

# AN FOCAL

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FREE

## ULSU TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST FEES



Students protest on Thomond Bridge.  
Credit: Denis Vahey

By Aoife Ní Raghallaigh - Editor

**THE UNIVERSITY of Limerick Students' Union has vowed to continue the fight against the reintroduction of third level fees following an announcement by the Department of Education on Thursday, August 20. The statement, which was circulated by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), confirmed that all incoming first years will be informed that they may be liable for fees from next year.**

ULSU was mandated by the student body to campaign against the reintroduction of third level fees in any form by a plebiscite last semester and ULSU President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, stated that the Union would continue to do whatever possible to stop the reintroduction of fees. "This year, instead of each union around the country working alone in the fight against fees, the unions will be coming together for a more unified response to this threat". It is hoped that a unified approach and campaign against fees will be

much stronger and more effective than a number of singular voices. During the summer ULSU officers met with other Union representatives on three separate occasions; at UOS Training, at the Forum of University Students' Unions (FUSU) and most recently representatives from the Munster colleges met. On each occasion the threat of fees was discussed in detail, as was the best way to lead the campaign against third level fees. A number of local, regional and national campaigns have taken place and are in development as a result of these discussions.

Following FUSU the decision was made to take a full page colour advert in The Irish Times on the day of the CAO results. The advert, which was booked in conjunction with 24 other unions throughout the Republic of Ireland, informed students and their parents of the cost of a four year degree plus the cost of living, if fees are introduced; €70,000. The advertisement listed every TD in Ireland as well as their position on fees and urged students and their parents to write

to their local TD. The advert called on everyone to lobby those who were in favour of fees to change their stance and to commend those who are against the reintroduction of fees. Speaking on the matter Mr Dillon McLoughlin said that aim of the advert "was to empower students and parents with the information needed to lobby their local representatives. Fees, in any form, will have a significant impact on families of potential third level students. At this time of economic uncertainty, when parents are already worried about the cost of education it is detrimental to introduce additional costs. Furthermore these costs will not improve standards in third level education as the introduction of fees will not lead to an increase in funding to universities." He also stated that "due to substantial pressure resulting from the advert, a number of TDs have now changed their position on fees".

Campaigns and Services Officer, Fergal Dempsey, also clarified that "the advert was about sending a message to all 166 TDs that the general

public cannot afford an additional unwarranted expense". In addition Mr Dillon McLoughlin stated that the reintroduction of fees will not solve the current economic situation but rather it will result in creating a long term barrier to third level education as students will be deterred from entering education on account of the substantial debt they will incur as a result. A regional protest has also been organised following a meeting with representatives of Students' Unions in the southern region. The protest, which will take place on Thursday, 8 October (Week 5), will start at University College Cork and will see students from Waterford, Tralee, Limerick, Cork and Carlow marching through the city. A similar protest, which was held during the last academic, saw 6000 students take to the streets to campaign. It is hoped that this number will increase at this year's campaign. Mr Dillon McLoughlin assured incoming first years that the Union would do everything in its power to prevent the reintroduction of third level fees.

## UL Celebrates 20th Anniversary

By Jason Kennedy - Chief News Correspondent

**THIS year, the University of Limerick celebrates its 20th anniversary with University status.**

Formerly known as the Institute of Higher Education, UL was granted University status on the 12th January 1989 by the then Minister for Education Mary O'Rourke. Ms O'Rourke told An Focal that she still follows the progress of the University and is interested to see where it goes next.

"I would like to wish all the Students and Staff of the University all the best and continued success in their work. I consider

granting Limerick a University as one of my personal highlights in my time as Minister for Education. It was an honour."

Current Minister of Education, Batt O'Keefe says that UL's facilities are something to be proud of. "Over the past two decades the university has grown from just under 4,000 students to more than 10,000 today.

The university offers a top quality educational experience at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and its graduates have a record of high employability. Congratulations to all the students and staff at the University of Limerick, both past and present, as they celebrate 20 years as a university." Minister

O'Keefe also spoke to An Focal about fees, which he claimed involved "complex and competing considerations.

I appreciate its sensitivity; however, it is an issue that merits consideration at this important juncture in the development of higher education and also given the current economic circumstances. I have signalled that it is not my intention to recommend any new form of student contribution be introduced before 2010. In the event that it is decided to introduce a form of student contribution from a future point, such arrangements would also apply, from that time, to those students who would have entered higher education this year."

Campaigning for a University in Limerick started in 1845, when the then Mayor of Limerick tried to get Queens College in the city, which instead went to Belfast, Galway and Dublin. On Thursday, June 1st, 1989, the University of Limerick Act was passed through the Seanad, ensuring the Treaty City

would be granted a University. That day, over 5,000 people turned up on campus to celebrate, including UL's founding president, Dr Edward Walsh, founder of Ryanair, Dr Tony Ryan and Deputies Michael Noonan and Willie O'Dea.

Also present was Chuck Feeney, the Billionaire from America who donated millions to UL. He also flew over a number of crates of Champagne to celebrate the day.

Dr Walsh claimed that it was "an emotionally packed day. It was the end of a long, long struggle. It was almost an emotional achievement knowing the many generations who were involved in attempting to achieve this." Currently, UL is in the list of top 600 Universities in the world.

On Thursday, May 28th, UL started the 20th anniversary celebrations, with music provided by the Funk Junkies, Jazzology, Cruinniu with Orlaith Ni Bhriain and also included dancers from the Irish World Academy.



# An Focal Digest

## In Brief

### New Sabbatical officers take up office

At the official handover ceremony on 12 June, the sabbatical officers from 2008/09 passed on the baton to the new incoming team. Former SU President Pa O'Brien wished his successor, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin and his team best wishes for their term of office during 2009/10.

Mr Dillon McLoughlin paid a tribute to the former officers and thanked them for their hard work over the past year.

Mr Dillon McLoughlin will lead Derek Daly (DP/Welfare Officer), Aoife Finnerty (VP/Education Officer), Fergal Dempsey (VP/Campaigns & Services Officer) and Aoife Ní Raghallaigh (VP/Communications Officer) for the coming year.

### UL Class of 2009 Graduates

Over 2,300 students graduated from UL during the Conferring Week which ran from 25 August to 28 August. The Conferring Week began with the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and ended on Friday with the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences. Speaking at the ceremonies President Don Barry wished all the graduates the very best in the future and explained that the numbers of students gaining employment after graduating from UL is still quite high.

### New Admin Secretary

Lucy Walsh has joined the Accounts department of the Students' Union over the summer. Ms Walsh will be covering for Róisín Monaghan while she is on maternity leave.

Ms Monaghan gave birth to a baby girl, Eleanor, on 24 July 2009. The Students' Union send their congratulations to Ms Monaghan and baby Eleanor and wish Ms Walsh all the best in her employment with ULSU.

### Communications Office Gets Environmental

In an attempt to be more environmentally friendly, the Communications Office, which produces An Focal and Pulse has reduced the print run of both publications. Traditionally 3,000 copies of each issue are printed but this has now been reduced to 2,500. This figure will be reviewed after a number of issues. The possibility of providing recycling facilities for An Focal and Pulse is also being investigated.

## Editorial

Since the Union took an advert in The Irish Times a couple of weeks ago I have been steadfastly emailing my local TDs regarding their position on fees. I was initially dismayed by the fact that, of the five TDs in the Carlow-Kilkenny constituency, only one, Mary White of the Green Party, had disclosed their position on fees. Upon contacting them I was even more dismayed by those politicians who did not clarify their position as they initially seemed extremely unwilling to state whether they were in favour or opposed to the reintroduction of third level fees.

Of the five TDs in my area, all but one, the aforementioned Mary White, have replied to

me. I am pleased to say that Phil Hogan, Fine Gael TD, has stated that he is opposed to the reintroduction of third level fees. Similarly, Bobby Aylward, Fianna Fáil TD, explained that he thinks a realistic threshold should be set and that: "It is entirely reasonable that those who are in a position to pay should pay". I would agree with this stance in a perfect World but unfortunately this is not a route I believe the Government will take. I'm also sure that if the Government did use this approach at first I'm sure the threshold for fees will be gradually lowered until all families are required to pay third level fees.

The least satisfactory responses came from John McGuinness and MJ Nolan, both of Fianna Fáil. I repeatedly asked them one simple question; "Are you in favour or opposed to the reintroduction of fees in any

form?" and clarified that I would be basing my vote in the next General Election on this, and this alone. Both TDs responded to me by saying that they would have to see the proposals given to the Government before they made a decision on their stance. In my opinion, this means that they are open to fees and as such I have informed them that I will not be voting for them. I also think it is saddening that the people who are supposed to represent me are unable to take a firm stance on such an important issue.

Copies of the advert, as well as responses to politicians, are available on [www.ulsu.ie](http://www.ulsu.ie). I would strongly urge you to contact your local TD and lobby them against the reintroduction of fees. Can you really afford €70,000 for a four year degree? If not, let them know.

Your voice is more powerful than you think.



Russycat Dollies entertain during Orientation Week

## Quotes of the Summer

**"What? We have to wear clothes to this?"**

- President Ruán Dillon McLoughlin is uncertain about what happens at Handover.

**"Is that microwave thing recording?"**

- CSO Fergal Dempsey confuses a Dictaphone for a Cooking Appliance.

**"I'm like a padded bra, I don't want to misrepresent the goods"**

- A salesman in response to CSO Fergal Dempsey complimenting his sales pitch.

**"How the fuck did my bike get out there?"**

- CSO Fergal Dempsey gets a shock when he looks out the window... at the bike rack.

**"Ruán thought I wanted him to have sex with my hot chocolate"**

- Communication Officer Aoife Ní Raghallaigh after President Ruán Dillon McLoughlin clearly misunderstands her.

**"I have to get back to feed the machine in my office"**

- Welfare Officer Derek Daly is up to strange things in his office.

## And thanks to...

**News Editor** – Finn McDuffie  
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# Students' Union 2009/10

**IN A TIME** when fees are looming over us like a dark cloud, your Students' Union feel that it is important to approach every challenge with a unified response. As such, instead of posting six individual manifestoes, we have decided to print one incorporated manifesto.

The aim of the combined manifesto is to show the students that the officers of the Union will support each other fully on every issue, campaign and plan. A unified response and a strong support system between the officers will ensure that the students receive the best service possible from the Students' Union.

We have been working hard since June to put our plans in place and will continue to work as hard, if not harder, for the next nine months. We will be more than happy to help you if there is anything you feel we should be doing or if there is something that you feel we are not doing right. We are also more than welcoming to any student who wishes to get involved with the Union, so let us know.

We look forward to working for you and representing you during the next year.

Hope you have a great year,

Ruán, Derek, Aoife F, Fergal, Aoife Ní and Michael.

ULSU Sabbatical Officers 2009/10.



## What your Students' Union plans to do for you this year.

1. Raise the profile of the Union on the North campus by holding regular clinics in a designated Union office.
2. Relaunch the ULSU and PSA website and ensure that both are regularly updated.
3. Aid students with budgeting and grants to try and prevent students from suffering financially.
4. Increase crèche spaces for student parents and initiate an after school program for older children.
5. Tackle accommodation issues in the community.
6. Increase the amount of 24 hour study spaces available.
7. Improve the quality of the playing pitches so that UL truly can be called a "sporting campus".
8. Commit to a long term Quality Audit of the Union in order to provide the best services to the student.
9. Ensure Class Reps are used properly and to their full potential.
10. Setting up a system of lecturer evaluation which is controlled by the students and not the lecturers, giving students the option to evaluate lecturers who don't submit to that.
11. Increase awareness of the Union by increasing communication between students and the Union and through continual publicity campaigns.
12. Encourage students to get involved with their Union and to use the many services provided for them.
13. Continual student health campaigns including campaigns focusing on mental, physical and sexual health.
14. Make the Union more environmentally friendly by recycling, using less paper and reducing the print run of An Focal and Pulse.
15. Continuing to fight the Government on the reintroduction of third level fees!

ULEnviroCom  
**Twitter**

UL Environmental Com  
 is now on twitter

<http://twitter.com/ULEnviroCom>



# ULSU Sabbatical Officers 2009/10



**Name:** Ruán Dillon McLoughlin.

**Position:** President.

**What did he do:** Construction Management and Engineering.

**What does he do now:** As President Ruán has to look after the day to day running of the Students' Union and make sure all the other Officers do their jobs. He also works with the Secretary General to look after the Union finances. When he's not doing all that he sits on hundreds of Committees where he represents you, the student.

**Contact:** 0860435300 or supresident@ul.ie



**Name:** Derek Daly.

**Position:** Deputy President/Welfare Officer.

**What did he do:** Accounting and Personnel.

**What does he do now:** Derek looks after any the many welfare issues a student might while at college including, but not limited to issues with accommodation, financial worries, or health problems. If you have a problem, call into his office and have a chat. Don't worry; he's heard it all before.

**Contact:** 0860435301 or suwelfare@ul.ie



**Name:** Aoife Finnerty.

**Position:** Vice President/Education Officer.

**What did she do:** Law and European Studies.

**What does she do now:**

I am here to assist with any academic problems faced by students. Basically if it's to do with your course, I'm the one to come to. I represent students at dozens of educational committees, to make sure that the university remember that decisions it makes affect students! Finally, I coordinate the Class Reps system, running elections, running Class Reps Council, giving advice on Class Parties and hoodies.

**Contact:** 0860435302 or sueducation@ul.ie



**Name:** Fergal Dempsey.

**Position:** Vice President/Campaigns and Services Officer.

**What did he do:** Health and Safety.

**What does he do now:** Fergal does exactly what it says on the tin. He looks after all the campaigns the SU runs as well as making sure all the services the Union provides are running the way they should. Fergal also works with our Ents partners, eightball, to bring you gigs and events.

**Contact:** 0860435303 or sucso@ul.ie



**Name:** Aoife Ní Raghallaigh.

**Position:** Vice President/Communications Officer.

**What did she do:** An Ghaeilge agus na Meáin Úra.

**What does she do now:**

Aoife puts together the SU publications, *An Focal* and *Pulse*, and updates the website ([www.ulsu.ie](http://www.ulsu.ie)). She also looks after publicity so it's up to her to make sure you know what's going on around campus.

**Contact:** 0860435304 or sucommunications@ul.ie



**Name:** Michael Bourke.

**Position:** Postgraduate Students' Association President.

**What did he do:** MA European Integration.

**What does he do now:** Michael sits on 163 different committees (not all active thankfully) and represents 2,500 postgrads in UL and all the Mary I PGs also.

He organises social events, maintains the PSA website [www.postgrads.ie](http://www.postgrads.ie) and makes sure that there's tea, coffee, milk and papers in the common room each day.

**Contact:** 0860435305 or psapresident@ul.ie

## UL brewing up a storm for Milford Hospice

By David Studer

THE HOSPICE community has launched a special appeal asking the public to support Ireland's Biggest Coffee Morning as hospice providers are facing more serious challenges in providing services to patients and their families, due to cutbacks in public funding and increasing demand for services.

Ireland's Biggest Coffee Morning, which is sponsored by Bewleys, was launched at Bewley's Café Grafton Street on the 17th August by Sharon Ní Bheoláin. The occasion is an all-island fundraising event, which raises vital funds for local hospice care services throughout Ireland. Now in its 16th year, Ireland's Biggest Coffee Morning 2009 will take place on Thursday 17th September 2009 (Week 2) and the target is to raise €2.5 million – that's over 1.25 million cups of Bewley's coffee.

People in workplaces, homes and local organisations across Ireland are being asked to hold a coffee morning and to collect €2 for each cup of Bewley's fresh ground coffee consumed. All money raised locally stays locally and goes directly back to fund local Hospice care services.

Milford Hospice, which is nestled between the East Gate and the Main Entrance to the University, is the main specialist palliative care service provider for the people of the Mid-West Region. Given the fantastic work that goes on in Milford, this year both the Students' Union and Postgraduate Students Association, as well as various departments in UL, are hosting Coffee Mornings in aid of Milford Hospice.

The SU Coffee Morning will be taking place all day in the SU Common Room on Thursday 17th September. The PSA Coffee Morning will be running from 10am on the same day for all in the PSA Common Room. PSA President, Michael Bourke, will be leaving the collection box for Coffee Morning throughout week 2 so any donations during your coffee break that week will of course be welcome!



AnnMarie Hayes, Fundraising Supervisor with Milford Hospice, Sharon Ní Bheoláin, Patricia Bewley

## ULSU hosts FUSU

By Aoife Ní Raghallaigh - Editor

THE UNIVERSITY of Limerick Students' Union played host to the Forum of University Students' Unions (FUSU) on Tuesday, August 4. The day long forum, which was held in the White House and the Students' Union facilitated the sharing of information between officers on a number of issues.

ULSU President, Ruán Dillon McLoughlin, explained that FUSU "is a medium through which all university students' unions can sit down and discuss issues affecting universities across the sector". Mr Dillon McLoughlin also stated that FUSU is a means of establishing which issues are relevant to everyone and not just isolated to one university. It also allows the unions to ascertain how such issues are tackled by other officers or unions.

A number of issues were discussed in detail at the recent meeting of FUSU. The day long forum began with a large group discussion before the officers split into two smaller groups for informal discussion.

The officers discussed how they could raise the profile of the union amongst their respective students and also what steps could be taken to encourage non-traditional students, such as Post Grads and Mature Students, to become involved in the union.

The majority of the group discussion time was spent covering university funding and finances, as well as the issue of fees. While the threat of fees is one which was not lessened in recent months, the members of FUSU are optimistic that a continual campaign against the reintroduction of third level fees will see the unions emerge as successful in their fight against fees. It is hoped that a number of national, unified campaigns against the reintroduction of fees will emerge from these discussions.

The current members of FUSU are University College Cork, Dublin City University, Trinity University, University College Dublin, NUI Maynooth, University of Limerick, NUI Galway and DIT. Representatives from UCC, DCU, TCD, NUIM, UL and NUIG were in attendance at the most recent FUSU meeting.

# New student email system in place

**STUDENTS returning after the summer holidays will be greeted by a new email system after ITD changed to the Microsoft Outlook Live system. ITD made the decision to move to the web-based system as it provides more storage and space for the student. The change to the new system took place throughout the summer.**

Students who have previously used the old system will notice a number of changes now the new system is in place. Previously the student email address had been IDnumber@student.ul.ie but this has now changed to IDnumber@studentmail.ul.ie in accordance with the new system. Access to the email system had previously been available from the desktop of any on campus computer via an Outlook shortcut or via a weblink for off campus access. In comparison students can now access their email from the one address, <https://outlook.com> as the system is not based entirely online. This allows students to always have the same level of access regardless of their location. Public Folders will no longer be used as Microsoft has decided to remove

this feature from their new technology. Instead students will be required to use a Sharepoint system which features portals sites for lecturers and exam papers which can be easily bookmarked. Tracey McKillen of ITD explained: "Sharepoint works in the same way as Public Folders but is just a more modern take on it".

Ms McKillen also pointed out that the new email system provides the student with much more storage space. Students were regularly frustrated that the previous system left them with very little storage space for emails. The Outlook Live system allows the user to send emails up to 20MB in size but also provides a "Skydrive" which allows the student to store their documents online without taking away from the mailbox storage. The Skydrive also allows the user to store documents in private folders, which can only be seen by the user, or public folders which allows sharing of files via email.

