



Page 6 - Eric Johansson asks, "Are we living in a nation of Christ?"



Turn to page 8 to find out why you should be having sex right now!

Clubs and Societies fight for self-sufficiency



ULSU President Derek Daly

Jason Kennedy

FOLLOWING on from an Extraordinary General Meeting of C&S Council, clubs and societies have begun to fight to make themselves less vulnerable in terms of funding.

Currently, the Students' Union receives one third of the Student Capitation Fund, with clubs and societies receiving two thirds.

The meeting, which was held in the Jonathan Swift Theatre, was dogged by controversy both on and offline, with rumours being passed around the university. At the start of the meeting, SU President, Derek Daly made it clear that there was a lot of misinformation on the issue of union finances after it was revealed that €60,000 of clubs and societies' money was used by the Students' Union to bail out the struggling on-campus shops. Mr Daly stated that €31,000 of the €60,000 has already been repaid, with the remaining €29,000 to be repaid this week.

Mr Daly also apologised for his behaviour during a previous clubs and societies meeting, where he was told he had an offensive tone and finger-pointed at two members of C&S Council. He also pointed out that there was a lot of misinformation on the subject.

"There was a lot of stuff written and a lot of hysteria. Not all of it is true. I don't want this to end up an 'us' and 'them' situation."

Auditor of the Debating Union, David Hugh Hartery, asked how dependent the Students' Union was on the shops and how likely they are to turning a profit. Mr Daly replied that the shops are expected to break even. Poker Society member, Colin Clarke asked what is to stop similar activities happening again. Mr Daly replied saying that there's nothing in place to stop similar activities.

"We saved the reserves for a rainy day. It was a rainy day. We used the reserves. If I screwed up, I apologise."

He went on to say he was "not happy" with the budgeting process. "I don't think it's adequate. The problems stemmed from one person doing the job of three people.

Now we have three people doing the work of three people and they are all fully trained up in their respective fields."

Drama Soc committee member Hugh O'Brien asked how much more the new employees in the SU are costing, which was answered by the General Manager, Philip Mudge, who said that the extra cost amounts to €2,000.

Kayaker Tony Canning expressed his concerns, saying: "Nobody would care about this if the matter was more transparent. If ULSU fails, we don't have clubs and societies. It's a concern that needs to be addressed."

When asked if there was a mandate for the shops to be open during the Summer, which is traditionally the time of poor trading for on-campus shops, Mr Daly said that shop hours are curtailed during the Summer.

"Cappavilla and Dromroe shops are closed for the Summer months, but we feel we have a duty to service students who are here over the Summer [by keeping the main shop open]."

Mr Daly added that there are councils, AGMs, UGMs, Refendas and structures put in place to protect clubs and societies. At the end of the meeting, OPC committee member and former Clubs Officer Keith Young thanked Mr Daly for answering the people's questions.

"A lot has been made clear after tonight, but there is potential that in a year [SU] Exec could cut the two-thirds. We want to legally secure that two-thirds for clubs and societies."

After the meeting, Mr Young told An Focal that there was a number of things left to do.

"We need to create a working group for Clubs and Societies and eliminate current clubs and societies vulnerability. It's not over yet."

News

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1. Contributors please note:

All submissions to An Focal are greatly valued. If you have submitted an article which has not been published in this issue, it is very likely that your piece has been retained for publication in future issues. If you are concerned that your article has not been published, please say so.

2. Editing:

If you are unhappy with how your article appeared in An Focal, please discuss this with the Editor. A number of strict guidelines are followed in the production of An Focal, which means some articles may be altered to allow them to fit on the page and to improve readability.

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Kelly O'Brien, Editor

EDITORIAL

From unparalleled highs to unprecedented lows, this fortnight has been an emotional rollercoaster.

Throw a good old fashioned bout of insomnia into the mix, and you have yourself the makings of one very overworked Communications Officer!

As William Henry Davies once said "A poor life this if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare." Therefore, my mission for the next few weeks is to embody these wise words and to look after my mental health... before it vanishes off the face of this earth.

Three major things have happened since I saw you last, student. Two of them are very complicated and, from spending too much time on Boards.ie, it's very apparent that not a lot of people

understand them and their implications. The first of these comes in the form of the UL Students' Union AGM which was held in the Concert Hall on Monday 19 September. This AGM was attended by over 260 students, well in excess of the 200 required to meet quorum. It is the first time that quorum has (actually) been reached for many years. At this AGM, a whole new Union structure was proposed and passed, a structure that will have far-reaching effects and will benefit the students of this University for years to come.

The second complicated occurrence arose in the calling of an emergency C&S Council meeting. This meeting was called to shed light on the recent financial issues that arose as a result of poor trading at ULSU Services Ltd. This story is covered on the front page.

Last, but by no means least, UL now has its very own full-time streaming

only radio station! I've been working on this over the summer and it's all just started to come together. We have been broadcasting almost two weeks at this stage and already we have made an astonishing amount of progress. There have indeed been some teething issues which arose from not having enough time to test the equipment; delivery was delayed by a good four weeks. Despite this, we have been getting people on air and, now that we're ready, I'll be launching a huge campaign to get the UL campus listening. We already have listeners overseas, so hopefully we'll be a great resource to homesick Erasmus students. There will be a feature on ULFM in the next issue but for now just go to ulfm.ulsu.ie to listen.

Kelly O'Brien
Editor



Radio Presenters during their first show on ULFM. Tune in to 'Censored' with Grainne and Sean on Tuesdays from 7pm - 9pm

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Higgins speaks of Irish 'boastful' behaviour in UL

Jason Kennedy

PRESIDENTIAL Candidate, Michael D. Higgins spoke to a small crowd in the UL's Millstream Courtyard about Irish behaviour over the last 50 years and his ideas for the presidency.

The Labour Party candidate, who is currently 10/11 favourite to become the next President, said that boastful behaviour had the ability to damage the Irish reputation.

"People were quietly thinking that they would become millionaires in their sleep. Many people were lured into this false sense of Irishness. In the past, we have been described as strutting; boasting about being wealthy. "This arrogance damaged our reputation." Mr Higgins claimed that he has travelled 20,000 miles so far during his presidential campaign and has talked to people from packed conference rooms to people's kitchens. From his travels Mr Higgins

says he has found what people want in their president. "Yes, people are angry. People feel abandoned. At the same time, some people believe that what we had could be repaired and off we go again. That type of thinking is not noble and not humanly responsible.

"We can develop through new ethos and become very positive and value-based. Anything I've said will be achievable under the constitution."

One of Mr Higgins' supporters, Peadar Kirby said that the candidate was always the one he wanted in the job.

"If Michael D. Higgins wasn't going to stand, we would ask him to stand."

Mr Higgins, 70, is the second presidential candidate to have visited UL during the campaign, as Fine Gael's Gay Mitchell campaigned for the youth vote on Friday of Week One.

While Mr Higgins was in Limerick, he visited his first home in No. 27 Belfield Park, just off the Ennis Road, where he was lived until 1946, before moving to Clare when his father fell ill.



Michael D. Higgins mid-speech

UL Peer Support

Rachael Power

With their bright red 'Ask Me' t-shirts and friendly smiles, it's impossible to miss the Library Peer Advisors as you step in the door. As an initiative unique to UL, this is the second year nine peer advisors have been helping first years to find their feet.

For the first six weeks of term, the advisors will be on hand to help students with all kinds of library related queries, from how to rent out a book, how to use the library catalogue, where certain sections are, to how to print and photocopy and also about other non-related services on campus, such as the SAA. The library has one of the highest footfalls on campus, especially in the first few weeks. Therefore, such an initiative provided great support for both

library staff and students during the busy orientation period, according to Head of Peer Advisors Librarian Michelle Breen. "The peer advisors' job is to make a positive impact on the first year experience. Their job is to be visible and provide highly proactive support for students, while sharing the experience with the new students," she said. "Where would people have asked a question if there were no peer advisors?" she added.

The peer advisors are recruited from the student population; they must be at least fourth year students and are also mostly recent graduates and students completing postgraduate studies. Ms Breen says that this so they can 'relate' with the student body and are familiar

with the library system. "When recruiting we ensure that they are outgoing, friendly, dynamic people that are engaged with the student body and know the system very well," she said.

First year business student Carol Hayes says that she found the service incredibly helpful.

"I was lost coming in to UL as it's so big, and the first time I had to use the library even though I was already given a tour I was overwhelmed. I was glad the peer advisors were there to help me out," she said.

With such positive feedback about the funded initiative, it's hopeful it will return next year, although it depends on whether further funding can be secured.

Car parking to be reduced in exchange for cycling facilities

Colm Fitzgerald,
Comment Editor

UL car parking is to be reduced according to Limerick City Council. "Limerick Smarter Travel" is a set of proposals put forward in an effort to encourage cycling and walking throughout Limerick. UL forms a major part of the proposals, with it hoped vehicular traffic to the campus could be halved. Notwithstanding the good intention of the proposals, it is likely that it will cause great stress and frustration to motorists. The already chronic

car parking problem on campus is to be exacerbated with the plans claiming a reduction in car parking is to be considered. It is unclear which car parks could be affected. Lower speed limits of 30km/h are also being considered for some locations, along with copious traffic calming measures. A cycle lane along the old N7 Dublin-Limerick road from Nenagh is to be put in place, along with improved cycle lanes to the City Centre.

The current very basic facilities for cyclists on campus will be augmented, with the Engineering Research Building being earmarked to receive showers and lockers for cyclists. Similarly, secure covered bicycle parking could be provided throughout the campus.

These measures are expected to address the concerns expressed by individuals who are deterred from cycling, such as dangerous situations on the roads and lack of facilities on campus.

The plans also outline how increased bus usage would be promoted, though it does not detail how it would address the current unreliable Bus Eireann service, with upward of 15% of services not running on a daily basis with no explanation.

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News

News In Brief

Student wins Dyson Award

A recent Product Design and Technology graduate from UL has been awarded the James Dyson Award. Twenty - three year old Chris Murphy from Westport, Co. Mayo, won the award for his 'Open Pool Transfer' design, an electronic device that transfers people of all mobilities from poolside to water safely.

Chris also receives €2000 and a place at the international stage competition with a chance to win €12000 in prize money and €12000 for the University Product Design and Technology Department.

His invention will compete with designs from 17 other countries for the James Dyson award.

Tom Dunne Show

The Tom Dunne Show was broadcast live from the Allegro, UL last Friday in conjunction with the Sociology Department.

The show celebrated the release of the book *Morrissey: Fandom, Representations and Identities* edited by Dr Eoin Devereux, Aileen Dillane and Martin J. Power.

Celebrity guests included Noel Hogan of the Cranberries and Peter Finan of Morrissey – Solo.com. The book was officially launched in Dolans later that evening.

President's Volunteer Award

The first President's Volunteer Award ceremony, a new initiative set up to encourage students to volunteer, will take place in the University Concert Hall at 3.30pm on October 12.

Similar to the Gaisce award, students can achieve the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards depending on how many volunteering hours per week they put in. Guest speaker at the event will be Director of Services at Enable Ireland, Tony Murphy.

UL drops a place in Times university guide

The University of Limerick has dropped from sixth to seventh place in this year's Sunday Times university guide. While UL's sporting facilities are complimented on, UL's research income of €41.3m, unemployment rate of 11 per cent and dropout rate of 18 per cent have made it fall one place. However, LIT has fallen four places, while TCD remains on top.

ULFM Launched

UL's new online radio station, ULFM, was launched two weeks ago by 2fm Presenter Will Leahy.

The station is located upstairs in the Students' Union and will be streaming 24/7 with programmes airing 11am – 11pm Monday to Friday.

To listen, visit ulfm.ulsu.ie

Emigration: The way forward?

Rachael Power

Around one in eight students who graduated from UL last year have emigrated to find employment, according to recent figures.

According to the HEA graduate survey carried out yearly, the overall figure of UL graduates finding employment are up 7 per cent on last year to 64 per cent, 13 per cent of these gaining employment abroad.

"The figures are a significant improvement on last year, and the employment rate of UL graduates are and always have been higher than average," said Head of Careers, Mary Sweeney.

Many other colleges around the country have similar results, with one in eight UCC students also emigrating to find employment after graduation.

Even though Ireland now has one of the highest overall emigration rates in the EU, emigration amongst graduates is nowhere near the high figures of the eighties, when around one in four graduates emigrated to find employment. Ms Sweeney said that she would encourage all final year students to make the most of the career services available, such as the new online Careers Connect: careersconnect.ul.ie

and attend the Careers Fair on October 13, which will be the biggest UL has ever had. One UL student who has gone abroad to find work is Sinéad Ní Chatháin, a Languages and Culture Studies graduate. While the half-Ozzie is moving to Australia to be with her family, she's also moving because she feels there aren't "many options" for her here in Ireland, although, she's not planning on making the move permanent.

"I am planning on coming home. I love Ireland too much and could never imagine leaving permanently. However, I want to stay abroad for however long it takes for me to discover what I want to do next. That could be months or years. As long as there is nothing for me here I'll stay abroad.

We have a good history of turning ourselves around in major crises, if we can pick ourselves up from oppression, civil war and famine, we can handle a few banking problems. But I do think it will take a long time," she said.



Sinead Keane on her Graduation Day

UL Careers Fair, bringing jobs to UL students

Mary Sweeney,
Head of Careers, Cooperative
Education & Careers Division

The media coverage on graduate employment can be depressing with its emphasis on job losses, recruitment freezes and large scale graduate emigration.

It sounds like the bleak 1980s all over again but the reality is never as bad as reported in the media. The fact is that UL graduates have always competed better than average on the graduate employment market, partly because they already have work experience and demonstrate good employability skills. This positive attitude impresses employers when they come on campus to participate in recruitment events, especially the annual UL Careers Fair. We hope that this year will be no exception.

The Cooperative Education & Careers Division is running its 12th UL Careers Fair in the University Sports Arena on October 13th between 12.00 and 4.00. This year's Careers Fair will be the biggest yet, featuring almost 120 stands with details of hundreds of graduate jobs.

We expect at least 2,500 students to turn up on the day and all are welcome.

This is an ideal opportunity to find out who are the key UL employers, what types of jobs are available, and what kind of skills employers are looking for.

Pretty much all sectors of employment will be represented: Accounting, Banking & Finance, Insurance, Law, Retail, IT, Biomedical, Pharmaceutical, Aeronautical, Consulting, Food Processing, Nursing, Education, Professional bodies and others. In addition, we will have a special Postgraduate Study zone and a Volunteering zone so there will be something for everyone.

Come along and meet employers including Abbott, Bombardier, Camp America, Dell, Google, Fidelity, Kentz, Lidl, Paddy Power, PWC, Microsoft, State Street, VSI, Zimmer and others. Find out about jobs in Ireland, UK, USA, UAE, Korea, Japan and other locations.

Spin South West will broadcast their programme from the Arena on the day. See details on the Careers website at: <http://www.ul.ie/careers/careers/events/fairs.shtml>.

This is an opportunity not to be missed for students who want to succeed in the job market.

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Comment



Aer Lingus and our National Identity: does it really matter anymore?

Colm Fitzgerald, Comment Editor

AROUND 20 years ago, I left the country for the first time on an Aer Lingus Jumbo Jet.

It was an age when not only I was born, but transatlantic travel was a relatively novel concept. Aer Lingus introduced the Irish nation to the notion of comfortable, swift (considering the distance) and somewhat patriotic transport to the land of opportunity.

The company upheld a sense of home and Irishness for those that emigrated and moved away both in time of difficulty and for whatever other reason. Stepping onto the green

aircraft emblazoned with the signature Shamrock logo at JFK Airport, or Heathrow, or wherever, brought a sense of, 'I'm home' for millions of such expats.

20 years later and the jumbo jets are recycled into drink cans. But does the airline still hold the same unexplainable sense of magic?

You would be forgiven for thinking that Aer Lingus was all about flawed industrial relations and muted controversy, because that's what headlines it's filled. Ex management burned bridges aplenty in the Mid-West when they culled the long standing Shannon-Heathrow route many years back in a whimsical commercial decision. It was a decision which

did not pass without remorse, with Shannon-Heathrow flights restored to their previous schedule after an almost painful 2 year debacle.

It would not be fair to comment on the state of their industrial relations, because staff obviously have a greatly different understanding and perspective on the issue to what I do. But while respecting the right of the staff to industrial action, it did disrupt travel plans for customers and in turn damage the commercial revenue of the airline. If you were to ask members of the public which airline they feel represents Ireland as a whole they'll either say Aer Lingus or they don't know. I wonder is it because the state is to sell its final shareholding, severing

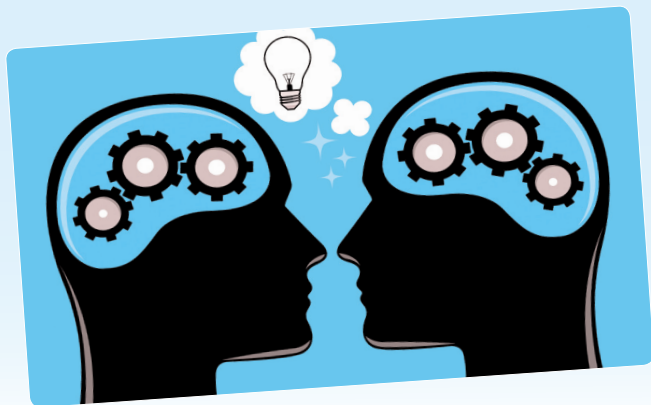
all ties between the airline and the state? To be honest, it's the only way the company should be, all the same.

They now operate a fleet of Airbus A320's and A330's to Europe, the UK and East Coast USA. Of course the focus has shifted to being a commercial operation. For strange and unexplained reasons many of the Irish travelling public have a placebo reaction if the word "Ryanair" is mentioned, with dramatic scenes and tales Shakespeare would have been proud of recounted on Joe Duffy regularly.

