



Win a pair of return flights to Liverpool, fly before the end of June, details on page 15



An Focal predicts the winners & losers of this summer's All Ireland Championships, pg 21



Find out what Clubs and Societies have been up to, pages 25-28

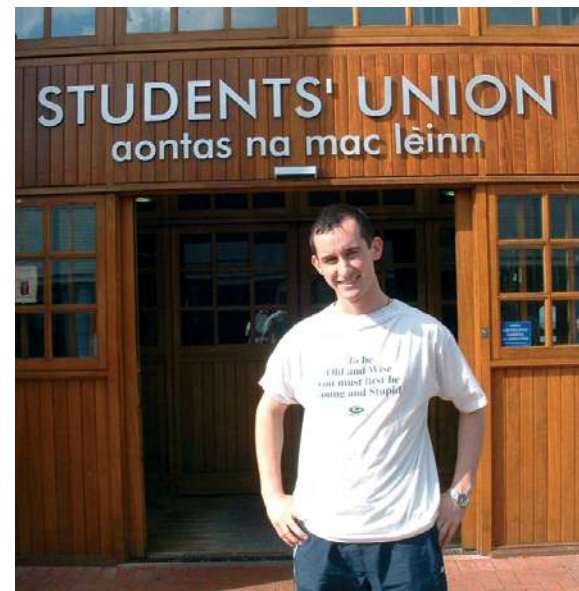
Paddy Pratt The New Education Officer All Four Sabbatical Positions Now Filled

On Thursday 28th April the remaining Sabbatical position was filled when Paddy Pratt was elected Education Officer after winning more than half of all votes cast. Nominations for the position of Education Officer were re-opened on Tuesday of Week 10 when no one stepped forward during the initial nomination period. This time three candidates stepped forward namely Katie Lynch, 4th Yr HPSS, Paddy Pratt, 4th Yr Law and European Studies and Seamus Ryan, 3rd Yr Public Administration. A toughly contested election, the three candidates

and campaign managers battled all week to generate support among the student body. Both Lynch and Pratt campaigned emphasizing their experience of the UL system during their four years and trying to generate support for a fourth year Education Officer. Ryan, on the other hand played his experience of the Union as the Community Relations Officer for 03/04 against that of the post FYP Lynch and Pratt. Speculators hinting at a close race between Lynch and Pratt were blown out of the water when Pratt was elected on the first count.

Fifteen minutes after starting the count Mary Immaculate counters knew there was already a clear winner. With a total poll of 872 votes cast and only two spoilt votes the quota was set at 436. The final tally was Seamus Ryan 171, Katie Lynch 232 and Paddy Pratt 467.

Paddy is now set to begin cross-over training on Monday 20th June with the three other new Sabbatical Officers; Fintan Breen, President elect, Frank Fogarty, Deputy President /



Welfare Officer elect and Anne Sheridan, Communications and Campaigns Officer elect. Congratulations to all three candidates for running for Education Officer and well done to the new Sabbaticals elect.

The University of Limerick's Traditional Music Society, Gan Ainn, recently put the finishing touches to a spectacular year when they won the Society of the Year at the Board of Irish College Societies (BICS) Awards in DCU in Dublin recently.

Having already swept the boards at the Clubs and Societies Ball, held in March, winning two of the society awards, Best Society and Best Society Event for Campus Trad & the Traditional Music Society Chairman, David Delaney, winning the Mike Sadlier Award for the dedication he has shown to societies during his time here in UL, the society didn't realise that their year was not over yet.

Although UL societies had left the BICS last year, they joined again shortly before the awards where Traditional Music Society were nominated in two categories: Best Society & Best Society Event, Campus Trad EU 2004

With a lot of competition in both categories from colleges such as Maynooth, CIT, IT Tallaght, UCC, DCU, NUI Galway, UCD and DIT the society was very grateful to come away with the Society of the Year Award. This was a huge success for the society and for UL as a university as Traditional Music Society were the only UL society entering.

Only in its third year as a society on cam-

pus, the Traditional Music Society has grown steadily as one of the most proactive societies and its members don't intend for it to stop here.

The society is well aware that Irish Music has never taken off in Irish colleges or universities in quite the way other interest disciplines have but they feel that they are breaking ground. Mark Cronin, Treasurer of Trad Soc commented saying, "We are trying

Gan Ainn Win National Award



Aidan O'Donnell, Kathleen Keenan Sean Egan and Mark Cronin pictured with Head of the Seanad Mary O'Rourke at the BICS Award presentation in DCU on 13th April last.

to spread awareness of trad music and we realise that it really is catching on. We have spread our wings as far as Denmark, Newcastle, Glasgow and New York and intend to do better next year."

Unfortunately, in the BICS ten-year history, only one other

award was presented to a society in this university, that being a Special Achievement Award given to the History Society in 1999.

When asked what the success means to the society Cronin said "We now feel that we

have risen the bar for all UL societies and that hopefully by winning all of these awards, this will bring UL societies as a united body back into prosperity. Gan Ainn has only existed for the past three years but we are proud of our accomplishments to date and have planned for further expansion and success."

The society would like to thank all on the Gan Ainn committee, their sponsors, members, supporters and not least their mentors and advisers in Clubs and Societies. Also a word of thanks is extended to Paul Lee, Eoin O'Suilleabhain & Paddy Mc Hugh.



The four awards Traditional Music Society has won this year

An Focal
 Student Centre UL
 Castletroy
 Limerick
 Tel: 061 202324
 Fax: 061 213476

Editor: Sandra Gannon

Layout: Topdesk

News: Oonagh Reidy
 Traditional Music Society
 Lynne Algar
 Paddy Pratt

Features: Anne Sheridan
 Matt Chomistek
 Thanael Mackarel
 Sine Nic an Aili
 Aoife Breen
 Gerard Fitzgibbon
 James Hoare
 Kate Nolan
 Jack Fennell
 Michael Toomey
 Emma Stafford

Reviewers: Emma Stafford
 Eoghan Clancy
 David Studer
 Benny Kupka
 Keith Whelan
 Matt Chomistek
 Niall Murphy
 Ronan Lawlor
 Brendán Ó hÉamhaigh

The Blurb: Valerie Gunning
 Lisa Egan
 A.M.
 Aoife Breen
 Jack Fennell
 Jean Kent

Sports Talk: Brendan Coffey
 Gerard Fitzgibbon
 Cathal O' Flaherty
 Dominic Hewson

Postgrad News: PSA President

C&S News: C&S PRO's

ATTACKS ON CAMPUS: STUDENTS URGED TO BE CAUTIOUS

The ULSU would like to issue a warning to all students to be extra cautious when walking around campus at night, following a series of attacks on female students over the past 10 days.

On Wednesday the 13th of April, a female student was walking late at night around 10pm on the pathway near the Salesian Hostel when a man attempted to grab her and drag her into the bushes, however the student struggled and managed to escape. On the same night, 20 minutes later, the same attacker exposed himself to two female students that were on the pathway from the White House to the PESS

Building and unsuccessfully attempted to grab one of them as well.

On April the 20th, at around 10:30pm, a female student was grabbed on the pathway from the back of the Schuman Building to College Court (where another student was attacked earlier this year) but struggled and escaped. The Gardai have identified the attacker from the incidences on the 13th of April and a very positive ID has been obtained from the attack on the 20th of April. The Gardai are investigating whether they are the same person in the two instances.

The Students' Union would

like to urge all students, especially female students, to use caution when walking around the campus after dark. Always walk with a friend, use lit pathways and cycle or use the Nitelink if possible. As well as this, personal alarms are available in the Students' Union shop at cost price and we would encourage all students to purchase these as a precautionary measure. Please call into the Students' Union if you have any concerns and one of the sabbatical officers would be happy to speak with you. If you have any information about the incidences please call the Henry St. Garda Station (061-212400).

UL Triathlon

The 2005 UL Triathlon held in aid of Milford Hospice was huge success. The 2nd Year Sport Science Students exceeded all expectations

by raising over 2100euro at the 3rd annual event. Over sixty UL students and staff participated this year in what turned out to be a satisfying and memorable day. Mark Higgins was the individual winner in a record time of 46minutes 22seconds, while the PESS Staff team of Amir Shafat, Ross Anderson and Tom Cummins won the team event in 49minutes 13seconds. The event is organised as part of the 2nd year sports science module of Sports Administration. Spectators, volunteers and competitors

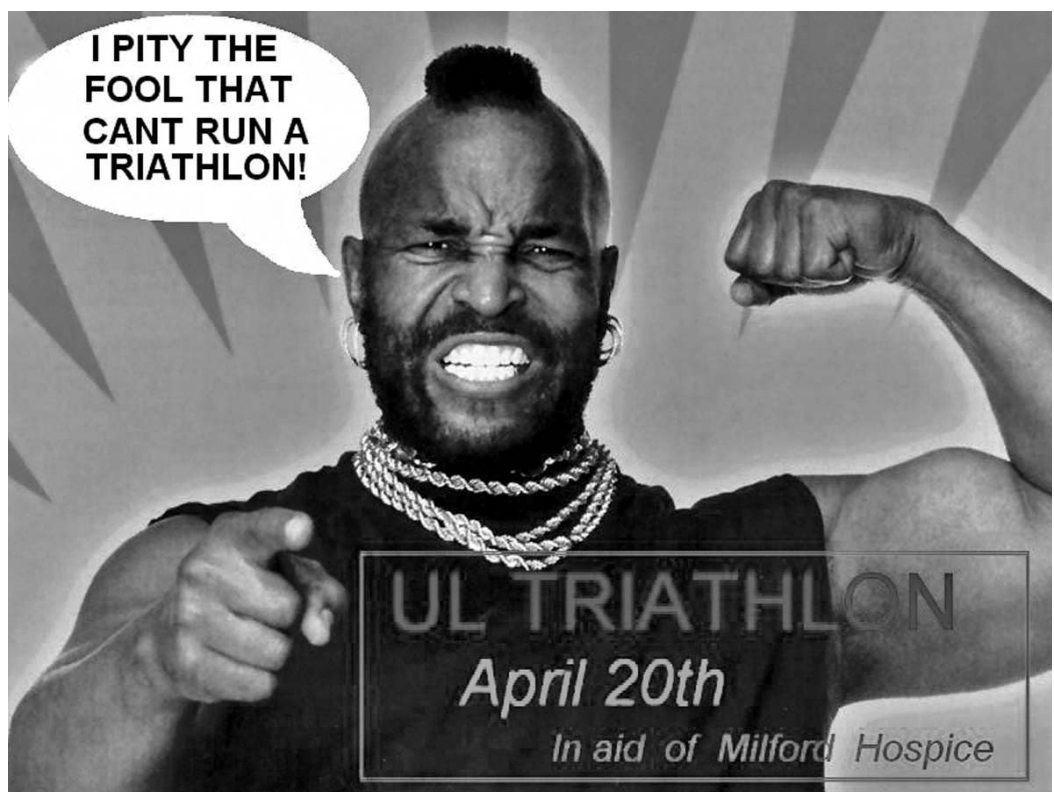
were all greatly impressed by how well the event was organised. Next year the Triathlon is expected to attract even more attention, so get

training and don't miss out. A big thank you to all the sponsors and volunteers.

ULSU UGM

**Tuesday 3rd May
7pm in CSG01**

**All registered
students
should attend.**



EDITORIAL
03/05/05

Last Friday just gone ULSU hosted the meeting of the Forum of Universities Student Unions (FUSU). One reoccurring theme is the increasing administration element of the supposed mostly representative positions. Clearly as the admin side of our jobs increase the representative side decreases and the university has been having a field day. The real thing is that in this university it all comes down to brass taxes, money. The Union has less time to spend on representation because we had to look after our interests and ensure that we will have money to run the Union.

But you get capitation money I hear you say, yes we do but although the university is set to increase the registration fee by 9.5%, the money we receive from the university will not increase by the same percentage. The organisation that represents the universities like FUSU for us, is CHIU. CHIU is asking the EUA to allow the seven universities to increase the registration fee further this coming September, essentially bring in fees gradually by the back door. The university also took back 30k off us this year because 'some students don't pay capitation fees', who would this be Mr University? Postgrad research pay continuation fees rather than capitation but everyone else international, study abroad, access, mature and all undergrad students pay capitation fees. This of course is separate from registration fees which if you get the grant your County Council or VEC pays to the university. Also, some students don't pay their fees. They spend a semester in UL, sit their exams and drop out, all without paying their fees. Does this sound plausible to you? Anyone that has had to deal with SAA knows that you can't sit exams without paying fees, that's not including the fine. If you don't pay your registration/ capitation fee you can't register, therefore, your not in UL for the year. If you're not registered you can't be registered for exams, that's where some more of your capitation money goes, and if you're not registered your name is not on the list, you have no card and you can't enter the exam hall. So how did over six hundred students do that? And why does the Union have to take the brunt of the university's inadequate system. Do you honestly think that the Medical Centre or SAA had their money cut because 'some students don't pay capitation fees?!'

So what are we looking for money to do? The nitelink bus costs 18k per year and considering the recent attacks the Union feels that it is an ever-increasing service that needs to be adequately financed. We would also like to see the service extended from 7-12 at night, no Hurlers or Lodge goers please! At the moment the nitelink also only operates from Monday to Thursday, wouldn't it be great if it also ran on a Friday night, especially during exam time.

So why the bitter article? This 30k is just a recent development and possibly one of a few tactics for the university to keep back money from the Union. Do you think that they would hold back money from AMICUS, the staff union. Definitely not. They are trying to trample on us because we're students. Don't stand for this, we are your Union but you are our members and we need you to let the university know that you're not happy either. When the attacks occurred on campus how many comments did the university make on them. Do you remember any? No because they didn't make any. Eamon Cregan is the man but we didn't hear a word. What new safety and security procedures did they put in place before the Union and the PSA interjected? It's about time the university started looking after its students, enough is enough.

UL Hurling Club Members Involved in Anti-Social Behaviour

The UL Hurling Club, one of the more successful and popular sports clubs on campus, has recently been implicated in a series of incidences that have brought the club and to some extent the University into disrepute. The Hurling Club was involved in two incidences that have tarnished a seemingly good year on the pitch for them. The first one, which occurred in December 2004 out in Killaloe during a "team building weekend", involved the destruction of some property in some local pubs and restaurants and resulted in the Gardaí being called. Following this event, a verbal warning from the Universities' Sport Department was issued to the team, advising them to be on their best behaviour for the remainder of the season.

The second incident occurred in the Stables Club after the Fitzgibbon Cup playoff and it implicated several members of the team. According to Stables Club management, several members of the Hurling club were involved in destruction of property, being generally abusive to Stables Club employees and one member of the team physically assaulted an employee of Stables Club. The Stables Club management has addressed this incident by coming to an agreement with the Hurling Club which resulted in the hurlers having to donate €900 to charity, provide 150 hours of community service to the Stables Club, pay for the damages (estimated at €230), provide a written apology and replace the estimated 200 glasses that were broken. These conditions have to be met within the next three weeks and the hurlers are currently not permitted to enter the club, pending the resolution of this matter. As well as this, the member of the club that assaulted the Stables Club employee is indefinitely barred and will be summoned before the Universities Discipline Committee. According to Declan Collins from Stables Club management, "In relation to other students who come into the Stables Club, their (the hurling club) behaviour was totally unacceptable

and out of character with general student behaviour. In the future, we won't be accepting behaviour of this type and



will straight away be referring students to the UL Discipline Committee."

The Hurling Club has also responded to this internally, by placing

sanctions on some of its members; imposing a two match ban on two of its members and a four match ban on four of its members. A further sanction was handed down by the Clubs and Societies Executive who decided to fine the club 25% of their budget next year in response to the two incidents. According to SU President Timmy Hennessey, "Naturally the SU is concerned about the situation that has arisen with the UL Hurling Club. We expect better behaviour from UL students, especially when they receive funding from us to participate in this activity and have the honour of representing the university." It is hoped that a team with much promise and potential on this campus will seek to learn from this year's series of events and acquit themselves next year with good behaviour and a successful season.



Bartenders x 6

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Public House

- Part time or full time flexible hours
- Some experience needed
- Interviewing now but candidates can begin work after college exams are completed in May '05.
- Telephone for an interview **061-310150** or **086-8338446**
- Be prepared to leave a contact number when you make the initial call.

My fellow students

Having recently been elected as the Education Officer elect for the forthcoming academic year, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce myself to you all. My name is Paddy Pratt and I am coming to the twilight of my academic career in the University, due to complete my course in Law and European Studies.

I would first like to thank and congratulate my co candidates, Katie Lynch and Seamus Ryan for their campaigns and the support they offered me, both during and following the result. It was fantastic to see an election being held which illustrated to the whole student body the role of and need for an Education Officer. I have no doubt that the lessons I have learned from the election campaign and Katie and Seamus, will be of great benefit to me in my role as Education Officer

A very special word of thanks must go to my own campaign team, without whom I would not have the opportunity to represent the interests

of University students. To all my classmates who handed out fliers, to all my poster hangers and to my 'lively' campaign manager Oisín, go raibh maith agaibh and remember RELAX!

When I begin my new role in July I intend on working on all those issues raised by fellow students during the past few weeks; library services, class reps, careers services, student services, postgraduate reading rooms, safer campus security, international students, etc. etc. etc...

If there are any issues which you think I need to be made aware of, please feel free to contact me by e-mail: 0144452@student.ul.ie, and I will keep a log of my all my duties. The winner of the draw I ran during my campaign was Marie Kendrick, congrats. I look forward to working on your behalf and for you all areas affecting your education. For now though it's off to cram for the exams, go n-eiri an t-ádh libh agus bain taitneamh as bhur laethanta saoire.

Fed up with looking for a place to park on campus?



Concerned about spiraling fuel prices?

Why not car share and do your bit for the environment too?

The UL Environmental Committee CAR POOLING facility has been revised to make it more user friendly.

Simply click on

<http://www.ul.ie/envirocom/Carpooling.htm>

and follow the instructions.

This can also be accessed from our home page <http://www.ul.ie/envirocom/index.htm>

UL Environmental Committee



STUDENTS' UNION SPECIAL OFFERS

HOT BAR SPECIAL

Buy a breakfast or regular baguette with a 500ml bottle from the Coca Cola range on offer for only €4.20

Bacon & Sausage Baguette €2.70 BBQ Rib Steak Baguette €3.00

SU Shops Competition

Enter a draw for an Olympus Camera valued at €200 when you spend €10 or more in one transaction in the SU shops.

Competition closes Wednesday, May 25th.

Personal Attack Alarms available at cost price €3.50



Guarantees
a better deal
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Presentation of Class Representatives and An Focal Writers Certificates of Recognition

**Tuesday 3rd May Wk 12
5pm in the White House**

All class reps and writers for the current year should attend. Please contact the Education Officer and CCO respectively.

Student Diaries

Matt, Sine and Thanael are all quite nostalgic this week and are reviewing the best of what's happened this semester.

AN GAEILGEOIR

Wow, ní chreidim go bhfuil deireadh na bliana druide linn ceana fëin agus gurb é seo m'alt deireanach ins An Focal mar Oifigeach na Gaeilge... cá ndeachaigh an 12 sheachtain sin?! Dár ndóigh, beidh mise fós greamaithe leis an ríomhaire seo fad agus atá sibhse ag baint sult as saoirse an tsamhraidh! Ach tabharfaidh an ciúnas thart fán gcampas deis dom obair ar rudaí áirithe nach bhfuair mé seans plé leo go fóill an téarma seo. Táim an-sásta leis an obair go dtí seo, san áireamh:

- na hailt as **Gaeilge ins An Focal** agus ar an **suíomh idirlín**, gura míle Sandra;
- **Polasaí an Dátheangachais 2005** a bheas ag dul os comhair Comhairle na nIonadaithe Ranga anocht buíochas le Jenn agus Fintan;
- **Bunreacht an Aontais** aistrithe go Gaeilge;
- **scannáin na Gaeilge sna Scoláirí** mar aon le bia blasta agus ceol den scoth, táim an-bhuíoch le Colm agus Ger;
- **Scéim Chónaithe** Aonad na Gaeilge 2005 - 2006;
- **comhoibriú na gclubanna agus na gcumainn** i dtaobh cur chun cinn na teanga agus Duais Aitheantais Aonad na Gaeilge a bhuaidh (maith sibh Ógra Fine Gael agus Cumann Naomh Uinsean de Pól.);
- **Seachtain na Gaeilge 2005** agus **imeachtaí na bliana** go ginearálta;
- an líon ábhair i nGaeilge ins **An Teanglann** buíochas le Herveline agus Marie;
- agus níos mó ná aon rud, **cúpla focal** na ndaoine uile a labhraíonn liom san Aontas agus thart fán gcampas, fair play daoibh!

