

STUDENTS' UNION



an Focal

University of Limerick Students' Union

Library Foundation Stone Laid

Week 15
Semester 2 '96

By
Brian Synnott

"A university is not a university without a library". These were the profound words from the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach in her address to the Governing Body at the laying of the Foundation Stone for the new library. Rather than a slur on the existing facilities it is felt that this was more an encouraging comment for the future. It is not known whether the existing library was on the Ministers scheduled tour. To say that it was but that it could not be found is but a childish comment on such an auspicious day.

Red Carpet Treatment
The cream of UL's jet set were there to celebrate the occasion, including Mayor Jim Kemmy, Minister for Health Michael Noonan and Louis and Loretta Greenbacks, sorry, Glucksman, who contributed three million dollars to the project. Such generosity towards this country has not been seen since the



Brian at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony

joshingly referred to Seamus Heary's crack about UL becoming the "holey ground". The HEA may

1000 year burial
An innovative part of the ceremony was the placement of a number of

being present or whether it was a premonition of the Shannon treble but Ms Bhreathnach got her own

Opinion

Goodbyes

ENTS

ARTS

been on the plans to the project. Such generous towards the country has not been seen since the Edinburgh summit. The gratitude was expressed in the naming of the building as the property itself, 'You and Louise Blackman Library and Information Services Building'. Planning permission for the sign may have to be sought.

The 'Today Ground' of UL. A number of references were made to the well established UL trail of digging steel holes on various months ahead of building work. Dr. Ed Walsh, m.c. for the occasion,

justifiably referred to General Healy's work about UL, becoming the 'Today ground'. The HEA may take a different view as it might it is this harder to refuse planning when the site is already still cover than it used to be. As Dr. Walsh looked in the glory of the occasion, it brought new meaning to the phrase digging a hole for yourself. Building work on the new Environmental and Aeronautical building is not in commencement in the summer. Rumours that it was to become a landfill site are unsubstantiated.

1998 year book. An innovative part of the ceremony was the placement of a number of new capsules within the Foundation Stone, to be unearthed in one thousand years time. The author had difficulty finding the opening but surmised that the way due to what was to put with the only copy of the constitution were strongly denied. The Mayor of London indulged in some pre-occupation calculations, leading the capsule over his head as the Minister pointed on. It was unclear whether the real anything to do with the Minister

being present or whether it was a graduation of the Minister, but Mr. Blackman got her own back calling on the Mayor's attention 'necessary' when she stopped with an opening three-year later. The Minister to get over-precise in the stone was an interesting image of someone's mind. In another reference to the institution. The atmosphere was relaxed and, rightly, congratulatory and the whole well intentioned with love.

STRESS CITY!!

By *Lorna Kerin*

Stress is our own creation. It is within our control to get freaked out about an exam, or deadline, or not to. To quote my fantastic flat-mate and friend: "There's no point getting stressed out - you can't do shit under stress. It freezes your cerebral fluid, makes your stomach churn, stops your eyes from focusing, destroys your breathing patterns, turns you into an anti-social freak and is just not worth it. Learn to throw it out."

But how? Everyone finds their own way but if you haven't yet found nurturing ways to dissolve your stress & anxiety, and your considering self-taping cog-notes to your thigh, try these suggestions.....

Chill out to Jazz. Wear

bright clothes. Take the time to smile. Go for long, fresh walks. Pamper yourself. Eat little bundles of delicious food at regular intervals. Dance, sing, bang or play some instrument. Have a friendly pillow fight. Giggle over a funny film. Make a colourful card for someone you care for. Submerge yourself in a warm, bubbly, frothy bath. Have safe, meaningful, passionate sex within a loving relationship (if you can find one between now and the exams!) If not many holistic doctors recommend masturbation as a wonderful and free way of releasing the tension and pain a headache holds). Try deep breathing, meditation, yoga exercises, tai chi. Phone a friend whom you haven't talked to in ages. Draw, colour, paint. Squeeze balls of plasticine. Surround yourself with lovely people who think there's more to living than

a high QCA. Deal with things you can do something about.

If you have financial problems which prevent you doing well in the exams, drop down to me in the SU Welfare Office where a cup of coffee and a chat can be had, or talk to Sabina or Declan, the Student Counsellors, who are well experienced in supporting stressed out students. As many sages have said (including the one who lives up the road from me), the way you think about something can change the reality of it. So think positively.