"They herded us like cattle onto the plane, Joe! Before landing the plane dropped 10,000 feet suddenly Joe!" This is actually quite beneficial for Aer Lingus. Joe Bloggs is happy because

he gets to board the aircraft via an airbridge and as far as he is concerned the pilot has a license.

It is probably reasonable to assert that despite its failings, Aer Lingus will be immortally considered our national airline. The next time you see the trademark green livery ask yourself, do I consider this part of our national identity? Because for those who see Aer Lingus land at JFK, Heathrow, Madrid or Frankfurt today, they'll certainly think Irish. And remember, you might be drinking Bulmers out of recycled fuselage in another 20 years!



HEAD TO HEAD

If you would like a topic discussed here, please email sucommunications@ul.ie

Is it better to be single in college?

Emma Norris

YES!

I read some interesting advice recently about being single, about making the most of being single: "Remember to take advantage.

Accept invitations, talk to strangers, go to sleep at 7 pm, if that's what makes you happy. Do everything you have time to do and when you've finished, do it all over again."

I think this is particularly important in college when you're presented with so many opportunities on such a regular basis; the opportunity to volunteer, to join clubs and societies, to talk to the sort of people you would never have talked to before.

The opportunity to kiss people. To kiss everyone. Or to sleep with them, if that's what you want.

College is the wrong time for a relationship, for so many reasons.

Leaving Cert year is a bad time to have a boyfriend or girlfriend because they serve as a distraction from the real "fun" of studying.

In college, they're another distraction: a distraction from everything else. In college, you have to prioritise, I think. You either want to be in love, or you want to live.

I think it's very hard to do both while in third level education. If you're lucky, your attention

is being pulled in a million different directions: new friends, new learning styles, new lifestyles.

As a second year, I'm still being challenged. Even if I wanted a significant other, I doubt I'd have the time. After lectures and reading and soaking up all that college has to offer, I am exhausted.

There is no way I'd be able to fit in emotional attachment into that equation. College is the perfect time to be selfish, to take your life into your own hands. If you live away from home, you're starting a new life as an adult of sorts. You have to look out for yourself completely and if you still find time to look after someone else, you're probably doing one of the above wrong.

Rachel Dargan

NO!

I have found out the long (and hard) way that it's definitely not better to be single in college.

I will admit that when you start college, there is the allure of the unknown that will normally lead you to the Lodge in search of a fella with land and 'road frontage'.

I went to the Lodge, I 'shifted and drifted', and I just was not happy with the situation. I have found that that is just not the type of person that I am. It suits me not to be single.

It is all fine and well to have the thrill and excitement of someone new every night, but I can tell you that it does not take long at all for that to wear thin.

You will find yourself craving nights in with movies, tea and cuddles rather than short skirts, high heels and the pub.

Moreover, the thing is that after a while, you will be subjected to 'the awkward shift' where you find that they have a significant other, or that they are in your lectures and tutorials or something along those lines.

For me, one of the best parts of not being single is not having to make a HUGE effort every day just in case I bump into any of the guys I know.

I don't have to make sure that my makeup is perfect or wear the perfect outfit, I can just be me, or on a lazy day a scruffy version of me, without

worrying because the person I am with likes me for me, not all of the makeup and fancy clothes.

Going out with someone doesn't just suit me in that I don't feel like I need to spend absolutely ages on my appearance before leaving the house, but it suits me in that I always have someone to talk to. It's different to having a best friend, because there are different things that I would tell a friend and a boyfriend, and I like the knowledge that there is always someone there for me.

I always have a shoulder to cry on, someone to talk to and a cuddle whenever I need it. And college is a time when you really need to have cuddles 'on tap' because it's so easy to get stressed out over assignments and exams. So no, it's not better to be single in college.

Comment

Is Ireland a nation of Christ?

Eric Johansson

THE upcoming results of the 2011 census are expected to show that the percentage of atheists in the Irish population has increased. The last census, in 2006, showed that about 186,000 people in the country considered themselves atheists.

The increase in non-religious beliefs raises the question of exactly how much religion should regulate everyday life in Ireland? I am from Sweden, a country where only 17 percent of the population consider religion as an important influence in their life.

Being from what the Westboro Baptist church in Kansas referred to as a “fag nation”, I can see obvious differences in how religion matters here in Ireland and how it doesn’t in Sweden. The most obvious and serious ones are the differences regulated in law.

The thing with religious freedom is that it also includes the freedom of not being religious. One step to secure religious freedom is to make sure that the country is secular, which means that the church and state should be separated. This is not the case in Ireland. Religion is ideology. That means religious views should be considered and open for debate as any political thought.

Therefore I was quite appalled when I found out that the Irish constitution actually has a ban against blasphemy. Even if the law is not regularly used, it is still there, a constant threat of censorship and putting a gag on the right of free speech. The ban does

not exist in Sweden. Neither does the illegitimacy of abortions. As you well know, it is illegal for a woman to have an abortion in Ireland unless there is a threat for her life if she doesn’t. The effect is that a lot of unwanted pregnancies are being taken care of in the United Kingdom. In my opinion the ban against abortion is motivated by archaic religious thought and has only one purpose: to disqualify a women’s right to own their bodies.

I have friends who have had abortions. These girls where not religious and saw it as the right thing to do. But even if they where certain that it was the right decision, it was still not a pleasant experience. The idea that the state could have made it more difficult for them than it already was is sickening to me. There are more examples of how religious values are regulated in the Irish law but these are two of the more serious ones.

These obstacles stands in the way of letting the Irish people make choices for themselves as freethinking individuals on what they believe in.

Laws are norms that are sanctioned by the state. They communicate which values and culture that are accepted in the nation. The examples above scream that the culture of Ireland so far is a culture of Christ, even if more and more persons are becoming atheists.



“Religion is ideology. That means religious views should be considered and open for debate as any political thought”

Supermarket Superpowers

Aoife Coughlan

THE Germans will take our money one way or another.

They haf vays and meens of making us, em, pay. (Yes do adopt strange gestapo interrogation accent!) If they won’t extort it through taxes then it is our food bills that will be fuelling their economy instead. We may have escaped invasion in the 1940’s but now the real occupation is here, the invasion of the German supermarkets is complete. There are some who believe that these stores are just not our cup of competitively priced tea. Are the Celtic tiger cubs still partying? And are we really too proud to be seen in the domain of discounts?

I beg to differ with this view. I find that the Irish flock to Lidl and Aldi stores as if it were gut busting the order of the day instead of belt tightening.

The problem is the Irish just love a bargain. And yes, I did say problem. This is because I detest these Deutsche dealings and their impact on the trends in Irish shopping.

I do not wish to sound pretentious but frequenting Lidl and Aldi stores is nothing to brag about. So what if the cheese is 39 cent cheaper or the chicken fillets are such value even Miriam O’Callaghan’s family could be fed for a month. It is not value for money if you still secretly crave that

organic burger from Superquinn or Dunnes Stores. Lidl and Aldi do stock Irish produce, even some superior labels, however this is not their target market. Behind it they still encourage the passive shopping experience, and have taken the passion out of food. The local grocer, butcher, baker or fish monger will suffer greatly if the Irish continue on the trend of economy shopping. I believe in the pleasure of the shopping experience, looking for and buying food of good quality from people who are experts in their field.

If this means that we pay a few cents more, so be it, at least we are paying for customer service.

You can argue that Irish supermarkets have already played their part in the demise of neighbourhood shops, but premiums charged for quality goods in supermarkets still allowed for a competitive nature in the industry. The price we pay is nothing compared to the price the local economy will pay if will ignore our home grown shopkeepers.

Warehouse like and cold, these stores have become ingrained in our country. Let us hope that a small portion of controversial Celtic tiger snobbery will prevent them from becoming ingrained in our culture too.

The places you’ll go

Jennifer Armstrong

MARK Twain once observed, ‘Books are for people who wish they were somewhere else’. While the father of Tom Sawyer may be right, I feel he almost implies this to be a fact holding negativity instead of the beautiful truth to be seen.

Sometimes getting lost down the rabbit hole or setting sail along the Mississippi river on a raft is quite a hassle just for some simple escapism, enter the world of fiction.

Unfortunately, an imagination much like creativity, is one of those things many people fear they do not possess. But as long as you can read a book and for even just a moment believe it to be real then you must hold some form of imagination, no matter how trivial.

The fondest memories of childhood are most often the bedtime stories of princesses and heroes, the Famous Five on wild adventures, Mr. Men and Little Miss!

The warmth and comfort provided by a parent’s voice reciting a whimsical story can never really be lost or forgotten. The stories, as well as the moments, stay with us long after finishing the last page, and that is exactly what a good book should always accomplish.

Much like a piece of clothing, we relate stories back to significant times in our lives. From starting playschool with Spot the Dog to starting secondary school with Harry Potter, books are

society throughout the decades. Closer to home, Joseph O’Connor’s Star of the Sea and Christy Browns My Left Foot chronicle different times in Irish history when life was a significantly greater struggle than it is today. A great tale excites, enthrals but most importantly effects.

Perhaps not every novel you read is worth treasuring, but every now and then, a story comes along holding the power to define and divide generations.

Where would we be without John Steinbeck’s East of Eden, Jack Kerouac’s On the Road or JD Salinger’s Catcher in the Rye?

If Pride and Prejudice can last over 200 years, who’s to say the tales of Harry and Co won’t last even longer?

As the ultimate and incomparable story teller Dr. Seuss once dictated ‘The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn the more places you’ll go.’



FOCAL Sport

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Sports Journalist Darren Mulryan explores the egotistical balances of coach Jose Mourinho. More on page 31.



Turn to page 30 to read Kevin O'Brien's thoughts on the new All-Ireland football and hurling champions.

CAN MAN CITY BUY THE PREMIER LEAGUE?

Michael Ramsay

MANCHESTER City: one of the most remarkable tales in recent football folklore.

This club has always been perceived as the unfashionable kid brother to their city rivals, Manchester United, always living in their shadow. Four days after United were crowned kings of Europe in 1999, Man City were scrapping it out with Gillingham in the Second Division Play-Off. Throughout the next decade, Man City were bested by their city counterparts regularly.

When they signed Costa Rican striker Paolo Wanchope, the illustrious Mancunian neighbours signed goal machine, Ruud van Nistelrooy. When City qualified for the UEFA Cup in 2002, United cruised to the title. Referred to as 'the noisy neighbours' by Sir Alex Ferguson, City have always been sneered and looked down upon as the inferior club of Manchester, until now. August 31 2008. That fateful day completely turned the entire complexion of Manchester City Football Club upside down. News filtered in that Man City had been taken over by Abu Dhabi, a company owned by Arab royalty who were eager to pump their billions of pounds into the club, and instantly

snatching Brazilian superstar Robinho for a British record of 32.5 million pounds. With their debt wiped out, a staggering 300 million was invested in incoming transfers, such as world-class superstars Carlos Tevez, David Silva and Sergio 'Kun' Aguero.

Whilst Man City have accumulated a selection of some of the finest footballers on the planet, there still lingers this question... do they have the right mentality to mount a serious assault on the Premier League title? One could argue that a club can't suddenly acquire a winning mentality through lavish salaries.

This mentality needs to be earned. It may also be that the hunger, determination and grit of this blue half of Manchester could finally be the factors that force Manchester City through that mental block of inferiority and topple their rivals for the first time in decades. Having burst through the doors of the new campaign in a flurry, scoring goals for fun and demolishing the opposition, it is clear to see that their mentality has changed...they are ready to take control of their destiny. This summer, the cash has been splashed. A new standard of player has entered Eastlands. The noisy neighbours have made their mark. It is up to Fergie to turn the music down.



The purchase of Sergio Aguero is an indicator of City's ambition



Novak Djokovic has had an incredible year

DJOKOVIC BREAKS THE FEDERER/NADAL AXIS

Diarmuid Hickey

NOT long ago, the only debate surrounding men's tennis was where had all the colour gone. Circa 2005, tennis was the Federer show, easily the most dominant player of all time. The argument then moved on with the arrival of Nadal, initially as a clay expert but latterly as one of the most powerful strikers of a ball ever seen. Two of the greatest tennis matches of all time were played in consecutive Wimbledon finals in 2007 and 2008 between these two rivals, and it seemed that the Nadal would dominate in a similar vein to Federer. What makes the emergence of Djokovic in the past

year so interesting is that just as Nadal usurped Federer in 2008, Djokovic has done the same to Nadal, and in doing so has taken men's singles tennis to another level again in the past year. Matching the grace of Federer and the power of Nadal, Djokovic now looks the complete player. The talent that was only hinted at previously is there for everyone to see. Mentally, every time he plays, he expects to win. It would be unfair to Djokovic to suggest that his ascent to the top has to do with the natural decline of Federer and Nadal's fitness issues. If it were merely a general lowering of standard, then Andy Murray,

a player whom can't seem to decide if he is overachieving or underachieving, or even Del Potro would surely have come closer to the likes of Djokovic and Nadal. The curious case of Federer and the French Open win over Djokovic raises the question if the greatest player many of us have ever seen is finished. Some believe there to be one last kick in Federer, perhaps at his spiritual home of Wimbledon, yet I believe we saw that last stand on the clay of Paris this year. The loss to Tsonga at SW19 only compounded that belief. Nadal however, can certainly scale the same peaks again, provided he stays fit, and improves his second serve, the only noticeable chink in his armour. For Djokovic, the true litmus test will be against Nadal in Paris in May next year, and to capture the only Grand Slam that eluded him this year. As it is, he can reflect on a fantastic year, with three of the four Grand Slams under his arm. It will take some-one special to stop him taking all four next year.

Sport

Fantasy Football: tips and advice

Jonathan Dolan

SO, you've managed to accumulate some solid points in September through long hours of hard decisions on picking your best starting eleven... or you just had Rooney, Dzeko, and Silva. What needs to be looked at from here onwards is the consistency and form of some players mixed with a helpful fixture list. As we have seen, there are no teams that are easily beatable, so the right players that have a good level of consistency are key. Firstly, we look at the defensive end. Newcastle United have looked very solid. Players like Ryan and Steven Taylor have proven themselves a bargain at under £5 million. Ryan Taylor, the pick of the two with his deadly free kick delivery, will grab a few assists and the odd goal. The same can be said for Chelsea, the pick here being José Bosingwa who is reasonably priced and offers a lot in assists. Mega-rich Manchester City haven't looked like conceding many goals. City defenders are considerably cheaper than their midfield and forward counterparts but of them all, either Vincent Kompany or Micah Richards

are great value. Both are guaranteed starters and keep a solid backline. The midfield area can be a profitable one if utilised correctly.

A nice blend of expensive big names and cheaper work horses can add beautifully to a well balanced team. One player I love to use is Clint Dempsey. Every season, Dempsey clocks up a nice tally of points and often plays up front while registered as a midfielder. Another man from the bargain basement that's worth a look is Seb Larsson, who is in decent form. Not to mention Matt Jarvis, Joey Barton and keep an eye on Shaun Wright-Phillips and Mikel Arteta. Up front is where it gets expensive but without question every team needs Wayne Rooney, and needs him captain too. Beside him you can have a number of quality strikers but Luis Suarez is the best pick due to a nice run of games for Liverpool and the return of talisman, Steven Gerrard, which could have big benefits for Suarez. Join in the fun with An Focal and enter our fantasy league at premierleague.com. The code is 573004-443556.

Editorial

Sports Editor, Robert McNamara

THEY say you are only as good as your last game. If this theory rang true, there would be plenty of sporting legends who would have quit in the face of temporary defeat, never to grace a sporting arena again.

The Irish rugby team faced their fair share of petty sound bites and column inches in the run up to the World Cup. After losing a couple of friendlies principally designed to prepare the squad for rugby's premier tournament, they were dismissed as not good enough. Would you run 26.2 miles in preparation for a marathon?

Would you swim from England to France before you swam the channel? These games were being used to maximise Ireland's performance at exactly the right time, when it really

mattered. The performance against USA provided further ammunition for the masses of experts who knew better than Declan Kidney, despite the fact that Ireland won that game in terrible weather conditions.

Forgotten in the melee of instant judgement was the raw ambition of the players in this squad, a band of players so utterly dedicated to the green shirt. Many of them had played in the 2009 Six Nations, Grand Slam winning team. Many had also starred for Munster and Leinster as the provinces triumphed in the 2008, 2009 and 2011 Heineken Cup, an unprecedented accumulation of silverware in such a short space of time in Irish rugby history.

None of these guys had ever shown complete and utter disrespect for their country by refusing to play or walking out of training camps.

None of them would dare make petulant remarks about the manager or his backroom staff. Even when the pundits were throwing insults like apes flinging faeces, they remained calm and composed. Many lesser teams and sportsmen would have capitulated in resultant pressure from the criticism



that was dished out. Not these lads though. In Paul O'Connell, Ronan O'Gara and Brian O'Driscoll, among others, this team possesses some of the finest sportsmen ever to represent this country, men who have never shirked responsibility or offered excuses for defeat. Still they were dismissed. Desire in sport can manifest itself when least expected and so, early morning, September 17 2011, Ireland pulled off one of the great shocks in rugby World Cup history and the Irish nation celebrated. How quickly bandwagons become overburdened with weight.



Stephen Cluxton's point was the difference between the Kingdom and the Dubs.

Dubs and Cats in Year of Retribution

Kevin O'Brien

ANOTHER September and the scenes in Croke Park were both familiar and electrifyingly new. Dublin, for so long the exemplars of under-achievement, joined Kilkenny, who emphatically reclaimed the territory that had been seized by Tipperary, at the helm of Irish sport as All-Ireland football and hurling champions respectively.

A match is over in 70 minutes and when it comes to All-Ireland finals, that time goes quickly but the ramifications can be enormous.

Dublin had been renowned for not being able to survive the furious conclusion to the red-hot cauldron of championship matches, while Kilkenny returned to the final having fallen just short of recording an unprecedented five-in-a-row.

It's difficult to compare these teams, but the manner in which they recovered after devastating defeats to their respective opponents was remarkable. More than two years ago, Dublin were in ruins after that ruthless Bank Holiday Monday massacre by Kerry. Twelve months ago, Tipperary broke free with a deluge of goals and devastated the Cats' five in-a-row ambitions.