Táim fós ag obair ar rogha Gaeilge a fháil ar **UMB na mbanc** agus áiseanna teanga níos lei-

thne a chur ar fáil ins **An Teanglann** de réir a chéile. Beidh mé ag obair ar na nithe seo a leanas sna míonna le teacht:

- forbairt **polasaí Gaeilge na hOllscoile** i leith na mac léinn de réir Acht na dTeangacha 2003;
- **lámhleabhair** do mhic léinn idirnáisiúnta, iarchéime agus na céad bhliana;
- **Dialann an Aontais** do mhic léinn nua a aistriú go Gaeilge;
- **Cúinne an Ghaeilgeora** ar an suíomh idirlín a fheabhsú;
- **téarmaíocht d'oibreoirí** an Aontais a chur ar fáil;
- seastán nó **suíomh eolais buan** a sholáthar don Ghaeilge san Aontas;
- **Cumann Gaelach trialach** a dhearadh;
- agus aon rud eile a iarrann sibh orm!

Caithfidh mé buíochas ar leith a ghabháil le **Tadhg Ó hAonghusa** agus **Deirdre Ní Loingsigh** as ucht an phoist seo a sholáthar dom mar aon le tacaíocht agus treoir go leor. Tá go raibh míle maith agaibh mór tuille ag lucht an Red Raisin freisin as ucht na mílte cupán de sheacláid te agus brioscaí brioscarán álainn a d'alp mé siar go rialta (tá na spúnóga plais-teacha daite agam leis sin a chruthú!!!) Tabhair libh bhur málaí codlata chun an téarma a chríochnú le himeacht iontach amháin eile oíche amárach i **Seomra Caidrimh an Aontais @ 22:00: maratón Spongebob Squarepants agus Sleepover na Gaeilge** so beidh oíche beagáinín craiceáilte againn!! Míle milliún buíochas le haon duine a líon an ceistneoir Gaeilge dom agus libh uile a chur bhur deamhén in iúl dom i rith na bliana. Leanaig ag labhairt as Gaeilge! Go n-éirí leis na scrúdaithe lads agus biodh samhradh den scoth agaibh, slán go fóill,

Sine Nic an Ailí xoxox

Diary of an International Student

Well, here it is: My last entry. It has been a great semester here at the University of Limerick. I have had a great time with all of the aspects of Irish culture that I have been able to experience in such a short time. I have been here now two and a half months, and have just over a month left. I cannot believe how quickly the time went. It seems like a couple short weeks ago when I arrived at the Shannon Airport and got dropped off in Brookfield Hall, ready to start a new semester in a new place. Now, I am past the point of the mid-term essays and can now prepare for exams. Well, I should be preparing for exams, anyways.

I realise that I still have a month here, but since this is my last article, I will summarize. Here goes.

My time in Ireland has been one of the most amazing experiences in my life. I was able to attend a Rugby Match in the heart of Irish Rugby. I was in Dublin for St. Patrick's Day. I saw numerous traditional music sessions that went

until all hours of the night. I was able to, in short, spend a semester in Ireland.

However, the things I have done would have little or no significance if it had not been for the people with whom I have met here. People that I have met from all over the world have enriched my experience far beyond any of my expectations. I have met many people from Ireland, the United States, mainland Europe, and even my own country with whom I will remain friends for years to come. I was made to feel so welcome here at UL, and I will extend this courtesy to any students from here who happen to find themselves at the University of Calgary at any time over the next four years.

So, to all of the international students, make the most of your last weeks here. As incredible as this exchange has been, and continues to be, it does have a definite end, and May 28th will be here a lot sooner than any of us think, and sooner than any of us will like. Good luck in exams!

Education, Teaching Practice & Me

The End

Well, it's almost over. I don't know if I'll miss teaching practice that much. It was certainly an experience and an eye-opener, but teaching is a tiring and slightly unrewarding job. At least, it is so far. Perhaps later, when I'm on the verge of leaving, the kids will say how brilliant I was and beg me to stay - but that could just be because I was softer than their previous teacher!

Something I've gotten interested in recently (especially since getting the broadband free trial where I'm staying) is a type of internet radio - podcasting. I found a podcast called teach42 (www.teach42.com) in which a guy simply talks about education and technology. He holds interviews with educators, reviews educational benefits of software and is cur-

rently putting up a list of other education-based podcasts & websites. It's great stuff and opens me up to new theories of education - sometimes more relevant than theories put in place in our current education system.

But I should return to my own personal experience of teaching. Theories, old and new, are all well and good and very interesting - but sometimes they don't hold water on the field. At least, not for a teaching practice student like me. Yes, theories help us to be more educationally beneficial

to the pupils, but if we don't learn how to control a class these theories simply will not work.

Controlling the class is largely something I have to learn for myself. I've been given tons of advice by the co-operating teacher (the woodwork teacher who was originally teaching my temporary classes), other teachers and my tutors - but, as Alice said in Wonderland, I seldom use this advice. I'm just the type of person who makes mistakes and learns the hard way. So in that respect, teaching practice has

been difficult for me - call it a welcomed challenge!

Despite my experience of having little job satisfaction (which may be to do with the fact that we don't get paid for giving the co-operating teacher a handy six weeks) and always learning the hard way, I'm going to stick this out. I'll do another teaching practice, finish the course and perhaps do a few years teaching before I finally decide if I like it. Education is definitely something that interests me, and it'd be a shame to abandon it due to a challenging teaching practice.

Thanael Mackarel

Features

WARNING! Apathy Virus on the Rampage

Aoife Breen is damn right annoyed at the lack of a concerted student voice, and an even greater lack of action.

These are the best years of our lives, or so they say. We're young, enthusiastic, full of energy and a whole load of other clichés that the media likes to use to describe students, the generation of tomorrow, when on occasion it decides to speak about us in a positive light. But if we're so enthusiastic and full of energy, then why is apathy slowly overcoming mumps as the greatest scourge haunting the UL campus and gradually brainwashing the students into pursuing a college career of non-involvement?

It's a regular occurrence now that anything that requires a student voice is not deemed valid due to a shortfall in numbers.



Apathy is no achievement!

The recent referendum regarding the boycott of Coca-Cola products attracted a mere 1,117 ballots - over 600 short of the necessary ballots to have it validated. There was no opposition for the position of President or for Welfare Officer of ULSU for the coming academic year 2005/6, and

not even one candidate went forward for Education Officer in the first round. An Focal regularly screams for new writers and classes complain continuously about lecturers, exams, university facilities (or lack thereof, as the case may be), but yet refuse to nominate a class rep to argue on their behalf.

Some will forever maintain that the Union is an elitist group of wannabe-



Apathy Embodied!

Taoisigh who don't have any interests at heart but their own and at the base of it all don't really care about the student population. I'm not going to stand up for ULSU - I think it manages to do that quite well itself - but I will insist that it does provide some vent for student grievances; at least for those who bother to air them. There are 8,581 students registered at UL yet not

even 20% of these managed to divert themselves on Thursday of Week 9 to cast a vote in the C.C.O. election. However, it is not that these people have no problems or complaints with their college life, but rather that the apathy parasite is gradually sucking every form of interest out of UL students.

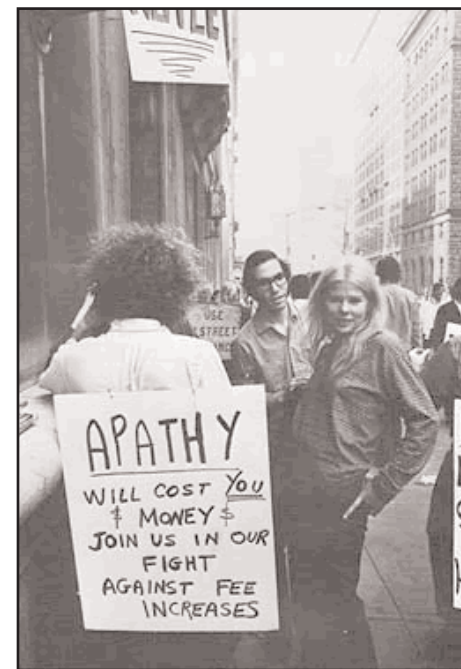
It seems that students come to college to acquire Dutch courage, consume and display their empty bottles of Tesco Value vodka, go Lodging and, oh, get a qualification of some sort. But college life is more than just these things. True; you've heard it all before - it's the place to experience new things, expand your horizons and try something new or different - yadda, yadda, yadda. BUT, university does present students with opportunities that that may never arise again. In a way, I may be speaking to the already-converted, as those who even bother to pick up a copy of An Focal do exhibit some curiosity with regard to the goings-on around campus.

I am not arguing that students should forfeit all of their free time and throw themselves into every club, society and ULSU-activity available. Nor am I casting those who are not involved as any less of a student than those who are. I'm merely pointing out that student involvement is the backbone of campus-life. It's what gives a campus its atmosphere; it's what makes each university unique; it's what binds the student population together. However, the creation of such a utopian campus that is founded upon the spirit of commitment and involvement will remain

forever impossible for as long as apathy slithers its way through the student population.

P.S. for those who are unsure of the meaning of 'apathy,' I've even looked it up for you to save you the effort:

- 1. Lack of interest or concern, especially regarding matters of general importance or appeal; indifference.**
- 2. Lack of emotion or feeling; impassiveness.**



Student protests against fee increases. Obviously not UL!

Daytime TV: Opium for the Brain-dead

Marty, Dr. Phil, et al. - Gerard Fitzgibbon thinks they all suck ass.

The joys of H.P.S.S. huh? Those of us lucky enough to partake in this wonderful excursion of thought are privy to one of the core truths of UL: dosing is an integral part of student life. H.P.S.S.-ers', in particular, are burdened with up to twelve hours of college a week, which can be neatly trimmed to nine depending on the extent of our apathy at any given time.

We find ourselves caught up in a cauldron of tedium, where our lack of activity creates a vacuum in our daily routine. This differs from those of you who consciously avoid college-your abstinence is chosen, and is cherished as such. For us, we are burdened with nothingness in the mid-afternoon- a time of day so hollow it gnaws at your very soul. Too early to start drinking (usually), too late to go back to bed. Too late for lunch, too early for dinner. How then, can one fill this ungodly time of day whilst retaining your grip on reality? I, like many others, find myself turning increasingly to daytime TV. When you delve into the 'wonders' of mid-day programming the reality of this sphere becomes woefully apparent: daytime TV sucks ass. Nonetheless, we are drawn to it, aware that the fine line between refusal to watch and over-



The hair : you decide!

bearing boredom is thinner than, er, something terribly thin.

Realistically, what are our alternatives? Many of you may be thinking "study you twat", but it is

an unwritten rule that 'studying' is a peculiar phenomenon that should only ever take place between weeks twelve and thirteen. As for outdoor activity, that too has a limited appeal-characterised by the modern student's blurred understanding of what exactly constitutes 'exercise'. Frowning at the hippies in the Stables courtyard is NOT a cardio-vascular workout. Our last resort, therefore, is to subject ourselves to the soul-searching, spiritually-enlightening crap that graces TV screens between the hours of twelve and five. Living in Dromroe, the University presents me with a

warm living-room environment and Chorus multi-channel, which serves to seal this greater evil in an encased prison of comfort.

Only when faced with the need to fill your afternoon with TV do the horrors of the modern media become evident. We are bludgeoned with a procession of socially conscious idealism, embodied in the mounds of American programming that have invaded our televisions. Why seek to materialise your latent creativity when that beardy fella from 'The New Yankee Workshop' lets you know how inept you are hours in advance. Why comfort yourself in the anguished beauty of The Smiths when Dr. Phil can show you, exactly how to better yourself through positive thinking and four bottles of Riddilin. Don't even get me started on gardening programmes and the 'bodily freedom' of Charlie Dimmock. Daytime TV encourages us to numb our minds and remove any traces of thought by providing an answer to any question you will ever ask about yourself or the world around you.

Its not just the Yanks though, oh no. RTE, in their eternal wisdom, have sought to break the mould of Americanisation in the daytime

TV forum by unleashing 'The Afternoon Show' upon us. Open House, in fairness, always provided mild entertainment, mostly through hurling abuse and hair colour jokes at Marty Whelan. How anybody with the will to live can be interested in Dana's daughter's wedding is beyond me. Rather than offer a viable alternative, RTE have augmented our suffering with this contriving pulp that makes the flying chair-fest that is Jerry Springer look appealing.

While all you mech-eng people are swallowed into a chasm of fifty seven hours a week, at least you're occupied. Copious amounts of free time may seem appealing on paper, but the reality is that seeking to counter your boredom with what TV has to offer is a dangerous practice. When watching daytime TV, you are taking your sanity into your own hands.



Mind numbing social consciousness - it can only be Dr. Phil

Celtic Tiger: The Sequel

Ireland has a bright future to look forward to, predicts James E. Hoare.

Its back! The Celtic Tiger has returned to the great relief of all in Ireland and more importantly to the relief of all 4th year students who are presently looking forward to new careers in the big bad world!



The Celtic Tiger is back!

The question that must be asked is whether the revived Celtic Tiger is just a flash in the pan or here to stay for a while. Unfortunately, as with all events that have not yet occurred it is impossible to tell as national and international events will play an important part in any prosperous future that Ireland wishes to have.

But what world events has Ireland to be fearful of? Regrettably there are many events that could dramatically alter the future of the Irish economy. Firstly, there is the matter of a repeat of a September 11th type atrocity which if directed at an equally critical point could send the world economy spiralling towards recession.

Secondly, there is the little matter of the affect that oil prices play on the world economy. Last week, Goldman Sachs produced a report, which stated that the price of oil could rise from its current price of \$56 per barrel to an incredible \$110. The world economy is coping sufficiently well with the current price of oil but if it were to hit such highs as \$110, then that would dramatically reduce the GDP of most economies. For every \$10 increase in the price of oil it is estimated that half a percentage point is knocked off GDP.



Ireland's economy is over-reliant on oil.

The likelihood of oil rising further is not an unrealistic prospect due to many reasons. There is the fact that oil from Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela are not assured due to various tensions in their respected regions and without an assured supply from the major suppliers,

then it is just a matter of economics to assume that reduced supply while maintaining the current demand leads to an increase in price. Ireland's economy is over reliant on oil in our every day lives and so we would be adversely affected by the rise in oil prices just like every other country.

A third reason to be fretful of Ireland's renewed economic prosperity is the United States. Like it or not, America is still the economic powerhouse of the world and Ireland is extremely dependant on trade with America to prop up our economy. Ireland is the number one beneficiary of foreign direct investment from the states and if the American economy were to go through a protracted downturn then Ireland would suffer also. America is currently doing reasonably well but there are many warning signs that keep flashing bright red when one looks at the American economy. The number one reason for worry is their massive and ever growing budget deficit which is currently in and around the 6% mark.

But why is it a problem? Well firstly there is the fact that having to pay off the deficit takes much needed capital out of the economy and takes it away from areas that it could be put to much better use, for example infrastructure development. There is also the problem that the deficit is largely being propped up by Asian economies such as China and Japan. China currently has approximately \$460 billion worth of



The American Dollar Bill - what is its true power over us?

American exchange reserves in its Central Bank, which is supporting the current deficit. By purchasing reserves from the Americans, they are also supporting the current strength of the American dollar because rest assured if the Asian money were not there then the dollar would be much weaker.

But what impact does a weak dollar have on us? Well it has the positive impact of making trips to the States a lot cheaper but it has the negative effects of increasing the cost of our

exports and thus making it less likely that Americans will buy our exports. Exports are a very important part of the Irish economy and so by reducing the likelihood of them being bought in one of our best markets - America - we reduce the possible growth that the Irish economy can achieve.

So there we have it. The Irish economy is just like every other globalised economy in the world in that it can be adversely affected by world event such as high oil prices, a faltering American economy or further terrorist attacks. Thus far Ireland has come a long way and despite the fact that we are more open to shocks from the world economy we are also more open to positive impacts. Ireland will always have to be wary of any recession whether it is caused by incompetent politicians, bad luck or just uncontrollable world events.

However, Ireland has a bright future to look forward to and with an expected growth rate of 6.5% this year and 6% next year, the foreseeable future looks bright. We must not get bogged down by worrying about things that we cannot control but a little future planning would not go astray and with this future planning we would be more capable of riding through any rough spots that we encounter.

I welcome all feedback and any issues that you may have with the above article can be sent to me at 0243841@student.ul.ie

Fine Gael to the Rescue!

Does Fine Gael's new plan to crack down on anti-social behaviour really have all the answers, asks Kate Nolan, and is this really the party to lead us in an alternative government?

On Sunday 24 April Fine Gael launched their new campaign against anti-social behaviour. This new 30-point plan entitled 'Ireland, a Night in the Life' contains hard-hitting measures intended to combat the problems of delinquency and anti-social behaviour among young people. This social policy document is part of party Leader Enda Kenny's campaign for an 'alternative' government and the following measures will be introduced should Fine Gael win the next general election:

The strategy proposes the introduction of on-the-spot fines of up to E100 to anyone engaged in so-called anti-social behaviour. The burden of payment will fall to parents if the offender in question is under eighteen. In addition, they will be obliged to attend parenting courses in a bid to help 'control' their child.

The party also plan on implementing anti-social-behaviour orders (currently in operation in the UK), which would prevent offenders from frequenting particular areas, or associating with certain people. Curfews would be imposed and gardai granted powers to disperse groups where their presence is "likely to intimidate passers-by".

A ban on the sale of alcopops in off-licences and spray paints to minors is also being proposed.

Finally, a civilian Garda support resource would be introduced to monitor crowded venues such as concerts, sporting events and so on.

To even the most casual of observers Fine Gael's new social policy is not only draconian in its measures (even Michael McDowell would be proud), but completely misses the point on every



Enda Kenny addressing 5,000 delegates at the 72nd Fine Gael Ard Fheis at the Citywest Hotel, Dublin.

occasion. Firstly, the plan shifts nearly all of the responsibility to the parents, without acknowledging the State's role in contributing to the problem of anti-social behaviour. Blame is laid squarely on the shoulders of parents who are unable to control their children. This strategy conveniently overlooks the fact that the majority of parents have neither the adequate support, nor the facilities to deal with these troubled teens.

The creation of special powers for Gardai enabling them to scatter crowds they simply don't like the look of is only going to increase existing tensions between young people and the protectors of law and order. In effect, this plan will make it illegal for large groups of youths to congregate in public places. If put in place, Fine Gael's policy would mark a return to 1950s Ireland where the parish priest lurked outside the dancehall with a flashlight to catch any 'improper' behaviour. Similarly, the introduction of a civilian Garda sup-

port resource will do nothing but heighten existing tensions. Once again, 'Ireland, a Night in the Life' misses the real issue, i.e. why young people are roaming the streets in search of some kind of entertainment.

Apart having a complete disregard for personal freedom, this strategy naively assumes that by simply banning the sale of alcopops, or forbidding entry to certain locations, the problem of juvenile delinquency will magically disappear. Repressive measures are not the answer here, the solution to the problem lies in the provision of support services at a community level which would prevent young people from engaging in anti-social behaviour in the first place. More resources need to be channelled into schools in problem areas instead of into things like new (completely unnecessary) government jets and only then is there a chance that progress will be made.

'Ireland, a Night in the Life' is not indicative of the Fine Gael pledge to offer an alternative to the existing Fianna Fáil/PD coalition because, fundamentally, there is no real difference between the two biggest parties in the Dáil. This is merely an attempt to disguise the fact that, until recently, Fine Gael had no real policies of its own, merely relying on pointing out the (obvious) shortcomings of Fianna Fáil - hence the reason for the party's dismal performance in the last general election. Without the benefit of a charismatic leader (lets face it, Enda Kenny has all the personality of a pair of grey socks), Fine Gael now feels the need to rely on tough-guy approaches in a bid to distinguish itself, but all this social policy does is reinforce the notion that any kind of alternative to the current government now seems next to impossible.

If you're going to abstain, do it in person

This year, I was a campaign manager on the two-horse race for the position of CCO. This involved photocopying, sleep deprivation and harassing people with sweets, home-made badges, and flyers. I'm glad I did it, because I had a blast, and I came face to face with honest, interested and polite students.