Before, or during, the exams, if you feel so anxious that you cannot sit your exams, call into the Medical Centre or the Student Counsellors and hopefully, they can organise for you to do your exam in a peaceful environment, or postpone them to a later date. Repeats are in (Hurrah for the SU, which is

you, and the Academic Council) no matter what happens, you have a fair second chance.

Some students in UL get seriously obsessed and develop a strange, goldfish mentality and spend time hiding journals, tearing chapters out of Library books, denying that they ever attended lectures etc. ad nauseam. This is not only stupidly selfish, but it could also result in you losing friends, or alienating potential ones, or being dragged up in front of Discipline Committee but it is also futile. I remember a time when a lot of my class photocopied a History essay I got an 'A' in because it was tipped to come up. Word for word, the question appeared on the exam paper. Although we had all studied the same material, i.e. the essay. So what I'm trying to say is please don't make it harder for other stu-

dents than it is already. Share your notes, do group study sessions, volunteer to cover one topic if a mate covers another, your essays, the library books, the journals, the hints that lecturers gave, the past exam papers. It will not diminish your result in the exam, but it will make you and lots of others feel much better as generous human beings as opposed to stressed out selfish goldfish. At the end of the day, examinations are simply a measure of how much information you have retained about a certain subject (and in my humble opinion, fairly useless at encouraging real intellectual stimulation and absorption of knowledge). Exams are not a measure of your intelligence, your potential, your self-worth, or your value as a human being. You are so much more than an exam number and result. Don't forget it!



Brian at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony

ELECTION CARTEL

Before anyone says it, this is not a sore loser article. It was supposed to be in the last edition of *An Focal* so by now the sentiments may be a bit old and a bit copycat.

One of the most banal and self defeating catch calls of the elections of Week 11 was the seemingly incessant attacks on anyone involved in Clubs, Societies, or the Students Union in general. Countless slogans harped against a "cosy cartel" or "clique" within the SU and more importantly some of the candidates involved.

What was the purpose of this barrage of obscenities? Who were these cliques mysteriously working against and what were their machievellan intentions of world domination and subversion? The answer is all too simple. There is none. There are none. But it sounds good, it sounds plausible, it sounds reactionary and above all it harks to the lowest common denominator. Its all too easy to believe in the notion that the peo-

ple you see day in day out, running around the college have some ulterior motive in mind. It is all too easy to say that it's the same bloody people year in year out who do everything. And predictably enough it is essentially the same people who get up and make something of this college. Without someone to organise the team, without someone to entertain you, this place would be even more depressing than it already is (if that is humanly possible). But this clique notion is ridiculous. Admittedly there have been some bad cases in the past but it is a gross injustice to paint others with the same brush. This cosy cartel which the people seem to worry about are not anything of the sort. There are a bunch of individuals who do try (albeit unsuccessfully most of the time), to make some sort of difference. But only because no-one else in this self serving college of incessant competition will or even cares beyond the quality of their

degrees.

The Students Union amazingly is everyone's union. It is not the sole possession of a few people in the know. And if you took a bloody interest in the fucking thing you might grow to appreciate this. But don't let me prevent you or anyone of your ilk in your sniping. Heaven forbid. Its not as if people aren't used to it. Life is so much easier on the perimeter. You can navel gaze to your hearts content UL. And that means practically everyone in the college. Keep your self importance and ability to swagger as you uphold the classic Irish tradition of knocking everything. Sure the last thing a UL student could do would be to feel good about themselves. Keep up the self persecution complex. Keep up the despondency, the melancholy and of course the apathy. God help ye all, its all ye have left to hold on to.

Pádhraig Fox

Film Review

Executive Decision

Just arrived in the Savoy Cinema Complex this week, Executive Decision is an action thriller starring Kurt Russell. It also features Steven Seagal, but not to worry he gets killed off early in the story (one wonders did he do the catering for the rest of the shoot?). Perhaps best described as a film that will have you laughing on the edge of your seat, it's a preposterous, cliched, over the top, adrenaline packed flight across the Atlantic with the necessary quota of Arab terrorists, Chechen Mafia, ethnically balanced special forces, hysterical passengers and a litany of potential disasters impeding our heroes that is longer than this sentence.

Emanating from the ever reliable Joel Silver (executive producer), Executive Decision is just the thing if you require some undemanding, action-packed entertainment. But is it art you ask? Who cares. It's Stuart Bairds' directorial debut and I know his brother.

