit on over 30 committees. A lot of the items discussed in these committees overlap between each other. Every day I'm involved in committees that control pretty much everything that goes on the University, from where the next building will be built, to how the University is financed, to how your exams are marked. Basically everything that affects your life in university is decided at these committees, and it's my job to represent you in these committees. It's probably not the most visible part of my job, but it is by far the most important aspect of the job. It is at these committees that I try to get policies implemented and keep the promises I made to you the students.

Another big part of the job is managing the services that the Students' Union provide, for example the SU shop, graphics and clubs and societies. Also this year we're trying to get a job placement service started. This should have two major effects. First of all, this service is aimed at providing students with work relevant to their field of study, so they can hone their skills while still in college. I'm also overseeing initiatives that will generate increased funding for the Students' Union, which can then be channelled into clubs and societies, who are at the moment seriously under-funded. Along with the general manager I have the final say in all the services provided by the Students' Union, but I always listen to the staff and students here in the Union as much as possible because their experience is invaluable.

At times the job can be very frustrating and stressful because this college is wrapped up so tightly in red tape. It can often take a long time to see progress on any of the issues that really count. But if you keep chiselling away you will get results and that is the greatest reward you can get in this job.

If you have any queries about the job please email me at [Michael.phelan@ul.ie](mailto:Michael.phelan@ul.ie)  
Or ring 061-202326



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**Mick Phelan**

# CULINARY GRACE -

## a beginners guide to gourmet cooking

Hi everyone. I have a selection of mouthwatering meals for you to cook this week. I am having problems getting cheap recipes with chicken in them, as I presume that half the students on campus won't be eating meat due to the foot and mouth scare. So I have chosen two recipes for those of you who are vegetarians and for all the faithful carnivores there, enjoy the tacos.

Oh! by the way I apologise to all the vegetarians, as I have had a few comments about that weeks edition saying that it was basically crap, so hopefully these are maybe a bit more appealing.

### CHICKPEA CURRY

INGREDIENTS	COST
2 tins of tomatoes	£0.90
2 onions	£0.30
4 cloves of garlic	£0.20
1 large tin of chickpeas	£1.05
1/2 red pepper	£0.23
1/2 yellow pepper	£0.23
1 carrot	£0.12
25g of mushrooms	£0.70
1/2 head of broccolli	£0.34
1 teaspoon of turmeric	£0.08
1 teaspoon of garam masala	£0.08
1 teaspoon of chilli	£0.05
1 teaspoon of paprika	£0.05
1 teaspoon of cumin	£0.08
1 teaspoon of coriander	£0.08
sat and pepper	£0.02
3 tablespoons of oil	<u>£0.10</u>
	£4.61

#### SERVES 4

**PREP. TIME: 10 mins**

**COOKING TIME: 30 mins**

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Chop all the vegetables and crush garlic. fry off the herbs and spices in 2 tablespoons of oil, except the garam masala as it burns quickly. Remove this paste from the pan. Fry off the vegetables until el dente or for 7 minutes. Stir in the paste, tomatoes, chickpeas, and garam masala. Cook for 20 minutes and serve on bed of rice or with naan bread.

### CHILLI BEEF TACOS



INGREDIENTS	COST
1 tablespoon of oil	£0.03
1 onion, finely chopped	£0.15
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped	£0.10
2 red chillis deseeded and finely chopped	£0.08
500g of minced meat	£1.50
1 tin of kidney beans drained	£0.86
1 tin of chopped tomatoes	£0.45
1/4 pint of strong black coffee	£0.10
salt and pepper	£0.02
8 taco shells	<u>£1.56</u>
	£4.85

#### SERVES 4

**PREP. TIME: 8 mins**

**COOKING TIME: 30 mins**

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion, garlic and chillies for 3-4 minutes until beginning to soften. Add the mince and cook for a further 3-4 minutes, until the meat begins to brown. Add the kidney beans, tomatoes and coffee. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes until the mixture is thick and fairly dark. Season to taste. Fill the taco shells with shredded lettuce, then pile in the chilli mixture. To serve, top with a spoonful of soured cream and a shake of paprika.

### AUBERGINE CHILLI JACKETS

INGREDIENTS	COST
2 tablespoon of oil	£0.07
1 onion, roughly chopped	£0.15
1 red chilli, roughly chopped	£0.04
2 large aubergines, cubed	£2.20
2 teaspoons of mixed herbs	£0.05
1 tin of chopped tomatoes	£0.45
1 tin of cannellini beans, drained	£0.95
salt and pepper	£0.03
four jacket potatoes	<u>£0.96</u>
	£4.90

#### SERVES 4

**PREP TIME: 40 mins**

**COOKING TIME: 30 mins**

#### INSTRUCTIONS

**Tip:** I find it best to cook jacket/ baked potatoes in the microwave for 10 minutes and then finish them off in a hot oven to get them crisp on the outside.

Heat the oil in a pan and saute the onion, garlic and chillis for 2 minutes. Add the aubergines and mixed herbs and continue to cook for a further 4-5 minutes until beginning to soften.

Add the tomatoes and beans and season to taste, then cover and cook for 20-25 minutes or so, stirring occasionally.

Divide between hot buttered jacket potatoes and serve immediately.



# State Of The Nation

the opinion of David Fleming

The state of the nation is entirely botched! There is no reason at all for me to point out the obvious to you, the intelligent people of the University. So I am not going to even deal with it. Instead this week I will treat you to a sample of the type of debate that is often discussed in a heated and loud manner in-and-around University corridors and pubs. It revolves around one simple word: republic. It means different things to different people and this then is the essence of the argument. Definition is something that everybody seems to disagree about, because before one can agree, one must find a common meaning so as to base a compromise or decision. This then is the essence of negotiation and settlement. The word republic literally means the public thing coming from the latin *republica*. Its modern day usage means simply a form of government in which the people or their elected representatives possess supreme power. Whether Ireland is a republic or not is open to some contention. Some say that Ireland has been a republic since 1916 (Bertie Ahern), others say that the republic began with the enacting of the Republic of Ireland act in 1948 (Fine Gael), while still others say that we haven't a republic at all until there is a United Ireland (Sinn Fein). For legal purposes the name of the state is Ireland or

Eire, according to the constitution and for soccer purposes we are the Republic Ireland to difference between Northern Ireland. So we don't know what we are really. It is said that De Valera did not include the term Republic of Ireland in his 1937 constitution as the island was partitioned, giving credence to his policy of ignoring the problem of the North for decades.

Today the word is synonymous with the provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and if one is a republican one is normally classed in this grouping. However Fianna Fail preserve the words 'The Republican Party' as their sub-name. But the word republican may also be applied to the Labour party and Fine Gael as they all support and give allegiance to the republican form of government that we have in this country (according to the definition above). So again people have different definitions of the same word.

Plato in his Republic had a distinct form of government in mind as did the Greeks and Romans of the ancient world. So too did the French in 1789 when the word came into vogue, with France being the first large European country to become a republic. But the Irish always seem to twist things. Republicanism in Ireland is another word for nationalism and is not therefore republican

at all (according to the definition of a republic above). The IRA and Sinn Fein as well as Fianna Fail and most of the other parties are nationalist parties who seek a particular national goal – the reunification of the island (which is not a republican goal). The goals of the political parties should not therefore be confused with republicanism. Irish republicanism seems to mean a supporter of the armed IRA. If one sings republican songs, one is deemed to be supporting a particular Irish republican mind-set. Some people think that displaying the Irish tri-colour is a trademark for Irish republicanism. The abuse of the word republicanism is therefore common practice among writers, historians and politicians, who cannot but help to fall into the trap that has been set for them. The real definition of the word has been deflated and now it has an empty meaning for most people. This of course leads to a general apathy to use any derivative of the word, such as citizen. We never use it in Ireland as we do not think ourselves part of a republic or a state based on the people. We consider our political structures corrupt and useless, but yet we do nothing about it. Even the so-called republicans watch as the state falls by the way-side and as global and regional politicians take control from the people and place it in the hands of elites.

Again, as I said last week, Irish politics needs a revolution, and I think that something cataclysmic is required both to topple our way of governing and our perceptions of ourselves. And I don't think that it's going to be foot-and-mouth disease.

## Dry Martini & Mary I

By Nicholas O' Brien

Barely have time to tell you about my crazy mad week... so I have to write this while I'm on the toilet, doing a Kid-A...

It's Mary I Rag week! I am temporarily an Arts student, and can those guys throw some parties! An entire week of drink, no lectures and nights you barely remember ... although that is pretty normal for an Arts student I suppose...

So of course I went to a nice little quiet pub and supped a dry martini and a Slimline tonic like a good Arts student should, but I think someone spiked my drink with something, probably more drink, because by the end of the night, I was trying to stop the carpet on the ceiling from licking me, while singing a duet with Anthony Hopkins in a Little-Bo-Peep outfit. (Him, not me.)

So we ended up stumbling about the exotic vista of Limerick City at about 4 a.m., which is, of course, the safest place in the world to be when you're drunk, and not anywhere approaching dangerous because Limerick is the greatest place on Earth and please nobody complain about me in the next edition of An Focal, because I didn't insult anyone this time and I also think all Arts students are great.

Anyway... Picture the scene, on a Windswept post-modernist O' Connell St. at 3:15 a.m., and me accusing a lamp-post/ urinal of slugging me mother, and then attempting to punch it, which is always a rather humorous image to

## Diary of A First Year

Nicholas O'Brien shows us that men write diaries as well as the girls can!!!!!!

remember the day after the inebriated escapade in question. Not quite so funny, however, when you wake up the next morning with the Lamp-post lying in bed next to you, but still...

The rest of the week was spent having endless hours of delighted fun shouting Homer Simpsonism's at the lecturers in UL... Which didn't generally get a good response, particularly " Dear Baby. Welcome to Dumpsville. Population, you, " which was met with the lecturer squinting into the back row, and then shouting " Joan? Is that you Joan? Don't leave me..... I wont skidmark ever again... Please...?" Now that's creepy.

Foot and mouth is running rampant around Britain, infecting Farm animals like it was 1999 or something. We did try to catch up with the virus to interview it on its plans for the future, but we only got an out-of- office auto reply, telling us to ring its spokesperson.

The other aspect of student life worth mentioning is the Snow, and the freezing weather, and of course the fact that for two days the testicles of every man in UL spontaneously disappeared.... which somehow didn't effect the amount of Yellow snow appearing on campus like a stale yellow gallery of modern art.

That's about your lot for this week, it seems my writing ability is about as short lived as 10 packs of ciggies are destined to be.

## University of Limerick Purchases a Campus-wide Agreement for Microsoft Software

The Information Technology Division has purchased on behalf of the UL campus community the Microsoft Campus Agreement. This agreement will enable University staff to use selected Microsoft products on their home PC.

The products covered for staff home use by the Campus Agreement are all versions of the following products.

**Microsoft Office (including Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint etc.)**

**Microsoft Office Macintosh Edition**

**Microsoft Project**

**Microsoft Windows Upgrades (98, NT )**

**Microsoft FrontPage**

**Microsoft Visual Studio Professional Edition (Visual Basic, C,J)**

Some of the Microsoft products not covered by this agreement are:

**Microsoft Publisher**

**Microsoft Bookshelf**

**All Microsoft Server products**

**Microsoft Products for the student community.**

The IT Division are unable to sell Microsoft Products directly to the Student community because of the type of licensing agreement. Microsoft has entered into with the 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions.

Microsoft Products are not available to students through the ITD print room or through the Library short-term loan. If students wish to purchase Microsoft Office 2000 Premium they can do so through software resellers like BCS or MCS in Limerick or PFH in Cork.

The Microsoft student offer is as follows:

Microsoft 2000 Premium includes the following software:

Word 2000, Excel 2000, Outlook 2000, PowerPoint 2000, Access 2000 etc

The process of getting the software from Microsoft is a bit long winded but here goes.

In order to purchase Microsoft Office 2000 Premium, the student purchases the software from a reseller. The software is ordered from a distributor, who sends a box with a form to the student, who completes the form and returns it to Microsoft, the full Product should arrive within two weeks.

Student licensing is not available on Microsoft Office Professional or Standard.

Student version costs about £145 plus vat @21% £175.

## What a load of B\*\*\*\*cks? - The Opinion of Mark Quinlan

If anyone can answer this question as to why our 'beloved' University continues to excel in forking out large sums of money on ridiculous eyesores? , don't hesitate to let us know. The campus facilities at present are not exactly on a par with the Hilton or Sheraton branch of hotels. So why isn't a larger proportion of the vast funds, which one can imagine as being hidden in a secret vault on location, used to make student's and staff's lives that little bit less stressful? The answer is because recently £50,000 of perfectly good money was lavished upon a statue resembling a rather tall and slim oompa-loompa surrounded by the latest in state of the art high-tech security, namely four timber crates. These timber crates

alone probably cost an arm and a leg but there's no fear of the statue being decapitated before or during Rag Week. Visitors to the campus such as V.I.P's (a rare occurrence in itself) and potential future undergraduates would immediately on catching a glimpse of this monstrosity conclude that UL is a joke. No one in their right mind would want to enhance their future career prospects with the knowledge of having to set eyes on the most irritating thing to enter UL since the sequential (allegedly) hanging of those inciteful pictures on the wall located in the D-block between the entrances to the Jean Monnet Theatre.

These pictures, of which it is not entirely clear what they are supposed to depict, are probably categorised as modern

art like a picture with nothing but a black dot on it apparently symbolising human insignificance and the struggle of humanity. You'd find more art in Homer Simpson's attempt to assemble a barbecue. Why anyone would derive pleasure or peace of mind from gazing at that vain caucasian gimp gazing approvingly into a bathroom mirror in four various but equally hideous poses is beyond me. Perhaps the most ridiculous structure erected in UL recently is those extremely tall and unbelievably expensive flagpoles placed side by side at the main entrance to the campus. Firstly, it would have been logical to locate each flagpole on either side of the road. And for such a huge investment in materials (it cost some £200,000 alone for the

wood) you'd think that the job would have been done properly. At the end of the day if the University is prepared to spend large sums of funds on erecting statues and other structures to enhance the architecture it should construct monuments which have a universal appeal and that the majority of the student body can appreciate. Otherwise the money would be wiser invested in better library facilities, wider access to the internet for students, and maybe even paying student services and the co-op office more to keep them open longer so that students are better catered for.

# Marian's Voyeur Column

- A fortnightly look at what's hot or not in the world



Why does anyone really care about Ken Barlow's numerous children and/or grandchildren? Or about Kay and Malachy's marital problems, or whether the Stewarts have to live in the caravan park for the rest of their lives? (You'll have to excuse me if my examples are out of date, but thankfully I have more interesting things to do than keep up to date in the happenings in Soapland.) More to the point, why in the name of decent TV does any one care if Glenroe is axed by RTE, if you ask me, we should be dancing in the streets and celebrating the freedom to watch something less nauseating on a Sunday night. I can only sympathise with anyone who has been living in two-channel land for the lifespan of the worst soap ever made. Or worse still anyone living in one TV land!!

When Miley was caught in a compromising "position" with Fidelma in the hay barn or wherever it was, it had thousands of "old Granny types" reaching for their writing paper to complain to Arthur Murphy at Mailbag, only to realise too late that that program had been axed about 10 years ago. And who could forget a country in mourning when the perpetually narky Biddy was "brutally" killed off in a car crash. And we thought the British were bad when Princess Di died, at least she was a real person. And it wasn't as if we'd never see biddy again, she is "the Surf Lady" after all. Although I think the crash had more of an effect than originally anticipated, coz she spends ages trying to pay for it and remove it from the lecherous hands of that creepy check out guy and then leaves it at the check out after her. I mean no washing powder is so good that it works while still in the shop, somehow I don't think Lever brothers will give her, her money back if she keeps leaving it in the shop!

To give Glenroe it's due, it did provide a discussion topic on Monday morning in senior infants in primary school, back in the days when I lived not only in two-channel land but also in one TV land. Don't worry I spent my communion money on a second

hand TV for my room so I wasn't subjected to too much insight into the goings on in a rural community in Wicklow. Hey, it was bad enough being subjected to an insight into the happenings in a real life rural community!!!

OK so we have established that Glenroe is definitely not hot, but if Glenroe is cold then Sunset Beach is frozen. I have to admit that I'm judging it on last year's standards. I never really watched daytime TV till I went to college and moved in with experts in the field, come to think of it they were experts on TV at any time day or night. Needless to say, lectures were missed, and essays were forgotten about during Sunset Beach, Home and Away and Neighbours, and if things were very bad Jenny Jones, Sally Jessy, Ricky Lake, Jerry Springer and Oprah!! I happened to be visiting one of said housemates last week (who shall remain nameless for the time being!!) and I was forced to sit through an episode of the thing and it was still the same story line, I swear, I was shocked. What's the point of having outrageous "plots" if you don't at least change them every so often! But seriously I don't think I've ever seen a more cheesy TV program, all that staring into space and being able to hear their thoughts, and when that cloudy effect appears around the edge of the screen, do not adjust your television set apparently it signifies a "flashback" scene!!????? With their perfect teeth and perfect make-up (even after being washed up on a beach almost dead), the "actors" are so annoying, at least in Glenroe you can't accuse the casting director of choosing the actors based on looks, quite the opposite I suspect.