It's the other shower of eejits that have me riled up.

One of the things a campaign manager has to do is sit inside the counting area while the ballots are being sorted out, and we have to see whether we wish to contest any of the spoiled ones -the ones marked with indistinct squiggles or 'hilarious' comments.

If gave both candidates for the CCO position number 1, 'as promised,' you're not as witty or original as you think you are. There were seven other people who did exactly the same thing.

Those of you who wrote down 'I don't really know,' get a life. We don't

know who you are, so we are not going to track you down and explain policies. If you were confused, you could have picked up a copy of each candidate's manifesto. It would have taken all of two minutes. Most undecided people did the sensible thing and just left the damn ballot blank.

Those of you who wrote down 'not enough information to decide,' get your eyes checked. There were posters *everywhere*. We were right there, willing to answer any question asked of us. On polling day, we spent nine hours sitting at tables and going slowly insane while people just walked past and pretended not to see us. We weren't doing it for the good of our health. If you opened your gob to any one of us, we would have given you enough information.

Kermit the Frog, regrettably, is not interested in UL politics. His receptionist stopped forwarding my messages to him last month, and he has

even gone so far as to take a restraining order out on me. Despite my pleading, he has no interest in ever running for a ULSU position. Same goes for Batman, Father Dougal, Jesus, Great Lord Ganesha or anyone else of that ilk.

I'm looking forward to the day when an SU president shuts down both pubs, loses all the SU funds at a poker game and introduces a policy of slapping people in the face with dead fish. *Then* the cry will go up:

"God, what an awful SU president!"

Wait a minute, you voted for Bugs Bunny, didn't you?

"Oh yeah..."

The most depressing thing about looking through the spoiled ballots is the sure knowledge that these are the same people who'll complain the loudest later on in the year. Bear this in mind: If you do not cast a legitimate vote, you have no right to bitch about the elected sabbats later on. The elec-

toral system gives you the chance to make your voice heard. Foregoing that chance when it matters and then settling back into a comfortable hurler-on-the-ditch position afterwards is, quite simply, trying to have your cake and eat it too.

Once upon a time, and it seems like a very long time ago now, the student body actually cared. When election time rolled around, the hustings had to take place in the Jean Monnet to accommodate the number of students who came along to see which candidates they would give their vote to. The Boathouse Referendum brought three thousand students out on polling day.

The academic year is divided into semesters because of the campaigning of the Student's Union. Does your vote matter? Yes, it does.

BRATISLAVA

Michael Toomey finds there is a lot more to Bratislava than cheap beer, hard liquor, and attractive locals.

Bratislava has been the capital of Slovakia since 1993, when Czechoslovakia was split up into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Nowadays, it is probably the most westernised city in the country, both geographically and economically. Its counterpart in the former Czechoslovak federation, Prague, has traditionally overshadowed it but since the break-up, it has forged a new identity for itself. Indeed, it is a very beautiful city in it's own right now, having plenty of distractions to while away the time.

Bratislava is situated virtually on the border with Austria, and is close to the Czech Republic and Hungary. One of the very first things that struck me when I travelled there was the sheer uniqueness of the city: whilst it is the most Western city in Slovakia, it still maintains much of its Slavonic character. It is very 'eastern'; it is certainly much different from most Czech cities, and it would be next to impossible to mistake it for Prague. Another striking visual is the contrast in the city, between the beautiful Upper area, which encompasses the historical quarter and the main business district, and the relative ugliness of the lower area, which is complete with high-rise Communist-era apartment blocks, and a general grey atmosphere that

hangs over that part of town.

Accommodation in Bratislava is not hard to find during the peak season (from May to August); there are at least three youth hostels, and quite a number of hotels. However, if one is to travel in the off-peak season, this situation is reversed; only one h o s t e l ('Backpacker's

Hostel') stays open during this period, and the cost of a hotel room rises exponentially. This might not be such a bad thing, though, as the one hostel that stays open is probably the best of the three. Rent is cheap, rooms are comfortable, and there is a bar where you can drink flaming Absinthe and Zlaty Bazant (Slovak beer) until late in the night. At that point, you might try to stumble into one of the many pubs, night-clubs, and disco bars in the city, safe in the knowledge that there is no



curfew in the hostel, and that the receptionist is on duty 24 hours a day.

Once you have recovered from your hangover and feel ready to take on the outside world again, you will realise that there is a lot more to Bratislava than cheap beer, hard liquor, and attractive locals. Although the lower part of the city is, admittedly, quite ugly, the upper part

is literally stunning. Some of the best things to see include the President's Mansion and the National Gardens, the Old (Historical) Quarter, and Bratislava Castle. From the top of the castle, the view is absolutely breathtaking. One can see for hundreds of miles into four countries at once, and can take in the magnificence of the River Danube, which snakes its way through the city towards Austria.

The Hviezdoslavovo Square in Staré Mesto is also worth a look, as it is the cul-

tural centre of the city, and boasts many fine theaters and museums. There is a number of restaurants, the best of which is probably the revolving restaurant on the bridge over the Danube. Be warned, it is very expensive, even by Irish standards. In fact, Bratislava as a whole is an expensive city (by Central European standards) and might leave you out of pocket pretty quickly. If you are ever having difficulty finding one of these places, do not hesitate to ask a local for directions; Slovaks are the most helpful people I have ever met, to the point of inconveniencing themselves to help you. On one occasion, we got lost looking for a nightclub, and asked for directions. The person we asked led us to the door of the nightclub (U-Club), even though it was a twenty minute walk from where we met him, because he didn't think he spoke good enough English to help us!

Bratislava is accessible by rail from all of it's neighboring countries. Easyjet also flies there direct from London Stansted. If you are backpacking through Europe for the summer, or if you just want to spend a weekend away from the stress of essay deadlines and exams, you should really consider travelling there. You will not regret it.

Pop Goes the Century:

Icons of Pop Culture from the 20th Century

THE KRAYS

"Sometimes they looked up at me in a strange, adult sort of way, and I'd have this weird feeling that they knew all about me and what was going on around them. Their dark eyes seemed to lack that childlike innocence. It was as if each boy knew more than he ought. The mental and physical relationship between them was intense"

- Charlie Kray, describing the twins as children.

At 8 a.m. on 24 October 1933, Reginald Kray was born to proud parents, Charlie and Violet Kray; ten minutes later his identical twin, Ronald, followed him into the world. Thus began one of the most fascinating, feared and fierce criminal duos in English history. The Krays were notorious among London's underground gangs - those who crossed them quickly discovered the brutal lengths to which they would go in order to protect their interests. They schmoozed with the rich and powerful as easily as they dragged enemies through the shadows, teaching them unforgettable lessons. Yet for all their faults, the twins held family in the highest regard (their mother Violet was their queen) and during their reign, the old and young could feel safe in their beds. Over thirty years after they were locked up, mysteries still abound as to what happened inside their close-knit, criminal organisation, the Firm, and still little is known of the true extent of their deadly dealings.



Ronnie & Reggie - Boxing Days

From an early age the twins developed contempt for the law - their father was a nomadic spirit who, when drafted into the army during World War Two, went on the run. With the Authorities constantly raiding their home in search of the deserter, the boys developed resentment and hatred for those in uniform. In the bomb stricken remains of London, the boys found an endless playground around their home in Bethnal Green, searching the rubble for any kind of treasure. Fighting was a familiar pastime in the East End, and both the twins and their elder brother Charlie made names for themselves inside the square ring, winning numerous titles between them. At one point the twins had the opportunity to fight each other, and having beaten each other to a pulp, proudly ran home to show their beloved mother the fee they'd earned. Inside the ring, the difference in the brother's personalities



With their Mum and Grandad



Ronnie & Reggie

was glaringly evident, and would again become apparent during their illicit reign over London:

"As boxers, the twins were quite different from each other: Reggie was the cool, cautious one, with all the skills of a potential champion and importantly, he always listened to advice. Ronnie was a good boxer too, and very brave. But he would never listen to advice. He was a very determined boy with a mind of his own. If he made up his mind to do something, he'd do it, no matter what, and unlike Reggie he would never hold back" - Charlie Kray

Ronnie and Reggie soon transferred their reputation for violence to the street where, with their gang, they created mayhem. Aged sixteen they were charged with grievous bodily harm but were acquitted; a year later they faced charges of assault and received probation. The following year they were drafted into the army but following their father's example, they went on the run. During this self-imposed exile they landed in court once again for attacking a policeman, and having served a month in Wormwood Scrubs, they were court-martialled and spent the remainder of their National Service behind bars.

Upon release, Ronnie and Reggie began to construct their empire - they transformed a troublesome snooker hall in Bethnal Green into a successful and profitable club called the Regal and followed this with The Vienna Rooms, but still dipped their hands in profitable scams when the chance (frequently) arose.

Ronnie was by far the more dominant and overbearing twin, and was also the more vicious and unpredictable, which helped cultivate popular fear of the two because he was likely to do anything and resorting to cruelty was never a problem. However, after being sentenced to three years in 1957, Ronnie's mental state became increasingly fragile and when told that his favourite aunt,

Rose, had died, the news pushed him over the edge. He was declared insane. Ronnie was realised in May 1959 but he was a different man - paranoid, uncontrollable and manic, he was suspicious of all those around him.

As the sixties dawned, the expanding numbers of clubs were prospering, and the Authorities were investing increasing resources in watching the unruly twins. Ronnie, in particular, enjoyed the social scene he found in his clubs and was frequently photographed with celebrities such as Judy Garland, George Raft and Barbara Windsor. Reggie, however, preferred life away from the glare of the cameras,



and in 1965, he married his cherished sweetheart, Francis Shea. The Krays were riding high on a wave of success but soon the tide would turn.

A rival gang, the Richardsons, were contending with the Krays for control of London and in March 1966 a gun battle in a club called Mr. Smiths left a member of the Firm, the Kray's cousin Dickie Hart, dead. Two prominent members of the Richardson gang were also shot but they stood trial and were sentenced to five years. Rumour had it, however, that it was neither of these that had killed Dickie, rather it was George Cornell, a known bully. Family was all that mattered to the twins and this event would not pass without vengeance. On 9

March 1966, Ronnie walked into the heaving Blind Beggar pub and shot Cornell dead. Although the pub was full, the police were met with a wall of silence when questioning the witnesses and failed to bring charges against the Krays.

Reggie's marriage had only lasted some eight months before Francis moved home to her parents. In great distress, Reggie tried to win her back and, with reconciliation on the horizon, he organised a trip away for the two of them. However, on the day they were due to leave, Francis was found dead - the victim of an overdose. Some members of the Firm mark this event as a departure from the Reggie of old - gone was control and restraint, and in its place the unhinged violence characteristic of his brother. The culmination of this was the murder of Jack "The Hat" McVitie. Jack had worked for the twins doing small jobs for them but was known to belittle and mock them when out of their company. He had ignored previous warnings to change his attitude and, with Ronnie boasting of his hit on Cornell, Reggie was forced to act. McVitie was lured to a party in 1967 where he was stabbed to death by Reggie.

After this, the Kray Empire began to crumble - they were arrested and appeared at the Old Bailey in 1969. With the brothers tucked away behind bars, loose-lipped members of the previously steadfast Firm began to tell tales, and their testimonies ensured that both of the Twins were found guilty of murder with a recommendation that they serve at least thirty years. They were also tried for the murder of Frank Mitchell, the Mad Axeman. Reggie had sprung Mitchell from jail and hidden him away until things died down.

Although the true story may never be known, some members of the Firm claim that as time wore on, Frank became something of a liability for the Krays and so they had him killed. Due to lack of evidence, this murder trial collapsed against the twins, and to this day neither the bodies of Mitchell or McVitie have been found.

In the years since their incarceration, the legacy of the Krays has only grown stronger. As time wore on, some people began a campaign to free the brothers based on a belief that their sentences had been quiet harsh, especially considering that the people they killed were no more than low-life criminals themselves. In 1993, hundreds of people held a rally in Hyde Park and delivered a petition to Downing Street that was signed by over ten thousand people. In March 1995, Reggie's heart

was broken when Ronnie passed away and he was released for one day in order to attend his funeral. Having served more than his recommended sentence, the Home Office decided to release Reggie in August 2000. This was on compassionate grounds as Reggie suffering from inoperable cancer. Six weeks later he died a free man. While the story ends there, the intriguing Kray legend continues to endure and fascinate with every passing generation.

On behalf of UL History Society,

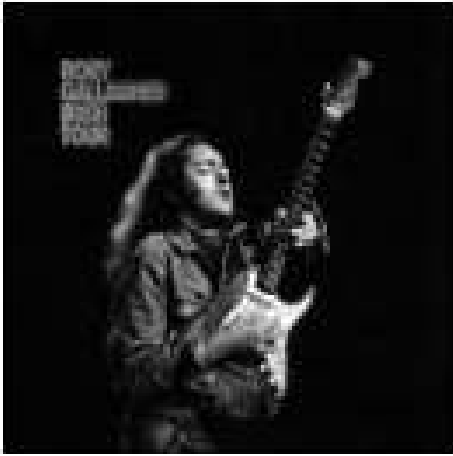
Emma Stafford

Reviews

Eoghan and David are singing the praises of some genuine Irish legends; Benny's being his usual insightful and helpful self; Keith's been camping out in the Concert Hall; David's in a Dreamland; Hillary's buffing up on her Opera; Ronan's all Tengo'd out; and Niall's trying to get us queuing outside the cinema...

ROCKIN ALL OVER IRELAND: RORY GALLAGHER - IRISH TOUR

Eoghan Clancy



The first live album to be reviewed in this column, Rory Gallagher's, Irish Tour is a tour de force - a worthy contender for the title of best live album ever. As a musician Rory was revered as one of the finest and most talented of his, or any other, generation. As a man, he was universally respected and loved, being humble, intelligent and inspiring in his dedication and love for music and humanity. Rory is widely recognised as being responsible for bringing rock 'n' roll to Ireland, dragging attention from the dancehall show-bands that had stifled the music scene since the 1950's and opening the ears of Irish youth to modern sounds. Rory's music has its roots firmly in the blues and country spheres but he, like Hendrix and Clapton, moved the game on, creating his own fiery blend of rock that remains a benchmark to this day. As a raw and captivating performer Rory was at his best on stage - whether with "Taste" in the earlier years of his career or with his own band, Rory's shows raised the bar and were crackling with energy and emotion, something that since his untimely death in 1995 hasn't been matched. Rory was one of the finest bluesmen ever to perform; the fact that the Rolling Stones attempted to poach him as a replacement for Mick Taylor and that he was John Lennon's favourite guitarist, demonstrate this with aplomb. One of Ireland's most talented sons, Rory deserves to be hailed as one of the true greats, a pioneer who paved the way for bands such as Thin Lizzy and U2.

"Irish Tour" was recorded in 1974 over a series of gigs played in Cork, Dublin and Belfast. It was his ninth release, sixth since splitting with "Taste" and his most successful. "Live in Europe" had been released in 1972 and captured Rory at his very best, winning him his first Gold Record. Interestingly, the European audiences were much more in tune to the music scene of the time, a factor that necessitated his move to London with "The Impact" in 1965. The success of "Live in Europe" demonstrated Rory's mastery of the guitar and peerless stagecraft, skills that had been honed over countless

tours and performances. Inspired by the sound and feel of this album, Rory constantly attempted to capture a "live feel" in his studio releases. By the time of his '74 Irish Tour his international fame had reached a peak and he was one of the most in-demand performers in the world. His guitar playing was compared to the recently deceased Hendrix, one of the highest compliments that could be paid to any guitarist or musician.

The opening track of the album is entitled "Cradle Rock" and it gets the proceedings going on a suitably energetic level. Based on a simple blues beat, the track demonstrates Rory's magnificent rhythm/lead playing with a tone-laden riff that locks precisely with the rhythm section. The song ends with some Hendrix inspired fills that serve as a warning of the quality to come. Also Rory's introduction of his band (Rod De'Ath - Drums; Lou Martin - Keyboards; and Gerry McAvoy - Bass) captures his humility. This track kicks the album off at a frenetic pace that it hardly relinquishes for the entire duration. "I Wonder Who" follows. Another blues offering, Rory's B.B. King style voice carries beautifully, complimented by his guitar. The emotion conveyed in this 7 minute 40 second track is simply awe inspiring, addictive listening indeed.

One of the highlights of the album is track three, entitled, "Tattooed Lady". A driving rock song, this crowd favourite showcases Rory's playing at its best, with an incendiary solo coupled with a unique and stylish feel. The inspired keyboard playing of Mr Lou Martin makes this track really special and Rory's guitar playing thrives from this interplay, a hallmark of many of his songs. Following up on this track Rory takes the pace back a bit with, "Too Much Alcohol". The boogie feel of this song is an interesting departure from the first three, and it shows once again Rory's musicianship and talent. This track is a real crowd pleaser, its 97, 98, 99 chant demonstrating the interaction that Rory enjoyed with his audiences, and it is also the first on the album to feature Rory's slide guitar playing, yet another facet to his mastery of the instrument.

The acoustic part of the set was always a highlight and "As The Crow Flies" by Tony Joe White is the first of these offerings. Rory manages to capture the swampy feel and down-home vibes of the original perfectly, his slide,



vocals and harmonica perfectly in sync. The atmosphere is so thick you can almost smell the corn bread cooking on the skillet! Rory returns to the electric guitar for "A Million Miles Away". Following a long and almost baroque style introduction his screaming lead guitar kicks in once again fitting perfectly with Martin's keyboards. Like "Tattooed lady" this song contains an excellently crafted, catchy chorus making it yet another high point. This is also the only track that Rory uses a WahWah pedal...in his own unique way of course.

Following up songs of this standard should be a daunting prospect but Rory pounds out another classic with "Walk On Hot Coals" a blazing track that must have left his fingers bleeding, such is the intensity of his playing. His band back him with real authority throughout and the interplay between the members is showcased here once again. "Who's That Coming?" sees Rory break out his slide for a more interesting sonic texture. He has been hailed as a true slide great and this song provides ample justification, his mastery of this difficult technique shining through. Also on this track his voice makes a distinct impression, echoing the sublime tones of his guitar. The slide makes another appearance for the track "Back On My Stompin Ground (After Hours)" where Rory's playing reflects the wistful feel created by the lyrics. The track changes in

tempo and attitude around two minutes in when Rory adds some funky style chops, creating character and a groove that persists until the end. The final track, "Maritime" is a simple waltz and rounds out the album in fine style allowing the listener to float back down to earth.

The tone that Rory managed to wring out of his trademark battered Fender Stratocaster (plugged straight into a simple Fender Twin amplifier) simply defies belief. His influences were many, shades of Clapton, Hendrix, Page even Lonnie Donegan can be heard through his music, but ultimately Rory had his own sound. A true original, he was motivated by many but melded these influences in his own way creating music as inspired as it is original. Rory's personality shone through his music and for an even greater idea of this the "Live At Rockpalast" DVD is an essential purchase. The "Irish Tour" album opens with a comically humble introduction from someone who

must have been more used to calling out bingo numbers than announcing internationally famous rock stars, and ends with the crowd chanting and baying for more. The journey that takes place in between will convince even the most ardent disbelievers that Rory Gallagher was indeed a master. "Nice one Rory, nice one son, nice one Rory, now play another one..."



Christy Moore - The Box Set, 1964 - 2004

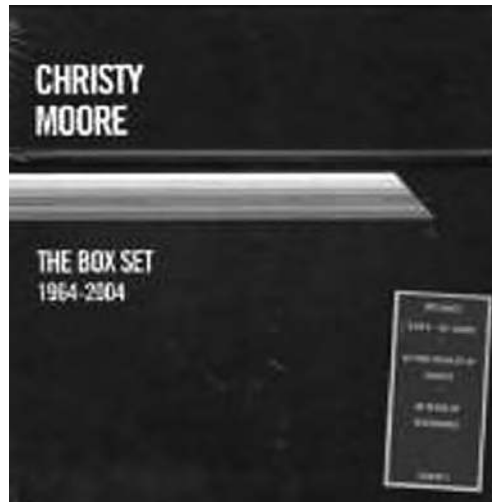
David Studer comes to terms with a box set of epic proportions

"It is at the end of Europe. The last rock. This island of ours is my body and blood. I come from here. My mother, my two grandmothers, my four great-grandmothers all took the waters, ate the produce, breathed the air of Ireland...I can feel it as soon as I arrive in the environs of the home place. The eye relaxes as the body takes in the familiar landmarks...Then, when I begin to see the familiar shapes and faces I remember days gone long by - at school with him, danced with her, delivered groceries to them, played football, sang in the choir, courted, fought, loved, hated, prayed, laughed with and cried with."