For more information on the new email system and how to use it visit the ITD website at [www.ul.ie/itd](http://www.ul.ie/itd)

# Safe Cabs for safe students

**THE UNIVERSITY of Limerick Students' Union will continue to operate a Safe Cabs scheme in conjunction with Plassey Cabs for the coming academic year.**

The aim of the scheme is to ensure that no student is left stranded without being able to get home. Students who have registered for the scheme and find themselves in a situation where they are in need of a taxi home but can't afford it will be able to get a taxi home from Plassey Cabs. They will then be able to pay their fare in the Students' Union the following morning.

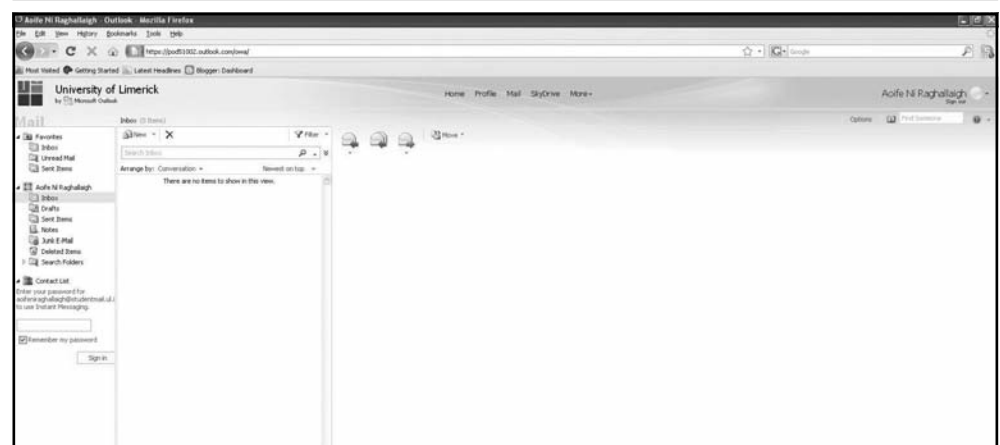
Students can register for the scheme at the reception of the Students' Union at a cost of

€2. Students will receive a registration number which they can quote to the taxi driver when they wish to avail of the service.

On entering the taxi the student should inform the driver they wish to use the Safe Cabs service. The driver will then take the registration number of the student before bringing the student home. The student must pay for the taxi in the Students' Union the following.

The Students' Union encourages all students to use the service responsibly as it is a service provided to ensure students safety.

To find out more information please log onto [www.ulsu.ie](http://www.ulsu.ie).



# Languages Week - Something for Everyone

**As part of the celebrations for the upcoming European Day of Languages (held every year on 26 September), the first UL Languages Week will be held from Monday 21 - Friday 25 September. The aim of this campus-wide event is to promote awareness of languages and language learning.**

A series of multilingual events, including poetry readings, language taster classes, workshops and film screenings will be held on campus, and various campus restaurants will offer theme days with typical food from

different countries. These will be complemented by visiting speakers, a book launch and a panel discussion on language-related themes.

The results of a survey on the language profile of the campus community will also be published.

In emphasising that this is to become an annual event, the Head of the Department of Languages and Cultural Studies, Dr Jean Conacher, explained, "UL is a multilingual campus with many language-learning opportunities, and LCS has an excellent record

in winning European Language Awards for a variety of teaching and learning projects.

Equally, sociolinguistic, literary and intercultural questions central to our understanding of the role language and culture play in society in Ireland, Europe and beyond are being explored by faculty and postgraduate students in a wide range of nationally and internationally funded projects."

Looking beyond Languages Week, Dr Conacher added, "Ireland needs to become increasingly international in outlook if it is to

prosper again in future, whilst retaining what is unique and special about its own cultural and linguistic heritage.

We hope that everyone will come along to the wide range of free events on campus, explore the new Languages Building to be opened officially later this year, and find out more about what opportunities languages can open up for them now and in the future."

For further details on UL Languages Week, see <http://www.ul.ie/~lcs/>





# Swine Flu Pandemic

By Emma Hayward

STATISTICS from 21 August, show 678 confirmed Swine Flu cases in Ireland and 2 deaths so far. There could be many more unconfirmed cases all over the country as not all possible cases are routinely tested. The level of Pandemic is classed as "moderate" and for most, this means the virus will be mild and self-limiting.

The virus is simply a new strain of Influenza A, the normal, seasonal flu. Swine Flu, originally called Influenza A(H1N1) is now officially renamed as Pandemic H1N1. Pandemic flu spreads rapidly from person to person and reaches many parts of the world. Part of the Swine Flu threat is "Its ability to transmit readily from human to human," said a GP. It spreads like normal Flu, in droplets that are released from an infected person when coughing or sneezing.

Students returning to college for the new academic year fall into the age group that is most affected by the Flu, "The peak incidence of flu cases to date has been the 15-34 year old age group."

"The people most at risk from Swine Flu are pregnant women, asthmatics, the morbidly obese (with a BMI greater than 40), those with chronic illnesses of heart, kidneys, lungs and also people who are on immunosuppressant treatment for an illness like cancer."

The University of Limerick is working in line with current HSE public health guidelines to combat swine flu, as the UL Influenza Pandemic Working Group are implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce impact of Swine Flu. Hand sanitiser will soon be placed in a high traffic areas and students and staff have been urged to use this frequently.

In addition staff and students have been asked to sneeze or cough into a tissue and to wash their hands with hot water and soap on a regular basis.

Doctors have also advised us to keep good hygiene measures, to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and to stay at home for seven days if infected. The typical symptoms include high temperature, fever, cough, muscular aches and pains, sore throat, runny nose, diarrhoea and vomiting. Because these symptoms are similar to other infections, it is important for people to contact their doctor if their condition deteriorates. A vaccine will be available soon in Ireland and according to a doctor, "The earliest date that the vaccine is expected is the 28th of September."

The vaccine is currently undergoing drug trials and more information on the vaccine and Swine Flu can be found on the following websites : [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).



## Information for the Public on Influenza A(H1N1)

Preventing the spread of germs is the single most effective way to slow the spread of influenza or flu.

You should always:

- Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- Place used tissues in a bin as soon as possible
- Ensure everyone washes their hands regularly with soap and water
- Clean surfaces regularly to get rid of germs

If you think you have flu, please avoid close contact with others, stay at home and seek medical advice by phoning your doctor or the Flu Information Line.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Chills
- Headache and body aches

Further information is available on [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) or [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

Flu Information Line  
Freephone 1800 94 11 00



# UL staff take part in Climate Camp

By Seamus Ryan

UL staff members and alumni were at the heart of the organisation of Ireland's first Climate Camp, which took place throughout last week at Shannonbridge in County Offaly. The self-sustaining eco-camp attracted participants from all parts of Ireland as camp members to highlight problems environmentalists perceive with the peat-burning power station in the area as well as to influence the path of environmental

action in Ireland. Nancy Serrano, working at UL in RCE-Ireland (the UN regional centre for Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development) and one of the organisers of the week's activities, was clear about the purpose of the week-long event: "The main aims of the camp are to take direct action on the root causes of climate change, to build the environmental movement in Ireland, to educate through workshops and to be an example of sustainable living".

"Peat is dirtier than coal and the entire Irish boglands will be gone in 15 years at the current harvest rate," Ms Serrano stressed, highlighting that peat generates three times the emissions of coal, despite its frequent presentation as a cleaner fuel.

UL's climate camp participants also included former Students' Union Presidents and environmental campaigners Eoin O'Broin (president from 2002 to 2004) and St John Ó Donnabháin (president from 2006 to 2008).

The numbers at the camp swelled to over 200 people last Saturday as participants took part in a day of action including a colourful protest march through Shannonbridge itself to urge the government to close the power station. "We're calling on the people of Ireland to help us shut down the plant because we don't have the time to wait," according to Nancy Serrano. She added: "People in the midlands deserve better community-oriented sustainable jobs. We need to think long-term and we need to start now."



# UL Alumnus to row across the Atlantic

By Finn McDuffie, News Editor

LIMERICK man Sean McGowan will tackle his life's ambition and begin rowing across the Atlantic this December. A participant in the Atlantic Rowing Race 2009, Mr. McGowan will row what has been described as one of the toughest races in the world. Having undergone 12 months of "punishing" physical training, his race will begin in the Canary Islands and finish in Antigua in the Caribbean. He will cover 2,500 nautical miles and the journey is expected to take over 70 days.

The family man joined the Shannon rowing club aged 14. "From the moment I was pushed off from the slipway and felt the water move underneath a boat I was hooked," he says. His past achievements include over 30 trophies at

junior and senior national level. Inspired by a news report about another Atlantic voyage, he became "hooked" on the idea of rowing the Atlantic.

Mr. McGowan's preparation and training has been rigorous. "It is impossible to replicate or completely understand the tremendous physical strain on the body during the 70 days at sea," he says. "To get a taste for it, go to your local gym and try rowing for an hour [...] rating 20 strokes per minute, cover each 500 meters in an average of about two minutes and 10 seconds. Take a 30 minute break and repeat the exercise 13 times. Take four hours sleep and do the same for 70 days." Mental preparation has also been important. "Most failures are attributed to lack of mental preparation rather than the physical." Fergal O'Callaghan has helped Mr. McGowan

with his training program. Mr. O'Callaghan is a rower in Shannon Rowing Club and studied PE teaching in UL. He now works with Munster Rugby. Physical training has required muscle building as fuel for the 70 day journey. Training has involved working with dietician Andrea Cullen. "She is tough," says Mr. McGowan, "the diet is a complete shock but within a week or two you feel much better." The diet includes minerals, vitamins and dietary supplements. These aid physical preparation and ensure the body can cope with stress at sea and avoid fatigue. Mr. McGowan is making a daily food plan with his dietician and will take freeze-dried foods on his journey. "They are easy to reconstitute and I'm told, relatively nourishing and tasty. It's a case of add hot water, simmer for a few minutes and eat." Coping with being

alone in the middle of an ocean, during a storm at night is a daunting prospect. But a stoic Mr. McGowan says "there isn't a way out. You put your head down and get on with it. It will end at some stage."

His boat has two cabins. The front cabin houses supplies including a life raft and sea anchor. Two solar panels charge two large, gel-filled marine batteries. The batteries power a desalination unit, a VHF radio, a laptop and a short-wave radio.

Mr. McGowan is taking on the Atlantic in aid of Soweto Connection, an Irish charity that fundraises for six aid groups in South Africa. All money raised goes directly to Africa. More information is available at [www.sowetococonnection.org](http://www.sowetococonnection.org) and [www.atlantic09.com](http://www.atlantic09.com)

## IRCSET funding crisis

By Michael Bourke

**TWO WEEKS ago postgraduate and post doctoral students in receipt of funding from the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET) received an email forewarning of large future cuts in the council's spending.** This decision has implications for students currently funded by IRCSET, all potential IRCSET scholars and research itself in the University of Limerick as IRCSET is one of the largest funders of research students in the University. IRCSET funds research in areas such as maths, chemistry, physics, computer science, molecular biology and earth science. It was established in 2001, and current members of the Board include Prof. Julian Ross of the Chemical and Environmental Science department (CES). There is no threat, however, to currently funded students as confirmed by the Dean of the Graduate School, Prof. John Breen. All IRCSET funded students are on a semi-contract which ultimately means they cannot have their scholarship removed. However any requirements for extra seed funding from IRCSET and extensions will virtually be unattainable.

The McCarthy report or as it is better known An Bord Snip Nua has called for a 15% reduction in the science, innovation and technology sector. If the recommendations are fully implemented this means there will be no funding extensions for those whose

scholarships end in 2010, and there will also be no new awards to undergraduate and potential post-doctoral students wishing to apply for this award next year.

The students that have the potential to suffer most from these spending cut back are the future research postgraduates. It is widely acknowledged that the numbers of research scholarships available in Ireland will either dramatically decrease or the stipend (the monthly allowance that each postgraduate research gets to live on) will decrease. For example, current PhD students receiving an IRCSET scholarship receive a yearly tax free stipend of €16,000. This is considered in many circles as too high particularly in regards to what levels stipends were previously at 12 years ago, and current economic conditions in Ireland. Pre-Celtic Tiger times there were no stipends, and when research stipends were initially introduced they were around €6,000. In a short space of time they jumped from €6,000 to €12,000 and then to €16,000. Some research PhD scholarships advertised in 2008 had stipend levels of €18,000-€20,000. Unless the Irish economy dramatically improves in the next year, very few stipends of this level will be available this year.

Despite government calls for the development of an "Education" society, their future actions if dictated by the McCarthy report will dramatically hinder this.

## CAO points rise for majority of courses

**STUDENTS do not appear to have been influenced by the current economic crisis and fears regarding the return of third level fees as CAO figures show a rise in points for the majority of courses on offer at the University of Limerick.**

The CAO offers, which were released on Monday, 17 August, showed an increase in the points required for 37 of the 75 courses available, while only 25 courses dropped in points. Points for 11 courses did not change at all. The biggest drops in points between 2008 and 2009 were incurred by Business Studies with Japanese which fell by 80 points, and Computer Aided Engineering and Design which went down by 70 points. The biggest gain in points was incurred by Irish Music and Dance which increased by 70 points. Public

Administration increased from 315 points to 340 but places were offered at random selection. This varies from last year when every student who received sufficient points was successful in obtaining a place.

Education Officer, Aoife Finnerty, explained that the increase in points is the result of a number of places being cut from courses but also to balance out the drop in applicants that was experienced during the previous two years. Ms Finnerty also stated: "Every year points rise and fall and the change doesn't appear to be any more drastic than other years. Students always narrowly miss out on courses regardless of how much points rise or fall and if this is the case, they shouldn't be disheartened".

Successful first year students completed their Orientation last week.





## Postgrad News

**HELLO and welcome to the PSA section of An Focal. I hope those of you returning to UL are settling back in, and a huge welcome to all new students. The Postgraduate Student Association (PSA) is the representative organisation for all Postgrads in UL and MIC and fulfils many of the roles of the SU exclusively for Postgrads.**

### COMMON ROOM

The PSA Common Room has had a facelift over the summer and has already seen an increase of use. The Common Room is the first point of contact between the PSA and its members (that's all Postgrads remember) and allows Postgrads to meet in a relaxed atmosphere. Help yourselves to free tea and coffee or even just read the paper in between classes. The Common Room is also our venue for smaller social gatherings including the official opening of the PSA Common Room in Week 1. Make sure you check out our new website for information on this event which will include a DJ and a free wine reception. This will be a great opportunity for Postgrads to meet one another and get sample of what the rest of the year holds. For further details check out the new website [www.postgrads.ie](http://www.postgrads.ie)

### GET INVOLVED

The PSA aims to create a community among all Postgrads on campus through events and building up support networks for PSA members. The PSA only has one full-time sabbatical officer and so it depends on involvement from its members. One of the many ways you can get involved is becoming a member of the executive, which will be elected at the AGM on the 1st of October at 12.45 in the PSA Common Room. The positions include Deputy President, Treasurer, Publicity Officer and Events Officer. The Mary I Rep, Shane O'Sullivan has already been elected. Application forms can be collected from my office from Week 2. I am also interested in reforming or adding some positions, possibly adding a PhD representative; again if anyone is interested please email me at [psapresident@ul.ie](mailto:psapresident@ul.ie)

### CHILD CARE BURSARIES

The PSA provides a LIMITED number of childcare bursaries; application forms are available from my office and from the SU reception. Application forms must be completed in full and be accompanied with all supporting documentation. The deadline for application is 5pm on Wednesday the 16th of September. The fund is very limited and is always oversubscribed so applications cannot be processed after the deadline.

### PSA EVENTS

In addition to the Official Opening of the Common Room, there will be a number of events throughout the year. This Year the PSA has teamed up with eightball promotions to offer all PSA members a discount on entry into The Release Party every Friday night in Aubars of Thomas Street. This is a club night that has already built up a following among Postgrads over its short history and it promises not to disappoint. There will be plenty of other events both in the Common Room and other venues across the city so make sure you check out the website regularly - [www.postgrads.ie](http://www.postgrads.ie)

### CLASS REPS

Class Reps is a system that is traditionally undersubscribed by Postgrads but I cannot stress the importance of having a class rep. Application forms will be available from my office and from the SU reception, the SU education officer and from the SU admin secretary. Not having a class rep means not having a voice and in this climate of cuts that could prove disastrous for your class. The first Class Reps Council will be held Tuesday the 15th of September in CSG01 at 6pm.

Well... that's all for now folks, please check out the refurbished Common room and our new and improved website [www.postgrads.ie](http://www.postgrads.ie) I'm also in need of some writers for news and events listings on the site, this will be done through the publicity officer once elected but in the mean time email me if you are interested. I hope you are all looking forward to a great year ahead and if there is anything I can do to make it a better year for you just let me know.



Michael, PSA President

# Welcome from the SU President

**WELCOME back all of you returning for another year in UL and welcome to all of you who are starting your UL experience, may you all have a wonderful year! Well since you all left our good auld economy has still refused to cooperate and as a result we are all trying to cut down on the basics in a bid to hold onto some of the luxuries we have enjoyed over the past few years.**

You will be glad to know that we at your Union are doing our best to help with this.

Here are a few of the ways the union can help you save:

- Save on petrol and clamping, get a bike for pretty much cost price from our Bike shop.
- Save on copying notes with the cheapest photocopying on campus in the SU.
- Save on the hangovers and hit our top class Comedy gigs!
- Save on on-campus gigs with our knocked down ticket prices.
- Save on childcare, get free condoms from the SU.

It's going to be a tough year ahead financially so if you're worried about not being able to make it through the year call into the Union and we can guide you in managing your cash. One easy solution to spending too much cash is to get swine flu; this way you have to stay in bed for seven days and can't physically spend it! Due to health concerns this may not be the most favourable option.

If you do feel sick and you think it is Swine Flu then please do stay in doors. The best way to prevent an outbreak is isolation. If a friend gets Swine Flu you're going to have to look after them if they stay in Limerick. Someone's going to have to keep them fed and watered while they pass the time, so make sure you don't just forget about them!

If you thought a dose of the Swine Flu was bad then try a dose of Fees....yeah now that's some dose alright. For all you First years out there; stand up and be heard. This is your future at risk here. If you sit back and do nothing then you will be hit with a 7 grand bill next September. We want your ideas of campaigns you want to run to prevent this. We will be holding a Protest in Cork on the 7th of October with all the Munster Colleges, alongside this we will have other local campaigns so you can be heard.

Speaking of being heard, I would like to ask ye to do one thing this year and that is to complain! Yes that's all, we all do it but you have to complain to the right people!

Your Union can actually try and do something about it if you let us know what it is that's bothering you. Just call in as ask for one of us or just drop me an email. Also if ye think we could be doing something different or would like to see us doing something else then let us know!

Log onto our new Website...[www.ulsu.ie](http://www.ulsu.ie) and check out our up and coming ents line-up.



Ruan, ULSU President

## Referenda Explained

*An quick explanation on how the UL Boathouse came to be.*

THROUGHOUT the years a number of referenda have been passed by the University of Limerick Students' Union members. A referendum can be called on any issue at the request of a General Meeting, Council or a petition of at least 200 Union members. A referendum result is only valid if at 15% of the Union's members have cast a legitimate vote.

In Week 9 of Semester 2, 2002 the students of UL were asked to vote on a referendum relating to the Boathouse Project. The students were asked to vote in favour of extending the student levy at the time to raise funding for the project. In other words, this meant that the students themselves would be paying for this facility. The move to ask students to fund the project came after previous applications for funding from the UL Foundation were declined.