Speaking of cheesy TV programs, Dawsons Creek epitomises cheese, but in a different way to Sunset Beach, all that teenage angst, all that verbose analysing of every word and every glance. Of course, I've fallen for it; I watch it religiously, and sigh in envy every time Pacey looks at Joey with those puppy dog eyes. Dawsons Creek defies a hot or not rating because it's both,



hot coz of its addictive storylines the Joey, Pacey, Dawson triangle still hasn't reached a satisfactory conclusion so I'll have to see that through to the end. Sad, but true!!! And not Hot because of it's absolute trash really.

One program at the moment that is most definitely hot is Sex and the City, those women know how to enjoy life, to quote one of them (I can't remember which one) "I don't believe in the Republican Party, I don't believe in the Democratic Party, I just believe in parties". I know it's not a new one but it sounded so much better coming from one of them. Their lives aren't perfect, but if Carrie has a problem to deal with, she wont stare into space trying to think up the solution to the problem, she wont go and talk to the Parish priest about it and she wont hide in her friends' wardrobe hoping the problem will go away. No, she'll light a cigarette, pour herself a drink and talk to her friends about it. Sound familiar?????

So, I'll conclude my rant about the state of daytime (or anytime TV for that matter) by appealing to all Sunset Beach followers (you 5 know who you are, I won't name and shame you ...yet) to STOP before it's too late, please watch some thing decent, I'll tape old episodes of the Simpsons for you to watch whenever you get the urge to watch Sunset!!!!

This article is written in honour of Rosie and Valerie who because of Erasmus and Co-op got away from Sunset, maybe they'll come back changed women!! Although somehow I'd say this will be a case of absence making the heart grow fonder!!

# Hitch-Hikers Guide to the World-Wide-Web



This article was "penned" well before the announcement that many of the sporting events both here and abroad were to be cancelled due to the "hoofling" in Dail Eireann and in the Agriculture department, amongst other places, but since it gives me the opportunity to make a political comment, I figured I might as well go ahead with it, even if events on these websites may prove sparse!

Of course I HAVE to start with the most talked-about sport coming up to St Paddy weekend and the next month, that is Aintree, Cheltenham and the Grand National! Now the punters know to go to [www.racingpost.co.uk](http://www.racingpost.co.uk) but for the novices among you who fancy a little flutter to raise drinking money for Kollege Week-FAST-then let me acquaint you with this comprehensive guide. This site not only covers both Irish and English meetings –the events calendar is invaluable for the serious punter-the site also gives all the up-to-date results as they happen. The side menu on the right gives details on ground conditions for the day, again the latest up-to-date news so you can place bets based on the "going" and the weather conditions. The statistics section on horse performance is one of the most thorough I've ever seen, not only giving bios on both Irish and English horses, but details on wins, odds on the day, winners etc. Details on trainers and jockeys are also accessible to the discerning betting-man It's the ultimate checklist for a potential punter, but as we all know, that's only the start of it! It even caters for professional breeders in its bloodstock section, so if you want to raise that purebred Arabian stallion or just a nag from Connemara, THIS is the place to start! The site also has its own range of tipsters, but they should be treated with caution just like any other advice. After all, why tell the world about a sure thing, it lowers the odds for yourself!

And by the way, I DO know the name of that offshore betting site, but I can't divulge it here for legal reasons!

The Racing club may also be interested to know that the racing post's website also covers greyhound racing to the same exceptional standard, but if you want a second opinion, check out [www.thedogs.co.uk](http://www.thedogs.co.uk) Brilliant for UK meetings, it gives all the stats you'll ever need, but doesn't cover Ireland so well. Nevertheless, it does give advice to newcomers on how best to start off in the sport, how to choose a greyhound, tips on raising it etc, and to that effect, provides a list of trainers selling greyhounds. Of course, if watching is more your thing, some great highlights can be found in the downloadable video section.

Moving onto football next though, [www.football365.com](http://www.football365.com) has some good tips on both rumours of transfers and reactions from fans to confirmed transfers, something that other sites, notably its closest rival in terms of soccer coverage, [teamtalk.com](http://teamtalk.com),

regrettably and crucially lacked. Be prepared to be inundated with more temptations to bet online, this time from [sportingbet.co.uk](http://sportingbet.co.uk), but considering how little there is in the statistics section of the site, they're not doing themselves any favours! In navigating the site, it's clear to me that they do HAVE the information, it's just that it's spread out all over the site in different parts, eg some stats can only be found by checking up each club's individual profile. They also let themselves down by only covering Celtic and Rangers in the Scottish team profiles, there are OTHER teams in the Scottish premiership, even if it seems like only a two-horse race every year!

On the plus side however, they redeem themselves somewhat in the league tables, covering all the group tables and knockout games in the Champions league and the UEFA cup-which saves you having to go to [uefa.com](http://uefa.com) to check out these international fixtures separately on ANOTHER website! They also show the early rounds and top goalscorers, which you'd expect from a site aiming at establishing itself as a popular site for all footie fans. Their coverage of Europe is also fairly comprehensive, giving all the results and tables for the French German, Italian and Spanish leagues.

That said, even after browsing through the features section, I couldn't actually find any decent articles on football, mostly news headlines that are to the point. The site is more of a database than a football website, it's got all the info, but lacks presentation Personally I feel that there is potential for their news-writers to do their own decent columns, and perhaps attract even more hits per week.

As for one of TG4's few audience-pulling programmes, basketball, the NBA's official website is particularly detailed in its information. As well as the usual team and player stats, [www.nba.com](http://www.nba.com) also has tables for both Eastern and Western Conferences. The NBA schedule of fixtures is extremely user-friendly, as it can be tailored to a team-by-team basis, a general schedule, or just key dates.

Teams are assessed in a variety of areas, and the stats cover 10 match ranges, long enough for a decent picture while factoring out seasonal highs and lows. Their analysis section is pretty comprehensive, and from what I saw, evenly balanced too. My favourite part though for those who may not follow any particular team as yet, is the multimedia section. There, you can watch the equivalent of "shot of the week" on video, courtesy of NBA Action. On top of that, you can also edit and put together your own selection of what you thought were the best moments of the week that was in your own film reel.

Considering we're in the heartland of Munster rugby territory, a quick perusal of [www.irfu.ie](http://www.irfu.ie) might be in order, or I'll face a ruck in the editor's office! A useful link on

the site allows you to book accommodation for international matches, which is something that other national sporting websites should take more advantage of. Personally I've never tried the online web commentary, I've always preferred the atmosphere of actually being there, but that said, I'd say it's up to scratch with most others, other than the unofficial voice of rugby, a Scotsman with the BBC. No matter who is playing the match always sounds good!

And of course, where would I be without giving a mention to the most skilful team game in the world? I speak, obviously, of our birthright, our heritage, the gracefully dangerous art form of a sport that is hurling, and more importantly GAA in general. An Cumann Luthchleas Gael has changed its championship for a new millennium, and it's nice to see them embracing new mediums of communication too. [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie) takes care to address all four of the GAA's constituent parts, the skilful game of hurling, the equally-exciting game of camogie, the heart-pounding test of endurance that is unmistakably football-proper football!-and the far too often overlooked game of handball, which is one of the oldest parts of the GAA.

Enough patriotism, and on to the site itself, but it's not [gaa.ie](http://gaa.ie) I'm recommending! An insider gave me the tip on a much better site [www.hoganstand.com](http://www.hoganstand.com) I could discuss the faults of [gaa.ie](http://gaa.ie), like the fact that their coverage of local club matches is practically non-existent, or that only about half of the county websites linked to are even up and running! Instead of saying what the official site doesn't have, suffice it to say that you'll find all you need in the Hogan stand, and more! As well as providing links to other county and club sites, each section on this site deals fairly comprehensively with all things GAA, from club to county level, which is refreshing to see on a website, considering that someone went to all that trouble. And believe me, if the result is anything to go by, it's well worth the effort! Stories on all the major results and matches at club and county level are written with a skill rivalled only by the voice of GAA itself, Micheal O Muircheartaigh, so that the real fans are always kept in the picture, at all levels of the game. Whether you're a dedicated club hurling fan from the inner regions of Kilkenny who never misses a match, or just the drifting glory-hunter who only gets interested in GAA AFTER your county has reached the All-Ireland final, you'll be guaranteed to find something to your liking here!

I'll sign off by reminding you of the Eircell Fantasy Formula 1 league starting up now, as well as some other new online games. If you're quick you can still get in without losing out on too many races! Hopefully, though we'll see some REAL action in the sporting line soon. PS I tried my best, but there's nothing on the West Cork Rally! Guess you'll just have to go and enjoy it live!

# Welcome to the World of Wired FM 96.8 + 106.8 FM



Tired of singing into your hairbrush in front of the bed/bathroom mirror? Then get down to the Wired FM Studio's and get On Air!! Get a show, get producing, if you don't know where the studio's are see directions below!., in the meantime, what is Wired up to ?

First lets tell you about

### The Lagging Jacket Sessions

(cause they are in association with Hot Press, silly!!!)

Wired FM in association with Hot Press is proud to present **The Lagging Jacket** every Wednesday night in MacGregors Bar on Ellen st. in Limerick.

Featuring the best of local student talent, we will bring you the live gig (starting around 9 ish). If you miss that, we will bring you the

highlights of the night, featuring interviews with the artists, the audience and demo's from the bands/ DJ's the following Wednesday night at 7:30-8:00pm on **Wired FM 96.8+106.8FM**. It's like two for the price of one (and its even better cause the gig is free in!)

We began our series of seriously interesting nights with two Limerick Based DJ's- Darragh Foley and Kevin Molyneaux. Playing their special brand of funky Disco and non commercial trance. DJ Foo and DJ Badger kept it real (with the 'troy massive). These dj's are well known for stopping the house in the Temple Bar Music Centre, Dublin and also for residencies in Ennis, Co.Clare.

Last Tuesday Wired FM proudly presented two Limerick Bands, Bandog and Woodstar. Playing their own blend of alt.country and melencholia to a crowd of nearly 100 people these guys gave live music a hope for the future !!! Bandog have garnered a well deserved reputation through supporting Bands like the Handsome Family and Chris Mills. Of the same ilk, Woodstar are currently in the running for a Bacardi Hot Press Unplugged Band of the year award.... So the gig will run every week (alternating between DJ's and Live Bands)

until the summer holidays. Wired FM -keeping everyone concerned about the live music scene in Limerick extremely happy!!!!

p.s. if you are a dj or you think your band is good enough to play why don't you get in touch with Stephan or Nessa on 061 315773? Or call up in person to Paula in the ULSU Studio's- bring a demo or a sample of what you can do!!!!

Don't know where the studio's are? Head up the stairs, hit the back wall (pick yourself off the floor!!! Ooouccchhh) turn left in the door in the next door, there ya go!!! (Paula will give you a band aid if the head really hurts!!!) Other things that Wired FM is up to....

We at Wired are gearing up for our shot at the National Airwaves!! Someone in 2FM had a serious lapse of goodtaste and invited the Wired FM DJ's to contribute an hours worth of broadcasting every Saturday (from 6pm-7pm).... Do they know what they have done???? So everyone is practising their "Rowndabout" accents..... Are you ready ????? Should be starting sometime around St.Patricks Day.....

Get up to studio, volunteer to get your face painted, wear silly costumes, carry banners, hand out flyers, have a laugh!!!!

## Wired FM 96.8 + 106.8 FM Limerick Student Radio schedule

### Monday

8.30-10.00am **The Breakfast Show**-News, Music, College Information  
 12.00- 12.30pm **Seachtáin**- weekly guide to whazon in Limerick\*  
 12.30-1.00pm **Extemporaneous**- Student Issues and Current Affairs  
 1.00- 1.30pm **Pulse**- All the best in chart music  
 1.30-2.00pm **Dis Harmony**- Local and alternative Bands live in studio  
 4.30- 5.00pm **Activate**- College, Local, National and International Sport  
 5.00-5.15pm **Cúlcaint**- \*News and Chat  
 5.15- 6.00pm **Timewarp**- Taking you back to yesterdaze music  
 6.00- 6.45pm **EXIT**- L.C.A.D Students present a user friendly world of Art!  
 6.45- 7.30pm **The Big Sack**- Music, Interviews and more.....  
 7.30- 8.00pm **Common People**- Chart show  
 8.30- 9.00pm **Anything Goes**- Music Show  
 8.45- 9.15pm **Creem**- Music Show with guest DJ's  
 9.15-10.00pm **Composition of Sound**- Heavy Metal Show

### Tuesday

8.30- 10.00am **The Breakfast Show**  
 12.00- 1.00pm **Class 1 Laser Product**- Lunchtime music and chat  
 1.00- 2.00pm **The Junk Show**- Gems of Jazz and Funk...  
 4.30- 5.15pm **Inkblots**- The Literary Show  
 5.15- 6.00pm **The Arts Show**- All the weekly Arts events for Limerick-in assoc. with **LimerickCorporation**  
 6.00- 7.00pm **Sceitiminí**- Magazine show\*  
 7.00- 7.30pm **In Focus**- The Movie Show  
 7.30- 8.00pm **Dead Air**- Comedy Show  
 8.00- 9.00pm **The Pat & Mike Show**- Musically themed show in assoc with **Bus Eireann**

9.00- 10.00pm

**Evil Monkeys in Space**- Local Music and Gig guide

### Wednesday

8.30-10.00am  
 12.00-12.30pm  
 12.30- 1.00pm  
 1.00- 2.00pm  
 4.30- 5.00pm  
 5.00-6.00pm  
 6.00- 7.00pm  
 7.00-7.30pm  
 7.30- 8.00pm  
 8.00- 9.00pm  
 9.00-10.00pm

**The Breakfast Show**  
**Staying Alive**- Health show- in assoc. with the **Mid-WesternHealth Board**  
**Left of Field**- Music Show  
**Alternative World**- Themed Rock music show  
**Saor Am**- Lighthearted look at College life\*  
**The Enchanting Wizard of Rhythm**- all you need to know...  
**Fargo**-quality music and chat show  
**Ten Forward**- Science Fiction Show  
**The Lagging Jacket**- live sessions and inter views- in assoc. with **Hot Press**  
**Crazy Sexy Cool**- Chart Music and Golden Oldies  
**Beats & Rhymes**- Late night Dance Music

### Thursday

8.30-10.00am  
 12.00-1.00pm  
 1.00- 2.00pm  
 4.30- 5.15pm  
 5.15- 5.45pm  
 5.45- 6.30pm  
 6.30- 7.00pm  
 7.00- 8.00pm  
 8.00- 9.00pm  
 9.00- 10.00pm  
 Show is produced and presented through Irish/ only Irish recording artists played.

**The Breakfast Show**  
**Soundbyte**- Hollywood gossip and Music  
**The Last Splash**- Comedy chatshow- in assoc with **Oxygen media**  
**Documentary Slot**- Community Radio Bank  
**Vortex**- Dance Music Request Show  
**Four to the Floor**- Club Hits  
**Side View**- Current Affairs  
**Pop is Dead**- Indie Alternative Music Show  
**Boyz and Girls**- Funky Club Hits-  
**Talking Headz**- Late night Music Show

## Stars in Her Eyes

By Mairead Moriarty

Let me tell you a tale. It goes a little something like this. There was once a young girl who came from a fairly developed town – somewhere in Kerry. She was very excited about coming to college for the first time. Being away from home. Being independent. Having her own life. Making new friends. Meeting different people. Experiencing the world, etc. And so off to college she went, UL – in case you hadn't figured out, where she spent her first year of further education partying, drinking and doing all the things that freshers are renowned for! Basically, she had the time of her life, or as she would put it – the *best* year of her life!

She met people who would have special meaning in her life and people who affected her whole existence. She met people from all walks of life who would make her look at things in a completely different light. Isn't that what college is all about after all?! She lived during the week and at weekends she went home to mammy and daddy back in the bog and told them how much of a learning experience the whole college thing was! She was learning so much from her educators as well as her new-found college buddies. To her parents, she seemed to be enjoying college a bit too much. But she had in fact grown up considerably. She was no longer the loud, cheeky Irish-dancing freak of a ten-year-old girl who craved attention from everyone and anyone! She had found something special in UL – respect – for herself and others! It sounds silly – but it's true!

UL was a place where respect was a given. She saw that UL students had respect for each other because they acknowledged the fact that it takes time and effort to get there! Anyway – this girl passed first year and ventured onto the dark gloomy road to second year. Again she chose the fun-filled avenue of constant celebrating. Celebrating what exactly was never a very important issue!! She was far too busy for the serious side of college. Then came the second semester! Co-operative education work placement! Oh my sweet mother divine! How things changed! She now actually *had* to get out of bed in the mornings! And really early at that! A regular nine-to-five job would really put her in her place! There would be no s\*\*t from now on! And she was paid every Thursday morning. The joy!

And so the story continued as so. The only source of relief was the fact that she could re-appear in UL at any stage to re-capture the simple things of college she enjoyed so much while in college! The sheer smell of the coffee in the Scholars in the morning! And the fabulous smell of the drink there at night! *Oh how she loved the warm heart of the day!* It was the simple everyday college things she missed! Just going for a pint after lectures! No longer possible because she was now – wait for it – living back at home – the *wonderful* Co-op office had placed her back in her home town in the Local Authority County Council! The joy! But she was being paid for her endurances after all! And sure – how bad?!

There is more to this saga – watch this space!