Once I decided to write about Christy's box set, I debated with myself for hours on how to approach it. Should I start with how I was introduced to Christy, should I open with some facts about the famous Kildare man and his work? In the end I started to open with the quote above, spoken by Christy as the opening track on one of the 6 cds in the box set. The track is called *Roots* and I think it encapsulates the poet in Christy and his love of this land. The box set is a journey through four decades of personal and Irish history. There are 101 songs included, taken from b-sides, outtakes, sleepless nights, rehearsals, live recordings and deleted recordings and 57 of the tracks are previously unreleased. In such restrained space, it is not possible to review all 6 cds so I'm just going to dip in and out for random items.

On the first cd is one of Christy Moore's most contentious songs. *They Never Came Home* was banned and withdrawn from shops in 1986. In it Christy sings about the 48 young people who died in the Stardust nightclub in Dublin on Valentines Night 1984.



Méan. It is a beautiful song which conveys the terrible loss felt in the small island community. *Quiet Desperation* is about the terrible loneliness that people can feel at times and "seems to find its way into the hearts of people who have known loneliness and isolation". Christy himself has confronted many inner demons through his music, particularly his alcoholism. On *Poití*, another monologue, he thanks the lord for "leading me by the hand from the terrible drunkenness I indulged". On the second cd Christy recorded a monologue about Maggie Thatcher. As we all know, there is no love lost between The Iron Lady and the Irish people, in particular with our Kildare born legend; and he doesn't shirk from his outspoken opinion of Mrs. Thatcher and her "murderous regime". Other songs in the box set include *Giuseppe* about Giuseppe Conlon, *Wicklow Boy* about hunger striker Nicky Kelly and *Scapagoats* about the wrongful imprisonment of the Birmingham Six.

But this box set is not just about

The song is a moving tribute to the families who lost loved ones in the terrible fire which claimed so many lives. The six cd's make for some very intimate listening. *The Two Conneeleys* is about two local fishermen who went missing while Christy was visiting Inis

Christy's more nationalistic songs. *Hey! Ronnie Reagan* was recorded by Christy in disgust of Reagans visit to Ireland, "this island of saints, scholars and f***in' arselickers." *Mullaghmore* was written about the crazy grant culture which is destroying Ireland's picturesque and unique landscape. There is *Little Musgrave*, a magnificent twenty verse love song to which Christy found the words on the floor of an auction hall floor. And then there are the songs that Christy has become famous for in recent years, particularly from his "Live At The Point" album, such as *Joxer Goes to Stuttgart* and *Delerium Tremens*. There are others too such as *Finnegan's Wake* and *Bridget's Pill* that will make your sides aches with laughter.

These are just some of the songs that I've plucked from the career of an Irish legend, and I haven't even mentioned his work with Planxty or Moving Hearts! Christy himself spoke of the difficulty of having to shave his box set down to 101 songs and I've only had a chance to write about less than twenty. In many ways Christy Moore is the pulse of the nation. This is a marvellous social history not only of recent Irish history but also of the development of Christy Moore from typical folkie through activist to veteran performer. Assembled with huge care, this set is a fresh breeze in the often-foggy world of compilation rehashes. With a booklet that is like a mini version of his autobiography *One Voice* included, giving background to the songs and some spoken comments on the introductions, you are getting one of the most comprehensive compilations of recent years.

Is your stereo tired of playing the same stuff time and time again? Looking for a little something to spruce up the study season?

Benny Kupka feels compelled to recommend:

Elliott Smith

It's strange how someone so talented can just slip through the cracks of existence in people's minds so soon after their untimely death. Sadly, that seems to be the case for Elliot Smith in this country. His influences range from Bob Dylan to The Beatles and many in between, so you can tell straight off that a quick listen won't fail to impress. He focuses heavily on his lyrics in all albums and these generally include deeply personal topics such as his stepfather and a crippling drug addiction to... yes, you've guessed it - Heroin. Born in Nebraska and raised near Dallas, his childhood was to profoundly influence his musical career. At the age of nine Elliot was getting piano lessons from a very avant-garde focused musician who liked to take his playing to the extremes. Smith won some prizes for his folk-punk brand of music even from an early age and, most recently, he was nomi-

nated for an Oscar for his music to the hit film *Good Will Hunting*, the soundtrack of which features some perfect examples of his talent. When considering his albums, it is extremely difficult to narrow it down to the best few but, nonetheless, I will nominate my personal favourites. His newest release *From A Basement On The Hill* which features tracks such as *Fond Farewell*, *King's Crossing* and *Twilight* is a true testament



to the artist. While listening to these songs you really get to feel what he felt, see what he saw and live through what he lived through, which is quite a considerable amount. Smith had a fondness for the bass guitar that lasted all his life and heavily influenced his music but he left it as a subtle undertone in

all his songs, gradually building up the pieces to make a masterpiece ever single time. His second full-length album,

Either/Or, should also be found in any respectable CD collection these days. This record moved me to want to crave much more of Elliott's music and lament the tragic death of this promising young artist. Tracks such as *Say yes, 2:45am*, *Angeles* and the strangely uplifting *Speed Trials* are definitely not to be overlooked. Simply put, if you haven't heard of Elliott Smith then I strongly recommend you get acquainted with him and his overwhelmingly poignant sound that could be compared to that of *The Red House Painters*, *Nick Drake*, *Sun Kil Moon* or even *Vic Chestnut*.

Notable Albums:

From A Basement On The Hill and *Either/Or*



UNIVERSITY
CONCERT HALL
Limerick

Something Old, Something New...

Paul Brady lights up the UCH with his impressive catalogue.

Keith Whelan was there to watch.



UNIVERSITY
CONCERT HALL
Limerick

The last time I saw Paul Brady was inside in the Concert Hall almost ten years ago (I'm showing my age). The least I can say is that, in the meantime, his temperament has improved immensely because if I remember correctly, he was a grumpy so-and-so that night! Paul, a singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, is one of Ireland's most highly regarded and successful artists, and is currently on a nationwide tour to promote his new album "*Say what you Feel*."

This Strabane native and former member of Planxty released his first solo album "*Hard Station*" way back in 1981 and since then has collaborated with many other songwriters, with the likes of Brian Kennedy, Bonnie Raitt, Belinda Carlisle and Ronan Keating (mistake?!) availing of this maestro's talent. Brady has had his

song's covered by the likes of Cher and Tina Turner and for the better part of 35 years has succeeded in changing the face of Irish traditional and popular music.

The new album marks a new direction for the artist. Most of it was recorded in Nashville, and Paul remarked that making it was like going back to square one as a musician for him. Although Bob Dylan has commented that Brady is one of the foremost songwriters around, talking with



someone after the gig who had never heard Paul Brady before, revealed similar sentiments to that effect. While he may not have the best voice in the world, his lyrics and music convey tremendous meaning and messages that we can all associate with.

The opening song in the UCH was "*Love in a Bubble*" taken from the new album. He continued with several new tracks including "*Smile*" (new Brady classic!), "*Sail On*", "*Living for the*

Corporation" (about working in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland), "*Locked in Heaven*" (about being married with children) and "*Say what you Feel*". He promised the audience, greatly comprised of fans that have followed him down through the years, that he would not forget the old stuff and Brady fulfilled this promise with renditions of "*Nobody Knows*," "*The World is what you make it*," "*Paradise is Here*," and ending with the perennial favourites, "*The Island*" and the "*Homes of Donegal*." Paul Brady is not a national treasure, but this is something you will only recognise properly the next time you sit in an Irish pub in Boston, London or Sydney and one of his songs remind you of home.

Byrne-ing Down The House

Keith Whelan ponders the return to stage of one of Ireland's brightest comedians.



Ed Byrne brought his "*Me Again!*" tour to the UCH recently as part of the "12 Nights with..." Comedy Series. Though he may have done some dodgy work on the telly, Ed Byrne remains one of the strongest observational comics around. Instinctively sensing the ridiculous in everything, he dresses sharp social satire in throwaway banter, belying the talent that's gone into the writing. The material is crisp and efficient, and Byrne's insights are dispatched within hilarious one-liners. His set is firmly based in the everyday and in the banal and his comical musings saw him ponder aloud and giggle about the sub-linear text to his own jokes.

He is firmly outspoken and candid. Any man who can talk about animal pornography and not staying with American friends because "I can't f**k whores in your house!" is not afraid to divide opinion in his audience, a fact he commented on himself. His slagging of his ex-girlfriend had some people squirming

in their seats and some even accused him of being sexist but, while gleefully venting his spleen over the breakdown of this relationship with an unreasonable woman, his self-deprecating slant should be noted. The conversation he had with an unhelpful Australian cleaning lady was worth noting for his borderline wit; a sharp retort calling him a "filthy pig" was met with the reply that "if you could read you wouldn't be doing this job!" Ouch! With that kind of sharp comeback, how long would he last on the streets of Limerick? Brave boy!

He continued with his disgust at unhelpful American Embassy officials and how the funniest thing he ever saw was a Muslim woman, dressed head to toe in black, with only her eyes noticeable in a blow-up ring in swimming pool in Dubai! Byrne sometimes lets himself down from his lofty standards with cheap jokes that take away from his brilliant observational comedy, but his manic pace indicates his real feelings about the topics he is discussing.

It's not worth mentioning the other acts as Karl Spain we all know and love as local lad come good, while the second was an English comedian who could only tell dirty jokes throughout his set. Don't mean to be prudish, but we have progressed past school yard humour...haven't we?



The Dream of a Summer Day

Matt Chomistek beholds a vision inside The Belltable

The Dream of a Summer Day, which played at the Belltable Arts Centre this past weekend, takes the audience on a poignant journey through both the life and writings of Lafcadio Hearn. Directed by Liam Halligan and presented by the Storytellers Theatre Company, this ambitious project shows both the extreme pain and pleasures of a troubled idealist constantly in search of something he only seems to grasp at the end of his life.

The cast, first of all, is amazing. All five actors play innumerable roles as characters either in Hearn's life or in his stories. One of the most interesting is Colin O'Donoghue's portrayal of both Hearn's father and his son, and there are underlying parallels between the characters that each actor portrays. Maria Tecce plays both Hearn's emotionally and mentally troubled mother from a Greek island, and his alcoholic wife from Cincinnati. Aoife Molony plays Hearn's Irish Aunt who takes him in when his father goes away, as well as his caring second wife in Japan - both from noble backgrounds, though in radically different cultures. Finally, Diane O'Keefe

plays Hearn's half sister, with whom he is very close, although they only know each other through mail correspondence and never actually meet face to face. She also plays his Aunt's maid, who treats the troubled young Hearn as a friend, and not just a child.

Conan Sweeney, however, dominates the stage as Hearn himself. He begins as a young man, petrified of the dark and a victim of his own vivid imagination. Later he finds himself in Cincinnati struggling with a vague sense of alienation on the banks of the Ohio, and finishes in Japan, content with living in a culture that seems to share his mystical view of life and beyond.

The great acting is supplemented with elaborate stage directing. A beautiful set, a number of props, an excellent score, brilliant lighting...they all contribute to the dreamlike nature of this play. The director, cast and crew should be brilliantly commended for this work which shows the audience how difficult but ultimately how rewarding the struggle of life can be, but only if we never let go of our dreams.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Release Date:
November 18, 2005

Starring:
Daniel Radcliffe,
Rupert Grint, Emma
Watson, Tom Felton,
Matthew Lewis,

Chris Rankin, Robbie Coltrane, Michael Gambon, Robert Hardy, Shirley Henderson, Jason Isaacs, Gary Oldman, Alan Rickman, Maggie Smith.

Plot Summary: The pivotal fourth novel in the seven-part tale of Harry Potter's training as a wizard and his coming of age. Harry wants to get away from the pernicious Dursleys and go to the International Quidditch Cup with Hermione, Ron, and the Weasleys. He wants to dream about Cho Chang, his crush (and maybe do more than dream). He wants to find out about the mysterious event that's supposed to take place at Hogwarts this year, an event involving two other rival schools of magic, and a competition that hasn't happened for a hundred years. He wants to be a normal, fourteen-year-old wizard. Unfortunately for Harry Potter, he's not normal, even by wizarding standards. And in his case, different can be deadly.

Preview: And so the fourth instalment of everyone's favourite boy wizard is upon us. With book six, Harry Potter and the Halfblood Prince, on its way in July expect some more of the hype that surrounded the release of *The Goblet of Fire*. The task of turning this 700 page opus into something suitable for cinematic release is no mean feat. Fans of the series are bound

to be upset by the almost certain omissions. As producer David Heyman put it "Anything that doesn't really relate to Harry and Harry's journey" has been chopped...whatever the hell that means. All the key scenes, the Quidditch World Cup, the Tri-Wizard events, Harry's trial at the Ministry of Magic and the lavish Hogwarts Yule Ball, are all in. By the way, for the uninformed, Ireland actually play in the Quidditch World Cup final. It's nice that the only sport that we do get to the final in is fictitious, still it's something to watch out for. And so the merry-go-round continues - another Harry Potter movie, another new director. This time it's the turn of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* director Mike Newell, an interesting choice. It's nice to see the quintessential British tale finally get a Brit at the helm and it already seems that he's out to stamp his own visual mark on the franchise. After Chris Columbus's light airy tones of *The*

Philosophers Stone and *The Chamber of Secrets* and the dark and sombre tone of *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, it will be interesting to see where Newell takes the visuals. Personally I much preferred the darker feel, but then I preferred *Empire* to the others for precisely the same reason. Ultimately Harry Potter is a multi-million dollar franchise, and no matter what the movie's like it will be massive at the box-office. I just hope for the fans sake that Mike Newell and Stephen Kloves can do

the book justice. And remember "Draco Dormiens Nunquam Titillandus".

Official Website:
<http://HarryPotter.WarnerBros.com>



Summer is nearly upon us but the weather still seems a little confused! Not to worry, Niall Murphy has a few things in mind to keep us occupied...

Kingdom of Heaven

Release Date: May 6, 2005

Starring: Orlando Bloom, Eva Green, Jeremy Irons, David Thewlis, Brendan Gleeson, Marton Csokas, Liam Neeson, Edward Norton

Plot Summary: "*Kingdom of Heaven*" is an epic adventure about a common man who finds himself thrust into a decades-long war. Jerusalem, late 12th century: the Christians occupy the city as the capital of their young crusader state, the Islamic Saracens want it back. As the teetering truce between them finally falters and war begins, a young knight named Balian (Orlando Bloom), striving to hold onto to his principals, steps into the breach. He finds it is a struggle that will test everything he stands for. From Ridley Scott, the master of the modern epic.

Preview:

Ridley returns to the genre that brought him the most success, the historical epic. Good news for the guys who love nothing more than seeing two armies go hell for leather at one another! For the women it's even better news as Orlando Bloom gets to grow a beard and act all soldiery. You can hear them fainting already. Joking, but by God Orlando needs to ditch that pathetic soft-boy image first seen in *LOTR* and further strengthened in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Here he is joined



by a more than able cast, especially "The Greatest Actor of His Generation," TM Edward Norton, albeit in a mask. Our own Brendan

Gleeson also turns up again and appears to be in every one of these movies! The Crusades have garnered a bad rap in Hollywood and even the legendary Cecil B DeMille came a cropper in 1935 with his movie on the subject. The last crusade film in fact was 1987's *Lionheart* which was made more with the kiddies in mind. But

there's nothing suitable for kids in this look at that troubling period of our history, and in light of recent anti-arabic sentiment in the US and elsewhere, it is a brave decision to make this movie at all. Ridley has a lot riding on this project, it's a deeply personal tale and it's carrying a budget of \$130 million. Initial word Stateside is that the visuals are amazing but it seems to be hampered by the story. Still we'll wait until Europe gets a good look before we jump to any conclusions. I think European audiences will be more familiar with the story and better able to judge than our American brethren. Personally, I'm just hoping that it's more *Gladiator* than *Alexander*: after that turkey I need this one to restore my faith in the historical epic.

Official Website:
<http://www.KingdomofHeavenmovie.com>

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DAWN KENNY 

FRI 6th • UPSTAIRS Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €10

THE CONWAYS 

SAT 7th • WAREHOUSE Doors @ 9pm • Tickets: €12/10

JJ72 

SUN 8th • WAREHOUSE Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €12/10

WINDINGS 
ALBUM LAUNCH

TUE 10th • UPSTAIRS Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €7

KARL ROONEY + TRIO 

WED 11th • UPSTAIRS Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €10/8

EOIN COUGHLAN 

THU 12th • UPSTAIRS Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €12/10

NORTH GREGG 

FRI 13th • UPSTAIRS Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €13

ASLAN 

SAT 14th • WAREHOUSE Doors @ 8pm • Tickets: €17

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 **CRIME WATCH** 

DO YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE?

The Students' Union have been contacted by the Gardaí in relation to students who have been involved in criminal activity and are harassing businesses in the area. The Gardaí are looking for help from UL students in identifying the people in these pictures. Actions such as those carried out by these students have a negative effect for all in UL trying to coordinate entertainment events such as Kollege Week for **all UL students**.

Students cooperation is greatly needed to ensure that innocent students reputations are not tarnished by a small minority of students.

Any student with information should contact the **Gardaí in Henry St. at 061- 212400** or contact any of the sabbatical officers in the Students' Union.



GRAY'S THIEF



RIO VANDALS

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061 314 483 for info & ticket bookings 10am to 6pm

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Liverpool

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Terms and Conditions 1. Flights are subject to airport taxes and charges which are to be paid by the winner. These are payable by credit card (Visa/MasterCard only): Transaction charge for payment by credit card is 2.50Euro per person per flight. When booking a return flight the passenger will pay 2 x 2.50Euro. This flight giveaway is only available on Ryanair specified flights from Shannon airport. 2. Travel is only available from 3rd May up to 30th June 2005 excluding all School and Public Holidays and any other peak periods. Travel on Friday or Sunday is not permitted. Applicable travel days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday only. 3. The number of seats available for this promotion on each flight is strictly subject to availability. 4. Bookings must be made by the date specified on the flight voucher(s) and can only be made by fax, via Ryanair Sales Office, Stansted Airport. It is the responsibility of all winners to complete vouchers clearly and provide a fax or email address for receipt of the flight confirmation. Failure to do so will result in the voucher not being processed. Ryanair will not contact winners in this regard. Vouchers must be completed with correct and complete payment details-failure to do so will result in the voucher not being processed. Ryanair will not contact winners in this regard. 5. Flights bookings are non-changeable, non-transferable and non-refundable under any circumstances once a booking has been confirmed. The Prize cannot be exchanged for Cash. 6. Flight Bookings made prior to this promotion cannot be exchanged or refunded for any booking acquired under this promotion. 7. All flights are subject to change without prior notice. Therefore it is recommended that passengers confirm their travel itinerary prior to departure. This can be done by contacting our call centre on: 0818303030 8. Passengers will not be allocated with a ticket, as Ryanair.com is a "ticketless" airline. A booking reference, which must be quoted at check-in, will be issued. All passengers must be in a possession of a valid Passport for all Ryanair flights. A valid Driver's License is also accepted for UK Domestic Flights only. 9. Passengers are responsible for their own insurance requirements. It is recommended that passengers take out suitable travel insurance (Ryanair sell excellent value travel insurance through the website). 10. No child discounts are permitted. 11. Persons entering must be 18 years or over. 12. Ryanair bookings are subject to the conditions of Contract as made available on the Ryanair website or printed on Ryanair form of Itinerary/receipt and to Ryanair's General Conditions of Carriage for Passengers and Baggage from time to time and such conditions shall prevail in the event of any inconsistency within the terms of this competition. 13. Ryanair shall not be liable for any failure to fulfil this promotion where such failure is caused by any supervening circumstances including but not limited to: severe weather conditions, fire, flood, earthquake, or severe movement of land or other natural phenomena, industrial disputes, war, riots Acts of God or events which without fault of either party rendering performance impossible or incapable of satisfactory execution. 14. Ryanair shall not be liable for ancillary partners to this promotion. 15. Bus/transfer services are the sole responsibility of the relevant bus/transfer companies. Ryanair shall not be held responsible for late or cancelled buses/taxis or flights that are missed as a result of delayed/non-arrival of buses/taxis. 16. Ryanair reserve the right to vary any of the terms and conditions of this offer at their absolute discretion. 17. Ryanair reserves the right to cancel this promotion without notice or obligation.

