

# Robinson, Hume & Keher to receive UL

doctorates

AN FOCAL REPORTER

ARY ROBINSON, former President of Ireland, legendary Kilkenny hurler Eddie Keher and John Hume, former leader and cofounder of the SDLP, will be conferred with Honorary Doctorates at the

University of Limerick on 18 May 2006, the University announced recently.

"Each of the three people to be honoured have, in their own distinctive ways, made enormous contributions to public life, in Ireland and abroad. The University of Limerick takes great pride in their achievements," Professor Roger GH Downer, President of the University of Limerick, commented at the announcement.

Mary Robinson, who along with John Hume and Eddie Keher, is due to receive a Doctorate from UL in May



# Downer presents class reps with ULSU hoodies

AN FOCAL REPORTER

171 Class Representatives were presented with their hoodies on December 13th 2005.

The ULSU Class reps hoodies serve a dual purpose: firstly, the colour of the hoodies - orange - is to serve as a visual aid in identifying your class rep. Secondly, it is



a gesture of appreciation due to the important work that Class Reps do.

The presentation on the night, which took place in the ULSU Common Room, was a great success, with UL President, Roger Downer indicating the importance of the class reps system within

the University structure and thanking the class reps for their participation and involvement in the University.

Having presented Roger Downer with his official class rep hoodie, we then continued to present the reps with their own personalized hoodies. Some of the names chosen were quite innovative: Witness Protection Programme was among

the best

Following the recent results of the ULSU survey carried out last November, it has to be said that the class reps systems will have to work a lot harder in order to improve its effectiveness and to carry out their main function of representing their classmates.

One of the most worrying things is that some students aren't even aware of their class reps or that they are entitled to have one. Hence the colour orange that can't be missed. Class reps are the most effective ways of uniting a class and the more people that are united the more power you will have to instigate change. If you want to know more about the class reps system then call into me or log onto www.ulsu.ul.ie and click on the class reps section.

ULSU President Fintan Breen with Roger Downer UL President, at the Class Representatives presentation.

# SU 'could do better' survey reveals

AN FOCAL REPORTER

THE ULSU survey released just before the Christmas period has presented some favourable results, but as always room for improvement is visible

The overall evaluation of the Students' Union's effectiveness is very positive with more than half of voters (54%) giving the top two ratings of good and very good.

While students are very aware of Shops, Entertainments and Clubs, the results show that extra effort is needed to increase awareness of Aid and Advice Services available for students.

In terms of usage of SU services, very positive results were shown for the SU Shop(s) with 75% of respondents using this service more than 15 times per semester.

Results are also positive for An Focal and Entertainments but again highlight the need to better inform students of Aid and Advice available to them.

The SU shop, Clubs & Societies, An Focal and Entertainments were rated as the top four most important SU services, respectively.

More than half of the voters (56%) find the ULSU either very or

somewhat approachable. While this is a clearly positive result, it does raise questions as to why such a high percentage (39%) answered 'don't know' to this question.

The question of fair and effective representation showed that 61% of respondents felt that their views are being moderately, well or very well represented in a fair and effective way.

50% of the students who voted in the survey appreciate the work done by their Class Rep. While this does show room for improvement it is a very positive reflection on the Class Reps that do work hard.

Almost half of the students who voted (46%) are happy with the Nitelink service. It's likely that the 39% of students that answered 'unsure' don't use the service at all. The majority of Nitelink users who voted are also happy enough with the drop-off points. Again, the 38% who voted 'unsure' probably represent the students who don't use the service at all. The majority of Nitelink users would not be happy paying for the service.

The high percentage of voters who answered 'unsure' to the

question of value for money of the Graphics Service could be an indication that not very many students use this service. 46% of students who voted feel that the range of services of the Graphics Service are either excellent, good or adequate. This is a good result but we must also note that an equal number of students (46%) are unsure. ULSU are currently reviewing all aspects of their graphics service.

50% of students feel that the quality of service in the shop is either good or very good. This further emphasises the view that the SU Shop(s) are one of the most valuable services provided by the Students' Union. Opinions are somewhat divided on the question of whether the Shop offers value for money or not. 20% believe the value for money is good while 20% also believe it is poor. A majority of 39% have shown that they are satisfied enough, by voting OK. The results indicate that a vast majority - 81% of voters hold the opinion that the shop is too small. Opinions also appear to be divided on the question of opening hours of the Shop. 43% feel that opening hours are not long enough, while just under half of the voters, 49% believe that the Shop is open just enough hours.

71% of voters agreed that the quality of the events provided by ULSU, currently contracted by EPM, are very good, good or OK.

### REPORTS SABBATICAL

#### Hey everyone

Wow! It's that time of year again. Welcome back to the University for another semester! We've been here working for you over the exams and the three weeks off to try and get some things done for vou. Talking about the exams, I hope you got your results and that you are happy. Call into Paddy if you need advice on repeating, appealing, viewing, etc!

Secretary General - Frank and I have been interviewing people for the Secretary General position and we would hope to be finalising the process shortly.

We have produced a services leaflet. Call into the Union to get a copy and see exactly what the Union does for you.

Paddy and I met with Bus Éireann to discuss concerns made by students about the changing of the city routes. They have said that direct Raheen and Caherdavin to UL routes are not possible until bus lanes are introduced. I will be writing to the relevant bodies on this issue to see if we can get bus lanes brought forward as soon as possible.

Paddy, Paul and I met with Prof. Don Barry (UL Vice-President Academic & Registrar) to push forward the Wednesday Afternoon issue. We want a half day Wednesday in order to allow Clubs & Societies to organise events, trips, matches, etc without having the worry of missing lectures/labs/tutorials.

At the Governing Authority Finance committee, it was decided, against my solo protests, from €2 to €3. I was totally against this measure, but I was the only one on the Finance Committee who thought this was a bad idea.

I protested the decision of the Finance Committee Governing Authority. After a heated debate where one of the staff reps also agreed that this decision would not be one in favour of the campus community. Governing Authority asked the GA Finance Committee to relook at the issue and to find alternate methods of funding the new bridge. At last a tangible

We successfully lobbied Academic Council to reject the proposed student charter, until it had firmer language. This document has been watered down again and again until it meant that the University

committed to very little. This will be back at the next council meeting, hopefully in a stronger language.

#### FUSU (Forum of University Students' Unions)

ULSU hosted FUSU during the three weeks when students were off-campus. Sabbatical officers from Students' Unions across the country came down to discuss issues which affect all University students.

The Union Executive has gone through a lot of its strategic planning stages. This started

semester to which over 1100 students responded! We hope to present the strategic plan to Clubs & Societies Council and Class Reps Council in the coming weeks.

We're working on the Scholars & Shop. We've had a planning day with designers about the new-look Scholars Club and we're in talks with suppliers about the layout and what we need in their to offer the best value and service to students.

Thanks for reading - talk to ye soon

**Thanks** Fintan AND SO IT ALL BEGINS AGAIN! God, I have missed the paper! In case you're wondering why there are no reviews or blurb in this edition, it has all moved to the magazine.

Loads of people reinforced my initial proposal to have a magazine: they think An Focal is a magazine, IT'S NOT, it is a newspaper, or at least it should be! Thus, the magazine will be out in week 4!

Thanks to everyone who answered the survey, over 1,000 of you did! I am going to respond to one issue.

difficulty

publicising events has long been negotiating An Focal's timeline. It is very easy to call for submissions from various departments, however you have to prepare for the fact that the An Focal deadline is a full week before publication, which can complicate things. See website for deadline and publication dates.

Also, many ITD emails that detail upcoming events are emailed that very day! I too wish I had notification of them in advance, so that you, the student body, would be informed of all there is on offer to you. Regardless,

check out the events listings page www.ulsu.ul.ie for details of upcoming events.

New additions to An Focal are: quotes of the fortnight and a general announcements section. For the next edition I am hoping to have an international page in the

paper.

The website has kicked off and loads of info has been put up for the past month, the problem is remembering to keep it updated, so a regular time once a week will be marked down for that.

PLEASE buy the ULSU calendar - only €5 and all proceeds go to charity (Milford Hospice and St. Vincent's School in Lisnagry) and come along to the official launch on Thursday of week 2, upstairs in the SU Common Room at 2pm. Everyone is welcome!

If you want to get involved in communications side of things, email me at anne.sheridan@ul.ie or just call in!

Anne





# Education: Paddy Pratt To be Old and Wise you must first be Young and Stupid

#### How's it goin?

Welcome back to the spring semester. It's been a very interesting couple of months in the SU since my last report. I cannot believe it's already the second semester and it feels like the long road to the end has begun, albeit a jam packed busy

Over the past couple of months I've been especially busy on the Deputy President side of my role. Just before Christmas, I organised interviewees for the new position of Administrative Secretary and also sat on the interview panel. Mary T Martin was successful in this position and has joined the team since January 3rd. Mary T is a great addition to the staff, will increase the professionalism of this place and also lighten the admin burden of the sabbats, allowing us to get with the job we were elected to do! Again on the staff side, I sat on the interview panel for the new Secretary General. We hope to have someone in this position in the next couple of weeks. I've also been working on bits and pieces for RAG week (comin' week 4!) and getting the Raising and Giving (RAG) Week working group up and running. If anybody would like to get involved in the Charity aspect of RAG Week, please get in touch with me ASAP.

Some of you might have noticed the Union calendar

that we're flogging for charity at the moment, probably won't need much of an explanation of my embarrassment on this one. Walking around the corridors of the White House in a sperm suit for 10 minutes waiting for the President will probably go down as one of my lasting memories and most e m b a r r a s s i n g moments of year! Thanks a million to Roger Downer for getting involved in the picture too... hopefully this will

make a nice bit for Milford Hospice and St. Vincent's in Lisnagry.

One highlight that has come up in my area of the Student Satisfaction Survey is a lack of awareness of Financial Aid & Legal Aid. If you or your friends experiencing financial hardship at any time, please call into my office to discuss it... there is a fund here that everyone one of you pays €8 per year into, so maybe we could help you out with a loan or a bursary depending on vour circumstances. Also, if you've got yourself into a bit of trouble with the law and need some advice, the SU has a solicitor that you can visit free of charge for advice....again call into me to arrange a visit to him.

So lads, it's that time of year when its time to start thinking about going for a sabbatical position for next year. If you've any inclination at all, I'd highly recommend you look into it. Don't worry if you haven't been involved in ULSU up to now. So far, it's been one of the best experiences I've ever had. I'll be writing an article about DP/Welfare for the next An Focal but in the meantime, if you think you might be interested in any of the roles, call into us for a chat and more details!!!

> See ya, **Frank**

#### OLA,

Time to get back on the merry-go-round of another semester @ UL. For those of you joining us for the first time here bienvenue, bienvenido, benvinguts, benvenuto, willkommen, huan ying, foon ying, and céad míle fáilte.

For those of you unfortunate to be leaving the financial security of coop, look on the bright side: RAG Week is on the way.

Importantly, if anyone you know has had any trouble with exam results then please contact me and I'll do my best to help. I can't change the grades but I can tell you how to go about trying to do it. Also you can find out all you will need to know on our website under the Education section so go and log on: www.ulsu.ul.ie.

Since it's the start of another semester you should all have received your module outlines for each module.

Academic Regulations state this and it is your right: On starting to teach a module, the faculty m e m b e r ( s responsible teaching the module shall outline writing to students the objectives of the module, the criteria on which assessment is to be based and the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument

associated with the module. The faculty member shall also indicate the repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module. Re. non repeatable modules, see 4.15 below.

Some of the things I've been trying to work on with the University include the University include the Undergraduate Student Charter, a University Complaints procedure and recognition of curricular activities.

The Undergraduate Student Charter has been an ongoing head ache for my two predecessors and I'm doing my hardest to make sure it doesn't wreck the head of my successor - the 'authorities' actually come up with something of benefit to students and the University itself and yet all they want to do is talk, talk, talk and talk about the thing instead of

actually implementing it.

It's on the web so let me know what you think. University complaints procedure, well self explanatory really, went looking for one of these and there was none to be found, even though there is of course one there for the staff and that explicitly states that it does not apply to students. Recognition of extra curricular activities: you may have heard on the radio DCU promoting this as being one of the best reasons to attend DCU, because they actually place an emphasis on personal development as well as being a utensil for industry, at least their honest about it. I'm sure that seems like a rant to

some of you but one word... bureaucracy!!!

From a Union point of view, we've all been working on a strategic review of the place and finding out all the bad things we're doing and some of the good things. Surveys, focus groups, reviewing documents and a range of other activity has taken place and we're confident we can have something better in place for you. Class reps Council is taking up my sanity, and I'm working on ways of trying to improve communication between everyone involved in the system so that you can know what the hell is going on this place. If you're interested in becoming a class rep you can call into me and have a chat about what it entails.

If you need me I'll be there,

Paddy patrick.pratt@ul.ie

# ULSTER BANK – YOUR FIRST PORT OF CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING

Students travelling for the Co-Operative
Education and Careers Programme or to the
US on J1 visas should call into the Campus
Ulster Bank branch to discuss their financial
requirements. "Travelling is an expensive
business, even if you're going to work
wherever you're going", says Senior Branch
Manager Lourda Flanagan. "We have a
number of products specifically tailored for
students and their financial needs and anyone
travelling on the Co-Operative Programme
should call in to discuss their requirements."



Back now Left to Right: Diane Colfer, Robert Nash, Rebecca McLoughlin, Helen Sheehy, Pat Egan, Lourda Flanagan Front Row Left to Right: Mary O'Connell, Nick Bunce, Vanessa Ballinger

Uliter Bank is a strong supporter of the Programme. The Co-Operative Education and Careers Programme is an excellent initiative", says Lounda. "Every year some 2,000 students are placed in jobs with more than 1,600 different employers. This helps build valuable links between UL and employers and gives the students a real head start for their future careers. We are glad to support the programme in any way that we can, porticularly by helping out with the finances."

According to Campus Branch Manager Diane Coffer the Programme requires many of the students to travel to different parts of heland or abroad and this canlead to quite high initial expenses. "About 30% of the placements are abroad in Europe, North America and Asia while a substantial number of those in Ireland are well outside the Limenck area", she says. "While the students will be paul for their work they still have travel costs, rent to pay. and general living expenses to meet before they get their first pay cheques. This is where Ulster Bank comes in: We have some excellent value products which are ideally suited to students' needs at such times."

Lourda Flanagan points out that Ulister Bank's student offer differs substantially from those of other banks. "We see our Campus Branch as a real partnership between the University, the students and ourselves" she says. "But ultimately it's all about the students and their needs. We don't patronise our customers with brinkets and gift vouchers. We understand what it's like to be a student. That's why we've got a simple, efficient package especially designed for students."

Student customers can avail of a standard Ulster Bank current account plus interest free overdraft facilities, a student credit card, low rate student leans, low rate travel loans, and transaction free free banking.

#### Interest free overdraft

"We know that when you start college you have loads of expenses, like buying books and paying deposits", says Drane Colfer. "An Dister Bank interest free oversraft could be just the cash kickstart you need. Other banks might ask you to apply for this service, but with us it goes without saying - no hassle no waiting, Your student account comes with an interest free overdraft (APR OW) of up to 6:650 on request. Alongside that you can apply for increased overdraft limits during your time in college - all interest free."

Students can apply for the following interest free overdrafts:

lear 1	€1/750
rear 2	€1.950
Year II	€2,750
fear 4	€2,500
Shart E	#1 pm

#### Student Credit Card

An Ulster Bank MasterCard or Visa Card could make more sense than ever right now. Whether you're on holiday or at home-d's always good to know you've got a bit more leeway, particularly in emergencies," says Diane. This credit card is also a safe and easy way to pay for things when you're travelling abroad. As well as a great introductory rate of ON APR on purchases and balance transfers for the first nine months we will offer you a guaranteed credit limit of €450."

After the first nine months the charge is just 17.9% APR (variable) on outstanding balances and 19.7% APR (variable) on cash advances from date of account opened. See the Credit Card Brochure for full terms and conditions, available on request from the Campus Branch or any Ulster Bank branch.

#### Low Rate Student Loan

At Uniter Bunk we know that getting educated is an expensive business. We'll help ease the financial burden while you get you nelf qualified. As an Ulster Bank Student Customer you're entitled to a low-rate student loan Typical APR 8% (variable). You can apply for anything up to €2,750 per year from year 1.

#### Low Rate Travel Loan

Equally expensive can be the holidays you'll need after all that studying, or indeed the working holiday in the US or elsewhere. That's why we offer you a travel loan that can fielp you see the rest of the world. As an Ulster Bank Student Customer you are entitled to apply for a low-rate travel loan Typical AFR 8% (variable) between May and September.

#### Transaction fee free banking

Whether in credit or within authorised overdraft, Student Account Holders can enjoy transaction fee-free hanking. Ancillary charges still apply, please refer to our Account Fees and Charges brochure and supplement.

"With this range of products and services we can make sure that your Co-Operative placement starts off on the right note with no financial worries", says Lourda. "Call in and chat to one of our team to discuss your needs before you go. Even if you're not planning to go on the Co-Operative. Programme call in and see us anyway, we're here to help you in any way that we can."