## How was it for you? Co-op That is!

by Sinead Kelleher

If you've just come back from co-op which I'm sure many of you have whether it was here in Ireland or abroad. The question we want to ask is were you happy on co-op?. The Student Focus Group are trying to find out and address the problems students have with their co-op and they need your help. It is up to us U.L students to have our say to try and change the system and to make sure no-one has to have a bad experience as there are many horror stories going

around. And just in case you don't think this is serious or that nothing will really be done a meeting has already been held on Tuesday of week 3 though attendance was poor these are some of the issues, which have been brought up.

Organising an evaluation form for the student similar to the idea of employers evaluation form. Getting students who have already been on co-op to talk to students from their course who have not yet been. The need for better communication between the faculties and the co-op office.

The co-op handbook to be more informative and updated. Accommodation lists to be made available compiled by old co-op students.

Co-op's gotten independent of the co-op office – could these be used again. And more on wages, relevancy of co-op's and grants obviously there is many more topics that need to be dealt with so if you have any ideas to add to this come along to the meeting on **Tuesday of week 5**.

# An Independent Student Focus Group on Co-op Education

**Tuesday Week 5**  
**Meeting Room 4, Students' Union**  
**6:30 - 7:30pm**

**If you've any ideas on how to improve the Co-op Experience**  
**Just want to share your problems & Experiences**  
**Everyone Welcome**



# Have You Nothing Better To Do?

**You know those headwrecking e-mails that you get from people with nothing better to do. Now and again though, a good one turns up. We're going to see if we can find one a fortnight. Tough task.**

**If you got a really good one send them to [anfocal@csn.ul.ie](mailto:anfocal@csn.ul.ie)**

## By Neil Boland

Many of you have moved into a new house for the next semester. Your new accommodation will, of course, need drastic redecoration before it is fit for habitation. Below is an easy-to-follow guide, full of handy hints, to help you on your way.

**Windows** - It is obvious that your new house will need windows. Yet why waste money on expensive, easily-broken double-glazed panes of glass? Glass may keep in the heat, but is neither as cheap nor as easily replaced as cling film. Yes, cling film. You need no longer cringe after sticking your hand through the window, as you signalled frantically to your friends outside that you couldn't possibly drink all the Aftershock yourself! Simply fetch the roll of cling film from the kitchen and tear off an appropriately-sized strip. Additionally, instead of covering your hand in bloody cuts, cling film will wrap it up and keep it . . . nice and fresh . . . ahem.

**Organising your beer can collection:** this is perhaps the most important point - you must aim for visual coherence, creating a beautiful montage of colours, punctuated by the occasional, tastefully-placed vodka bottle. Once you have created this divine work of artistic brilliance, beautiful girls will flock to your kitchen. Possibly.

**Fridge** - student fridges are the same the world over. More than likely, yours will contain: a 3-day-old slice of pizza, 2 cans of an unidentified foreign beer, a single slice of bread and your childhood cat to which you still have an emotional attachment. A small lump of rancid butter is not unusual, if a little unpleasant.

**Study Area** - you may find it useful to designate an area specially for studying. Common choices are: the gap beneath the front door and the floor, the outside window-sill and the Lodge.

**Security** - naturally, you must take steps to protect your new household against intruders. You can rid yourself of thieves simply by living like a proper student and not possessing anything of actual value in the house.

**Paint** - it makes absolutely no difference what colour you paint your walls, as after three hours, they will be covered with one or all of

the following: beer stains, footprints, pizza slices, vomit. It is simpler to let the stains build up and cover them with a poster when they get really bad.

**TV** - there is little room for maneuvering here - student custom dictates that your TV must be small, old, have no aerial, no reception except for Network 2 and must constantly retune itself if turned on, off or over.

**Seating** - your couch will rarely be used for actually sitting on. It is more important that it is able to sleep at least seventeen people in moderate comfort.

**Feng Shui** - the ancient art of arranging furniture to create 'positive' energy in a room. For students, however, a better strategy is to make sure there is nothing pointy in your hallway to bang your shins on after a night in the Stables.

**Traffic cones:** a well-placed traffic cone can form the centrepiece of a fashionable bedroom. Useful for hanging clothes on and discouraging parking in your already-cramped bedroom, it also makes an 'amusing' hat when you're completely languered.

**Book-case:** only kidding.

**Cleanliness:** the easiest way to keep your house neat and tidy is to make sure that there are no girls living there. If nobody says anything about the dirt, then it doesn't exist.

**Space:** create more space by getting rid of the washing machine. Simply sprinkle washing powder on your clothes before showering. If you need yet more personal space, remove the cooker. There exists little student food which cannot be cooked by putting in the toaster a few times (waffles) or leaving on the radiator to cook slowly (rashers).

**Music:** if you are a connoisseur of fine music, there is no need to invest in an expensive sound system for your bedroom. All you need is a mobile phone and a bottle of Jack Daniels. Simply programme your favourite pieces of music onto the phone as ring tones, drink the Jack Daniels and get somebody to ring you. You'll never notice the difference.

**Sanitation:** to save money, excess books may be employed as toilet paper. Large, thick books such as War and Peace, will, I'm sure, be right up your alley.

## Notice for users of the Computer Science Building:

1. Only students who can successfully open both glass doors on their first attempt on the way into the CS building will be awarded degrees.
2. A new four-year degree programme will be offered next year: Turning on the Projector in CSG01.
3. If there is a lab in progress, it is now traditional for every passing student to enter, stand there for ten seconds with a look of mild confusion upon their face, attempt to sit down at a PC and then be asked to leave as there is a lab on. Let us all continue to uphold this fine practice here at UL.
4. When waiting for a computer for your labs, don't just stand there looking lost and embarrassed. Please dance in an amusing fashion for the benefit of your fellow students.
5. If your mobile phone rings while you are working in a lab, you have a number of options:
  - (a) continue listening to music on your headphones and not answer your phone, to the annoyance of everyone else.
  - (b) grab your phone, hold it aloft like a prized trophy and rush outside to answer it.
  - (c) speak in a very low whisper which, curiously, everybody else in the room can hear quite distinctly.
  - (d) grab your phone and smash it to pieces off the table in front of you. This also stops it ringing.
6. You may never use any code written when you were not entirely sober - after repeated experimentation, I can assure you that this approach rarely works.
7. If you see somebody sitting in front of a computer wearing a mad, evil and slightly deranged grin on their face, do not be worried. They are either working on their end-of-term project, or sitting on a pencil.
8. There will be NO laughing, spitting, running, talking, chewing, coughing, eating, drinking, or fornicating in the corridors.
9. If you want to get fit, run up the stairs to CS304. If you want to get attention, fall down the stairs from CS304.
10. If a fellow student is playing a CD of poor musical taste on one of the computers, you are entitled to strike him/her on the back of the head with the nearest keyboard four times for dance music, three times for heavy metal and seventy-eight times for rap.

# Two Sides to Every Story

## Europe - One Nation, One Goal

**By Karen O' Sullivan**

The reasoning behind creating a "single European culture" is quite simple; differences in culture and identity result in reduced support for further European integration and reliable decision making. If each country is looking out for itself as opposed to wanting what is best for the Union, and it will reduce the Unions power on an international front. That all seems well and good in theory, but what about in practise? Are countries loosing their national identity in an effort to become more "European"? The answer, my friends, is no. The Maastricht Treaty advocates the maintenance and promotion of a country's cultural identity, but calls for an increased understanding in other member states. That is what being European is. It is not about abandonment, but learning and understanding. The ERASMUS scheme, which is very active in our own university, has been partly aimed at developing a shared sense of identity among students from different member states. This "shared sense of identity" can only be advantageous for companies seeking to invest in Ireland. A well educated, multilingual and culturally aware workforce will not only improve a multi-national's productivity, but also save it millions of pounds in training and head hunting.

It is a well-accepted fact that American companies are Ireland's biggest investors. They bring millions of pounds into the country and for the first time in decades, we are experiencing a budget surplus. The boom we are experiencing is largely due, at the moment, to over seas investment. But what about all those years that the E.U./E.C. continually gave us grants to do with anything we could think of asking for. We improved our infrastructure using European money, Irish farmers made money fulfilling E.U. quotas and we made the first tentative steps at properly paying back the National Debt. Suddenly, everything in the garden was rosier and Ireland was no longer playing beggar my neighbour, but supporting itself. It was then, that our western neighbours came to borrow a cup of sugar. The multi-nationals arrived

and started increasing employment. The competition laws in Ireland were practically non-existent; as was corporation tax and because we were a member of the E.U., there were no trade restrictions to the other member states. Foreign investors were quick to take advantage of this situation and the government, who was too wrapped up in the fallacy of higher wages and decreasing unemployment, actually felt that this was the best thing that could have happened!

We became victims of transfer pricing. This is the increasing of the selling price of a product in one country to cover the costs of a cheaper selling price in another country. We also fell victim to profit repatriation. Put simply, the government's department of finance has no idea how much of the profit that a multinational makes is actually retained in Ireland, and how much is sent back to the mother country of the multinational. Our Balance of Trade could win the Booker Prize for best new work of fiction. The introduction of a minimum wage has not only caused some companies to pull out in favour of countries with cheaper labour, but also caused inflation to increase.

By now, we are all familiar with the footage of Mr. McCreevy clutching the c.d. that contained this years budget and pronouncing with a flourish that this year he planned to pump millions into the Irish economy. What he didn't tell us was that he had been expressly told by the E.U. not to do this. Poor Charlie was forced to appear before the E.U. and was given quite a rap across the knuckles for his misdemeanour. The reasoning behind this reprimand was not because the E.U. member states are jealous of our progress. They are, in actual fact, worried about us. Our inflation is almost twice the E.U. average and the burden of this higher inflation falls on Ireland's workforce. Multi-nationals are starting to pull out of Ireland and the unemployment rate is starting to increase. The state and semi-state employees that signed the Program for Prosperity and Fairness are continually striking over what they see as unfair wages. Our economy is showing every sign that it will crash and burn, and instead of employing a

deflationary fiscal policy to reduce the pressure, Mr. McCreevy decided to gamble that the high inflation was a once-off occurrence due to the introduction of the minimum wage, increased oil prices and the fact that the U.S. economy is slowing down.

It all comes back to identity. We are no longer the subservient "gateway to Europe" supplying multi-nationals with what they need to make a profit, and why should we be? When we became members of the E.U. and agreed to join the Euro, we were committing to something bigger than Ireland. We are a member state of the E.U. and as such, should represent its interests above our own. I realise that as a rule, Irish politicians find it hard to see beyond themselves, but fortunately now they are being forced to look at the bigger picture. When we committed to the E.U. and it's policies, it was for a greater purpose i.e. to increase the standard of living in ALL member states not just our own. Fundamentally, this is done by increasing employment and decreasing or maintaining low inflation. By complying with the E.U., it's member states give it increased credibility and bargaining power in the World Market. Economic change is a gradual process that literally takes years and the results of a policy are not immediately noticeable. The one thing that is necessary for economic change, however, is continuity. Strange as it may seem, the Irish government are being asked to commit to the same policy for longer than one term in office, but it is a policy that was written with the best interests of all E.U. member states in mind.

When we say that we are proud to be Irish, included in that is the statement that we are proud to be European and not some American or British subculture. There are no subcultures in the E.U. but a conglomeration of countries with individual beliefs and customs that have reached an understanding and wish to achieve a common good. That, to me, is something to be proud of.

## Europe - We don't need you (USA, A OK)

By Gerard Gill

Picture this, Ireland is the 51st state of the United States of America. Ireland attempts to introduce a new reduced state tax rate and increase public spending. The mandarins in Washington DC are aghast. The Federal reserve and the President condemn Ireland for its expansionary fiscal policy. Later, the President announces that the power to set state taxes has been taken away from the state legislature in Ireland and given to an unelected body answerable to the Federal Reserve.

Ok, the above scenario would never happen, right? Yes, for two reasons the inherent anti-Americanism of the Irish establishment and the independence the US federal government affords its states. However the type of interference into sovereign Irish policy described above, occurs on a regular basis from the EU. The centre of governance of Ireland may never be in Washington, but currently its in Brussels.

The censure of Ireland's budget, the most recent example of unelected, unaccountable European bureaucrats interfering in Ireland's affairs. Ireland is booming. Our debt/GDP ratio and unemployment rates are among the lowest in Europe. Our budget surplus the largest. The UK and Germany are running budget deficits; Italy's public finances a joke and France's industrial relations policy non-existent, yet the commission dares not criticise them. They are the power brokers and we are pawns. Recently while negotiating the Nice treaty, the socialist French government wanted to harmonise taxation in Europe. This would mean, that a standardised corporation tax rate would apply in the EU. There goes Ricardo's comparative advantage. Ireland could not set its own corporation tax rate, which has attracted so much foreign inward investment and is the main reason for Ireland's economic success. We probably couldn't have avoided giving up our monetary policy (right to set interest and exchange rates) by staying out of the Euro, but perhaps we could have adopted a 'wait and see' approach. After all our two largest trading partners (the US and the UK) aren't in this club ruled by the 'worst central banker' in the world. The 'one size fits all' monetary policy hasn't proved suitable for Ireland. Dan McLaughlin of ABN AMRO has argued that because Ireland is a small open economy, the poor performance of the Euro and the restriction on cutting or increasing interest rates makes high inflation inevitable. Yet the EU criticised our fiscal policy, when it was the poor performance of socialist run economies that are responsible.

The EU wants us to sign various Human Rights treaties and directives, designed on the Scandinavian social contract model. These directives will commit

Ireland to introducing abortion on demand for example. Whatever ones personal view on abortion is, surely it should only be introduced after mature debate and if that is the will of the majority, not because some Swedish civil servant called Gunther thinks so.

I'm not advocating the protectionist-isolationist policy of old, far from it, globalisation is inevitable and a force of good. However the integration of the EU will only hinder globalisation. Many commentators believe that three big trading blocks will emerge - North America, Europe and China. Each will adopt tariffs to restrict imports of goods from outside the blocks. An integrated Europe will only accelerate the process and lead to trade wars (like the banana war and Boeing V Airbus). Europe is likely to be the loser, so we may as well pick the winner and become the 51<sup>st</sup> state of America.

Back to my earlier points about anti-Americanism and the protection of states' rights. If I were to suggest that Ireland become the 51st state of the USA, people would say I was delusional. However we are rapidly on the way to becoming the 15th state of the United States of Europe. So, why not the US instead of Europe? Leaving geographical differences aside; we are much closer to the US culturally and economically than Europe (with the notable exception of Britain). We almost speak the same language, 25-30% of Americans approx. claim Irish ancestry. How many O'Briens and Ryans will you find in the phone book in Berlin? We may criticise the American judicial system, but the District Attorney's offices in New York, Boston and Chicago (not to mention the Police, Fire Service and FBI) are dominated by Irish-Americans. Local politics in those cities, until recently were ruled by dodgy Irish-Americans. The Irish politico-administration system and Judiciary is a hybrid of British and American models. British - because that was what we knew best, American - because that was what we aspired to. Economically, Ireland is a small version of the American free market forces model and that is why Ireland is so successful. Ireland adopted a low tax regime coupled with free trade policies, if we had copied the European social-democracy model, Ireland would now be an abject failure. This was clearly evidenced in the 80's when Ireland had a prohibitive tax regime that exacerbated Ireland's economic woes. The Scandinavian countries had a higher rate of tax in excess of 70%. 60,000 plus are employed in American owned firms in Ireland and over 60,000 are employed in Irish firms in America. Of all the American direct investment into the EU, between 10-15% of the total goes to Ireland (when you consider the size of the Irish economy, this is a huge amount). Furthermore the US gets 20% of its IT requirements from

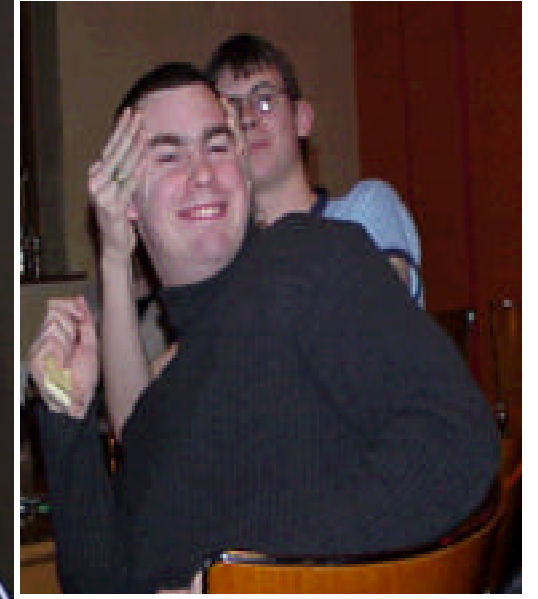
Ireland. Consider what would happen Limerick if DELL, forced into action by spiralling corporation tax demands (brought on by Europe) and higher unit labour costs (also caused by EU directives demanding higher wages) relocated. Over 4000 jobs gone straight away (many of the workers from deprived areas) plus the impact on the local firms that service DELL.

Why then when it appears that "Ireland is closer to Boston than Berlin" (Mary Harney), is Ireland so hostile to the US. The liberal press and Left wing parties revel in Yankee bashing. The insipid, nasal, Michael D. Higgins (is vehemently anti-American). One might say that this is because of America's foreign policy, however Higgins like most pseudo-intellectual, liberal left-wingers in Ireland is very pro-European. The majority of EU countries are members of NATO. France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and Holland all have very poor colonial records. Look at Germany's record in the last century. Also these left wingers are conspicuously quiet when human right abuses in Sudan, Cuba, Russia and elsewhere are brought up. The German foreign affairs minister, a supporter of Palestinian terrorists and former member of a militant left wing organisation, (who was seen seriously attacking and assaulting a Policeman) remains in the German cabinet. There is no protest from the Irish left. A conservative (not associated with any violent organisation) is appointed Attorney General in America and the left wing start screaming and accuse Bush of appointing Attila the Hun as A.G. Double standards - we invented them in this country.