YO LA TENGO PRISONERS OF LOVE

A SMATTERING OF SCINTILLATING SENESCENT SONGS 1985-2003



Ronan Lawlor is struck by a smattering of scintillating senescent songs, 1985-2003

Yo La Tengo have been quietly plying their trade for over twenty years now and this two-disc collection marks their first compilation of their back catalogue. Prisoners of Love is being pushed as an 'introduction' to the music of Yo La Tengo rather than an all-out 'best of'. Its just as well, given the glaring absence of such Yo La Tengo gems as 'Today is the Day', 'Deeper into Movies', and 'Dan Electro 3', to name but a few.

Yo La Tengo are a hit-and-miss band. A sizeable bit of this compilation is monotonous, going-through-the-motions 3-minute crap-rock (see "The Story of Jazz"). However, when Yo La Tengo click, you know you're listening to something special. It is no co-incidence that most of the standout tracks on this compilation feature drummer Georgia Hubley on lead vocals. Her voice is Yo La Tengo's greatest attribute, however for the most part her singing duties play a secondary role to those of her band mate & husband Ira Kaplan, much in the same way that the truly haunting voice of Low's own drummer-cum-vocalist Mimi Parker is seldom deployed. Songs such as 'Little Eyes', 'Swing for Life', 'Pablo and Andrea' are given a distinct atmosphere of their own by Hubley's husky, minimal voice. Especially 'Pablo and

Andrea', a song lifted by resonating Hawaiian guitars and sliding fretwork. The band rock out on 'I Heard You Looking' and 'Blue Line Swinger', both slow-building instrumental crescendos of distorted guitar work. 'Autumn Sweater' - probably one of Yo La Tengo's best-known songs - has a great drum groove and it surprisingly rocks with the unusual sound of a church-organ!

Yo La Tengo are the type of band that makes you appreciate great songs. Great songs are a rarity and when they come along, you have to get every last drop out of them. Kinda like a lemon on Pancake Tuesday. I'm rambling.

However, Yo La Tengo are not a band of great albums, in the same way a band they are constantly compared to, The Velvet Underground, were. Likewise, Prisoners of Love is not a great album. This is not a shameful indictment on Yo La Tengo, because they are a band of so many great songs, and Prisoners of Love is an album with great songs on it. Almost half this 26-track collection is genius. Plus you will be hard pushed to find an album with as many quality tunes on it for the price Prisoners of Love is going for - only €12.99 in HMV and all good record stores; that's all right in my book!

The Hired Man

Leabhar le Melvyn Bragg,
Ceol agus Liricí le Howard Goodall
Léirithe ag LITMT agus Limerick Musical Society

Chuaigh grúpa ón Brionglóid Theatre Group in **Inn Ennis** amach ar **oíche shóisialta social night** chuig **ceoldráma musical** iontach **The Hired Man** an tseachtain seo caite in **Amharclann na Mílaoise the Millennium Theatre**. Bhí an ceoldráma ar siúl ó Aoine an 15ú go dtí Satharn an 23ú Aibreán agus ba **léiriú production** an-mhaith a bhí ann, lán le ceol agus damhsa. Tá an ceoldráma seo bunaithe i Sasana ag **tús an chéid seo caite at the start of the last century** agus bhain scéal láidir leis an gceol. Bhí gach rud ar fáil ann: grá, **feall betrayal**, bás, **tragóid tragedy**, cogadh, **chuire téama daonna human theme**. Bhí **aisteoirí actors den chéad scoth of the highest standard** ar an stáitse agus **amhránaithe singers** iontacha iad uile freisin.

An t-aon locht *The only fault* a bhí agam air ná nach raibh an damhsa chomh maith agus a



bhíonn i léirithe **Cumann Ceoldrámaíocht Luimnigh Limerick Musical Society** de ghnáth. É sin ráite, bhain gach duine sa **chomhlúadar s'a-gainne in our company** an-sult as an gceoldráma agus **bhain sé na deora as it brought tears to** chuid de **mo chomhghleacaithe my companions** i rith an léiriú fiú. D'éirigh gach duine **gafa caught up** leis an scéal agus leis an gceol! Le heolas breise a fháil ar imeachtaí an Chumainn amach **anseo hereafter**, breathnaigh ar a **suíomh idirlín website**: <http://www.limerickmusicalsociety.com>.

Brendán Ó hEamhaigh



La Traviata: A Love Story of Epic Proportions



Culture vulture Hilary Crowell laps up Opera Season at the UCH

As a violinist and orchestra member I have great respect for the musicians, orchestra, conductor, and singers who go to work each day with their sights set on creating a musical experience that will transport an audience away from reality, if only for a short time. Two weeks ago, the Ukraine National Opera of Odessa succeeded at doing just that: a nearly full house at the University Concert Hall was enthralled by the tragic love story of Violetta and Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata*.

It was interesting for me to see and hear a non-American cast for a change. While much of the sung Italian sounded the same as I remembered from seeing *La Traviata* in Minnesota, there was a distinct difference in the pronunciation of certain words. In particular, it seemed that the

Ukrainian singers were able to roll their R's with more ease than American singers. Also, though music is a universal language, the conductor directed the orchestra differently than what I've seen in the past: his motions were very fluid rather than strictly rhythmic and reminded me of a choral conductor.

Each opera experience has its own feature that makes it unique and, on this occasion, it was my companions that made my evening especially memorable. Six friends who had never seen a live opera escorted me to the show, and it was thrilling to see their encouraging reactions as the curtain fell at the end of each act and, as we exited the hall, the buzz of positive conversation as the show was disseminated. It was an unforgettable night that will forever be imprinted on my mind and on the minds of six new opera fans!

Agallamh le Emer Ní Flaitheartaigh, Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge & Stiúrthóir Brionglóid Theatre Group

Duine óg, lán le fuinneamh is í Emer Ní Flaitheartaigh, duine a rinne a lán oibre ar son na Gaeilge i gCo. an Chláir thar na blianta. Is Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge leis an gComhairle Contae í Emer agus is tríd an bpost seo a tháinig Brionglóid Theatre Group le chéile.

Is muid an chéad ghrúpa den chineál seo sa mheán iarthar, a deir sí liom agus an grúpa bunaithe ar chúis amháin - chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa chontae de réir cúraimí a poist. Luann sí liom gurb í an chéad Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge lánaimseartha atá ag an gComhairle Contae. Bhain Emer céim sa dlí amach in Ollscoil na hÉireann i nGaillimh agus le linn di an chúrsa sin a dhéanamh, rinne sí Diplóma sa Ghaeilge chomh maith. De réir **Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003**, is féidir léi an leas is fearr a bhaint as an gcéim agus as an diplóma araon.

Tá sí an-bhródúil as an tionscnamh go dtí seo. Tá dhá dhrama á léiriú againn i láthair na huairé agus tá dáréag páirteach sna léirithe.

'Is rud iontach é an suim a spreagadh sa Gaeilge in aon dhuine déag eile,' a deir sí.

Ní raibh i bhfad i ndiaidh bunú an ghrúpa gur tosaigh na téacsanna agus na glaonna gutháin ag teacht ó dhaoine go raibh suim acu bheith páirteach sa ghrúpa. Is iad **Fáilte Romhat a Mháirtín** le Brian Ó Baoil agus **Dún na mBan Trí Thine** le hEilís Ní Dhuibhne an dá dhrama atá idir lámhe faoi láthair agus tá Emer an-mhórtasach as an suim atá léirithe ag daoine sa dá dhrama.

Nuair a iarraim uirthi cén fáth gur roghnaíodh an t-ainm **Brionglóid** don ghrúpa, míníonn sí go raibh an beart féin chun an grúpa a bhunú mar a bheadh brionglóid aici, sprioc go raibh sí ag súil mór le baint amach. Ansin nuair a tharla sé go fírinneach, bhí a fhios aici gur **Brionglóid** an t-ainm ceart le tabhairt ar an tionscnamh. Cuireadh na focail **Theatre Group** as Béarla leis an ainm chun teideal dátheangach a thabhairt dó ar eagla go mbeadh drama dátheangach á léiriú againn amach anseo.

Roghnaíodh na drámaí áirithe atá á léiriú againn faoi láthair os rud é gur thaitin an scéal ait i **nDún na mBan Trí Thine** linn. Theastaigh uainn rud úr nua a dhéanamh don chéad léiriú de chuid an ghrúpa, de bharr nach bhfuil ach dhá léiriú déanta de **Dún**



Emer Ní Flaitheartaigh agus Alec Fleming

na **mBan Trí Thine** roimhe seo, ní bheadh mórán cloiste ag daoine faoina choinne roimh dóibh ár léiriú de a fheiceáil.

Tá an dara drama bunaithe ar an seanchas agus éireoidh daoine de gach aois gafa leis. Is as scoil lánBhéarla do bheirt pháistí sa drama againn, cailín agus buachaill, so is deas an rud é na daoine óga a chlosteáil ag labhairt sa Gaeilge anseo ar a laghad! I gcodarsnacht le **Dún na mBan Trí Thine** atá deacair le tuiscint scaití de dheasca nach bhfuil a lán de na carachtair beo (an-aisteach, tá a fhios agam!), tá scéal **Fáilte Romhat a Mháirtín** níos éasca le leanúint. Níl ach 6 carachtar sa drama agus is drama éadrom greannmhar é. Is intreoír iontach é **Fáilte Romhat a Mháirtín** chun na teanga mar tá sé níos éasca d'fhoghlaimoír a thuiscint. Tá súil againn go spreagfaidh sé suim go leor daoine sa Ghaeilge!

Bhí an seó seo le léiriú againn ar an 10ú - 11ú Marta ach le bás tragóideach máthar Emer an tseachtain chéanna, cuireadh an léiriú ar ceall. Beidh an seó ar siúl anois i **Meán Fómhair 2005** agus b'fhéidir go mbeidh sé ag teacht chun na hOllscoile fiú so bíg ag breathnú amach dó!

Brendán Ó hEamhaigh
OCP, Brionglóid Theatre Group

The Blurb

This week An Focal reports on the antics of the Synchronised Swim team, Lisa discussed leaving UL when she's only just found her way round, Aoife tries to get to the root of our obsession with the Lodge and Val reports on the new hobby sweeping UL 'anything but study'.

The UL Synchronised Swim Team Disgraces Themselves

In a shock development, the sordid details of the carry on that the UL Synchronised Swim team got up to, has come to light. The UL SST (as it will be referred to), while incredibly successful in their cameo performance as "*Moulin Rouge*" on the Aquatic Stars in Their Eyes television series, have managed to bring the name of UL into disrepute. Following the celebrations after a recent event, the UL SST went out celebrating at the popular nightclub, "*The George*" in Dublin, where according to observers, "they wrecked the joint".

According to Ashleigh, the team's stylist, "*It was mad. Just absolutely mental. They only had about two*

alco-pops each but next thing I knew, they were out of control. One of them started doing star jumps on the dance floor and then it all went horribly wrong-some poor lady got kicked in the face and it looks like her chance to become a top model will never take place."

University officials who were contacted about the scandal had these comments, "*It's shocking. We never expected this from synchronised swimmers, they're usually such graceful, colour co-ordinated and peaceful individuals-we're really at a loss at what to do.*" Disciplinary actions have been suggested; ranging from harsh words, to community serv-

ice with a local theatre group or even indefinite suspension from the Aquatic Stars in Their Eyes Series.

However, one member of the UL SST was at a loss as to what the uproar was about. According to him, "*God. I mean, it's not like we killed anyone-we had some fun after an aquatic interpretation of Moulin Rouge, the musical. Is that a crime? So we held some people down and put make-up on them. So we threw a hair straightener through a hotel window. We gave a few wedgies and smashed a few alco-pop bottles. Does that make us criminals?*" Unsubstantiated rumours also indicate that Elton John, sole funder of the SST and uncle of one of the

members left an ominous voice mail with the Students' Union threatening to write a "really mean song" about the SU unless charges against his nephew were dropped.

Finally, a comment from the SU President seemed to sum up the reaction to the scandal. According to Mr. Hennessy, "*I've always really enjoyed watching synchronised swimming but now a lot of the charm of the sport has been spoilt for me by these individuals. Next time I watch them kick their legs, all I'll be able to remember is those are the fateful star jumps that wrecked some poor soul's modelling career. It's just not right.*"

Do You Know Your EGO From Your CSIS?

It was the unlikely combination of the Hurlers and a first year student that gave me the idea for this article. As I was out celebrating handing up my FYP, a first year student asked me in all seriousness what the letters FYP stood for? So I got to thinking that to survive in UL you have to learn an awful lot of stuff and that's ever before you pick up a pen in a lecture. Y'see UL is tricky, as soon as you think you know your A Block from your C Block and have realised which sandwich lady to avoid in the canteen (You all know the one) they pack you off on Co-op and you come back feeling as lost as you did when the powers that be first stuffed an incomprehensible map in your hand and sent you on your way.

Years can go by in UL and only the lucky few find some of the answers that they're looking for. Other questions will just live on as long as there are students in UL...such as what do they contemplate in the contemplative centre? Are you allowed to trundle through the White House with your bag on your back? (Still not sure about that one). What's with the glass tunnels? Who had the fountain fetish? Why does it rain every time I have a lecture in

the Schumann? Can I use the lifts? If I'm in the Plaza and I can see out does mean everyone outside can see me...No. How can I get Enviro Soc to stop emailing me...the answer to this one is elusive but oh so worthwhile! Were there ever horses in the Stables? What's in the basement of the library? Why is there grated carrot on every meal the restaurant serves? Once I go over my storage limit on the computers how do I log off without annoying one of the IT staff? Who put the brown man there all on his own and why? It just goes on and on.

And then once you think you know it all, you are politely asked to leave UL or graduate as it's more commonly called. But the most annoying thing is just before you graduate, just once you think you have it down, just when you get your timetable and can decipher the SC from the SH and your EG004 from your A1066 without any problems you arrive into UL and what have they done? They've opened a whole new building! They could have waited until were gone....

Lisa Egan

SEX AND THE COUNTRY

Hello everyone, it's me Carrie Braidshaw, writing for An Focal with my very original column 'sex and the country'. Firstly let me explain my reasons for writing this column: Basically I think that sex in the country is much more glamorous than the old 'city sex' you college kids love oh so much. After all it was us country dwellers that had sex originally, long before cities were even thought of. 'Whest' Limerick is of course a prime example of excellent countryside. This is where my many adventures have taken place... Now my friend Billy has been having girlfriend trouble lately. Oh yes, Billy has been having a dilemma of late as his beloved sheep, Dolly hasn't text or called in a week. It's just heartbreaking and after a sexy romp in a haybarn and all. Billy feels let down, I mean, are all sheep just using him for his body? But alas, I do not have all the answers, even though I am incredibly brainy.

So taking the initiative I decided to confront Dolly at the local farmyard. I was very delighted with my costume choice for the night, a sexy red raincoat by Versace and knee high blue wellies. Wearing my fantastic costume I thought, I can do anything, anything at all. So I confronted the evil sheep that was tormenting my friend. But Dolly seemed to ignore my outrageous outburst, simply bleating rudely in my face. I felt my self confidence go to mush, like the cow dung I had just trampled on, dirtying

my beautiful wellies in the process. I turned on my shitty heel and went to walk away. What had I done? Billy and Dolly didn't need my interference. It was simply the journalist in me coming out again.

But after a few strides I felt a hoof tapping on my shoulder. I turned on reaction, ready to fight... but instead of Dolly begging for forgiveness I was faced with a handsome looking bull. His eyes were wide and as dark as coal, his dribble trickled down the side of his face as he licked a blade of grass from his lips. I felt my knees go weak and almost fell into a trough. He was so exotic. I loved his handsome red hair, his rapidly blinking eyes, and his well... he was well hung. So I couldn't control myself... It must have been the fertiliser and fresh slurry in the country air.

But when I woke the next morning he had gone, leaving no message, no number. I felt used, and like the slut I was. I told my friend Billy the next day, we're both sluts, god help us. But there's still one burning question for all singletons in the country, are we just being used by animals for our Bodies? Or will we always be alone in the haystack in the mornings? Then again, maybe interspecies relationships are forever doomed, as farm animals do lack the thumbs needed for texting after all. Alas...

Until next time,
Carrie Braidshaw

Life, the Universe and the Lodge

Aoife Breen

I have come to notice that, in many editions of the highly esteemed *An Focal*, there is a continuous battle between those who are for the Lodge and those who loath the place. As the semester, and academic year, draw to a close, I am certain that there will be tears of sorrow and of joy as students part from their UL lives (i.e. the Lodge) and return to their homelands for the summer months. How will some members of the student population cope for almost four, long, hard months without the Lodge experience? But then again, others are weary from fighting endlessly in effort to combat this apparent love for the Lodge and cannot wait to be rid of the claustrophobic dance floor. UL students are certainly very divided over this matter. But what is really at stake here? What is the true meaning of this psychological warfare between those who like to go Lodging and those who would rather have five 9am lectures for every semester than dare step foot down that ramp towards those infamous shacks? I believe there is a deeper issue being discussed; something that no one has dared probe before. But I, being the brave writer that I am, have decided to be courageous and step up to the task to discover what is really going on. In a dearly sought-after exclusive *An Focal* exposes the truth behind life, the universe and the Lodge.

In my travels I have come to discover that there are similar venues

with similar contentious ratings at various universities and third level institutions across the globe. A most cherished friend screams in anguish at the mention of "The Bop," while others cannot wait to go "Bopping" (a phenomenon similar to "Lodging," one can only imagine). Another argument flares up between Marguerite and Philomena (all names have been changed to protect the identity of sources) as they battle to and fro about the qualities (or lack there of) of the nearby club. And other comparable disputes religiously take place week in, week out, up and down the country. Why is it that third level institutions locate themselves so near to such controversial night spots? Friendships can be made and broken following the discovery of one's alignment to such divisive entertainment.

So what is it about Kilmurry Lodge that attracts so many but repels even more? Why is it a cosy atmosphere for some but a suffocating environment for others? *An Focal* is determined to get to the bottom of this intriguing yet harrowing situation that wracks students all over the UL campus and distracts them from their studies on a regular basis. Too often have we witnessed brawls at the bus stops as otherwise content studious scholars release their hidden tensions and scream, "to the Lodge!" while others in their company call for another location, any other location. Too often

have we watched droves of scholars rushing through the estates to get there before 10:30pm for free entry. Too often have we seen students flocking at the entrance impatiently gagging to walk down the ramp to their Lodge-destiny. And yet, too often have we seen so many turned away because the damn place is so small and can only fit about 103 people (and even that depends on everyone sucking their breath in at the same time).

But, perhaps, this is its exact appeal for some. Ah yes, the precise petite nature of the Lodge may well be its charm for some members of UL's student populace. You see, there are those who crave exclusiveness and yearn to be the *crème-de-la-crème* of student life. But with so much conformity and universality on campus, how can these attention-seekers stand

out and acquire the distinctive status that they seek? Ah, of course - by being one of the 103 allowed into the Lodge. You see, 103 clubbers out of a total student count of 8,581 makes that elite a privileged 1.2%. That's pretty exclusive.

So then, we can conclude that the division between Lodge-lovers and Lodge-haters does not rest on proximity to so many members of the UL community. It does not rely on music tastes and a love of 'The Lodge: Original Soundtrack'. No, the divide is a result of personal internal turmoil as those who hunger after selectiveness desire to be crushed on the dance floor in the name of exclusivity. They cry out for individuality and plea for a unique status. In the name of God, let them go Lodging.

NEWS IN BRIEF...

- Gazing aimlessly out of window not so entertaining anymore
- Potential boyfriend did get your text, ignored it
- Student attends first tutorial in Week 12
- Humorous exam anecdotes thin on ground
- Drunken bore unaware of own drunkenness and boringness
- Student "had the weirdest dream" last night



Unexciting Lecture Produces Exciting Doodle

Last Monday's mind-numbingly tedious economics lecture produced an interesting doodle on one first year's notes, reports have confirmed. The student drew "a kind of a cross between a spaceship and a swirly shape" that attracted interest from his neighbour.