Arts All For Now Folks

"I knew I should have
taken that left
turn at Albuquerque"

As this is the final issue of An Focal for this year, allow me to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have helped with "Artsing Around" and all those who have contributed to what has been a great year (so far) for the Arts in Limerick.

For their contributions to these pages, thanks to Fiona, Lorna, Pat, Emer and Sinead. For provision of info and more so for staging some truly fantastic events, big thanks to Loughlin Deegan and the Belltable Arts Centre, Mags O'Sullivan and the Irish World Music Centre, Brendan Maher and Limericks Irish Film Festival, Brid Finn and the Umbrella Project, Yvonne Sweeney and Arts Speak, Marie & Aine and UL Film Soc, Tim McAuliffe and UL Drama Soc, John Hargaden and UL Arts Office, Declan McLaughlin and the Belltable Film Club, Ron Byrne and UL Music Soc, Paddy Expo, Ann O'Brien and EV+A, John Breen and Island Theatre Company, Tony Rodgers and Limerick Jazz Society and anybody else out there who helped to enrich

our lives over the past year.

Also thanks, praise and best wishes to the 'Dreamchasers'; Matt, Brian and Ger. Would that there were more like you out there. Go n-eirt an bothar libh. On a personal note a special big thank you to Pat Ingoldsby, a man who has been chasing his dreams for many years. Long may he continue to do so.

Extra special thanks to Duncan and Anne for their editorial and layout expertise (and of course the Pizza). It's been a pleasure working with you and kicking your ass at Space Junkie.

Finally to you the reader, I hope that "Artsing Around" has at some stage encouraged you to partake of some the many great delights available in what in this city's growing and vibrant arts/entertainment scene. To those who didn't, I suggest you get a copy of A House's "Wide Eyed & Ignorant" and give a listen to a track called "Deadhead".

Billy Madden

Bandanas, Leather Belts and buckles, Nose

PZAZZ

Foxes Bow

r Slides, Broaches

Ear Cuffs, Passpor



The Three Stooges at the laying of the Library foundation stone last Friday

CHINA - NO-ONE IS SAFE

If you're still in Limerick on Wednesday, 29th May, something well worth going to is Amnesty International's launch of their 'China - No-one is Safe' Campaign. Designed to raise Irish Awareness about the widespread abuse of human rights in China, the evening promises to be an informative and interesting evening.

The leading Amnesty Asian expert on Asian affairs, Paul Ledesma, from the Philippines, will officially open the launch at 7.30 pm. The Limerick Branch of Amnesty have transformed the ground floor of the Theatre Royal (known to most students as 'Boogie Wonderland'!) into a colourful and startling exhibition on Human Rights Abuses in China. The exhibition highlights the urgent need for international pressure to be applied to the Chinese Authorities. According to Pierre Sane, Secretary General of Amnesty International: "The fact that the international community is ignoring the fundamental human rights of a fifth of the world's population sends a worrying message about global commitment to human

rights,"

The wine reception will be followed with a feature film from China's most internationally acclaimed director, Zhang Yimou. Entitled "Qiu Ju", the film tells the contemporary story of a simple peasants wife who sets off on a long trek for justice when her husband is assaulted by the village chief. Heralded as "Funny, touching and absolutely compelling tale which narrowly avoided the People's Republic Censor" Film-goers are asked to contribute £1 towards the cost of the film - a bargain at the price!

In order to commemorate the student massacre of Tiananmen Square, the Limerick branch of Amnesty International will be taking to the squares and streets of Limerick on Saturday 8th June, with their theatrical impression of the campaign. With a line up of Chinese dragons, jugglers, percussionists, singers, actors, it sounds like you won't miss them! Amnesty asks that anyone who sees the Street Performance to wear one of the symbolic white bandannas of support and join in.