Through one game of hurling, Kilkenny seemed to have dodged time itself. Written off as a team past its sell-by-date, Brian Cody's men came to Croke Park as outsiders, as the side with something to prove. As ever, they did so and expiated the disappointment by showing the application, awareness and the ferocity that always hallmarks their best displays. Unlike Kilkenny,

who have dominated the landscape of hurling for the last decade, Dublin were a young and inexperienced team moulded into champions by Pat Gilroy. Four points down with seven minutes remaining, the Dublin of old would have capitulated, but they came back, their resolve hardened by Gilroy and years of failure and disappointments.

What they've been through the last number of seasons had clearly built superb character, that never-say-die attitude, and that's what ultimately delivered the win for them. Just as it seemed Kerry were applying a last coat of varnish, Dublin surged to the Hill with scarcely credible tidings.

For all Kerry's experience, they lost some of the composure in the end, and at that stage destiny seemed to take over, and the incredible willingness of this Dublin team to win. Stephen Cluxton held his nerve and kicked the match winning free to defeat Kerry in championship for the first time in 34 years, deliver Dublin's first Sam Maguire since 1995 and give his side atonement for their crushing defeat in 2009.

Sport

The Mourinho Love Affair



Darren Mulryan

The special one prowling the technical area

IN the wake of recent controversy over the eye gauging incident in the Camp Nou, Jose Mourinho continues to entertain us with his indifferent and individual displays as Real Madrid coach.

After almost 10 years at the top of the game, is Mourinho's ego starting to suffocate Los Blanco's dreams of lifting yet another La Liga title?

"One of the most important things I learnt from Bobby Robson is that when you win, you shouldn't assume you are the team, and when you lose, you shouldn't think you are rubbish."

Mr Mourinho certainly believes that

statement. Personal confidence is not an issue. However, his self-proclaimed title, 'the special one', hangs over him like a devil on his shoulder, encouraging and massaging his ego all over Europe, bringing with it a ripple of annoyance.

However, on the flip side, let's not forget that personality is what makes the man. It is all a part of the act. The designer suit, brown loafers and the charismatic nature. Jose Mourinho is a success, full stop. What does he get you? Titles. 18 of them in under a decade. This is the lure of Mourinho. The controversy he brings with him is merely a shortcoming. It is a price Chelsea, Inter Milan, and Real Madrid pay to win the big European and Domestic titles.

Real Madrid paid quite a handsome sum to prise Mourinho away from his Treble winning Internazionale side. Real's president Florentino Perez wants titles. The Madridistas want immediate success. A high pressure job

which brings unprecedented levels of focus and drive. But Mourinho must focus on the challenge at hand. With a remarkably talented squad at his disposal, he has been given a squad to de-throne possibly one of the best football sides in history, Barcelona.

However, the team is not the primary concern. It is off the field incidents that are making the wrong headlines. Entertaining for Mourinho, but a headache for Madrid's public relations office. In the heat of the battle some may forgive the eye gauging incident with Barca's assistant Tita Vilanova. The most loyal Madrid fans disgusted as the club has long been associated with a great public image. It will be a successful year for Madrid and Mourinho, only if the ego takes a back seat, to let his man management take pole position. Get this right, and Los Blancos will run Barca close.

NFL New Rules, New Game?

Garry Irwin

THIS season sees a few slight rule changes introduced to American Football which are sure to have a big impact on teams. The NFL's Competition Committee has introduced them, with the backing of the majority of NFL team owners, in the interest of increasing players' safety.

The most obvious change will be apparent right from the kick off, as the ball will be kicked into play from the 35-yard line rather than the 30. Bringing the ball those five yards closer to the opposition will result in more kicks flying into the end-zone for a touch-back. The kicking team are also now only allowed a 5 yard run up, down from the previous 15 yards, decreasing their want of a player to even attempt a kick-off return. We will see less return attempts this season for big yardage but this should reduce injuries also, as the instances of 250 pound-plus players running into one another at nearly 30 kph will be few. Considering that in the past some players made a career of breaking opponents in two, you can see how it might upset some purists. But you cannot keep players apart for long and when the game is underway there is

a raft of new rules of what a defensive player can and cannot do to stop an opponent. A 15 yard penalty will be given to players who leap two footed off the ground and hit an opponent with their helmet; the definition of a defenceless player has been expanded to include the quarterback while throwing the ball, a player attempting to catch the ball or a running back who is already being tackled. Will defenders have to line up one by one to make a tackle? Well, no. But if there are any more than two of them trying to wedge an opposing player, that's still a penalty. On top of this, if a team is in constant breach of the rules they could incur more severe penalties, such as loss of draft picks. Good luck this season with that, Steelers!

While reducing the amount of injuries is in everyone's best interests, it can't but feel like an attempt by the NFL to soften up the sport for the introduction of the much talked about increase in the regular season game schedule. But would you want more games if the games weren't as exciting?

Sports Virgin: Octopush

Garry Irwin

THE last time I checked, humans really didn't need to go underwater to discover a new sport but alas, octopush has somehow managed to drag itself from the murky depths from whence it came and into our civilised society.

For those who are unaware of this unnecessary "sport", it consists of two teams of 6 players each who essentially play underwater hockey with tiny foot long sticks. Despite having goals there are no goalkeepers as most teams set up a 3-3 formation consisting of 3 defending players and 3 attacking players. The madness ensues from here as both teams aim to drop or flick a hockey puck into a three metre wide container. Octopush is a non-contact sport that is often described as the worst spectator sport in the world due to the peculiar location in which it's played. Most octopush clubs actually encourage their fans to adorn swimwear and a snorkel and watch underwater. The two referees are also submerged.

The game consists of two 10 minute halves with four subs from either side constantly interchanging with their team mates. Allegedly, the subs bench was once underwater as well but had to be moved to outside of the pool in the late nineties due to mass drownings.

The game begins with the puck being placed in the middle of the pool while all players are at either end. Players then race to the centre in the hope of grabbing the illustrious puck. Fouls tend to be given for blocking an opponent or the puck with your body or for using the stick as a violent weapon.

Octopush was created by British man, Alan Blake at Southsea sub aqua club in 1954. At the time, it was 8 players a-side, hence the "octo" part. A goal was known as a "gully" and the puck was called a "squid". The silly names and novelty of being underwater wears thin quickly however, leaving me to realise that the game is essentially underwater hockey.



Don't be such an Octopussy

Sports

Forgotten Footballer: Alvaro Recoba



Recoba: another in a long line of South Americans at Internazionale

Gerard Flynn

BORN in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1976, Alvaro Recoba made a name for himself as an attacking midfielder for Uruguayan side, Damibio, where he broke into the first team at the tender age of 16. After a successful spell at Nacional of Montevideo, Recoba signed for Inter Milan in 1997, scoring 2 goals on his debut against Brescia and eclipsing the performance of fellow Milan debutant, Brazilian goal scoring legend, Ronaldo. Perhaps the Uruguayan's finest moment came in a match against Sampdoria in the 2004/05 Serie A season, where after coming on as a 32nd minute substitute he managed to turn around a 2 goal deficit by assisting Obafemi Martins and scoring a 94th minute goal himself as the Nerazzurri ran out 3-2 winners.

Injuries and suspensions disrupted Recoba's consistency as well as his confidence during his 11 year stint in Milan. After succumbing to, then recovering from, every ankle, shoulder and knee injury under the sun, Recoba also spent 4 months on the sidelines due to a suspension for having a fake Portuguese passport which he used for European citizenship. The influx of younger and more expensive purchases at the San Siro had an effect his eventual departure as the striking

pecking order over his decade at the club included Hernan Crespo, Christian Vieri, Adriano and Julio Cruz.

Recoba left Inter and descended on a downhill spiral by joining Greek champions, Panionios in 2008 after scoring 53 goals in 175 games for 'La Beneamata.' Injuries again hampered his progress and his career in the Athenian suburb of Greece ended in ignominy when he rescinded his contract on orders from the club due to what they felt were excessive wage demands. After a season with old club Danubio last year, Recoba has returned to his home team, Nacional where he has scored 2 goals and assisted another in 3 games. Fellow strikers Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Raul have been cited as technically inferior to Recoba by football journalists in the past, yet it was their winning mentality and mental strength that had catapulted them to the apex of the footballing world.

Sadly for Recoba, there is no revitalisation of his career to be seen and it's safe to say that there will never be another moment in his sporting life that will equal that September day against Sampdoria where the Giuseppe Meazza sang his name louder than any other player on the pitch.

UL GAA round up

Eimear Considine

Over 100 Fresher hurlers turned up to trials on Monday the 12th and Tuesday the 13th in Maguire's. With plenty of high profile names on board the squads, this year hopes to be a successful year for the Fresher sides. Improvement on last year's season is key for the Fresher 1s as they lost out in the semi-final and the Fresher 2s hope to continue their winning ways after capturing the Fresher 2 league title. UL GAA has high hopes for these teams and wishes to achieve something that has not yet been achieved in UL: Fresher championship titles. Lorraine Scanlon, 1st year P.E recently received a bursary from Kerry GAA on her acceptance into UL. Congratulations Lorraine! Well done to the Cork Senior B's who captured the Aisling Mc Ging title last weekend especially to our UL Girls Kathryn Coakley (4th yr Law and Accounting) and Ella Ryan (4th year business). Also part of the panel who are currently studying in UL and who we hope to see representing the college in the upcoming year are Patricia Murphy, Olivia Roche and Una Tuohy. Congrats Girls! Congratulations are also in order for Linda and Lisa Bogler (2nd year SES) who won Intermediate

and Senior camogie titles with Wexford at the weekend. Well done also to Marie Russell (2nd year Science) who won the Camogie Junior final with Waterford. Well done to all.

Upcoming Fixtures:

Oct 11th: Senior hurling league V GMIT, Fresher 1 football league V CIT (H)

Oct 12th: Fresher 1 hurling league V UCC (H), Senior & Intermediate football league V CIT (A)

Oct 13th: Fresher 2 hurling league V Mary I (H)

Oct 18th: Fresher 2 hurling league V ITT (A), Fresher 2 football league V WIT (H)

Oct 19th: Senior hurling league V NUIG (H), Fresher 1 football league V CIT (A)

Oct 20th: Senior & Intermediate football league V UCC (H)

Oct 27th: Fresher 2 hurling league V LIT (H)

Emerging Sports Star: Ross Barkley

Liam Togher

ONE of the surprise results of the 2011-12 Premier League so far has been QPR's 1-0 win away to Everton on the second weekend of the season.

The result sparked fury among the home fans, who had already been frustrated by a complete lack of reinforcements over the summer and then had to sift through the pieces of what had been a woeful Toffees performance. In their gloom they found one beacon of hope; a 17-year-old midfielder who stood head and shoulders among more established players on the field. As Andy Gray would have said if he was still on Sky, take a bow Ross Barkley.

The teenager's career was nearly over before it had even begun, Barkley suffering a broken leg while playing for the England under-17 side a year ago. However he showed tremendous strength of character to not only recover fully from the horrendous injury, but also to make a name for himself after

just 90 minutes of first-team football. He was the near-unanimous choice for man of the match in that QPR game from pundits, with Martin Keown predicting him to become, "one of the best players we'll ever see in Britain." High praise indeed.

So impressive was Barkley that he was drafted into the England under-21 squad on the back of his spellbinding Premier League debut and he also appeared in Everton's subsequent league matches. With Mikel Arteta joining Arsenal on transfer deadline day, the youngster's chances of becoming a regular feature in the Toffees' starting line-up increased even further and his progress will be worth tracking over the course of the season. Everton have produced some quality players over the years.

Leon Osman, Victor Anichebe, Jack Rodwell and Tony Hibbert all came through the academy to make their mark on the club's first team.

Oh, and there was also some fella called Wayne Rooney who once scored a thundering winner against Arsenal on his Everton debut. He went on to do pretty well for himself.

These are not the easiest of acts to follow, but on the evidence of what we have seen over the past while; Ross Barkley could be mentioned in the same breath as Rooney and co when recalling great players who started out at Goodison Park.

"So impressive was Barkley that he was drafted into the England under-21 squad on the back of his spellbinding Premier League debut"



Ross Barkley is the latest Everton youngster to break into the EPL

Student Speak

STUDENT SPEAK



This week, News Editor Jason Kennedy was out and about asking...

What did you do for Arthurs' Day?

James Kennedy
"The Stables"



Phil James
"I went to The Scholars and poured my own pint!"



Jodie Ronan
"I studied reproduction. It's all willies and vaginas"



Anthony Kennelly
"I went to Costello's. It was alright"



Jenny Walsh
"I went to The Stables!"



Thomas Torode
"I honestly did nothing"



Niamh Rafter
"I studied all day and night"



Andrew Dwyer
"I went on the lash in Stello's"



Chris Ryan
"I ate a bag of marshmallows"



Adam Davis
"Stables, Hurlers, Icon = major hangover"

Lifestyle

7 reasons why you should be having sex right now!

Barbara Ross

FROM the roaring twenties to the swinging sixties and now the naughty noughties, there is no denying that sex sells. While outward beauty and sex appeal have been used in advertising for generations, the health benefits have been overlooked. Well not anymore!

Boys, did you know that getting down and dirty twice a week means that the risk of getting a fatal heart attack is halved? This is because sex is a form of cardio-exercise which helps both your heart and your body. Having sex

for thirty minutes can burn off eighty five calories and is certainly more fun than the gym. Swapping bodily fluids is always risky (for the love of God, always wear a condom) but it has recently been proven that sex can build your immune system.

Having sexual intercourse twice a week increases the level of immunoglobulin A which protects you from colds and flu. The bad news is that having sex three or more times a week can lower levels of the same antibodies. You win

some, you lose some! Younger men can reduce the risk of prostate cancer simply by having five or more ejaculations per week. Those of you accused of being a sex obsessed pervert now have the perfect comeback to those spoil sports.

The world is an incredibly stressful place and getting more so as time goes by but the old methods of stress relief are the best. While having sex, the brain releases endorphins that create a feeling of euphoria, masking feelings of stress. These endorphins and lower



The health benefits of sex have been overlooked

blood pressure also means that sex relieves pain. The dreaded headache is the bane of most men's sex life, however lower blood pressure helps to relieve headaches. Sorry ladies, our secret is out. Every girl's pet peeve is a guy who falls asleep straight after but they are not completely to blame. The oxytocin generated during sex helps to promote a deeper, more restful sleep.

The act of sexual reproduction may shave between four and seven years off your physical appearance.

On the other hand, having kids may make you look older in the long run. It goes without saying that sex can make you happy; this is because of the mood boosting hormones found in semen, absorbed by the vagina. Clearly an unwanted pregnancy or STD would decrease anyone's happiness and it cannot be said enough

- USE PROTECTION!

Is it safe to pop the pill?

Lisa Blake

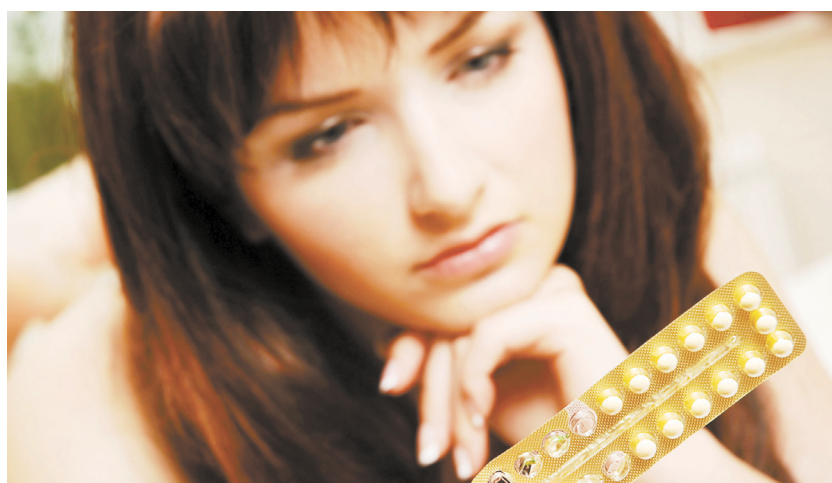
ACCORDING to a recent study in the US, the contraceptive pill has shown to have an effect on women's memory.

Fear not ladies, this does not mean the pill damages your memory; it simply alters the way we retain information. For example, if a woman who was taking the contraceptive pill attended a wedding five years ago, she is more likely to remember the emotions of the day, whereas a woman not taking the pill who was also at the wedding will remember the specific details.

With approximately 100 million women using the contraceptive pill worldwide, shouldn't we know a bit more about the side effects it can have? Caroline Sharkey, General Nurse at Mayo General Hospital, has outlined some of the pros and cons of using the pill. "The pill can decrease the risk of

cervical cancer as well as help clear up acne and cease period pains. However, it can slightly increase the risk of breast cancer." Caroline went on to say that if 8pm is the time you take your pill and you end up taking it at 10pm or 7pm, this can alter how effective it will be, therefore it is vital you take it at the same time every day. She added that if you are sick and prescribed medication, the majority of the time the pill will not work in conjunction with antibiotics. "When using the pill as birth control it does not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases, so a condom is by far a safer means of protection."

Caroline also mentioned that she would not recommend the pill to smokers, as they are already at a higher risk of cancer and as the pill also increases this risk, it is not advisable. "Women who are over the age of thirty-five and on the pill are more prone to blood clots and so for this reason this particular age group should be wary of taking the pill." So there you have it ladies, all you need to know about the contraceptive pill and its pros and cons. If you are one of the 100 million using the pill, make sure you use it wisely and know your facts!



The pill has its pros and cons



"In our culture today it is unlikely to see a young person approach the bar and say "one standard drink please" and then call it a night"

The health benefits of sex have been overlooked

A drink a day keeps the doctor away

Lisa Blake

AN alcoholic drink a day can improve a woman's health in her mature years. This statement sounds almost too good to be true.