The neighbour, a fellow business student, estimated that the incident took place some time between 12.20 and 12.30 on Monday afternoon. "We were getting to the stage of the lecture where it feels like 3 hours have gone by but it's actually only 20 minutes," said the student who reportedly skipped 53% of his lectures last week. "I'd spent a few minutes staring at the clock, a while studying the graffiti on the desk, and a moment thinking about the bird that was two rows in front of me, and then my wandering attention was grabbed by this cool little squiggle."

Critics have been unanimous in their praise of the young first year's work. The student was reluctant to comment on the work itself, though he did not specifically deny that it blended post-modern and traditional influences together in a kind of eye-candy meets avant-garde structuralism type way.

"It started off like any other doodle," stated the student, "though once I saw how pretty it was looking I brought the blue biro into play. The shading was hard to do and took at least five minutes." He went on to emphasise how the drawing of the doodle helped him immeasurably in surviving until the end of the lecture.

"It started off as a random squiggle, but then I noticed it looked a bit

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like a spaceship, I guess," recalled the student, before adding: "You know?" The drawing is now stuck on his bedroom wall between posters of Ali G and Buffy.

Student Drops Confident Love Machine Facade After Three Years

Third year **Tim 'Tiger' Kavanagh** is finally dropping his confident love machine persona in favour of being himself. "I'm sick of keeping it up," he admitted, "it didn't get me anywhere at all."

Mr. Kavanagh's reputation was established in orientation week of first year when he amazed his new friends with astounding tales of sexual conquests and feats. He then went on to earn the title "*the love machine*" with a series of brief passionate relationships. "They just made me feel awful," Mr. Kavanagh confessed, "all I really want to do is sit in front of 'Winning Streak' and eat Hula Hoops."

The late-night reveller has also admitted that his "blonde bombshell" girlfriend from home is a complete fabrication. "It was lies, all lies," said Mr. Kavanagh, "every thing I said. Even the bit about the erotic weekend in Paris." Neighbours confirm that the only place Tim went on the said weekend was to his local Xtra-Vision store.

"I don't even like the Lodge," claimed the man who once spent 11 consecutive nights within its beer-

stained walls. "I don't like drinking or going to house parties and I especially don't like treating girls like objects. Most of them I made up anyway: obviously there was never a Scandinavian snowboarder and part-time Wonderbra model living around the corner."

Friends reacted with sympathy and astonishment to Mr. Kavanagh's revelations. "I thought that Tiger was having the time of his life," said housemate Ben Dover, "and now it turns out her doesn't like the taste of vodka? What? After that night of drinking games? It must have been torture for him."

"I'm looking forward to getting rid of the mirrored sunglasses," said Mr. Kavanagh. "What was I thinking?!"

Approaching Exams Trigger Sudden Interest in Anything Except Study

According to close friends, P.E. third-year, **Francesca Crowe** has become obsessed with a wide range of non-revision-related activities as exam time draws nearer. Miss Crowe, previously known for her laid-back and carefree way of life, has developed a keen passion for pastimes including washing up, walking to the shops, watching chat shows, and reading books on the life of Henry VIII.

"I'd love to get some study done but I just don't have time at the moment," claimed Miss Crowe, speak-

ing over a cappuccino that had taken 35 minutes to prepare. "Already today I've had to wash the dishes, clean my room, draw up a landscape plan for the garden, watch Ricki Lake, do a stock take of the fridge and complete the Irish Times crossword. I mean seriously, where does the time go?"

"It's painful to watch," admitted fellow housemate Dave O'Brien. "She must have watched about five minutes of Star Wars in her life, and now that it provides an escape from revision she's addicted. Yesterday I mentioned we might need some milk, and she walked all the way to the Parkway to get some, even though we live next to Superquinn. She was gone for three hours."

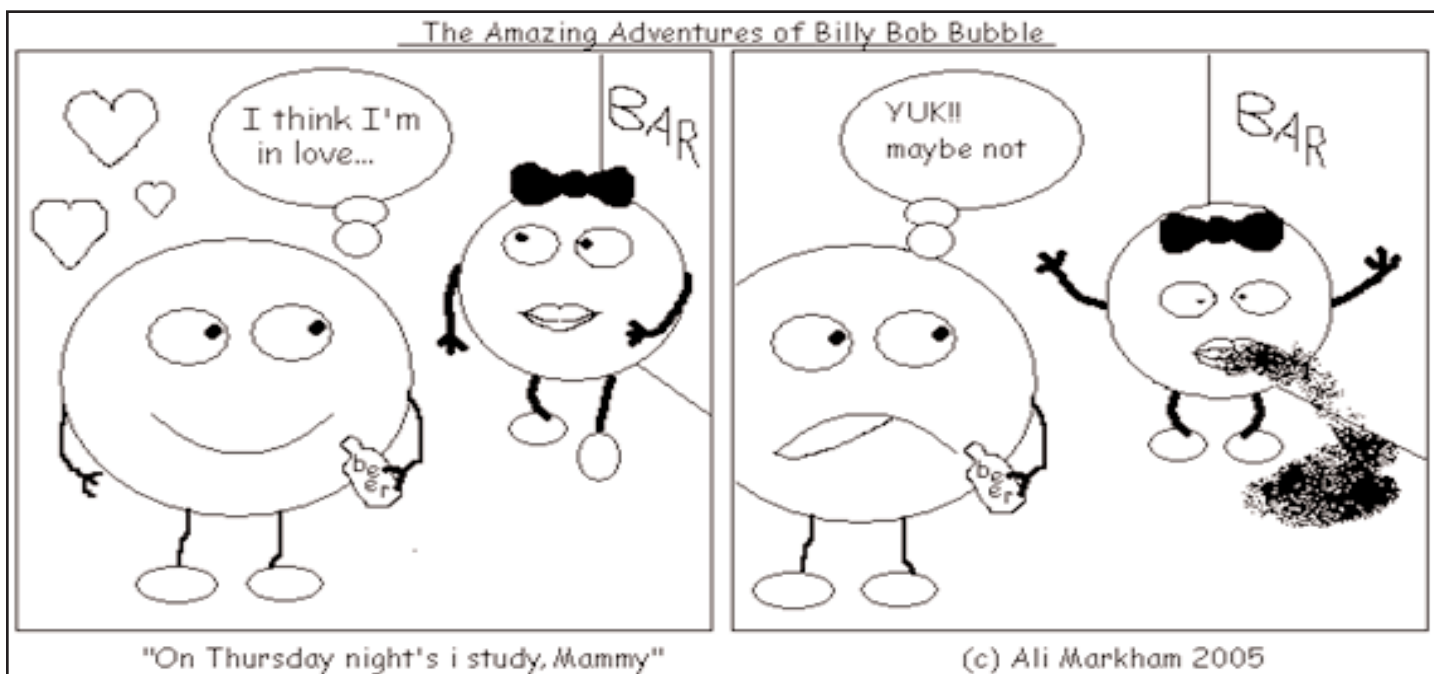
Fellow housemate Christina Jones walked in to her friend's room last week to find Miss Crowe sitting on her bed singing and gazing out the window. "As soon as I walked in she got up and pressed play on her hi-fi," remembers Miss Joyce. "I asked her if she was thinking about doing any study that day and she said 'definitely, as soon as this album finishes'. Well, it was the Complete Greatest Hits of Disney, and she has a CD changer so had all four disks ready to go. Later that day I found her reading one of my engineering books, I mean this has really got to stop."

"There's nothing to worry about," Miss Crowe assured 'An Focal'. "I've just got one or two loose ends to tie up and then I'll get right down to some serious study. Now if you'll excuse me, I don't want to miss the repeat of Emmerdale. I think there were some things I missed the first time I watched it, and it's at such an exciting stage at the moment."

'Limerick Limerick'

this is the last limerick ever
that is written by my fair hand,
hold onto your copy of An Focal
in a few years it'll be worth five grand.

Jean Kent



Sports Talk

Otherwise known as the toy department where those who weren't good enough to make it criticise those who are and generally sit around watching Sky Sports all day. Interested? Read on.

All Hail Benitez, the Destroyer of Pragmatism

Gerard Fitzgibbon

Liverpool's recent victory over Juventus and their ascension into the heights of European Cup semi-finals may bemuse some people. This is Liverpool after all, the same team who have suffered the collective jeers of English football for most of the nineties. The same team whose crowning glories of the last fifteen years have been a plastic treble and a few bold fashion statements. How then, can the champions of tedium, the high protectors of the long ball, suddenly rise to



Rafael Benitez

the Mestalla have become the hallmark of Liverpool FC. He has reformed the club, squeezing talent out of unheralded players and successfully incorporating new faces into the grander model of the team. Jamie Carragher, a Jack-of-all-trades under Houllier, has become an outstanding centre-half. Igor Biscan, Stevie Finnan and John Arne Riise have all improved dramatically under the Spaniard, with the explosive (if erratic) Luis Garcia and the superb Xabi Alonso augmenting the new European astuteness of the club. From being a club in anguish under Houllier, Benitez' perfectionism has instilled new life, and the benefits are clear.

The victory over Juventus paid perfect witness to the 'Rafalution'. Heading into the second leg at the Delle Alpi with a 2-1 aggregate lead, Benitez' men were in a dangerous position. The Italian press, champions of de facto xenophobia, forecasted a typical



Benitez and Fernando Morientes

'English' performance from Liverpool; spirited, passionate but utterly fruitless. The 1-0 home win is an Italian national treasure, after all. What actually transpired astounded many. Liverpool were enduring and rational in a 0-0 draw. They answered every question that the Bianconeri asked. Organised, solid and efficient, the performance in Turin encompassed everything that Benitez is seeking to instil into Anfield.

Problems remain, however. An inherent inability to transfer European form to the Premiership is Benitez' main dilemma. Calm organisation is perfect when faced with Pavel Nedved, but Geoff Horsfield kicking you up in the air is a different gravy altogether. European intelligence will not always stand you in good stead at Fratton Park. Likewise, the issue of Steven Gerrard is a problem that I have discussed before. The club captain, so used to carrying the cause alone under Houllier, is struggling to adapt into an environment of controlled football. This is indeed similar to the Michael Owen situation last summer. Do not be surprised if Stevie G faces a similar outcome.

Whilst there is still major work to be done at Anfield, the initial signs are promising. Benitez' major success has been his ability to transform the basic dynamic of a squad that is largely the same as the one Houllier ran into the ground. His ability to incorporate patient, precise and proficient ideals into a team so used to a route-one style of play must be commended. Problems are still evident, and must be addressed. However, the fact of the matter remains that if Gerard Houllier was given six years Rafael Benitez should be given twenty.

the dizzying heights of the Champions League? At first glance, you would think it was just an overbearing pox. However, the evidence is mounting. Liverpool are moving forward. Whisper it quietly, but the seeds of success have been planted at Anfield. The Kop faithful are starting to smell wisps of victory. And we all know who is responsible. To claim that the situation at Anfield has been distressing over the last decade is an understatement. Gerard Houllier, for all his merits, brought the club to a point of fracture. Liverpool fans, brought up on the gusto and glory of the 1970's and 1980's, bore witness to some of the most mind numbingly pragmatic football in recent history under the Frenchman. All the while, the Liverpool board stood idle, believing that foreign managers were the wave of the future, and Houllier needed only time and money to succeed. Dabbles of success and flashes of victory were hollow trophies that nonetheless held Houllier intact.

However, after six years and over £150 million, the board gave in and sacked Houllier, not out of eternal wisdom, but realising instead that the ransacking of Anfield by belligerent scousers was a distinct possibility. What happened next was possibly the shrewdest appointment in football since Martin O'Neill crossed the border. Rafael Benitez, the man who led Valencia to two Primera Liga titles in three years, along with the UEFA cup in 2004, was called in to repair the ailing club's fortunes. Working from the bones of a talented but dispirited squad, he began to incorporate a new wave of intelligence into Liverpool's style of play. No more repeatedly hitting cow's arses with banjos.

The patient, organised and efficient football that characterised Benitez' stint at

Has Romanticism Sold Out?

By Gerard Fitzgibbon

Apathy. We see it every day, from failing to vote in the Coke referendum because 'you can't be arsed', or abstaining from the walk to Champs because Home and Away is starting. Fair enough. However, when applied to a situation involving millions of euro and the hopes and dreams of thousands of people, Apathy can cause a marked descent into chaos. This is the gravity of the situation at Real Madrid. Fiorentina Perez' real-life game of Championship Manager is now falling apart at the seams, entirely due to a wholehearted lack of desire on the part of the much-heralded 'Los Galacticos'. Ageing legs will tire, spent lungs will become exhausted, but when the mind no longer focuses, the jig is most definitely up. Some



Are the glory days gone for Real Madrid

may snigger at the demise of Real Madrid, a juggernaut so infatuated with winning the race that it forgot to tie its shoelaces. Even so, one cannot help but draw a sorrowing parallel between the situation at the Santiago Bernabeu and the greater dynamic of modern European football. Has everything we love about the beautiful game been crushed under the weight of enormous pay packets?

We can all try and pinpoint the precise moment when money became more important than football. Was it February 1979, when Trevor Francis became the first one million pound footballer? Not really. Was it the inauguration of the commercialised Champions League in 1992 to take over from the traditional European Cup? Perhaps. There have arguably been many contributing factors, but the specific moment when football ceased to be a sport and became a business was in 1996, when a relatively unknown Belgian footballer cited Article 48 of the Treaty of Rome in order to gain a free transfer from RFC Liege to French club Dunkerque. His name was Jean-Marc Bosman. His case was the most defining moment in the history of contractual football since Jimmy Hill successfully lobbied for the removal of the salary cap in 1961, aided no doubt by his ominously imposing chin. Bosman marked a new era for football, where player power is now driven entirely by fiscal gain. The growing trend of top players waiting out their contracts, joining the club that offers the most money and leaving their previous employers more red-faced than Sir Alex on a warm day has become depressingly abundant.

Since Bosman, the commercial floodgates have swung open, flattening the old truths of loyalty and pride. We turn on our TV and David Beckham is modelling a new razor blade (whilst worryingly sporting two diamond earrings). Roberto Carlos and Ronaldinho wear Viking helmets and pleated skirts whilst pummelling actors with cans of Pepsi. Wonderful for advertising purposes, but nonetheless underpinning the intrinsic reality that money has become the driving force in their careers. They are not alone. The emergence of a wealth-driven hierarchy in European club football has diminished the impact that old-fashioned romanticism can now have in domestic and European competitions. A few odd seeding systems in the Champions League will not change this.

Real Madrid is the ultimate personification of this principle. No team has exerted as high a profile both on and off the pitch in the last six years than Los Merengues, where President Florentino Perez has engrained ideals of grandeur into every facet of the club. His policy of signing the highest profile players in the world as the embodiment of his vision of a 'superclub' was driven entirely by monetary gain. Some may dispute this, but the fact of the matter remains that selling Claude Makelele and replacing him with David Beckham was both the height of arrogance and ignorance. Cracking the Far East merchandise market is clearly more important than a solid midfield. Perez' wholehearted disdain for the practical realities of football has filtered down into the playing squad, which is now rife with a lethargy that is cemented by spectacular bank balances.

Is there any hope for old-fashioned passion and resolve? The future, to state it bluntly, does not look good. The decline of the international game, embodied by the deserved but entirely disgusting victory of Greece in the European Championships last year is another high profile example of player apathy. The dangers of fiscal poisoning in the game are indeed rampant, and I would be lying if I said I knew where the spiral into the rabbit hole would end. We can only hope that raw desire at grass-roots level can overcome commercial affluence before the beautiful game ceases to be so beautiful.



Real-Madrid Players who seem to spend more time shooting commercials than playing football

Summertime is on its way and with it the start of the All Ireland Championships. We look ahead and see what's in store for the year of 2005.

By Cathal O'Flaherty

Football

The men from the Kingdom are the defending champions and we start in **Munster**, where Kerry will have the hard route to glory, with every prospective game away from home. Starting away to Tipperary, a meeting with Limerick awaits them in the semi-final, where last year's hard fought and very ugly battle will be rejoined. Limerick missed their best chance of beating Kerry last year, and you get the feeling that psychologically they're not ready to take the next step. Cork will use Waterford for target practice before meeting Kerry in Pairc Ui Chaoimh. Cork were beyond awful in Killarney last year and are much improved, but not enough. **Kerry** to retain their crown.

There are rumblings from the east of a new force rising, and in **Leinster** this year Wexford are the name on everyone's lips. Their major test will be in the semi-final, where Meath or Dublin lie in wait. If they can hold their nerve against either, they will be set fair for provincial glory. I don't see it however, because Sean Boylan's **Meath** are moving nicely and can recapture former glories. Laois have gone backwards since their historic victory two years ago, while Westmeath are struggling badly and will look to the qualifiers as the most likely chance of a prolonged

summer. As for the Dubs, well, barring another cushy route to the quarter-final, this could be the shortest summer yet for the mentally fragile boys in blue.

Connacht will see **Mayo** play Galway in the final with the rest nowhere. The guess here is that John Maughan's men will run the increasingly jaded looking Galway team off the field.

And so to Ulster, home of the blanket defence and anti football tactics according to conventional wisdom. Don't be fooled by the label however, as some cracking games will take place up north this year. Armagh v Fermanagh, the winners v Donegal and Tyrone v Down are mouth watering prospects. No team has won Ulster from the preliminary round, which rules out Armagh and Fermanagh. Derry were lucky to make an

All Ireland semi-final last year and certainly won't do so this year. Down are progressing nicely but have a ways to go, while Donegal's heads haven't been

right for quite some time now. All of which leaves **Tyrone** poised to recapture their crown.

Joining Mayo, Kerry, Tyrone and Meath in the quarter finals will be Armagh, Cork, Galway and Donegal. The winners will come from the big three, and the feeling here is that Jack O'Connor is wily and resourceful enough to make **Kerry** the first back to back All-Ireland winners for the first time since Cork in 1989/90.

Hurling

Leinster will be won by **Kilkenny**, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Offaly simply aren't strong enough as yet, while Wexford will be dreading the backlash from last year's smash and grab raid against the Cats in Croke Park. Dublin are moving in the wrong direction.

Put the house on **Antrim** in **Ulster**.

The main business will be taking

place down south, and there is much to savour in **Munster** this year. Tipperary v Limerick in the quarter-finals bring together two teams searching for an identity, and while the form is great by neither, it seems as if Tipp are further down the road to discovery. That will bring them to another thunderous joust with Clare, and while Clare fell flat against Waterford last year, that won't happen here. The marquis matchup will be in Semple between Cork and Waterford. Both teams coasted through the league with one eye on this titanic clash and you could go back on forth on a likely winner all day. A hunch tells this pundit that Cork will reverse last year's result. Which leaves the Banner county and the Rebels to do battle on Munster final day. There's an awful lot to admire about Clare and the way Anthony Daly has recast his ageing greats, but **Cork** should have too much for them in a championship setting.

Galway come into the picture at this stage, but they're no nearer to winning an All-Ireland now than five years ago and Eugene Cloonan can only take them so far.

The feeling here is that another claustrophobic **Cork-Kilkenny** final awaits us, and Cats will be gunning for revenge. They'll get it.



Will all the action be in Munster this coming Summer?

In the end it went out with a whimper. It was predicted and as ever the bookies got it right. The grassroots of the GAA finally had their voice heard at the top table of Gaelic Games administration and in the warped world of GAA democracy, the majority finally won out.

Reminders of Bolshevik Russia don't come much greater than the notion of the GAA protecting its own little state from all the nasty influences of the outer sects that have tried to invade and infiltrate and inherit all the great players the GAA has grown into a worth appreciable by the fee paying codes of soccer and rugby. Try as they might to keep the shutters down on the outside world-where kids swap O'Neill's footballs for Nike ones on a daily basis and children enthusiastically attempt to ape Boris Becker at the first sight of strawberries and cream from Wimbledon-they couldn't act dumb and longer

By and large the GAA is good but what's good in practice isn't necessarily so in theory.

Because in practice at least, teams of All-Stars touring the sunnier outposts of foreign continents have held exhibitions on rugby pitches while low and behold the great warriors of the International Rules series have parachuted themselves on to the wicket crease of the MCC in Australia. A cricket pitch! Despite the relatively close co-ordinates involved in the playing of cricket and hurling-i.e. the use of a bat and a ball-cricket and the GAA couldn't be much further removed. Cricketers of Eton could never

Rule 42-The Aftermath

by Brendan Coffey

bring themselves to mix with the hurlers from the vocational schools of Galway.