#### Introducing the Uister Bank UI. Campus Branch Team

#### Lourda Flanagan, Senior Branch Manager

Lounda has worked with Lifeter Bank for over 15 years and spent 13 years in various focations around Limerick City working in all aspects of branch banking before going to Ennis as Branch Manager in August 2003.

#### Diane Coffer, Branch Manager

Diane knows all about being a student at UL having graduated from the University in 2000 with a BA in European Studies and a Graduate Diploma in Business Administration. Before joining Uliter Bank in 2003 she worked in the computer industry as a business analyst.

Vanessa Bullinger, Mary O'Connell and Nick Bunce are the Customer Advisers in the Campus Branch. They have all worked in various branches throughout the area. In their roles as Customer Advisers they deal with Student Accounts and UL Stuff Accounts. The other team members are Helen Sheerly, Kebecca McLoughlin, Par Egan and Robert Nash.

Drop in and meet us next time you're passing, or call us on 061 216260

#### W Ulster Bank

Other Bank Student CSes only countries to half the presence countering of that pearly the dates and conditions are deposited to describe a properly the dates and conditions. Students was the reposited to the pearly for the dates and conditions to the pearly the three dates and conditions of the condition of the three dates and conditions of the three dates and conditions of the pearly date three dates and conditions of the conditions of the pearly for the condition of the conditions of the con

# 2006 ULSU Executive calendar for charity on sale now!

By ANNE SHERIDAN

LL students and staff are encouraged to buy the ULSU calendar for charity. All proceeds are going to Milford Hospice and St. Vincent's School in Lisnagry. Both charities and ULSU would greatly value your support.

This is a great opportunity to familiarise yourself with the people who will either be representing you or working for you. Calendars cost €5 and are available to buy from the reception in the SU.

The calendar features 12 of the 13 members of the SU Executive; people who represent the student body in a variety of ways, from education, welfare, clubs and societies to the wider community. The first five months feature sabbatical officers who will remain in the their posts until the end of the summer. The second half of the calendar features non-sabbatical officers who have not yet finished their studies and are likely to be

involved with the Union for some time to come.

This is the first Union calendar of its kind. However, last year Clubs and Societies had a calendar along similar lines, with former ULSU President Timmy Hennessy posing as Marilyn Monroe!

Anne Sheridan, C.C.O. originally proposed the idea of a naked Union calendar for charity. However, the ULSU Executive adopted the proposal with the amendment that individual officers could choose their own poses. Four of the twelve photos give the illusion of nudity, or partial nudity.

Photographs thus range from the serious to the downright sexy, hilarious and satirical.

Special thanks to Cian Davis, UL Photographic Society, who took all the photos in this calendar and to Eoin Stephenson, UL Photographic Unit, who allowed us use of the studio for various shots.



Frank Fogarty, ULSU Welfare Officer with UL President, Roger Downer. "This disadvantages of launching SHAG week and having a meeting with the President on the same day"!

# Does obesity really deserve its bad name?

#### AN FOCAL REPORTER

A ONE-DAY forum was held in the University of Limerick that sought to tackle perceptions of weight and obesity. It also questioned the science used to in creating these perceptions.

Contrary to the conventional view, critical contributors to the obesity debate have recently argued that the science behind this war on fat is highly uncertain and founded upon problematic

Bra obe

This forum consisted of five papers that



Brad Pitt and George Clooney are classified as overweight and obese respectively according to the BMI index.

critically sought to expand the obesity debate. Speakers based in Ireland and overseas, who are researching weight-related issues from

# UL students hope the run "world's most beautiful marathon" in Cape Town

By ANNE SHERIDAN

THREE UL students are hoping to raise over €15,000 for the Two Oceans Marathon in Cape Town, with proceeds going to Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin

The three participants from UL that are hoping to run "the world's most beautiful marathon" are Anthony Wren, a research postgraduate student, Ger Finan, a UL graduate and Joe Lillis, a research Masters student in physics.

Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin. Failure to reach the target sponsorship of €5,000 will mean that a participant will not be allowed to take part in the event, held during Easter weekend, Saturday 15th April.

Joe Lillis said that they are "pretty confident that we will manage to raise €5,000 each once local businesses come on board. We have previous experience of raising funds for the New York marathon last year as well."

Ger Finan was initially apprehensive at the thought of securing €5,000 for the New York marathon, but was "astonished by peoples generosity. Knowing that people thought so highly of this cause, I was more than happy to try and raise another €5000."

This funding will go towards a newly constructed wing that houses a state of the art day-care facility for Cystic Fibrosis, Dermatology, Hepatology, Infectious Diseases and Neurology patients.

The three UL students have varied reasons for doing the Two Oceans Marathon. Anthony Wren said he had never completed a marathon before but "thought it would be a great opportunity to do some charity work for a well respected and honourable cause."

"I had already completed a normal 26 mile marathon in New York," said Ger Finan, "so when I saw the chance to compete in a 35 mile ultramarathon, I viewed this as a great challenge, with the added benefit of getting to raise money for the hospital again and of course the opportunity to see South Africa."

Joe Lillis felt that "after completing the



Three UL students - Anthony Wren, Joe Lillis and Ger Finan - who are hoping to raise €5,000 each for charity to run the world's most beautiful marathon. Photo: Anne Sheridan

Dublin marathon this year I felt a great buzz, really wanted to do another one and to raise money for charity." He is cautious as to whether he can improve on his time in South Africa due to increase in distance and heat/course profile.

This is the first year that the Crumlin hospital have organised a team to go to this particular marathon; each year they have a team going to the New York Marathon in November and last year the team raised over €500,000.

"The heat will be the biggest issue for us", said Joe Lillis, " but the humidity should be OK." Ger Finan believes that in terms of humidity nothing can compare to New York. "We had the unwanted privilege in 2005 of running in one of the warmest, and most humid, New York marathons in recent memory. But the experience of running through the five boroughs of New York far outweighed the heat", said Ger.

The UL group will be organising a traditional music night in March and hope that many people will go in support of this cause. Last year they raised €4,000 from a traditional music night held in Pery's Best Western Hotel on Glentworth St., with only a weeks preparation

If you would like to give a donation or please call Joe on 086 8644609 or email joseph.lillis@ul.ie. They would greatly appreciate any support.

This article was previously published in The Limerick Leader.

clinical, educational and sociological perspectives, discussed with some of the taken-for-granted claims made about the obesity epidemic.

The goal of the forum was to encourage a humanistic, equitable and ethical approach to health

Rather than prematurely foreclosing the obesity debate, this stressed the importance of engaging in productive dialogue in a way which takes on board the complexities of this issue.

Dr. Lee Monaghan, Senior Lecturer at the

Department of Sociology in UL states in his paper, 'Apparently Most Men are Too Fat', that "Fat has been defined as a feminist issue, but it is also routinely presented as a public health issue and a male-relevant issue. Using the Body Mass Index (BMI), it is authoritatively claimed that most Irish men, similar to men in the USA and England, are too heavy and are either 'unhealthy', 'at risk' or 'diseased' because of their 'excess' weight (fatness). Are such claims warranted?"

# **History Society launches Poets** and Patriots Parted exhibition

By NOEL GRIFFIN

N February 10th, in conjunction with our hosting of the 56th annual Irish History

Students Association conference the society launched its flagship event for 2006 Poets and Patriots Parted.

The exhibition that is housed in Dromroe Village Hall is an examination of some of the people and events surrounding 1916, with both exhibits

relating to the Irish Volunteers and the Irish regiments within the British Army during the period.

The exhibition was opened by UL President, Dr. Roger Downer, at a reception attended by delegates to the conference and invited guests held in the east room of Plassey House.

Over 60 people from various universities across the Republic, Northern Ireland and Britain attended, along with many delegates from UL and Mary Immaculate College.

Papers were delivered on such diverse topics as The 1835 select Committee on Corruption and Electoral practices in Ireland, by Elaine Byrne of UL, to Sexual Politics, justice and economics: Women's organizations and the campaign for women police in Ireland, 1935-57.

The conference could not have run as efficiently as it did

with out the support of the History department; we would like to offer our thanks to Jennifer Moore, who as the History department liaison officer was a tower of strength, advice and assisted us in every area throughout our organization and running of this prestigious event.

The conference closed with the IHSA AGM where the society was highly praised for hosting such a successful event. Queens University Belfast was then chosen as the location for the 2007 conference. We would like to offer our thanks to Nash's mineral water for the donation of the water for the event.

The exhibition Poets and Patriots Parted has been in the planning process for the better part of a year and we have been extremely fortunate in the items we procured to place on display. Room 1 houses an audio visual display, with short story boards about Ireland in the period mounted around the

room. There is also a visual display accompanied by music portraying a pictorial account of the time, (please beware there are some graphic images showing the true horror of war in this portion of the exhibition) both in Dublin and on the western front in France.

Room 2 houses the physical artifacts with letters from Edward Daly, Sean MacDiarmada, and Joseph Mary Plunkett. These have been sourced from the special collections department



The UL History Society presents the Poets and Patriots exhibition in Dromroe Village.

in the UL Library and also from the granddaughter of Thomas MacDonagh.

Beside the documents there are a number of items relating to men who were killed in France in WWI, of which the most striking is the 5 foot high wooden grave marker made of oak to Captain WM (Pat) Armstrong of Tipperary along with the helmet he was wearing showing the entry and exit holes of the round that

There are also picture boards with the poetry of Thomas MacDonagh, Francis Ledwidge and Tom Kettle, along with boards detailing the lives many of those whose items are on display.

The exhibition is open between 10 and 5 Monday to Saturday.

# Love your heart...

By CLAIRE MCGRATH

YOU may have noticed the Irish Heart Foundation posters around the college for Valentine's Week (also known as Week 1). Matters of the heart are important at every stage of life. Remember - it is not just our parents that have to think about cholesterol, fat intake and exercise.

Why not make a small change now e.g. swap chips for a baked potato or try fruit instead of a scone. Cutting down fatty oils and watching your cholesterol intake now will bring big dividends later. For more information related to a healthy heart and how to achieve it log on to www.irishheart.ie

The Health Promotion Working Group have also organised a series of events aiming to increase awareness of basic good health. Starting on Tuesday the 28th of February the Irish Cancer Society will have a stand in the canteen from 12.00-2.30. A nurse will be there to give information about cancer prevention and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Come along and pick up a leaflet or if you would rather speak to someone in your own time

Freephone 1800 200700 or click on www.irishcancer.ie. We look forward to seeing you on the 28th!

Another initiative under production is a new leaflet indicating safe walking routes around/near UL. We have highlighted two routes which only take about 30-40 minutes to walk - perfect to fill a gap between two lectures or to make healthy use of your lunch hour.

Walking is the easiest way of getting your recommended daily allowance of 30 minutes of exercise. For other walking routes and tips see www.Irishheart.ie and click into Sli na Slainte which has safe routes for walking around Limerick and also explains the benefits of walking.

Look out for other initiatives on healthy eating, quitting smoking and many more during the semester. If you would like more information on any of the above contact Claire McGrath in the Student Affairs Office Claire.mcgrath@ul.ie

### Ceapadh Oifigeach na Gaeilge nua

By BRENDAN O hEAMHAIGH



DIA dhiabh! Is mise Breandán Ó hÉamhaigh, Mac Léinn na darna bliain Léann Éireannach le Gearmáinis, agus beidh mé ag obair mar Oifigeach na Gaeilge in Aontas na Mac Léinn go dtí mí Meán Fómhar. Táim anseo ag déanamh mo chomhar oideachas agus táim ag tnuth go mór leis an obair agus chun a bheith ag buaileadh libh.

Hi all! I'm Breandán Ó hÉamhaigh, and I'll be working as your Irish Officer in the Students Union until September. I'm here doing my Co-op and I'm really looking forward to the work, to meeting you all.

Tá mo oifig suite san Aontas, thuas staighre, agus ar chlé ag deireadh an dorchla (san áit ina bhfuil an Tolglann). Táim ag cur súil anois ar Seachtain na Gaeilge, agus tá cúpla phlean agam anois. Bím i gcónaí ag lorg tuairimí agus moltaí, so ná bí buartha do guth a árdú! Beidh

an ciotal ar buile, agus ceol ar an radio anseo, so buail isteach chun gaeilge a labhairt agus cupan a ól!

My office is situated in the SU building, up-stairs and left at the end of the corridor (I'm in the Tolglann). I'm looking towards Seachtain na Gaeilge at the moment, and I have a couple of plans already. I'm always looking for opinions and suggestions so don't be afraid to raise your voice. I'll have the kettle boiling and music on the radio, so drop in for a cuppa and a chat as gaeilge!

Beidh mé anseo san oifig

Luain go hAoine ó a 9 go dtí a 5, agus ó am go ham beidh mé anseo go dtí go mall san oíche! Beidh breis eolas ar an suiomh idirlíne <a href="https://www.ulsu.ul.ie">www.ulsu.ul.ie</a> (bhrú isteach ins "an Gaeilgeoir") nó seol r-phoist chuig <a href="https://www.ulsu.ul.ie">Breandan.OhEamhaigh@ul.ie</a>. Agus cuimhnigí, bíonn mo doras ar oscailt i gcónaí!!!

I'll be here in the office from 9 to 5 Monday to Friday, and sometimes I'll be here 'till late in the night! There will be more info on the website www.ulsu.ul.ie (go into "an Gaeilgeoir") Or send an e-mail to Breandan.OhEamhaigh@u Lie And remember, my door is always open!!

### **Student Enterprise Awards 2006**

By MARK CLENDENNEN

UL student, Mark Clendennen, and Rosanna Davison launched Student Enterprise Awards 2006 on Wednesday 28th September 2005. Mark is a previous Student Enterprise Awards finalist of www.kartplan.com with one of his off road karts, which was his Award b u s i n e s s submission.

Application forms are available from Dr Naomi Birdthistle, Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies, Kemmy

Business School, University of Limerick, naomi.birdthistle@ul.ie
The closing date for the 2006 Student Enterprise Awards is 6th March 2005.

Winners will be announced at a special presentation ceremony in Queen's University, Belfast in April 2006. The overall winning project will win a first prize of €10,000. There are four additional prizes of €3,000 each for categories or



UL student Mark Clendennen with former Miss World, Rosanna Davison.

new product ideas. A further €5,000 prize will be presented by Cruickshank & Co. (Patent & Trademark Agents) for a technically innovative project. A prize of €4,000 is available for Post-Graduates & five €2,000 awards of merit are also being offered to participating students.



# Limerick celebrates master author with Kate O'Brien weekend

#### AN FOCAL REPORTER

NUMBER of renowned writers and authors are coming to town for a literary festival dedicated to the remembrance of a famous Limerick woman.

The Kate O'Brien Weekend kicks off the Spring Cultural Calendar of literary events on Friday evening 24th February at Limerick's newest cultural venue, Daghdha Space @ John's Square.

Kate O'Brien was born in Limerick in 1897 and wrote masterpieces including, Without My Cloak, The Ante Room, and The Last of Summer.

Now in its 22nd year The Kate O'Brien Weekend is attracting even larger followings both national and international. This year's theme, 'Creative Impulse' is appropriate for a city, which is fast gaining a reputation as a

creative and vibrant cultural location.

Limerick has in recent times been getting international coverage in the press and has been described in the most recent edition of the travel guide 'The Lonely Planet' as "a city with fine museums and galleries, and a thriving restaurant and pub club culture, and a warm heart"

The Kate O'Brien Weekend has played its part in creating an annual literary event with a cultural vibe for Limerick. The Weekend also and importantly has had an influential role in establishing an understanding and a following of the work of Kate O'Brien and so ensuring her place in the literary canon.

One of the great strengths of the weekend is that one theme is interpreted by many voices and many experiences. The Weekend will be officially opened on Friday 24th February by Colbert Kearney who is professor of Modern English at UCC and on Sunday 26th the key note speech will be delivered by international Irish artist Dorothy Cross. She is best known in Ireland for her work 'Ghost Ship' which was moored in Dun Laoghaire Harbour in 1999.

Juxtaposed to Dorothy Cross is Subhadassi,

a Buddhist poet and writer. He will speak on 'Creativity as an Art Form' from a spiritual perspective. The Irish poet Louis de Paor will read from his latest collection and composer and musician Bill Whelan, son of Limerick, composer of Riverdance will reaffirm that creativity is alive and well in Limerick. Other contributors to the weekend include Mannix Flynn actor and writer and also psychiatrist Patrick Bracken. Judith Hill architectural historian and writer will talk about Lady Gregory discovering creativity.

On Sunday morning the audience can relax and listen to the music referred to in Kate O'Brien's 'As Music and Splendour'. This session will take place in the recently renovated Daghdha Dance Space in John's Square and will be introduced by John Horgan who describes himself as a dilettante in musical matters and a great fan of the works of Kate O'Brien

The Weekend promises to be stimulating and enjoyable, come to the Kate O'Brien Weekend and 'catch the heart off guard and blow it open'.

# The rise and rise of the University of Limerick

By UL PRESIDENT, ROGER G.H. DOWNER

THE END OF the calendar year is a chronological landmark, which encourages reflection of the year that has passed, and anticipation of the year ahead. For individuals and families there have, undoubtedly been moments of great joy and satisfaction, occasional disappointment and, unfortunately for some, times of sadness and despair.