If I were to write an article attacking Americans it would meet with no response. If I wrote an article saying the French were obnoxious, Germans power mad, Scandinavians boring, I would be accused of xenophobia. Attacking the US and American policy, capitalism, free markets and globalisation is fair game. Attacking anywhere else and liberal left wing policies make you a right wing nut.

In the US, each individual state will have more freedom, than that allowed to states in the EU in years to come. For instance, the Federal government would never force any state to introduce abortion if it didn't want to. In the EU, that leeway will not be given. The commission, which is the effective cabinet of the EU is not elected. In the future it is likely that small states like Ireland won't even have a commissioner. Even Rhode Island in the US, has democratically elected congressmen and senators. In the EU, German central bankers will set our monetary policy and Swedish Civil servants our social policy. In short we should say Europe get stuffed.

# Out & About - Catching you in the Act



# Out & About - And Boy! Did We Catch You This Week



# Stripping the UL Waterpolo Club Bare - Scholars 1<sup>st</sup> March



With security in place and the “toys” secured everyone met up early on the Thursday for a few scoops and a final run over the events for the night. Scoop after scoop after scoop, the prospect of getting their kit off in front of a sizeable crowd of ladies began to appeal more and more and more to the boys. Things were cumming together nicely. It was all going to go off without a hitch.

As the final hour

approached and bodies were being oiled, the ladies began to assemble outside. Black plastic bags stylishly covered the windows while security milled around outside, looking to spot the troublemakers. The boys were to masquerade as many different things during the night – they were lifeguards, builders, cyclists, sailors, army men as well as waterpolo players (which they were all well used to masquerading as obviously!) It promised to be a good show. And it was.

The women were let in, the drink was let flow, and clothes were let fly. The boys must have gyrated at least 5 times each during the night, testing their fitness to the upper limit. Their all but professional moves were interrupted only by a dodgy sound system and the even dodgier (is that a word?) games planned for the ladies.

The ladies were a quirky bunch to be sure. There were those among them only to eager to partake in every game going, while there were those who needed to be “helped” to the stage by our resident Captain Caveman. Twelve or so among them took part in the fake orgasm competition run as the night wound on – the eventual winner, winning (seemingly) due to her use of one of the reluctant security staff as a prop. You’ll know her if you see her. She’s the girl walking funny. More among them ate bananas. Yup, bananas. Apparently we were looking for the girl who could fit the most amount of banana in her mouth in one go. What that was supposed to tell us I will never know.... My ignorance aside, on the recommendation of one of the bouncers a certain UL pool lifeguard was seen to stuff a whole banana in there in one fail swoop. Nice one.... I guess.

Quirky as they may have been, there was no doubting their appreciation for the lads *sans vetements*. The boys teased, the women smiled and the baby oil, chocolate and cream made one great big mess! Through all the routines the ladies roared their approval, egging the lads on to even

greater displays of “taking-their-clothes-off”ness. The ladies loved it! The lads loved it even more!

After being introduced to the ladies one by one, the lads gave one last performance to the timeless classic YMCA. They were joined on stage for this one by a few choice members of the audience, a certain semi-naked bouncer, a whole load of discarded clothes as well as Mammy herself. It would have been a great end to a great night except for one ickle thing – this wasn’t the end. How could you possibly follow such a quality display? One word – Jazz.

Jazz is a professional stripper who gave freely of his services for the night that was in it and, Jazz, we thank you for it. He came in as a policeman and left as a legend. The ladies loved him and the lads wanted to be him. He did his thing, using chairs, handcuffs as well as unsuspecting (but not at all unwilling) members of the audience. He put on one hell of a show almost rivalling the Waterpolo boys, but come on now, lets not be ridiculous, to expect Jazz to live up to that simply wouldn’t be fair...

It was a top night and above all it was a night for charity. One of the club members, Fergal Dalton, is climbing Mt. Kilimanjairo in an effort to raise funds for The Street Kids of Rwanda later in the year so we thought we’d help him out with a little fundraiser. We managed to raise £600 on the night.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mammy, the ever-shy guys in the Waterpolo Club for having the balls to do it (hahaha), the management of the Scholars, Tim McAuliffe for doing MC, the bouncers and, of course, all the lovely ladies who turned up to help out The Street Kids in Rwanda. It was a very successful night and everyone helped make it such.



**By Mark Breen**

Thursday March 1<sup>st</sup> saw the UL Waterpolo Club take over the Scholars Function Room for a night of fun and games and more than a little barefaced cheek! With nigh on 15 male club members as well as one of the Scholars finest barmen agreeing to show a ickle leg (and, in most cases, show a “ickle” something else too) to the assembled gathering of appreciative UL women, a good night was definitely on the cards.

Full-blown preparations began early in the week with our tireless “Mammy” unselfishly undertaking the one task we all dreaded. For it was she, who, ignoring every moral fibre in her being and indeed risking the very innocence that endears her to us all, darkened the door of one of Limerick’s Adult Stores. Upon finally bringing herself to open her eyes therein, she courageously went about seeking sponsorship of some “novelty toys” to be used on that fateful night in the Function Room. Ask she did and oblige they did. Said “toys” were to act as rewards for those lovely UL ladies who were game enough/drank enough/stupid enough/horny enough to partake in the various party games organised on the night.

Of course, with numbers of women in the triple figures and a herd of 100% prime Irish beef in close proximity, security was going to be a major consideration. The boys in the Waterpolo Club do have a tendency to draw a crowd of female admirers at the best of times and this was definitely going to be one of those times! The task of finding suitable and willing security staff was long and arduous. The prospect of spending the evening in the company of a whole lot of hormonally over-active women would appeal to but a few hardened campaigners. The gauntlet was set down and four of Crew’s best duly took up the challenge. Bedecked in the finest in men’s formal wear (kindly sponsored by Tony Connolly Menswear in town – cheers Tony!), they vowed to fight the good fight and enjoy the great night.

# The American Dream: Propaganda and Lies

**By David Clune**

My good citizens, these programmes are playing us like fools. Like lemmings we march to the pied pipers tune in search of the Utopian paradise of America. The posters depict our intrepid and fearless student bungy-jumping his way into the opportunity of a lifetime.

This is a Reality Trip folks. First off, they're going to charge you in addition to you flights (which are going to cost you approximately £300), Insurance will cost you another £100, tax on top of that, and then of, course there is the "Programme Participation Fee" which will cost you 200 quid. Apparently this covers the administration, support services and costs involved in the operation of the Student Work & Travel Programme. They must mean that folder you get filled with nonsensical superfluous diatribe and the handy 24 hour hotline number, "Sorry no-one is available to take your call right now".

This year brought the advent of an ingenious scheme where our poverty stricken innocent student pays £200 in Spring Semester to book his slice of the American dream. So while poor Johnny scrimps and saves to buy a packet of cheese and onion Taito's for his dinner, one can picture the companies fat-cats, cigars in one hand and champagne in the other, laughing heartily as the interest accrues in a Geneva bank account.

Once you arrive in your Gateway City (Gateway to what I wonder?) they put you up for one's nights accommodation followed by a "comprehensive orientation session with experienced local staff". This amounts

to an inexorable mundane five hour spiel filled with sparkling gems of essential titbits such as "Accommodation can be difficult to find" and "Don't get arrested while you are over here". If I wanted uninformed rhetoric and stating the blatantly obvious I'd listen to Jim Beglin commentate. Yes I'll just note that down in my imaginary notebook. Then its out the door, slam, click, searing heat, lugging cases, hostels all booked out, Where am I going to sleep tonight? Worried about exam stress? How about 20 scared pale white Irish students sleeping in a park in Boston running shifts to stay awake and watch for muggers. Or the 1000 students who were relocated to Hampton Beach from Boston to work crap jobs in grubby lodgings. Or the prospect of going home broke for the summer, the American dream in tatters.

The J1 Companies seem to give the impression that waiting for you is a ripe tree laden with jobs and accommodation. When our adventurous Paddy, complete with G.A.A. shirt, hurley, red neck line, hairy legs and potato in his back pocket arrives off the plane to 'merica Father Johnny won't be there to "sort you out sur". The Americans love the Irish, they just won't give them a place to stay. Typical real-estate phone conversation.

Estate-agent : Where are you from?

Student : We're over from Ireland.

Estate Agent : click.....

The simple fact is that especially in major cities like New York and Boston, there is not enough apartments to cope with the vast number of students infesting the metropolis for the summer. Quote Usit leaflet "A deposit on an apartment and first

month's rent could cost as \$500-600 per person sharing....".

Try \$1000 mate and that's with illegally stuffing the gaff with so much paddies there hanging out the window.

Why then do so they throng in their masses every year at ungodly hours (and I confess to being among their number) to apply for the J1 visa? Is it that our own inhibitions and innate desire for security (even when we are supposed to be breaking free from those shackles) that blind us into viewing the Usit body as a kind of surrogate mother, watching over us like an Angel, protecting us from harm. Do we really want independence? If you want security and comfort, stay at home for the summer and buy a hot-water bottle and some Andrex Soft toilet tissue. Make no mistake, if things get ugly, screw the system, or go to Amsterdam or Prague, now that's how to have a good time!

I'm sure many reading this are saying, Who's this asshole?, we had a great time last summer and evidently a large percentage of people will find this the case. I would venture that of their number, the majority had pre-arranged jobs and/or accommodation, or new someone they could stay with. I tentatively suggest those intending to the States on the J1 visa this summer pursue one of these options. Otherwise you might find yourself sitting at home next summer with only a fading memory of disappointment and an empty wallet.

## Ta Se ag teacht.....

**Le Cumann Na Gaeilge ,  
Deirdre O' Mahony .**

Caint, craic spraoi siamsa, eachtraí spoirt , cultur ....ta seachtain na Gaeilge ag teacht go Ollscoil Luimnigh ,idir an 12 marta agus an 16 , seachtain a cuig agus bigi ag siul le seachtain mor o thaobh craic de!

Is e seachtain na Gaeilge a seachtain naisiunta don Gaeilge ar fud na tire –mar sin I gach cathair ,sraid baile , contae ,scoil agus ollscoil beidh an teanga le heisteacht agus beidh himeachtaí agus siamsa a'eagru I ngach ait .

In Ollscoil Luimnigh , ta Cumann Na Gaeilge ag iarraidh seachtain iontach a eagra daoibh . Ta siul againn go mbeidh ceili, turais ,comortasai tri gaeilge agus alan nios mo. Beidimid ag iarraidh an teanga a chur chun cinn san ollscoil chun blas na dteanga a spreagadh . Mar sin ta siul again go gcloisimid |Gaeilge ar fud na haite agus go ndeanfaimid chuile duine sar –iarracht chun a gcupla focail a usaid ! I ndeireadh na dala ....gan teanga , gan tire .

Talk ,craic, sport, entertainment , activity ,cultur ....

'Seachtain na Gaeilge ' is coming to the University of Limerick between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of March, in Week 5 so expect a great week filled with 'caint agus craic'.

' Seachtain na gaeilge ' is a national event organised all over Ireland so in every town , village, county , school and University the language will be spoken and heard and there will be various activities and entertainment organised to promote the Irish language and culture.

In the University of Limerick Cumann Na Gaeilge are organising a language and culture

packed week for You. We hope that there will be Ceilís , trips,competitions through Irish and much more besides . We hope to promote the Irish Language and to inspire the love of the language in those who have not heard it before . Therefore we hope to hear everyone who has their cupla focail to use them !! Our time table is not out yet but keep your eyes peeled on the noticeboard . Afterall .....gan teanga gan tire !!

# Poetry Corner - Rhyming Thoughts of UL Students -

Send your thoughts to [anfocal@csn.ul.ie](mailto:anfocal@csn.ul.ie)

One Poets exile  
 Into a field of dreams  
 Filled with the seed of anonymity  
 Seeing only the light  
 Filling the void  
 The one true love  
 The love of everlasting substance  
 Like a mother's teardrop  
 Caressing her dead child's brow  
 this is the scene within life's obstacles .  
 Obstacles broken , torn and over thrown  
 thrown from the throne of hatred  
 I will lie here in my fields ocean  
 and float like a leaf  
 to Nirvana.

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## The Pseud

By .....

We snort, and escape narcotic sleep. Flee a magic-mirrored consciousness of wonder wide and horror deep. We were shapeless clay, stretched and moulded by Promethean hands, made monstrous, comely and of aspect gay. Hispid shadows brushed past and through and underneath, rapiers of light sliced and halved them, then sought the ceiling's sheathe. Our voice spoke of happiness, a noble pursuit, of life made real by borrowed dreams, of love clad in white and liberty swaddled in grey. We found no purpose that was our own, but knelt to kiss our chains, and thanked ourselves for slavery. Strewn before us were the crumbs of fairy-tale, and these we followed into darkness that had forgotten day. And now we are awake.

We are a slumbering grumbler. We somnambulate sloppily into lathered water with furry rag, ignore the shallow stranger, dismiss decay implied by eyelid-bag and stomach sag. Clothes are smoothed and shaken, disgorging blizzards of shining, fetid dust. Our gristly brunch is moodily munched, with attendant pangs of hunger and disgust. We sniffle and swallow snot, and save our teeth from reek and rot. This, it seems, is dead life, of time it eats so much and is sated not.

White, disembodied bouffants streak the sordid sky, combed and primped, they frolic over fields where lissom lovers lie. We wade through dirty homeless raindrops that seek the sea, and hum to ourselves a torpid, tuneless melody. Hiho, hiho, it's off to the pub we go. Seven priapic pillars loom above us, dwarfing a slated square; here are starring snow-white sylphs with silvered teeth and shoulders bare. We slip and slalom in between, eyes mark us, take aim but do not fire, consign us to musty cabinets; we doze till fate or expediency require. With scant regard for looks that chide, we push the door and squeeze inside.

Enter. Swim and splash through seas of sweat, in quest for truth or better yet, a serum of sorts; the jester's juice that loosens tongues and breeds retorts. We do battle with slavering sentry, a many-elbowed snake, it covets the serum for its thirst to slake; drink the sour nectar, our mind is lightened, of life we are no longer frightened. Slide past slivers of skin, hear howling gales of laughter and disdain, murmur, mutter, stutter; stammer and lisp, look for a likeness, find friendly barbs, fresh-bled blood, halt, and listen: sense the slow descent of a curtain of suffocating banality, nose notes reek of rotted corpses, eyes idly scan feeding flies, here lie unquestioned answers, old-fangled follies and secret-less spies. Exit.

Astral black, we cruise the road in billowed slacks. A haggard tramp chunters, berates and batters his breast, stares at us, and puffs his chest. "I see you, and you are me, both prisoners of our lechery". Weak and withered though he is, we punch and kick him till he wilts. We have leisure, and we take our time; pound his nose, and beat our rhyme. He groans and moans assent, we see a mirror in his features blent. He smiles, and dies, and we are spent. We wonder briefly what he meant. Come, admire our work and blame our mothers; you are wrong, and there will be others.

We trudge past swaying bushes, and pause with hands that shake, our mind envisions further bastardies, further lives to break. We are the crouched figure, beneath the trees we wait, and spring on those in search of grisly fate. We are the tramp, the madman, our muscles bunched for violence; mark our grinning mask, a smile contorted by hate. We are the silence that implies consent; both murder and treachery rest beneath our tent. We are alone, and strong for all that, an army of skunk and rancid rat. We are nightmares, mermen, creatures of the deep; we will come tonight to inform your sleep. We are the vicious, the evil of shadows bleak, you are the victims and you are the weak. Yes, you are the weak.

Home swallows our frame; our mind is restive, beneath the sheets we creep. And so the circle ends as we snort... and escape to narcotic sleep.



# **Welfare Notices:**

**- PLEASE do not walk home alone...**

**A key danger and target area is the road behind the Orchards - Attacks have been reported from this area in particular. ... Don't take the risk**

**- There will be a Memorial Mass for Jason Hackett who died last November 30th in a windsurfing accident. The Mass will take place in the Silesian Church at 7.30pm on Sunday the 11th March.**

**-The Blood Transfusion Board will be in EGO 10 on Wednesday and Thursday of Week 5 and are appealing to us all to donate.**

**- The Samaritans are holding Special Seminars on the Growing Concern of Youth Suicide in the Augustinian Church on the 14th, 15th 16th of March at 1.00. All welcome to attend.**

**- Outreach Society Information – Check out the Notice Board outside the Welfare Office for times and activities. New members are always welcome...so feel free to drop into the Welfare Office for any information you need.**

**- Welfare Week is coming up in Week 6 – watch out in the next edition and posters for details of events and activities for the week!**



**SAYIT TRAVEL**  
**NOW ACCEPTING**  
**J1-VISA APPLICATIONS**  
**MEETING ROOM 5, STUDENT CENTRE**  
**10AM - 5PM DAILY**  
**UNTIL MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>**

**Congratulations to**  
**Joey Redmond**  
**&**  
**Paula O'Conner**  
**on Winning the**  
**Sayit**

**Scooter Competition**



Joey & Paula being presented with their New Scooters by Tom O'Donovan, Education Officer, ULSU.