Still the theory persisted all those long years when comb-overs and high Nellie bicycles were intrinsic elements of the ruling classes of the GAA. Thou shalt not enter the gates of GAA heaven. Croke Park is reserved for Gaelic Games, American football, Neil Diamond, Tina Turner, Ceili Dancing, U2...

While Tony Cascarino was lying about the exact details of his nationality, the thought of being able to play in Croke Park hardly caused him restless nights. Croke Park was then by and large of similarly substandard stadium material as Landsdowne is now. The boys of Blackrock and the fellas of Finglas and the culchies of Clarecastle never regaled each other. Soccer and rugby could cohabit but only when the other half was away. The GAA got busy on the Northside.

While Croke Park transformed itself into an amphitheatre fit for a king, Landsdowne lurched along on match days like the clapped out darts that frequented the station alongside.

Slowly but surely running out of space, painfully trying to negotiate improvements.

Dreams of Eircom Park were just that. Asbestos nightmares were all too real.

So the GAA got the job done. Everything is magnificent as the suits stock up on food and contacts in the corporate boxes. Going to a box is in vogue for international business class. Golf courses are no place to cut deals and woo clients anymore.

And yet still soccer and rugby were kept outside. The Prime Minister of South Korea and the Prime Pussy of English Pop Robbie Williams could come and be pampered. But soccer and rugby dare not kick a ball in anger. The reasons remain rooted in the past and regardless of right and wrong a majority had called for change long since. The motions for change came from the bottom but just as quickly they were sent scuttling back down from the top.

Extra money available but things are under control, the GAA didn't need it and anyway the competition is ultimately getting a leg

up. All very well but the Playstation is the greatest competitor along with a host of other dangerous foes like alcohol, women and McDonalds. In GAA parlance at least a number of promising young male players have been said to have "gone chasing women".

And yes the money is needed. There's debts to be paid and an ancient game in danger of distinction. Grave danger.

Because while Wexford can have a renaissance in football, you could hardly see the same happening to the Dublin hurling team on current form. So yes money please and lots of it because soccer and rugby should pay well for their collective incompetence.

Top class sport needs a stage. Having great rugby and soccer games in Croke Park is what this nation needs. Better chance to get tickets and better stadium to show the world. Better facilities to wow the players.

Because in 50 years time when O'Driscoll talks about the time he captained Ireland to a Grand Slam (hopefully) he'll remember where he did it more than anything. The wonderful spectacle that Croke Park was and how its awesome beauty inspired him to victory. And we'll smile to ourselves as we watch Reeling in The Years and gulp back mouthfuls of pride as we watch Croke Park host a winning Irish team. And we'll thank the GAA for its gift to the nation.

SPORTS QUIZ

- Question 1** Which golf course will host this year's Nissan Irish Open?
- Question 2** Who was recently named PFA Player of the year in England?
- Question 3** How many of the Grand Nationals did Ruby Walsh win this year? (i.e. of the Irish, English, Scottish and Welsh).
- Question 4** What club does DJ Carey play for?
- Question 5** Who is the president elect of the GAA?
- Question 6** How many years is it since Chelsea last won an English Championship?
- Question 7** In what year did Ken Doherty win the Snooker World Championship?
- Question 8** Who trains Moscow Flyer?
- Question 9** What will the new Tier 3 All-Ireland Hurling Championship be known as?
- Question 10** What club does Irish rugby player Trevor Brennan play for?

Here's what won't happen (probably) but in the esteemed view of the An Focal sports team, these things really should happen.

An Focal Sports' 10

- Brian O'Driscoll will make a shock transfer to Stade Francais in time for next season. The Ireland captain cites tough Irish anti-pimping laws as his reason for moving to Paris.
- Chelsea FC announces a six-year, £15 million sponsorship deal with Pedigree Chum. At a press conference, Chief Exec Peter Kenyon says, "Chelsea already play and smell like top dogs, now we can eat like them too".
- The Ashley Cole 'tapping up' case will act as a new watershed in European football. The FA will put in place new regulations that restrict illegal meetings from taking place in Oriental, Indian or Mexican restaurants. However, hotel bars, lap dancing clubs and broom closets are deemed legitimate locations.
- Next season, the Setanta Cup is expanded to include the Scottish and Welsh First divisions. It was suggested that the bottom half of the SPL be invited, but the organisers decide to keep the quality level relatively high.
- The NHL final between Clare and Kilkenny sees no fewer than 14 players yellow carded and both sides run out of hurls because they keep breaking them off the opposition. Neither team registers any score, but Clare are declared winners by virtue of having more players correctly identify how many fingers the referee is holding up. Both managers describe the game as 'tough but fair'.
- Clive Woodward springs a surprise name to start the Lions first test vs. New Zealand. He justifies the selection saying 'Jonny Wilkinson is a class act and his crutches and cast

SPL= Europe's finest...

Well maybe not but its still more exciting then the premiership.

By Dominic Hewson

Better players? Yes, better Quality? Definitely, more money? It goes without saying, but I still wouldn't trade last Sunday's old firm title decider for a whole season of the sleep inducing English Premiership. The SPL has its deriders and well it might but there was more passion, fire and excitement inside Ibrox stadium that day then there has been in a year of watching Chelsea stroll towards the top prize in England just as we viewed Arsenal through matchstick supported eyelids do so the season past.

Don't get me wrong I love a good Premiership game as much as the next man, and if you happen to support Chelsea I'm sure this has been the most wonderful season in living memory, but don't give me all that nonsense about it being the most exciting league in the world, they say Scotland is a two horse race, well that's twice as many horses as those running in England for the previous two years. And you know it's been a poor year entertainment wise when the end of season drama is focused solely on the relegation battle and the manager of the would be Champions expresses a desire for the team in second to win so they can pick up the title at home. Pitiful when you think about it.

Now Celtic's 2-1 victory over Rangers, that's how to settle a championship, passion, commitment, desire... loathing. They say football and politics/religion don't mix, and maybe they shouldn't but they do and it sure makes for a spectacle. Think Barca, Real and the political tension passed down from the Spanish civil war or Lazio, Livorno and the fascist vs. socialist connotations associated with the fixture and the subsequent clash of ideologies not on the battle field, but on the football pitch, the kinds of occasions sport was made for. Perhaps you disagree, fair enough but it beats the hell out of so called English "derbies" where rival fans go home holding hands.

The quality on display was also of a higher class then you might think with Bellamy, Lennon, Petrov and Sutton showing just why they would grace any stage in the game, well what would you expect from a team who over the last four years have collected the following scalps: Ajax, Porto, Juventus, Valencia, Blackburn, Celta Vigo, Stuttgart Liverpool, Boavista, Lyon, and Barcelona. A lot has also been said about the supposed "quality" of the English game and I have to laugh when I hear it described as the best league in Europe. Quick fact, this season there will be an English team in the final for only the second time in twenty years, lets put that in perspective there were two Spanish clubs in the 2000 final and two Italian clubs in the 2003 final for that mater, and I don't mean to rub it in but Romania's Steau Bucharest have been to more finals in this period then any English team. Still the media in England will have you believe that we are being treated to the best football fare Gods green earth has to offer.

While it is true that the SPL really isn't the greatest league in Europe (there are probably teams in Luxemburg who could give Livingstone a run for their money) at least the fans know its poor and the love for their club and distaste for another keeps them coming back, how many full houses do you think Man U or Chelsea would expect if the Winter fixture list read: Dundee, Kilmarnock, Inverness, Dunfermline etc... Well I don't think you'd have to remove your socks to count them anyway.

So when the English season finally stutters to its mind numbingly predictable close and the hype begins to mount on the one forthcoming, you'll forgive me if my attention turns north of the border where there's still a residue of the old fervour, feeling, and most importantly emotion that used to mark pre Sky British football out from the rest the world had to offer.

shouldn't affect his performance. Despite Wilkinson being pronounced dead after Jonah Lomu steps on him, Woodward picks him to start the second test. The Lions sneak a last minute victory when Ronan O'Gara dropkicks Wilkinson from 30 yards out.

- In a classic Ulster final, Armagh beat Tyrone with a last gasp Steven McDonnell point. Final Score: Armagh 0-01 Tyrone 0-00. The referee is awarded man of the match.
- José Mourinho causes further controversy by claiming that Man Utd fans are 'fair-weather supporters who only sing when they're winning'. With death threats hanging over him, José decides to get as far away from United supporters as possible...by hiding out in Manchester.
- Cian O Connor appeals against his disqualification from the Olympics. He claims that Waterford Crystal moon walking between fences was 'just a sign of a healthy horse'. The appeal fails. Rumours that Michelle Smith is being lined up as O Connor's mount for the next Olympics are as yet unconfirmed.
- The knobs in the sports section are too lazy to think up a tenth item for the An Focal Sports ten. Sports editor Brendan Coffey is asked about this unusual move. "My main passions in life are cursing and drinking so f**k off and let me enjoy my pint".



Letters to the Editor



Celtic & Rangers: The Reality

We the UL Celtic Supporters Club would like the opportunity to reply to Cathal O Flaherty's article 'Rangers & Celtic- A cover for religious bigots'. In the 'SPL is S**t' we are told people know how he feels about the religious aspect of this fixture, but the more pressing aspect is the lack of quality in the SPL. We don't care if he thinks the SPL is S**t, that is his opinion and he is entitled to it, but we do take issue with asserting that Celtic are a front for bigotry.

Celtic is more than just another football club; it is an institution which, despite its changing face and increasing commercialization, remains for millions across the world, an extended family and a way of life. Celtic is relatively unique for a football club in that it has a Social Mission Statement, which defines what the club stands for, and seeks to promote within society. Celtic FC has no political agenda, and is for people who want to support a club that strives to maximize all opportunities to disassociate the club from sectarianism and bigotry of any kind and to promote Celtic as a club for all people, regardless of sex, age, religion, race or ability. Finn (1994) argues the prejudice displayed towards Irish Catholic immigrants in Scotland was also reflected in football. Culture, tradition, nationalism, religion and politics were linked to the establishment and evolution of many clubs in Scotland, but was predominant in the case of Rangers who up until the signing of Maurice Johnston as recently as 1989 had refused to employ Catholics. In contrast Celtic have always employed people irrespective of their background, with some of their greatest players & managers being protestant. So I'm afraid if "football is being used as an excuse to legitimise sectarian bigotry on the part of a pretty large number of people" it is not on both sides of the old-firm divide.

The article mentioned the "vile chants and threats that spew forth from the terraces". While Rangers fans sing of "being up to their knees in fenian blood" there are no songs sung at Celtic park that talk of killing protestants or with racial or religious overtones. The debate over singing political songs at a football game is well voiced but to speak of such songs as sectarian is incorrect. The word sectarian is repeatedly misused in the media to encompass the singing of such songs as it 'proves' both sides of the old-firm are as bad as each other. They are not. The Cambridge dictionary defines 'Sectarian' as "(a person) strongly supporting a particular religious group, especially in such a way as not to be willing to accept other beliefs", therefore sectarianism is to do with religious prejudice. While it is painfully obvious that songs such as 'no pope of Rome' are sectarian in the dictionary sense of the word, the same cannot be said of the songs of Celtic football supporters.

In relation to Ricksen being stuck on the head by coins (a despicable act perpetrated by a tiny minority of idiots), apparently "what made the incident all the more depressing was how utterly predictable it was". Why was it predictable? The supporters of Celtic football Club were presented by UEFA, with an award for their behaviour and sportsmanship; the first time such an award has been given to football supporters. The governing body of world football, FIFA followed UEFA's lead and recognised Celtic fans with their FIFA Fair Play Award for 2003. This suggests that Celtic fans are held to be

the epitome of respectability by the ruling authorities of both European and World football, so saying Celtic fans throwing coins is "predictable" is simply not true.

The main 'source' used was message boards from the internet but you cannot generalize from the rantings of a few extremists on the internet to the millions of Celtic supporters worldwide. For example there are postings on various Aryan websites from Irish people spewing vile stuff about asylum seekers in this country. Generalizing in the same way the article did, would imply all Irish people hold these views, which would be nonsense. When stating "The fact that a football club with a long and proud history has become a focal point for these extremists is extremely sad", the article again generalises from the few to the many which is illogical. By all means air views on the standard of football in the SPL but do not make blind accusations about a matter as serious as religious bigotry with half arsed facts to base the article on. The answer to whether Celtic is a cover for religious bigotry is emphatically no!!

UL Celtic Supporters Club Committee

Stop the Spam! *

Dear Ed,

This subtle little movement has taken place in our college that is irking the hell out of me!

When did it become standard for us to fill each other's email accounts (which, as we all know have poxy storage limits) with random emails? Whatever happened to notice boards?

These days if 'Wolfgang' has lost the bracelet his grandmother left to him, or if 'Majella' has a "deadly" house with a spare room near the lodge, we all have to hear about it.

Worse yet are those 'conscience' emails sent by frustrated student preachers.

No offence 'Brian' but I don't need a cheesy poem written by a Dallas housewife in 1997 to convince me not to drink and drive. And Kevin, whilst I'm massively impressed that a friend of yours happens to know an Attorney (ohhh, the kudos!), this attorney knows jack shit about the Law if she believes Bill Gates will be coerced into giving a few 'forwarding-happy' U.L heads ten grand.

You know who you are people....

Yvonne Deane

* Names have been changed to protect the identity of these eejits.

Postgraduate News

It's that time of year again when the PSA presidency is up for grabs. Sorcha has had a great year but is moving on. Read her account of what's involved and maybe you might be the one to carry on the torch...

My Year as PSA President

My name is Sorcha Keogan and I was this year's postgraduate representative for this academic year. If you are a postgraduate student & you are interested in the position of PSA president please feel totally free to call to the PSA office anytime with any questions what so ever or alternatively you can email me on sorcha.keogan@ul.ie.

Below is a rough guide of what the position entails, though the position depends very much on the individual & there is serious room for new ideas & energy:

- There are 2 major elements: representation and entertainment/interactive integration.
- There is also a personal side to the association, in which you will to meet with students individually to discuss their problems & issue. The problems & issue you will encounter vary in nature..
- The PSA represents postgrads on University Committees like Academic Council, Governing Authority and other boards.
- Entertainments are organized by yourself & the PSA committee throughout the year. The variety of events will differ greatly as to cater for various tastes. Some events will be small for particular interests and others will be for larger groups like barbeques, table quizzes, the Ball and music gigs.
- The PSA has its own centre located in the corner of the Stable's Courtyard, here you'll find a haven for postgrads. This need to be managed & kept in coffee at all time!!!!There are newspapers/magazines and tea and coffee facilities.
- Update website & update Post grad page in An focal to keep post grads as informed as possible.
- Administer financial Aid.
- Chair PSA executive and general meetings. In addition you will act as the principle initiator of policy for the PSA.
- Sit on SU executive
- Sit on Class rep Council.
- Keep PSA Accounts

Think about it. It is a chance to learn new things, meet new people, and work with your peers and a year to work toward the change you want to see.

All the best,
Sorcha



Attention : Post Grads

- Want to do something different next year?
- Want to meet new people?
- Want to work with other young people?
- Want to run social event?
- Want a challenge?
- Want to gain administrative & managerial experience?
- Want to help your peers?
- Want to work within the University sphere?
- Want to change elements of Post grad student life?

If so then the position of PSA president could be for **YOU**.

- Nominations open: Tuesday May 3rd.
- Nominations close: Monday 9th, 5pm.

Clubs & Societies News

Enda Kenny san Ollscoil!

Tháinig Enda Kenny, nó Eanna Ó Cionnaith mar is fearr leis aithne a bheith aige air, chugainn ar an Déardaoin de Sheachtain 10. Bhí Ógra Fine Gael an-bhródúil gur tháinig sé ar cuairt agus rinne baill an Chumainn a lán oibre chun an oíche a chur le chéile. D'fhan coiste an Chumainn don tUasal Uí Chionnaith ag an Teach Bán agus tháinig an cuairteoir luath ag a sé a chlog, é chomh fuinniúil greannmhar agus a bhí riamh! Leanamar ar aghaidh linn chuig FG042 agus bhí slua mór ag fanacht ann dúinn. Thosaigh ár gcuairteoir ag caint faoi thodhchaí na tíre agus an Rialtas atá againn anois. Bhí am don ceistean-na tar éis a chuid chainte agus níor chuir sé na ceistean-na deacra ar ceall. Chuir duine amháin ceist air faoi dhúmharfóirí an Gharda Gerry McCabe agus tháinig fearg air faoin rud uafásach sin. Dúirt sé nach mbeadh na daoine a mharaigh garda saor faoina Rialtas agus nach ndearna siad rud ar bith ar son na tíre nuair a mharaigh siad an Garda McCabe. Thug an slua bualadh bos mór dó tar éis an ráiteas sin! D'fhan sé i ndiaidh an chruinniú ag

labhairt le daoine agus sheas sé do ghrianghraif. Ansin d'imigh sé go dtí na Stáblaí agus fuair sé bualadh bos ó na mic léinn nuair a shiúl sé isteach san áit. Chaith sé an-chuid am ag labhairt leo faoi ábhair éagsúla. Tar éis tamaill, bhí air fágáil ach d'fhág sé daoine ag labhairt faoin 12ú Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, nuair a d'imigh sé!!

Duais Aitheantais

Bhronn Síne Nic an Ailí Duais Aitheantais Aonad na Gaeilge ar Ógra Fine Gael agus Cumann Naomh Uinsean de Pól araon an tseachtain seo caite. Is fiú €400 an duais agus roinneadh go cothrom idir an dá Chumann as ucht a gcuid oibre ar son na Gaeilge i mbliana. Táim an-bhródúil as an duais a bhualadh agus is rud iontach é don Ghaeilge sa pháirtí. Míle buíochas le Stiúrthóir Aonad na Gaeilge, Deirdre Ní Loingsigh, as an onóir seo agus le Síne as ucht a cabhrach!

Brendán Ó hÉamhaigh
Oifigeach na Gaeilge,
Ógra Fine Gael OL
Rúnaí Choiste na Gaeilge,
Ógra Fine Gael.



Rúnaí ar Choiste Nua na Gaeilge

Ainmníodh Brendán Ó hÉamhaigh, Oifigeach Gaeilge Ógra Fine Gael anseo in Ollscoil Luimnigh, mar Rúnaí ar an gCoiste Gaeilge nua de chuid Ógra Fine Gael. Is é an t-aon duine agus an chéad duine sa phost seo sa pháirtí agus measann sé gur rud iontach é. 'Táim an-bhródúil as an bpost nua mar táim ábalta an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn ar an stáitse náisiúnta anois. Is as mo pholasáí féin a d'fhorbair an Coiste seo. Fuair mé an post mar Oifigeach Gaeilge Ógra Fine Gael sa bhliain 2003 agus ón am sin i leith, bhí mé ag obair go crua chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa pháirtí go ginearálta agus sa bhainse seo in Ollscoil Luimnigh.' Comhghairdeas a Bhrendáin!

UL Badminton Club

The annual Munster league was played in the arena on Sunday the 24th of April. Our division 4 team participated in the event against a competitive team from Killarney. Beginning with men's doubles, Kieran Forde and Danny McInerney took on a strong Kerry duo. They were very unlucky to lose this match. Next in line was the ladies doubles and sisters Elaine and Catherine O'Connell took to the court. After a thrilling match, going to three sets, U.L took their first match. The men's and ladies singles were next on the agenda. Patrick Aherne showed off his skills on court, winning an easy match. Caroline Kenny was very unlucky being defeated in the ladies singles after a very close match.

It was neck and neck going into the mixed doubles with the score sheet reading 2-

2 to both teams. Patrick Aherne and Elaine O'Connell were unfortunate to lose their match while Kieran Forde and Catherine O'Connell took a resounding victory over their opponents. It was down to the third and final mixed. Unfortunately, despite a great game of badminton, Damien Flynn and Caroline Kenny were very unlucky not to win this match. The final score read 4-3 to Killarney.

A good day out and perhaps we'll have better luck next year! The division 3/4 team throughout the year was: Ger Fitzpatrick, Patrick Aherne, Kieran Forde, Danny McInerney, Elaine O'Connell, Angela Carmody, Catherine O'Connell. Thanks to Damien Flynn and Caroline Kenny who joined the team on Sunday as Ger and Ange were unable to play.

Things are beginning to wind down lately for the UL Waterpolo club, as the men's team played their last match of the National League against UCC last Monday, and they were unlucky not to come away with points, although they played a great match against UCC. The women's team was left disappointed when St. Vincent's of Dublin failed to travel to UL a few weeks ago.