The aim of the Boathouse Project was to provide storage facilities for some of the most

active clubs in UL, as well as providing superior training facilities to club members. The clubs involved, Rowing Club, Kayak Club, Sub-Aqua Club and Mountain Bike UL, were in possession of some €250,000 worth of equipment but had nowhere to store it. As such they were forced to either pay for storage, or store their equipment in cramped, unsuitable conditions where it was

subject to costly vandalism and deterioration.

Before the referendum was called the clubs involved developed a detailed list of specifications that would be required from the boathouse. Following this they were able to come up with an estimated cost to complete the project; €4.1 million. On the day of the referendum 3000 valid votes were cast and as the majority voted

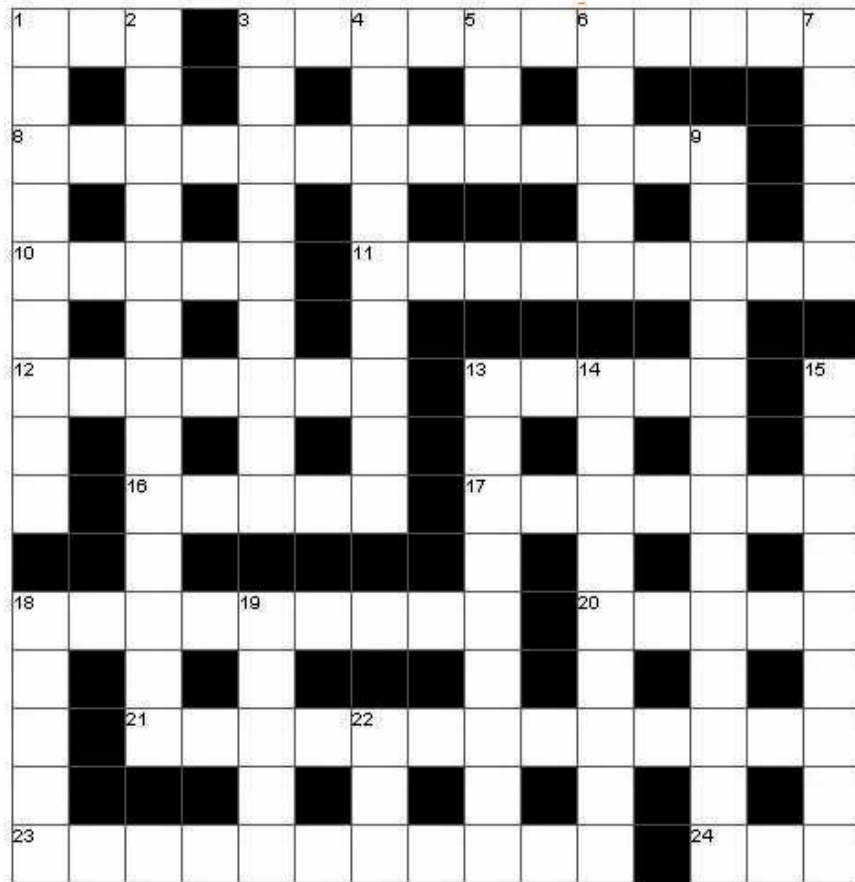
in favour of increasing the student levy to fund the Boathouse Project the referendum was passed. Work on the project began immediately and some now, in 2009, we are preparing to officially launch the state of the art Boathouse and students, both past and present, can be proud of the fact that they were involved in funding this monumental building.



UL Boathouse



# Crossword



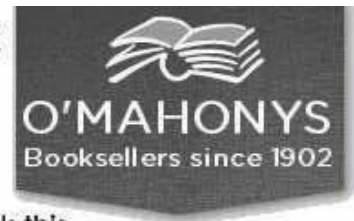
**Across**

- 1. Flow Back
- 3. Subdued
- 8. One who keeps dropping things
- 10. Large chunk of cheese
- 11. '\_\_\_ Star' (Seal Song)
- 12. Presented
- 13. Like a primer
- 16. Seasonal Songs
- 17. Serious collision
- 18. Exaggerate
- 20. Drink spiker
- 21. SWAT team specialists
- 23. Concerns for ecologists
- 24. Methodolgy (abbr.)

**Down**

- 1. Airplanes lack this
- 2. As 8 across
- 3. Supersized
- 4. Arrangments, as of opposed mirrors, giving the effect of long vistas
- 5. Corral
- 6. Effect of a beating
- 7. 'Get it'
- 9. Modern writers' aids
- 13. Petitions
- 14. Horses on a stud farm
- 15. Puts another way
- 18. Gavel pounder's demand
- 19. Body of military officers
- 22. A pop

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**O'Mahony's Booksellers**  
 or online at  
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*For all your college needs*  
 Submit entires with name & ID number to the entry box in SU reception by  
 15th September 2009

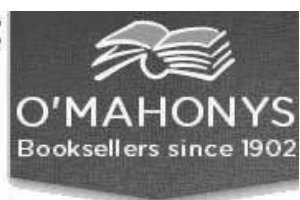
# In Numbers



- 2325**  
The number of students who graduated from UL at the end of August
- 2500**  
The print run of each issue of *An Focal* and *Pulse* this year.
- 18**  
This year's volume of *An Focal*. It's now legally allowed vote!
- 18,000**  
The amount of condoms Welfare Officer, Derek Daly, has in his office.
- 6**  
The number of designers who tendered for the redesign of [www.ulsu.ie](http://www.ulsu.ie)
- €32,000**  
The average cost of a 4 year degree is fees are reintroduced.

# Sudoku

Sponsored by:



				4			6	
	3	7	9				5	1
	2		6			8		7
4	5	6		9	7			
	1			3			7	
			2	5		6	8	4
3		1			9		2	
2	6				5	7	4	
7			3					

**Instructions:**

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

The winner will receive a €20 voucher to spend in  
**O'Mahony's Booksellers**  
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*For all your college needs*  
 Submit entries with name & ID number to entry box in SU reception by 15th September



Class Reps receiving their certificates last semester



# Graduate Article

*in association with the University of Limerick Alumni Association*

**Jennifer Harwood is former University of Limerick student who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in New Media and English in 2007. She now works at the Thesis Centre in Dublin and is currently writing her first novel. Here she speaks to An Focal about what life has been like since she graduated, her work, and what she misses most about UL.**

“Every time I go back to Limerick, I don’t feel like I’ve come home until I’ve seen the flags at the main gate”, Ms Harwood explains. “I had tried a science course at any college before going to UL and had been very unhappy in the course. Doing New Media and English opened up whole new worlds of thinking and exploration for me”.

Ms Harwood spoke fondly on her time in UL, especially with regard to the support and guidance she received from UL. “I started writing poetry when I was eight and fiction in my teens...My family and teachers were very supportive of my writing, but when I started doing my final year project with Dr. Tom Moylan, I found I had a supervisor who was able to direct me not just in critical studies but towards the readings that would help me in my own fiction. When I first Ursula Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* at the suggestion of both Dr. Moylan and Dr. Kate Boulay, I realised how lazy I had been in my own writing, and it gave me the kick I needed to write better than I had before. I’ll always be grateful to Dr. Moylan, Dr. Boulay and Ms Le Guin for that little extra push that made me take my writing that bit more seriously to give it the work it deserved”.

“In fourth year I won the James White Award (a short story competition for non-professionals) for new science fiction writing, and one of my lecturers threw me a party during a science fiction class and invited my other lecturers to it. It was great to feel that my accomplishments were appreciated by the university”, Ms Harwood continued.

When asked what she liked most about UL and about her course, Ms Harwood stated that she most enjoyed the variety of her course, of the subjects and of her lecturers. “Overall it was a place where learning was fun... [There was a] wonderful atmosphere created by knowledgeable people encouraging us all to learn more and think in new ways.

There was, for me, very much a sense that people wanted to learn and wanted to help each other learn. When comparing my knowledge to those I’ve since studied with, I’ve realised that the different modules I had at UL gave me an education that was quite unique and interesting – as any course would – and, for me, it was an education that I enjoyed every part of it.”

Ms Harwood explains that since graduating from UL, “I was signed with the McKernan literary agency, and am currently working on my first novel. In addition I’ve been shortlisted multiple times for the Aeon Award, another Irish based [Science Fiction] award.

I have two essays published in the acafan book *Battlestar Galactica: Mission Accomplished* or *Mission Frakked Up* and I have co-written an essay for an upcoming book on the *Back to the Future* trilogy...I



got to stand up at a conference and talk about crisis of identity in the new *Battlestar Galactica*.”

Speaking on how her time at UL was beneficial to her career and personal life Ms Harwood explained: “I have loved science

fiction all my life and here I am doing it for a living on two fronts. I have no idea how I got so lucky, but it started when I decided to go to UL. Being happier in my career choices, and in where my life is going, has made me happier in my personal life. I have made wonderful friends that I would never have made if it weren’t for going to UL, doing the course I did, and getting the incentives that I did to keep me going and doing what I love to do...I took away so much good, both professionally and personally...It’s a great place to do that college thing of ‘finding yourself’, even if, like me, it’s not exactly the self you expected to find when you started.”

“If someone had told me six years ago that I would be applying for PhDs in English I would have laughed, but, going to UL, and being encouraged so much, has given me the academic career that I love”.

“If I had to pick one thing [I missed most] I’d say it would be the place itself...I did a taught MPhil in Popular Literature at Trinity College [and] there’s a completely different atmosphere; it’s a very odd place and you feel that when you’re there, but there’s a great energy to it”.

Ms Harwood finished by saying: “I took away so much good, both professionally and personally, that I wouldn’t hesitate to recommend that others go there...I’ve realised that the different modules I took at UL gave me an education that was quite unique and interesting...for me, it was an education that I enjoyed every part of.”





# Duck, Duck, Goose

By Emma Hayward

One day as I was walking with my friend, Joe, I was quite astounded to find that his knowledge of our native birds was frighteningly poor. Sure, he could identify a swan easily enough but he proceeded to ask me how did I know what a goose was, and how could I possibly differentiate between a duck and a goose? After a few minutes of surprised silence it dawned on me that perhaps this was one of those really shocking but simply explained cultural differences that often emerge between friends in unexpected ways. I had not thought much about the fact that people who hadn't grown up in the countryside were not very used to the wildlife and birdlife that I was so accustomed to seeing and hearing regularly where I lived. When I moved to Limerick to study in University I never expected to be surrounded by so much wildlife, just a stone's throw from my front door in Dromroe.

UL happens to be situated next to the river Shannon, Ireland's longest river, which has its source in County Cavan and flows out to the sea in Shannon Estuary after passing through Limerick city itself. Along this vast stretch of inland waterway is an abundance of wildlife that, surprisingly to me, not everybody has had the pleasure of experiencing. Ducks and swans are among some of the native birds that can be found on the river Shannon. The most common duck we have, which can be seen all along the river around the campus, is the Mallard Duck. The male is the more noticeable with his bottle green head feathers and white ring around its neck. The female is brown in colour with different shades of brown feathers all over.

Swans are probably the most easiest to find as they are among the largest of birds on the river and can be quite formidable if you get close enough. Mute Swans have orange bills that sport a black knob at the top which is usually

slightly larger on the male. A long, elegant curved neck and its snowy white plumage means the swan is widely acknowledged as the most striking of the birdlife on the river. Mute Swans, unlike their name suggests, do make noises; most commonly a hissing noise when threatened by another swan or anything else that gets too close. They also make a faint gurgling "how how how" noise sometimes, a little reminiscent of Donald Duck's voice.

Geese are smaller than swans but bigger than ducks. The most common types of geese you will spot on the river walk are the Greylag Goose, the Barnacle Goose and the Greenland White-Fronted Goose. These geese, unlike the Mute Swan and the Mallard Duck, are winter visitors and can be seen from the autumn months through to March and April. They don't actually breed in Ireland though and instead they return to their native countries to do so.

There are also visiting swans that come to Ireland from afar. Whooper swans travel from Iceland to spend the winter in our milder climate and the slightly smaller Bewick's Swan flies in from Siberia. Whooper Swans are distinguished by their yellow beaks in contrast with the Mute Swan's orange beak. They get their name from the honking call that they make and you may well have heard them flying overhead. There are some pure white geese also though these are not wild and most likely farmyard geese, which at first glance can be easily mistaken for swans, as my friend found out on our walk.

I'm not sure if Joe was even listening to me anymore but he did amuse himself for the next while periodically shouting out "duck!", or "goose!" or "swan!" and shouting correctly I might add. I was impressed, though one cyclist almost overbalanced as he was caught off guard by the sudden cry of "Duck! Duck! No, wait, goose!".



View of the River Shannon

**Hola from Argentina! I am currently in Buenos Aires for my Co-Op placement as a Language and Culture Facilitator and Camp Counsellor with EColonias since June.**

As a Language Education student studying French and Spanish, it's imperative for my progression in a language to work abroad and immerse myself in the language and the culture.

So far the experience has been incredible, I arrived out in June to begin my first placement

in a language institute in Rosario, 300km away from the capital, where I was assisting in a classroom with pupils aged from 4 years old up to 70 by helping them to progress in the English language with the assistance of a native speaker.

Most people's fear is that they won't get to know anyone; I can safely say that Argentineans will blow you away with their personalities, hospitality flamboyant use of the Spanish language and general good humour.

As part of the programme, you stay with a host

# Postcards from abroad

By Andrea Gallagher

I am an eternal procrastinator. I could rationalize myself into putting off breathing. I don't know if this deadly affliction is part of my personality or if it's just laziness but when it came to organising my Erasmus placement I swore that this time would be different. After the stress of trying to organise a Co-Op during a recession, I knew I didn't want a repeat of the constant worry I caused myself and my poor mother. How hard could moving to another country be? Sure, there is a bit of a language barrier, (in that I don't speak the language or even know how to say hello.) and it may be a scary starting afresh in a new university just when I'd got to grips with my own. So it might be a little complicated, but nothing I can't handle!

Having come to terms with the sudden dispersion of my friends to various parts of the world, saying farewell to the Lodge for an entire semester, missing Christmas Daze, Sally O'Brien and the way she might look at you, etc., I consoled myself that when I was jetting to my destination, Portugal, I would be laughing. I would have a whole semester of new experiences, a little sun, living in a city on the Mediterranean, reunited after a summer apart from my ever dependable partner in crime Kate. And, compared to the extortionate prices of sub standard student accommodation in Costa Del Castletroy, the accommodation in Portugal was less than €200 per month with on campus even cheaper. Sorted! That was December.

Co-Op began in January for six months. Maintaining employment along with a hectic social life (now that I had a bit of change to spare) seemed to take over my life, and any thoughts I had of organising my impending Erasmus dimmed, although shimmered in my mind occasionally. I swore I'd get round to it. I had plenty of time!

Before I knew it, it was late May. I was nearing the end of my placement and I had to register for my university. I surprised myself by doing so in good time for the deadline (pat on the back for me!). Once this seemingly mammoth task I sat back, relaxed and enjoyed

my summer of new found unemployment until one uneventful day mid July when I received a shiny A4 envelope all the way from Portugal.

I tore it open expecting to see details of the on-campus accommodation I had applied for. Instead I scanned the acceptance letter to see the cruel, bold letters: "Unfortunately we have been unable to secure campus accommodation for you." AHHHH!

Panic ensued. Campus accommodation had alleviated all of my "What if I don't make any friends or end up homeless" worries! I frantically emailed anyone I thought could help me. I joined all the Erasmus Student Network groups there were going on Facebook and emailed the other two strangers who were also going to Portugal. I hastily introduced myself as I should have done long ago and got to the real point: have you been placed on campus? As I had feared, they had. Out of the four UL students going to my university, I was the only one who didn't get on campus. This had to happen to me. Disaster.

I knew I was in trouble as I don't speak Portuguese, and that this was going to be much more stressful than it had to be. I was on a waiting list but it was now August! I knew I had to do something unless I wanted to be homeless. So I did what any girl would do in my situation: rang my wise older sister. After much scolding about how I have to "get organized" and start taking some responsibility, she came through as she never fails to.

Through some miracle she knew a guy who knew a Portuguese guy from her own Erasmus, who was contacted through the miracle of Facebook, (see, I knew it wasn't a waste of time) who happened to have a younger sister in the same university with a room to rent.

Everything happens for a reason (even if the reason is sort of due to my own neglect of the situation) so perhaps it will be a blessing in disguise that I didn't get on-campus accommodation. Maybe I'll be getting a more authentic Portuguese experience, I'll have to wait and see. Now to book my flights, buy a travel book, maybe a crash course in Portuguese... but tomorrow is another day!

# Diary of a Co-Op Student

By Kieran Phipps

family in order to get the authentic Argentine experience and my first family were certainly memorable. I went from being the youngest in my family to being the big brother of two girls aged 7 and 11 They really made me feel part of the family, to the extent that I would watch the Disney Channel with them in the afternoon which is one of many things to help improve my Spanish. Also, their hospitality was amazing. In order to make me fit in they invited locals from the area to the house who were my age for a barbeque or an "asado" as they call them here, they were as eager to meet me as I was them which was great.

While I have had previous teaching experience, working in a language institute is quite different to that of say 1st or 2nd level in Ireland. The English language is in big demand here and it's part of most pupil's weekly regime to take English classes outside school. It's a bit more informal as well. I personally didn't feel as if it was a pupil/teacher relationship but more a case of an Argentinean having the chance to

chat to a native English speaker and not feel under pressure in a classroom. This feeling was reciprocated outside of the classroom too when I'd see my pupils every day on the street, at cafés/restaurants, on the street, etc.

Another part of my placement is to work as a Camp Counsellor in English Immersion Programmes around Argentina. These are quite similar to Irish colleges in Ireland except they last about 3 days generally and have various different themes to suit the needs of those taking part (for example Gold Rush, Superheroes, Camelot, etc). I do these with some of the other UL students here along with some Americans, Australians and English. They are great fun but you'd want to have a lot of energy, personality and no shame to keep the kids entertained! That being said there's a great feeling of achievement in them as well as being a very influential part of these kids' learning experience.

Until next time!  
Kieran



## ULSU ENTS Sponsored by **Ulster Bank**

Welcome to U.L, if you're a first year stepping on campus for the first time, with your first An Focal in hand, double welcome or a fourth year on your way out the door in a few months, a special welcome back too. We're ULSU Ents and we're based in your Students' Union. It is yours by the way; of the students, for the students, by the students. We aim to bring a varied line-up of bands, djs, comedians and sundry fun to campus, for a lot less than you'd pay elsewhere, in rooms and clubs and pubs down the road from your house all semester long.

ULSU Ents have an office in the SU building, upstairs near the Class Reps

room. I'm Sarah and I'll be on campus every day moving the ents programme along with the team at the ULSU. So drop in, say hi, and tell us what you'd like to see more or less of this year. What bands are rocking your iPod and what djs you like to get down to and we'll do our best to keep your parties fresh, your feet dancing, your ears happy and your belly laughing.

So, without anymore to-do we'll get down to the goodies you can look forward to in the coming weeks while you're settling yourself into your gaff, getting used to your new timetable and finding your way back to the library.

### **Week I: Ray Foley Lazy DJ Tour** **Trinity Rooms** **Thursday September 10th**

ULSU Ents in association with Trinity Rooms invite you to experience "the pup" himself up close and personal when he takes to the main room at Trinity on Friday September 10th from 10 pm.