Organisations experience similar highs and lows and, as I reflect on the past year from the perspective of the University of Limerick (UL), I am encouraged to note that the triumphs far out number the disappointments.



UL President, Roger G.H. Downer. Photo: Cian Davis

We continue to set the standards for other Universities in the quality of the teaching and learning environment provided to our students. For this, I am grateful to all members of the University community for their

dedicated efforts to ensure that students enjoy and benefit optimally from their UL experience.

We enrolled our first students in Architecture and graduated students in Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and the Diploma in Applied Taxation. We conferred the largest number of post-graduate degrees in the history of the University, increased substantially research income, publications in primary journals and patent applications.

Establishment of the Irish Software Engineering Research Centre at UL with an

"The major disappointment during the past year relates to continued under funding of the University sector." overall investment of EUR28 million from the Science Foundation of Ireland represents a major coup and much credit is due to those who led and supported this a m b i t i o u s undertaking.

Physical development continues apace with the

Engineering Research Building and Millstream Complex fully functional and the Health Sciences Building on the Clare side of the campus now occupied.

There also have been many individual achievements by faculty, staff and students who

have brought distinction to themselves and the University by winning awards in academic, cultural and sporting fields. I acknowledge these achievements with pride but will not name individuals because of the inevitability of inadvertent omission.

The major disappointment during the past year relates to continued under funding of the University sector. The inadequacy of recurrent funding means that UL, like every other Irish University, will incur a deficit in the coming year in order to maintain current programmes.

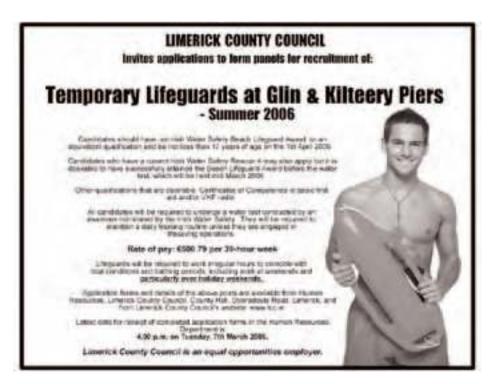
The recent budget announcement offers some encouragement for the future and the Minister deserves credit for the additional funds secured for capital development with UL being well positioned as a result of the exercise.

This year promises to be exciting and pivotal. Our proposal to establish a post-graduate entry medical school is likely to be considered in the first half of the New Year and we can anticipate also a new five-year strategic

plan to replace the current 2001-2006 document. As ever, there will be pressure to meet enrolment targets, generate viable submissions for specific funding opportunities and comply with ever-increasing demands for reports and assessments. We will continue to evaluate the quality and attractiveness of our academic offerings, strive to enhance the effectiveness of our support systems and endeavour to embrace the concept of continual improvement in every facet of our operation.

I place on record my appreciation to every member of the UL community for the support, commitment and loyalty, which you have demonstrated during the year. The institutional accomplishments are a direct reflection of your efforts for which I am most grateful.

I extend to you and yours my very best wishes for an enjoyable Christmas and for a happy, fulfilling and healthy New Year.



# Irish Chamber Orchestra scale new heights

AN FOCAL REPORTER

005 proved to be a landmark year for the Irish Chamber Orchestra as it celebrated its 10th Anniversary in Limerick.

Festivites commenced in February when the orchestra performed with renowned UK conductor/cellist Paul Watkins followed by a lavish Valentine Ball co-hosted by St. Gabriel's Centre which raised funds in excess of €40,000 for both charities.

March marked the ICO's first concert for many years at New York's prestigious Carnegie Hall. Bill Whelan of Riverdance fame and John Kinsella, one of Ireland's foremost contemporary composers wrote new works

for the occasion. Limerick and Dublin audiences previewed the programme.

In April, the Audi Spring Tour with the Irish Chamber Orchestra visited seven venues countrywide from Mallow to Monaghan. The tour featured another world première

by Irish composer Raymond Deane, the dynamic Concursus for chamber orchestra with solo violin and viola, commissioned by the Irish Chamber Orchestra.

In May capacity crowds attended the Allianz Irish Chamber Orchestra Concert Series featuring worldrenowned flautist Sir James Galway performing in Limerick, Dublin and Galway.

During July's MBNA Shannon International Music Festival at St Mary's Cathedral & University Concert Hall Limerick played host to a broad range of international guest artists for Nicholas McGegan's final Festival as Music Director of the Irish Chamber Orchestra. The festival was a resounding success and has been embraced by Limerick City. The

Autumn Season kicked off with the Murray O Laoire Architects Irish Chamber Orchestra West Coast Tour, which saw the orchestra

crossing to Inishbofin in a force 9 gale!

In October audiences in Limerick, Dublin and Waterford had a special chance to tango with the ICO's incoming Artistic Director Anthony Marwood when he conducted a programme of works by Ginastera, Piazzolla and Vivaldi which proved popular. Marwood has planned an exciting programme for 2006, which will appeal to all enthu-

World-renowned violinist Maxim Vengerov took time out from a sabbatical year to perform in the Allianz Irish Chamber Orchestra Concert Series in November. Vengerov's concerts in Dublin, Belfast and Limerick gave ICO fans a unique opportunity to hear one of the world's most exciting violinists in concert with the orchestra. An all-Beethoven programme received critical acclaim.

The final performance of

the year POST-CARDS from CONNEMARA celebrated the music of Limerick's own, Bill Whelan. The programme featured a trilogy of works commissioned by orchestra: Inishlacken, Carna and the world première of Whelan's Errisbeg. For these works the orchestra was joined by Irish traditional musicians including vio-

linist Zoë Conway and Riverdance soloists. A large and appreciative audience acknowledged the composer with a standing ovation.

Looking ahead to next year, ICO's new Artistic Director Anthony Marwood has gained a firm fan-base following two very impacting performances last year. His 2006 Spring/Summer



Anthony Marwood will be in the UCH in late March and early April.

Season is the beginning of new artistic journey and several distinguished colleagues in concert will join him over the coming months. "Richard Lester, Douglas Boyd and James Boyd will bring unity of vision but from the slightly different perspective of cellist, conductor/oboist and viola player respectively. In June

we are joined by the inspirational Richard Tognetti, Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra".

The 2006 MBNA Shannon International Music Festival under Marwood takes place 26-30 July and promises to be bigger and better than ever!

See page 23 for 2006 list-

## **Keith Wood brings 6 Nations Trophy home to Limerick**

AN FOCAL REPORTER

RUGBY legend Keith Wood visited UL on January 30th, to bring the RBS 6 Nations Trophy to Limerick for a very special tour, marking the beginning of the 2006 6 Nations Championship.

St. Munchin's College, with its rich rugby heritage, having produced three former Irish senior rugby captains, welcomed its former pupil as he displayed the coveted trophy to hundreds of excited students. In what proved to be a unique atmosphere, he encouraged students to get behind Ireland during this year's RBS 6 Nations cam-

Keith Wood also paid a visit today to the new Ulster Bank branch in the University of Limerick campus in Castletroy. He then travelled to the Radisson SAS Hotel

where he met Daire and Seán Gunning from Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, fresh from a training session with Mike Mullins from the Munster team on the hallowed turf of Thomond Park.

See page 28 for Gerard Fitzgibbon's interview with Keith Wood.



Keith Wood and Sean Og at the UL Trophy Tour.

### Christian Union **Meetings**

Weekly prayer meeting and bible study times TBA. Web: www.skynet.ie/~cu Email: cu@skynet.ie

#### Week 2:

Regular meeting (Topic: Authority of the Bible) Monday 20th February, 8PM, Contemplative Centre.

Christianity Explored Thursday 23rd February 7:30 PM, Dromroe Village

#### Week 3:

Regular meeting (Topic: Sexual purity) Monday 27th February, 8PM, Contemplative Centre.

Christianity Explored, Thursday 2nd March, 7:30 PM, Dromroe Village Hall.

#### **Other Notices:**

National CU ball, 3rd March, Davenport Hotel, Dublin. Contact ASAP to

## **Protect yourself** on campus - join a self defence course!

By CLAIRE MCGRATH

Normal everyday people get attacked. We don't like to talk about it or think it will ever happen to us but it does happen - to people just like you.

The UL Sexual Health Working Group have organised an attack prevention course for students. This course will provide you with basic skills to help you avoid an attack situation and to use in the event of an attack situation.

Participants will also learn about the mind of the rapist, how to avoid a dangerous situation, date rape

and what to do if you have been raped.

The course will run on Tuesday 28th February and 7th March - participants need to attend both sessions - at 7pm both evenings in Drumroe Village Hall. There will be a charge of €3 per person which will be donated to the Limerick Rape Crisis

To register your place on the course or for further information please contact Claire McGrath in CM045 or Claire.mcgrath@ul.ie.

#### **ULSU SHOP OPENING HOURS EXTENDED**

The ULSU Shop will now be open on Saturdays, from 11am - 5pm.



# **UL Gospel Choir seeks male singers**

By ANNE SHERIDAN

HE University of Limerick Gospel Choir is launching a massive recruitment drive this spring, according to its Director, Dr. Gerry Culloty. The campaign is particularly aimed at males, who to date have been reluctant to get involved. At present, the Choir consists of approximately thirty members, with just three males in rehearsals last term.

"This is a situation that affects a great number of choirs regardless of style", said Mr. Culloty. "The exact reasons are complex but it's a situation the U.L. Gospel Singers would like to change this term, please God."

While male singers are a focus at present, Mr. Culotty insists that "All are welcome to join the U.L. Gospel Singers, staff and students alike. In particular we are looking for enthusiastic and competent singers, male and female, who will be committed to both the choir and to the music itself. Guys, if you can sing and want to express yourselves, you are most welcome"!

"The choir provides an opportunity to meet others with a similar interest in singing and in particular to meet others who share a passion for the Gospel Music Repertoire," said Mr. Culloty.

There is no fixed number of singers in a Gospel Choir but the smallest number

necessary to sing some of the early Gospel tunes is four i.e. one soprano, one alto, one tenor and one bass. The upper limit is not fixed however but "the greater the number, the greater the sound", said Mr. Culloty.

Gerry Culloty is a former student of The Irish World Music Centre, receiving an M.A. in Ethnomusicology. Having established The Modern Gospel Ensemble in Dublin (2003), he was then to form the U.L. Gospel Singers, which evolved from the long-established U.L. Choir. This is just the second year of the choir and we are hoping the make this term a productive and joyous experience for all members, new and old.

The Choir will meet once a week, with the first rehearsal of spring term being held on Thursday 16th February, from 5.00-6.30pm in Room C0078 Block C, Main Building. Two public performances have been lined-up for spring 2006; a lunchtime concert in The Performing Arts Centre, Foundation Building, in U.L, with donations going to the Hope and Homes for Children charity in Romania and a performance at Milford Church, in association with Fr. Koenrad Van Gucht, the Catholic Chaplain at U.L.

This article was previously published in The Limerick Leader.

# Retirement of Noel Whelan, UL Vice-President External

#### By ANNE SHERIDAN

**PROFESSOR** NOEL WHELAN, Vice-President External and former Dean of the College of Business, retired from the University of Limerick just before the Christmas period.

President Roger G.H. Downer noted "it is appropriate, at this time, that I place on record my appreciation for the considerable contributions made by Professor Whelan to the advancement of the University of Limerick. He has been a tireless champion of the University in local, national and international forums and a source of prudent counsel in the various committees on which he has served."

Professor Noel Whelan was also elected the first President of Campus Europae. Between 1982-88 he was Vice President of the European Investment Bank and Vice Chairman of its Board of Directors. Previous to this he was Secretary General of the



Retired Vice President External, Noel Whelan, greeting a visiting Chinese delegation.

Department of the Taoiseach lectured part-time in UCD and UCC.

All members of ULSU and the University would like to wish him the best of luck in his retirement

# An Focal Briefs

## Make €100 by writing a short profile on yourself!

The marketing department are looking for short student profiles to use in the undergraduate prospectus and on the web. We will pay €100 for every student profile used in the prospectus/web. Photographs will be required. They will arrange to take photos of the students whose profiles are used. See www.ulsu.ul.ie for more details.

#### "Coming Out" workshop

Coming out as a lesbian, gay or bisexual in this culture is a lifelong process. It can be frightening and it can be exciting. In this interactive workshop, the stages of coming out will be discussed along with the challenges and benefits of each. The workshop will explore the issues involved and how to decide if coming out to someone will enhance the relationship.

This workshop is open to anyone, no matter how closeted or out.

The LGBT liaison officer is now taking the names of people who are interested in participating in the first Coming Out Workshop of 2006. The dates for the Spring four week workshop will be announced once the minimum number of six participants has been confirmed. To reserve a place in the workshop email: <a href="mailto:gerard.hanley@ul.ie">gerard.hanley@ul.ie</a> (please include 2006 Coming Out Workshop in subject line)

# Alternative Careers & Volunteering Fair: 1st March

The Cooperative Education & Careers Division is organising its third Alternative Careers and Volunteering Fair on Wednesday, 1st March. The Fair will take place in *EGO10* and it will be open to students from *12.00 to 3.00*.

Please see <u>www.ulsu.ul.ie</u> or <u>http://www.ul.ie/careers/careers/events/fai</u> rs.shtml for more details.



A student at least years Alternative Careers Fair.

#### Russian Magic from the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra

The RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and its Conductor Emeritus Alexander Anissimov bring an all-Russian programme full of drama, colour and wonder to the University Concert Hall in Limerick for their concert on Thursday, 9 March, 8pm as part of the RTÉ

NSO/*The Irish Times* spring tour. Tickets at  $\in 10$ ,  $\in 15$ ,  $\in 18$  (conc.  $\in 8$ ,  $\in 13$ ,  $\in 16$ ) are available from Tel: 061 331 549 or **www.uch.ie** 

# UL establishes link with leading Brazilian University

**DIRECTOR** of the Localisation Research Centre (LRC) at the University of Limerick, Reinhard Schaler, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Brazil to establish an office of the LRC at the Brazilian University.

#### **Musical chairs!**

**PRODUCT DESIGN** & Technology Students at the University of Limerick flexed their creative muscles this week in putting together an unusual exhibition in the Millstream Courtyard on campus.

The second y e a r students invited UL faculty, staff and their fellow students to check out and test their Cardboard Chair Designs in their First Product Design Exhibition.



Tristan Chung from Mallow with his chair creation.

#### Bugs up and over!

SECOND YEAR Mechanical Engineering and Computer Aided Design Students at the University of Limerick got a chance to get their creative juices flowing recently with a project to design a mechanical robotic toy in the form of an insect that is capable of jumping one meter in height or three meters in length.



John Murphy, Paul Norris, and Eamonn McNicholas, 2nd Year Mechanical Engineering and Computer Aided Design students recently designed a mechanical robotic toy in the form of an insect that is capable of jumping one meter in height or three meters in length.

# **ULSU** cleared in civil action

By FRANK FOGARTY

OLLOWING a court appearance on Friday 27th January 2006, the civil action taken against ULSU by a former Mary Immaculate College student was struck out.

Mr. Christian Morris, a graduate of the MA in Philosophy and Literature, took the Students' Union to court following difficulties accessing the Student Centre during Kollege Week 2005.

All entrances to the Student Centre were cordoned off during Kollege Week to comply with the conditions of licences granted to the Stables Club and the Scholars Club. Non-members were asked to sign the clubs' sign-in books before being granted access to the Student Centre. Mr.

Morris signed the book and was allowed to access the Student Centre, but only after discussions with Ents Crew and former Students' Union President Timmy Hennessy.

ULSU originally attended Limerick District Court on this matter on 29th July 2005. However, Mr. Morris applied for an adjournment on the grounds that witnesses were not available, which was allowed by Judge Tom O'Donnell. Again on 14th October, Mr. Morris sought an adjournment on the same grounds. Judge John O'Neill again granted the adjournment to Mr. Morris.

On January 27th, ULSU's representative from Dundon Callanan Solicitors requested that Mr. Morris clarify the

cause of action for the Civil Suit. Mr. Morris failed to identify a cause of action that came under the jurisdiction of the District Court and stated that he had suffered personal damages. When asked by Judge Aeneas McCarthy to clarify what damages were sustained, Christian Morris recalled that his damages were minor and amounted to being made to wait in the rain. Judge McCarthy stated that such damages did not come under the jurisdiction of the District Court and suggested that Mr. Morris bring the matter to the Personal Injuries Assessment Board. ULSU's application to strike out the Civil Summons was subsequently granted.

"I'm happy that the Students' Union has been

vindicated in this case and our stance to defend the case to the utmost was justified", stated current ULSU President Fintan Breen after the court appearance.

When asked if he believed the case would be brought before the Personal Injuries Assessment Board, Mr. Breen declined to comment. An Focal also asked Fintan if ULSU would be amending its practice in relation to the club boundaries during this year's Rag Week. "Well obviously prior to this Rag Week, we will have to agree this with Gardaí, Campus Security and the University of Limerick", stated Mr. Breen, "but I feel that this worked very well last year and there is no reason that we should change it".

# UL Environmental Committee launches 2006 calendar

By ANNE SHERIDAN

THE University of Limerick's environmental committee has launched a calendar for 2006 as a new initiative in its sustained programme to raise environmental awareness among the campus community.