Congratulations to both Michelle Fitzpatrick and Rosie Rodgers who represents both UL and Ireland in the recent Celtic Nations Varsities Competition in Galway, Michelle and Rosie both competed in the swimming and Ireland came out 1st overall in the event beating stiff competitions from both the Scottish and Welsh teams.

Congratulations also to the men in the club who com-

UL Waterpolo



Winning Polo Team!

Although the exams are approaching ULKC are still. With a few river runs, river safety training and even a polo competition ULKC were as busy as ever. Everyone is having fun and presently we are planning for our trip to the spectacular Alps!

As river safety is always our main priority when completing any river, we thought it would be necessary to update our members on how to react in certain situations. It was a

great success and we have had four of them since the last article. That's some pretty intense river training! We practised on four different rivers-one course on the Castleconnell River, one on Plassey River and two in the mighty Clare Glens! At the moment we are still completing more courses, and our members are getting on superbly! Well done guys, swimming in those freezing rivers is not an easy thing to do!

On addition to this some of our first years have been practising their new found skills on the River Deel. They had fun and learnt even more during this trip! The leaders as per usual were on top form and they really did help and guide newer members marvelously down that cool River! Well done to all that attended and all who swam and tried again!

Final news on this club's events has to be about our latest in the Limerick National Polo competition which took place on Saturday and Sunday (23rd+24th April). Members entered in all three divisions. It was extremely well organised and it went off without a hitch. It really was a fun weekend, which resulted in

two of our teams making it to the final against one another! The teams battled valiantly against each other until eventually the so-called Polo "Puffs" won! It was a great match and was super fun! That was in division three! In division two our members also took the glory and won their division! They were as majestic as swans on the pitch! UL may sound greedy but we can't help it if we are that good! In division one our members didn't come out on top but they did play some crackers of a games. No one could keep up with the pace of their games! It was amazing! Overall it was a brilliant weekend, it wasn't about the winning it was all about the fun!

At the moment ULKC are planning their summer trip to the Alps. There is lots of preparation at the moment and everyone is busy out! If you would like come down to the pool for a bit of craic and paddling then we are always there Tuesday-Thursday nights at 9.50-11.00. Or check out our message board on <http://kayak.csn.ul.ie/>. Best of luck to everyone in the exams!

UL Snatch Sixth Varsity Title In A Row

In a thrilling contest at the Irishtown Stadium on Dublin's south side, UL made it six varsity titles in a row in one of the most hotly contested varsity championships in a decade. The recently-opened stadium played host to a spirited UCD display that saw them snatch the men's title, while falling just short of breaking UL's winning streak in the overall contest that reaches back as far as Belfast 1999. The final results table saw just 8 points separating the sides, 197 to 189 - with 7 points for a win in each event, the packed weekend of competition couldn't have had a much tighter conclusion.

UL ladies scrapped the form-book when they bounced back from their indoor loss in December to claim the ladies trophy. Having been separated from serious silverware since Galway 2003, the UL ladies put in one of their most consistent performances in years - scoring in 20 of the 23 events. It was team captain Sarah Cormack and veteran multi-eventer Rosie Daniels that led the way on the points scoring front. Both ladies put on a display of athletic diversity, picking up points in both track and field events. Cormack clocked up 13 points in total between the javelin, discuss, pole-vault



The winning ULAC team at the Irishtown Stadium

and high-jump. Daniels contributed a whopping 24 points, including a great win in the high jump, silver in the shot and triple jump, and victory in the multi-events - reflective of her all round talent. In the long-distance events, ULAC were involved in two particularly noteworthy achievements. Siobhán O'Doherty picked up two excellent bronze medals in the 3000m and 5000m. And Michelle Harvey was involved in a small bit of history by grabbing second place in the first ever ladies 3000m steeplechase held in this country.

In the men's competition, a nail-biting climax to the competition saw UL scrambling for points in the

relays in order to peg back a late UCD surge. All day Saturday the captains of both clubs, Maurice Donohue of UL and Ruari O'Briain of UCD, were plotting and totting up interim points totals as the results came through. In the end it came down to UL's dominance in sprints and jumps against UCD's formidable throwers and long-distance crew. UCD just held the day. In the long-distance events, the Belfield team picked up 20 points to UL's zero. Their specialist throwers overwhelmed the UL multi-eventers 34 points to 12. However, in the blue-ribbon sprinting events, UL were in inspired form. Graham and McCarthy were at their usual

medal-winning best. Donohue and Carney displayed that they will be a force to be reckoned with over both the long and short hurdles in the years to come. This speed transferred to the relays where UL took both the 4x100m and the 4x400m in two phenomenally exciting races. UL took the jumping events by almost double scores, Doyle, Burke, and Houlihan picking up medals on the way. The middle-distance events also saw consistent runs from UL athletes, boding well for next year's competition.

In the end though, ULAC were happy to settle for just two of the big three trophies. The team showed considerable improvement from a disappointing indoor season. With some strengthening of the squad in key areas, the dark blues will be gunning for the treble next year. The varsity ball provided its usual share of spectacle and controversy. In a shock decision the Irish Universities Athletics Association President, Mr. Stephan Lipson, announced his retirement from his position to a dumb-struck Hilton banquet hall. The announcement provoked shocked exclamations from certain areas. However, the search for a new IUA President adds even further intrigue to next year's athletics season.



Sarah Cormack on her way to a silver in the ladies Pole Vault



Liam Houlihan in the Pole Vault

UL Law Soc

It has been a busy few weeks for the Law Society. At the recent AGM on Wednesday of week 9, a new committee was elected to take over and continue the work of the old committee for the coming academic year. The newly elected committee are as follows:

President Maria Reck

VicePresident

Benjamin Kupka

Secretary Justin Killeen

Treasurer Ulton Folan

PRO Siobhan O'Brien

Law Reform Commission. He is a member of the Irish Human Rights Commission. He was Visiting Fellow at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (Michaelmas Term 2002). He has authored and co-authored books on private international law, torts, and family law and organises the Annual Workshop on Constitutionalism for African Chief Justices and Senior Judiciary, held at the Law School.

On Tuesday of week 11 Mr Justice Karroll Moran of the Circuit Court spoke on "General Practices of the Circuit Court from a Judges Perspective". He qualified as a solicitor in 1970, was called to the Bar in 1975. He was editor of the Irish Law Reports from 1993-1997. He was appointed a Circuit Court Judge in 1997. He sat in Cork Circuit Court until 1998, and then moved to the West Midlands until 2002. He is currently sits in the Southern Circuit Court.

On Tuesday of week 10, the highly acclaimed Professor William Binchy from Trinity College Dublin delivered his paper entitled "Turning the tide against Plaintiffs in Tort Litigation: Recent judicial and Statutory Initiatives". Professor Binchy is a Barrister-at-Law. He is Regius Professor of Laws. He was formerly a special legal adviser to the Irish Department of Justice and Research Counsellor to the



From Left to Right: Ulton Folan, Justin Killeen, Professor William Binchy, Professor Eoin Quill, Maria Reck, Siobhan O'Brien, Benny Kupka.

UL Softball Club

The intervarsity year has officially come to an end and the club ended on a winning note during the UL intervarsity weekend at the beginning of April.

Over the year the club ended up as both the Plate and Bowl Champions. The Originals ended up plate champions while the Dt's are bowl champions. Despite the fact that the college year will shortly

come to a close competitions will continue throughout the summer with tournaments such as Triple I and MIST coming up shortly. The club would like to thank John and Edel for all their work throughout the year and also for organising the trips away.

All who wish to play during the summer are welcome and I would like to thank all the members throughout the year and to all the members of the committee for their hard work and commitment.

UL International Soc

A Trip to Dingle (16-17 April 2005)

I had often heard about Dingle and its picturesque harbour but I don't think that looking at a picture of a place can ever equal you being on the very spot, camera in hand, as you explore the simplicity of the little fishing village, also famous for its numerous craft shops.

Since I had started my day on the wrong foot, waking up at half seven and reaching the coach half dead and breathless, all I needed was a doze of Dingle, the never-ending sandy beach and a good glimpse of the Ring of Kerry to change my mood. The weather befriended us that day and it's not easy for me to write about the lovely hues of the sea and the greenery of the fields under the golden sun. The Blasket Heritage, situated amidst the wildness of Irish landscape was an exhibition I really enjoyed as we were shown a film about the once-existing life on the island of Blasket before the village was evacuated in the fifties. By now, many of us were tired and looking forward to a nice rest at our hostel in the village of Cloghane. When you're with the International Society it is impossible not to make friends with new people and exchange cultures and views; an exercise which helps in

making the experience more memorable. At the beginning of the day each one of us had to pick a small paper from a pouch and perform the task written on it (you can guess what mine was!). Most of the tasks involved pair-work, an excellent way to get to know someone in your group whom you probably never talked to before.

After a good meal of pasta, cooked by our chef, some of us decided to spice up the night with some grooving and a pint at the pub just beside the hostel. However, the next day's programme had to undergo some changes as the rain poured heavily on Co. Kerry. The seven hour hike had to be replaced by a day in Killarney where the group had a guided tour at Muckross House, the Victorian-style building surrounded by a scenery of lakes and gardens. The ancient ruins of the Muckross Friary was our next visit and we explored the roofless chambers in awe under the persisting showers of rain. What followed was an amazing view of the Killarney waterfalls and a hike up the hill until we could see a lovely view of Killarney below us. We ended the day with a coffee in town and a two-hour voyage back to Limerick. I guess this is one trip I will never forget amongst many others with the same society.

UL Windsurfing Club

Life was frantic for UL Windsurfing club this semester, all in the positive progressive sense of course! We've ended the year with the intervarsity title, a comprehensive and impressive range of equipment and a superb set of members! It's not all over yet though, as some will make the trip to The Irish Windsurfing Festival taking place over the bank holiday weekend at UISCE, near Belmullet, Co.Mayo. UISCE is a renowned activity centre dedicated to water-sports and with promises of free windsurfing clinics, (from beginner to wavesailing, and freestyle) and probably an awful lot of fun, it looks to be a fine weekend. Already tactics are being discussed regarding the



Windsurfers

summer months and how the club will operate and what we'll get up to. Unfortunately we have to say goodbye to many of our prominent members this year, as they depart from the traditions of college life! Several of these people have taken the club on the unexpected road to

success-from humble beginnings to present day prosperity. Their hard work and determination will have a lasting impression. Make sure to come back and visit!! Best of luck also to all those doing exams. Website: www.skynet.ie/~winds

Envirosoc members and Milford students making a difference.

Last Thursday, the 21st of April, the Milford 6th class students joined forces with the UL environmental society and attacked the Shannon riverbank. The initiative was started a few years ago and has continued with success.

Last Thursday we were blessed with good weather and good humour. We all met in Dromroe Village and made our way from there to the river. Two teachers, 60 pupils, two brilliant volunteers and some envirosoc heads all took part. Once divided into two groups, each went there separate ways, up and down stream. Bags and bags of recyclable and various materials were gathered.

The students were great, and as one can see from the photo, they had fun.

However it was not exactly stress less on our part. I heard a girl scream at one stage, and thought, God, she's in the river. When in fact when I saw none of the students reacting, it was quickly determined that in fact a spider had been at the root of the problem. It was good to know however that the lifeguard on duty was right behind me. So thank you to her for volunteering.

After all this what did the students want? They had collected numerous

bags of rubbish, had lugged heavy bags up the river path, and what were they seeking? A night without homework, which we were pestered to ask the teachers for. So much for so little... So please, when you walk next to the river, either up or down be considerate to the environment around you. Wait until you reach a bin. Look at the surrounds and be grateful but most importantly happy when you realize what nature has to offer.



One of the Milford Class's after a hard evenings work



UL SVP Soc

It may be the end of the semester but SVP is still going strong. All the usual activities such as home and prison visitation, paired reading, soup run and homework and swim club are still running.

SVP held their AGM during week 11. It was a great success. Each member of the committee gave a fabulous presentation about their role in the committee and what they had done throughout the year. Elections were then held for a new committee. There will be a brand new committee back in action next semester. Afterwards everyone headed to the Scholars for food and drink. Mighty craic was had by all and it was a brilliant way to finish the semester.

SVP still continues throughout the summer. We run a summer camp throughout the months of July and August for the kids who do swim and homework club. At the summer camp they can enjoy swimming, gymnastics, hurling, football, arts and crafts and lots more. We also take the kids to Dublin for a week, which is great fun!

Also during June and July five of our volunteers are heading to Haiti to do charity work with the local SVP. They will be working for six weeks in orphanages and hospitals. We wish them the best of luck to Lisa, James, Cara, Catitrona, and Bonnie on their life changing trip and our members will hear all about it when they get back.

Finally SVP would like to say a huge thank you to all their volunteers for their hard work and effort throughout the past semester. We wouldn't be a society without you. We really appreciate all you have done for us over the best semester and we hope to see you all again next semester. Best of luck in the exams and have a brilliant summer!

Con Colbert Cumann Ogra Fianna Fail

Seanád Reform

The issue of Seanád reform has been consistently controversial for the past number of years, yet, in spite of this, or perhaps because of it, little or nothing has been done to address the situation. Nevertheless, while a solution would no doubt snowball with enthusiastic aid from the current (and future) opposition, Mr. Ahern would do well to follow the old Irish tradition of Parliamentary plagiarism. Like most democratic countries, our lower chamber is loosely based on the best working model of recent centuries, that is, Great Britain. The Taoiseach would be wise to follow this up by duplicating what is arguably the most constructive upper house in modern politics, that of Germany.

Put briefly, the German upper house consists of representatives from the regional Lander governments, who are entirely elected by universal suffrage. This gives them an electoral mandate to challenge the government's legislation, while combating the centralising tendencies of mono-chamber gov-

The UL Palestine Solidarity Society has been very busy over the last week holding two events to mark the 1st Anniversary of the release from prison of Mordechai Vanunu.

Vanunu was sentenced to 18 years in prison in 1986 for revealing the existence of a secret nuclear arsenal in Israel. He was released on April 21st 2004 and a number of restrictions were placed upon him, including not being allowed to speak to foreigners or the media. Despite these restrictions two members of the society met and interviewed Vanunu last February in Palestine. This interview was screened on Thursday 21st April last week to mark the anniversary of his release. The screening was held in conjunction with a wider debate on the Palestine/Israel conflict, which included speakers such as Ed Horgan, Peace Activist and researcher at UL, Dr. Luke Ashworth, Lecturer in International Politics in UL, and Damien Lynch from Amnesty International in UL. We were delighted that it was possible to ring and speak to Vanunu live

on the first anniversary of his release. He asked the audience to continue to work for peace in the Middle East. As a result of the success of this event, the society was invited to again screen the interview at the Irish Centre for Human Rights in Galway. On Monday 25th the interview was screened again to a packed room with about 70 people even standing up or sitting on the floor, and even 25 more had to be turned away because there was no room! Again a live phone call was made to Vanunu who was overcome with emotion at the strong support, and when he spoke to a Palestinian human rights' campaigner in the audience who had spent time in the same Israeli prison than Vanunu, and who would climb to Vanunu's window to salute him whenever he had a chance. Vanunu asked for people to work for peace and to help him be released from Israel. Please come and join us to advance Vanunu's attempts to seek asylum in Ireland. Please contact Zoe.Lawlor@ul.ie or Maria.Escribano@ul.ie

ernment. Furthermore, it grants real parliamentary experience to up-and-coming politicians, the like of which Irish Councils cannot offer.

While I'm sure even the mention of a functional upper chamber would terrify most Irish legislators, especially upon consideration of the limited, local outlook such a body would undoubtedly have, with long-term planning and reasonable restrictions, such a house would not even need to match the authority of its German equivalent before justifying its existence. This is apparent for two primary reasons.

Firstly, members would come, through some manner of internal selection, from the local city and county councils. Happily, this would enliven such bodies, too many of which are stagnant and under contested. With the possibility of real power in the offing, even the most jaded Alderman or Councillor would challenge old arguments with renewed vigour.

Secondly, with selection based on council preferences,

local issues would become increasingly national, with party politics preventing these from subverting national interests. With this in mind, it is easy to imagine an opposition controlled upper house causing chaos, however, creative selection and voting measures could prevent one party from dominating, without detracting from its valuable input.

Without doubt, the Seanád is an unproductive, vastly inferior assembly, when compared to many of its counterparts. Moreover, modern councils have lost much of the enthusiasm with which they were initially approached. At the risk of over-simplifying, perhaps the two dilemmas can be remedied with a single stroke. At present, the framework of both ensures little achievement, along with little room in which to establish reform. Occasionally, pragmatism is the wrong course; in such situations a radical revision is needed.

Michael Keary

2005 University Rowing Championships

You hear tales and folklore of this event from elder lemons of the club, a special regatta when all the Collages and Universities of Ireland North and South, journey to the national forest park at Castlewelken Co. Down to go head to head at the University Championships of Ireland.

All year long it's drilled into you that you are training for this day, every weight you lift every ergometer test you do is for this day. Almost to the point of obsession or madness which ever happens first. When one day you find yourself jotting down plans in the middle of your lecture notes, the master plan of how your going to systematically destroy the boys from Trinity, and win the heart of the girl next door, or was that just me?

With the picture perfect setting of a lake in the middle of a national park, the mountain landscape of Co. Down for a backdrop throw in a Castle for good measure and you have the Regatta course that is Castlewelken.



One of our winning Womens Crew

Gabbett, Marie O' Neill, Vivienne O Grady and cox Cora Connelly brought home the gold winning convincingly in the heat and final.

ULRC also came 3rd in the Men's Senior 4 and 2nd in the men's intermediate 4. Cathal Moynihan finished well in the senior sculls.



One of our mens novice eight

UL Rowing Club having been highly competitive in all categories to date didn't disappoint the crowds assembled at Castlewelken competing in some of the more exciting races of the two day weekend.

It was a small championships entry this year for UL with all our crews making the finals in the men's and women's novice and intermediate fours.

Queens Regatta was our next show down on the exact same course the following day.

UL women's novice four of Sarah Clancy, Liz

Our women's Intermediate eight preformed well, and the men's novice four came 2nd in Heat.

ULRC's Men's novice eight took part in one of the more exciting races of the day, a race which saw three top crews neck and neck all the way to the line. UL and UCD left the rest straight off the starting blocks, Trinity managed to just stay in touch with the two crews. Both UL and UCD swapped the lead for the first 1000meters both managing to match each others pushes. At the 1200meter mark the three crews had

UL Sub Aqua Club



Clown Fish

The week I spent in the Red Sea with ULSAC was my first diving trip outside Irish waters and the most amazing trip of my life. The months leading up to it were filled with preparation, training, organising gear and the anticipation of what was to come.

On arrival in Sharm El Sheikh we were brought to the boat, the South

Moon, our home for the week. We organised our gear in preparation for our first dive the following morning, Ras Umm Sid. The water was warm and as we began our descent, I knew this first dive would be very different to any of my dives in Ireland. As we followed the reef I was struck by the riot of colours - there were large numbers

of gorgonians, thistle corals, soft corals and thousands of anthias. I also saw Red Sea bannerfish, butterflyfish, angelfish, clown fish, parrotfish, lionfish, surgeon fish, stonefish and crocodilefish. The most amazing sight for me was two turtles swimming above our heads in a type of courting dance.

The Red Sea was the

pulled level for the final push for the line, only in the final 15 strokes of the race did UCD manage to edge UL from the lead.

At the end of the race John Meehan commented "Obviously nobody likes losing, but on the other hand there really wasn't a whole lot between the three of us at the finish line. It was a good fight every step of the way, at least now we'll know what to expect from them and we can prepare for the next regatta in Limerick".

For more information check out WWW.ULROWING.COM

site for my first wreck dive, on the Chrisoula K., a Greek freighter that sunk in 1981. The sunken ship on its side with its cargo of Italian Floor Tiles was an awesome sight and I quickly became a dedicated wreckee! We also dived the world-renowned SS Thistlegorm, sunk by German bomber planes during World War II. Exploring the ships holds we found motorbikes, trucks, rifles, coal, rubber boots and wartime cargo.

The memories from my first diving trip to the Red Sea will last a lifetime. Having travelled to the Red Sea a newly qualified diver, I've returned a more confident and experienced diver, who can't wait to get back in the water! Thanks so much to Bob and Pepijn who organised the trip!