## Entertainment of Campus

### The Stables Club Entertainment

#### Week 4

Monday: (Every Monday) "Live Wired"

All Musicians and Singers Welcome!

Tuesday : 12-3pm "Red Bull Pit stop Challenge ' (Courtyard)

7pm "Race Night" Organised by Post grad Student Association

9.30pm "Adain D.J."

Wednesday: 7pm to 7:30pm Buy any 3 pints of any Draft Lager and get one free!

7:30pm "Panathinaikos v Man United also bacardi breezer promo. And D.J.

Thursday: 8pm D.J.

9pm "Blue Monday"

10.30pm Bacardi Breezer Promo. And DJ,

Friday: 9pm "Party, Disco Night D.J. Adain

#### Week- 5

Monday 9pm "LIVE WIRED"

Tuesday.: 7pm to 7.30pm Buy any 3 pints of draft Lager, and get one pint FREE!

7.30pm Man United v Sturm Graz

9.45pm D.J.

Wednesday: 7.30pm "Champlons League Game Live"

9.45pm "Noel McLoughlin"

Thursday: 3pm "Sutras"

9.30pm "Dave Matter and The Crockets" (Pop)

10:45pm D.J.

Friday: 9:30 Party Disco Night D.J. Adain.

**Note: "Paddy's Weekend" Closed Sat. and Sun. Reopening Mon 5pm**

### The Scholars Club Entertainment

#### Week4

**Monday:** Jody

**Tuesday:** Murphy's Comedy Club

**Wednesday:** Greenbacks - Live 9pm

**Thursday:** Party Night 70's, 80's & 90's

**Friday:** Woodstar - Barcardi/Hot Press Band of the Year

Finalist

**Watch out for the Murphy's Comedy Club, Tuesday's**

**Wk 4,6,7,9,10&12**

**Also Appearing Live:** 14th March Kontakte

21st March Sutras

**Rag Week Entertainment to be published Soon**

**Big Screen Coverage Published in Bar Weekly**



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#### **For further information or an application contact:**

**Bruce Carolan,  
Head of Legal Studies,  
Dublin Institute of Technology,  
Aungier Street, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 402 3016**

**or Postgraduate Studies,  
DIT, Pembroke Street, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 402 3400  
Email: Bruce.Carolan@dit.ie. www.dit.ie**

# FOCAIL EALAÍNE - Arts Section



Don Wycherley & Catherine Walsh in Eden

The next fortnight sees an exciting blend of theatrical and musical events taking place on campus and an opportunity for students and staff to attend a number of associated workshops. The National Theatre – the Abbey and Peacock Theatres – will present EDEN, a new play by Eugene O'Brien in the **Jonathan Swift Theatre on Mar 5, 6 and 7**. Set over one week-end in a small midlands town in Ireland it is directed by award-winning playwright Conor McPherson. EDEN features Catherine Walsh ( Love in the Title, Translations ) and Don Wycherley ( The House, Translations, Ballykissangel ). The Arts Office is delighted that a UL venue has been included as part of the National Theatre's policy of extending its work outside of Dublin.

Set over one weekend in the midlands, Billy and his wife Breda tell of their idea of heaven. For Breda, it is simply to have her husband love her, for Billy he is more interested in the drink, the lads and the beautiful young one. Told as two interlocking monologues, EDEN captures the imagination by bringing a midlands town and all of its inhabitants to life, often with raucous hilarity, and yet with a sincerity and poignancy that touches the soul. A strong debut play by a young Irish writer, EDEN tells it how it is: the harsh, sorrowful truth of this couple's situation resonates through the language and is delivered raw by two fine actors.

Concession For Students- £5

The UNIVERSITY CONCERT HALL has managed to secure the return of the sell out ALONE IT STANDS by John Breen. A runaway success when first performed in the Belltable it tells the personal stories around the historic victory of Munster over the All Blacks in 1968. Kevin Myers of the Irish Times says "... Whether you're from Coolock and have never been to the theatre in your life, or are a long-suffering resident of Lansdowne Road who loathes rugby as the invention of the devil, you will love ALONE IT STANDS. As well as being very funny, it is a delightful study of Limerick society, of the qualities of courage and determination and of love – love between man and woman, between men together, and between father and son..."

The IRISH WORLD MUSIC CENTRE 's free lunchtime concerts recommence on Tuesdays and Thursdays with a full programme by visiting and resident performers. Featuring virtuoso performers such as guitarist Clive Carroll, fiddler/pianist Charlie Lennon, founder member of De Danaan Alec Finn, and one time accompanist to The Pogues Tommy Keane, this series promises to deliver many musical highlights. Mar 7 sees the return of Iarla O'Lionáird , singer with the Afro Celt Sound System and composer of the film soundtrack "I Could Read the Sky ".

## Focal Eile - Arts Event Guide

Any information on forthcoming activities of Societies and Clubs should be sent to Room S1 – 22, Schuman Building or [patricia.moriarty@ul.ie](mailto:patricia.moriarty@ul.ie)

### UL PHOTO SOCIETY

are holding a seminar on NOV 23 at 2.00 pm. Contact PHOTO@CSN.UL.IE They will photograph your event, Club activity. Minimum 1 week notice period desirable – these are busy guys.

### UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK ORCHESTRA

rehearse every Tuesday in the Kilmurry Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

### DANCE CLUB

host Salsa Classes with a professional teacher every Mon in the Conference Centre, Student Centre. 2 classes 6.00 – 7.00 pm and 7.00 – 8.00 pm. Beginners and experienced Salsa fiends catered for. The programme of instruction is being extended to include belly dancing and flamenco.

### UL DEBATING UNION

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### HISPANIC SOCIETY

meet every Mon at 6.30 pm in the Language Resource Area for the screening of Irish and Spanish based films.

### UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK CHOIR

rehearse every Weds from 6 – 8 pm in the Music Rooms of Block C. Regularly performing in venues on and off the campus the student/staff choir always welcome new members.

### UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK TRIBAL SPIRIT DRUMMING CLASSES

with John Bowker – Absolute beginners are absolutely welcome to join in these weekly sessions in the Students' Union on Weds from 7 – 10 pm. A small fee of £5 (or less), student rate of £3 (or less) ensures an evening of rhythm and celebra-

tion.

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Focail Ealaíne book reviews, concert reviews, event listings should be sent to Room S1 – 22 , Schuman Building or [patricia.moriarty@ul.ie](mailto:patricia.moriarty@ul.ie).

Focail Ealaíne FREEBIES Venues on and off the campus will give free passes to Focail Ealaíne in return for a review. If you are interested contact the above address

# University Concert Hall - News & Reviews

## Alone It Stands - The Review



**Alone It Stands**, is one the cleverest funniest most brilliantly crafted plays you are ever likely to see. Its writer and director, John Breen, has married rugby to the dramatic arts and produced an absolutely delightful offspring.

Even to have arranged a blind date between the stage and the oval ball seems to have as much promise as organising a dinner between Peter Robinson and Bernadette McAliskey: you wouldn't expect them to stay together for the duration of the bread-roll.

It's not just that rugby by its nature, with its complex running patterns and brute physicality seems quite beyond capture on the stage. There is also the small matter of the sort of people who play and follow rugby. They are about as theatrical as the fair Bernadette is Orange. If you crosschecked the membership of voluntary societies in any university the two most likely to have absolutely no members in common would be the 'rugby club and dramsoc'. They stand at the opposite ends of the occupational spectrum, mutual disdain being perhaps the only quality which unites them.

So how can these two profoundly

antipathetical elements, matter and anti-matter, be brought together, not just to coexist begrudgingly, but to produce a dramatic triumph? *One word.. Munster.*

### So different

What is it about Munster that makes it so different from the other provinces? Why does it, in any of its manifestations, seem to guarantee character, resilience, courage, resourcefulness, intelligence, in any code? An All-Ireland final without a Munster team competing is somehow lacking. And sport being a metaphor for other things, and much as I loathe the War of Independence as an unnecessary conflict, it is hard not to admire the tenacity and courage of the people of Munster throughout its dura~tion.

So, as in all things, in rugby (unlike Leinster) Munster never surrenders. The game is over only when the team bus leaves the ground, as tomorrow's game will undoubtedly testify~ Of course, Munster has its class divisions, but in rugby, and in Limerick in particular, they seem to dis~solve completely. Working-class people play and follow rugby there in same way that they follow soccer in Dublin. The ordinary boundaries that cut through Irish rugby like a Berlin wall vanish when they converge on the Shannon.

Limerick rugby's classlessness gives the game there a cachet, a plausibility, that it lacks elsewhere. And there is something else about Limerick. It is the home of one of the great occasions in Irish sport: the victory of Munster over the all-conquering AllBlacks in 1968

So? How can you make a play about that? I wish I had answered that for you; instead, John Breen has - by a combination of ingenious writing, brilliant dramatic construction, and superb directing. And it doesn't really matter if you think that Dolphin is a cousin to Porpoise and a Cork Con man is a Leaside fraud, or, conversely, if the word "theatre" suggests sinister cross-dressing homosexual pinko pacifists no man in his senses would turn his back on. **Alone It Stands** is a theatrical occasion which, like rugby in Limerick, crosses all boundaries.

We can justly ask why this play has been presented only in fringe theatres. Is it too accessible'? Is it too unaffectedly amusing'? Is it because it features the sort of people who as quintessentially untheatrical as rugby players and supporters'? Or is it because it so triumphantly subverts theatre's self-consciously theatrical definition of itself?

### Limerick society

Haven't a clue. No matter. Whether you're from Coolock, and have never been to the theatre in your life, or are a long-suffering resident of Lansdowne Road who loathes rugby as the invention of the devil, you will *love Alone It Stands*. As well as being very funny, it is a delightful study of Limerick society, of the qualities of courage and determination and of love - love between man and woman, between men together, and between father and son.

You will probably weep with laughter. You might equally well weep with pride. And suddenly, out of the blue, you might find yourself weeping in pity. *I have not seen a finer Irish play in years. I suspect only dramaturgical snobbery of the mostwitless kind has prevented John Breen~ becoming the household name which one day it assuredly will be. (The forgoing are excerpts from An Irishman's Diary by Kevin Myers which appeared in THE IRISH TIMES on Saturday January 27, 2001 the day before another great win for Munster!)*

Last 3 Shows at the Concert Hall 9th -11th March

**Tickets available from UCH  
Box Office,  
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# THE BACK ROW

( Now Showing at a Cinema/Theatre Near You... )

## ALMOST FAMOUS



*"...the only true currency in this bankrupt world is what you share with someone else when you're uncool"*

"Almost Famous" is director Cameron Crowe's love letter to the '70s. Of course, Crowe's experience of the 1970s is a little different from the norm. A renowned rock journalist while still in his teens, he spent most of the early part of the decade on the road with the music legends of the era: Led Zeppelin, The Eagles and The Allman Brothers. A labour of love, this film is his glowing tribute to lost innocence, falling in love, and the music that mattered.

The story is classic "Wizard of Oz" stuff. William Miller (played by newcomer Patrick Fugit), an exceptionally bright 15-year-old and aspiring rock journalist, abandons high school and the trappings of his humdrum existence to cover up-and-coming band Stillwater's Almost Famous tour for Rolling Stone magazine. He falls in love with the lovely but troubled groupie/Band-Aid, Penny Lane (Kate Hudson), forges a close friendship with the band's enigmatic guitarist Russell Hammond (Billy Crudup), gets deflowered by a trio of groupies (thus earned the hatred and envy of every male member of the audience) and, for the first time ever, he doesn't feel uncool.

But all in Oz is not what it seems.

Tensions are flaring between Russell and the band's egotistical lead singer (played by Kevin Smith regular, Jason Lee) who resents the fact that the guitarist's fame eclipses his own. Meanwhile, the dream is turning into a nightmare for William as he struggles to cope with unrequited love, fast approaching deadlines and his mother's pleas for him to come home ("and don't do drugs!"). His biggest problem though is his escalating crisis of conscience as he wonders whether he should tell the whole truth and lose the only friends he's ever known, or deliver a sanitised version of events that will end his career before it has even begun.

There are quibbles. Crowe's obvious nostalgia for the period and the loving attention to detail contribute to a rather hazy rose-tinted view of events. The early '70s were a passionate time: sex before Aids, music before MTV, the decade as it was before disco and mirror balls took over. Yet, little of that passion comes across in the film. The hedonism of the rock star lifestyle, the drugs, the despair, the loneliness of life on the road are all glossed over. The film's only dark note is struck in a poignant scene near the end when one of the Band-Aids discovers that she has been gambled away in a poker game to a rival band.

It's a tough film to dislike though. There are great scenes, from the group sing along to Elton John, to Russell's hilariously unsuccessful attempt to smooth talk William's mother, to the band's John Denver moment as their plane loses altitude. The hands down highlight however is when Russell having set out to find "something real" in the midst of all the bullshit, ends the evening by yelling "I am a Golden God" from the roof-top of a fan's house in a moment of LCD inspired lunacy. More than anything, the film plays tribute to fandom. The groupies, the fans and William himself all understand the true spirit of rock 'n' roll better than the musicians who are meant to embody it.

The cast are uniformly excellent. Shunning the big stars that populated his last feature, "Jerry Maguire", Crowe assembles

an impressive group of unknowns and character actors. Stars in the making, Crudup and Hudson, lend an easy charm and naturalism to their roles. Top acting honours however go to the youngest and oldest players. Patrick Fugit, who came to the film with next to no experience, is perfect as the wide-eyed Miller who sees everything but tells nothing.

Meanwhile, two of the finest actors at work today take key roles: Philip Seymour Hoffman (Magnolia, The Talented Mr. Ripley) grabs all the best lines and ups the charm quotient to outrageous levels as an elder statesman of rock criticism and Miller's mentor, while Frances McDormand (Fargo) plays William's devoted but over-bearing mother to superb effect. Watching these two onscreen, you get the uneasy that you're witnessing a crime. They steal every scene they're in and then some.

Sure, it's light and fluffy and at times so sentimental it's like being hit over the head with a Valentine's card. Yet, I defy you not to love this.

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MARLBOROUGH GROUP



# Now Showing at the Belltable World Cinema Season



Picture:

[http://us.imdb.com/Title?Comedian+Harmonists+\(1997\)](http://us.imdb.com/Title?Comedian+Harmonists+(1997))

**Comedian Harmonists** (1997): a German film that refers to comedy in the title. Those who associate German comedy solely with the sale of millions of David Hasselhoff albums may be put off. Fear not, for the comedy refers to the gently amusing romantic songs performed by the titular group who, until their dissolution in 1934, grew in popularity world-wide – amusement at the songs is not a requisite for enjoyment. The film's (and the group's) title may sound like an inelegant, literal translation, but it reflects the pre-irony, pre-cynicism, good nature of this very entertaining biopic.

The story centres on the Harmonists founder (Ulrich Noethen), following his musical aspirations amidst economic depression and then the early period of Nazi Germany. Through the Depression and the constraints it enforced (to his parrot: "Although caged, you are more free...", or something), he maintains his sense of humour. After their formation and some petty squabbling, the group coast to fame and success. Although from a very different genre, the rousing, amusing paeans to brotherly harmony create the same effect and have the same place in their film as those of *The Soggy Bottom Boys* in another Depression Era film, **O Brother, Where Art Thou?** However, before you can say "Hello Nuremberg! Are you ready to rock?", the rise of the Nazis ends hopes of the coked-out fat Elvis-in-Vegas period that all musicians aspire to.

Director Joseph Vilsmaier crafts a well-paced tale from a classic Hollywood-style narrative and a generous budget. The cast is excellent, and the leads inject a spark into that old dramatic warhorse, the love triangle, as it threatens the friendship at the group's core. However, the film's women are all either mothers (alive *and* dead), wives, girlfriends or whores. Perhaps it's just a reflection of the age, but, despite the odd tantrum and infidelity, they are all giddily subservient to their men. The most significant action of the main female character is in deciding which of the two leading men she "belongs to". But that's me: a bra burner till the end. On the other, less feminist hand, these Louise Brooks bob-wearing Bauhaus babes uniformly possess beauty of a grown-men-weeping variety. After the dissolution of the group, my Lovely Assistant felt most sorry, not for the persecuted Jews forced to leave their country, nor the loser-in-love, but for the group's Lothario and his separation from an endless source of adoring groupies. That they're *all* so gorgeous only reminds you that **Comedian Harmonists** is primarily entertainment, whatever its messages, and very entertaining it is too.

A vague and laudable sense of unease permeates most of the film, even through the happier times, only to be dissolved in an emotional finale. Although there were few dry eyes in the house, I was left with a warm glow. That the group wouldn't survive was inevitable. That no one died at the hands of the Nazis was a bonus. That their friendships survived, despite considerable obstacles – handling success, fame, rivalry and jealousy with fragile egos and massive libidos – is a miracle.

The second German film in a week, **It's A Jungle Out There** (1995) is also highly enjoyable and warmly amusing. Directed by Hans-Christian Schmid with the necessary light touch, **Jungle** puts 17-year old Anna through some rites of passage, while her parents revisit some old ones.