As the Environmental Committee is not a funded body, sponsorship was sought for the calendar. ULSU and the PSA together sponsored one page in the calendar. Other sponsors included Mr. Binman, Plassey Campus Centre Ltd., UL Arts Office, Noonan Services Ltd., the University Arena, The Stables Club and Brian McCarthy Contractors Ltd., among others.

The calendar offers messages each month outlining simple things that people can do to try to protect and enhance the environment both on the university campus and in the wider community.

Tony Kay, Chair of the Environmental Committee, said "The challenges posed by increased student numbers and therefore increased waste quantities, more traffic and increased energy and water use must be addressed on an ongoing basis."

" T h e challenges posed by increased student numbers and therefore increased waste quantities, must be addressed on an ongoing basis."

The Committee has also enlisted the help of students to design and build recycling stations that would be place at key points around the campus, creating a sense and familiarity and making recycling a second nature response, said Student Affairs Director, Jeremy Callaghan.

Mindful of this ULSU are launching their own environmental awareness



The launch of the first environmental calendar

campaign at present. Environmentally friendly posters and flyers have been sought, which will notify students of the correct recycling measures. A series of environmental law lectures has also been planned; the first lecture, Climate Change: the Irish response was held on February 16th.

Commenting, UL President, Dr Roger Downer said that he welcomes the initiative and the ethos behind it.

"The University of Limerick is justifiably proud of the splendid physical setting which it enjoys and is conscious of a responsibility to ensure that this magnificent resource is managed in a manner that is consistent with best environmental practice," he said.

# Quotes of the week . . .

"We can't be too
'jabumbled' about this"!
Fintan Breen, SU President,
on a recent court case. Further
investigation led us to believe
he was trying to say
'triumphant'!

"We're getting pooper scoopers, it's time to clean up our act. I'm so happy..."
Paddy Pratt, Education Officer, in an email to fellow sabbats, while sourcing material for an environmental awareness campaign.

"From time to time accusations are thrown that the Union is neither accountable nor transparent. My answer to that is: here we are, come and get us!" Anne Sheridan in foreword of the first SU Executive calendar for charity.

"I think you could get rid of all the crap architecture in Limerick that was built in the 80s and take down some of the crap they're building now." Limerick based artist, Gavin Hogg, on Limerick architecture.

"It is not just a disgrace, it is absolutely extraordinary."
Mayor Scully after a documentary was shown on RTE in late January on Limerick's criminal activities.

"It is miraculous that I have passed through seven universities and managed to escape the 'leaving-do' until now. The problem with

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having very nice things said about you, is that you are expected to say similar kind words back that you don't really mean." Jeremy Callaghan, former Director of Student Affairs, on his leaving reception in Plassey House. Jeremy is now working in a similar position in Trinidad.

"I wish we had thought of this sooner; we could've saved ourselves an awful lot of hassle." Michael Fagan, operator of The Stables Club, on the success of increasing Christmas Days by an additional day.

"The science legitimating the war on fat is often uncertain and open to serious questioning." Dr. Lee Monaghan, Department of Sociology, UL obesity forum in January.

"The inadequacy of recurrent funding means that UL, like every other Irish University, will incur a deficit in the coming year in order to maintain current programmes." UL President, Professor Roger G.H. Downer, in his 2006 message to the University community.

"To say there is nowhere that rivals the facilities and spirit that we have here at Arena and UL for developing Sport and Recreation, is an understatement." Eoin Kernan, University Arena.

# **Current Issues in Environmental Law**

Spring 2006

Seminars take place from 4 - 6 p.m. Locations to be confirmed.

Thursday 16 February 2006 "Climate Change: the Irish Response"

**Speaker:** Rónán Kennedy, School of Law, University of Limerick

Thursday 9 March 2006
"Environmental Enforcement in Ireland"

Speaker: Dr. Matt Crowe, Environmental Protection
Agency

Thursday 27 April 2006
"Fisheries in Ireland: Lessons from North America"
Speaker: Professor Katrina Wyman, School of Law,
New York University

May 2006 "Environmental Impact Assessments"

Speaker: Garrett Simons, BL

Further Information: ronan.kennedy@ul.ie

# **Professor Downer** urges graduates to embrace co-operation

AN FOCAL REPORTER

**PEAKING FROM THE** second of the three winter conferring ceremonies in UL, President, Professor Roger Downer, stressed to graduates the importance of fostering an ethos of co-operation as they entered the professional world. According to Professor Downer Ireland's overly competitive spirit is clouding the definition of success for young people.

"In the corporate world, the importance of co-operation is being recognised increasingly. Even companies that compete in similar markets are seeking cost-sharing opportunities and choosing to pool intelligence in certain areas so that each gains benefits. Indeed, the

unfortunate but comprehensible term, coopetition has been coined to describe this growing practice," said Professor Downer.

"The challenge for Ireland is to harness the competitive ethos, which pervades our current thinking, and complement it with the equally beneficial and productive spirit of co-operation. It is relevant to ask if our educational system and our societal value-set help us to address this challenge. Unfortunately, the conclusions are not encouraging," he continued.

980 graduates were awarded degrees from the University of Limerick in a range of disciplines including, Business, Education, Engineering,

## **Excellence in small group** teaching

AN FOCAL REPORTER

TWO UL FACULTY members received an Award for Excellence in Small Group Teaching at the UL Winter Conferring Ceremony.

The Awards for teaching are based on a comprehensive review of a range of teaching and learning related activities. The teaching award system uses sources of evidence that can help to build a strong picture of those faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to their profession.

Patricia Mannix MacNamara received the award from Professor Roger Downer, UL President during the conferring ceremony. Patricia teaches in the Department of Education and Professional Studies where she lectures in several areas including psychology and affective education. She is course director for the graduate diploma/MA in health education and promotion and co-ordinator of UL's life

Nuria Borrull, who also received the award, teaches Spanish in the department of Language and Cultural Studies. She links her teaching to the learning of her students in creative, well thought out and effective ways. Her aim in language teaching is to foster communicative competence in the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. She facilitates



Emma O'Brien, Dooradoyle, was delighted after she was conferred with a PHD-Doctor of Philosophy from the College of Informatics and Electronics at the Winter

learners to negotiate meanings and uses creative methodologies for the effective learning of the Spanish Language.

Speaking from the ceremony Dr Sarah Moore, Dean of Teaching and Learning at the UL said that the University is very proud of the standards in teaching excellence shown continually by faculty.

"The award process includes the examination of independently gathered testimonies from students, the versatility, volume and level of teaching, range of delivery

> strategies, the quality of teaching and the teacherclass relationship. In addition such activities as, planning and preparation, the development of materials, assessment, research in the area of teaching and learning and overall professional development considered," said Dr Moore.



## Irish Universities must embrace change, says Downer

"We have been

pursuing an

aggressive

responsible

programme of

vears and will

- UL President,

change for several

continue to do so."

Professor Roger Downer

AN FOCAL REPORTER

AS THE THIRD and final Winter Conferring Ceremony took place in UL President, Professor Roger Downer expressed his appreciation of the Government's recognition of the importance of the University sector in Ireland's future and its commitment to ensure funding to facilitate change and development within Irish Universities.

Professor Downer identified the University of Limerick as a centre for change and spoke of his wish to assure Government that the University of Limerick will continue to develop and adjust to new realities. However, he emphasised that this is not something new to this institution.

'We were the pioneers of cooperative education in Ireland and introduced modularised programmes and customised course selection long before other Universities. We are ahead

of the field in the way in which our Office of Teaching and Learning assists learners to achieve their potential. We pioneered innovative programmes to improve access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and to assist students with physical problems. In

the last three years, we have introduced new programmes in Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Architecture and the suite of courses offered across the board is reviewed and changed annually to ensure that our students are provided with what they need. We have enormously effective collaborations

with industry both in programmes to up-skill the workforce and collaborative research and enterprise. And we continue to expand and develop the physical infrastructure of our campus in unprecedented fashion," said Professor Downer.

"Therefore, while appreciate the government's recognition of the importance of the University sector in our nation's future and its commitment to ensure that

the change agenda is funded, they should not think that we have been ignoring this essential process. Rather, we have been pursuing an aggressive programme of responsible change for several years and will continue to do so," concluded Professor Downer.



# News from the Postgrad World

#### By MARIA MCHALE

#### Welcome back

To all taught postgrads who had the past few weeks off and to all research postgrads who were here the whole time slogging away at their research. So I hope you all had a good Christmas and I wish you all a Happy New Year. How many resolutions have you kept so far?

#### PSA social events

The PSA Christmas party was held in the PSA centre on Thursday 15th December and I'm pleased to inform you that the PSA has been successful in its endeavours to get blanket permission to have receptions and parties in the PSA centre, subject to some terms and conditions. For those of you that missed the night, please see the photos in order to get a flavour for the night. Musicians from Gan Aimn provided the music and the Stables generously sponsored the food for the night, as well as allowing us use of their facilities. It was a really good night and it was finished off in the Stables for many.

The PSA decided to take advantage of the tranquil nature of the UL campus during the break and thronged into the Stables for a barbeque meal on Thursday 9th January. Afterwards, the Funk Junkies provided music - and they rocked!

#### Postgrad ball

Preparations for the annual postgrad charity ball are well underway. Full details will be available in the next issue of An Focal, but for the moment I can tell you that the main sponsor is Ulster Bank. We have also generously received some sponsorship from the President's Fund. The chosen charity for the proceeds of this years ball is Adapt House. Adapt House provides refuge and support to women and children who experience domestic violence. The staff at Adapt work to promote the right of women and children to a life free of violence. Adapt also provides a 24 hour emergency accommodation and help-line services to people experiencing domestic violence. The date for the ball has been provisionally set for 30th March, but make sure to check the next edition of An Focal for the full details

#### ULSU student satisfaction survey

It was interesting to note the high proportion of postgrads that responded to this survey and the comments therein. Some students seemed slightly aggrieved that postgrad social events



Attendees at PSA Christmas party



Maria McHale, Postgraduate President.

and the role of postgrad president was not referred to in the questions. The PSA is a sui generis organisation within the Union structure, and is fully autonomous on postgraduate issues. Simply put, it is not the concern of the Students' Union to ask questions about PSA events or the PSA President. However, a postgrad satisfaction survey is being drafted and there you will have an opportunity to air your views on the PSA, good, bad or indifferent!

#### Postgrad focus groups

The PSA, in conjunction with the Graduate Studies Office, will be holding two postgrad focus groups in week 3. One session will be for taught postgrads and one will be for research. At the time of print, details are still being finalised, so please keep an eye on the PSA mailing list for the full details.

Deadline for consideration for 1st March exam

Please note that postgraduate research students who wish to be considered by the University Examination Board on 1st March must submit the final hard bound copies of their thesis to Marie Beaumont, Graduate Studies Office by Wednesday, 22nd February. Theses submitted after this date will not be considered by the board. Research students should also forward by email to Marie Beaumont (word document) an electronic copy of the thesis abstract, including the title of the thesis and candidate's

#### Writer's retreat

The Centre for Teaching and Learning and Graduate Studies

UL's First Postgraduate Writers' Retreat - Coolbawn Quay 7-9 March 2006

#### Purpose of the Workshop

UL's first writers' retreat for postgraduates will take place March 7-9 (Tuesday-Thursday). The UL faculty writers' retreat has been availed of by many faculty over the last five years and we would now like to offer a similar opportunity exclusively for postgraduate research students. The benefits of participation

- Time and space for productive writing
- Development / enhancement / sharing of scholarly writing
- Initiation and maintenance of a supportive writing network

Producing a tangible piece of your own work either for publication or for progressing your masters or PhD thesis (or

In the spirit of a writers' retreat, this event takes place off campus in peaceful surroundings facilitating productivity. Structured seminars, advice on writing and practical publishing tips will form part of the programme but the main objective will be to provide an environment in which you will be able to focus completely on your current writing task. The purpose of participation will be to start, progress or finish a coherent piece of scholarly writing for publication (e.g. a journal article, a chapter of your thesis, a book proposal).

The workshop will be facilitated by Sarah Moore, Centre for Teaching and Learning and Nick Rees, Dean, Graduate Studies.

#### Who should attend?

Participants in the past have ranged from novice academics, to prolific writers with editorial experience. All postgraduate research students are eligible to attend, but a preference will be given to those in the latter stages of their research and who have definite publication goals and plans. Attendance will be fully funded by the Graduate Studies Office - but the number of places is limited so early application is advisable.

The programme is funded with the support of Science Foundation Ireland under the National Development Plan.



**PSA Christmas** 

#### **Further details and applications**

To make a booking or to get further details contact: Maura Murphy, Centre for Teaching and Learning: Email: maura.murphy@ul.ie. Please include the following in your email: year of study, masters or PhD, department/institute affiliation, supervisor, and the title of the project that you wish to work on during the workshop.

## Forthcoming seminars from the Graduate Studies Office

- Date/Time/Venue 22nd Feb, 1-2pm, MC2-005(Millstream
  - Dr Gary Walsh will give a talk aimed at 3rd year postgrads entitled "Academic Writing & Publishing your Research
- Date/Time/Venue Feb 22nd 12.30-1.30pm (old MBA Room E1-017) IRCHSET Workshop



# HE FOG

One hundred years ago, in a thick, zerie fag. off the rocky coast of Northern California, a horrible shipwreck occured under mysterious circumstances. Now, shrouded in derkness. the ghosts of the lang-dead sailors have returned from their watery graves to exact their bloody, merciless revenge.



# DATE



The twisted minds of two of the six screenwriters behind "Stary Movie". Auron Seltzes and Josen Friedberg. This time skewer the romantic comedy genre. The new film tells the story of hopeless ramontic julia James (Hannigan), who has limitly met the man of her drooms, the very British Grant Funckyerdoder (Campbell). But before they can have their "Big Fat Greek Wedding," they'll have to "Meet the Parents," hook-up with "The Wedding Plannes," and contend with Grant's friend Andy "a spectocularly beautiful woman who wants to put an end to her "Best Friend's Wedding.

# **LUCKY NUMBER** EVIN

Cost: Lucy Liu, Morgan Freeman, Bruce Willis, Josh Hortnett. Sir Ben Kingsley



In a classic case of mistaken identity, a man is confused with the friend whose apartment he is staying in, and forced by a gangland bass to assassinate the son of his arch enemy. But perhaps this seemingly random stranger is not quite as anlucky or as unknowing as he initially appears.

has a shot at the big time when a nathing morning television show calls him for a of the world, but his personal life is at complete disarray. Dave's painful diverce, his dad's illness and trouble with his kids have him paised on the knife's edge between stability and disaster.



## **SYRIANA**

Starring: George Clooney, Matt Damon, Amanda Peet

Written and directed by Oscar-winning screenwriter Stephen Gaghan (Traffic), Syriana is a political thriller that tracks several disparate characters across the globe as they find their lives impacted by the ruthless competition for inculculable power and wealth that drives the energy industry.



NOW SHOWING Hurry! Finishes Soon!



# WALK THE LIN

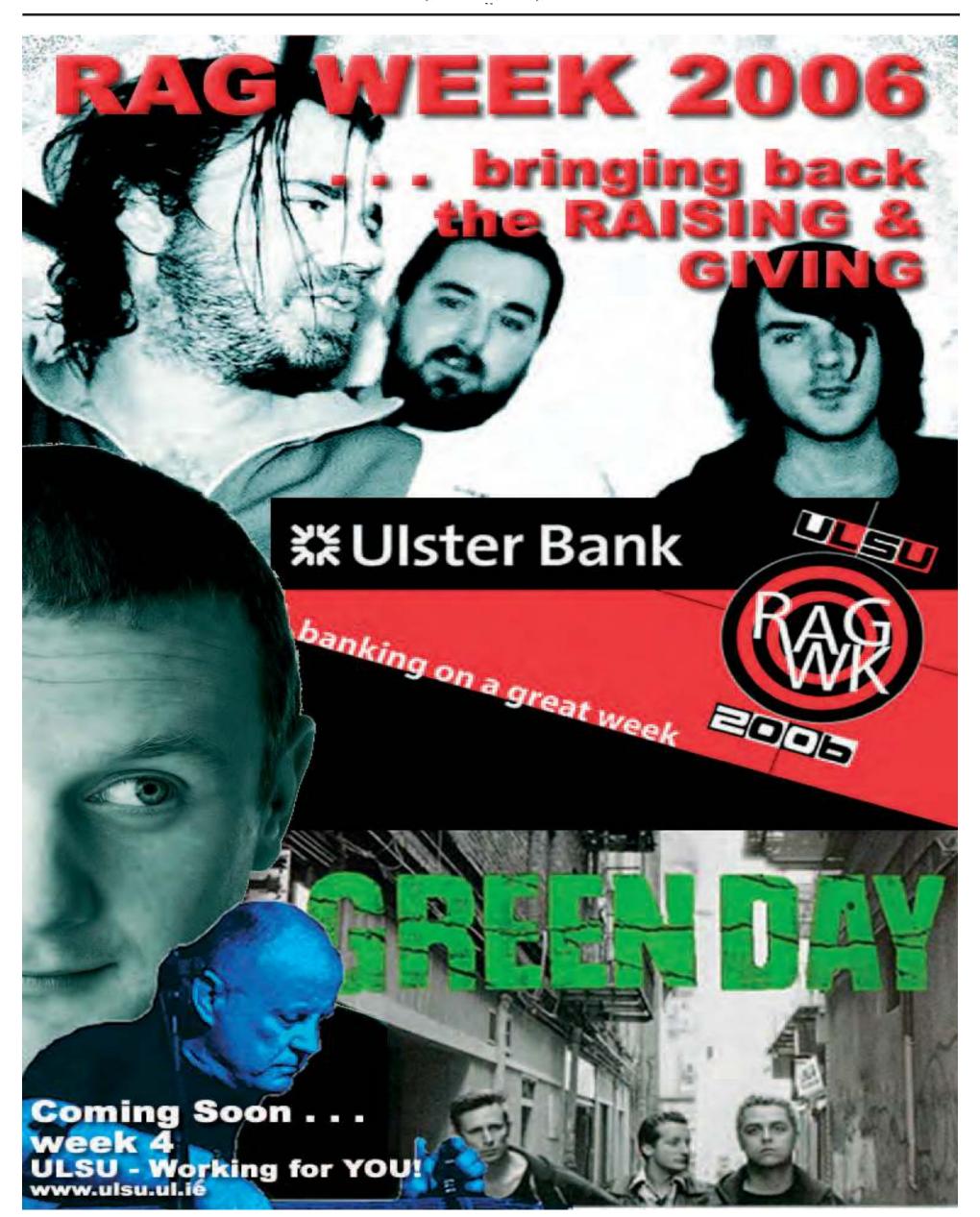
WALK THE LINE is a lunny and very entertaining biopic of Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash by director James Mangold (KATE & LEGPOLD). Giving some of the best performances of their careers, Juaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon play Johnny and June. They appear almost certain to get Academy Award nominations for their work, but they probably won't end up taking home

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sexy - it has the makings of an

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# Raising and Giving Week -

ALL Events are subject to Licensing . . .

o here it is, the week you all look forward to the on the only UL Rag week 2006.