Ray Foley joined Today FM in 2004 at the tender age of 23, after stints on East Coast FM and pirate radio station Spin 1038, jockeying 'The Blast' from 10pm with college mate and trusty sidekick JP Gilbourne. Playing the biggest bangers from the charts and generally acting the maggot with his buddy got him noticed and fill in slots for Ray Darcy, Tony Fenton and Tom Dunne followed. The little pup became the big dog when he took over the noon to 2.30pm window, with "Just a bit of fun for your lunchtime." Nothing too serious, nothing serious at all really, Ray Foley went (for me anyway) from being the slightly annoying guy on late in the evening to laugh out loud at your desk messer. From The Blagger's Guide to Lazy Radio Theme Tunin' it to the max on Friday, Ray Foley has the lunchtime fun sewn up.

And others seem to think so too, Ray took the Meteor Award for Best National DJ in 2008 (when he sang The Journey from the closing scene of The Sopranos accepting his gong) and again in 2009, when he didn't sing at all.

Another useless fact about Ray sheds some light on his ongoing jibbing of Ray D'arcy; turns out it's a family thing - Ray has an uncle, Gabriel Foley, who lives in Virginia, County Cavan. Ray has noted on his show how his uncle Gabriel has an ongoing rivalry with Clancy Darcy, grand-uncle of Ray's colleague Ray Darcy. It started in 1998 when Clancy drunkenly stole Gabriel's tractor and drove it into the wall of the local Glan Bia milk factory. Fortunately no-one was injured.

**Ray Foley will bring his Lazy Radio Tour to Trinity's Main Room on Thursday September 10th and will broadcast his show live from The Old Quarter Bar & Café on Little Catherine Street on Friday. A limited number of tickets will be available to purchase from ULSU priced €10**



Ray Foley

### **Week II: Justin Robertson** **Trinity Rooms** **Friday September 18th**

Leaving aside the fabulous hats, and this man knows his fabulous hats, Justin Robertson has been rocking, wrecking and raising dancefloors since most of ye all were wearing baby bonnets and mittens. There is a reason he is still one of the most in demand dj's and producers around, he knows music even better than he knows fancy headgear.

Justin Robertson's tastes have always been eclectic though you would be hard pushed to find a musician working successfully in areas as diverse as techno, house, dancehall and art pop. Justin is a true modernist: he excels as a DJ of international repute; is a creator of bespoke techno; one third of New Pop band Thee Earls, a remixer for the likes of The Whip, Bjork and Felix Da Housecat and, most recently he has written and produced an album called Silent Life. His latest solo venture was made and mixed in his West London home with Justin adding guitar to a synthetic pop album that belies his love of inventive, but odd early 80's pop. In the midst of a creative purple patch Justin has also just completed an EP for Southern Fried called The Deadstock 33's which he calls psych-house. Justin works in so many genres that he sometimes needs to create new ones.

As a D.J of 20 years repute Justin's lineage through music has taken many twists and turns starting out as a DJ in Manchester in his early 90's clubs - Spice and Most Excellent - which were hugely influential cornerstones of the burgeoning dance movement. The Chemical Brothers, then students in the city, cited him as their mentor. His Rebellious Jukebox club - also in Manchester - pre-empted the Heavenly Social and the mid 90's trend for mish-mashing musical styles. In the 90's Justin generally operated under various nom de stages, the most renowned being Lionrock with whom he scored several Top 40s hits - 'Rudeboy Rock' and 'Packet Of Peace' among them - and appeared on Top Of The Pops in a dashing purple suit opting for gramophones over Technics.

It wasn't until 2001 that Justin stepped out under his own name releasing house and techno like 'Have Mercy' for the Bugged Out imprint. In 2001 he recorded his most critically acclaimed project to date, Justin Robertson presents Revtone, which brought primitive house and new wave disco into the digital age. For someone with such diverse tastes it should have come as no surprise to anyone when Justin began recording and singing with a guitar.

As a DJ Justin continues to play a mix of techno and electronic house at clubs such as The Loft in Barcelona, Pacha in Buenos Aires, Bugged Out in Manchester, Shine in Belfast, Chibuku in Liverpool, Together in London, and at various clubs all over Europe and the rest of the world. He also plays more eclectic sets showcasing his love of reggae, northern soul and pop at festival and nights like Sunday Best. Justin will continue to wear several hats, metaphorical as well as some stylish real ones!

**Catch The Lionrock; Justin Robertson in Trinity Rooms on Friday September 18th.**

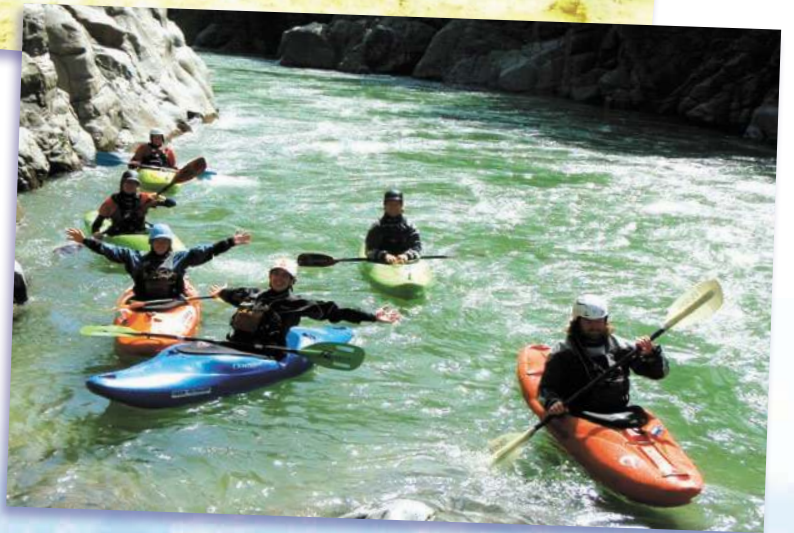
**A Limited number of tickets will be available from the U.L.S.U / priced €7**



Justin Robinson



# Clubs & Soccs Recruitment Drive



## University Arena

Wednesday, 9th September 2009

6-9pm





# Clubs

## American FC

The UL Vikings are the defending Irish American Football Champions. This entertaining and physical sport is played throughout the country and is the fastest growing sport in Ireland. They are one of three college teams and have been in operation since 1999. The season runs from March to August.

## Athletics

UL Athletic Club is an expanding and successful club. Last year the club came second in the Irish Universities Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field competitions in the overall team categories, and just missed out on a medal in the cross country championships. This year with the help of some fresh Athletes the club hopes to go one better. However, ULAC is not just for 'seasoned athletes'. Even if you have never competed before, you are encouraged to join us. All levels of ability are welcome. Call down to training some evening to test it out, don't worry, you won't be run to death!

## Archery

ULAC are a friendly club, who encourage anybody to take up the sport of archery. They have a large number of students as well as external members, and anybody is welcome to join throughout the year. Gear is provided, so all you have to do is turn up with open ears and willing arms, and they will do the rest.

## Badminton

The UL Badminton club is one of the most successful and heavily subscribed clubs in the college, with over 200 members. Membership is just 6 euro per year, free racquets and shuttles are provided during training times

## Basketball

UL Basketball Club was established to provide an outlet for people interested in all facets of basketball within the University of Limerick. Currently in the Club they have Men's, Women's and Fresher teams. They cater for everyone interested in basketball, be it playing, Coaching, Administration or just watching a great game.  
<http://www.ulbasketball.skynet.ie/>

## Chess

The University of Limerick Chess Club has been meeting weekly for the past couple of years, developing their strategic skill over two models of war - Chess and Draughts. They hope over time to also run GO, Chinese checkers and anything else members would be interested in.

## Dance UL

Dance UL was set up in November 2008 by a group of aspiring students from one of the newest courses in the University, BA Voice and Dance. Once the committee of seven was set up an astounding number of over 200 members began the growth of what is now the club Dance UL. Classes began in semester one 2-3 nights a week holding five different classes in total taught by some of the most experienced dancers of each style in Limerick. The 5 styles of dance taught in the first semester included; Jazz and Tap, Ballet, Hip-hop, Salsa and Break dancing. <http://www.bebo.com/ULDance>

## Fencing

Fencing is as much a sport for women as it is for men. It is an activity which is more tactical than physical, more reliant on flexibility and balance rather than brute force resulting in an elegant dance of blades between the fencers. You don't need to be big or strong to fight – in fact this can work against you – but you do need fast reflexes, co-ordination, timing, and a great sense of anticipation. If you are interested in taking up fencing as a sport this semester check out <http://www.ulfencing.com>, email us at [ulfencing@gmail.com](mailto:ulfencing@gmail.com) or come along to training at 6pm in the main sports hall of the PESS building. <http://ulfencing.com/>

## GAA

The four clubs that come under the GAA are Football, Hurling, Ladies Football & Camogie. GAA has always had a special place in the UL history books and now is your chance to be part of that. Remember that being a part of any club is not just about the competitive side it's the friends that you make for life. The GAA has the largest memberships on Campus with sixteen active teams; basically if you want to play any of the four disciplines we have a team for you.

## Golf

UL Golf Club has been a long standing club in the University of Limerick for a number of years. Our activities range from simple practice sessions in Ballyneety Driving Range or a bit of fun at Unigolf to playing on some of the top courses in the country and competing alongside Ireland's elite college golfers in the Intervarsity Championships.  
<http://www.csn.ul.ie/~golf/>

## Hockey (Ladies)

UL hockey has been a well-established club both in the University, as a Munster Division 1 team and nationally as we compete every year in the prestigious Irish Senior Cup competition. Besides from the high standard of training and commitment from the players, UL hockey has a very fun social aspect. Some of your best friends you will make in college will be from the team! Every year we have an annual trip away. We have been to Glasgow, Barcelona and this year Amsterdam, which is always a highlight of the year. We also have many team nights out and fundraising events throughout the year, which are always great craic.

## Judo

UL Judo Club currently has in excess of 30 members with a mixture of beginners, intermediates and black belts. All beginners are welcome to attend and non students of UL are also welcome to join.  
<http://sites.google.com/site/uljudoclub/>

## Karate (Shotokan)

Whether you are looking for a new club to make friends, get fit, become confident and learn some self defence, or you are a karateka to your core, the Shotokan Karate Club at University of Limerick has what you are looking for. While we train hard, and sweat a lot (!), we know how to have fun. Training doesn't end at the dojo, it continues onto the pub afterwards for a few "bicep exercises"! Trips to Japan, competitions, annual water balloon championships and pancake parties are just some of our events that we have. The friends you make at the UL Karate Club will be friends you will have for life  
<http://www.ulkarate.com/>

## Kayak

Think kayaking is just about floating across a lake? - There's way more to it than that. With UL Kayak Club you have the opportunity to paddle in Ireland and abroad and try your hand at surf, polo, freestyle and whitewater kayaking. The club caters for beginners to experienced kayakers. <http://kayak.csn.ul.ie/>

## Mountain Bike

The club was founded in September 1998 to cater for the needs of the growing community of mountain bikers in UL and the surrounding area. Their aim is to promote mountain biking as a fun recreational activity, both in UL and beyond. From humble beginnings, with about 3-4 cyclists on each outing, they have grown to the extent where they routinely have up to fifteen cyclists out every week, whatever the weather. They have also expanded their activities to include racing as well as recreational rides.  
<http://www.skynet.ie/~mtbclub/>

## Outdoor Pursuits

OPC is five clubs in one: rock climbing, mountaineering, hill walking, orienteering and caving. The club is aimed at everyone, from beginners to people who want to scale the heights of Everest. The club operates the climbing wall in UL and organises a trip every weekend. They also run two or three international trips a year.  
<http://www.ulopc.com>

## Rugby (Ladies)

Their success stems from the hard work and dedication of all members, not just the old heads but the new members as well! They pride themselves on our professional approach on the field and probably most importantly their ability to have fun as a team both on and off the field. They are always on the look out for new members (no experience required). If you have an interest in rugby and would like to play why not come give it a try!  
<http://ulladiesrugby.com/>

## Rugby (Men)

Re-formed in September 06, the UL Men's rugby club is steeped in a rich rugby history dating back to the days of the I.H.E.L. Since then the men's rugby club has sought to provide players of all levels, and indeed those new to the brilliant game, with a serious and competitive alternative to their respective home clubs. UL men's Rugby club is made up of two teams: the Fresher's comprising of 1st year students and the Senior team comprising of 2nd-4th year, Erasmus and post grad students.  
<http://ulrugby.skynet.ie/>

## Rowing

UL Rowing Club caters for all levels from the "newbie" right up to Senior. They train during the week and at weekends so there is always a slot you can fit into. The training programme for new rowers consists of introduction lessons around the rowing technique and some light exercises. Each crew has its own programs to work off and the coaches coordinate this together so there will be some sessions where the whole club trains together such as circuit training.  
<http://www.ulrowing.com>

## Sailing

The Club is in existence to provide the sport of sailing to the students of the University of Limerick, and also to promote the discipline of sailboat team racing, all in the name of 'craic'.  
<http://sailing.skynet.ie>

## Skydiving

Skydive UL is the 1st ever 3rd level skydiving club in the Republic of Ireland! Skydive UL's home dropzone is located just 20 minutes from UL, at Skydive Ireland. The locality of the dropzone is a major advantage as it allows the student skydivers to advance in the sport without taking too much time off college.  
<http://www.skydiveul.org>

## Softball

The UL Softball Club is charging into the year with four Intervarsity title's in a row and chasing the fifth, the last two seasons, of which, were without losing a single game. The club consists of both Irish and international students of all ranges of capabilities. All are welcome to join the club, regardless of experience. Joining a UL club or society has proven to be a great way to make lifelong friends, so why not join a club where all you need to have is a desire to have fun and maybe learn a new sport along the way?  
<http://www.skynet.ie/~softball/>

## Soccer

The Soccer currently has the following teams available include the women's senior team, women's freshers' team, men's senior A team, men's senior B team and a men's freshers' team. Combined with these teams we are hoping for a women's senior B team and a men's senior C team which can only be possible with new members showing interest. The roll of honour for the year 2008/09 is an impressive one, but can be enhanced with new talent signing up to improve our club. So during Orientation week we will have a stand set up to register for membership and also during the clubs and societies night we will have another stand set up so if you are interested do not hesitate to sign up.

## Sub-Aqua

The University of Limerick Sub Aqua Club is the only diving club in Ireland affiliated to the Scottish Sub Aqua Club (SSAC). The University boasts one of the few 4m diving pits in Ireland, which gives them an added advantage for confined water training. Being based near the Atlantic coast of Ireland means that some of the best dive sites in Ireland are right on our doorstep!  
<http://subaqua.csn.ul.ie>

## Tae Kwon Do

TaeKwonDo is a Korean martial arts. Literally translated it means "Art of Hand & Foot Fighting". Training sessions typically last from 60-90 minutes & cover a multitude: - general fitness, boxing & kicking techniques, hyung (traditional patterns), conditioning, ground fighting, padwork... to name but a few.

## Trampoline

The UL Trampolining club is perhaps one of the most misunderstood clubs on campus. It not only provides an alternative for dull evening vegetating in mouldy accommodation but creates many unexpected opportunities. Last year alone the club travelled to Cork, Scotland and Belfast for various competitions. Like any club, Trampolining provides an enjoyable social outlet with a friendly, easygoing atmosphere where anyone can have fun and get fit. Unlike any other club, we're insured to make the bed bounce! Try it, you'll be surprised.



# Societies

## Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate Frisbee is a physical game involving a disc instead of a ball. Your team of 7 tries to work a Frisbee up a rugby sized pitch. The one catch being you can't run with the frisbee or let it touch the ground. But you can jump, run and dive to make sure you get that catch. So if you like playing sports, travelling and a few social beverages of an evening then Ultimate Frisbee is the Club for you. Contact [ultimatefrisbee@gmail.com](mailto:ultimatefrisbee@gmail.com) or go to our website [www.ul-ultimate.110mb.com](http://www.ul-ultimate.110mb.com) for more details.

## Water polo

UL Water Polo is one of the fastest growing and most successful clubs in the college. We have both men's and women's teams that compete in a host of competitions that suit all levels of ability. Each year we take in many new members and pride ourselves on turning them into hardened water polo players. We aim to subsidise trips so you don't have to worry about paying out loads on the bus or trains. These trips usually involve some socialising with the other teams. So if you want to see a bit of the country, improve your fitness and have some great nights out, get your speedos on and join UL Water Polo in the arena for the best fun you can legally have in the water!! <http://h2opolocsn.ul.ie>

## Windsurfing

As well as weekly trips to locations in Ireland the also undertakes two foreign trips in Europe. Their base camp is in Castlegregory, Co Kerry and their trips take place on the weekends. The rates are reasonable from €30-€50 which covers for transport accommodation equipment lessons and of course food for the whole two and a half to three days (depending on the weekend). Check them out on Facebook just google "ulwc facebook" into the search engine and you should find us where there is news photos, videos and events. [www.ul.ie/~winds](http://www.ul.ie/~winds)

## Societies

### Architecture (SofA)

SofA is a cultural organisation which is run by students of the new School of Architecture at the University of Limerick (SAUL) established in 2005. The aim of the organisation is to bring the wider debate on architecture and the associated arts to audiences in Limerick and beyond, through evening lectures, site visits, exhibitions, debates, social events and trips within Ireland and abroad. <http://societyofarchitecture.blogspot.com/>

### Anime & Manga

The Anime & Manga society meet every week and host screenings of the Japanese anime series and movies, both older classic material as well as brand new releases, catering to as many varied genres and tastes as they can. Whether you are a die hard fan of the genre, a casual fan, or have never seen any anime beyond kids shows on TV, all are welcome and they hope to see you when they restart in September. <http://www.skynet.ie/~anime/>

### Christian Union

Christian Union is a group of students at the University, brought together through their common faith in Jesus, their common desire to know him better, and to do God's work for us on campus by spreading the good news. [www.ulcu.ie](http://www.ulcu.ie)

## Computer

The computer society has their own server room, organise profile guest speakers from major companies, members get access to loads of techy stuff, and include's webspace, email, databases, etc... For more information visit them at <http://www.skynet.ie/>, email them at [compsoc@skynet.ie](mailto:compsoc@skynet.ie), spot one of their posters around campus, or come see them at the clubs and societies signup day.

## Debating Union

The University of Limerick Debating Union is a society open to the students and staff of UL to engage in debate on topical issues and participate in student inter-varsity debating competitions. <http://www.skynet.ie/~debates>

## DJ Society

The general idea is to promote DJing to the whole of Limerick city rather than just the UL student population. The main form of this promotion is performed by running fortnightly workshops which cover all aspects of electronic music, from basic mixing on turntables and CDJ's to digital DJing and music production. <http://www.uldjso.com/>

## Drama

UL Drama Soc is the society to join if drama is your thing. From acting to backstage work, the society will cater for you. They also run regular workshops and performances. <http://www.uldrama.ie/>

## Fianna Fáil - Con Colbert

At their weekly meetings, the cumann gives its members a unique opportunity to discuss current political issues. They have, and will continue to, submit policies to the government on issues of interest to the members of the cumann. The Con Colbert Cumann is active in its politics; it's about having the voice of the people heard and expressing concern about issues we believe our party can improve upon. <http://fiannafail.csn.ul.ie/>

## Fine Gael

Young Fine Gael (YFG) is the youth wing of the Fine Gael party and always welcomes new members aged between 15 and 30. Young Fine Gael is the only vehicle for young people to seek political change in this country. As an autonomous youth organisation, it has the advantage of embodying the values of the senior Party, while maintaining the independence to express views of young people. <http://finegael.csn.ul.ie/>

## G.Soc (Games society)

The aim of G.Soc is to provide those in UL who enjoy gaming in all forms a way to relax and enjoy their experience while a part of the University of Limerick. <http://www.skynet.ie/~ulgsoc/>

## History

History Society are currently working on putting together an interesting programme of events for the year.