Politician Da and prissy housewife Ma leave the house in the care of Anna and her little sister Clara before Anna's pleasingly

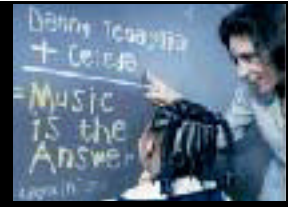
realistic birthday party gets going. They return the next morning to find themselves knee-deep in party casualties, debris everywhere, a radish artfully carved as "a penis in the fridge", some hash in their darling daughter's top pocket (an unused present), and the last straw: a broken, original 1940s Thelonius Monk album, Dad's prized possession. (The albums and vegetables abused ... the neighbour's gnomes kidnapped and tortured ... but at least these kids had the smoking etiquette not to hog the one spliff seen smoked). Anyway, a row ensues. She gets grounded, gets slapped, gets her stuff, and gets a lift to Munich from the neighbourhood's Awkward Teenager (a secret admirer).

After an unsuccessful Janis Joplin impersonation audition, Anna spends her evening with a succession of nasty PR wankers and not-as-nasty bohemian musician slackers. Meanwhile, searching for Anna, Ma & Da meet Awkward Teenager's parents, also looking for their runaway kid, in a nightclub that showcases the worst of dirty German gabba. Both couples head back to the scene of the party, comparing middle-aged patheticness over drinks before skinning up off Anna's confiscated stash. Dad does a very good job despite years out of practice. As little Clara observes (in one of a few funny diary entries) while waiting for people to come and take her into care, Anna's party is reserved in comparison.

There's a feeling of a first time script about this, especially with the use of an urban myth that nonetheless elicited raucous laughter from a very responsive, infectious audience. Also evidence of this is the freshness of the whole enterprise, particularly when reversing one-dimensional Stern Parent clichés. Ich bin ein happy camper.

Next up: at the Savoy Central Studio Cinema on March 11<sup>th</sup> the Belltable are presenting a "surprise film!!" (their exclamation) from the '50s. Also a surprise: tickets are £6, but it's for charity, apparently. On March 18<sup>th</sup>, also at the Savoy, the season's penultimate: Wong Kar-Wai's supposedly deadly **In The Mood For Love**. We'll see.

# Music is the Answer - Reviews & Interviews



## Marriage of Heaven and Punk - Farewell the Hitchers!

**By Nick O' Brien.**

If the passing of Buddy Holly was "The Day the music died", then the passing of Limerick's pop-punk anti-heroes the Hitchers is "The day the music farted artistically." What else can you say from a band whose most famous refrain is "She Broke my heart so I ate her liver."?

To quote the Doors, "When the music is over, turn out the light," and that is exactly what the Hitchers did with their farewell gig, ironically enough at The Globe, as a failure to gain major global recognition has resulted in a terminal split in Ireland's best kept Fun - punk secret of the past decade, with this, their last concert as a band, and a goodbye to the fans. The show began, some two hours later than billed, with the drummer and lead guitarist strumming along and playing any requests the crowd had for them., while the other band-members drank, smoked, and texted themselves into local music history as the local band that could, but didn't.

Drummer- cum-guitarist Niall Quinn received all the cheers, usually reserved for his namesake in the Irish team, on Thursday last, as he displayed his two - chord guitar

skill. He and Andy Gallagher pissed off the already aggravated crowd with some ill - advised warm-up songs, at 1 a.m, on a school night, mum.

But soon that unfortunate incident was over, and someone made the mistake of giving on-loan bassist Frank Ryan of Barberskum ( a band well worth checking out, One of Limerick's current finest so I've heard ) the microphone, with which he screamed some unintelligible cliché like " Are you ready for us, motherf\*ckers? ", to a resounding chant of " Steady on there mac," and the feeling that maybe he just didn't get it... The Hitchers don't do that, and they aren't about to start now, are they?

But if the warm-up was underwhelming, the second that Quinn re-appeared with his trademark Green jersey, as advertised on Kenny Live, it was obvious that The Hitchers were ready, to go out with a bang, and give us a show worth seeing.

Their catchy, up-beat songs and humourous lyrics are well matched to their dual electric guitar combo, and anybody unfamiliar with them, who has any interest in free-punk, from The Clash to the Bloodhound

Gang, should check out their Debut L.P., "It's all fun and games till somebody loses an eye."

Maybe the set was short, but as it surged on, and the fans jumped, moshed and drank their way through, we realized that it didn't matter that the gig was delayed or the warm up was crap, but that we remind the insecure band that somebody will remember them, for "... fun and games ...", for that song on the soundtrack to "Rat", and for that green jersey. Three poignant moments of the particular evening floated through my mind on the taxi home from that last show, the first was the fact that the last song played before the Hitchers started their set was " My Way " by Sex Pistols supremo, Sid Vicious, a testament to a musical career which revolved around laughs. The second was choosing to silently play " This is Spinal Tap! " on a big TV. during the entire set, and the third is the last song of the set that they played, a punk version of " Mama- Mia " by ABBA, ringing out into the future and looking over to the Hitchers previous successes, sending a message to all musicians and bands, Loving music is easy, getting it to love you back is the bitch.

## Randon Centre - Review of "The Paint Drying Experience"

**By Marion Roche**

Ever since I turned my back on daytime radio due to the massive quantity of utter CRAP on it I've spent a fortune on CD's, so when I got one for free to review for An Focal it was a refreshing change, actually the words "refreshing change" come to mind a lot while listening to this cd, and yeah I am aware of how corny that sounds, but in this case it's actually true!

Random Centre are four UL students, Dave Whelton, Manolis Sheehan, Marcus Flannagan and Patrick Lenhane.

The five songs on "The Paint Drying Experience" will leave you wanting to hear more, (which you can in April when their new demo is out). The musicians seem to work well together and they seem totally at ease with their songs, at no stage does the sound seem forced in any way. My favourite song on the CD is Random Centre, I hate making comparisons but I'm convinced that I

can hear a Greenday influence and those guitar solos and the raucous staccato drum and guitar ending has essences of the Pixies!

The gorgeous love song "Wheel of Fortune" was short listed in the Hot Press song of the year competition. It's sound track material if ever I heard it, it's the kind of song you would put on repeat for a week after a horrible break-up!!

Unfortunately, "If Only" doesn't inspire much confidence lyrically, to be honest it rhymes too much for my liking, it was a bit of a let down after the other four songs, it probably would have sounded ok if it hadn't been for the other four songs.

All in all, Random Centre are a band to watch out for, they are a band who enjoy what they do and do it well and not a sight of Louis Walsh anywhere which is always a "refreshing" change. You can catch them in the Stables on Monday nights for "Live Wired" or watch out for them in The HighStool in town.

## An Focal Editorial Team

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# Music is the Answer - Reviews & Interviews



## Heineken Rollercoaster Tour 2001- Dolan's Warehouse Feb 28<sup>th</sup>

By Tommy Finneran

Last Tuesday I discovered the importance of the eggs in my pancake mixture. "Eggs" they told me "are most important, get the eggs right and the pancakes will be fine". I'll admit my knowledge of all things culinary is about as good as my knowledge of where that sandy statue came from in the plaza. However, last Wednesday I returned understanding that music is most important. Get the music right and any gig will be fine. The Heineken Rollercoaster Tour 2001 spent it's penultimate stop in Dolan's Warehouse and as usual was a sell out, as usual was a success and as usual was even better than last year!

Dave Fanning stood in front of a brimming Warehouse with a smirk on his face that almost said "I know what's ahead and it's great". Relish, Bell X1 and Wilt with the sounds of Kevin Courtney lay ahead and the Rollercoaster's most balanced line-up ever promised an exceptional night.

Bell X1 were the personification of coolness in presence and music. Little remains of the bands former life as Juniper. The loss of their lead singer saw the band regroup and re-emerge with their debut album "Neither am I". On stage, however, their relaxing overture caught many almost by surprise but this was short-lived as the band straddled their broad sound that ranges from the sweet, emotive ballads such as "Pinball Machine" to high-energy

rock and roll crashes with some electronica influences intermingled in there somewhere. After their last appearance in Dolan's earlier in the year, this performance only confirms that Bell X1 are truly something special with a sound that, live or recorded, will excite something inside you.

Within what seemed like a short time WILT appeared to a rousing applause. It was clear that WILT's reputation as rockers with a liberating sound of intensity, had preceded them. Although lead singer Cormac Battle's presence on stage can be somewhat exaggerated, especially when bundled with two bands that let their music do all they talking, WILT do inject a certain animation and passion into their performance which seems to spark any audience to a frenzy of bliss. Their debut album "Bastinado" meaning "torture" is anything but, and encompasses what the band are vividly. Their single "Peroxatine" is most memorable with its familiar melody while on stage "Never a friend" sent the sold out venue to the point of sonic orgasm (well almost).

Then there was Relish. Formed in Co. Down and signed to EMI in 1998, Relish have since traversed the Irish Top 40 with "Let it fly" and "Rainbow Zephyr". Brothers Ken and Carl Papenfus and Bass player Darren Campbell make up the band. The lads have a poltergeist (apparently) which follows them wherever they go flicking lights and moving faders. We didn't see signs of a poltergeist on Wednesday night but Relish

are certainly full of spirit and there is something magical about their harmonious soulful vocals and full guitar. To the words "put it in a heart shaped box" hands were raised around the Warehouse and that rare and quality pop sound was present in its very essence, something which is so difficult to unearth nowadays with so many melodious pollutants. Relish were even summoned for an encore such was the respect they quickly earned.

Whilst WILT were expected by many to deliver a high-octane performance, and that they did, it's probably the calm defining sounds of Bell X1 and the rich harmonious performance of Relish that most will remember vividly from this tour.

Of course, there was still one more name on the line-up, although reviewing and writing is usually Kevin Courtney's scene. For the Rollercoaster Tour however, Kevin became DJ Kevin and applying his unrivalled knowledge of good music, filled the gaps between and after the acts with simple but effective fun. The party mood after Relish stepped off stage continued and unlike Mark McCabe last year, Courtney performed his task profoundly.

I have no inhibitions about saying a gig was good when clearly it was. To find faults I would have to search deeper than usual and so this year's Rollercoaster Tour did not disappoint. The pancakes turned out brilliantly by the way!



# Special Preview - Cream Live at the Point - March 18<sup>th</sup>

Seb Fontaine  
Tall Paul  
Dave Seaman  
Timo Maas  
Col Hamilton  
Raymond Franklin  
Paddy Sheridan

Point Depot . Dublin  
St. Patrick's Weekend -  
Sunday 18 March

Ireland and Dublin in particular has always enjoyed a special relationship with Liverpool, its history dating back hundreds of years, but of recent times, for Cream, this has become more significant with the success of Cream residencies, special events, and our first ever Creamfields Ireland last year, not to mention the number of Irish, hopping on the Seacat



every Saturday afternoon to make their pilgrimage to the hallowed Cream in Liverpool! Which brings me nicely to the next announcement! Oh yes, not one to miss an opportunity for a knees up, Cream will be joining its twin city relatives on 18th March at the Point Theatre, the celebration that has now become synonymous around the world when a load of Irish nutters take to the streets to celebrate Paddy's day (the man so legend has it who chased the snakes out of Ireland)

Cream has a line-up that will be bringing all those Blarney stone wishes come true with performances by Seb Fontaine, Tall Paul, Dave Seaman, Timo Maas & Col Hamilton. Following on from the last sell out event

Cream staged with Orbital & the wise buddah of dance Pete Tong, to be sure, to be sure to get a ticket get them .

Seb Fontaine, Tall Paul, Dave Seaman, Timo Maas, and Col Hamilton make up the all-star bill. All five premier league jocks are set to have their most successful year to date - as if they haven't done enough already!

While building on the phenomenal response that has greeted his second full year as the Cream's resident DJ, Fontaine is now set to take up his latest challenge - a

new regular BBC Radio One show (Saturdays - 5 to 7pm) from February 9th.

Likewise, Timo Mass' popularity continues to soar - both through his DJ sets, his 'Music For The Masses' release, and of course, his remix of Azzido Da Bass' 'Dooms Night - a tune that continues to run and run. Not to mention that he's also just begun his new monthly residency at Cream Central in Liverpool.

As well as his residency at The Gallery, regular guest appearances at all the major clubs, and a radio show on Kiss 100, Tall Paul continues to run his expanding Duty Free Recordings label.

Dave Seaman, meanwhile, may be set to take a break from his jet-set DJ lifestyle to return to the studio to work on some new Brothers in Rhythm material.

Col Hamilton from the legendary Lush! - home to the first Essential Mix from Ireland, and a previous nominee for Best Club in the Muzik Awards - completes the line-up. Hamilton is no stranger to the UK superclubs himself and was



voted the Best Northern Ireland DJ Award at last year's BBM Awards.

Local heroes from Cork and Dublin, Raymond Franklin and Paddy Sheridan are the latest editions to the bill. Cream boss James Barton was so impressed with the lads when he saw them at Cream at Mono that he insisted on putting them on the bill.

**Doors for Cream at The Point on Sunday, March 18th open at 7pm.**

**Tickets are £25 (incl. booking fee)**

**Ticketmaster and usual outlets nationwide**

**Credit Card Bookings:  
1890 925 100 (lo call)**

## An Focal Cream Live Competition

Win Yourself A Pair of Tickets For  
Cream Live at the Point Depot, March 18th

Just Answer this simply Question:

**Who did Seb Fontaine take over from as Cream Resident?**

E-mail Answers: [fergal.fennessy@ul.ie](mailto:fergal.fennessy@ul.ie)



## Murphy's Dot Comedy Club - Scholars Function Room



### By Tommy Finneran

While almost all good cities in Ireland, as well as Kilkenny, now boast a comedy club, comedy is something that has escaped Limerick. It's reassuring then, when the good people at Murphy's and the Scholar's Club give us something other than our QCA's to laugh at.

The Murphy's DOT COMedy Club (it's an internet pun, don't worry if you're confused) hit UL in style on Tuesday evening of Week 2 and our first resident comedy club wasn't that bad by golly, by Jove, I'll have you know etc etc.

The Function room was transformed with angled tables, intimate candles and eager students who endeavoured to maintain confident faces rather than tempt a potential rush of witty criticism from the three comedians. To be fair, the night's entertainment was all in good spirit and even the finest of lines were rarely crossed.

Your 3 pounds admission fee not only entitled you to a feast of parody and fun but also to a complementary pint of the (other) black stuff. And so, no sooner had Man. Utd left the field and the giant screen silenced then a swift movement from the Scholar's bar to the Function room took place and an excited anticipatory character enveloped the room. Outside, John Henderson, Bob Reilly and Kevin Gildea huddled together radiating a sense of confidence with an underlying nervousness. It was a first and no experience could alter that fact, nobody was sure what to expect.

John Henderson, was first to grab the microphone (and subsequently drop upon discovering it wasn't working) and a friendly style explained how he was much older than the rest of us could imagine – way back to days of “now that's what I call music 8!” As MC for the night Henderson was most capable and the audience enjoyed his non-threatening under-the-breath approach.

Bob Reilly, who like Henderson is a Dubliner, was next up. Bob was very interested in what his audience was studying although he admitted he didn't so much study “Electronic Engineering” than was “aware it was on”. We were treated to stories of O'Reilly's Glenree childhood among other shocking stories and whilst some of his gags were predictable and almost over-rehearsed Bob did inject enough spontaneity

and ingenuity into his act to warrant his appearance.

So, after a short interlude, it was headlining act Kevin Gildea's turn to amuse. The small comic adorned in dark rimmed glasses almost hidden by his bushy hair commanded a more immediate presence than the previous acts. Demonstrating to his audience how he would be using two catch-phrases during his act to ensure he was a success: “Please like me” and the more direct “Laugh ya c\*\*t! Gildea's satirical technique was well received. Many of the men present were most impressed by his very real understanding of our inability to wear handbags and therefore our pocket filled “Tina Turner walk”. Gildea is definitely a name worth watching out for again on the comedy circuit.

The relaxing candles, cosy surroundings and great entertainment were a welcome alternative for a night out. Afterwards, most agreed that the comedy was better than we've experienced in UL for a long time. Recent endeavours in the Stables courtyard and in the John Monnet lacked the unconstrained and cosier setting of the Function room. The Murphy's DOT COMedy Club will return again on the Tuesday nights of weeks 4,6,7,9,10 and finally week 12. From what we've seen so far we're impressed and that QCA just doesn't seem as funny now damn it!

## Amstel Champions League Competition



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# Stables-Fest - Thursday 1st March with Des Bishop & Liquid Wheel

## The Real Des Bishop: An Interview with Ivan Fleming



Thursday afternoon last saw one of Ireland's most talented comedians, Des Bishop, take to the mike in the Stables, which was packed to capacity, and left the audience with sore sides (& a few fairly embarrassed) with a hilarious take on everything from clubbing to the Celtic tiger, to emersion heaters. I caught up with the man himself after the gig, and talked about college, life & comedy.

An Focal: Des, how was it, did you enjoy doing the show?

Des Bishop: It was great. Yeah, I loved it.

A.F. It that the kind of crowd you enjoy playing to, a student crowd? Or do you prefer an older crowd? I mean, what do you think suits your style more?

D.B. Mmmm. The only kind of crowd I enjoy is a focused crowd. A crowd that are there to see the show. I think once they are there to see the show, then I can, y'know, I'll enjoy it. There's nothing worse than, sometimes some student gigs can be a bit unfocused. I was a bit worried about the Stables, because it doesn't look like the kind of place where people would be watching, but yeah, everyone was watching, all the way down to the back, so it was good, y'know.

A.F. Yeah. The response was excellent all round, even down as far as the back...

D.B. I felt it pretty much from the beginning, y'know. I think it really has a lot to do with how you start. I think, in a place like that if you don't start right they kill you off. So that was good.