This gig has been running for about the last 25 years, come to think of it we should find out exactly how long its been running and have a bit of a party not that we're not going to have a party anyway, that's for next year.

Back to this year - it's a lot earlier than normal this year Week4 as opposed to Week 7/8. It'll probably be a little bit colder and maybe a bit darker, but sure we'll generate enough light and heat over the course of the week to illuminate proceedings. We are looking to centralise everything as much as possible on campus.

Every night we'll have gigs running in the Stables Club till closing time and then we'll run buses in to gigs in town as per usual.

However, the gigs in the Stables are ones that you shouldn't miss.

It all kicks off on Monday night and runs through to Thursday night where we'll be hosting our very own mini festival O3.

We'll be running daytime activities from 1pm to 4ish from Tuesday to Thursday with everything from hypnotists to jelly

wrestling to
the second
annual Irish
Wheelie Bin
Grand Prix
and with a little bit of comedy thrown in.

#### Daytime

This year's host is **PJ Gallagher** (TBC). The

man from Naked Camera PJ has been a star of comedy stages for a long time now but in the last year or so he has started to come to everyone attention with his starring role in Naked Camera.

He was already in UL this year when he did a sold out show for the Laughing Society. Now is your chance to get to know him even better!

Our little University has developed a bit of a reputation over the last few years for hosting the mother of all day-time events during Rag Week. Anyone who's been at them for the last few years knows the stories and legends behind

them, and knows they're not to be missed. This year won't be any different, and even has a couple of additions. The daytime events will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday in the Stables Courtyard, and here's some stuff to watch out for especially.

#### Tuesday @ 1pm

Kicking of the week in earnest is hypnotist extraordinaire, Zac Powers. He'll turn your friends into anything you want, and if it turns out that they're not actually your friends, he may not even turn them back. He's a genius, so don't miss him. He's been a part of every UL Rag week ever and its just not the same without him so don't miss it!

After he's finished, it's going to get messy, drinking, eatin, gungin and the little matter of qualifying sessions for Ireland premier wheelie bin racing competition. We're looking for 16 teams of two who would be proud to represent their counties in wheelie bin racing. We'll equip you with all the necessary safety equipment, the course and the safety car to lead you around it. All you need is your county jersey, a partner to push and be pushed and the will to get through the heats, quarterfinals, and semi finals and onto that winners pedestal on Thursday. Ask at the students' union reception for more details and entry forms.

#### Tuesday

Jelly Wrestling. We've done mud wrestling and we'll do it again this year but before we get down and dirty we're going to get slimey, with jelly. After this you'll never eat jelly and ice cream again. We haven't decided on a flavor but it will be suitably revolting by the time we get those lithe UL bodies writhing around in it! But to start the day and for a much more sedate approach we're going to revert to childhood and have a magic show, rabbits hats and all that jazz!

#### Thursday

The inflatables hit town, with a little twist on sumo wrestling added by the, a little twist on gladiator jousting added by the mud pit, a little twist on tangle twister added by some rope and some fairy liquid, and then a tug of war to boot.

Throw in a bouncy castle in the Scholars Courtyard and you'll be on your arse for the

day. If that's not for you then get ready for all the Grand finals, boat racing, bean eating, wheelie bins its all hapnening!

Oh and don't forget Thursday is Mud wrestling day.

#### **Monday Night**

The main entertainment for the evening will be from Republic of Loose This is what the press think of them. We just think they are fuckin brilliant. So too does every radio DJ in the country at the mo. If you haven't heard their two singles Comeback Girl and You Know It then you've been studying way too hard, come and feel the noise!!!

When you all finish up in the Stables, jump on a bus and join us and Hector in Trinity Rooms for the Back to Skool party.

Hector will be on the decks and if we're lucky he might get off the mic occasionally so that we can her some music.

#### **Tuesday Night**

Tuesday night is **Super-heroes Night,** so get into those phone boxes, get changed and head to the stables, there'll be superhero fun and games.

The usual superhero kind of stuff, leaping over the bar in a single bound, running faster than a number 2 bus, x-ray vision - how cool would that be? Seeing as it's a night for superheroes we'll have a U2 tribute on stage in the marquee.

#### **Wednesday Night**

#### The Bogman's Ball

The Stables courtyard is a barn for the night; expect cows sheep pigs and lots of hay.

A Christy Moore tribute headlines the Stables court-yard. He's Ireland's favourite singer songwriter but Rag Week just wasn't his thing. However we have the next best thing. Come on down for a night of belting out the ballads and if that isn't your thing then there's loads of chart tunes in the Stables. From there we're off into town and god only knows what rural surprises will wait at Trinity Rooms

#### Thursday Night

The grand finale, the end of

# and you thought it was all about you?!

great big bog off. See you next year. You've been to Oxygen; we had O2 back in September now its time for O3.

American Idiot in the Stables courtyard bangin out the Greenday tunes. All the music of Oxygen bands in the Stables bar. Some decorative portaloos and lots of dodgy kebabs.....and so it goes on.

Into Trinity Rooms and its even more O3. The acoustic tent in the green room, the dance tent in the quarter club and god only knows what you'll find in the main room. Throw in some fire-eaters, jugglers and we might even do some face painting!!!!

#### Bungee

Rag Week wouldn't be Rag Week without people throwing themselves off massive heights attached to the thinnest piece of elastic band. giving their friends the fingers on the way down, forgetting that those same friends could be identifying them for medical purposes within a matter of minutes.

Only messin' it's perfectly safe. Seriously, it is. And it's great fun, and a great way to make money for charity. And everyone wants to do it, so if you want to, just pick up a form at Students' Union reception, put down your entire mates name on it, take the money for the electricity bill, and throw yourself off a ridiculous height for fun. Ahh, Rag Week, where would we be without you.

#### **Tickets**

Ticket sales are going to be a bit different this year. Normally it's a queue up in the morning kind of thing, this year it's a queue up in the evening kind of thing.

We're going to have a party in the Stables on Tues/Weds of week 3 to celebrate the tickets going on sale. Lots of tunes, plenty of beer, and loads of free lolly pops. I can't think of a better way to spend an evening. Then into Trinity Rooms for the Superheroes ball.

You can get four tickets per ID card, and you can bring your mate's ID cards if you like, just don't let them leave you queuing on your own. It's gonna be busy - hopefully you wont be queuing too long but we will supply the lollipops.

At the end of the day, that's

what this is supposed to be all about, having a great time, and in the process, raising as much moola as we can for the less fortunate among us. An at the end of the day, we are all really lucky, heading into what should be a great week, having parties with our friends in the sun, before we all head off somewhere fancy for the

So, without getting too heavy, could yis keep that in mind now and again during the week, and put whatever ye can manage into the buckets that will be going around. We'd be doing something more than just enjoying ourselves, we might be making life a little easier for people who haven't had the same breaks as us.

If you see a bucket, then dump your change, if you get a chance to get involved then go do it, if everyone in the col-

lege just put €2 in a bucket over the course of the week we'd make close to €30,000 for charitv before we even lift a finger. I know the pockets are getting empty by Thursday night but just give what you can as often as you can....Please!

The following charities have been chosen by the RAG week Working Group to receive all money raised throughout RAG week please give generously!

#### **Focus Ireland** www.focusireland.ie

This organistaion works to advance the rights of homeless people to live in a place they can call home, through the provision of quality services, research and advocacy. Focus Ireland provides a range of quality serviecs including day centres, cofee shops and creche facilities as well as long and short-term accommodation. Focus Ireland is planning a large extension in Limerick in the near

#### Limerick Rape Crisis Centre

11 Mallow St, Limerick 061-311511 Provides support services for males and females, including face to face counselling.

**Brothers** Of Charity Limerick www.brothersofcharity.ie

The Brothers Of Charity

Services in Limerick City and West Limerick provides a range of services that contribute to the enhancement of the lives of many individiauls with intellectual disabilities.

#### And One Last Thing . . .

We just want to ask yis a favour. We're hoping to have a great week, and we're hoping that you're going to enjoy every minute of it. We hope we're gonna make loads of money for charity and we're sure everyone will make it out the other end of Week 04 feeling great and looking better.

But there's a really important group of people that we don't want to forget and that's the residents that live in Castletrov.

The students of UL have consistently got a bad rep from the actions of a tiny minority

that lose "Respects the the run of themselves people living now and around you, be again. they student Now, should also be said that none of us permanent resiare helped dents during by sensationalist this week, and journalism in the local press, or the unwillingness of a similarly - EPM & ULSU, tiny minorthe organisers of

RAG week

other weeks.

residents or

all other

weeks."

iron out problems. The fact remains that the vast majority of both students and local residents are great, so we're just asking that everyone remembers that and respects the people living around you, be they student residents or permanent resi-

residents

who refuse

with us to

work

#### And a quick thank you to our sponsors . . .

dent during this week, and all

For their support which has helped both this little handbook and Rag Week itself to come together Ulster Bank, the Stables and Trinity Rooms. They've helped us out enormously and it wouldn't be happening without them.

# PJ Gallagher

PJ GALLAGHER is fast becoming one of Ireland's bestloved comedians. Following the huge success of his role as Jake Stevens in the hilarious and sometimes outrageous hit TV show "Naked Camera", PJ rarely has time to be himself these days as he prepares for yet another run of the massively popular series.

PJ Gallagher is a Vicar Street regular, can often be seen with Jason Byrne on various TV and live performances, has toured with Des Bishop and has appeared at the Cat Laughs festival in Kilkenny.

PJ, a native of Dublin has made a big impact on the Irish comedy circuit since his first solo stand up performance at the Comedy Cellar in Dublin.

He has since gone on to woo audiences nationwide, including The Empire in Belfast, Queens University also in Belfast, The Laughter Lounge in Dublin, and various comedy clubs in Cork, Galway and Killarney.

A graduate of the Gaeity School of Acting, PJ Gallagher left sell out audiences in Vicar St. begging for mercy as part of the hugely popular Jason Byrne show. As a result of this success, he decided to branch out as a solo stand up and immediately made it to the finals of the BBC New Stand Up Comedy Awards. He also won his way through the prestigious Channel 4 'So You Think You're Funny' heats and performed at the National final of the Daily Telegraph New Comedy Awards at the Edinburgh

He has recently been filmed bursting into a pub cheering for the wrong team for a Guinness commercial.

Feared by livestock, loved by few women, the cheeky wit of PJ Gallagher can only lead this natural born idiot to comic stardom. With appearances on both The Miriam Callaghan and Tubridy show, you can expect to see a lot more of this brilliant, energetic young comic.











# Time

All day time events will take place in the Stables courtyard

Tuesday

Limbo Competition, Hypnotist, Gunge Tank, Boat Racing, Slippery Pole, Wheelie Bin Racing, Boiled Egg Competition, Half Yard of Coke, Shaving, Wine Drinking - Spanish Style

#### Wednesday

Magic Show, Jelly Wrestling, Bungee Jump, Boat Racing, Yard of Ale (in order to comply with the Alcohol Policy food will be provided!), Wheelie Bin Racing, Iron Stomach, Gunge Tank, Boys from the Rafters, Shaving, Kissing Competition, Welly Throwing

Thursday - Finals Day

Boat Racing Finals, Mud Wrestling, Gladiator Jousting, Sumo Wrestling, Wheelie Bin Racing Finals, 3 Legged Fairy Liquid Tangle Twister, Shaving, Condom Dunking in Custard, Lovely Girls Competition with Surprise Guest Host

# ht Time Event

Monday

f Loose €7.00 (Joint Ticket €10) Rooms - Back to Skool €7.00

Tuesday

Tribute €7.00 (Joint Ticket €10 rinity Rooms - Superheroes Ball

### Wednesday

Christy Trinity Room : Bogman's Ba

Thursday

American Idiot €7.00 (Joint Tick Trinity Rooms - 03 continue



TRNTY ROOMS ARRAYS >

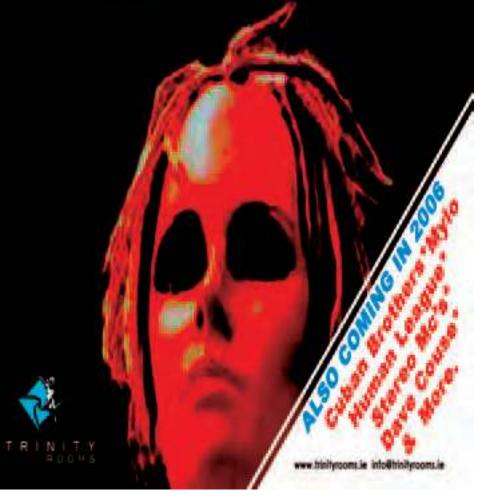
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#### AN FOCAL

#### ULSU / PSA and UL in 2005

Compiled by Anne Sheridan

#### **February**

ULSU Shop says goodbye to 'shop saviour', Fiona Doyle Ms. Doyle was co-opted on to the shop Board of Directors as part of its overall regeneration strategy. The Students' Union Shop hit financial difficulty and it was at this time that Ms. Doyle joined our time as a consultant with many years of retail management experience. Since she joined ULSU in January 2004 she has been working on developing the SU shop to the best international standards in retail excellence.

#### April

Paddy Casey & Des Bishop headline Kollege Week. This year the name has been changed back to RAG week: it's all about the raising and giving, you know!

#### Sabbatical elections 2005

Frank Fogarty was elected unopposed as Welfare Officer, as was the President, Fintan Breen, Education Officer in 2004/05. Two An Focal writers, Anne Sheridan and Valerie Gunning ran for the position of Communications and Campaigns Officer. Anne Sheridan was elected as C.C.O. with 533 votes (Valerie Gunning received 421). The position of Education Officer was re-opened and three candidates ran for the position: Paddy Pratt, Katie Lynch and Seamus Ryan. Paddy Pratt was elected with 467 votes, while Katie Lynch received 232 and Seamus Ryan 171. All four sabbatical officers started officially on July 1st 2005, after three weeks of training.

#### May

#### **PSA Sabbatical election**

Maria McHale was elected unopposed as the PSA President for 2005/06. Maria commenced her term on 1 July after two weeks of training with the former PSA President, Sorcha Keogan.

#### UL announces new architecture course

Merritt Bucholz, UL's first ever Head of Architecture, believes the course will be a leader in its field. Mr. Bucholz firmly believes that a closer consideration of the environment in the course will give UL architecture graduates an edge. "It will it give graduates an edge, but I also hope it will create leaders.

#### September

Eightball Media and Promotions (EPM) secure the ULSU contract for entertainments

Dave O'Donovan, ULSU CEO (Communications and Education Officer) in 1998 and Keith Piggott, both UL graduates agreed to manage and organise ULSU ents & events on the basis of a 20-80 split of the profits in favour of EPM, while they would take all the losses.

#### **PSA** information leaflets

Information leaflets were designed and printed for postgraduate students. These were distributed throughout orientation week and are still available from the PSA.

#### **PSA** workshop for new tutors

In consultation with the PSA, the Centre for Teaching and Learning ran a very successful training workshop for new tutors in orientation week. Over thirty tutors attended and during the course of the two hours, Sarah Moore, Dean for Teaching and Learning, outlined strategies and techniques for engaging students.