Other proposed events include a trip to the Aran Islands, a trip to the British museum in London, a trip to the WW1 battle sites of Belgium as well as hosting numerous interesting speakers. All these events are possible but in order to succeed we urgently need the input of new members. If you are interested in joining the society please contact us at [ulhistorysociety@gmail.com](mailto:ulhistorysociety@gmail.com) or phone Robert on 087-9675413.

## International Soc

The International Society is not just for international exchange students; it is also a great way for UL students to meet some new people and learn about a variety of different cultures from around the world. Last year they ran a number of hugely successful events including International Speed Dating, the World Food Fair, an International Week, film nights, table quiz nights, a few Ceilí nights, a Halloween fancy dress party and a huge variety of themed parties in both UL and Limerick City. As well as this they organised trips to Cork, Galway, Kerry, to several hurling matches and a weekend away on the Aran Islands.

## Law

The University of Limerick Law Society was founded with the aims of establishing a law society which would help students to develop a stronger interest in law by bringing law out of the textbooks with the help of guest speakers, moot trials and other such events. [www.skynet.ie/~ullaw](http://www.skynet.ie/~ullaw)

## Music

The UL Music Society offers something for everyone. The Music Room is fully equipped practice room for bands, events and competitions. The Music Soc holds lessons in a variety of instruments for beginners, as well as providing a facility for musicians to meet other people with similar tastes, and even form a band. <http://www.skynet.ie/~ulmusic/>

## Medical Society

Medsoc is one of UL's younger societies started in late 2007 and officially recognised since January 2008 hosting nearly 100 members already. Medsoc has fortnightly journal club meetings, guest speakers, trips abroad, social and health education events. [www.ulmedsoc.com](http://www.ulmedsoc.com)

## Out in UL

OutinUL is the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) society here in UL. They are an active and friendly society who seek to provide a safe and friendly environment to support the LGBT community. Anyone is welcome to join the society and it's not just closed off to the LGBT members of the college, so all are welcome This means that all of the events and activities cater for everyone in the student body. You can visit them on Facebook as OutinUL Soc. If you have any questions about the society or any of the activities please email us at [outinul@gmail.com](mailto:outinul@gmail.com)! <http://heaven.skynet.ie>

## Poker

<http://ulpokersociety.synthasite.com/>

## Photographic

The Photographic society has its own Dark Room and organizes trips to get to see some more of this great country and learn a bit about photography, whether it is how to compose a landscape shot or how to capture the fast action in a hurling game. We cover it all. You can contact the Photo Society at [photoul@gmail.com](mailto:photoul@gmail.com) or at the website <http://www.photo.ul.ie> if you are interested in seeing some of Ireland,

learning how to take good photographs or improve on your existing photographic experiences. <http://www.photo.ul.ie>

## Socialist Youth

SOCIALIST YOUTH is the youth section of the Socialist Party (the CWI in Ireland). It is an organisation run for young people and run by young people. It was established in late 2000 as an organisation that fights on all the issues that affect young people. Socialist Youth is open to all people who are sick of the fact that we are not represented anywhere. <http://socialistyouth.wordpress.com/>

## ULTV

ULTV is one of the newest societies on campus. It caters for anyone interested in editing, acting, presenting, interviewing and operating cameras/lighting amongst many other things. They recently made a trip to the BBC studios in London and are currently working on a number of projects. <http://www.skynet.ie/~ultv/>

## Young Greens

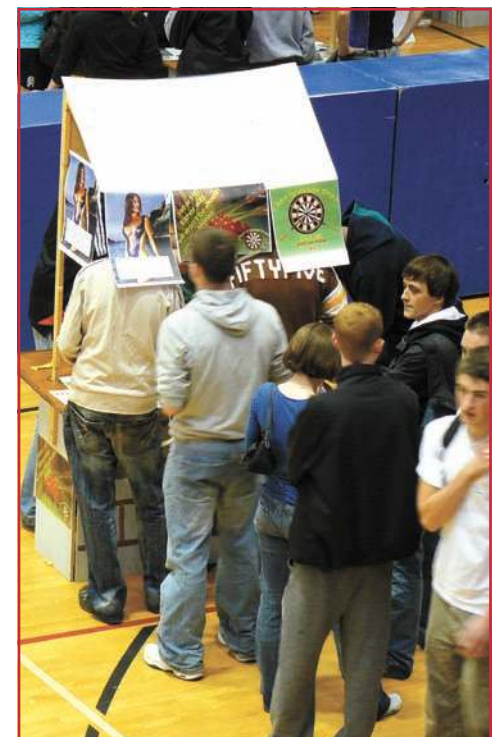
Fun, finesse and free(ish)-trips, that about sums us up the Young Greens. Once you get involved you'll find out that the Young Greens are a dedicated bunch and a down-to-earth society that invites anybody from any background to join and get involved. <http://greensul.pbworks.com/>

## I didn't go the recruitment drive! What do I do now?

Don't panic! You can still sign up to any Club or Society by calling into Paul Lee upstairs in the Students' Union. He'll put you in touch with the committee from your club of choice and they'll sign you up.

## Idon't like ANY of the clubs or societies, help!

Well you're a picky one aren't you? Never fear though; call into Paul Lee and he'll let you know how you can set up your own club or society. Now you have no excuse.



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**Week III: The Saw Doctors**  
**Jean Monet Lecture Theatre**  
**Wednesday September 23rd**

They're back. Rolling round the country for more than two decades and The Saw Doctors are still one of the best live bands you'll witness. From the main stage at Oxygen, after our mini main stage on campus at the Freshers' Ball last year, where 2,000 of ye got your hoe down in the courtyard, the Tuam Troubadours return and this time to the more intimate surrounds of the Jean Monet Theatre on Wednesday September 23rd.

Since their formation in Galway circa 1986, The Saw Doctors rise to fame and fortune has not been without pitfalls, but their successes when they came have been massive, most notably the fact that their breakout single, "I Useta Lover" still holds the record for the biggest selling Irish single of all time. Their debut album, If This Is Rock and Roll, I Want My Old Job Back entered

the charts at Number 1 in 1991. Always playing with high energy and plenty of tongue in cheek humour, The Saw Doctors frenetic live performances have cemented their reputation as one of Ireland's most in demand touring bands, at home and abroad where they regularly upstage the 'bigger' acts on the bill. An Irish band to the core, The Saw Doctors have a huge following in the States and U.K where they tour regularly. Their songs speak of ordinary people, filled with humour. they write of love; messing it up, making it work, Ireland's landscape, Gaelic football, dreary Irish 'summers', drinking, depression, desperation and the clergy; of whom they have been less than complimentary (Carton appeared at the 1991 IRMA awards dressed as priest with the rest of the band dressed as altar boys). The Saw Doctors have a rogue-ish, rakish, wild and world weary charm that is laced with energy and ultimately optimism. Everything may be going to hell in a handbasket but we may as well have a laugh while it's happening!

**The Saw Doctors play the Jean Monet Lecture Theatre on Wednesday September 23rd.**  
**Tickets available from U.L.S.U.**



**Every Week: The Release Party @ The Club @ Au Bars, Thomas Street From Midnight / €5 with your student card.**

The Release Party is no more than a club-night, one that started as a gentle reaction to a country, a city and a community a little at odds with itself at the start of a new year. The thought was very simple..... get a good room, fill it with good people, play good records, and concentrate hard on dancing, drinking, talking & thinking. Being, for short. The music. This is really the most important bit, isn't it? The Release Party's soul comes mainly from soul itself. And funk, hip-hop & house. But it's also fed by straight rock'n'roll, classical, drum & bass, and a bunch of other genres. Although we don't really like using the word 'genre'. Glen Miller has also been heard played at the

club. And people danced a lot to it. So this club is about the music and the people. Not about educating the people about the music, or playing the music that all the people hear all the time. Just about great music and good people.

Check out [www.thereleaseparty.ie](http://www.thereleaseparty.ie) for info and a free mix to download and dance to at home.

**That's our confirmed line-up so far. That's not it though, not by a long shot (or a round of shots for that matter). We will be announcing more great gigs, djs and comedy very soon and the best way to keep up to date with what's coming your way from ULSU Ents is to log onto the Students' Union Ents page and click on ENTs or join us on bebo & facebook – search ulsu ents.**



# Bring Back: Bum Bags

By Richeal O'Brien

**FANNY pack, belt pack, belly bag, buffalo pouch, hip sack, hip pack, or the Joe bag. It doesn't matter what you call them; bum bags are genius.**

Unfortunately for anyone living in 2009, Wikipedia (so you know it's true) tells us that bum bags reached the peak of their popularity in the late 1980s and early to mid 1990s. My mother, being somewhat of a fashion pioneer, even persevered beyond this point, but even she knew the game was up shortly after. My father carries a neat alternative (note to self, bring back the word neat), on holidays which he calls a money belt. This has the added bonus that it can be tucked inside his trousers, where only the bravest pick pockets would go. The problem however, is when he goes to pay for something, and gets arrested for indecent exposure.

The solution to this annual embarrassment is to bring back the bum bag. I've spent my Co-Op in mainland Europe, where it is fair to say, such revival is unnecessary. I'm quite convinced that the message that this fashion necessity had become uncool was lost in translation. But Ireland hasn't adopted the same bum bag friendly policy. I had the absolute joy of recently attending a "boogie nights" event in which I got to wear my very first bum bag since their exile in the mid 90s. A steal at €10 and it truly was an experience.

In it, I carried my makeup, money, phone,

camera and cards. At first, I was derided by so called friends, but soon I was carrying their various paraphernalia. We proceeded to the dodgiest club in Luxembourg, renowned for its black hole of valuable possessions, and danced our socks off, safe in the knowledge, that we'd return phonefull (it's a word). As it turns out, the greater Luxembourg population hadn't heard about the dress up night in the tiny Irish pub on the outskirts of the city, and so, we were at a loss to explain our choice of dress.

I thought it was pretty rich considering the club is staffed and populated by transvestites whose attire I've always accepted.

I guess that there's just no accounting for taste. I'm not the first to attempt a bum bag revival, and thus join a distinguished line which includes most recently Kanye West, Donna Karan, and the good people at Marc Jacobs, Gucci, Prada and Louis Vuitton. There are even those propagating the rumour that criminals have begun using them as holsters for storing loaded handguns, which although I don't condone, should go some way to upping bum bags in the cool stakes.

I think it's high time, we dispersed with the myth, that bum bags are a naff 80s throw back and embraced them for the useful, life saving accessory that they are.

Let us not even succumb to their rebranding as Belt Bags because, after all, a bum bag by any other name...



## An Ghaeilge i measc an t-aos óg

Le Emma Hayward.

Rinne Des Bishop é, ach an bhfuil sé chomh éasca sin? Teanga eile a fhoghlaim agus a bheith greannmhar sa theanga ceanna. Pearsantacht a thaispeánt tríd an gramadach olc agus aire gach éinne a choimeád go dtí go thagann tú ar an bhfocal ceart chun leanúint ar aghaidh ag caint. Bíonn ar beagnach gach dalta ina gcónaí in Éirinn teanga na Ghaeilinne a fhoghlaim.

Ó aois óg, cuirtear focail, nathanna chainte agus amhráin inár bhéil chun an teanga a phlandáil go buan inar mheoin. Ach, is dóigh gur theip an córas seo mar níl an teanga seo ar eolas ag an chuid is mó den phobail sa tír seo. Cad a tharla? Cén fáth nach bhfuil sé ar eolas againn, agus muid ag fhoghlaim é ón chead lá scoile? Dár liom, is é an slí ina múinteoir é atá mícheart. Tugtar dúinn aistí agus dáin chun fhoghlaim gan leabhar, chun úsáid san Árdeist, agus tar éis an scrúdú mór níl tábhacht ar bith ag baint leis an ábhar nó leis an teanga (dár leis an formhór do dhaoine ar aon nós!). Níl aon bhrú orainn an teanga a fhoghlaim nó í a

chaomhnú agus de bharr sin níl an tábhacht cheana ag baint leis, ó lá go lá.

Chuaigh Des Bishop ó Meiriceá go dtí an Ghaeltacht i gConamara ar feadh bliain chun Gaeilge a fhoghlaim, teanga nach raibh aon taithí aige ann, agus tar éis tamaill beag bhí sé ag déanamh a sheó grinn trí teanga nua seo. Conas a d'éirigh leis chomh maith sin? Bhuel, bhí sé i measc daoine a bhí ag caint Gaeilge gan stad, agus phioc sé suas an teanga gan mhoill. Taispeánann sé sin gurb é an fhadhb atá againn ná go bhfuil a chóras oideachas mícheart agus gan éifeacht sna scoileanna sa lá atá inniu ann.

Ceapaim go mbeadh an teanga ar eolas ag níos mó dhaoine dá mbeadh slí níos fearr chun é a mhúineadh. Níl an fadhb leis an teanga. Creidim go bhfuil gach uile duine sa tír seo ábalta Gaeilge a fhoghlaim, agus é a labhairt go minic, mé féin san áireamh. Is é an aidhm pearsanta atá agam ná a bheith ábalta rud mar seo a scríobh gan féachaint ar foclóir Béarla-Gaeilge fiú uair amháin cad é do aidhm?

## Has feminism gone too far?

By Aoife Ni Raghallaigh

**"R.E.S.P.E.C.T., Find out what it means to me." So sang Aretha Franklin in a song that would epitomise the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s (despite the fact that the original was sung by Otis Redding). The early feminists did wonders for the rights and treatment of women across the World, but has the campaign gone too far?**

The original feminist movement called for equal rights for all women. They wanted to put an end to the sexist stereotypes, double standards and oppression that was forced upon women by men. Thirty years ago women wanted to show that they were strong and intelligent. Women wanted to be treated equally to men. Most importantly, they no longer wanted to be treated as a lesser being based on their biological makeup.

I will not deny that the feminist movement did wonders for women and nor will I try and tell you that our society is now perfect, but I believe that the feminists among us have lost sight of what the real fight is. Nowadays, instead of fighting for equal rights women are segregating themselves from men and in many cases are making demands that are hypocritical and petty.

For many years feminists fought for inclusion in men only events, yet women now feel it necessary to host a number of "women only" events. When one registers for the Flora Women's Mini Marathon you are explicitly warned that men are not allowed partake in the race under any circumstances. There also a number of other "women only" marathons held throughout Ireland. Big horse racing meets often feature a "ladies' day" where the women are admired for the grace and beauty, but you never see a "mans' day". Pubs hosting "ladies' nights", where women get free entry or a free drink simply because of their body type, are also a regular occurrence, but I've never seen a pub host a "mans' night".

How can we ever expect to be fully included if we exclude men on such a regular basis? The feminists of earlier generations fought so hard to end discrimination against women and exclusion of women from events on the basis that they were women. Not only does the practice of

holding women only events segregate women from men, it is also discriminating against men. Why should a woman get a free drink on a night out, just because she happens to have an XX chromosome? Why should be excluded from winning a prize, and quite an expensive prize at that, at the Galway races because he isn't wearing a pretty dress?

Feminism has gone so far that we women aren't even entirely sure what we want anymore. Chick Lit, which is a genre of romantic women's fiction in which the protagonist, a smart, classy woman with a fantastic job, is dumped by her loser, beer drinking boyfriend who is emotionally unavailable and thus, no good for her. Any confused male who read these books who come to the logical conclusion that what women want is a man who is in touch smart, sophisticated and in touch with his feelings; basically a male version of the female. Yet if a man is in touch with his feelings he is instantly branded less of a man and ridiculed. A man who is in touch with his feelings or spends any time on his appearance is seen as effeminate but a man who never pays any heeds to his emotions is an oafish slob. This is no middle ground.

Men are consistently portrayed as unintelligent and somewhat of a lesser being because of their genetic make up. It is a widely accepted fact that men can't multitask, nor can they do something as simple as reading a map, whereas the vastly superior woman can handle this challenge with no difficulty. A recent advert for oven cleaner featured the tag line: "so easy a man could do it". Some how such blatant sexism has become acceptable, yet if a woman was to be discriminated against in such a way there would be a court case.

They say history is circular and that what comes around goes around. I feel that we are nearing the end of the feminism and as the campaign for women's rights dies out a new campaign will rise; masculinism. Men have been forgotten for so long because women have been shouting louder but soon they will have their chance to be treated equally. The Fathers' rights movement has been gaining momentum in recent years, and this is just the start of maculinism campaigns.

## Fá ilte c huig Ollscoil Luimnigh

Le Róisín Healy

Tá sé déanta agat. Tá tú críochnaithe. Tá an caidreamh sin idir tusa, an Ardeist agus do éide scoile críochnaithe go deo. Chomhghairdeas. Maith thú, etc. Ach níl aon gá caint faoin an Ardeist nó a léitheid níos mó. Tá tú anseo in Ollscoil Luimnigh faoi dheireadh. Ach níl an rás críochnaithe – níl sé ach ag tosnú! Tá tú i do sheasamh san Ollscoil is bríomhar agus is áille in Éirinn. (B'fhéidir go bhfuil bias agam, ach is cuma.) Seo é do sheans anois chun daoine nua a bhualadh, bheith i do bhall de chlub nó chumann éagsúil, do chuid pearsanta a chur chun cinn, na mílte chicken rolls a ithe ó Spar agus an áit...er...cinniúnach sin, an Lodge, a bhlaiseadh. Agus b'fhéidir go mbeidh an t-am agat bheith i láthair sna léachtaí...nuair nach bhfuil Home and Away ar siúil, ar ndóigh.

Tá áit faoi léith ag an Ghaeilge in Ollscoil Luimnigh. Déantar iarracht campas dhátheangach a chrútú. Do na daoine a bheidh ag stadéir ar an nGaeilge – déan iarracht an

teanga a labhairt leis na daoine i do ranga. Ní dhearna mé agus tá aifeala orm anois. Tá sé fíor-dheacair é a phiocadh suas go nadúrtha níos déanaí. (Deireadh leis an rant – geallaim.) Tá Seomra na Gaeilge againn mar Ghaelgoirí – Wahey! Tá sé suite in Fhoirgneamh na dTeangacha agus an Léinn Chultúir. Beidh seans agat do chuid Gaeilge a chleachtadh agus, níos tabhachtaí, cupán tae a fháil saor in aisce – agus mar is eol duit, tá sé an-thábhachtach do chuid paisean le haighaidh tae AGUS do chuid airgead a chosaint mar mhac léinn.

Ní morán eile a mholadh duit – is féidir leis na SU Heads mionsonraí na bliana a chur in iúl duit. Bain sult as na ceithre bhliain. Ní fada go bheidh tú sa saol dáiríre ag smaoinreamh siar ar na laethanta a chaith tú sna Stablaí nó ag déanamh anailís ar gograí Pot Noodle don léacht socheolaíochta! (Tarlionn se sin dom sa tríú bhliain – má tá tú amhras ort.)