The lovely researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health in the US have found in their study that compared to women who do not drink at all, women who drink in or around 15g of alcohol a day can increase good health in later years by up to 20%. But how much is 15g of alcohol in student speak? And how can alcohol improve a woman's health? Well, there is 10g of pure alcohol

in one standard drink. It is important to remember that the amount of alcohol you consume is more relevant than the amount of drinks you consume. Every alcoholic drink has a higher or lower percentage of alcohol than the next. In a 440ml can of beer which has a 4.2% alcoholic content, there are 1.5 standard drinks. In a 750ml bottle of wine with a 13% volume of alcohol, there are 7.7 standard drinks.

So, in light of these facts, it is fair to say that to students in particular, 15g of alcohol really isn't a whole lot. In our culture today it is unlikely to see a young person approach the bar and say "one standard drink please" and then call it a night. With regard to this issue,

the kind people at drinkaware.ie have brought to our attention the advice of the Department of Health and Children. "...up to 14 standard drinks a week for women and up to 21 standard drinks a week for men is considered low risk. It is important that they are spread out over the week and not saved for one session or big night out."

Whether we abide by this advice or not is an entirely separate issue but it is important to know that while going out and having a few drinks is fun, it is necessary to recognize when we have had one too many. And remember, it's 15g a day that leads to good health in later life, not 150g!

Lifestyle

How much man muscle do women really want?

Sinead Reilly

NOW that is a question. Speaking from the female perspective, I deem it to be quite difficult to give a definite and collective answer to that question because as always it comes down to one's own personal tastes and desires.

However, I strive to weigh up the pros and cons of the male physique and give a logical explanation as to why and how much man muscle women desire.

Undisputedly, the male population is under increasing pressure to conform to society's "expected" body type. Most males are under the impression that girls want a man with a "buff" body and this is a fair judgement. After all, I'm sure many males in mixed accommodation are already sick of the sighs of contentment leaving the gaping mouths of the females who have settled down to watch their daily dose of Home and Away. Surrounded by these women ogling toned, muscly and tanned men, one could easily reflect on themselves and feel inadequate.

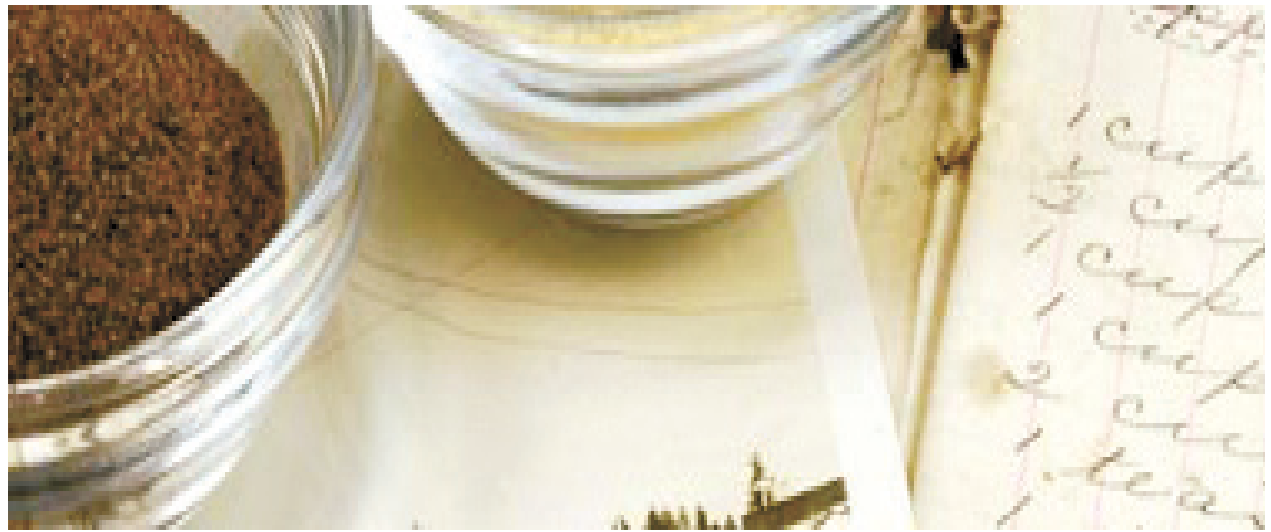
In reality though, would most of these girls want to be with these men? When it comes down to it, I don't believe they would. One only needs to watch a few hours of the numerous shows like "The Only Way is Essex" to realise that those lean physiques come with a

price. Hours of strenuous exercise in the gym and specially tailored diets are the components required to create a lush muscly "sex god". If the guys are spending all that time in the gym and working out, where does that leave them with the time to spoil and treat us girls? Some of these muscle men are worse than women when it comes to the hours they spend perfecting their appearance. I would rather have an intelligent conversation with an average fella than a strained one with a man who is secretly counting the number of butt clenches he has completed since I began talking. We want a nice comfy medium. Too scrawny and we will feel fat, we want to be swept off our feet and carried about without the fear of being dropped or hearing the sound of matchstick arms snapping.

Too muscly and we ourselves will begin to think we need to take more exercise or endure endless boring conversations about which types of protein shakes and steroids are best. We want enough muscle that when you wrap your arms around us we squirm on the inside and feel safe and secure. It's a girl thing.

In simple measurements I believe the desired amount of muscle required in the upper arm is the size of a small mandarin, anything smaller just isn't worth the mention.

As for six packs, so long as you aren't carrying the whole keg we won't complain. Realistically it differs for each woman but I hope this article has solved the mystery somewhat.



GINGERGIRL'S FOOD UL LOVE...

Helen Keown, Food Columnist

BREAKFAST is something to be savoured.

During the week I tend to stick to cereal and fruit but I think the weekends are worthy of something a little more special and I really adore my Saturday morning ritual! I'm not a fan of the full cooked breakfast as I find the combined flavours a little overpowering - this is probably a good thing as the calorie, salt and saturated fat content are substantial! I do, however, enjoy a hot breakfast as a treat. For me it's eggs. Growing up, we always had our own hens, which ensured a constant supply of organic eggs. I have yet to get my own hens so for now I pick up my organic or free range eggs at the market.

Baked Eggs
(serves 2)

- Olive oil
- 2 medium courgettes, diced
- 2 400g tins of chopped tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon of caster sugar
- 3 cooked potatoes, sliced
- Fresh basil, shredded
- 4 free range or organic eggs
- Sea salt and fresh black pepper

In a large non-stick frying pan, heat a drizzle of olive oil over a medium heat. Add the courgettes and potatoes and fry until the courgettes are soft and the potatoes golden. Add the tomatoes, sugar, salt and pepper and cook for a further two to three minutes, stirring every so often. Make four gaps in the mix and crack in the eggs. Cover the pan

with a lid or foil and cook for a couple of minutes until the eggs are cooked to your liking. Sprinkle the shredded basil leaves and serve with crusty bread. Helen's produce is available nationwide from independent food emporiums and at UL Farmer's Market where you can also purchase her range of breads and chocolate brownies. Helen also writes a weekly food column for the Limerick Leader and the Limerick Chronicle and is Spin Southwest's resident "foodie". Want some cooking advice and tips? Email helen@gingergirl.ie

For a chance to win some delicious gingergirl produce and avail of special offers, follow gingergirl on Twitter ([gingergirlfood](https://twitter.com/gingergirlfood)) or on facebook ([gingergirl](https://www.facebook.com/gingergirl)).

THE BEAUTY COLUMN

It's Barbie bitch

Roisin Curran, Beauty Columnist

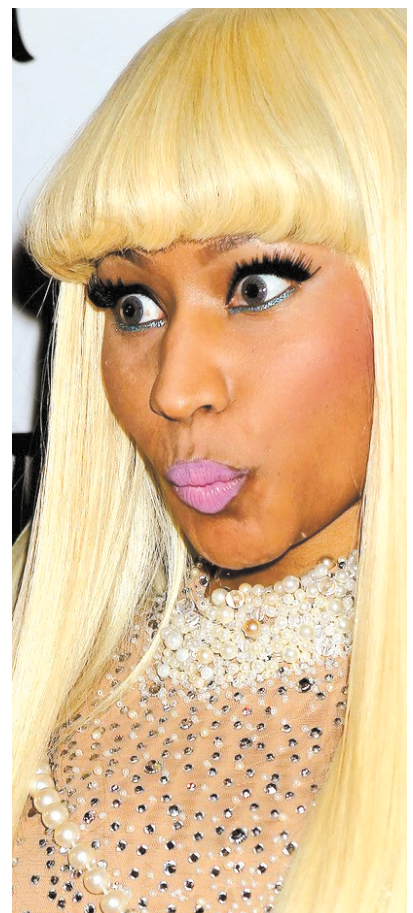
OH blonde hair, where to start? Blonde hair has been the go-to colour for celebrities, the butt of all hair colour jokes, the picture of beauty and has morphed itself into a powerful social enigma.

It is a force to be reckoned with. This hair colour has long dominated the beauty world not only for its alluring shade but also for its mysterious treatment. What is it about blondes that capture so much attention, be it good, bad or downright ridiculous?

Ever since childhood, everyone seemed to just accept the fact that blonde was better. Blonde wasn't just a colour, it was a lifestyle choice. Today, it can be seen as an agent for beauty, dumbness or even fakery.

No blonde hair colour is natural since every woman's hair darkens with age which means that any blonde hair you see is bought in a bottle. Shocker, I know. One girl I know has the fakest of fake peroxide locks and she's the mascot for blondes worldwide. It's our dear little friend Barbie.

Fair enough, Barbie was a revolutionised play time doll. She inspired girls to become whatever they wanted with her variety of colourful costumes. Barbie was running all over the world being a high time career woman, dragging Ken along with her. She had it all, including blonde hair. I didn't see her brunette friend doing all these exciting things or even coming out of her box to play. And here lies the problem; little children saw the blonde girl conquering the world, not the brunette.



Are blondes really the fairest of them all?



How buff do you like your men?

Fashion

Prints take London by storm

Dearbhaile Houston

FROM September 16-21, fashionistas from around the world came to the city that gave us mods and Stella McCartney to check out the best designs for Spring/Summer 2012. More than 100 designers showcased their catwalk collections in locations throughout London, from big names like Vivienne Westwood to designers just starting their careers.

The biggest trend of the coming season will be prints. Most designers featured printed pieces throughout their collections but Basso and Brooke, Issa and Clements Ribeiro's use of kaleidoscopic digital prints really stood out. Mary Katrantzou, a young Greek designer, used a mash-up of floral prints on everything from dresses to trousers with beautiful results and a much lighter approach to her usual prints.

The darker colours of winter will give way to a brighter palette. No better was this seen than in Roksanda Ilincic's collection. Her loosely tailored dresses in soft tones were offset by knitted beanie hats in hot pinks and oranges.

Other designers such as Jonathan Saunders also added a casual pop of colour with accessories to contrast with his more neutral pieces.

The form-fitting body con dresses of past seasons are now being swapped for something altogether different and refreshing. Christopher Kane and Acne both featured looser shapes with culottes, maxi-dresses and wide-leg trousers making a welcome appearance.

Designers are drawing on a simpler aesthetic that is by no means boring. Tailoring is feminine but unfussy, focusing on the shapes of the late 40's and 50's with trapeze style dresses, mid-length skirts with cinched waists and structured collars. Irish designer Paul Costello had babydoll dresses and tailored coats in soft sorbet colours that allowed the craftsmanship to be noticed. Dedicating the last day to menswear gave importance to the often overlooked side of fashion. Topman Design showed a 1970's tinged

collection with paisley shirts teamed with knitted jumpers as well as slim-line suits. Christopher Shannon put on a stand-out show. His playful take on street wear had colourful panels and tassels added to hoodies and bomber jackets to give a new twist to the ubiquitous. As with the womenswear collections, designers were eager to get creative with classic styles.

London has continually taken the lead in promoting and nurturing its young designers, both creatively and at a commercial level. Programmes such as the British Fashion Council's New Generation and Fashion East give young designers an opportunity to show their designs on the catwalk. This has proved to be successful. Alumni of such programmes include House of Holland, Roksanda Ilincic, Gareth Pugh and Jonathan Saunders, all of whom have become highly regarded and bankable designers.



Prints have made an extraordinary comeback shown by Mary Katrantzou

Upper East side story

Marie Enright

WHO is Ed Westwick some of you may ask?

Not only is he a character on the infamous TV series 'Gossip Girl', he has starred in successful movies such as 'Chalet Girl' and is quickly becoming fashion's newest male style icon. Better known as Chuck Bass, he first graced us with his stylish presence when Gossip Girl first

aired in 2007. Ever since, Westwick has showcased Chuck's sometimes questionable yet daring fashion sense. He is famed for his trademark bold-coloured suits and endless collection of quirky bow ties which portray his character's arrogant charm perfectly. But where do the similarities between the character's bold fashion sense and Westwick lie? While his character's style is seemingly outrageous at times, Westwick embodies a personal style reminiscent of old Hollywood whilst also incorporating his own unique style into that look. At a press conference in

Salon de Ning in Manila Peninsula, Westwick can be quoted as saying, "I think fashion is a very important part of our lives in this day and age; its self-expression and self-reflection". Westwick's own style emulates his sultry charm and heightens his mysterious good looks which have won him an army of female fans across the globe.

His red carpet attire has become renowned worldwide as fashionistas are finally taking notice of the star. In 2009 he was interviewed by GQ magazine which praised the up and coming fashion icon for his sophisticated yet effortless look. He also was chosen to model GQ's fall collection in the same year which was an opportunity for the British actor to showcase his own interest in fashion and also his impeccable taste.

His ability to select pieces that are not just season favourites but pieces that are timeless is an admirable quality in the opinion of many fashion bloggers. While Westwick's style may seem to be effortless, he must be given credit for his capacity to incorporate simplicity and classic Hollywood glamour into his look on a daily basis.

Whether he is in black-tie attire, portraying the famous Chuck Bass or simply going on a coffee run, Westwick always is seen at his fashionable best and he must be applauded for that.

One only has to look at the young star to see his mass appeal and yet Westwick manages to exude a demure nature in both his manner and fashion sense. It is this that has catapulted the TV star to worldwide fame and into the eyes of fashion lovers.

Personally, I think it is fair to say that Ed Westwick has fashionably arrived!



Ed Westwick, the new fashionable kid on the block

This fortnight in fashion history

Emma Norris

THIS fortnight in fashion history was an eventful one.

The following dramas, retirements and new-born fashion designers all came into being in Octobers of the past.

1666. In October 1666, there was a clear change which came over men's dress. One month after the Great Fire of London, only a short time before the Dutch burnt ships in the Medway and only a year after the Plague, King Charles II decides to reform the fashion of London. Swapping long cloaks for short ones was one of his many fashionable endeavours. Who knew he was such a style icon, eh?

1825. Charles Frederick Worth, the so-called father of couture, is born on October 13. Born in England, Worth moved to Paris in 1845. Worth was known for the lavish fabrics and trims which made up his beautiful garments, and often took historic influences.

1970. The Broadway musical, Coco, based on the life of iconic designer Coco Chanel closes October 3 after a ten-month run. Set in 1953-1954 when Chanel was re-establishing her couture house, Chanel was played by Katharine Hepburn for the first eight months, and by Danielle Darrieux for the rest of its run. 1997. McQueen told Vogue in October 1997 that his debut couture offering for label Givenchy was "crap", but he stayed with the house until March 2001, continuing to create challenging collections, including one featuring car-robots spraying paint over white cotton dresses and double amputee model Aimee Mullins striding down the catwalk on intricately carved wooden legs until the contract, which he said was "constraining his creativity", was ended. 2001. On October 9, Kate

Moss is signed as the face of Rimmel London. Apparently chosen for being "the quintessential cool girl from London", whose "beauty is born of the street"; she was later joined by Lily Cole and Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

2007. On 4 September 2007, Italian fashion designer, Valentino, announced that he would retire fully in January 2008 from the world stage after his last haute-couture show in Paris. He delivered his last women's ready-to-wear show in Paris on 4 October.

2009. Fashionista (or fashion fiend, depending on your point of view) and close friend of the late Alexander McQueen, Lady GaGa proclaimed that the October 11 2009, National Equality March rally on the National Mall was "the single most important event of her career." As she exited, she left with an exultant, "Bless God and bless the gays." 2011. Caribbean Catwalk. Preparations are on the way for fashion weeks all over the world, set to take centre stage in these coming months. The gorgeous models in the Caribbean are in high anticipation of getting their faces seen in as many runway shows as possible.



Charles Worth's fashion pioneering

Fashion

Everybody wants to be like James Dean

Jennifer Armstrong

THE TIMELESS Hollywood star was often quoted as saying "I try so hard to make people reject me".

However, this seems an unlikely truth when you consider the heart-throb profile Dean managed to create with his fashion and style alone. While he may not have been as severe a bad boy as he has been portrayed, there's no denying he came pretty close especially when it came to the fashion world. In an era when preppy pin stripes was the sought-after look, the rebel that was Mr Dean

took simple jeans and white t-shirts to a whole new ridiculously attractive level. He made famous the 'lean against the wall' pose and the 'brooding' magnetic stare long before *Rebel without a Cause* was cemented into the hall of must-see movies. When truly contemplated, it was more Dean's attitude and body language that inspired such a flock of followers. While his fashion remained simple and classic, it was his posture, stance, manner and mind-set that made the masses stop and stare.

His ideology, if he even realised he had one, was straightforward dressing with a tough exterior. Fashion houses still claim you can't quite beat a good

pair of Levi's, a fitted tee, and a cheeky smirk, and I can confidently say most ladies won't disagree. Even *The OC's* Ryan Atwood attempts to translate the true James Dean look into a modern day setting with his capsule wardrobe of blue jeans, basic tees, and of course the smouldering, intense gaze. The basic idea is to strip back the often chaotic appearance in order to allow confidence and self-assurance to take centre stage.