#### Music & health -Two day meeting at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance

From September 18th - 20th, the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance hosted Music and Health, an international meeting examining issues pertaining to research into the use of music in healthcare contexts, with academics from the



fields of music therapy, music psychology, arts health, community music, and music sociology. Funded by the European Science Foundation (ESF), with support from the College of Humanities, this prestigious event was followed by a one-day public conference, with papers presented by ESF sponsored speakers, including Dr Leslie Bunt from Bristol University UK and by Dr Lars Ole Bonde from Allborg University, Denmark. The Convenor was Dr Jane Edwards, Senior lecturer in Music Therapy at the Irish World Academy.

#### Tea party for postgrad parents

In week two of the semester, the PSA organised a tea party for postgraduate students with children. As many of the PSA events that are organised are not very family friendly, this informal evening provided a different social outlet for postgrads with family responsibilities.

#### **Graduations ceremonies**

Professor Roger Downer told An Focal "the graduation ceremonies are one of the highlights in the annual cycle of a University. It is the time when we recognise and reward achievement. Graduates, parents, spouses, siblings, friends and faculty all have reason to feel pride in these achievements. As President, I enjoy the occasion greatly." On Tuesday September 14th, Professor Roger G.H. Downer, President of the University of Limerick, conferred degrees upon his wife, Jean Elizabeth Downer and daughter, Tara Siobhean Downer, who both graduated with a BA degree in Law. They received their degrees to rapturous applause, which was heightened further when Professor Downer warmly embraced his wife and daughter on

#### Fifth sabbatical position in proposed SU Constitution

One of the biggest changes to the constitution is the creation of a fifth sabbatical position. The proposed constitution has decided to split the office of Vice President/Campaigns and Communications Officer into two positions. If it passes, this will be divided President/Campaigns and Publicity Officer.

Services Officer and Vice President/Publications and

#### The Scholars Club closes with debts of at least €30,000

The Scholars' Club began a descent into financial

difficulty since its very opening



initially launched as part of the new multi-million pound Student Centre almost six years ago.

### New Clubs & Societies guidelines for An Focal

At the start of the academic year the C.C.O. introduced new guidelines regarding Clubs and Societies contributions to An Focal. She stated that up until now C&S contributions were not being used to their full potential in the paper. Under C.C.O. Sandra Gannon, C&S contributions were

limited to 300 words and placed in a specific C&S section of the paper, numbering 4 pages. 05/06's C.C.O. got rid of the word limit, placed society articles in the news section and club articles under campus sport. The only criteria for publication, she said, was news-worthiness and good writing.

#### University Departments charged for submissions to An Focal

The C.C.O. proposed to the SU Executive that University departments be charged for submissions to the Students' Union newspaper, An Focal, in line with other Students' Unions across Ireland and Britain. The SU Executive passed the proposal on the basis of the C.C.O.'s arguments; namely that the volume of University submissions were expanding to the extent that submissions from student writers were omitted. "It is the student' union paper, written by students, for students. What we have to strive against is the dumping ground attitude many people have towards An Focal - it cannot improve otherwise", said Ms. Sheridan.

#### European Award for UL's Language Support Unit

The Language Support Unit (LSU), Department of Languages and Cultural Studies, received a prestigious European Award for Languages - Language Label 2005. The award, which was open to language programmes across Europe, recognises creative ways to improve the quality of language teaching, motivate students and make the best of available resources. The prize was presented by Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education and Science on 26 September at the Law Society, Dublin and was accepted by Catherine Jeanneau (LSU Research and Development Manager) on behalf of the team involved in the LSU.

#### **Product Design and Technology**

This year saw the first Co-op class from the University enter the world of commercial design and these are the leading

edge of the new wave of designers from UL.

The Product Design & Technology course currently has First, Second and Third year students with the first graduates joining the workforce in June

The autumn semester saw the Second year class presenting their designs to the University at large, in a display that was held at the Millstream courtyard. Passers bye were confronted with an array of cardboard seating that pushed the boundaries of material usage and seating definition. Those who sat down found surprisingly comfortable seats that belied the apparent flimsiness of the material and remarked at its' warmth - an antidote to the freezing wind that

The students work creatively with environmental sensitivity and a knowledge of aesthetics, technology to design diverse products including domestic and entertainment appliances, transport, sports and lighting equipment.

Our thanks go out to all who came out and experienced the students' first public presentation. Special thanks go to the Millstream Restaurant who provided refreshments and to the press who publicised the event in the local newspapers.



The Scholars ceases to operate under Mick Dolan.

#### **October**

#### **PSA** non-sabbat elections

Positions on the PSA executive were elected unopposed. Two college reps were elected unopposed. As per the PSA constitution, three reps were then co-opted. However, the PSA still needs a rep for the college of education.

Due to a lack of interest in the PSA soccer league, it had to be cancelled. It is hoped that there will be a better response in the second semester.



Clubs and Societies recruitment drive was a huge success

# in Review

Minister Micheál Martin announces funding of €11.7million for the Irish Software Engineering Research Centre in UL

Mr. Micheál Martin TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, announced Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) funding of €11.7m to the Irish Software Engineering Research Centre (ISERC) - a national centre for software engineering research at the University of Limerick. Work at the centre will deliver a sustained competitive advantage for the entire Irish software sector.

#### 8,000 second-level students attend UL Open Days

More than 8,000 second level students from over 170 schools around the country visited the University of Limerick Campus over the two days of Limerick Open Days.

#### Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Representatives visit UL

A delegation of high-ranking officials from the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry met with senior academics and representatives from the University of Limerick today. The visit to UL was part of a capacity-building programme organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs. During their visit, the Vietnamese delegation met with various state agencies and government departments to discuss Ireland's economic success. UL organised a comprehensive programme for the guests, which highlighted Ireland's reputation as an environment for education excellence and demonstrated the contributing power of education to economic development.

#### **UL Science Fair**

The UL Science Festival on the 13th November proved a spectacular success with over 15,000 members of the public attending the festival on the campus. Guest of Honour at the Festival was NASA Astronaut Dr Steve Robinson who wowed audiences with his personal home video taken during the recent 'Discovery' mission.

#### DVD Launched to tackle Irish perception of asylum seekers and refugees

A new DVD launched at University of Limerick on November 30th aims to debunk many of the myths surrounding Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Ireland. Made by DORAS Luimni, the DVD entitled "Refugees and Asylum Seekers: The Asylum Process in Ireland" will be an invaluable teaching aid in second level education.

#### November

### "Candlelight Painter" books launched at the University of Limerick

The University of Limerick saw the official launch of two unique books about the language and history of the Irish Traveller community. These books were a collaborative effort between William Cauley, the Limerick Traveller and artist known colloquially as "The Candlelight Painter" and Dr. Mícheál Ó hAodha who works in the University of Limerick Library. Both books give a rare glimpse into the lives and language of the Irish Traveller community, a community about whose history little is, as yet, known.

### I'mPulse/Gol: A Gathering of Voices from Asia and Europe at the Irish World Academy of Music & Dance

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in cooperation with the Irish World Music Academy of Music & Dance hosted the second annual I'mPULSE/GOL Gathering of voices from Asia and Europe', a week-long interaction between 11 young traditional singers from countries on both continents. During the gathering, participants shared the sounds of traditional song from their homelands, and interacted with the other participants towards a collective composition, which was performed at the final concert on Wednesday November 16th at the Daghdha Space in St John's Square, Limerick. This concert was one of the highlight events of the Irish World Academy's Sionna Festival of Music & Dance. Directed by Óscar Mascareñas of the Irish World Academy, in association with the ASEF Office in Singapore, the gathering

was facilitated by Dr Tran Quang Hai of the Department of Ethnomusicology at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris and by Dr John Purser of Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Isle of Skye.

#### ULSU launches their first SHAG week

Frank Fogarty, ULSU's Welfare Officer launches ULSU's first SHAG week - sexual health awareness and guidelines. It was agreed to be a massive success. A full week of events centring on sexual health awareness took place. SHAG week also coincided with World AIDS Day Campaign. Throughout the week students dressed in 'sperm suits' gave out SHAG packs around the campus, containing information on sexual health, condoms, lubricant and crisis pregnancy leaflets. Posters highlighted various facts about contraception, STIs, pregnancy and other sexual health related issues.

#### Postgrad forum

The PSA and the Graduate Studies Office ran a postgrad forum called Looking into the Crystal Ball - The Graduate Experience of the Knowledge Economy. This was very poorly attended, but the postgrads who turned up seemed to enjoy it. Copies of the presentation are available from the PSA centre.

#### Daithi O'Sullivan, former ULSU President dies

Daithí was the President of the Students' Union for the academic year 1979/80. After winning an arduous campaign for president, Daithí spent a year representing students at the National Institute of Higher Education in Limerick. One of the memories of Daithí is his setting up of an alternative canteen when students were outraged about the prices being charged in the University canteen. His memory and the nature of his commitment to students and to the community stands with us in the University and Students' Union that we have today. May he rest in peace

#### Abortion survivor, Gianna Jessen, speaks in the Concert Hall

The talks held in the seven universities across the country aim to increase awareness and provide greater education about abortion, especially the mental and physical effects abortion has on women. Eoghan De Faoite, a student at the College of Surgeons in Dublin, who is also a member of Ultrasound, a group of third level pro-life students, facilitated the talks. Despite the image portrayed in their promotions around the campus in UL - glaring red posters, with quotes such as "I carried their dead bodies for disposal" - both speakers took the softly-softly approach in convincing the audience that abortion is morally wrong.

#### December

#### PSA Interaction

The PSA message board finally went online and can be accessed through the PSA website which is www.ul.ie/~psa. Also, in an effort for more transparency within the PSA, the PSA homepage also contains a link to the PSA President's blog.

#### Permission for events in PSA common room granted!

The PSA has now been granted permission to hold social events in the PSA centre subject to some terms and conditions.

### University prepares for €2.5million budget deficit

The Vice President Finance, Ailish Quinlivan, told An Focal

that the University has planned for a €2.5m budget deficit for the year 2005/2006. 'The reality is that our funding has been cut and cut for the past number of years,' said Ms Quinlivan. She cites one of the main reasons that UL, as well as other national third level institutions, has run into debt is because the state grant has not increased proportionately with wage increases.

# THE YEAR IN BRIEF

#### February

Official launch of the ULSU Common Room

UL hosts third International Human Rights Conference

#### April

Coca Cola referendum not quorate

#### May

Ulster Bank win competitive UL banking tender for undisclosed amount

#### September

#### ULSU AGM fails to reach quorum

2005/06 Nonsabbatical officers elected unopposed

Clubs & Societies recruitment drive reaches unprecedented level



Clubs & Societies Quality review questions UL's sporting



Class Representatives
Council
proposes a
Higher
Diploma in
Education
for UL

Keith Downey, Sinead Hickey and Michael Toomey, final year HPSS students who proposed a Higher Diploma in Education for UL



Minster for Education and Science meets with ULSU President, Fintan Breen

#### October

Rumours abound that the ULSU Shop will secure the Scholars' premises

#### December

ULSU prepares for their first "exposed" calendar together for charity

Noel Whelan, UL Vice President External retires

UL Environmental Committee launches their first Environmental Calendar



Geraldine Mills in conversation with Janelle Eagleton in the White House pub on O'Connell Street.

"I WORK PART TIME in Aids-West in Galway city, so if I'm working in town, I get up about 7 o'clock and I'm in my car by eight. I don't have a long journey to work, but for

parking reasons, I get into Galway by about half past eight. I'm not in work until half-past nine, so I use the car as my office and usually write for that hour in the morning.

Recently I've been quite busy. I'm doing a number of writing workshops in Galway, so sometimes I can have a very long day. This week for example, on Monday, I left the house at 8 o'clock, I finished work at 5pm and at six I was opening an Art exhibition in the library in Galway, then I had a class at 7 o'clock. It was half past ten by the time I got home, so if I hadn't gotten my hour's writing done in the morning that would have been it.

I find that hour in the morning crucial, or sometimes I will take my lunch hour to write if I know I won't get a chance for the rest of the day. If I have an hour free in the evening, I might even just jot down a few

"One of the

I found was

'out-there',

and opening

myself up to

criticism.'

hardest things

putting myself

ideas that have been going through my head.

It's not that I'm working all the time, but I do try to find a time to write, when I

And then, some days I have at home, so if I can I spend them writing. I reply to letters and invitations first and then I work on a short story or a poem for the rest of the day. I tend to get

more writing done in the wintertime. I'm an organic gardener so in the summer I like to go out in the garden on bright mornings.

A couple of years ago, when my children were at home, and I was bringing

them around to dancing, and horse-riding and everything, I used to resent the fact that I could have been writing instead. But that's when I discovered that I could work in the car where there were no interruptions, or telephone or people knocking on the door. And now I can write almost anywhere, especially if I'm working on a second or third draft. I suppose it is discipline, but maybe it means I'm boring because I don't socialise a lot! It really is important to balance writing, work and going out.

I get ideas for stories and poems everywhere. It can be a chance meeting with someone, or an image I see as I walk down the street. It can be just watching people talk or something from my past that comes out without me even realising it. I also go to my journals for ideas that I have written down. Ideas are so fleeting; they just come in and go out.

For relaxation, I like to meet up with my friends and family. I have a large family and we get together regularly. It's great to just sit around the table, talking, and maybe have a nice meal and a glass of wine. I enjoy reading as well, although I suppose now, that's always tinged with a little bit of criticism. It gets very hard to read un-critically!

I work with my sister on the organic garden. We don't grow

for a market, it's just for ourselves. We have a poly-tunnel, so we grow the more delicate things like tomatoes, in there, and the other, harder vegetables, like potatoes go outside.

It's not a huge garden, but it's a wonderful combination with the writing. If I have an idea and it's not going anywhere, I go out and I start digging or weeding. And as I'm weeding, the ideas will start coming, it works extremely well. Often poems or short pieces for the 'Living Word' have formed just by being outside and working in the garden. I think it's extremely important for a writer to ground themselves in the ordinary and the everyday because it allows you to let your mind wander. When you're washing dishes or peeling potatoes is a great time for reflection and working on ideas.

I wrote when I was growing up; in school my English essays were much praised. And I've been writing seriously for about 20 years, but it's only in the last seven or eight years, since my children grew up, that I've really decided to pursue it. One of the hardest things I found was putting myself 'out-there', and opening myself up to criticism.

I had to become more critical of my own work as well; I had to learn to make sure that every word has earned its place on the page. That means working on a number of drafts, maybe ten or twelve, before I'm happy with a piece. And each time I start a new story or poem, it's almost like learning the craft all over again. It's a new idea, a new way of looking at something, so it's always different. That's the wonderful thing about writing; you're always learning, always observing.

I did a diploma in Science at the Regional tech in Galway after I finished school, it was only later that I did a degree in English and Greek and Roman civilisation at night in UCD. But I find the science background useful in my writing sometimes for knowing the make-up of a flower or plant, or for knowing the specific names of shellfish.

Once I made the decision to focus on writing, all sorts of invitations started coming to me. Within months I'd gotten my first invitation to send off my poetry for publication to Bradshaw Books, in Cork. And then within a year, they came back to me and said they wanted to bring out a second book of my poetry. So I did two and a half years of concentrated work to write 'Toil the Dark Harvest'. And then I wanted to get back into writing short stories, so I wrote a story last November and that actually won second prize in the Francis McManus Short Story Competition 2004. Island House publishers rang and said they'd like to publish some of my short stories. So I've never had to actually look for a publisher for my poetry or my short stories. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been given all of these chances and I feel I've made the right decision to concentrate on writing.

Tonight I'm reading from both of my collections of poetry, mostly from the second one. I'm also reading some new poems that I've been working on. I do about 6 readings per year. I'm always extremely nervous; you never know how you're going to be received. But if you get an attentive audience, it's absolutely wonderful. Or if, afterwards, one or two people come up and say they enjoyed what you read, that's very rewarding. It makes a huge difference."

# Irish journalism - a misnomer?

DONAL O' DRISCOLL argues that there needs to be a serious debate about the journalistic standards in this country

HE KILLING OF A CHILD always serves to heighten the emotions of the population. The thought of a life taken away, at such an early stage, at the hands of another, is always a talking point in the media, the killing of Robert Holohan and subsequent conviction of Wayne O' Donoghue was no exception.

Wayne O' Donoghue convicted of the manslaughter of Robert Holohan, who was killed in January 2005 and was sentenced to four years from the date of remand. This sentence evoked a lot of criticism, especially after the emotive 'victim impact statement' of Mrs Holohan, Robert's mother, who raised question relating to evidence which was not presented in court. Such evidence included semen, allegedly from Wayne O' Donoghue, which was found on Robert's body. Against this backdrop, the very structure of court proceeding in this country came under severe scrutiny the and media. understandably, got involved

in this. However, in my opinion, the resulting media coverage, particularly the tabloid media coverage was a b s o l u t e l y abhorrent and goes against all concepts of ethical practice iournalism.

What the media did, was to effectively convict

Wayne O' Donoghue of a crime he was not even charged with, the crime of paedophilia and sexual abuse. This reaction was disturbing for a number of reasons. Firstly, making assertions on a matter as serious as child sexual abuse, based on the victim impact statement of a grieving mother is extremely problematic. If I was a parent and someone killed my child. I know I would be unable to look at it rationally. The 'evidence' Mrs Holohan identified was largely circumstantial and the question must be asked, if there was reason to believe sexual abuse had taken why did the place, prosecution not pursue this? The second, and most fundamental area disturbs me, is the attempts

of some papers to subvert the integrity of the courts and increase Wayne O' Donoghue's sentence.