A.F. So, how long have you been doing comedy yourself, how long have you been involved in stand-up?

D.B. Well, actually, this month, it would have been about four years from, like, my first gig, but about 3 years, since I... Well I finished college in June of '98, and I suppose if you considered your career starts after you finish college, then, y'know, whatever time that is, 2 & a half years, since I

really got focused.

A.F. You're from New York yourself, and you went to university in UCC, right...

DB Yeah....

AF You spent 4 years... Was it 3 or 4 years you spent in Cork?

DB Should have been 3, but the first year was a bit of a disaster, y'know. You might have been listening to the show today, & you might have noticed that I got involved in a few things that aren't very good for your short-term memory. So, yeah, my first year was a bit of a disaster... Yeah, one extra first year, y'know.

A.F. Were you doing comedy yourself in New York before you came over here, or was it when you came to Ireland when you got really involved?

D.B. Well, I've got a bit of a myth I've got to dispel for ya. I've actually lived in Ireland for 10 years. I went to boarding school here, so I actually did the inter-cert. So I think I deliberately try not to let people know too much, how long I've been here, because I think they get a bit of a kick out of how much an American knows about Ireland, but, in reality, y'know, I've been here for 10 years, & I mean I'm half Irish really. (Des' father is a born and bred Corkonian & also has strong family links in Waterford)

A.F. So, would you see that as the reason why you're in tune with the Irish sense of humour, & that you can get into the Irish psyche?

D.B. Yeah! I've done one gig in New York & that was just to try it out. I mean, I wasn't nurtured through American comedy... I mean, I grew up on it & that's what made me love stand-up, but no, when I got onto gigs, I was surrounded by Irish comedians and English comedians.

AF So, basically, you had no problem in adjusting to the Irish sense of humour, as you had been living here for so long, you knew it straight

away...

D.B. Yeah, I think I definitely didn't have a problem adjusting, but I definitely think it helps that I'm not distinctly Irish in my humour, I think that I have a distinct New York attitude that helps my stuff along.

A.F. Does that actually help you in such a way in that you can stand back and observe things, quirks, about Irish people, about the Irish psyche, that other Irish comedians may not see, and therefore you can highlight it, which in itself can be good comedy?

D.B. I think that's a good point.... Yeah. That sounds..."That's a good point" like we're on Sam Smith on Today FM.(Adopts spoof posh Dublin accent) "Yeah, that's a good point, I think the BSE crises needs to be culled"... But no, it's a good point ..(in).. that I see certain things that other Irish comedians wouldn't see, like, for example, the stuff I was talking about today, be it the stuff about emersion ..(heaters). Irish people just accept that as normal, whereas from someone outside & comes in, and goes, like, this is not normal, & that other places in the world you do not have to heat the (water)... you don't have to wait for a shower, you can just have one..... It was a big thing, y'know, there's still loads of (emersion heaters) around... Yeah, but it's not a big social point, it's not, like, I'm going, (Adopts spoof politician accent) "Emersion, we've got to deal with this."

A.F. What do you think, for you, makes good comedy? Is it looking at making the funny out of the normal, or is there something else to it?

D.B. I don't know.. Before I used to be very like, 'I'm American, and this is what I see', whereas now I do some of that, and then some more just kind of stylised, kinda performance type stuff. So, I don't know, I'm not really.... I don't think my style as com-

pletely focused in one direction, so it would be hard to answer that. A lot of it is being really confident about what you're saying.....

A.F. Do you think the style of comedy differs between the US & Ireland & Britain?

D.B. Definitely. Styles generally definitely differ. I mean, if you look at the likes of Dylan Moran or, Ardal O'Hanlon, stuff like that. I mean Ardal does well in America, & I'm sure Dylan would do well, but they'd have to cut out a distinct audience for themselves, like generally their stuff wouldn't go down as well in America because Americans – I mean I shouldn't be calling them dumb, they're not a dumb race, but, comedy wise, they laugh at a bit more of the obvious, & I think in America you'll notice that most of the American comedians tend to push their stuff, y'know, like its more bang, bang, bang, because American crowds need to be almost.. stimulated, whereas Irish crowds and English crowds are generally that bit more, kind of, intellectual, or able to accept things that are not smack bang in front of their face, y'know.

A.F. From both sides of the Atlantic, i.e. British/Irish comics & American comics, who would be your favourites, out of the current crop, and those from the past as well?

D.B. Out of the current crop, I love Tommy

Tiernan, y'know - he's one Irish guy I love. I like Johnny Vegas, I think he's cool. Billy Connolly, he's always been cool. There are loads of other guys, I just think are really good. I love Kevin Gildea, y'know, who doesn't get that much, kinda, props... Then my ..(favourites of the).. old school, when I was younger, I loved Eddie Murphy, I loved his original stuff, the best of Saturday Night Live stuff - that stuff was awesome - and a lot of the circuit comedians in America at the time, but Bill Hicks would probably be my most influential.

A.F. So, finally, Des, what would be your favourite comedy moment, either from stand-up, TV, or any other form, are there any particular moments that stand out for you, in general?

D.B. I have one, this guy, Denis Miller, did this new year's, a millennium show, which I thought was amazing, but nobody over here would know it, so maybe that's not a good example. Favourite comedy moments..... That would be a hard one now, I have to say..... That's a tough one because there's so much different stuff... Eddie Murphy's delirious, like the moment where he starts talking about, "Hey Norton, I've been watching you and I know you've been watching me Norton", that was a pretty good one, & Eddie Murphy raw, which wasn't as good, but the moment where he talks about the

Italians going to the movies..... That would have been a good comedy moment for me, & maybe the moment, in Father Ted, the Christmas special, where they are all in the lingerie department, & Dougal goes to Fr. Ted, 'Ah Ted, what's going on?', & Ted goes 'Well, we're trying to find our way out of the lingerie department'. Then Dougal goes 'No, I mean, in general, like', I thought that was a pretty good moment.

**For the interview in full, with his thoughts on Don't Feed the Gondolas and his fight against cancer, tune into Wired FM on 96.8 & 106.8 FM this week.**



## Liquid Wheel - The Review



Thursday last in the Stables Club saw the return of Liquid wheel to UL. However, there was two things terribly wrong with this gig, one the sound system was brutal, but you'd get over that, the second

thing was the crowd. What was wrong with the crowd you may ask, firstly they did not appreciate the music, which you can understand but then to boo them as they finished was just pathet-

ic. Now that I got the bitchin' out of the way, I tell you how the band actually played. Listening to band, you can certainly see who their influences were, with the first track resembling, Swastika Eyes, by Primal Scream, and their second track, sounded a bit like Afrika Shox, by Leftfield, there was also hints of Underworld and Westbam.

The band were certainly up for the gig, even with the crowd being so sh\*t. They gave a performance similar to the gigs they've done at festivals in Europe, last Year, which went down a treat by the way. They put on a great show in the Stables that night but were only enjoyed by a select few, who it must be said, ventured from their normal drinking-den to hear a

live dance band at their best, at least on an Irish Stage.

Talking to the band at the end of the gig, I felt their disappointment at travelling all the way down to Limerick, on what was an extremely cold night, only to be given an even colder experience in the Stables.

To be fair, to the Stables entertainments manager, Ber Angley, he did try something new for the Stables Bar; it didn't work, no harm done. The band got paid, the Stables crowd got drunk as usual and for the small crowd that appreciated the band, went home with a better appreciation for the music they love and the knowledge never to venture into a world that has no place for it, that is the Stables of course.



# Heineken Clubs and Societies pages

Over the next few pages is reports and previews of what's happened or is happening with Heineken Clubs + Societies on campus. Take a good look at 'em, and if there's anything you think you'd be interested in, then give Paul Lee a shout in the Heineken Clubs and Societies Office in the new Student Centre, and he'll point you in the right direction as to who to contact to get involved.

## Prelude to the Clubs & Societies Ball - The Clubs & Societies Nominations Night, Scholars Function Room 28th February



By Michelle Daly

On Wednesday of week 3 the clubs and societies office in UL held an informal night in Scholars function room to vote on who should take the awards for best clubs and societies on campus for the last year . The

nominations all had to stand up and state why they deserved the prize before the voting for each category took place . Clubs and Societies development officer Paul Lee with Nessa Fahy-O'Donnell (Sports administrator) and Patricia Moriarty (Arts officer) planned a jam packed night with entertainment and games between all of the nominating speeches .

The aid of Dayvoh (O'Donovan) was mandated in the form of MC for the evening . Aswell as creating a stocks for the losers of the games and meticulously planning torture sessions for those unlucky enough to lose some of the games .Paul , Nessa and Patricia went to a lot of bother to ensure every club and society had a great night even those who were creamed with the custard pies (the perpetrators of my creaming you know who you are and you know you will suffer...) Ended up having a fantastic time .

The nominations were they reason we were all there and each one went to considerable effort to present their case ..

Category One  
Best Club  
1 Hockey (f)  
2 Soccer (m)  
3.Outdoor Pursuits

Best Society  
1 Debating Union  
2 Environmental  
3 International

Category Two  
Best Event (Club)  
1. Hockey Intersvarsity ( hosted in UL )  
2. Volleyball Intersvarsity ( hosted in UL)  
3 . Outdoor Pursuits ( mountaineering in Scotland )

Best Event (Soc)  
1 International Foodfair  
2 History Journal  
3 Debating Union Intersvarsity

Category Three  
Best new or Improved Club  
1. Waterpolo  
2 Badminton  
3 Mountain Bike

Best new or improved Society

1 Dance  
2 Ten Forward  
3. Environmental


Category Four  
Best Club Individual  
1 Keith Pigott ( Hockey )  
2 Stephan Driver ( Soccer )  
3 Rosamund Healy (Rowing )

Best Society Individual  
1 Alan Powell ( International )  
2 Eoin O' Broin ( Environmental )  
3 Keith Pigott and Micheal Hourigan (Debating Union )

The Jason Hackett Award for clubs and Mike Sadlier award for societies specially commissioned by the Sports Department and Arts office respectively acknowledges excellence by an individual in their final year of studies in this university . These nominations are completely at the discretion of the committee and only at the ball will the winners be announced.

As will the winners of the above categories , the effort put in on the awards night on Wednesday will only be a reflection of the prestige that this years Clubs and Socs ball is due to excite . Already lined up for the event is The Wizard – Master of Illusion and light . as well as a band and DJ . The big event will be on in The Limerick Inn on Thursday of Week 5 or March 15th and tickets are now available from the Clubs and soc. Office in the SU building . If you are interested just call in , and do it quickly as they are being snapped up .....



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## The Young Fine Gael Debate on Europe awakens in University of Limerick

By Michelle Daly

On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> of February, the Young Fine Gael party in the University of Limerick held a debate on the forthcoming Nice Treaty, a referendum for which it has been hinted will be held in May or June of this year.

The Nice treaty signed on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2000 is that which allows for the increase of the EU from 15 states to 27 states and an increase of 40% Land mass and 11% purchasing power within the EU.

It also increases the population of the European Union by 30%. The Nice Treaty was up for debate here in UL by the former Fine Gael leader Alan Dukes and the Czech Ambassador Peter Kolar. However due to the extreme weather conditions all over the country on Monday and Tuesday of week 3 these debaters were unable to travel. However on the night the YFG faction here in UL were able to secure two just as prestigious and able speakers. Dr Mary O' Donnell of the University of Limerick Economics Department and Deputy MEP for Munster Richard Deasy.

The debate chaired by Dr Patricia Connell attracted a large number of group of students from different backgrounds as well as local people and local fine Gael senator. Mary Jackman. An honest and thorough discussion was held upon the benefits and costs of the Nice Treaty and the expansion of the EU in general.

The fact that Ireland has had its own commissioner could end as the union increases in size and we become a lesser force. Ireland could lose its commissioner and therefore our voice in how the European Union is run.

Dr O' Donnell was quick to point out that since we joined the EEC in 1973 we have been for the most part a receiver of monetary funds, there will soon come a point where we shall have to be a net contributor to the fund.

Should the expansion of the union go ahead we may have a situation where we are contributing more and more money to an entity where we have a lesser voice.

However Ricard Deasy the Sub MEP for Munster was quick to promote the idea that a greater union is of greater benefit to every state involved. The debate on this topic was extremely foresighted

of the Young Fine Gael party on campus and despite the cancellation of two speakers at the last minute was a credit to their organisation and ingenuity. The speakers were lively, and entertaining as well as being faultless experts in their field.

The treaty agreed by the leaders of the 15 current member states including Ireland was signed late last year. It is expected to take 18 months to be ratified in referenda by each individual member country.

In all 12 countries are negotiating accession to the European union; Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. In addition Turkey has been recognised as a candidate for membership. The composition and operation of the European institutions and bodies were agreed in the 1950's when the union only had 6 members. The union has since had four enlargements yet apart from the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, there has been no major reform of the institutions since the founding of the European Community.

If the present system were maintained, the accession of the 12 countries currently negotiating membership of the Union would lead to a commission of 33 members, nearly 4 times its original size.

The treaty of Nice limits the commission to one member per Member state, with effect from 2005. A ceiling on the number of commissioners will be imposed once the union has 27 member states. At that point, the council will have to take a unanimous decision on the exact number of commissioners (which must be less than 27). The nationality of the commissioners will then be determined by a system of rotation that will be absolutely fair to all countries.

As you can imagine Ricard Deasy and Dr Mary O' Donnell both provided a thought provoking evening to encourage political insight within UL.

Students attending the debate included Kalista Mountjoy and Eoin O' Broin of Envirosoc as well as Postgraduate officer Marcus Lynch, all of whom took a healthy interest in the subject up for discussion. The evening was as informative as it was discursive, Encouraging discussion within University of Limerick on a subject that will rise in profile in the coming months.

## UL Women's Athletics Team win Best International Team at the Recent Hyde Park Relays



Last weekend UL Athletics Club entered a women's team to the Hyde Park Relays for the first time. This event has been hosted by the Imperial College for the past 53 years and attracts entrants annually from Ireland, Britain and the Continent. The team of Tracy Roche, Elaine O'Donoghue, Fiona Reid and Eliz Egan did extremely well, finishing in 5th place behind teams from Cambridge, Birmingham, Oxford and Bristol. They easily fought off the challenges of the

Maastricht, Heidelberg and Pozan teams to take the first foreign team prize, completing the 4 x 2 mile course in 50 minutes and 6 seconds. To add to their success, Fiona Reid ran the fastest leg of the day by an international runner, finishing the scenic two-mile course in just over 12 minutes. These girls were members of the UL teams which won the Intervarsity Road Relay title in 1999 and 2000 and this was the first chance the four girls have had to represent UL at an inter-

national level. They did their job well. The Athletics Club would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sports Department for their support and assistance in making this trip possible.

The next event for the UL athletes is the intervarsity Cross Country in UCD on the 10th of March where a very strong women's team hope to add UL's first Cross Country title to their ever increasing collection of silverware. The above team will be helped by Rosemary Ryan, fresh

from her first National Interclubs title, which she won in Monaghan recently. Rosemary represents Ireland in the World Cross Country Championships in Dublin at the end of March. The men's team this year is also looking very strong and expectations are high.

New members are always welcome and anybody interested in joining the Athletics Club should e-mail Eliz at 9739564@student.ul.ie.

## Report on the Annual Judo Intervarsities in Belfast

The annual Irish Judo Intervarsities were held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb in Queens University, Belfast. A group of 13 headed off on Friday, undertaking the gruelling 7-hour journey. The time passed with our coach Joe Monaghan taking money from all players in his version of the card game shoot pontoon. By the time we hit Belfast most of us were heading towards the nearest ATM after having been totally fleeced by our sensei. At least we managed to get Tom to keep his clothes on in this game!!

This was the first time that any of the club had competed at this event. All competitors weighed in on Friday evening with more flesh being shown than can be described. After a bit of skipping, stripping and sweating all players made their categories.

The competition began on Saturday morning at 10 with the team event. Over 25 teams contested this event, with UL being beaten by the well-seasoned NUIG team in the first round.

The overall entry to the competition was over 360, double last year's entry. The standard of judo was superb with many Irish and Northern Irish international players contesting different events. All UL players fought

exceptionally well with Shane Buckley, TJ Davitt and Declan Butler unlucky to be beaten for bronze in their individual events. Caroline Cannon took bronze in her category, having lost to her first opponent.

Paddy Hennessy had to make a little visit to the local hospital after taking a nasty fall during a bronze medal fight in the U81kg category. Rumours had it that his foot may need to be amputated, but this was not the case as he was gassed in the ambulance and filled with numerous drugs on his way to the casualty. Coach Joe Monaghan saw this opportunity to play highest card, and readily took several pounds off poor Paddy.

The post competition meal and medal ceremony was held on Sunday evening. Everyone got spruced up and with all the boys looking dashing and girls looking stunning we headed the Wellington park hotel. Spirits were high and fast flowing. Shane Buckley went missing. Where he went nobody quite knows, but there was a mention of a bus stop?? Martin did his best to marry Ailbhe off to a Waterford player. Her attempts to scare him off with her stories of sheep farming only increased his interest and he has mentioned visiting UL for rag week!!!!

Sunday saw the end of our weekend with a nice leisurely trip from Belfast back to Limerick. Bomb scares on the line forced us to bus it part of the way and eventually we made it back to lovely Limerick late Sunday evening.

UL Judo Club would like to thank our coaches and our sponsors (Stables, Scholars, The Lodge) and the ULSU for helping us compete at this event.