From a black polo-neck to a blue button down shirt, the master of the smoulder could rock pretty much anything. He even made a lazy hanging cigarette reek of style appeal. Even



James Dean, the first male fashion icon.

today's popular trends like wide frame ray bans and black leather jackets were first mastered by the young actor who managed to give some unforgettable performances before his untimely death at the age of 24.

Perhaps his tragic death is partly what makes him such an iconic fashion figure because audiences never witnessed his

sad older years of slippers and hand knitted jumpers. The only image we carry is the young radical youth riding around town in jeans and jackets, a look insured to cause raised heart rates. Having said that, in the case of Mr Dean, I feel he may be the one specimen who could have pulled off a pair of old slippers quite unlike any other.

Is fashion sexuality, or is sexuality fashion?

Amy Grimes

SEX SELLS, or so the world of advertising would have us believe. It sells everything from alcohol to crisps and yes, sex definitely sells clothes.

Sexuality is an intrinsic part of fashion, after all, stylish clothes are meant to make us more attractive, more appealing so obviously the emphasis on sexuality is a constant undercurrent. At the moment, it's not so subtle.

The fetish trend this autumn was seen on runways everywhere, on New York catwalks designs by Alexander McQueen and Louis Vuitton showcased latex, PVC and leather dresses and skirts, and bangles resembling handcuffs. On the high street, this has translated into sheer or lace panels in dresses and leather skirts from stores like Zara and Oasis. I was amazed to see a 'pleather' mini-dress in Penney's the other day, trust me, it was a failed attempt at sexy. This look has to be decadent to be desirable.

To avoid looking like an over-eager dominatrix, stick with small touches. Wear some killer heels with a subdued dress in muted tones of grey.

Pair a sheer black top with a tank, skinny jeans and flats. Most importantly, leave the whip at home. You don't want to look like you just sauntered out of an S&M club.

Speaking of masochistic tendencies, footwear is a large part of looking sexy and the stiletto heel is an erotic item in itself. Sure, flat shoes are cute but stilettos add a certain power to your step, an air of invincibility if you will (they were named after a dagger after all). While more comfortable options like wedge and platform heels are

popular this side of the 'noughties', the stiletto heel has had a revival of late: in 2010 sales of Kurt Geiger's six-inch heels quadrupled.

Other styles have had their sexual undertones amped up this season too. Masculine trends come and go in the form of sexed up suits, boyfriend jeans but this winter, the focus is on adding graceful details such as embroidery and sequins to traditionally unsexy attire such as baggy trousers. Slouchy, figure-concealing coats gave way to glimpses of plunging necklines on the Michael Kors models.

Androgyny is certainly part of this trend, just look at Andrej Pejic, the male model who made headlines throughout the year by modeling in women's shows. While female models often parade the runway displaying their God-given gifts for all to see, he proves that there is more than one form of sexuality that can be used in the fashion industry.

A quick look at *Vogue* shows that 40s glamour is in which means pencil skirts in slightly less daunting but equally sexy fabrics. The knee-length skirts at Gaultier had eye-catching thigh-high slits. More discreetly sensual than overt this particular style is similar to the 50s trend that's been popular for the last year or so. The glamorous trends from this era are more suited to our weather however, while figure-hugging skirts may be the focal point the emphasis was also on faux-fur shrugs, pearls and feminine gloves.

Whether your personal style is in-your-face, feminine or fashion-forward, this season there's certainly plenty of room for interpretation when it comes to what's sexy.



But whips and chains excite me-the fetish trend showcased by Louis Vuitton

What's the rush in growing up?

Roisin Burke

WHEN you were 7, what did you do? Did you watch Beyoncé shake her booty and wear sexy slogan clothes? Back in the day I'm sure we didn't, but if you are 7 now, you probably do. It's a growing concern. I don't remember what I did when I was 7.

It seems such a long time ago, but then I have trouble remembering the day. I suppose we all have problems.

Back to the main issue. Children. Children and sex. What a bad combination. In any order.

There are growing concerns that children are having less and less of a childhood. They are growing up too quickly. By the time they are 7 they want boobies and high heels. Odd, I still hate both.

A lot of research has gone into this problem. People are universally outraged and I'm joining in. Children should not want boobies. The hugely popular high street store Penney's got in trouble over this mess. They were selling padded bikinis to pre-teens and parents got cross. They are no longer on the market.

But realistically, it's not just one shopping franchise. It's everywhere. Its adverts, toys, clothes, TV, there is no getting away from it. The issue is innocence. It's being robbed from the nation's children, and children all around the world, way too soon. Self-perceptions are being mutated to that of an older generation.

Children are being sold Playboy stationary for school, Girls play with super sexy Brat dolls at home, Kids are bombarded with provocative, semi-nude images every time they turn on the TV.

It's not just the girls. The boys are having issues too. A father despondently shared the pressure of having to bond with his son

through 'Grand Theft Auto', the game notoriously centred on crime 'gangsters' and prostitutes. There "must be easier ways of bonding" are his words.

This is a big thing in England and David Cameron has given it a lot of thought. He is recorded as saying, "You can't cut children off from the commercial world but we should be able to help parents more in terms of trying to make sure that our children get a childhood and that they are not subject to unnecessary and inappropriate commercialisation and sexualisation too young".

Reg Bailey, chief executive of the Mothers' Union, UK, wants to see new legislation enforced allowing responsibility to lie with corporate companies and legal action taken against them individually. A government-commissioned report, written by psychologist Dr Linda Papadopoulos suggested introducing age warnings to 'lads mags' and further discretion regarding 'hot' music videos.

So it seems changes are in place and action is being taken to restore the modern childhood but the question still remains, what really can be done to protect our children?

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ERNST & YOUNG
Quality In Everything We Do

ULFM launch party headliners Bipolar Empire talk to An Focal. Turn the page for a review of the gig and to the back page for the full interview. Words: Kelly O'Brien

6th October 2011



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Volume XX

Villagers finish tour with a bang

Tom Horan

BASED on Villagers' debut album, 'Becoming a Jackal', I expected frontman Conor O'Brien to be the introverted type. The album is forty minutes of him pouring out his insecurities, desires, and fears to the public, not the sort of themes tackled by a swaggering rock god.

This preconception was broken on Wednesday night in the Milk Market as soon as he began with "I Saw the Dead". After its wistful intro, Conor looked up from his keyboard and out into the crowd, beckoning us to clap along as he sang with a breathless intensity unheard on the album. Two years of touring has taught the band that when you play it live, you have to play it loud. The band followed with "Memoir", a new track, and the crowd instantly sang along to its catchy refrain: "I might as well be anyone at all". The lyrics of "Pieces" have Conor at his most intimate as he confesses a crippling self-doubt, ironic considering the song ends with him and the whole crowd howling insanely like jackals in a cathartic release that concludes the first section of the show.

Acknowledgement must be given to the bassist's bizarre swaying and bobbing, he moves in a way I can only described as being like a seductive rooster. The band leaves the stage before Conor preforms the wonderfully bare "27 Strangers", but return for the similarly understated "New Found Land". These songs are spoiled slightly by the din coming from the disinterested punters down the back. I hear one annoyed fan plead for their silence with an "ah shut up". These dissenters are drowned

out by "Down Under the Sea", the nearest thing Villagers have done to straight out rock, followed without pause by that other fan favourite "That Day". In "The Bell", the band switches seamlessly between brash rock and gentle keyboards several times in minute, maybe a sign of a heavier sounding second album. The encore begins with

"Acknowledgement must be given to the bassist's bizarre swaying and bobbing, he moves in a way I can only described as being like a seductive rooster"

their greatest hit, "Becoming a Jackal", unchanged from its album version, not that any change is necessary to what is already a live highlight. After saying their goodbyes, Villagers' final song of their final Irish tour date until after recording of album two is "Ship of Promises". The set ends with Conor kneeling at the edge of the stage and ripping the string from his guitar. The gesture speaks for itself.



Villagers' frontman, Conor O'Brien

Losing the Game of Thrones



Sean Bean as Lord Eddard Stark in the medieval fantasy epic *Game of Thrones*

Keith Beegan

DUBLIN actress Lisa Nolan passed up the chance to star in HBO's critically acclaimed medieval fantasy drama 'Game of Thrones' after she was asked to engage in an erotic scene that involved complete nudity.

The rising actress insists that she was promised no nudity when she was contracted to star in the show's second season, which is expected to air next summer, and that she would be supplied with skin patches for her breasts during filming.

Fans of the hit series will admit that there is a thread of nude scenes in the first season, but that they are not the central focus of the story.

The show, based on George R. R. Martin's series of books called 'A Song of Ice and Fire', explores the trials and tribulations of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros as the natives battle amongst each other for the Iron Throne.

Sean Bean, of 'Lord of the Rings' fame, stars as Lord Eddard Stark, the first season's leading protagonist, and helps in offering a thrilling story that is so much more than nude women and sex scenes. We must take into account

that *Game of Thrones* is set many centuries in the past, in an era where modesty was not a virtue, and women were enslaved as prostitutes and forced to satisfy their master's sexual needs.

The show explicitly exposes this historical truth and requires the actors, both male and female, to appear nude and act out sexually-fuelled scenes.

Other HBO shows, including 'True Blood' and 'Boardwalk Empire' feature male and female nudity. 'True Blood's' lead character Sookie Stackhouse, played by the Oscar-winning Anna Paquin, frequently appears nude and engages in far more explicit sex scenes with her co-stars, Alexander Skarsgård and her real-life husband Stephen Moyer. This is not uncommon among HBO shows.

We must not ignore the fact that there is a double agenda in operation in including these scenes: sex is the most effective way of selling a product in modern society.

However, if she had paid any attention to the previous season, Nolan should have been more than prepared for some raunchy scenes.

If Miss Nolan intends to conceal her assets at the expense of artistic and historical authenticity, then that is her unfortunate prerogative.

Death by donuts

Colm Fitzgerald

DEATH by falling from a chair after excess consumption of donuts is quite the unfortunate if interesting fate. 'Skippy Dies', Paul Murray's second novel, tells of such a tale.

I came by the book quite by chance. A trip to Easons to buy a 50 cent packet of chewing gum resulted in being lured in to view their latest '3 for 2' offers. Moments later I left with 3 random titles I knew nothing about and my wallet €25 lighter.

Two of the books were utter trash, and while it may sound utterly clichéd, 'Skippy Dies' made up for it. It's set in a Catholic boarding school for boys, an environment many are familiar with

(fortunately or unfortunately), starring a stereotypical set of teenagers; weird ones, geeky ones, fat ones, love-struck ones and of course the damn stupid. The novel is filled with a rich narrative of many quandaries and predicaments which torment adolescent lives: the trauma of a first "love", drinking cans at the side of a takeaway and becoming addicted to dieting pills. I'm defying all journalistic convention by saying I couldn't put the book down. But I'm being honest, I really couldn't!

Sheer hilarity ensues throughout, giving a giddy encouragement to read on. I struggle to consider who could not relate at all to it. Coming of age combined with shenanigans, digressions over string theory while building a time machine is somewhat of a cracker. That said if anyone reading

this has built a time machine, fair play. It is quite unpredictable, which is one of the biggest qualities I look for in a novel; there is indeed nothing worse than knowing what exactly is going to happen next. It provides a reminder of how difficult it was to be 14 with the whole world against you, except for that one girl from the convent across the road. It is as sad as it is giddy. The adventurous escapades ultimately lead to a darker core offering an ideal balance of emotion. Skippy does indeed die, after falling off a chair while eating donuts. So, ten points for originality, I won't ruin the rest for you.

Someone told me the cover is probably one of the worst they've ever seen on a book. Well, as the saying goes don't judge a book by a cover and, in this case, that couldn't be more true.

Copyright: taking the Mickey?

Roisin Burke

NEW legislation has ensured copyright robbery will continue to exploit the newest songs to the stage, while the classics remain safe.

The Cliff Richard-fronted legislation means music now has copyright for 70 years, an extra 20 years on the previous length. Unfortunately, nothing is being done to stop the constant theft of fresh tracks from the market simply because there is no way to stop it.

You can't get The Beatles without paying, but this week's chart toppers will be on YouTube before they hit the shops. If you really want to fix copyright, you should probably start with the source of the problem.

Everyone knows it's illegal. That's the problem. It's so common, it doesn't feel illegal. It's more a moral obligation like recycling. Everyone should do it, but it's easier not to.

The issue is universal. So large that no one knows where to start. Families downloading at home, students at college, young adults at work... who feels right slapping wrists for something they themselves have done? That's the problem.

A similar law passed in the US was nicknamed 'The Mickey Mouse Protection Act'. This law was seen as the result of Disney's efforts to save Mickey Mouse from the public domain.

Ultimately it appears the motive is money, unable to prevent losses from the modern market, they are attempting to capitalise on the old. Funding the future by surviving on the past.

Artists from the last era can rest easy knowing the money will continue to pile up while new artists will falter without funds to enter the cut throat music industry.

Their talents are exploited without payment. Their music taken. Their careers over before they begin. This is the modern phenomenon in the music industry and something needs to change.

As U2's manager, Paul McGuinness, asked in the Daily Telegraph; without changes to copyright laws "where is the investment going to come from to fund the next generation of bands such as U2 and Coldplay?". There's a question.

As Dave Fanning would say: "the thing is..." Without securing the copyright laws for the next generation of artists, the industry is in danger of dissipation. Without money to pay for musicians, songwriters, producers and studios there will be a musical standstill, a lyrical stop.

Music needs money to progress. That money comes from music lovers, fans and followers. Concerts follow success. Live performances are at peril, pay for the lyrics.



Paul Murray, author of 'Skippy Dies'

Bipolar Empire Rock The Stables

Kelly O'Brien, Editor

Wednesday 21 September saw the official launch of ULFM, the Universities first full time streaming only radio station. For the launch, the ULSU secured Tallaght born band Bipolar Empire and New Yorker Mike Scala. The event kicked off at 1pm with freebies from sponsors Hot Press, Relentless and Meteor and at around 3:30pm 2fm DJ Will Leahy made a guest appearance to cut the ribbon and declare the station operational. On the day he stated he was "delighted to be here" and that it was "great to see students showing an interest in radio."

With the station officially streaming, the party moved into The Stables to celebrate. First to the stage was local singer/songwriter Andrew Foley. Andrew has been playing gigs in and around the Limerick area for the past while and you can usually catch him in The Office Bar. After a hugely popular set of covers from Andrew, Mike Scala and his band stepped into the limelight. Born in Brooklyn, Mike himself was passionate to succeed as a self-taught musician, and set his sights on working his way onto the New York music scene. He established himself as an artist by age 17, performing at underground jazz and rock clubs across New York and Los Angeles.

He is currently performing a tour of Ireland and has a tendency to pick up artists along the way. His current line-up includes two Irish musicians that joined the tour just before the ULFM launch party. Next up were headliners Bipolar Empire who exploded onto the stage with all the intensity of a pop/rock band destined for greatness. Formed a mere four year ago, Bipolar Empire have been going from strength to strength lately, gaining extensive fan bases throughout Ireland. Their song Tempomanic was featured on the RTE newsreel and Muse bassist Chris Wostenholme even joined the band onstage to play two songs with them at a recent gig in The Workman's Club in Dublin. The band played crowd favourites such as the aforementioned Tempomanic and the infectious album title track Feel That You Own It before taking their leave with a promise to be back in UL soon.

Their debut album has been available since April and they are currently gigging throughout Ireland. If you do get the chance to see them live, don't pass it up. In the words of the Daily Mail on Sunday, they truly are "Highly Impressive".



Bipolar Empire looking suitably broody

Irish trio to bring the sunshine

Jack Brolly

THE Richter Collective is one of Ireland's most prolific independent record companies, boasting acts such as Adebisi Shank, And So I Watch You from Afar and The Redneck Manifesto. Their latest output comes in the form of slacker pop trio Squarehead, who have been creating positive buzz since they first crashed onto the scene.

They released a string of singles over the last year, two of which are on the album, and made a name for themselves. 'Yeah Nothing' is a collection of lo-fi songs with a Beach Boys vibe. Everything here is laid back and croons with 'oohs' and 'aahs'. "Midnight Enchilada", the album's opener, was one of the singles released earlier in

the summer. It has a dreamlike feel and evokes images of warm summer nights. After this is "Save Yourself" which has that typical laid back Squarehead feel. Halfway through the album you'll start to get a bit of déjà vu. "The Abandoned Sea" sounds particularly like "Axes of Love". After one listen it's hard to distinguish each song from the other. It took me a few listens before I could correctly name a song while listening to it. "Tasty Fruit" has a '50s swing sound and is sure to make people sway as Squarehead tour around the country. The closest thing to a rock song on the album is "The Abandoned Sea", which has a delicate intro and then breaks out into a restrained rock like sound.

The strongest song on the album is their first single, "Fake Blood". If you're going to check out any song from the album, make sure it's that one. 'Yeah Nothing' has a warm and optimistic feel. If you're having a bad, day stick this on and you'll be smiling in no time.

Overall, while not as good as others on the Richter label, it is still an enjoyable and catchy album. There are definitely a few songs on this album that you can listen to over and over again. Squarehead have managed to capture the summer we never had. Give it a listen. If anything this album will keep you warm through the winter months.



Irish Trio Squarehead

2 B or not 2 B

Roisin Burke

INTERPRETATING language is no new phenomenon. Slang is a modification of speech just as text is a modern variation on writing. As my boys would say: "just roll with it". There are those who think texting is not real.

I would say than neither is your "fone". There are those who believe texting is lowering the quality of speech, I say forget that!

Some say mutation. Some say diversity. They all mean the same thing: change. There is always variation to an original. No language is static, in any form. Texting is a new way to communicate using the written medium.

There was a time when Shakespearian speeches were primary communication methods. It may have taken ten minutes to say you were going to the toilet, and even then, not everyone was sure what you meant. Things changed for a reason: speed and survival.

Communicating faster means understanding quicker. Saying more with less leaves space for extras. And everyone loves dessert.