The Irish Mirror started a campaign to force the DPP to increase the sentence. At all levels this is a civil libertarian nightmare. To increase a citizen's sentence based on newspaper coverage, essentially designed to create profits, when the accused has

no opportunity to defend themselves, flies in the face of the concepts of democracy and justice that we as a society purport to espouse. For the purpose of this article, it is not necessary for me to give my opinion on the rightness of the sentence, but the judge arrived at this, based on the evidence presented to him during the trial, should we not at least entertain the

The Wayne O' Donoghue coverage is not to be viewed in isolation; rather it should be viewed as part

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of the systematic decline in Irish journalism standards. Even writing for An Focal. we are taught the fundamentals; be factual, be evenhanded (unless in an opinion piece and even then there are standards to maintain) do not try to mislead the reader etc.

However none of these issues seem to be addressed by today's media, especially in the tabloid sector. Even the basic concept of "do not get sued" seems to be ignored by the more cheeky publications. It seems some publications are willing to risk lawsuits to pull in readers with juicy headlines.

The cult of celebrity is one area in particular that is diminishing the quality of journalism. Stories that would at one stage have gotten a little column towards the back of the paper now take up the paper. Does anyone really care if some drunken celebrity is unable to keep his or her top from falling down? Or what some nobody is prepared to lower himself or herself to on big brother to get



Perhaps we do, but if so it is only because the media saturates us with this rubbish. I would rather hear about that robbery in Askeaton or the jobs closure in Skibbereen. Now I must add I do pick up a newspaper if I see it lying around, no matter what it is, but in the case of many, it is merely skimming through as there is very little to read.

There are wider implications for the slump in journalistic standards. It may affect the amount of people going into the profession or seeking qualifications in journalism. Why kill yourself trying to train to be a journalist when most 'journalists' these days seem to get away with breaking all the rules. Journalism should be a very important profession but if the more idealistic aspiring scribes amongst us see that what dominates the paper is stories about the social lives of talentless celebrities, the question arises why bother.

There needs to be a serious debate about journalistic standards in this country and in general. When so many people now choose a weekend paper according to which DVD is free with it, fundamental questions have to be asked. Journalism is a noble profession, it is supposed to educate people, broaden their horizons and make them think. I hate to say it, but at the moment Irish journalism just makes me want to throw up.



# leters to the Editor

#### **Vexed Law student** with gay friends

#### Dear Editor,

I would like to stress my deep anxiety that little first years, not knowing any better, might be convicted and incarcerated in Portlaoise (bend over boys) for some pathetic attempts at a slagging match with a gay man. Next time I attempt to talk to a member of out in UL I'd better make myself more familiar with the Incitement to Hatred Act (1989). Or maybe An Focal just has too many law students with gay friends?

While I recognise the marked distinction between student liberalism of the 80s where a Chinese boy stood in front of military tanks in the name of human rights and today's UL student body who won't even attend the SU meetings, I draw the line at labelling us as homophobic bigots. In my opinion, the day that two mature, proud, gay men find the remarks of a couple of wet-behind-the ears first years "very, very intimidation" a sad day for liberalism.

Lest we forget, not two weeks ago we encountered SHAG week and it's rogue-ish life size sperm prancing around campus distributing condoms to all and sundry regardless of sexual orientation, marking a pretty satisfactory level of liberalism in my book. On of the aforementioned sperm, a bubbly gay red-head was an acquaintance of mine. He once told me that he moved to UL because he had experienced some narrow minded homophobes in his previous University.

In my opinion, these 1st years just need to be taught a lesson. Some of my closest friends are gay, and I have learned a lot from them. Wouldn't a stronger message have been sent to those 1st years by laughing confidently in their faces rather than scurrying to Irish legislation? Alternatively, they could have used their sexuality to strike the fear of god into the boys' hearts by shouting something like "ohh come ere and ill ride ya...little first

Maybe the SU could organise FAG Week, flying in the face of homophobes fresh out of the CBS?

Signed, Law student with gay friends.

#### **Farcical student** celebrations run amok

To whom it may concern,

Has anybody noticed the accumulation of themed weeks around this University recently? Back in the days when 'college' wasn't spelled with a 'K' or 'Christmas days' with an 'X' and a 'Z', UL started celebrating Christmas early since everyone was away for the holiday and it was a nice idea. From a one day affair, through a twoday mitosis into Christmas eve plus Christmas Day and before a stubbly man has had the best shave of his life, we now have added a third - St. Stephen's day to this list. (Or Boxing day, as anyone coming off a three day bender would call it.) This shameful excuse initiated by us and perpetrated by pubs eats up an entire week. And I'm not just picking on this 'X-mas celebration'.

A plethora of other pseudo-celebrations have graced the UL calendar over the last few years. Anyone remember 'soUL' week? How about 'cULture' week? Were these not just a re-named 'Greek week'? whatever the idea behind that was in the first place. (A slot the Union invented to 'showcase' Clubs and Socs, apparently) I submit that this name altering and punning has lessoned the impact of our actual traditions.

Your ineffective sexual health week can SHAG off, I say, and you can shove your cULture up your Greek holes (no offence, Maria). I would like to know if first, and second years are actually lulled into thinking these 'holidays' are anything more than gimmicks. People have to buy tickets to go into there own social Club over X-DZ, or whatever the hell they decide to call

I am an advocate of Rag/Kollege week. It used to be that money was raised for charity and I know this still goes on to some extent. One out of three 'Xmas' days will do, though. Clubs and Socs can still be encouraged to hold their events, and if it could be organised well over a 'Greek week', than I wish them the best. But please- let's stem this madness.

Yours, Concerned old-fogy.

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Christy Gillick Pepijn Van de Ven Geraldine Quain

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# MUSIC WAREHOUSE/UPSTAIRS DOLANS

#### Dolan's Events Listings for February 22nd - March 2nd 2006

22 Wed

Rodrigo y Gabriella
Due to unprecedented demand, Rodrigo Y Gabriella
will be returning to Dolan's Warehouse for another
night of mesmerising guitar playing
Doors open 8pm €20

23 Thur

Q (upstairs)
Q aka Colm Qurarney the guitarist and songwriter known from such bands as LIR and Dragonfly and from working with such high profile Irish acts such as Mundy, Jerry Fish and the Mudbugs and Mark Geary. He has recently released his second album "Body Electric" Q released his debut album back in 2001 "the world's not round" to great critical aclaim Doors open 8pm

24 Fri

Twenty Two (upstairs) are from Limerick. Their second album - `The Cultural Coupon`is to be released February 24 in Dolan's upstairs room, followed by in-stores and launch gigs around Ireland. They have now been performing for over 6 years, permanently embedding themselves into the long term memories of their audiences *Doors open 8pm* 

25 Sat la boutique

Doors open 11.30 €10

2 March Thur Albert Niland upstairs

Jason Byrne
Fast talking Irish buffoon. His style is a freewheeling, high energy brand of lunacy that takes
the audience on a helter-skelter tour of his offbeat
mind, helped along by his curious array of bizarre
props. He has performed all over the world and has
a ever-growing international following. He was a
nominee for the Perrier Award in 2001
Doors open 8pm €16



Wednesday 22nd Dr Anthony Seeger, Professor of Ethnomusicology at UCLA is addressing a symposium, hosted by the Irish

World Academy of Music & Dance Venue: Wood Room, Plassey House

Venue: Wood Řoom, Plassey House
Time: 1.30 - 5 p.m
Anthony Seeger is one of the world's foremost ethnomusicologists and folklorists, renowned for his twentyyear documentation of the music of Brazil's Suyá Indians, author of Why Suyá
Sing: Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People. A politically committed anthropologist, he is bringing
camcorders and lawsuits to bear on the Suyá's fight for a place in the modern world, enabling them to
document their ancestral land claims. He is rooted in traditional music, being the grandson of renowned
musicologist Charles Seeger, and a nephew of Peggy, Mike and Pete Seeger. He is also curator of the Folkways Collection and
director of Folkways Recordings at the Smithsonian Institute.
The syposium is entitled 'A National Ethnomusicology'.
Organiser: Dr John Morgan O Connell, Irish World Academy of Music & Dance, University of Limerick.
Extn. 2966 email: john.oconnell@ul.ie

Thursday 23rd (Week 2)

Official Launch of the first ever Students' Union Executive Calendar

Venue: Upstairs, Students' Union Common Room Time: 2pm

Tiffic. 2phi Calendars are only €5 and all proceeds are going to Milford Hospice and St. Vincent's School in Lisnagry. Food and complimentary drinks will be provided. We hope to see you there. All students & staff are invited to attend. Organiser: ULSU - working for YOU!

EU Commissioner, Mr Charlie McCreevy, will deliver the next lecture in the Kemmy Business School Monday 27th

Distinguished Lecture Series Venue: University Concert Hall Time: 17h00 - 19h00

Organiser: Kemmy Business School http://www.ul.ie/business/

March 2006

"Emission Impossible", IEE Faraday Lecture 2006, University

Venue: University Concert Hall Time: 10.30am & 2pm

Climate change is the most important issue we face when looking at our future way of life!

The need to address our impact on the global environment has never been more urgent and the technology the forefront of this battle is some of the most exciting and ground-breaking in the world today.

Organiser: For Reservations, Contact Carmel Long @ 061-202255 or Carmel.Long@ul.ie

The Language Support Unit resumes its activities in Week 2

The purpose of the LSU is to support and guide you towards being a better language learner. It is free of charge and is open to all UL students studying a language. It is based in A1062b, across the main office of Language Resource Area. The LSU provides a range of language-learning support: one-to-one the Language Support Advisors for language-learning advice, language-specific workshops (e.g. masculine/teminine in French, past tenses in Spanish), oral and exam preparation, essay-writing workshops. For further information on the LSU activities, please visit: www.ul.ie/lsu or email: lsu@ul.ie.

A full list of all upcoming events can be viewed from:

http://www.ul.ie/eventscal/

#### IRISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA SPRING/SUMMER SEASON 2006

Anthony Marwood director/violin

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in D

**Barber String Quartet** Beethoven String Quartet in C#m

Sunday 30 March, 8pm University Concert Hall, Limerick Tel: 1890 923 543 or 061-331549

Thursday 2 April, 8pm National Concert Hall, Dublin Tel: 01 417 0000 Online booking: www.nch.ie Tickets both venues: €20, €15, €10, €5 with concessions

**Douglas Boyd** conductor

Alison Roddy soprano

Corelli Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 6 in F

Tippett Fantasia Concertante on a theme of Corelli Mozart Exsultate Jubilate & other arias (Alison Roddy)

Mozart Symphony No 40 in Gm K550

Thursday 27 April, 8pm University Concert Hall, Limerick Tel: 1890 923 543 or 061-331549

Sunday 30 April, 8pm National Concert Hall, Dublin Tel: 01 417 0000 Online booking: www.nch.ie Tickets both venues: €0, €15, €10, €5 with concessions

James Boyd director/viola

**Hindemith Trauermusik** Janacek On an Overgrown Path Mendelssohn String Symphony

Holstead new commission

**Tuesday 23 May, 8pm National Concert Hall, Dublin Limerick** Tel: 1890 923 543 or 061-331549

Sunday 28 May, 8pm University Concert Hall, Tel: 01 417 0000 Online booking: www.nch.ie Tickets both venues: €20, €15, €10, €5 with concessions

Richard Tognetti director/violin

Janacek - String quartet No.1 'Kreutzer Sonata' arr. Tognetti Mendelssohn - Violin Concerto in E minor arr. Tognetti Schubert - Quartet in D minor 'Death & the Maiden' arr. Tognetti

Sunday 11 June, 8pm National Concert Hall, Dublin Limerick Tel: 1890 923 543 or 061-331549

## **UL ARTS OFFICE SPRING FILM SEASON 2006**

#### Jean Monnet. Lecture Theatre. All films are on at 6pm. Admission is free with a UL student ID card.

February 20th - Machuca

February 27th - Mysterious Skin

March 6th - Head On

March 13th - Overnight

March 20th - Torremolinos 73

March 27th - The Consequences of Love

April 3rd - La Nina Santa

April 10th - Czech Dream

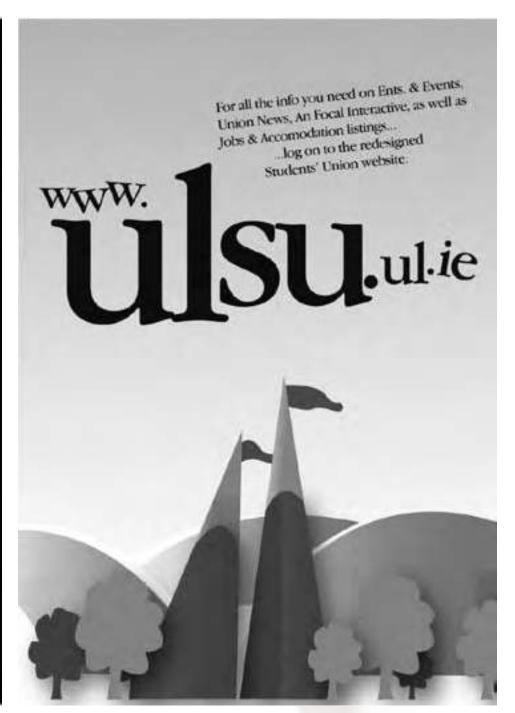
April 24th- Downfall

May 8th - Whisky





floppy discs for €1



### Nominations for ULSU sabbatical positions

Nominations open: Monday March 27th 2006 (week 7 second semester).

Nominations close: Thursday March 30th.

Hustings: Wednesday April 5th Elections: Thursday April 6th

Collect a nomination form at the SU reception on March 27th, get 45 signatures to support your nomination and leave a €40 deposit.

**Current sabbatical positions include\*:** 

President
Deputy President/Welfare Officer
Vice President / Education Officer

Vice President / Communications & Campaigns Officer (C.C.O.)

These positions may be altered to include Campaigns & Services Officer, whereby the C.C.O. would become Publications & Publicity Officer.

#### FIFTH SABBATICAL OFFICER in the SU?

A waste of students money or a long over due development?

#### YOU DECIDE!

@the ULSU UGM (Union General Meeting) in

The Stables Club

Wednesday, week 5, March 15th 2006

Food & complimentary drinks will be available for all!

ULSU - Working for YOU!



## Legal Aid from ULSU

Any student is entitled to receive free legal aid from our contract solicitor, Gerard J. Meehan & Co Solicitors.

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# UL Tae Kwon Do club - reflections of a rookie

By CORMAC GLEESON

REALLY DID NOT KNOW what to expect from my first night of Tae Kwon Do training. Maybe I had some of those preconceived Hollywood stereotypes of martial arts movies, visualizing it as a sort of hybrid between The Karate Kid and Blood Sport.

At first glance, a training session of boxing and sparring can look quite intimidating. However, once you start training you get into the swing of it all very quickly. After a few weeks I was hooked. It is a contact sport but the head instructor Mr. Fox and all of the senior grades are very careful about safety. They ensure that all of the participants respect the rules of engagement.

In Tae Kwon Do we learn a wide range of traditional and self-defense techniques including sparring, kicking, takedowns and ground fighting. Like any sport, physical and mental conditioning is needed to achieve success so we also endure (but enjoy in a strange kind of way!) regular sessions of sweat-drenching press-ups, squats, star-jumps.... It is a traditional martial art and an Olympic sport that incorporates a colour belt system.

The different colours represent one's level of training and progression through a challenging curriculum. No comparisons are made between individuals in Tae Kwon Do and everyone is encouraged to do their best.

Regular grading is encouraged to focus your attention on set goals and build confidence in your achievements. As a beginner I wore a white belt but in December the club had a formal grading / testing. Master John Darcy, 6th Dan black belt and European director of our TKD association, AIMAA (Action International Martial Arts Association) was the principal examiner.

We demonstrated our pre-rehearsed patterns and sparring / fighting techniques. In the end he complimented us on our techniques and told us the good news that we all had passed. Now I'm a yellow belt and am working up towards the next level - orange belt. The old Chinese proverb which says that: 'The journey of a 1,000 miles begins with a single step' is certainly applicable to Tae Kwon Do. Eight more colours to go before I earn the coveted black belt!

So what does a typical training session with UL TKD involve? It is fast-paced and challenging but Mr. Fox is also aware of the different capabilities in the group. He never pushes anyone into doing something they cannot handle. There is no rigid format so it never becomes monotonous.

Generally we start with a series of stretches to loosen and improve our flexibility. Very often this includes some shadow boxing and kicks followed by some traditional fighting

techniques. Patterns are essential to any martial art. They are particularly interesting in TKD because each one represents the achievements of Korean patriots or some significant aspects of Korean history / culture. As white belts we were introduced to sparring after a few weeks. The club provides most of the safety equipment including gloves, protective helmets and foot and shin pads. Initially all you need to bring is a gum shield. The rule is no gum shield, no spar. The instructor and all of the club members are vigilant about wearing the appropriate gear, which is fair enough.