# The Supermarket Price War

*Where it began, how it played through and what it means.*

By Finn McDuffie, News Editor

**Now that the Celtic Tiger has firmly clawed its way into history and the discerning Irish consumer has awoken from a long and dreamy snooze, some changes are afoot in the Irish grocery sector.**

As consumers started to feel the pinch, supermarkets initiated some vast strategy changes this summer. Tired of high prices, weary Irish consumers stopped spending or moved their parity purchasing power to Northern Ireland. And lo, a price war began in the grocery sector, which drastically altered relations between suppliers and retailers and continues to transform Irish consumer spending. It started at Tesco. The state's biggest grocery retailer, Tesco could tackle the high prices issue that scared most politicians and irked every weekly shopper in our curtly named "rip-off Republic". The supermarket giant announced thousands of alleged long-term price cuts in a campaign rooted at the Northern Irish border. To curb the cross-border flow of southern shoppers, Tesco closed 11 stores in the border area. For two days in May, the stores underwent a transformation, which has since touched stores nationwide. The new stores offered huge savings in a campaign labelled "change for good". Shortly after, an article appeared in The Irish Times reporting that Tesco was making profits of A around €250 million in the Republic with margins 'significantly higher' than elsewhere

in the Tesco group. Willie Penrose, chairman of the Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise and Employment voiced concern over the 'significant differential' between Tesco profits in Ireland and elsewhere.

He noted Irish suppliers were losing shelf space to overseas rivals due to Tesco's

in exchange for continued shelf presence.

In June, Labour TD Ruairi Quinn highlighted the impact of the "Tescoisation" of the Irish food sector as "far more serious than we realise" and claimed Irish products were being placed above or below customers' eye lines in supermarkets. In response,



new, price-cutting strategy, which included importation of cheaper brands directly from the UK.

Tesco's ability to cut prices and simultaneously maintain high profits is suspicious. To achieve this, Tesco changed the layout of its stores to give more space to UK brands. The new planograms, or shop layouts, were applied to the 11 border shops in May and a further nine branches by June. Many Irish brands were no longer stocked and others got less shelf space. At the time the Euro was strong against the Pound and Tesco made vast savings by buying wholesale from the UK. Further, Tesco was alleged to have been demanding cost price cuts of 20% from many of its Irish suppliers

Tesco said it bought €2 billion of food and drink products in Ireland. Soon after, it was reported Tesco increased prices on food items despite its highly publicised "change for good" campaign. In fact, prices increased on 200 products while a further 300 fell in price. But Tesco promised to make cuts 'for good' in May and amid criticism, claimed most of the hikes resulted from increases in supplier prices.

The cosy relationship between supermarkets and suppliers has broken, with retailers claiming products can be sourced abroad cheaper. Suppliers have had to deal with Tesco's hardball "take it or leave it" approach. And what of 'Hello Money?'. In the past, some

suppliers would approach a supermarket with payments to secure shelf space or preferential placement in a store. Yet it seems it may be bye bye "Hello Money" as Minister for Enterprise and Employment Mary Coughlan seeks to ban many of these payments.

The entire supply chain has been affected by the price war. Irish Farmers' Association president Pdraig Walshe warned supermarkets over the summer that farmers "would not die quietly" and they were not going to take any more price cuts for their produce. He said the savings being made by the consumer are coming "off the backs of Irish farmers". He also criticised the supermarkets for importing food products from the UK.

By July, Tesco had removed 350 Irish products from its shelves. 3,000 slow selling products were removed to make space for 7,000 new products, many of which were sourced from the UK. Further, the price war had caused national food costs to drop as much as 20%, according to surveys by the National Consumer Agency and the Central Statistics Office.

As prices continue to decrease, the power truly lies with the Irish consumer. Tesco has pledged to keep Irish products on its shelves so long as demand continues. But buying Irish is not enough. As supermarket giants pass on dirty savings to consumers by sourcing abroad and demanding cheaper produce from Irish food producers, it seems a vicious circle is set to stay.

## Rage Against the Machine

By Emma Hayward

WOULDN'T life without technology be so much simpler?

I mean first of all, we wouldn't have to learn the language of computers; a language which I have not particularly learned to master just yet.

We wouldn't have to deal with these things called 'Gigabytes' and all the various other type of bytes that really only bring to mind Kellogg's Mini-Breaks or Weetabix Minis, which actually do make the rather interesting study snack betimes.

The deal with computers is that today pretty much everyone has one and if you don't, well, you're pretty well screwed. You can't even check in to Shannon Airport without doing it online first. What does that have to say about this century?

Do we rely too much on technology? Have we simply out done ourselves? And in the process have we forgotten the simpler things in life?

Have we forgotten the skills and intelligence that once were compulsory for our survival, which have now been deemed

superfluous due to the ever flourishing progression of technology? Most of us have let our once neat handwriting diminish over the years as now everything can be typed and sent thousands of miles across the world to absolutely anyone with access to a computer, or all the way to the person in the adjoining room whom you are too lazy to talk to.

I used to be a good old fashioned writer of letters. They were great. The excitement of sealing the envelope and the tangy residue left on your tongue. Apparently if you licked enough envelopes you could die from glue poisoning.

Not to mention the real excitement of receiving a letter in the post. Not knowing who it's from, where it came from, but knowing that someone somewhere has cared enough or had something of appropriate importance to tell you, to put into writing and have it carefully delivered to your doorstep via, one of our most important and prominent neighbourhood members, the postman.

You just don't get the same level of personal intimacy in an email. It's bad

enough that half of our emails are spam and junk and contain thoughtfully honed viruses just waiting to make their new home in our computers.

We wouldn't have this problem if we all wrote letters instead. I just can't picture people with the flu writing hundreds of malicious letters and sneezing in each envelope before sending it off to be opened by anonymous recipients with low immunity levels.

It's not too much effort to post things instead of emailing them. And the time in between correspondence could be spent becoming self-sufficient at home. You would have spare time to grow your own potatoes instead of buying them. Then you would have spare money to spend on cattle and then you would have your own butter and milk and cheese.

Then you could sell them and buy sheep and make your own clothes and before you know it, you have just solved your own economic crisis.

No more recession here. Perhaps without the constant dependence on technology our own intelligence might expand and perhaps we might develop our brains so that we use more than 10% of them in our lifetime. Imagine what we could do with that other 90%. Surely it's not just the bubble wrap that our brains came packaged in when we were born.

As for transport; forget cars, buses and petrol. We could just as easily gallop around on horseback just like in the days of old. It's more fun too. They say that horse-riding is a dangerous sport, but compared

with injuries sustained from car crashes, we would be much better off being involved in a head on collision with two horses going 30 mph rather than two cars at 60mph. Much safer and there'll be fewer deaths on the roads. Sorted.

It's also a great form of exercise, which means less fat people waddling around and that would do wonders for Ireland's expanding -no pun intended- problem of obesity. So technology doesn't really have much of a leg to stand on. Maybe I'm just a rare Luddite, self proclaimed technophobe, but I believe that I could be on to something here.

It could be the whole new way of life, or should I say, old way of life, that has been over shadowed by the advancement in technology.

Maybe this insight into the traditional way of living will have an impact on those who read it. Now, how to persuade the rest of the world? I'll start by e-mailing this to my editor.



# Adventures in Shopping

*Andrea Gallagher reminisces about her experiences as a pushy sales assistants in America.*

Customer service is being taken to higher and more sophisticated standards, from loyalty cards to store credit cards. This ultimately American trend is slowly beginning to creep into Ireland. The scariest form of which is the overly accommodating sales assistant. I was genuinely confused when I entered Claire's accessories for the first time and instead of the usual simple hello I was greeted by a grinning "Hi! How are you today?" I warily said fine and disappeared behind a rack of hair ties wondering if she thought she knew me from somewhere. As I peered around, her smiling face jumped out at me and offered me a basket, which I rejected out of pure surprise. She must think she knows me.

I picked up some earrings nervously, feeling her eyes watching me. "Those are so cute aren't they? Did you know if you purchase two sets of earrings you can get this key-ring half price?" Anytime I went in, I was hounded by these Martian sales assistants until the thought of it put me off so much I stopped going to avoid saying "No, I don't need your help or your basket just leave me alone!" The truth was I was

more likely to buy something if I didn't feel like I was being watched and therefore was in a rush to leave.

The first time I went to America I was shell shocked. Every shop, supermarket or café I went to, I was greeted by a warm "Hi! How are you today?!" This was a perfect stranger smiling at you warmly like you were an old friend or an elderly person hard of hearing. The preferred response was "I'm great thanks how are you?!" but I had the Irish habit of saying "Grand" which received smiles of puzzlement.

This continued until every female shop assistant over 40 was like the American mom I never had, and every young, hip beautiful college student in shops like Abercrombie and Fitch who asked me "What's going on?" were like the best friend I didn't know was coming to a store near me. I always imagined myself giving them some smart, overly personal answer just to see what these robots would do, but I inevitably mumbled something inaudible and shuffled past. These people were supposed to make me feel more at home and looked after but they made my cold European soul want to run for cover.

I did my J1 in California and was employed by a popular high end department store. I knew that I would have to be exceptionally outgoing to be successful. During the interview I found out it was a commission, target based job. This means that the more you sell the more you make and if you don't reach your targets... well that's it. Now I knew what all this was about. I would have to act like The Happiest Person in the Universe to earn more than the pitiful minimum wage.

I did an intensive three days of training which really gave me insight into the American corporate machine. We were programmed to give generic compliments and warned there

would be mystery shoppers visiting regularly to ensure we were interacting sufficiently with the customers. We watched videos on how to "Sell, sell, sell!" There were signs plastered around the staff area, with phrases, compliments and conversation starters for customers. They even had carpets with lines you could use on the customers. I swear, "Your outfit is so cute, where did you get it?" was one of them. That particular line made me feel really uneasy, sort of like I was in Mean Girls. "How are you today?" I could handle as it seemed to be the norm even in non commission shops but telling a customer a barefaced lie... I imagined what would happen if I approached customers in Ireland in the way I was expected to here. They'd run a mile, think I was drunk or on valium.

I knew I had targets to reach and needed to "Sell, Sell, Sell!" as my manager kept telling me. I worked in the Handbag Department where I was surrounded by bags worth hundreds and thousands of dollars. The girls I worked with were all American and it was very refreshing from the hundreds of D4 brats I'd become used to on our nights out. They were all extremely beautiful and had gorgeous clothes and I realised I'd have to start wearing heels to work! It was a huge difference from jobs I'd previously held but the most I had to do was dilly dally in our heels with a duster to look busy in between our next victims stepping into our stomping ground.

I wholeheartedly admit I was extremely embarrassed but my livelihood depended on it. I pounced on the customers as soon as they walked in, striking up conversations, telling stories that I repeated day in, day out. "Yeah I'm from Ireland! No, I have never been to Kerry. I'm sure it's beautiful." Some days it was fun, some days I wanted to scream. There was a real thrill to closing a sale. Mostly my customers were lonely middle aged women who had money and time but no one to talk to. I chattered

for hours as I helped them choose bags and soon I had my "regulars". I was always trying to ply them with the store credit card, which held a reward of ten dollars in hand per card, sweets of your choice and being congratulated on the store intercom.

The sales floor itself was a jungle; your friends were also your enemies. Nobody wanted to step on anybody's toes, and there was always the whisper of "Is she/he yours?" Although there was a real sense of team to reach our daily department goals, there were some cold blooded sales people, like the oldest person on our team, Midge. She was seventy, wore pink velour tracksuits, leopard print glasses and drove a convertible.

Her business card bore the coveted "5 star salesperson". She was a commission thief who feigned deafness and incompetence when it suited her. Even our manager was united with us against her.

Then there was the dreaded shoes department, despised by the entire store. The employees of this department were all great looking, particularly the men. They were flirtatious and handsome, wooing every woman who walked by. It was a highly competitive department and the staff were vicious in their assaults on our department. They shamelessly walked into our division undoing our exquisite displays as we rolled our eyes at each other. One was particularly bothersome. You could be in the middle of closing a sale, and he would casually walk by and before stopping and facing the customer. "Oh no, you're not... are you? That's disgusting!" He would then proceed to pick up a different handbag and try to sell it. Depending on the type of woman, this went either way. If she was insecure she'd be mortified and hang onto his every word, or if she was a sophisticated street wise shopper she would be openly confused at the fact that a perfect stranger told her a bag she chose was disgusting. It was truly an eye opening experience, and in ways showed human nature at one of its worst.

When I arrived home I found it so refreshing to walk into a shop without being approached. I could walk around and get what I wanted without that feeling of having to be little miss sunshine to someone who was only being as nice as their job required. I'm not saying that I don't enjoy good hospitality or appreciate sales assistants who go out of their way to be nice but it's nice to have somebody be kind because they feel like it, or because you were nice to them, rather than have someone who could be on the verge of a mental breakdown for all you know greet you in a voice that's just a little too high to be normal.



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# Welcome to Welfare

By Derek Daly

**Well, what can I say, it's a little late and a little early to be giving advice on grant applications and student accommodation; but here's some of the stuff you can do:**

**Take photos of your house with today's An Focal in them, to show what is and isn't broken. Store these in case your landlord says "that wasn't broken when you moved in". Then you can show them the photo and say: "oh yes it was". More on this at the end of the year, when more photos will be required.**

## Condoms and Glydams:

A new system is in place for condoms this year. You will be asked to make a donation to RAG charities (something small 50c or €1) every time you get condoms or glydams\* and lube from my office. The average pack of condoms is €4 so a small donation isn't a big ask. So for the first time; the more sex you have the more benefit there is to good causes, call it an absolution of sin if you're that way inclined.

This year I have also catered for those with latex allergies so there is no excuse for not using a condom.

## Coming up this year

Throughout the year we will be putting on various awareness campaigns, some linked to others, all with the theme of *UrLife*, meaning they are all relevant to you and your

every day life. These include Healthy Heart, SADS, Road Safety and Mental Health as well as the yearly SHAG campaign, where we encourage everyone to go out and have SAFE sex.

## Get involved

I hope to get a Welfare Crew up and running during Semester 1 to get the general student population involved. It won't be paid but there might be a few perks at the end of the year. It will involve RAG Charities collecting, Equality stuff with the Equality Officer and looking at where Welfare can improve. Email [suwelfarecrew@ul.ie](mailto:suwelfarecrew@ul.ie) for more info!

That's all folks. Drop in, say hello, keep me in check, any issues with accommodation come to me for advice, any sex issues come to me for advice, money problems, legal issues; you get the picture!

Look forward to meeting a lot of you this year.

D

## \*What is a glydam?

A glydam is a sheet of latex that you can use to prevent infection when "licking out"/ "muff diving" a lady friend. I have them available in the office, so please use them!

# Ed's Education

Hi everyone,

Ok, so it's finally happened. You're here. The Leaving Cert is over and I can hear you cry: "Let the fun begin!". The next thing you know, it's Week 6, you've run out of money and realised that there are a couple of classes that you've never actually been to, never mind fallen behind in. Right, time to bury your head in the sand and hope for the best? WRONG!

Hundreds of students from 1st to 4th year fall behind in modules every year in UL, either because they don't attend class or because they find the material too difficult. Many people fail their exams the first, and second, time round. You can avoid being one of them if you ask for help early. I know it can be embarrassing and awkward to ask for help with course work, but it could very well be the difference between you repeating first year and sailing into second year.

"But who do I ask?" I hear you say. There are a number of different people. First things first, you can ask your tutor or lecturer. They can often recommend a good book to help with the basics or in smaller classes, a Postgrad who may be able to give you grinds. You can also contact me on [sueducation@ul.ie](mailto:sueducation@ul.ie) or the Postgraduate President on [psapresident@ul.ie](mailto:psapresident@ul.ie) and we can send an email out looking for suitable Postgraduate candidates.

More importantly, there are a number of Learning Centres for particular subjects, for example the Maths Learning Centre or the Language Resource Area. Trained tutors (often tutors or lecturers in the university) are available at certain times to assist students.

The best bit is – It's free! There are certain guidelines for what the Centres can and can't do and it's important to stress that the help they offer is not designed to replace classes, but to support you in your learning. One lecturer in particular helped me week on week with my oral German. She gave me huge confidence and I went up two grades in exams in 4th year because of it.

So when you finally wake up from your 8 week campus holiday, remember that help is at hand. Or failing that, just go to class in the first place!

All the best,

Ed (AKA Aoife 1)

# LET'S TALK SEX

**Let me start by welcoming all the first years to the best university and welcome everyone else back too. I hope you had a great summer. Back to the matter in hand, each edition of An Focal will contain an article discussing some aspect of sex. Given that it is the start of a new college year and considering how hard you have worked up until this point to get to university, this article will be based on safe sex. (I know your sick of hearing it but sure hear we go).**

Anyone who has been living on planet earth knows that while sex is fun, there is also the many problems it can cause. From pregnancy to STIs, the nasty list goes on and on. So whenever (or where ever) you decide to get it on make sure you use protection. There are so many different types of contraception available but it is sometimes hard to decide which form suits you best. If you are unsure it is best to consult your doctor.

We all hate to talk openly about sex but if you are grown up enough to have sex then you are able to ask if your partner has a condom. It may be embarrassing but if it prevents you

getting something nasty, it's worth it. Make sure you always go out prepared, and that goes for the ladies too. It's easy to throw one in your pocket, purse or handbag and it's always better to be safe than sorry. Do you really want to go home and wake up the next morning, not only with a hangover, but knowing that you've risked getting pregnant or contracting an infection? Even if you don't use it, one of your friends will. I have lost count of the times I have had someone ask for me a condom.

Another popular method of contraception is the oral contraceptive, most popularly known as "the pill". The pill is almost 100% effective in preventing pregnancy and also easy to take. However, it is only effective if you remember to take it each day and at the exact same time. It also does not work if you are sick with vomiting, diarrhoea or on medication. As the pill is taken orally, it does not protect against STIs so it is safer to always use a condom which is the only form of contraceptive that works as a contraceptive and protects against STIs.

If you do have unprotected sex you must go to the doctor to get tested for STIs. Ladies

must also visit the doctor to get the Morning After Pill. The Morning After Pill is a form of emergency contraception which can be taken after unprotected sex has occurred. This is most effective when taken within 12 hours of having unprotected sex but can be taken up to 72 hours after intercourse. It is only available by prescription and is not supposed to be taken regularly. It is also very important to note that your body will quickly develop an immunity to the Morning After Pill so do not use it as an excuse to have unprotected sex whenever you feel like it.

Condoms are available for a small donation in the Students' Union building. Just ask the Welfare Officer, Derek Daly.

There is also a free Student Health Centre, should you need to see a doctor for any reason. There is nothing they have not seen or heard and there is no need to worry about anyone finding out as it is confidential. It is a FREE service but it is recommended that you also register with a local GP. The opening hours of the Student Health Centre are 9a.m. to 5.00p.m. Monday to Friday and is located in C Block, Level M, Main Building.

# Campaigns and Services

Cead Mile Failte lads/lasses! So I'm Fergal and I look after Campaigns and Services, our main goal this year with Campaigns is to highlight that every campaign ran has 3 main goals for students. We want to highlight areas that affect you; your wallet, your health and your safety. These are the 3 things that are at the basis of every campaign we run so we are going to spend a lot of time acting on them.

We provide a whole range of services in the Students Union. We have a Nitelink that will get you home safely at night. We have the cheapest photocopying on campus. ULSU provides a second hand bookshop that allows students to both make money and save money on college books. The Bike Shop enables everyone on campus to get out and get active without costing an arm and a leg.

Ents is gonna be good this year. We are really conscious that you want good gigs for a small price. We're really trying to do our best on this for ye.

# UL soccer stars shine at World University Games

By Liam Tobgher

IRELAND was represented in both the men's and women's soccer tournaments at this summer's World University Games in Belgrade and some of UL's footballing finest were on show. Brendan Daly and Brian Cleary were chosen to represent the men's team while Lorna O'Connell, Aoife Herbert, Ruth Fahy and Niamh Mulcahy all formed part of the female squad.