Britain's Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, says: "Texting is a modern form of poetry and an ideal vehicle for the Facebook generation. It's a way of saying more with less, just as texting is". I agree. Texting is modern poetry. It is playing with words and using interpretation. It has several meanings



and it is always personal. As Duffy puts it: "It's able to connect young people in a deep way to language [...] it's language as play." Texting is literal rap. It is musically based and emotionally interpreted. Just as rap is competitive for the best rhymes and rhythms, text is a game of the swiftest, smoothest sentence and most creative expression. ROFLCOPTER, or 'rolling on floor laughing and spinning around'. There is no greater symbol for the popularity of text talk than this universally recognised expression.

It's no great surprise however. This kind of thing has been predicted since the '40s when George Orwell created the concept of 'Newspeak' for his book 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'. In the classic novel, Newspeak was a form of language that removes all unnecessary extras and simplified all words and grammar. Predicted or created the mystery remains, but one thing is certain, Newspeak is here and in popular use. Poetry is a form of entertainment. Effective entertainment is popular.

Welcome to the poetic era of text. Keep it short and sweet.

Film

Plot and production in Citizen Kane



Citizen Kane: impressive lighting, staging and visual effects, even by today's standards

Anthony O'Brien

CITIZEN Kane, without it really needing to be stated, is regarded as the best film of all time, mainly because it was so far ahead of its time in direction and production.

There are certainly a number of impressive special effects in the film and pioneering visuals include the use of Deep Focus. Narratively, the use of multiple speakers to tell a single story was a first in a film. A Newsreel is very effectively fabricated, with a film scratching effect that was so unique film distributors asked for new prints as they assumed the effect was not deliberate. Many tricks establish a great sense of depth and size to the sets. But what story do they tell?

Charles Kane is a media baron. Raised away from home from a young age, he turns around a struggling newspaper with an endearingly cocky arrogance. Kane seems very jovial in the narrator's early accounts, but as we see his older life we see how he lacks any sort of real connection to other people and feels deeply empty.

This is partially brought about by his arrogance and misconceived efforts to live a wealthy and luxurious life. His wives are unloved and humiliated and he winds up secluded in his colossal private residence, Xanadu. The sets are staggering; Kane appears tiny in contrast as he loses his only company in life. I find it hard to say anything original about the film. It's very widely held to be the best film of all time; many clever analyses of the picture reveal its cinematic grandeur better than I can hope to. However, I will say I found the film's lighting, staging and visual effects still personally dazzling even in 2011. But as a story, does it hold up enough? It isn't quite as involving as some other classics. How much you think it lives up to its reputation depends on what extent of a film's greatness you look for in its production, or if you rather story and plotting. I think *Citizen Kane* is stunning on a close examination. Although it tells a great story of an interesting man it does not, in my opinion, leave you with enough to think about to be considered the pinnacle of cinema.

A classic for our generation

Ann Styles

"If you don't love *Shawshank*, chances are you're beyond redemption." Ian Nathan, *Empire Magazine*.

The Shawshank Redemption is a must-see movie that tells the story of Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins), a successful young banker, who is wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife and her lover in 1947. Andy is condemned to two life sentences in Shawshank prison. Once there, he is subjected to brutality from both inmates and guards but is befriended by Red (Morgan Freeman), a lifer with access to contraband.

Andy asks him for a rock hammer for his hobby of fashioning chess pieces from rocks. Eventually the corrupt warden sees potential in Andy when he helps a guard with a tax problem. The warden moves him to the library where he can then use him to launder the money he is secretly siphoning off the system.

After almost 20 years in Shawshank, Andy has a chance of vindication when new evidence comes to light.

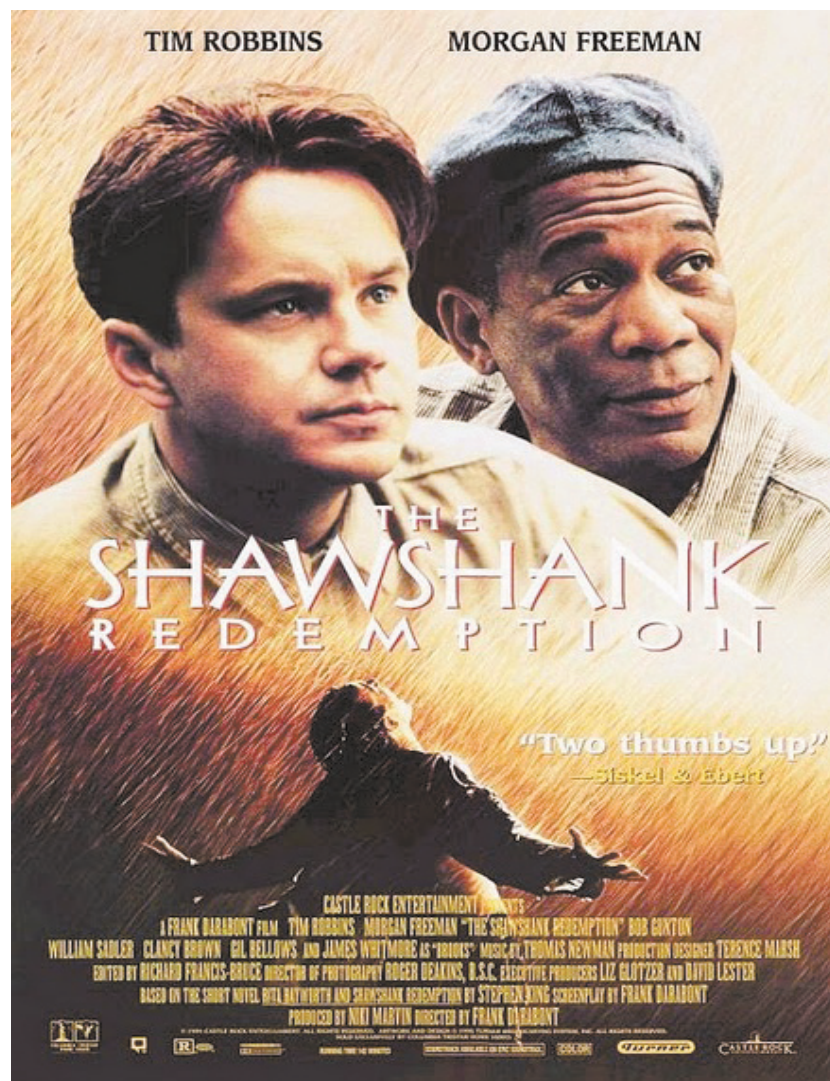
However the warden suppers his chances by having the informant killed as he fears that Andy will reveal his shady dealings if he is freed. Throughout the film, we see Andy fight against corruption and brutality, often to little avail.

He stands against the injustices given out daily, despite this always being paid for heavily, yet he refuses to be broken or corrupted. "Without a single riot scene or horrific effect, it tells a slow gentle story of camaraderie and growth, with an ending that abruptly finds poetic justice in what has come before." Janet

Maslin, *New York Times*. This film is an insightful, thought-provoking and inspiring examination of the strength of the human spirit.

Audiences of every age can connect with the pervading themes of freedom and self-worth that run through the film. It illustrates how we are influenced by not only the events around us, but

also by our own outlook on life. The message is clear. The human spirit is indomitable and good wins out against all odds. Voted favourite film of all time by BBC Radio one listeners earlier this year it is, and will remain, a firm favourite with pundits and punters alike. So grab the popcorn, fizzy drinks and DVD and enjoy.



Trilogy Tragedies

Aoife Coughlan

I'm feeling particularly grumpy today so let's have some fun bashing films of the past few decades that should never have become trilogies.

A new film arrives on the scene and is met with tremendous box office sales, more often than not this ends up being an excuse for the producers to churn out a couple of watered down follow-ups to keep fans flocking back to the theatre the following years.

Apparently no fan-boy on the face of the planet was happy with the *Star Wars* prequels. *Jurassic Park 3* was so far from the quality of the first two it made Will Ferrell's recent take on *Land of the Lost* appear thrilling in comparison. Here, I have unearthed a few particularly rotten titles for you to munch popcorn over this coming Thursday night, when nobody invites you out to the Lodge.

#3 Critters (1986 - 1992)

The original *Critters* film is a fun, harmless frolic that saw a peaceful country farm under attack from pintsize space invaders that look somewhat like rabid hedgehogs. It's too bad that things went horribly wrong thereafter with two sequels that got progressively weirder and repetitive. The 3rd movie features

the film debut of the then 17 year old *Inception* star Leonardo DiCaprio, who by now must feel that his involvement in this production is a bad dream he'll never wake up from.

#2 The Santa Claus (1994 - 2006)

Having taught a generation of kids that Santa Clause was both real and actually just the guy from *Home Improvement*, this was a fairly by-the-numbers Christmas film.

Fast forward twelve years and Disney have milked it for two more. They have gone on to get the Easter bunny, tooth fairy and every other imaginary sprite involved too. Come Christmas this will be getting replayed on RTE for the umpteenth time, watch *The Muppet's Christmas Carol* instead.

#1 Transformers (2007 - 2011)

As of June 2011, special effects director Michael Bay has given us just over 7 ½ hours of giant, CGI robots fighting each other whilst Shia Labeouf and his super model accomplice avoid getting trampled.

The franchise set a new low for the level of brainlessness employed by summer blockbusters and a new high for the amount of CGI on display at any given time. There's nothing wrong with turning off your brain and enjoying an all-out action spectacular, but with *Transformers* there isn't a thought to spare.

Film

Jane Eyre or Jane Eyre-head?

Eoghan Cannon

LET me start this review by saying that I never actually finished reading the Jane Eyre novel.

I read as far as I could, which was much further than I thought I would ever read, but it was just too boring for my liking. It was just not my type of book. The movie, however, fared much better, although I did nearly fall asleep... twice.

For those of you who don't know, Jane Eyre is a Victorian novel by author Charlotte Bronte. It follows the life of Jane Eyre from when she is an unloved young girl to her growing up into womanhood and all of the dull bits in between. She becomes the Governess of Thornfield Hall, and this is where the majority of the storyline and the more exciting moments of the novel take place. Plain Jane begins to fall in love with the fiery Rochester, and sets in motion the rollercoaster love story between the two. What I thought the movie did well was that it picked up on Jane's isolation from the world in the novel but added more depth to

it. We see, among others moments, Jane wandering through the garden alone and I couldn't help but feel sorry for her. But is this not totally going against what the symbol of Jane Eyre stands for? Is she not supposed to be so independent and strong that whenever she walks on screen we want to sing "R.E.S.P.E.C.T."? I think that the idea of an independent Jane was somehow not as forcibly put forward as it should have been. Having said all that, the movie is actually quite good. It does not start chronologically; this was a great idea by the director as it indicates to the audience that this adaptation will be different from ones we have seen previously. Mia Wasikowska (Alice from Alice in Wonderland) and Michael Fassbender (complete with awesome mutton chops) do a brilliant job at playing Jane and Rochester having great on-screen chemistry. Also, the lack of lighting adds great intensity to the eeriness and mystery of Thornfield Hall. Of course, those going to see the movie will have no doubt read the novel (or most of it anyway), and know what to expect to unfold on-screen; a modern-day romantic comedy set in gangland New York. Oh wait...



"Mia Wasikowska and Michael Fassbender do a brilliant job at playing Jane and Rochester"

Have you got what it takes?

Roisin Burke

IT'S all about the chair. Everyone wants to sit in that chair shouting 'Action' and demanding one hundred and eighty per cent. Forget the actors; it's the director that calls the shots.

The transition from the medium of text to talk, print to film is their journey. The secret to silver screen success lies in their hands. Collaboration, control and improvisation are a few key skills needed for directing success. Not an easy combination. It is difficult to encourage spontaneity and synchronicity while ensuring cohesion and organisation; especially while attempting to create an image that exists only in the mind's eye. Masters of this fine art include Tarantino, Scorsese, Woody Allen and, of course, Steven Spielberg. Each individual is infamous for awakening the imaginations and emotions of millions with their cinematic productions. All American they may be but the similarities stop there.

Tarantino is well known for his love of the bloody scene. A few cult films include Pulp Fiction, Kill Bill and Inglorious Bastards. All include vast amounts of tomato ketchup!

Woody Allen is a quirkier character with films ranging from tragedies to oddballs. He has done a lot of work with Broadway and his work varies from covers of Shakespeare to addressing modern issues such as murder and violence. Spielberg loves the science fiction field. He is the proud creator of



ET and Jurassic Park among notable others. Scorsese is my favourite, but that's just my kind of thing. He deals with the mafia scene and modern crime. His calling was a close one, he almost picked the priesthood. The man loves his visions, but thank God he picked film. His unique style regularly features the back streets of New York, where he grew up. He often depicts isolated individuals fighting a power gone bad. He deals with inner demons and soul searching struggles. Gangs of New York is one from his typical

niche and Good fellas is his worldwide classic. The Departed, in my opinion, his masterpiece.

An Irish name worth mentioning is Neil Jordan who directed Interview with a vampire, Butcher boy and Cillian Murphy's transvestite performance in Breakfast on Pluto.

It's not for everyone, but the rewards are obvious for those who flourish. Directing is an ability that never ages and a talent admired for eternity. You just have to ask yourself... have you got what it takes?

Spiderman Reboot

Jake Lawlor

EVERY summer audiences flock to cinemas to catch the latest summer blockbusters and you can bet your spandex that among them there will be a superhero movie.

From Marvels Nazi bashing Captain America to DC's dismal Green Lantern, it seems like every superhero is getting a shot at the silver screen. It's hard to remember but way back in 2002 superheroes weren't really a feature for cinema goers. That was of course until Sam Raimi's Spider-man hit the big screen. The movie was an undeniable hit grossing over \$40.4 million in its first day alone.

The story took liberties with the comic book, picking and choosing the better aspects from various storylines and skating over spider-man's early years. Despite this the story was compelling, and the action spectacular. The sequel was even better. It took one of Spider-man's greatest adversaries Doctor Octopus, throwing him into the mix while continuing the plot of the first movie in its undertone. Unfortunately, after this, it all went pear shaped. Spider-man 3 was a bigger flop than Stealth. The problems were numerous, from the various storylines, ranging from who killed Uncle Ben, to the clichéd love triangle of Harry, Peter and Mary Jane. The list goes on from the wooden performances of Toby Maguire and Kirsten Dunst, to the baffling choice of Topher Grace as Venom.

It was clear that something had to be changed and with Raimi reluctant to sign on a fourth script Sony Pictures cut and run in favour of a reboot. So what can you expect? The movie again follows Peter Parker this time played by

Andrew Garfield (The Social Network) as he passes through high school, the usual dark loner type. Staring as Parkers love interest Gwen Stacey, is Emma Stone (Easy A) with Rhys Ifans playing the Lizard and Martin Sheen as Uncle Ben. The Director Marc Webb (500 Days of Summer) has promised a storyline truer to the comic books focusing on a Spider-man that is struggling to come to terms with his abilities. The Amazing Spider-man is due to hit cinemas July 2012 so get your comic books out and get prepared!



Travel

La Dolce Vita Part 2

Aoife Coughlan

I must confess to being taken aback by my first impressions of Lucca, the fortified settlement that was my third destination.

The crowds were bus trippers trespassing for the day, ice cream and camera in hand. However behind this veneer is a city so beautiful it takes your breath away. An entire day can be spent wandering the winding streets of stone and looking at the gastronomic delights in shop windows of Biscotti, Panforte and the most delicious focaccia you have ever tasted.

A walk along the town walls is where the real local flavours appear – health conscious joggers, old men with sticks in hand and women with dinky dogs pass by. There is nothing quite as peaceful and beautiful as watching the town come alive from its slumber.

A day trip to Pisa saw midday markets, art and chic library coffee shops. There is so much more to Pisa than the crooked tower, however magnificent it may be. My Tuscan highlight was taking a train through the mountainous Garfagna region. Disembarking at the village of Castelnuovo I found it in misty splendour on market day. The entire region seemed to be there. Gruff, grey locals in a bar gradually melted and coffee became lunch provisions and pigeon conversation, ending with the owner introducing me to all as his “friend”. A train strike forced me to leave Lucca early.

Unfortunate, but Perugia would more than make up for it. The hill town is historic, beautiful but with a thriving university and international culture. Being in Umbria, it is the centre of Italy and a lot less touristy than some areas, still local but young and vibrant. Perugia boasts a fabulous Etruscan and archaeological museum, the most

beautiful bank, achingly large art gallery and the fine Piazza IV Novembre. My Perugian adventure was crowned by a visit to the church of San Pietro. Opening up the sombre church early the caretaker took me along with him, showing me the entire church with his vast knowledge of art and architecture being better than any guide book.

With sadness I left for my final destination, but the prospect of Rome meant that feeling did not last long! Rome, the Eternal City, merges history, style and proud authenticity. Rome is an exceptional city and I would advise just taking a map and planning an itinerary around the places you want to visit. And yes, Rome was not built in a day and cannot be seen in a day, but in a couple you can cover a lot of ground.

I explored the famous Campo di Fiori and the mired of backstreets of the Jewish ghetto where a strong Jewish population still resides. The pantheon and piazza navona and of course the Trevi fountain are glorious. Monuments galore, Rome feels like a dream as you walk through time. Stop off at classy shops, view well-heeled women and suited men on Vespa scooters, visit the Spanish steps and Villa Borghese gardens for a lunch time picnic, perfecto! Then it was to the Vatican City to glimpse the Sistine chapel, Michelangelo’s masterpiece. My advice is to book tickets in advance to avoid queues. Of course ancient Rome with the iconic Colosseum is something that needs to be experienced even once in your life! Alas my Italian adventure had reached its climax. I can honestly say traveling alone is one of the best things you can do.

Italy is the most amazing country; every place was unique, the people welcoming and the culture inspiring. My holiday may have ended but my love affair with Italy had just begun.



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Co-op in AOIFE

Caitríona Ní Chadhain

AS well as the work I'm doing for AOIFE (Association of Irish Festival Events) while I'm here I've also been assigned the role of Deputy Editor of Ballinasloe Life Magazine.