The UL TKD has a positive, fun atmosphere and a genuine commitment to training and self-improvement. The group is very friendly and welcoming of new members. In terms of getting fit, I would not hesitate in recommending it over gym work alone. UL TKD club provides a regular, intense physical/cardiovascular work-out, exercises to improve flexibility and balance, training to learn to learn self-defense techniques and a great atmosphere. If you are looking for an effective way to relieve the stress from long hours of lectures or the day job, then this martial art may be for you. Feel free to come watch us train or join in with the action. You can find us every Monday (6:45-9.00pm) or Thursday (6:45-8:30pm) in the old sports building behind the MSSI building.

## Weekend sailing in Schull

By DARRAGH O' CONNOR



were present at the Fastnet Marine Outdoor Education Centre to take part in a two day Team Racing camp. Two teams from UL, one team from CIT and Schull Community College took part. The purpose of this training weekend was to focus on the upcoming IUSA Southern Championships in Schull on the 4th and 5th of February, while getting some training in the unfamiliar 420 dinghies before the upcoming event.

On Saturday morning everybody met and rigged the Schools 12 420's. After having a briefing from centre manager and coach David Harte we set

out in a steady Easterly breeze. Close racing on the water ensured concentration all round.

After lunch the breeze stiffened and a couple of races switched drills to improve boat handling skills in the 420's. After a long afternoon on the water we went ashore and had our debriefing with David Harte, with the aid of video footage we could see the areas which needed improvement.

On Sunday morning a moderate Easterly breeze greeted us as we headed on the water. A long morning was spent getting in as many races as possible and in as many combinations.

Fearing equipment could be

damaged by the harsh wind it was decided not to team race in the afternoon, but to focus on boat speed, handling and starts. Using the full width of the harbour all 12 boats battled against each other improving fitness and boat handling skills. As the breeze died consistently we focused on our starts, which were poor on the previous day.

We came ashore around 3.30pm, put away the boats and had our debriefing. We left Schull shattered and exhausted, but it was obvious that the weekend had paid off and improvements had been made all round.

## Windsurfing Caribbean style

By GERALDINE QUAIN

UR FIRST EVER international club trip to Dominican Republic could be classed as a huge success and has set a precedent for all future club trips. Ranked among the ten best windsurfing sites in the world Cabarete in the Dominican Republic is a small, laid-back Caribbean beach village offering tourists like ourselves the chance to windsurf in the warm waters - averaging about 26 degrees Celsius with fantastic wind conditions to suit every level of sailor.

The tuition from worldprofessional windsurfers allowed all of us to develop our skills and huge improvements were seen throughout the trip. The chance each day to build on the skills learned the previous day, was motivation enough to keep everybody from complaining about sore hands, backs or bodies which was inevitable from the amount of time spent on the water during the trip.

The fantastic thing about this location was that when we were taking a break

from the windsurfing there were still plenty of fun things to be done and we spent our time playing beach volleyball with the locals, sea kayaking, swimming, surfing, kite-surfing, strolling on the beach, sun bathing or just relaxing on the beach chairs.

Another highlight of the trip was the day we decided to do a jungle adventure trek during a tropical rainstorm. This involved trekking across rivers and valleys and rock climbing in the jungle. Along the way were different waterfalls to swim in and different fruits of the jungle to sample, like oranges, grapefruit, coconut and almonds to name just some of the tropical things we tasted that day. We felt like pioneers because we were the first Irish people ever to take that trail with our guide.

The nightlife was fantastic. Accompanied by the locals on a nightly basis, we experienced a mix of the best of the Caribbean entertainment. Between sampling all the local drinks and witnessing the locals dancing skills on most nights we partied into the early

hours of the morning.

I had the opportunity to stay for one week and was really sad to be leaving the island. Half the group stayed on for another week and had an equally amazing time on that second week.

I never thought when I joined the windsurfing club in September that I'd have an opportunity to go on such a fantastic trip like this. The club is really welcoming to all beginners and is a brilliant example of an active club constantly encouraging more people to become involved in its activities.

Several more trips are planned for next semester including a weekend trip to Achill Island Co. Mayo, another beginner session in Rusheen Bay in Galway and the Intervarsities hosted by NUIG in Galway. I would strongly encourage anyone with any interest to sign up for the beginner trip.

A slide show of photographs and videos from the trip is being held Thursday 23rd of February in the PESS building P1001@8.00pm.

# Sub-Aqua Club hit the Skellig rocks!

By PEPIJN VAN DE VEN

VER THE LAST vears University of Limerick branch, one of the Scottish Sub Aqua Club's (ScotSAC) overseas branches. has grown to become a mature part of ScotSAC. Thanks to several people, both in Scotland and in Ireland, we now have four instructors, 8 sets of club owned gear, a brand new electrical compressor and too many trainees!

The success of our branch has shown itself through numerous trips, for which several Scottish members of ScotSAC have been invited. A few examples are our yearly Red Sea trip (given recent 'political' developments we might have to reconsider this

year), the Kenmare trip in 2004 and our recent Skelligs trip.

On the latter trip we had the pleasure of be in gaccompanied by our regional coach Murray MacCallum and Don Lees. The Skelligs are two rocks off the coast of Kerry with abundant life, both above and below sea

level. On these rocks various animals can be found on a daily basis; apart from the usual shoals of pollack and mackerel, one will find seals, gannets, lobsters and crawfish on many a dive.

Our two guests from Scotland arrived on Thursday afternoon after a short flight with the Low Fares - Don't Cares company. After having shown them our brand new constantly bloated Italian boy, an electric compressor pumping two 12 l bottles from nod to 200 in 12 minutes, we got our act together and departed on the three-hour drive to Port Magee, near Valencia Island.

The road leads through a beautiful part of Ireland, boasting magnificent scenery, horrible roads and great cheese and garlic chips. Having enjoyed all this, we finally arrived in Port Magee where a B&B and one of our member's sister's house were awaiting us. A quick pint in the local pub saw most divers

hanging in their chairs and all conversation ended: it was time for bed.

Friday morning we met our skipper at 9 am. He was lord and master of a beautiful RHIB (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat), at the mere sight of which many a diver, though well capable of swimming, would soon drown in his/her own drewl. The first dive was a small cave and wall on Bray head, the western head of Valencia Island. This lovely dive with a bottom at 25 meters, great visibility and abundant fish life was a good way to start the holidays and get used to buddies and skipper. Supervision was in the capable hands of Don Lees who was in charge of filling out the dive log slate he

himself had brought over as a present for the club.

"The last dive

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on a deep wall

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was a

The second dive was on Puffin Island, which is just off the coast, in between the main land and the Skelligs. As one expects, there was an abundance of puffins. During the high speed journey to the dive site they could be spotted

anywhere: left of the boat right of the boat, in front of the boat and occasionally under the boat I'm afraid. After this second dive, most



A member of the Sub Aqua club underwater in Co Kerry

divers decided that a night dive was to be had. As a BBQ was also planned, the night dive was rearranged to be a late afternoon dive, simply to be begun at the peer in the harbour. This dive was probably the dive of the year for most of us. After all, who would expect to stumble upon a large ray in the confined waters of this harbour at about

7 meters depth!! A positive identification was performed by our well respected Regional Instructor Murray MacCallum, who was quite 'shocked' to find out the ray was actually one of those of the 'electric' persuasion. A good instructor as he is, Murray knew that we would follow his example and was kind enough to advise us

against it. Luckily one of our members had brought the club camera on this dive, as a result of which we can proudly show several pictures of the electric

The following day the dives were as spectacular. On the Skelligs, several seals were spotted, both underwater and out of the water. The last dive in particular was a

beautiful one, on a deep (50+meter) wall with beautiful sponges, anemones, crawfish and large shoals of mackerel and cod. The cherry on the fish cake was that yet another member of our club did his final branch instructor assessment with positive result. Congratulations to John Kelly!

## **Annual Plassey 10k run**

AN FOCAL REPORTER

HE ANNUAL PLASSEY 10K will take place this year on Saturday 8th April. Each year the popularity of this event has been increasing

with a record number of participants last year. The aim of the event is to raise funds for local charity Groups.

We will progress slowly and whether you walk or run there is no reason why you can't complete your first race and have something to be proud of in 2006. When striding walk tall. Look forward, (not at the ground) gazing about 20 feet ahead. Your chin should be level and

your head up. Shoulders down, back and relaxed. Chest forward.

Tighten your stomach and buttocks. Flatten your back and pretend you are walking along a straight line. Swing arms front to back (arms should not cross your body.) Do not swing elbows higher than your breast bone. Swing your arms faster and your feet will follow.

Concentrate on striking with the heel, rolling through the step and pushing off with your toes. To go faster - take smaller, faster steps. Breathe naturally. Do not over stride.

# **UL Racing team newly formed**

By CHRISTY GILLICK

HIS YEAR will see the University of L i m e r i c k represented in the Formula Student competition for the first time. The competition is open to all 3rd level colleges world wide, and requires the students to conceive, design and fabricate a single seat formula-style racing car.

The design and building takes place throughout the year and the competitions are held in July in the UK.

Over seventy universities across Europe were represented this year along with entries from the US, Canada and India.

Formula Student cars compete in both static and dynamic events. The competition is judged under such headings as technical development, cost analysis and manufacturing analysis, presentation and design. In the dynamic event cars compete on acceleration,

skid pad performance, autocross, endurance and fuel economy.

Formula Student allows the participants to develop their skills in a real way in areas such as design, manufacture and business.

Further details can be obtained from Dr. Christy Gillick, christy.gillick@ul.ie, Department Manufacturing & Operations Engineering.

EITH WOOD is in a jovial mood at the UL Ulster Bank. He is here as an ambassador for the RBS Six Nations tournament and is accompanying the Six Nations trophy, as well as a considerable PR entourage, on a whistle-stop tour of Limerick city.

An Focal loiters outside, before finally being spared his artic torment and invited into a small office where he greets the smartly clad Wood; fresh from dozens of photo ops, joking with enamoured bank employees and balancing the trophy on his head.

"Its fantastic, the kids just love it" he remarks, referring to the hundreds of children who assembled at St. Munchins College earlier as Wood visited his old alma matter.

"They see the cup on the telly and then they get a chance to see it up close". Perhaps said youngsters are more excited about the presence of Wood himself than the trophy? "I think it's a little bit of both" he jokes.

Words such as 'icon' and 'legend' are bandied about so much in sport today that it is hard not to become numb to their significance.

Yet Wood is exactly that an Irish rugby legend, arguably our finest international captain. His career encompassed League titles with Garryowen in 1992 and 1994, 58 international caps (a record 36 as captain), Lions tours in 1997 and 2001, a myriad of unfortunate injuries, but above all else a hardened determination to

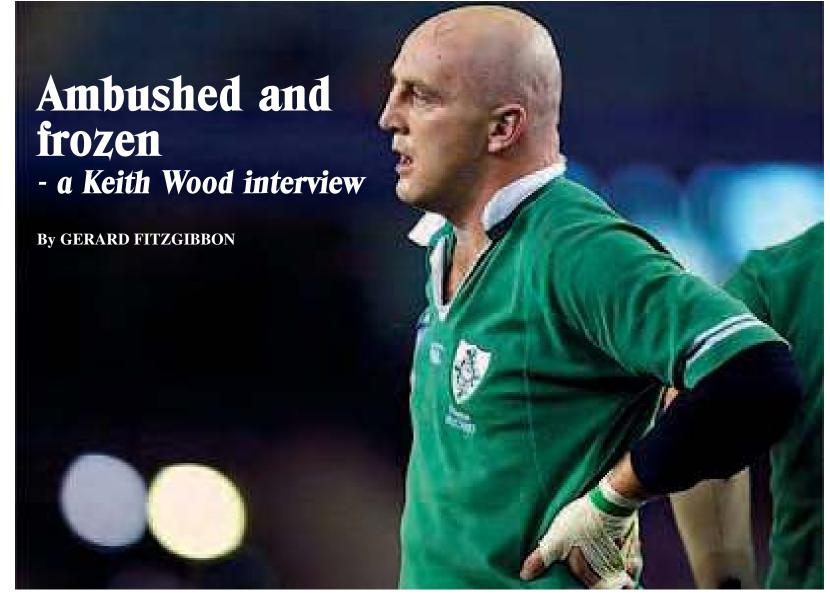
succeed that stayed with him until his retirement in 2003.

On the pitch he exuded power, bravery and leadership, and was considered the finest hooker in world rugby for years. Off the field, a reputation as an intelligent

and light-hearted man has always preceded him.

Growing up, however, it was by no means certain that Wood would seek a future in Rugby Union. Despite a strong family heritage with the sport - his father Gordon was capped 29 times and toured with the Lions in 1959-the thought of pursuing rugby seriously never occurred to him.

"You dream of playing sport as a young fella, but I never thought of it as a career or anything vaguely like that. I was just a sportsman from a



very sporting family", notes Wood, who also played hurling and soccer fervently as a child.

"I went to a rugby school and loved playing it, but how I got playing seriously was the luck of the draw really - I was

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anything

that."

vaguely like

asked to join
Garryowen when
I left Munchins.
If I hadn't been
asked I mightn't
have played at
all. In the end it
all hinged on a
couple of guys
making a chance
trip out to
Killaloe". The
luck of the draw,
indeed.
Wood played

international rugby for four years as an amateur before the onset of professionalism in 1996 ("It was never a money thing anyway" he notes), at which stage he joined English club Harlequins. He went on to play all his club rugby at the Stoop, excluding his legendary 'sabbatical' of 2000 when he helped drive Munster to within a fibre of Heineken

For fans and commentators alike, however, it was his integral role in the victorious 1997 Lions tour of South Africa that marked the pinnacle of Wood's career, as well as elevating his status to a

Cup glory.

truly global level. "It was like having blinkers taken off", he remarks about the experience.

"We weren't a good Irish team at that time; we had had successive wooden spoons and were in a bad spot, yet suddenly you could see that there was much better training and different experiences to be had. You got to believe that other things were possible. It was a great tour for opening your eyes".

Wood occupied a more central role on the tour of Australia in 2001. Though not awarded the outright captaincy, he occupied an informal role of seniority within the group, along with men such as Martin Johnson and Jason Leonard, whose leadership would prove crucial to the survival of the expedition as morale disintegrated.

"In 2001 we had a great team, a better team than in 1997 or 2005". Why then, did the tour fail? "There wasn't any one thing really. We made a few mistakes [Joe Roff's interception in the second test is a tragic example], but we were knackered. By the last test we virtually had nobody left standing. We over-trained on that tour, definitely. We still could have won it, but we didn't score in the last twenty minutes of any test. We were just bushed"

As a man who considers

the British and Irish Lions an important part of his rugby experience, Wood is particularly annoyed with the debacle that was the 2005 tour to New Zealand.

"I feel very angry about it really. We brought too many players; the guys never got the chance to get to know each other well. Lions tours are a unique thing in sport; it's about the best players from the four home unions. 51 players out of 60 isn't the cream of the crop, that's everyone. That de-mystifies the Lions". Sir Clive Woodward's vivacious PR campaign is also dismissed by Wood. "There was too much money thrown at it". It is clear from his ever-so-slightly bile tone that the distortion of the Lions mystique last year strikes a nerve with him.

Wood now slides back into his chair and offers his two cents regarding Irish prospects for the Six Nations. "Bit happier now than I was a few weeks ago" he says, contentedly referring to the impressive Heineken Cup performances of Munster and Leinster, and more specifically Paul O'Connell and Brian O'Driscoll, the previous weekend.

"With those two back, we have enough leadership on the field to make something happen. You can see the confidence of the guys around

them goes up once they're playing. We didn't have that in the autumn and looked a bit rudderless".

In the wider auspices of test rugby, there have been some calls for the incorporation of a more expansive style of play by Northern Hemisphere teams with one eye on the 2007 World Cup. Wood is somewhat sceptical. "There's an element of change alright; there's been more offloading in the last six months than in the previous six years, but we need to make certain we keep the grit and the grunt that is Northern Hemisphere rugby. It's about finding a balance".

There's a knock on the door. Mr. Wood has a busy schedule, and an interview with a now partially-thawed An Focal reporter cannot delay that too much. Let's move on. Quickly. What are Wood's own designs for the future? Coaching perhaps?

"No, I don't have the tolerance for that. I'm known as a cranky man," he sniggers wryly. "I said it the day I retired, I don't plan on wasting the next five years proving how shit a coach I am. I really want to do something in rugby someday, but it won't be coaching".

An Focal is now anticipating another, more forceful knock. We motor on. The year prior to Wood's

swansong in 2003 was a period of rollercoaster emotions: the birth of his first child Alexander was flanked by the deaths of his brother Gordon and mother Pauline, all this at a time when his body fought against a belligerent shoulder injury that placed his career in doubt. What kept him going?

"I made a commitment to myself that I was going to retire after the World Cup and I worked very hard to do that". Looking back, Wood appreciates the poignant timing of his decision. "I was happy with it in the end. I wanted to be able to perform properly in the World Cup, and I wanted to say 'I'm stopping now'. I was content with the idea then and I'm content with it now. It was the right time".

Like in any Hitchcock movie, the suspense of waiting for the inevitable is broken. The door swings open; Mr. Wood has to go. With a good-bye handshake like a rusted vice grip, the RBS PR machine powers on, rugby legend in tow. An Focal dices with the idea of making an Uncle Fester comment as a light-hearted parting joke. Unsurprisingly, words fail him. It appears his courage hasn't thawed out yet.