The men began with a 1-0 defeat to Uruguay, the only goal coming on the half-hour. Athlone Town full-back Brian Cleary almost equalised in the second half with a powerful header that went narrowly over the bar. Luck continued to desert them as they fell 2-1 to Italy despite dominating for long periods. That result ended their hopes of progressing in the competition and a Pool C whitewash was completed following

another 1-0 loss, this time against tournament favourites South Korea.

Ireland then entered the play-off rounds for final positions and they missed out on a top 12 spot after losing 1-0 to Canada. It was a galling result as they had numerous chances to score but were left to rue their profligacy. At least they avoided the wooden spoon with a 4-1 thumping of Ghana, UL's Cleary scoring the fourth goal and Daly captaining the side.



Their final match ended in a 1-1 draw with Morocco. The UL boys played their part, Brian featuring in five games and Brendan in four.

The women's first game ended with a 3-0 defeat by Japan, having run out of steam in the second half.

However, they gave themselves a decent chance of progressing from Pool D after beating Hungary 3-2. Unfortunately they couldn't build on that result and lost 1-0 to France, the match spoilt by a horrendous hailstorm.

In the play-offs, they went down to another

narrow defeat, this time 2-1 against Poland. Like their male counterparts, the girls made sure they wouldn't finish bottom of the pile by hitting South Africa for six, even though their opponents managed three in reply. In another parallel with the men's team the Irish finished 14th following a 3-2 defeat by Hungary, who reversed the result from the sides' group stage meeting. All four UL girls had a part to play in the tournament.

The selection of six UL players between the two squads highlights the recent success of both the men's and women's soccer teams in this college. Their formidable efforts at national intervarsity level were rightly rewarded with an unforgettable experience in global competition, even if the results in Belgrade didn't quite make for glorious reading.

## Mulcahy switches To Mary I

By Tomás McCarthy

ONE OF UL's brightest sporting talents Niamh Mulcahy is set to transfer to Mary Immaculate College. The soccer and camogie star from Limerick will begin a course in Primary Teaching. When contacted by An Focal sport Mulcahy confirmed that the move was "99% certain". This news will come as a shock to anyone who is involved or who follows the UL sporting scene.

Mulcahy was controversially left off the UL camogie team for the Ashbourne Shield final last term. UL eventually lost that game to NUIG. It is unclear, however, if this had a part to play in Mulcahy's decision.

What is clear is the stunning achievements that the 19 year old from Castleconnell has racked up to date. The honour of representing your country is one which Niamh has done with pride in last

couple of years. She has seen action with the Ireland soccer team at under 17 and under 19 level. In the recent campaign the under 19s failed to reach the European Championships despite some notable wins over Russia, Slovakia and Greece. This summer she took part in the World University Games in Belgrade. The Irish team finished in 14th position.

Last season was an incredible one for the UL ladies soccer team winning the treble, a success that Mulcahy had a major hand in. After already capturing the indoor crown and the league title UL entered the intervarsities as hot favourites. Mulcahy found the net twice in the 5-0 group

stage win against DCU. After defeating UUI in the semis Sligo IT were the opposition in the final. Again Mulcahy came up trumps with a long range goal to open the scoring as UL ran out 2-1 winners. As well as three medals she added a league all star to cap a remarkable campaign.

Niamh is one of three Mulcahy sisters representing Ahane on the Limerick senior camogie team. This year though will be best forgotten as Limerick lost games to Wexford, Clare and Galway. In spite of this Niamh Mulcahy was a shining light displaying her class throughout. In three games she fired 0-19 out of Limerick's total of 1-24. This included scoring

all eight of the Shannonsider's points in the 1-16 to 0-8 defeat to Galway. Operating at centre forward Mulcahy could not do much more to inspire her side. Niamh along with Claire and Judith will no doubt be looking for better results in the years to come. In 2007 Niamh earned the young camogie player of the year award and also an Irish Examiner Junior Sports Star Award. This was after a year where Limerick won the All Ireland B championship defeating Cork in the final.

Mulcahy will continue to excel for club and country but no longer in the colours of the University of Limerick.





# Ambitious, use less and we're back

## To más Mc Carthy on the year ahead

HERE I am on a rather mild Saturday August evening cleaning the dust off the laptop. The laptop a bit like myself doesn't relish the summer months. Finally though the college season is underway and we are both back in business.

While the laptop and the sports hack are best of friends and worst of enemies they are also very similar to each other. We are both very ambitious but ultimately totally and utterly useless. As that elusive deadline approaches I frantically type those all important words while at the same time checking on the county of that UL corner forward while also keeping tabs on some meaningless League One match

that I have money on. At the same time the Kings of Leon belt out another hit in my earphones. I know that the laptop wants me to succeed. Something is lacking though. Short in sharpness and speed (a bit like a Dublin corner back) my Dell feels the pressure and the mission collapses. The message "Not responding" deepens the frustration. Multi tasking is not in the vocabulary. Eoin King wouldn't be happy. "Kingy" was a fantastic new recruit for An Focal last season showing not only writing skills but he is also a fine snooker player, soccer striker and also a hurler! Dell take note. Some may criticise that we are hanging for too long. Can McCarthy

resist the lure of The Stables though? Or pitch one on a freezing cold day? Certainly not. Here at An Focal we are masters of the predictable. Suffice to say we wouldn't do well at hide and seek. Togher's hairstyle is an instant giveaway, Connolly will almost certainly be in the library on paddypower.com with McGrath outside proclaiming the greatness of Bernard Brogan. If only the laptop was as reliable.

However, through thick and thin Dell and myself come back for more. The new college season similar to start of a Premier League campaign promises much for us both. We can all afford to dream of exciting times ahead.

UL won't win everything but then no college can. So what is on my wish list? A Fitzgibbon title, Sigerson semi finals, continued success in rugby and soccer, improved pitches and further progress in water sports and in other lesser known clubs.

My message to all UL teams for the year is to dig deep, aim high. Every time I get to see a UL sporting event a new talent comes to the fore. All we are here for is to put words on that talent. We'll do our best to cover anything. If you see me, Togher, Connolly, McGrath, King or my laptop say hello. We need all the encouragement we can get! All comments to mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com

# High Performance Centre reaps dividends

By Tomás Mc Carthy

SWIM Ireland's High Performance Centre based at the University Arena has been boosted by fantastic success by Grainne Murphy over the summer months.

At the European Junior Swimming Championships in Prague Murphy won an incredible haul of three golds and one bronze. The first gold medal arrived in the 400m Individual Medley. Murphy's time of 4.40.88 was a record for the Championships and also

an Irish Junior record. Later on that evening she was in the reckoning once more in the 1500m freestyle. This time she had to settle for the bronze medal. Still not content with her lot two more gold medals followed. Murphy emerged victorious in both the 200m Individual Medley and the 800m freestyle and adding another European Junior record in the process. For the sixteen year old the month of July in Prague was definitely one to remember.

The Grainne Murphy story should come as no surprise though given the work being done at the Arena. Belgian Ronald Claes is coach down at the centre and his previous experience as both swimmer and coach are paying off. The facilities at the Arena are available for the athletes to use seven days a week including the 50 metre pool. This is all being done to ensure that Irish swimmers do not have to go abroad to improve their performances in competition.

Swim Ireland is eager to open more centres similar to this in the near future.

Grainne Murphy along with other High Performance Swimmers Niamh O'Sullivan and Nuala Murphy also took part in the World Championships in Rome during the summer. Other swimmers now based at the Arena include Tara Dunne, Chris Bryan, Patrick Kennedy, Kevin Denihan, Lorna Cummins and Leo Delaney.

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## UL Sports Round-Up

### Kennedy Cup

The month of June saw UL host the prestigious schoolboy soccer tournament The Kennedy Cup. The Dublin and District Schoolboy League won their sixth title on the trot defeating North Dublin SL 2-1 in the final.

### Irish Rugby Squad

Declan Kidney's Irish rugby squad went through their paces at the University Arena facilities at the end of August. The squad were beginning their preparations ahead of the Autumn Internationals.

### New Sports Writers

An Focal Sport are looking for new writers to join the sports team. If you think you are up to the task email mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com If you are passionate about sport this is for you.

### Comments?

Have anything to get off your chest? Let all of your views known by email to mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com All comments welcome!

# The Optimum Point

By Kevin McNamara

**THE 2009/10 Barclays Premier league season is upon us once again and with it an eagerly anticipated campaign that has been heightened by an 'over-inflated' transfer market.**

As the Champions were fed to the lions in the European Cup Final in Rome, few would have thought that Manchester United would begin the defense of their title with a weakened team. The world record fee for Cristiano Ronaldo and the loss of Carlos Tevez to Manchester City left many fans quietly excited about the new faces that the money could bring in. The signing of 23-year-old Ecuadorian winger Antonio Valencia is a thrilling prospect, but does he really have the potential to be one of the best players in the world and fill the shoes of Ronaldo? And what about Michael Owen, a player most likely seen on a hospital ward over the last few years then on a football pitch. Described as an 'impact player', he was not exactly on the top of many lists to replace fan-favorite Carlos Tevez. Despite the reassuring whisperers around Old Trafford that 'No player is bigger than the Club', the 18 goals and the countless match winning performances by Ronaldo last season shows that it is maybe the time for the likes of Rooney and Berbatov to come out of the shadows of the runaway Prince..

But let's spare a thought for poor Rafael Benitez at Liverpool, who once again has come down with the 'Ferguson Complex', as he now claims that

Sir Alex is 'worried' about Mark Hughes and his

spending power at Manchester City. However if I was Rafa, I would be more worried about his latest signing Alberto Aquilani, who not only cost 20 million, but has only played 73 games in the last three seasons. With a dodgy injury record and now in one of the most physical leagues in the world, it remains to be seen if he can defy the odds and refrain from becoming one of Benitez's legendary

flops. Glen Johnson is another notable recruit for the 'Reds' and brings another dimension in a right-back that could go forward in search of troubling opposing defenders.

However if we are very honest, are these acquisitions good enough to win the title? Somehow I think 'Sir Alex' isn't losing

much sleep. As for Arsenal, the money coming in from the sale of both Emmanuel Adebayor (25Million) and Kolo Toure (16Million) to Manchester City has allowed Wenger to finally bring in summer target and former Ajax captain, Thomas Vermaelen. Chelsea on the other hand, with new manager Carlo Ancelotti have been surprisingly quiet in this summer's transfer market, bringing in only Yuri Zhirkov from CSKA Moscow for a reported fee of 18 million.

It remains to be seen if Ancelotti's wonder weapon, the diamond formation can perform like it did in Seria A. Manchester City will of course be top of McGrath's 'Rumour Mill' this year, with the spending of over 100 million on players during the summer. But does this not remind anyone of a Claudio Ranieri scenario a few years ago after the Abramovich takeover?

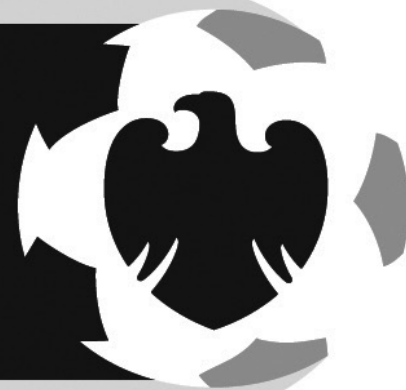
It's a fact, City have the quality to break into the 'Top Four', but the arrival of so many players will cause problems and if they are not quickly resolved, could spell the end of Hughes at the Premier League Club.

Whatever the case, the season promises to be another enthralling affair as the gap has closed ever more between the major contenders.

The world record fee for Cristiano Ronaldo and the loss of Carlos Tevez to Manchester City left many fans quietly excited.



**BARCLAYS**  
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## Commitment + talent = rewards

*Liam Toogher speaks with busy UL soccer star Brian Cleary*

**SPENDING Friday nights playing for a modest League of Ireland First Division club certainly isn't the dream of most college attendees. UL 4th year Business student Brian Cleary would rather be nowhere else at that time of the week than doing his left-back duty for Athlone Town.**

The club, and indeed the league, wouldn't quite fit the billing of 'glamorous', but Brian knows it is far from Ragball Rovers territory. "The standard in the League of Ireland is quite good, especially at the top with teams like Bohemians and St. Pat's doing so well in Europe. It's a big commitment with training three times a week and a match as well. I've been doing my co-op in Dublin

and then some evenings I'd have to travel back to Athlone. That would be an 18-hour day when you're constantly on the go. It's tiring but very much worth it, particularly when you go to places like Ballybofey [to play Finn Harps] and Monaghan and you get three points. It's quite rewarding even though it takes time out from your social life. I also like the variety in the training sessions; it's not all just ball work or fitness."

Brian's hard work at club level, and with the UL soccer team, was rewarded with a call-up to the Irish squad for the World University Games in Belgrade this summer. The results were disappointing but the experience most certainly wasn't. "It's one of the best things I've ever done. The standard is a step

up from what I'm used to. Some would say it's an even higher standard than the Premier Division in Ireland so just to be involved at that level is brilliant. Playing such quality teams can only improve you as a player and we never lost by more than one goal so we weren't that far off the benchmark. The heat was tough as well but we were well prepared and well looked after. It was great being there with the other Irish athletes too and having the craic with them."

As well as his UL and Athlone Town commitments, Brian also finds time to represent his local club in Gaelic football. "I play with my local club and we won the Under-21 B title in Galway last year. Unfortunately I've had to give it a miss this

year due to my soccer commitments but I really enjoy GAA, what with it being your own community."

Here is proof that with the ideal combination of talent and honest, thorough commitment, rewards such as playing in a global event for your country are very much attainable. Despite making his name as a left-back in soccer, Brian features at centre-forward on Gaelic football duty, so maybe if Athlone Town were ever stuck for strikers they could deploy him further up the park? "Nah, I'd only end up putting the ball over the bar!"

It's a big commitment ... some evenings I'd have to travel back to Athlone.

Playing such quality teams can only improve you as a player.



# Previewing plenty for UL GAA

By Eoin King

**THE BIG Dance that took place Sunday in Croke Park between Kilkenny and Tipperary may have felt to some like one of the last shows of the GAA season, yet with the return of lectures, tutorials and nights in the Lodge focus will also return to college GAA.** No fanfare. Little limelight. Maguire's field. It's the uniqueness of hurling and football that in a space of weeks the likes of UL's own Seamus Hickey or David Moran can grace Croke Park in a summer spectacle while not long after slog it out in Maguire's (mudbath?). The GAA is, of course, a year round sport which carries on regardless the season. Between hurling, camogie, men and ladies football the college has teams running into double figures.

There is a mix of the good and the bad. Men and women who will leave a mark on their sport, and experience days like Sunday for years to come. There are simply those who will leave a mark on a LIT opponent. With a new batch of 1st year students comes a new chance to see future All-Stars. It happens.

Sometimes it's current All Stars. And with hurling fresh in the minds let us start with the Fitzgibbon hurlers. Returning the core players from last year such as Limerick's Seamus Hickey, Martin Walsh and Matthew Ruth of Kilkenny, and Tipp's Tom Stapleton this year's squad will fancy their chances of a return to the final. After impressively negotiating a passage to Parnell Park last March with some outstanding hurling UL were caught by an inform UCC team.

Once again, competition will be tough and the usual contenders look to be UCC, LIT (with one more year of Joe Canning) and WIT. UL last won the competition seven years ago.

With the experience and hurt of the final last year to inspire them the signs at this stage are positive and point towards silverware. Knock on wood. They have ability and leaders. Intercounty leaders. If one team is worth following it's this group.

The sliotars, of course, aren't just reserved for the Fitzgibbon squad. The senior camogie team suffered defeat in the Ashbourne shield final some months ago. Once more, at this time of year hope springs eternal. Hope being UL

can progress further in the Cup than the shield. Considering the number of teams toging out on behalf of UL the football, once more, will likely prove a mixed bag. The college does not, in fact, boast a Sigerson in its trophy cabinet. It was another Cork team that prevailed in last season's competition with CIT, led by Daniel Goulding, defeating DIT in the decider.

The last time UL made the final was in 1997 when they lost to Tralee R.T.C by seven points. Under the guidance of Cian O'Neill, last year's team left the competition in the second round after three bouts of extra time against UCD. Had they cleared that hurdle the momentum could have been telling, yet, once more we are only left to preview with optimism rather than a sense of certainty.

UCD lead the roll of honour with 32 Sigerson cups, and tend to contest the latter stages most years. With a new season the aim is to build on that loss and push on. One thing the Sigerson squad is not short on is talent. David Moran of Kerry, Fiachra Lynch (Cork), Kenneth O'Malley (Mayo) Sean Ryan (also UL hurler and dual star with Offaly) and Stephen Lonergan (Offaly) are a few of many

notable names from last year's panel. What can't be doubted with each team is the time and effort given to the cause. By both players and coaches. The fact the ladies lost last year's O'Connor cup final by a point after extra time is another meaningful sign that UL GAA send out some of the best teams in intercollegiate competition. Like the Fitzgibbon hurlers, the ladies will be looking to avenge the final loss to DCU and win the competition outright. Stars of last season's team included Gillian O'Connor, Geraldine O'Flynn, Fiona Rochford, and Eimear Considine.

The GAA in UL is far from fancy. It is far away from the world of last Sunday. In fact, it can be a world of mud, as last year's training sessions on Maguire's field proved. But it is sport. UL sport.

And the hours upon hours put in training last year obviously paid dividends for a lot of teams. There are top class athletes on one team; sufferers from the Stables the night before on another.

The forecast is good. There are enough good hurlers and footballers to make the back page headline come next March. So we predict.

# Credibility crunch for League of Ireland

By Liam Toghner

**ABOUT a year ago I wrote an article in this paper declaring my confidence in the League of Ireland moving onto bigger and better things. Sadly, that has not proven to be the case. If anything, the lamentable perception of club football in this country has become even more extreme. Of course, the monetary woes felt by nearly everyone in Ireland over the past 12 months haven't helped either, but to blame it on the recession (sorry for mentioning the word) alone is to ignore the whole story.**

Football fans in this country are accustomed to watching some of the world's best players on a weekly basis in the Premier League, so for them LOI is laughable by comparison. It says a lot about the reputation of Irish club soccer that someone from Brighton or Stockport is more likely to be called into the national team than the finest Bohemians or St. Pat's have to offer.

There are very few casual supporters of LOI. Most people are either hardcore fans who frequently attend games or classify themselves as having absolutely no interest in Irish clubs.

Earlier this decade, several of the country's top clubs entered full-time professional status, but the wages being paid to players were simply not justifiable when weighed up against the paltry income from gate receipts, TV rights, etc. The

most dramatic case is that of Cork City, who performed one of football's greatest miracles in staving off extinction a few weeks ago. Although I'm glad to see them remaining in business, surely it won't be long before a big-name club succumbs to the liquidators.

A notable run in European competition is also needed for LOI clubs to boost the coffers. Bohemians came very close to a shock elimination of Red Bull Salzburg in the Champions League qualifiers and while they can rightly be proud of their efforts, the constant tales of 'close but no cigar' and 'moral victory' cannot be tolerated. If we keep celebrating mediocrity then we will get absolutely nowhere. Witness how two Kilkenny hurlers argued with one another when they conceded an academic goal to Waterford in last year's All-Ireland final at a stage when the result was well beyond doubt. For God's sake Belarus and Cyprus had teams in last year's group stage, so why not Ireland?