The last few days have been quite hectic getting the magazine together, as I write this it's nearly done and dusted. I was expecting to be pulling my hair out at this stage but was pleasantly surprised to find that it all went pretty smoothly. Seeing as this will be the 4th edition of the magazine I think a good deal of the lumps and bumps were smoothed out by my predecessor, another UL student (thanks Ruairí!). I got to meet a lot of interesting people in the process of putting this edition together and have received a great welcome from Ballinasloe so far.

The prospect of putting two more editions together doesn't seem so daunting now! As far as the AOIFE side of things go, preparations for November's conference are well underway. Had a pretty intense meeting

today about arranging speakers and times and this and that. I had a tough time of it trying to take minutes with names and figures flying around faster than I had a chance to blink! It went well though and now it's time for me to kick a press strategy in to action and start attracting a bit of media attention. It's quite scary to think of all the responsibility that leaves me with. Another intern started just a few days ago and there are two Italian interns coming next week so that takes a bit off my shoulders!

I'm living with my boss while I'm here, which isn't as strange as it may seem! It keeps me on my toes, which is probably best for me in this job as it's quite busy. It also makes it possible to work from the house on evenings like this when the magazine is being sent to the printers!

So far this co-op is really whipping me into shape, if you'd told me a few months ago I'd be the deputy editor of a magazine and managing the press and communications for an association like AOIFE I'd be laughing it off but here I am and not doing too badly so far!



Travel

Erasmus in Budapest

Darragh Roche

HUNGARY has declared war on its deadliest enemy. That enemy is national debt, and the war Hungary is now fighting should ring bells at home. Such alarmist headlines greeted me this week, the very week I began to take the true measure of Hungarian society for the first time. The peppermint green Metro carriages are as much my home now as anywhere in the twin cities. The endearingly ramshackle underground is a constant in a city of delightful incongruity, where a short walk takes you from the Arabian Nights to Grimm's fairytales.

A reclining Statue of Liberty stares down from the New York Palace Hotel towards the Moorish synagogue; beneath her, winged, cloven devils hold lamps aloft. Slipping gingerly under the portcullis of a facsimile Transylvanian castle in the city park, the dead eyes of mediaeval saints stare intently at balconies bedecked in fleurs-de-lys. In an obscure alcove sits a bust of Bela Lugosi, complete with Dracula's pointed collar for which he was most famous. A statue of an anonymous chronicler of an ancient king completes the feeling of stepping into another time. Writers touch Anonymous' pen

for luck, a ritual in which I happily indulge. Just beyond this stands George Washington, gazing across a lake filled with free standing art, including heads of Karl Marx in pink plastic. It hasn't been hard to find controversies after settling down. Sleeping rough is illegal in Budapest; its mayor is determined to use the law to wipe out homelessness and "homeless crime". Hungary intends to force the unemployed to build dams for a pittance or face impoverishment, the cries of "slave labour" have already begun. An award winning writer has called his people "genetically inferior" and blamed them for the horrors of World War II. At least I always have something to read. Little things conspire to remind me that weeks are passing in UL without me. A leaflet for KravMaga found its way into my letter box, a tricolour flies outside the Mercure Hotel and, oh, yes, there's an Irish pub across the street from my university.

The Irish Cat boasts "genuine Irish food". That idea always makes me shudder. On the other hand, flashing my passport might earn me a free drink. Next time: the joy of having classes for the first time in a year.



The Great Synagogue, also known as Dohány Street Synagogue

Erasmus in Spain

Alana Walsh

I'M writing from Spain at long last! In fact, I have been here for a whole week now and what a week it has been. I have stayed in hostels, searched for an apartment and explored some of the beautiful city that is Granada. The best news is that we located an apartment after a few days of searching and we are all moved in. On top of that a mere five minutes away there are another four UL students living together. Our apartment is nice and diverse, myself plus three other Irish girls, an American boy and a French girl. Between the lot of us we are managing conversation in Spanish, however broken it may be. It was far more daunting ringing landlords and agents about arranging viewings, we just have to be brave and give the language a try. My first hangover in Granada did not involve a club or even a planned night out, we were all in shorts and runners. My two Irish amigos and I met up with two other Irish students for dinner and then decided to check out Hannigan's, the Irish bar here in Granada. Well needless to say we felt at home, even returned there after having left to go get tapas in another bar. Tapas are great, you order a drink and get food with it. How handy would that be in the Stables eh! Our return to Hannigan's after filling our bellies resulted in me trying an "Irish Car Bomb", a shot of baileys and whiskey dropped into a half pint of Guinness. Never ever again. Trust me to try it for the first time in a foreign country. Gross does not even begin to do it justice. However, I will be revisiting Hannigan's a lot for Magners; I am missing my beloved Bulmers already.

Granada is gorgeous, so much to see and explore. Average temperatures for our first week were 31-37 degrees but today dropped to around 29 degrees. I have not seen a drop of rain yet, the closest thing to it has been the spray of water from the many fountains throughout the city. Today we had

orientation and in typical Irish fashion we went to the wrong building on the opposite side of the city to where we were supposed to be, to make up for it we just sat in on orientation for another faculty so I think we are up to speed. Onwards and upwards! Until next time, greetings from Granada.



Granada Town Hall on Plaza del Carmen

Erasmus in Sweden

Adam Leahy

WHENEVER I sit down to write one of these columns I always find myself at a loss for what to say.

This, of course, is a problem. As this is issue three of the shiny new An Focal, I have had some time to read from the other Erasmus Columnists and I find myself strangely green-eyed with jealousy. Not just over their experiences, narratives paved and built on streets of gold inspired by fairytale cities from history books and postcards, but over the fact that they, unlike me, all have something to say.

Does the fact that I don't have the Seine running through my university make my Erasmus all the less worthwhile? Are they having a better time? And, most important of all, does that make my contribution less interesting to read?

That is why I can never think of what to say; is it more interesting to read about the awe-inspiring beauty of a city you're not in, or is it preferable to read about what happens to the people in that city. Yesterday was my 21st birthday and if I'm honest, I was dreading it. Away from home, my family, friends and girlfriend, I knew it was going to be difficult, especially since it was such a big one. I wasn't looking forward to

spending the big day in a place to which my 21st meant quite little. Thankfully, a new English friend and roommate of mine suggested that we go for a quiet drink in a small pub around the corner with our Irish friends.

I was really grateful, on a day like that any kindness and celebration is really heartwarming. I was childishy excited, silly really, so I asked my other roommates if they wanted to join us, they didn't.

That didn't bother me so much; why should my birthday be that important? I don't know them that long so I didn't take it personally. I went with my new friend and was thankful to do that. On the way, she told me that she'd forgotten her purse so we had to go back.

Arriving back into our apartment, I walked in on a room filled with green, white and orange balloons, banners, cakes and a large crowd of smiling people all clad in green shouting 'Surprise!'. I don't think any Swedish lake, or Parisian walkway will ever compare to that.

I guess what I'm trying to say is yes, it's good to be surrounded by beautiful architecture on cobbled streets and it's nice to read about that from time to time. But without a wealth of characteristic human beings to fill that story up, what is the point? What makes an experience, or a good read? Is it the setting, or the people?

In Focus



ULFM Launch, In Focus

The launch of UL FM radio station featured appearances by Will Leahy, Mike Scala and Bipolar Empire. You can listen to UL FM by visiting ulfm.ulsu.ie

Images: Paddy Phillips and Des Foley



In Focus



Irish Amateur Archery Association Nationals 2011

UL Archer Brings Home Fourth National Title

Eoin Murray

The start of September saw the 2011 Outdoor Archery National Championships being held in University of Limerick for the very first time. The UL Archery Club worked day in and day out to bring the most prestigious competition in Irish Archery to the UL Arena Bowl.

It was truly an honour for the club to hold this event in the Bowl, which is well known as the sacred training grounds of Munster Rugby. This years competition attracted archers from all over Ireland; from Kerry to the North, and Galway to Dublin.

The competitions kicked off on Saturday 3 September with the 2011 UL Outdoors being shot at a fixed distance throughout the day with a double 70m round for recurve archers, a double 60m for cadet and master recurves and a double 50m for all compounds. First place titles in recurve went to five separate categories: senior male - Keith Hanlon, senior female - Sinead Cuthbert, master male - Jim O'Connor, junior male - Peter Cummings and 30m beginners - Katie Hamilton.

The compound titles went to Colin Griffin – senior male, Deirdre Rogers – senior female, Richard Delaney – master male and Orla Barber – cadet female.

Sunday morning saw the start of the IAAA Nationals and another intense day of shooting. The competitors battled strong winds to complete a 72 arrow qualifying round during the morning stage of the shoot.

The afternoon stage saw no let up in the “trustable” Irish weather, but this did not seem to hinder any of the archers present.

A number of extremely tight battles were fought to advance towards the final matches, some of which were forced to a shoot off. The most nail biting of these shoot offs was between Dun Laoghaire’s Joe Malone and UCD’s James Ryan.

This years IAAA Nationals saw many archers retaining their titles. Tara Purcell held on to her senior

female compound title and Keith Hanlon secured senior male recurve. Sinead Cuthbert took back her senior female recurve title.

Other titles on Sunday also went to Tom Meade – master male recurve, Enda Coffey – master male compound, Rohan O’Duill – senior male compound, Niall Boland – junior male compound, Michéal Irwin – junior male recurve, Aisling Finn – junior female recurve, Patrick O’Sullivan – cadet male recurve and Orla Barber – cadet female compound.

Niall Boland, one of UL Archery’s very own, now has four national titles - Irish Open Indoor 2009 and 2010, IAAA National Indoor Championships 2011 and IAAA National Outdoor Championships 2011 - all Junior Male Compound.

The weekends events were more than successful, with one person giving it the following praise: “The quality of the venue is fantastic, and this is without question one of the best organised shoots I have seen in quite a time”.

The UL Archery Club would like to thank Neasa O’Donnell and all in the UL sports department, Tom Ryan and the UL Sports Bar for their sponsorship, Paul Lee and Liz Gabbett in C&S, groundskeeping for the quality of the field, all of the stewards and volunteers involved and Cork City Archery, Athboy Archery and Greenhills Archery who helped out with equipment.



Image Credit: John Halas

Massive representation of ULLR players in IRFU Women’s Interprovincial Championship

Michele de Barra, ULLR PRO

A total of twelve current and former ULLR players lined out for Munster, Lenister and Connacht this September for the IRFU Women’s Interprovincial Championship.

This achievement reflects hugely upon the standard of coaching at ULLR over the past three to four years. At the heart of this is Gillian Bourke who has been coaching ULLR players since she was at undergraduate level and has continued to do since her graduating in 2007. Gill, along with Claire Keohane, Ashling Hutchins,

Laura O’Mahoney and Laura Guest represented Munster in this year’s tournament. Munster reached the championship final against Lenister, a great accomplishment in its self, but unfortunately succumbed to Lenister on the day, losing both the champions and bid for their sixth title in-a-row. However, we suspect that Michelle

Claffey, Fiona Coghlan and Dee O’Brien former ULLR players, who turned blue, celebrated the Lenister victory in style!

For Connacht, Ailish Toner and Michelle Barry both started the tournament’s final match against Ulster, but like Munster, were unlucky on the day, conceding a loss

of 12 -15. Current ULLR players who previously represented Munster and Connacht include, Sarah-Jane Cody, Mary-Rose Flanagan and Anna Caplice. Playing with the Munster and Lenister Development Squads were, Claire Lewis and Leah Barbour.

ULKC: a new beginning

Mark Barrett, ULKC P.R.O.

AN exciting start was had to the year by the freshers in the kayak club. After teaching the first year students basic techniques and skills they were introduced to the Castleconnell section of the Shannon River.

We took off from the boathouse with the UL Wolves brand proudly displayed on the side of the sprinter. Only a short drive out the road we arrived at our destination and prepared the first years for the biggest water they had been on so far.

As we made our way down the river, many freshers went through the initiation process of falling out of their kayak and taking their first swim. After a few quick and effective rescues and a casual paddle down the river, we finished just before it was dark.

This river trip is an ongoing event which happens every week and is a great way for first years to get passionate about the club.

After a great opening three weeks, the club had the annual fresher's night out at Costello's in town. Celebrations were due and it was a good night for the first years to get to know each other.



Bekey Mangan on the Castleconnell River

OPC First Weekend Trip to Doolin, Co. Clare

Katherine Davis, OPC PRO

OVER the past weekend the Outdoor Pursuits Club ventured to Doolin, Co. Clare for our first weekend trip of the year.

We set off on Friday evening for a weekend which was going to be packed full of exciting activities. On our arrival to Doolin, we went straight to the hostel where we would be spending two nights.

Waking up early on Saturday morning, one hundred OPCers split into two groups to spend the day hillwalking towards the Cliffs of Moher. With the intent of meeting up halfway, one of our groups got a bit delayed due to a certain Ireland vs. Australia game. With both Irish and Australians in the group, it made for a fun hike afterwards. As we came to the end of a slightly unpredictable day we were glad to sit down to a mass dinner of spaghetti Bolognese. Our exciting day exploring Doolin and meeting some locals was ended well by an even better night.

The last day of our trip started off with a chaotic morning between breakfast, packing and hauling everything back

onto the bus. Our caving leaders took a small group out for the day to explore the cave systems around Doolin, while the rest of us had a different plan. Before heading back to Limerick we stopped to spend a few hours at the

Burren, introducing climbing to our new members. Luckily the weather was great, we were able to enjoy a sunny day out on the rocks and set up five different top rope routes for people to try. If you're interested in trying

out a day trip or weekend trip with the Outdoor Pursuits Club, let us know! We can usually be found in the C&S room in the SU or check out our website at ulopc.com. Trips have been filling up quite fast so try to sign up early!



Equestrian Club: up and running!

Ciara Quinn.

The Equestrian club is only recently established, so when over 80 members joined at the recruitment drive we were delighted!

We had planned a day to the races in Listowel for week 2. This was attended by a good few members. Unfortunately, many of us failed to back a winner but that didn't stop of us from enjoying the day.

We are now trying to plan for our next big trip; Tetrathlon and, as a club, we are planning some all-important fundraising.

Any new or prospective members are asked to contact us through our facebook page: UL Equestrian Club. Hopefully the club can expand and we can all have some fun!

C&S

UL Handball Triumph over UCD

Thomas Ryan

The All-Ireland 60X30 Handball Team Intervarsities were held in Cashel county Tipperary on Saturday the 17th of September.

Only three teams entered the B grade, and the competition was played off in a round robin series between, University of Limerick 1 (UL1), University of Limerick 2 (UL2) and University College Dublin (UCD).

Each team match consisted of two single games and one doubles, and the team with the best overall aggregate score were declared the winners. The fast paced match between Catriona Casey (UL2) and Darragh Cloake (UCD) highlighted the young Mary I student's talent with an overall result of 30-9. Shane Hayes (UL1) also shined against the UCD player, Darragh Cloake,

beating him 30-20. Colm O Luing (UL1) displayed his class by beating opponent Alan Armstrong (UCD) 30-4. Alan Armstrong (UCD) somewhat redeemed himself with Fiachra Hayes (UL2), but couldn't overcome the ferocious serves of the UL2 player and lost again with a result of 24-17.

Another star performance was displayed by the UL1 player Colm O Luing who beat Fiachra Hayes (UL2) 30-8 in wonderfully skilful game of handball. In the last of the singles Shane Hayes and Catriona Casey put on what some of the spectators regarded as the match of the day.

The final score of the hard fought battle was 18-25 to Catriona Casey. The doubles were no less exciting with a victorious performance given by the UL1 team in particular. John Fitzgerald and Danny Riordan for UL1 ruled the court against UCD doubles team, David Kirby and Niall McCormack with a final score of 30-3 to UL1. UL2 also left UCD with very little to celebrate.

UL2 doubles team which consisted of Eamon McNicholas and handball veteran Mark O'Donovan who won by 30 to 19. The final doubles match was between the two UL teams which left many of the predominately UL connected spectators torn between who to support. It ended in favour of UL1 with a final score of 30-16.

After all of the matches had been played and the final scores, which were based on an aggregate score for each team, were calculated the results were as follows; UL1 – 174, UL2 – 4 and UCD – 150. The flawless performance given by both UL teams were testimony to the detailed preparation, hard work and training put in by the UL players. However it was UL1 that took the lime light and as deserved, won out the tournament.



UL Athletics: Munster Road Relay Champions

Kevin Moore, UL Athletics PRO

THE University athletics calendar got off to a blistering start for UL Athletics. On Saturday the 24 September the inaugural Munster University Road Relay Championships were hosted by W.I.T A.C. in the People's Park, Waterford City.

The club won both titles that were up for contention on the day. With the sun shining it was a perfect day for racing, the park's paths dry and cleared of the usual afternoon walkers.

The relays took place on a 1k loop around the park and consisted of a 3 leg event which started with a 2k leg followed by a 1k and a 3k.

The first race of the day was the men's race in which UL had three teams competing. The 'A' team consisted of Niall Tuohy, Finbarr Horgan and Michael Carmody. Niall ran a great leg in a time of 5:29, to show he hasn't lost the form he showed of last season to put UL a few metres clear of the W.I.T team.

Finbarr picked up were Niall left off and put UL in a commanding position going into the final leg running a time of 2:38. In the final leg Michael held off the W.I.T chasing pack to bring home the gold for UL in a time of 8:56.

The UL 'B' team which consisted of Kevin Moore, Timmy Crowe and Fergal Smithwick came in fourth position overall and the 'C' team which consisted of our new first years Shaun McCormack and Aodhgan Tuohy ran excellently in first appearances for

UL. The final race of the day was the women's equivalent and UL had two teams on the starting line.

The 'A' team consisted of Una Britton, Jessie Barr and Imogen Cotter. Una put UL out in front right from the off with a very impressive first leg.

Jessie known better for her exploits over the 400m hurdles showed that the extra 600m wasn't too big a call for her. Imogen completed the final leg to make it double titles for UL Athletics on the day.

The UL 'B' team of Sinead Prendiville, Rebecca Hand and Nicola O'Ceallaigh were very strong on the day and finished second overall just behind the 'A' team.