Our training time, as always, are as follows

### **JUDO**

**Monday** 8:15 - 9:45pm

**Wed & Fri** 7:30 - 9pm

### **Self Defence Classes**

**Wed** 6:30 - 7:30

**Venue:** GYM (old sports building)

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Contact Editor on 202363,  
e-mail: *fergal.fennessy@ul.ie*  
SU-013, Student Centre



## UL Kayak Club Report on The Intervarsities in DCU

A gang of enthusiastic kayakers headed off for the capital on Friday morning last to compete in the Kayaking varsities. We were slightly delayed, when some of us decided to sleep in, but eventually we got on our way.

That evening our kayak polo team put up a brave battle against CIT. In the end our efforts just weren't enough and CIT pulled away with a 3-point win, final score 4 - 1. CIT went on to the final, but were defeated by DCU at around 12.30 that night that night. ULKC by this time were busy with different activities, like corrupting the city with our dancing skills. A great night was had by all esp., our senior boys Deckie, Cathal and Darren. After that night Clare became our new PVG and we never saw Seanie move so fast.

The next morning saw some of us poor souls rising at dawn to compete in the white water race. Andy, Philip Edel and Cathal started well, Andy and Philip were ripping up the water, until near the end, when there was a pile up and Edel and Cathal swam, hard luck guys. We ended coming in fifth in the end.

Ross also did a great job as safety man. By this time the rest of us were just out of bed and were heading to lexslip to

compete in the long distance. We arrived 2 hours early, waited for 4 hours, then DCU decided to call the race off (scam), This was a major disappointment to us. We decided to take a paddle along the lovely liffey (not) away. I decided to be cool and have a go in the sluce (play hole), I lasted 3 seconds then swam, smashing my knees of the rocks. Jimmy and Paul came to my rescue, phew and I got back in and tried again (go Jeni). We picked up Bob the builder on the way down the liffey as well and he is now safely in Two cans house. A fun ending to a fairly disappointing paddling day.

That night ULKC hit the town as the Irish version of ER. We stole the show at the fancy dress, emergency surgery was carried out on a number of occasions. The horse did some illegal horsing and was escorted out early, next time horse bring the girl with you. PVG was on her best behaviour but it was Seanies turn now.

It was a delight to see our new members the American girls enjoying themselves so much. Another wild night, one for the records, but a little not, Kev next time we are strapping your elbows to your side to avoid injury to yourself and to others.

Sunday morning saw us all rise early, some of us more earlier than others, got up eat

breakfast, finished the milk and went back to bed, before anyone else had time to wipe their eyes.

Rodeo day, our clubs favourite, all our pro's were kicking ass on the sluce, Andy with his cool hand tricks, Ross, Jimmy, Deckie, Cathal and our new hot shat Paul, who pulled it from the bag in his redline, (nice one Paul.). Also our brave amateurs took a lash at it. Beth stole the show on the day, first testing the water before going near any boat. Congrats Beth on your first rodeo, you gave us the most laughs ever. I got loads of class pictures of the trip, you can take a look at them yourself on the web, they are defiantly worth a look. We finished sixth overall, but we all had an excellent trip.

Finally we elected a new committee on Sunday evening. Congrats to Mick Fallon and his new team for being elected. Also I would like to thank our last committee for doing such a good job, hope we do as half as good. Hey anyone interested doing worth while for lent! Why not try kayaking, pool sessions Tuesday 9.45 to 11, wed river trip and thurs 7 to 8. So go on and make your life a whole lot healthier and join us wet and wild kayakers.

**C U THEN  
ULKC**

## The Folk Group Are Back

New Semester – new start. The Folk Group are back!!!! Practice as usual Wednesday Night at 8:15 in the Salesian Hostel.

Singers, dancers, musicians, or just all you people who like a bit of craic...all are welcome to join!

And more good news! Preparations for our traditional weekend away in Spanish Point are already under way!!!! So, if you wish to study the local night-life and/or music scene, get to see some of the most magnificent sights in our sweet Co Clare (i.e. Cliffs of Moher, Fanore, Lahinch, Doolin, the Crosses of Annagh-Pub), you know what you have to do, don't you?

Interested? Then come along!

If you have any questions or queries, do not hesitate to contact us. You will find a full list of useful (or not) contacts on our webpage:

[www.csn.ul.ie/~folk](http://www.csn.ul.ie/~folk)

See you there!!!

## UL Trampolining Club Place 3rd in Scotland

UL Trampolining Club competed recently in an International Intervarsity Event in Scotland and performed extremely well. We also have just competed in the Irish Intervarsity and the club took 3rd place in the Team Event beating teams from UCC and DCU who have much longer established clubs. Outstanding Performances from Michelle Delaney (1st P.E) claimed a Silver medal in the Women's Novice event, she was very narrowly beaten by a more experienced Annette Flynn from T.C.D. While Pauric Dooley (3rd P.E) took bronze in the Men's Elite event. Also competing with distinction were Avril Mansfield, Barbara McElvaney, Yvonne Barry, Michelle Carroll and Norah Nelson.

The club would like to thank Bank of Ireland, the Lodge and the UL Sports Department for all their assistance.

Anyone interested in getting involved with the club can contact: 9856986@student.ul.ie



# A Few Announcements

## UL Windsurfing Club Itinerary – Spring Semester 2001

Week 4	Wed 7 <sup>th</sup> March Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> /Sun 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Windsurfing in Killaloe Powerboat Course, Killaloe	Week 10	Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> April	Windsurfing in Killaloe
Week 5	Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Windsurfing in Killaloe	Week 11	Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> April	Windsurfing in Killaloe
Week 6	Wed 21 <sup>st</sup> March	Windsurfing in Killaloe	Wednesday Afternoons: Bus leaves from the Foundation Building Car Park at 2pm and costs £2. All equipment is provided. Coaching also provided. Bus returns to UL at approx. 7pm. Maximum number of places 15.		
Week 7	Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> March 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar - 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Windsurfing in Killaloe <b>Beginners Weekend,</b> Killaloe. Cost: £20 Maximum no. of places: <u>15</u>	For more info see the club noticeboard in the canteen (right of Bank of Ireland Pass machine) or email <a href="mailto:Brian.Leddin">Brian Leddin</a> or <a href="mailto:Diarmuid.Boyle">Diarmuid Boyle</a> .		
Week 8	Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> April	Windsurfing in Killaloe			
Week 9	Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> April 13 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> April	Windsurfing in Killaloe <b>Castlegregory, Co. Kerry.</b> Cost: £30 Maximum no. of places: <u>30</u>			

## UL American Football Club

### Training Monday/Wednesday 5pm

**Astro-turf or Pitch (Bring Runners & Boots)**

**All New Members Welcome**

**e-mail: [info@ulvikings.com](mailto:info@ulvikings.com)**

**website: [www.ulvikngs.com](http://www.ulvikngs.com)**

### UL Dance Society Presents

#### Jazz Dance Classes

Tuesday - 6:15 (Beginners)  
Wednesday - 6:15 (Advanced)

in Dance Studio (Old Sports Building)

#### Belly Dancing

Monday 6-7 (Beginners)  
7-8 (Advanced)

in Scholars Function Room

### Alcoholics Anonymous

Meeting of  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
every Thursday  
in room E0019  
at 6.30p.m

**If you want to drink that's your business,  
if you want to stop that's ours.**

Has your life been affected by  
Alcoholism  
Violence  
Gambling  
Or

Any other addiction or dysfunctional behaviour.

If so  
You are welcome to meetings of Adult Children of Alcoholics and  
Dysfunctional Families.

**When:** every Friday Night

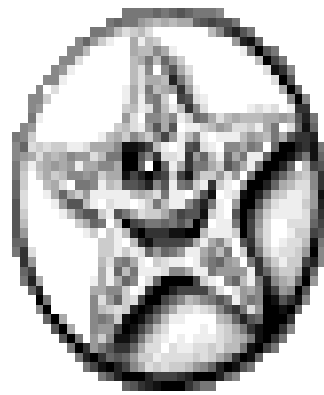
**Where:** Bishops Place,  
Nicholas Street, Limerick.

**Time:** 8.30p.m

# It's in the Stars

so it must be true

Mystic Moriarty tells you what you're in for



**Pisces** 19 February – 19 March  
Changes are taking place in the social side of your life. A friend has been causing you some hassle lately, but new energies will form between ye soon. Don't lose hope!

**Aries** 20 March – 18 April  
Health-wise you are not feeling your full self this week. Be careful not to over-strain yourself. Make and keep time for yourself.

**Taurus** 19 April – 19 May  
Romantically you are in for a pleasant surprise. Someone close has been a bit distant of late but all that's about to change this week.

**Gemini** 20 May – 20 June  
You feel you need to do something new, fresh and exciting. The world is your oyster, just try not to stuff yourself in the process.

**Cancer** 21 June – 21 July  
There's little time for emotion as you need to keep yourself concentrated and motivated. The most important thing is to remain logical and focused.

**Leo** 22 July – 21 August  
Don't wait for that cruise ship to come to you. You have to swim towards it and make the waves move in your direction. Focus.

**Virgo** 22 August – 21 September  
You've got it bad, honey! That four letter word that everyone crazes has you in a mad frenzy. Enjoy it. You deserve it.

**Libra** 22 September – 22 October  
Imagine you're in heaven. You're surrounded by chocolate and marshmallows! That's where you should be now – not in the emotional hell you are experiencing at the moment.

**Scorpio** 23 October – 21 November  
Romantic prospects are good. Expect the unexpected in the most unexpected setting. Love and fun raise their heads this week. Just be prepared.

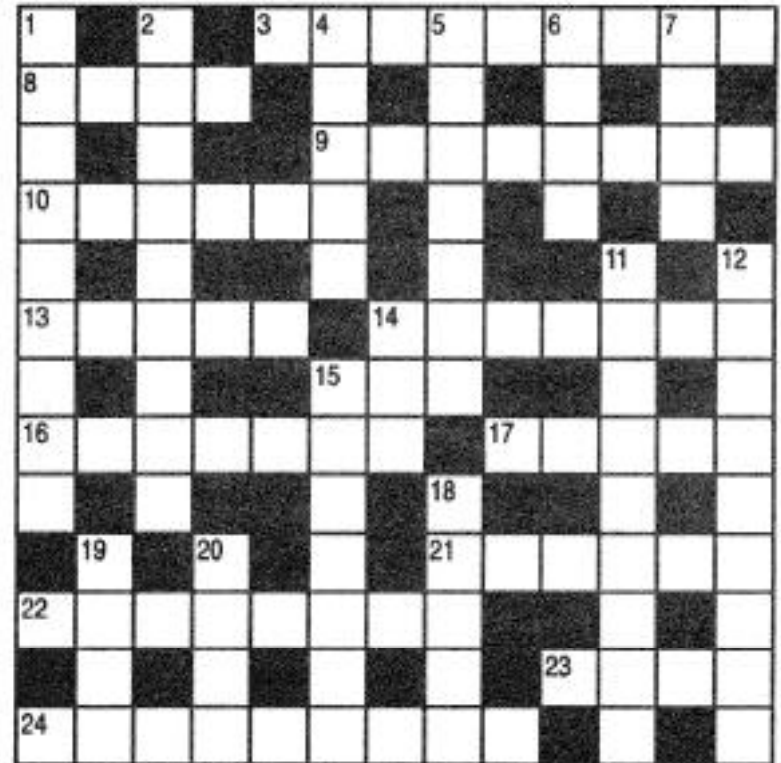
**Sagittarius** 22 November – 20 December  
You are stuck between a rock and a hard place. You need to decide whether to continue on or to move in a different direction. It's your choice.

**Capricorn** 21 December – 19 January  
It feels as though it's you against the world this week. Paranoia is an eight-letter word that restricts the mind from seeing people as they really are – and sometimes they're not all out to get you.

**Aquarius** 20 January – 18 February  
You have the typical bank account of a student – very few digits and usually on the minus side! But all this is set to change as you discover a secret stash! But how long can you keep it a secret or make it last?!

Drop the correct answers into the New 95 Fm &

Win yourself a few CD's



**ACROSS**

- 3. Man's name (Stallone) (9)
- 8. Walked upon (4)
- 9. Not tried (8)
- 10. Goal (6)
- 13. Girl's name (5)
- 14. Short oratorio (7)
- 15. Pop star's devotee (3)
- 16. Null (7)
- 17. Belgian, Swiss money (5)
- 21. Achieve (6)
- 22. Enormous (8)
- 23. Agreement (4)
- 24. Aircraft instrument (9)

**DOWN**

- 1. Fact expressed numerically (9)
- 2. Eating away (9)
- 4. Youngster (5)
- 5. Holy See (7)
- 6. Strip worn over shoulder (4)
- 7. Garden of paradise (4)
- 11. Twin-hulled boat (9)
- 12. Give injection against disease (9)
- 14. Rotter (3)
- 15. Subtlety (7)
- 18. Soothing thing (5)
- 19. Baby horse (4)
- 20. Cartoon bear (4)

le scribble box

# Life through a Lens

## - Sinead's view of Life



As I happily munched into my dinner on Sunday last I (stupidly) made the wholly unreasonable request of asking someone to pass the salt. No reply. I (very, very stupidly) asked again. Better response: Frosty stares, accompanied by a loud shushing noise and a salt seller skidded my direction and collided with my plate. With the power of 20/20 hindsight I suppose I escaped quite luckily, the usual penalty for talking during North West Radio's eloquent commentary of Ballyma-nowhere v Kill-never-heard-of-it is somewhat akin to a paramilitary style murder (in my house).

So in an effort to prolong my existence another few years, and maybe strike a rapport with my GAA mad family I decided to do some research into the ruaile buaile of dangerous Irish contact team sports. Harkening back to primary school, I have vague memories of being made wear *short* shorts and having to run around a mucky football pitch after an inflated pig's bladder, as part of the physical education programme. As a quirk of the wacky educational system the "pitch" doubled as a field for grazing cattle after hours, so as well as suffering hairline fractures of the radius, from the as yet untapped rock quarry underneath, and sand burns in hard to reach places, our school offered the added enjoyment of permanently greening (patriotic eh?) your clothes with a special organic variety of dairy herd dye.

Second level proved much more aerobically and academically effective, and there was a football pitch with *grass* on it (and no cow crap). Enter the violent world of camogie: a necessary evil if you wanted to pass honours Irish, as it was a widely known fact that my Irish teacher only passed people who played on *her* camogie team. All considered, my lack of affection for our national

games, is not, I think unmerited, but still, I braved the Internet for an insight into the sports that so many Irish hold dear to their little green hearts.

Inspired by the *American's Guide to Soccer*, (and it's football, *you guys*) published during the irony of the American hosted World Cup in 1994, I bring you:

### The Idiot's Guide to Gaelic Games

**A** is for Athenry, because I'm being paid to write that, and because they are going to win the Club Hurling Championship in Croke Park on St Patrick's Day.

**B** is for Ball, being chased around a pitch, hopefully not covered in cattle dung and big stones, by big boys in brightly coloured jerseys and shorts, in the rain.

**C** is for Camogie, the sport of the devil and colliding with someone who went for the same ball as you, and having to go to Casualty and leaving on crutches.

**D** is for the Dirt that you will be doused in after training in the rain, and also for very Dangerous, because it is.

**E** is for loss of mental Equilibrium, which occurs whenever you put two opposing supporters into the same room just before a grudge match, and ask who is going to win.

**F** is for Fisticuffs that happen all the time, because it's not a life and death matter, it's much more important than that

**G** is for Guinness who most generously sponsors the National Hurling League, because they really care about the regeneration of national heritage. It's got nothing to do with huge exposure of their product.

**H** is for High tackles because they are fun to watch.

**I** is for Ireland and also Insanity, which is interesting because Wilde described Ireland as "the world's only open air asylum"...

**J** is for jumping up and down every time someone scores and spilling a drink all over the person beside you.

**K** is for wanting to kick the ref when he gives the free to the other team.

**L** is for the Liam MacCarthy Cup, which I will never see up close because I don't think we have a hurling team.

**M** is for Míheal Ó Múirithearthaigh,

who suffers a mental breakdown while commentating.

**N** is for Normal, which really doesn't belong here

**O** is for Operations to repair injuries (see P) and Off-the-Ball-Incidents, also known as assaults causing actual bodily harm, not vitiated by consent, because it's not a part of the game.

**P** is for painful physical and sometimes permanent injuries that happen in the course of play, and pitch invasion, another source of the above.

**Q** is for queuing for hours to buy tickets to stand watching a match in the rain, and then queuing to go to the toilet, get something to eat and finally to get out.

**R** is for the soon to be renamed and reformed RUC, who weren't allowed to play Gaelic Games – why did they think no one was joining?

**S** is for Slíotar, a very dangerous weapon in the wrong hands.

**T** is for torturous post-match analysis on the television and radio and in the pub and everywhere you go for a year afterwards.

**U** is for ubiquitous victorious fans who really rub it in because they won and you didn't

**V** is for violent sports, because they really are.

**W** is for wannbe Irish people, who wish they were and try to pretend by playing Gaelic Games by their own rules.

**X** is for xenophobia because we don't want to play stupid foreign games.

**Y** is for yellow, because it's in almost every jersey (look at the crests), which is a pity because it's a bad colour with an Irish complexion

**Z** is for do it yourself Zebra Crossing, which you can make by placing the Sligo team lying head to toe across a road.