All in all, 2009 will not be remembered for the right reasons when it comes to the League of Ireland. Even Pat Fenlon, Bohemians manager and a man who lives and breathes the Irish club scene, admits that the overall standard of LOI is a joke.

We can be thankful that there is no resident George Lee-type pessimist on RTE's Monday Night Soccer. Otherwise, those with a passion for League of Ireland football would be even further in the doldrums – if that was imaginable.

# Exciting times ahead for UL Ladies Rugby



By Fiona Reidy

**UL LADIES Rugby are set for an action packed season which will span from mid-September to April, and will undoubtedly contain many sporting highs and lows on the way. UL are current Intervarsity and League champions and hope to retain these titles this year while continuing to improve and nurture new, fresh talent.**

The UL Ladies Rugby team has been at the pinnacle of college rugby for the past decade and while the players and team change each year, the ethos and team spirit has remained the same. It is one of camaraderie, friendship, enjoyment, a will to win and most importantly the team's ability to have fun both on and off the pitch.

New players are crucial to this team's success and every year it is the influx of these new players that helps initiate this success. Many players who begin playing rugby for the first time in UL have gone on to play with Munster, Leinster, Connacht and even Ireland. This shows the vast and unlimited experience our members gain while playing with this team. We stress that absolutely no experience is required and new members are very welcome. So if you want to try a new, exciting and exhilarating sport come along and give Ladies Rugby a go because

you will be sure to like it. UL Ladies Rugby is a college team not a club team so if you play club rugby at home you can still play club and play with the college also. This year we plan on having our most successful year yet, both on and off the pitch with the appointment of a new social secretary who will be organising loads of fun days/nights out so everyone will have a great time.

Our competitions this year begin with some friendly matches at the start of October with the first League match shortly after that on the 19th of October. There are two more League games in November with the remainder three in February and March. The season hots up at the end of March with the League Finals and the Intervarsities. The Varsities are a two day event hosted in a different university every year. The first day consists of several pool games with the semi finals and finals on day two. It is an event that is eagerly awaited by all members of the team.

Last year UL won its tenth Varsity title in 11 years beating the Garda College 14-3 in the final. For more information about training etc. check out our website; [www.ulladiesrugby.com](http://www.ulladiesrugby.com), e-mail us at [ulladiesrugby@hotmail.com](mailto:ulladiesrugby@hotmail.com) or contact June Downey 087 9507616 / Sarah Hogan 087 9003042.

# A Typical GAA Junior B Line up...

*Goalie* - must have 'great goalmouth presence'.... which is secret code for being fat enough to have his own gravitational pull. Always in the 40-50 age bracket, this is a gent that will almost convince you that he played minor for the county in goal, even though the last time he got his knees dirty diving was at a céilí in 1965 when his version of the Hucklebuck went out of control, with numerous casualties.

*Right corner back* - the quiet man of the line-up he seems to escape the jokes in the dressing-room just because no-one has ever seen him angry and are afraid of hidden depths. Unmarried farmer with severe emotional baggage. Contact with a woman consists of the handshake at mass on a Sunday morning.

*Full back* - First started playing football some time in the Pleistocene Epoch. Nicknamed Sledge like "yer man outta U2". Will get a nose-bleed if he passes beyond his own 50 yard line. Utterly, utterly useless and yet is a great hit with the fans.

*Left corner back* - Has all the footballing skills of a piece of cheese and yet has been known to disappear up corner-forward's arses for days on end. An absolute cast-iron guarantee to be made mark the other team's young and absurdly fast superstar in the making.

*Right half back* - just out of minor, this boyo is sadly not going to get anywhere near the senior team... and yet hasn't missed a training session since early 1989. Selection is basically the manager's way of proving that he "doesn't give a damn who you are, if you're not down training we're not going to give you a game".

*Centre back* - disgruntled former senior player; tried to remove senior manager at AGM and now has about as much chance of playing senior as he does of playing Hamlet in the Globe. Hasn't been junior training all year and is still absolutely guaranteed his spot on the team.

*Left half back* - county u-16 star, great white hope for the entire club. About 5 foot 4, he is still told to get under the kick outs and 'take the game to the opposition'... secret code for don't pass it to anyone unless your life is in serious danger.

*Midfielder* - chronic alcoholic who last scored a point in the late 70s and yet reckons he is justified in having a go for a point from anywhere inside the opposition's half. Well-liked character because he always gets his round in at the post-match piss-up.

*Midfielder* - the full back's older brother, who sports a rather strange looking bandage on his knee - probably hiding teeth marks or something. Eats five dinners a day and is a prime suspect for a coronary.

*Right half forward* - quietly-spoken business-man who hails from the village but is living in Dublin. Drives a flash motor. Lads who live in the pub in the town don't know what to make of him.

*Centre forward* - third of the set of brothers that includes the full back and midfielder. Is the target of all the brother's clearances...ALL of them.

*Left half forward* - utterly, utterly useless 25 year old who by some fluke of nature happens to be a deadly accurate free-taker. Tries to avoid open play altogether as he is far too important to the team to get injured. Is basically the team's only source of points.

*Right corner forward* - happily married man who hasn't played football since he was 12 but has suddenly decided to take up the game again. Natural talent (like his genitalia) completely and utterly over shadowed by his beer belly. Guaranteed to bag a goal or two and gain for himself some ridiculous nickname like "Schillaci" or something.

*Full forward* - hasn't scored since the end of the war but is captain of the team and an all-out nut case. The line commonly quoted to excuse his complete inability to find the target is "he's a good man to bust up the play." Will no doubt be marked by

a similar figure playing for the opposition. Only at junior B will the full-forward and full-back play the game the exact same way, and could even switch positions with no effect on how the team plays whatsoever.

*Left corner forward* - the village thug, who invariably sports an ear ring and a seriously dodgy haircut. Will be involved with the referee within five minutes of the throw in. Plays the foreign game with the town five miles down the road and is hence viewed with suspicion by all and sundry.



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# Sports Writers Diary

By Tomás McCarthy, Sports Editor

## June

Well basically my summer consisted of working in Bulmers. I assure you that I was doing more than looking at the differences between pears and apples. A big shout out to Thomas “Hamster, Trolley” O’Leary with whom I had many a sporting argument with to pass the working day! June was also the month I got an awful soaking at the Waterford v Limerick match in Thurles. Dreadful weather and a dreadful excuse of a hurling game!

## July

Apart from the hurling action I took in the Galway Races (where I spot Brent Pope!) and Keano’s visit to Waterford United this month. Also Mundy’s song which is the same name as the month above gets its annual playing!

## August 15

No idea why the diary starts here but if the Premier League can start on this day well so can the diary! United for the league by the way with City for fourth and I can see Burnley, Portsmouth and Wolves dropping.

## August 16

Limerick are destroyed by Tipp and now think they can topple the Cats. We’ll see...

## August 17

I send the first email to the An Focal sports team. Yes we work through the summer and all! Paddy Power gets burned for a million after they pay out on the Tiger a bit early!

## August 18

Isn’t the DW Stadium a ridiculous name for a ground? Just thought I would get that off my chest. In Trinidad though they have the Dwight Yorke Stadium! What next the Dean Windass Stadium in Hull??

## August 19

Burnley defy the tag of relegation fodder against some team called Manchester United. In other news Deadly Diego Forlan actually looks unbelievable in a Champions League play off for Athletico. Would a revitalised Forlan be better than Michael Owen?

## August 20

Usain Bolt would be some man to catch a bus if he was running late!

## August 21

Plenty of hard graft, plenty of effort but also plenty of boredom as Drogheda and Cork serve up a match of paint drying quality.

## August 22

My UL timetable has once again left the sports editor in total despair and confusion. Someone has it in for me definitely.

## August 23

“Isn’t this a brutal game? Der actin like brazen schoolboys”. A unhappy Liam Toghher complains about Tyrone v Cork. My verdict is that he was being a tad harsh!

## August 24

Sports section of edition one done and dusted!! Next edition the diary will cover fresher week (yeah I know I’m fourth year but I shall be around!), The Lodge and other random bits I make up along the way!

# Forgotten Footballer - Henning Berg

By Tomás McCarthy, Sports Editor

HENNING Berg may not have appeared on that dramatic night against Bayern Munich but the ice cool Norwegian defender will forever be associated with United’s treble triumph.

Signed in August 1997 Henning Berg, when fit, was a mainstay in United’s defence. At the time Berg became the most expensive defender in England at £5 million. He came from Blackburn Rovers with whom he won a Premier League medal in 1994/95. Under Kenny Dalglish Berg along with the likes of Tim Flowers, Colin Hendry, David Batty and Alan Shearer denied United the title on a dramatic final day. Fergie had obviously not forgotten the part that Berg played in that success.

His first United goal arrived in December 1997, a brave header against Everton on Boxing Day. A frustrating first season in 1997/98 ended with Arsenal winning the league and Berg losing his place. The treble campaign was interrupted by injuries but Berg was superb in the quarter final triumph against Inter Milan especially in the away leg. On that night in the San Siro his defensive blocks and goal line clearances were crucial to United advancing. His partnership with Jaap Stam flourished in the New Year but again injury denied him a spot in the Champions League final.

Berg won his second league title with United in 1999/2000 but in September 2000 he returned to Blackburn. He then moved on to Glasgow Rangers to finish out his career. At this point in time Henning Berg has returned to his native Norway to manage Lillestorm.



# The Rumour Mill

By Conor McGrath

It might only be the dawn of a new semester and of fresh lambs to the slaughter but the rumours never seem to cease, quite like a first year’s appetite for a trip to the off licence.

Teeing us off is the Golf Society which has, apparently, caught a big fish. Pdraig Harrington’s team have taken the soc’s recommendation of Castletroy Golf Club very seriously as the 3 time major seeks a bit of peace in the rainy South West, after a trying two weeks with Tiger. I wonder what Pdraig will think when he sees the water features on the back nine. Would he take it or treat us to another trademark icy glare? Expect a reaction from that one.

Onto stranger happenings, it appears the athletics crowd are seemingly planning their own ‘9.58 Goal-t Smash’ event in the Bowl this month, in a bid to create possible record breaking history. “A deluded fantasy” snapped one cross country walker, while a senior university official was peculiarly quick to point out that “a young girl in high heels running from the Lodge to a taxi at 1:45 would sprint faster than that lot, I’ve seen it myself”. Rolex should time that.

Colm Cooper has got into the college spirit recently as he was spotted in the Stables on a stopover back from Croker. All there is to say is that he failed to let the kingdom down on the draught front as per usual but according to one Stables local, he seemingly “fell down” during of those horrid GAA speeches we’re treated to every September.

On a final note, expect a crisis on the security department this coming semester. Mark Hughes is believed to be “very impressed” with one of the men’s astute and general non-nonsense nature. Give a Welshman some gold and it’s soon gone out of Holyhead. Remember folks never let the truth get in the way of a good rumour.

# Quotes of the Edition

Liam Toghher

“Jesus, it’s unreal. Delighted. Absolutely unreal. Jesus.” Darach Honan, two-goal hero of Clare’s first Munster Under-21 hurling triumph in July, reckons it was an achievement of biblical proportions.

“Red Bull, Red Bull, it’s s\*\*\*e, Red Bull!” Bohemians fans taunt their Salzburg counterparts, the Austrians of course financed by the energy drink company. Sadly they had the wings in Dalymount Park that night.

“Ginger hair is unacceptable!” An inebriated red-haired Scottish spectator chants at Bohs’ red-haired striker Glen Crowe at the same match. And no, it wasn’t Colin Hendry.

“Sometimes I see it but I say that I didn’t see it to protect the players and because I could not find any rational explanation for what they did.” With statements like these I’d sooner trust a banker than Arsene Wenger.

“To all patrons with cars in the Tesco roundabout car park – the gates will close at 8:30 and will not reopen until 9...am... Monday morning,” As if Clare’s performance against Galway at this Saturday 7pm throw-in in the All-Ireland qualifiers in Ennis wasn’t comical enough, this Garda announcement had the 14,000 attendance in stitches laughing.

“Someone get Tiss a straitjacket.” Paul Merson taunts fellow Sky Sports pundit Matt Le Tissier for tipping Burnley to beat Man Utd on live TV. Maybe the Southampton legend is more anorak than straitjacket material.

# Give It A Lash Quiz

By Tomás McCarthy, Sports Editor

- Who did Roger Federer defeat in men’s singles final at Wimbledon this year?
- What squad number does Arsenal striker Nicklas Bendtner wear?
- How many goals did Norwich concede to Colchester on the opening day of League 1?
- Who won this year’s Tour De France?
- Which Irish athlete claimed a silver medal at this summer’s World Athletics Championships?
- Who scored Mayo’s winning point in their Connacht Final defeat of Galway at Pearse Stadium?
- Name the Tipperary hurler who scored a goal in every round of the Munster Championship this year.
- Who captained the Lions in the tour of South Africa this summer?
- In what year did Wexford last win the All Ireland hurling title?
- Which golfer defeated Tiger Woods to claim the USPGA crown?

- Quiz Answers
- |                     |                   |                    |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Andy Roddick     | 2. 52             | 3. Seven           |
| 4. Alberto Contador | 5. Olive Loughane | 6. Peadar Gardiner |
| 7. Seamus Callaghan | 8. Paul O’Connell | 9. 1996            |
| 10. YE Yang         |                   |                    |



# OPC Assists Pilgrimage Climb

By Aislinn Deenihan and Cillian Burke

**THE Irish Cave Rescue Organisation (ICRO) issued a call in July to all caving members to assist the Mayo Mountain Rescue team in administering first aid during the annual Croagh Patrick Mountain Pilgrimage. Six members from the Outdoor Pursuits Club in UL – Cillian Burke, Paul Londres, Mike Jordan, Aislinn Deenihan, Eoin Fahy and Jessie O'Shaunessy - volunteered to assist on the Mountain for Reek Sunday.**

Croagh Patrick is a mountain in North Mayo considered to be St. Patrick's mountain and is most commonly called 'the Reek'. Legend has it that St Patrick fasted for 40 days on top of the mountain. Each year on the last Sunday in July over 20,000 people ascend the mountain as a pilgrimage to Ireland's national saint.

Croagh Patrick is 762 metres high, but it has one of the most distinct mountain profiles in the country. The Reek itself can be extremely dangerous in wet weather due to its rocky terrain, with the last 400 metres ascension similar to hiking up a vertical mound of sharp shale at the bottom of a deep trench.

New pilgrims on the route are often unprepared for the hazards of the mountain and some deaths and serious injuries have occurred on the mountain over the last 10 years. Traditionally pilgrims do it in their bare feet to get extra forgiveness for their sins but this year only a few hardcore climbers were on the mountain.

The ULOPC members were initially scheduled to be on the mountain on the Sunday from 10am till 6pm, but due to terrible weather conditions and the number of people that began climbing the mountain on the Saturday night, they were sent up at 10pm Saturday night to do an extra shift and pitch an Icelandic tent.

Weather conditions that night were described by the veteran Mountain rescuers as the worst experienced during a Reek weekend for 20 years, with driving rain and hail and force 6 to 7 winds. Weather conditions deteriorated

to such an extent that Mayo Mountain Rescue team advised to wait out the worst of it and wait for some clearance before pitching the secondary hospital tent.

Conditions improved around 2am and relieved people slowly made their way up the summit again. The pilgrims doing the pilgrimage at this hour ranged from the well trained and prepared hill walker to the drunk trying to ascend using a mobile phone as a light. The ULOPC group were able to descend from the mountain at 4am after having pitched the tent with the other 14 people who had been sent up the mountain six hours previously.

The second shift began at 10am the next morning, with continuing poor weather conditions. However over 2,000 people an hour were attempting to climb the summit. Incidents that were encountered on the second shift included several cases of children suffering from hypothermia, elderly people requiring assistance descending the mountain and people with blisters and cuts and bruises from minor falls. The OPC/ICRO team were relieved from their shift at 4pm.

The participating ULOPC members described the experience positively, particularly the camaraderie among the rescue groups and the pilgrims and they are all looking forward to next year's pilgrimage already. It was an eye opening experience and heightened the awareness of group leadership and responsibility when out on the Hills.

The OPC is one of the largest clubs on campus and offer five activities to their members, hill walking, climbing, caving, mountaineering and orienteering.

Keep up to date with OPC activities by visiting [www.ulopc.com](http://www.ulopc.com). Visit them at their stand at the Arena Wednesday of Week One or call down to their home in the Climbing Wall at the PESS building any Monday Tuesday or Thursday from 7 to 10 pm. All levels catered for and all are welcome.



## UL Kayak Club take to the water

This summer has been a very busy few months for the Kayaking club here in UL. The biggest event on our calendar this year was our Alps Trip which took place from the 21st May until the 12th June. This trip can be summarised as such: 4 countries – not including Ireland; Driving nearly 15000 Km around Europe; Paddling at least one river a day; Two of Ireland's best white-water instructors; Litre Birra!

The first week of this trip was for advanced members of the club who went to Italy and, under the tutorage of Dave Carroll and Ali Donald, were taught advanced white-water techniques and useful leadership strategies. Their training, for the most part, took place in the beautiful Sesia Valley in the Italian Alps. Although a number of paddles were broken and boats dented, all of the 8 lucky kayakers found the 1st week very beneficial. The 1st week was over all too fast but this group had a chance to practise their new-found knowledge on the rest of us who flew and drove over to meet them in Italy on the 27th May. Finally united as one, our group of 20 UL

paddlers set about finding as many rivers to paddle as possible...and we succeeded! Our first day on the water we paddled a stretch of river called the Lower Sesia (which after much debate is pronounced say-zee-ah). This turned out to be a very fun run which challenged everyone from the beginners, who for some hadn't been on much white-water before, to the leaders, who hadn't led much before! After our first river we went on to bigger and better things and really started to gel together as a group. Unfortunately though, one of the lads had a wine bottle related accident and ended up needing 3 stitches on his finger which meant he was designated camera-boy for the remaining two weeks of his trip.

After 4 days of paddling in Italy the rain started to fall, rendering the rest of the rivers in the Sesia Valley too high to paddle. The decision was then made to make the long arduous drive over to Slovenia to get a taste for some Julian Alpine action. This time we were staying in a camp site in the Soča Valley near a town called Bovec. Arriving to the campsite late one night our camp site popped up in

seconds in what must have looked like an ad for Quechua TwoSecond tents! Our objective in Slovenia was the same as in Italy; paddle as much as we possibly could on as much white-water as we could possibly get to. And once again I think everyone feels we achieved that. The Soča River was much different to what we had experienced in Italy. The river was strewn with gigantic boulders which the river weaved its way through and which created many interesting lines for us. We managed to fit in a day of rescue and safety training for the newcomers which also gave the leaders a chance to show off what they had learnt.

The last leg of our trip was spent in France in the Briançon Region. By now everyone the confidence of everyone in the group was high and we were running rivers that we couldn't have done a week and a half previous.

The trip finally came to an end when we had to leave our campsite and start the long monotonous drive back to Ireland. Driving through the Alps of course was amazing; the snow capped peaks of the mountains looming over us as we drove out of the valley left all who were awake in awe. Of course more has happened this summer than the Alps trip.

ULKC paddlers have been all over the world paddling and training. Both Tom O'Donoghue and John O'Rourke have been training very hard for the up and coming World Championships which will be taking place as this article goes to print. Unfortunately, Kim Siekerman who was also intending to compete in the World Championships had to pull out due to injury.