In other news at our first club meeting Shaun Mc Cormack was appointed first year rep for UL Athletics. Club gear will be available for order soon. Check out facebook.com/ULAthletics and ulathletics.webs.com for updates and the fixtures list.

Martial Arts EXTRAVAGANZA!

Vincent Lee,
UL Shotokan Karate Club PRO

The martial arts grasshoppers are settling into their new clubs and the fruits of training are beginning to show! Week 4 saw the successes of the Karate Quiz hosted by UL Shotokan Karate Club and the Pressure Point & Self Defense seminar hosted by UL Tae Kwon Do.

The event filled night has proven there is a great deal to learn from the different martial art forms. More importantly, the semester is young and there is plenty to see!

Martial Arts Promo Night

UL's Martial Arts clubs are hosting a promo night on Tuesday 11 October (week 6). Karate, Krav Maga, Tae Kwon Do, Fencing, and Boxing will put on a fantastic show.

Each club shall demonstrate their unique training and eccentricities for a truly electrifying night at the Stables.

Promotions are in-house, while the music provided by UL DJ Soc will make this one evening to remember. See you there from 8:30pm -10pm. Special thanks to Srdan (Krav Maga) for organizing the event.

Karate Seminars

The karate club will play host to one of Ireland's leading karate-ka. Esteemed sensei Seamus O'Dowd, 5th degree black belt, will teach fundamental karate on Thursday 13th of October (week 6).

O'Dowd has travelled with the grandmaster of Karate, Kancho Kanazawa. He is well known for his technical ability and he is also a teacher of the famed Kanazawa no Bo kata forms. Needless to say the club is looking forward to another great night of training.

In other news, Sensei Garrett O'Donovan (also a 5th dan) shall train with the club before the end of October. O'Donovan has years experience training with the Irish karate squad.

O'Donovan has been demonstrating his skills for the club's benefit for the past four years and he is always

willing to impart his knowledge. Beginners and seniors welcome. The more the merrier.

Nationally, Ireland will once again host the Grandmaster Kancho Kanazawa (10th Dan) and his son Fumitoshi.

These seminars will take place from the 8th-13th November.

UL Shotokan Karate Club hopes to attend these seminars in Cork and Tipperary and bring back invaluable knowledge to study further.

We wish the best of luck to our members who wish to progress under Kancho's tutelage and earn their next grade. Check out www.ski-ireland.com for full details.

We have a jam packed semester ahead and of course new members are always welcome. For any information regarding dates, times or venues don't hesitate to contact the club.

Web: ulkarate.net
facebook.com/ULKarate
E-mail: pro@ulkarate.net

UL Young Fine Gael Visit Leinster House

Anthony Woods, PRO,
UL Young Fine Gael

UL YFG went on their annual trip to Leinster House on the 14 September.

This is an important event in the Society's calendar as it gives members a chance to see democracy in action in the Dail and Seanad Chambers.

They also get the opportunity to meet and question the leaders of the country.

This year's visit was particularly special for Young Fine Gael as Fine Gael is now in Government.

The hard work put in by members last February is visible in the amount of Fine Gael TD'S elected and the amount of Ministers at the Cabinet table. The Society held a meeting in the Leinster House 2000 building with Deputy Simon Harris, who is in fact the youngest TD elected to the current Dail. Deputy Harris outlined the importance of Young Fine Gael in the current Government.

He recognised the importance of submitting policy proposals in areas such as Third Level Fee's and the reform of the Junior Certificate.

During the day the group spent time in the gallery of Dail Eireann, where lively scenes were witnessed including a brief suspension of the House. The group travelled across the Leinster House complex to Government buildings where the branch members met An Taoiseach Enda Kenny. He remarked on the outstanding contribution that the

University of Limerick has made to education in Ireland, noting the renowned Co-Operative Education. He wished the branch well in the future and reminded that it is not an easy road ahead, but we are a resilient nation and will emerge from under the support of the EU/IMF a better and stronger nation.

To join Young Fine Gael, email the branch onlyoungfinegae@gmail.com. Join us in Rebuilding Ireland.

Debate on Upcoming Referendum

David Hartery

THE University of Limerick Debating Union, in partnership with McMahon O'Brien Solicitors, will be holding a debate on the upcoming national referendum. The referendum will take place on the 27th of October.

This is the same day as the Presidential Election and will concern issues such as the ability of the Executive to cut Judges' remuneration and a vote to enable Dail committees to conduct inquiries with full investigative powers.

The debate will take place on Thursday the 13 October at 7.30pm in the Jonathan Swift Lecture theatre, B1023 and is sponsored by McMahon O'Brien Solicitors, Limerick.

Speaking against the cut in Judges' pay will be prominent legal academic Dr. Fiona De Londres from UCD. As well as lecturing, Dr. De Londres is a contributor to the Guardian's 'Comment is Free' section and to highly regarded Irish law blog 'humanrights.ie'.

Speaking against the reversal of the Abbylara decision will be Dr. Elaine Byrne from Trinity College Dublin. Dr. Byrne is a prominent advocate for political reform, involved in 'WeTheCitizens' amongst other groups lobbying for reform of the political system.



Entire Branch on steps of Government Buildings with An Taoiseach

Southern Fried Ladies Hockey

Alan Good

As shocks in Munster hockey go, this was more full-blown earthquake than minor tremor.

University of Limerick captain Steph Peters had promised her side would be more competitive this term, but she couldn't possibly have imagined they'd start the campaign with a 2-1 away win over Cork Harlequins.

Quins may not be the same force that won 15 consecutive Munster titles and went unbeaten in league action for eight years between 2001 and 2009, but for them to fall on home turf at Farmer's Cross against a side they thumped 12-0

in the corresponding fixture last season was nothing short of remarkable.

UL – a far more organised outfit now George Blackwell has had time to impart his ideas – perhaps had three legitimate opportunities in the game and converted two of them, both finished off adroitly by Sorcha Carey. Conversely, Quins were incredibly wasteful at the other end, culminating in late drama as UL keeper Elaine O'Flynn brilliantly kept out Orlagh Cotter's injury-time penalty stroke. UL players run to congratulate goalkeeper Elaine O'Flynn after she saved Orlagh Cotter's injury-time penalty stroke in the students' shock win over Quins. Picture: Andrew Gray

The Limerick students had other heroes too; Laura Davis produced one brilliant goal-line reaction clearance and was generally excellent alongside debutant Tara Whisker at the back,

before departing early with a facial injury. Laura Peters re-emphasised her value to the side by picking out Carey for her first, while Elaine Breen consistently raided down the right flank to good effect.

There are mitigating factors for Stephen Dale's Quins; missing totems Clíodhna Sargent – on "active rest" from the Irish camp – and injured new skipper Yvonne O'Byrne, they were also trying to bed in a host of new signings.

But they won the corner count 8-1 yet scored just once, and will lament the failure of their forwards to find a path to the back post to convert any number of searching balls from Rachel McSharry to that danger zone. Quins started in bullish mood and forced a couple of corners – one of which was taken off the line by Davis via O'Flynn's pads –

while Steph Peters flashed a cross-shot wide at the other end.

But such was the hosts' dominance of possession they were worth a half-time, single-goal lead, coming when McSharry found Leanne Mullins to convert Quins' trademark switch-left corner move.

But UL's heads didn't drop, and they levelled it on 45 minutes with a counter-attack goal of real quality. Breen engineered some space on the right and fed Laura Peters, whose cross-field pass found Carey all alone at the top-left of the circle. She swept hard and early to the near post, catching out Quins netminder Vanessa Sargent who seemed to be expecting a cross to the onrushing Steph Peters.

UL scrambled a Lesley Ann Daunt effort off the line with Acacia Taylor waiting to pounce as Quins were stung

into action, but they amazingly went in front a couple of minutes later, again on the break. Steph Peters bullied her way down the right and won a free 5 metres from the circle while Breen took quickly, squaring to the unmarked Carey who again found a gap at the near post for 2-1.

That was the signal for UL to batten down the hatches, and the meagre possession they did collect in the last 20 minutes or so was ruthlessly hoofed downfield by influential debutant Rachele Nyhan. Quins spurned a number of opportunities before Claire Bergin saw her rebounded effort hit UL postwoman Laura Griffin's body on the line, having come up off her stick.

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WEEK 5

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Union

THE
PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN

Derek Daly,
President

So. How are we all? Quarter of the semester gone already; time just goes so fast around here!

Thanks again to all students who attended the AGM. The new structures are planned to start taking shape before Halloween. As well as getting students interested in the Students' Union there has been an unintended consequence that many key people in the University have taken an interest in and are looking forward to further engagement with students. There has been lots of talk about finance and this structure will actually help the situation allowing us to have access to expertise to avoid rather than combat the situation.

In relation to the finances I have requested that audited accounts and management accounts be made public once approved by Council Finance Committee (when established). I don't believe we have anything to hide, so we shouldn't act like we do. It's YOUR money (well it's the government's unless you pay tuition fees) so you should know how it's being used.

I have been getting out every Thursday and have so far (as I write on Tuesday) I have been to the KBS, Health Science Building, World Academy and Schrödinger to gather your views and opinions about the Union. Keep up to date with my blog ulsupresident.blogspot.com or follow me on twitter @ah_lads

Derek Daly
President
061 202326 | 086 043 5300
supresident@ul.ie

WELFARE
WATCH

Tara Feeney,
Welfare Officer

Howdy, Where do I begin! The last two weeks have been crazy but I've enjoyed every minute.

It's a big difference from summer. I've had to become a pro at multitasking! The main issues I've been dealing with are accommodation and student finances.

Freshers' week was a blast. Every night sold out which is pretty impressive. It's all due to our new Events manager Keith, all his hard work and late nights paid off. How unreal were 5ive? Ha, it was like I was twelve again when they came on stage... if ya getting down baby, I want it now baby....

I've also been working on plans for Mental Health week with the counselling department. It will be starting October 10. I'm getting really excited about it! Eeek! We have loads of brilliant ideas in store. So if you want to get involved or have any ideas, please let me know. I'd love for more students to get on board. The more students we have helping the more effective it will be.

That's about it! Oh and a BIG congratulations to Kelly on her launch to the ULFM! We now have our very own radio station, yahooooo! Remember I'm here for you, so if anything is bothering you I'll do my best to help. Or if you just need someone to talk to, just drop in to me to me, I love talking...

See you around campus,
Toodles,

Tara Feeney
DP/Welfare
061 202519 | 086 043 5301

ENLIVENING
EDUCATION

Aoife Kenny,
Education Officer

Hey People,
So there has been brilliant news that the reform of the current class rep system will soon be underway.

As of from the ULSU AGM, the restructuring has been approved so over the coming weeks we're gonna be electing departmental reps.

To give you a really, really quick rundown on the new system; there's still going to be class reps. There is now going to be an extra layer added to the communication flow from the University to the student body. Departmental reps will have an open door policy with the heads of their departments so if there is ever any issue that needs to be brought to the attention of the HoD then they are the people to go to. Departmental Reps will add to the communication system that's current not really working as far as the University are concerned.

Along with Departmental reps, I'm bringing in Faculty nights that are going to replace the current Class Rep Council, which means no more bi weekly meetings. Instead I'm running conference evenings in the Kilmurry Lodge, which will be followed by a gig and a rocking night in the Lodge!

To avoid making everyone confused I'm in the middle of doing a document that will be available to all students on the new structure. Other than that, remember to call in with any issues that you may have about any academic issues. And be a Class Rep, Aoiffs

Aoife Kenny
VP/Education
061 203491 | 086 043 5302

CAMPAIGNS
BRIEF

Paddy Rockett,
Campaigns and Services Officer

Hi all,
Hope these past few weeks are treating you well.

After a short Week off and all the restructuring plans put in place we can finally get down to the nitty gritty of the union and how it operates.

The past week has seen a massive reshuffle in Campaigns so what would be timetabled in your student diary might have changed.

This is to coincide with national coverage of huge issues like mental health and sexual health. If we're gonna do em right we're gonna do em big!

At this stage you will have seen a Know your Union Campaign and the rounding off of Student safety.

I have abandoned the 'week' idea instead running campaigns throughout the year with primary focus on a specific time of year. This is a little nugget we got from the NUS conference in the summer.

If any of you want to get involved contact me on sucso@ul.ie. As for craic banter and shenanigans...Skins Secret Party...Keep an eye out!

Look after yourselves and each other

Paddy Rockett
VP/Campaigns and Services
061 213542 | 086 0435303
sucso@ul.ie

WORDS
FROM THE
PSA

Sarah Jane Hennelly,
PSA President

Hello to you all!
I hope I find you well!

Here is some Postgrad News:

I held the PSA AGM this week in the PSA Common Room. Unfortunately we did not reach Quorum of 30 people, so I will be holding it again on 29 September at 3pm. I hope to elect my executive, which consists of a Deputy President, Events Officer, Publicity Officer and four Faculty Representatives. I also wish to pass some Constitutional Amendments. The Careers Service will also be hosting a CV Review week from Monday 3 to Friday 7 October. They will be open from 1-2pm each day and bookings can be made through Yuliya (061202451)

The PSA/UL is proud to be the FIRST to set up a University Toastmasters Club. This will be specifically targeted for Postgrads, and it offers invaluable training for students of all areas looking to improve their communication and leadership skills. Here is what it's about:

"Confidence. The ability to communicate, persuade and lead. The skill to tell one's story, shape better tomorrows and point others in the same direction. These are the attributes of leaders, and not all leaders are born with talent. They learn it, one experience at a time, and so can you. For nearly a century, Toastmasters International has been helping women and men of every background, education level and economic standing develop the competency they need to become effective communicators and, ultimately, inspired leaders." To get involved, you can contact me via email or drop into my office. Take care,

Sarah Jane Hennelly
PSA President
061 203473 | 086 043 5305
psapresident@ul.ie

Connect: UL's Peer Mentoring Network

What is Connect? Connect is the UL's peer mentoring network and we have one very simple aim: to do everything we can to give you the best possible student experience!

Nobody ever gets through college smoothly and every student will inevitably encounter some difficulties, from finding it hard to make new friends, starting a new course, living on your own for the first time or joining a club or society by yourself.

Connect is a 'by students for students' service that can match you up with students who had a similar situation who might be able to help you out. We have

a 'no problem too big or small' ethos so whatever might be bothering you we can find someone who has experienced the same issues and understands your situation.

Our team consists of student volunteers, people who've had personal experience of the highs and lows of college life and can give good suggestions. Like Clubs and Societies, Connect has a committee of students who decide on activities and promote the service. We have an enthusiastic committee this year who really want to make students aware of this important resource to students.

How can Connect help you?

- Connect can help you whatever your need is. Some people may only want to use this service to help join a society/club or even as a service to be shown around UL and Limerick.

However, for people who are finding it hard to adjust to the new college lifestyle we're here to listen to your problems and help you as best we can.

- If you're feeling a bit isolated because all your school friends have gone separate ways, you don't know anyone in UL, your work load has increased

and you're stressed then we will find you someone to have a tea/coffee with you, take you along to a club or society you might like, meet new people, and do everything we can to make sure you enjoy your time here.

- If you want a relaxed chat no problem. But if you want to talk about something more serious with us we provide a non-judging, listening ear and will only ever go through your options, not tell you what to do.

And if for some reason we can't help you, we have the resources to put you in contact with someone who can.

How to contact Connect?

Website is - <http://www.ul.ie/connect>

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/ulconnect>
Email - connect@ul.ie

How to get involved?

If you're interested in being a Connect Mentor or just would like to get involved in raising awareness through different events around campus then contact Michelle at 09005412@studentmail.ul.ie. We run mentor training at least once a semester and are always looking for volunteers. The training involves some light counselling training and usually only takes 3-6 hours. Being a mentor is also a fantastic experience which is a lot of fun, gains new skills, meet new people, develop confidence in yourself and it's a great way to give back to the University community.

Interview

Feeling it, Owning it: Backstage with Bipolar Empire

Kelly O'Brien, Editor

Bipolar Empire is composed of Shane O'Reilly - Singer, Joe Leech - Bass, Mark Maguire - Guitar and Callum McAdam - Drums.

Formed at the 2007 Oxegen festival, they have been gigging various venues in Ireland as of late and their fanbase has grown steadily and substantially in the last few months.

In chatting to the four Dublin lads, I find them refreshingly down-to-earth and surprisingly easy to talk to. Ever the gent, lead singer Shane states how great it is to be in UL and thanks me

for having them. When asked about the bands beginnings, he reveals that they all grew up together in Tallaght and were in bands previous to Bipolar Empire. "Myself and Mark (current guitarist) were in a band before this. We were called The Unknowns... I know, it's awful, but it sounded good at the time." After saying goodbye to The Unknowns, Shane details how

surprised he was at the momentum Bipolar Empire seemed to gather, "we started jamming together when we got back from Oxegen in 2007. We started playing gigs almost straight away because we already knew songs from being in the other bands. We just kept getting gigs... that was it really!"

A contributing factor towards the band name, it seems, was the fact that they couldn't agree on one.

Callum explained that they "went through many band names, absolutely killing each other over it". He says that "as a band, being almost like a family, you're never all gonna be in the same

mood" which reflects the nature of the condition Bipolarism. "The empire bit, that stands for the family unit. It works in the end and we're all here and we're still together".

The band have gone from strength to strength lately, one particular high point occurring in March of this year in The Workman's Club in Dublin. Muse bassist Chris Wostenholme joined the band onstage for 2 songs.

Lead singer Shane described the experience as incredibly "humbling" that Chris not only joined them onstage but also went to the trouble to learn two of their songs especially.

Feel That You Own It, Bipolar Empire's debut album, is available now on iTunes. Fresh off the stage for Templebars Arthurs Day, they will be playing Cork's Cyprus Avenue on October 7 and, if you're free that night, I really do recommend you go see them. In the words of the Daily Mail on Sunday, they truly are "Highly Impressive". You can find Bipolar Empire on facebook or visit their website www.bipolarempire.com