If any students or staff wish to get involved in the campaign, please contact David Lilburn, ext. 2040 or e-mail David.Lilburn@UL.IE

THANKS

by Elaine Kiely,
Deputy-President & Welfare
Officer Elect

Dear Interested,

A short note to relieve the boredom of exam time!! Well people, I'm very happy to be here for another year and to those of you whom I have not met, I was the 'whistle' candidate. As I've only spent a year here in UL, I am going to really need YOUR input this year. Remember I have been elected by you to work for you so feel free to come call in with ideas for the coming year or just a chat & cuppa. So thanks for your vote(if you voted) and have a great summer.
Elaine

SU Co-ops Depart

Goodbye and farewell to the mainstays of the SU, Gearoid Prendergast and John O'Reilly. Gearoid or Gar (he thinks Gearoid is a name for farmers so he prefers Gar!) was the good-looking charmer behind the main SU reception desk - even Tony O'Donnell, cynic extraordinaire, admits he was "exceptional" (Gar that is, not Tony!). His charming abilities came into play in most advertising deals and after a good conversation on the phone Gar would move in for the kill with a one to one meeting with the person, ole Gar could name his price after that! On the women front Gar has been keeping himself for the woman of his dreams who is currently studying in England. "I plan to marry her someday! and we can settle down on a few acres of land grow vegetables, live off the land and we can call the first born Gearoid" - lets hope it's a boy.

Gar is off to the states with his soon to be Mrs., Gar may you return to us bronzed, loaded and alive! It's been great!

When asked to comment on John, Tony O' Donnell refused to, saying 'Sure, how could I, he's been locked away in a cubby-hole in some part of the world!'. Known to other students as the "Clubs & Socs Office", John certainly has been king of the Thomond island. Devoted to the promotion of Clubs & Socs on campus, John has been the friendly, efficient, good-humoured, pressurized, long-haired enigma that everyone has spent the year looking for! Thanks for doing such a great job John, and pay no attention to those who suggest a drastic hair-cut - you know what happened to Samson!

Bye Bye

FAREWELL!

by Lorna Kerin
Deputy-President &
Welfare Officer,
'95/'96

What to write at the end of 12 months of discovery, creation, stress, collapse, success, and excitement, of my Deputy-Presidency! Well, I'm not going to write a litany of concrete achievements 'because firstly, there is ten minutes to the An Focal deadline and secondly, I think any student really interested would have heard it all before at one of the AGMs/UGMs. What I would like to do, briefly, is outline some fundamental changes that would greatly benefit the effectiveness of the Students' Union in my opinion.

Sabbatical Training

First of all, it would benefit everyone if sabbaticals were to undergo intensive training during the summer months in, for example, time management, counselling skills, event organisation, journalism, PR, political lobbying etc. It's all very noble for sabbatical officers to do it from scratch but it wastes a lot of student and sabbatical time.

SU Mentor Board

Due to the fact that Sabbatical Officers are elected for just one year, one of the most frustrating elements within the stu-

innovative services etc. Obviously, the Board would sit in an advisory capacity, as opposed to a decision-making capacity.

Community Development Officer

There needs to be a full-time, qualified Community Development Officer on campus. The potential, positive energy that the University and the Students could generate into Community Initiatives and Schemes is massive! But the Welfare Officer simply does not have the physical time to initiate, develop and co-ordinate schemes. Therefore, a full-time paid position needs to be created.

Research Officer

Most American and British Student Unions have one, some Irish Student Union have one, and we need one! There needs to be on-going research on the opinions, experiences of UL students so that initiatives and reforms can be based on fact, as opposed to assumptions. Sabbaticals need to go into meetings armed with comparative academic and service information.

Employment Officer

One of the greatest challenges that many students face is financial survival during their years here. Moreover, employers look positively upon a graduate with lots of varied work

the effectiveness of the Students' Union in my opinion.

Sabbatical Training

First of all, it would benefit everyone if sabbaticals were to undergo intensive training during the summer months in, for example, time management, counselling skills, event organisation, journalism, PR, political lobbying etc. It's all very noble for sabbatical officers to do it from scratch but it wastes a lot of student and sabbatical time.

SU Mentor Board

Due to the fact that Sabbatical Officers are elected for just one year, one of the most frustrating elements within the students Union is the transient nature of its' aims, campaigns, information and policies. An advisory board which would sit three times a years, for three years, consisting of past students or ex-sabbaticals who have concrete experience of the working world in their own area, be it law, media, politics, finance, social work etc., would be invaluable in suggesting professional ways in which to tackle issues, whether it be the SU debt, libel laws,

Research Officer

Most American and British Student Unions have one, some Irish Student Union have one, and we need one! There needs to be on-going research on the opinions, experiences of UL students so that initiatives and reforms can be based on fact, as opposed to assumptions. Sabbaticals need to go into meetings armed with comparative academic and service information.

Employment Officer

One of the greatest challenges that many students face is financial survival during their years here. Moreover, employers look positively upon a graduate with lots of varied work experience. There are a lot of part-time and seasonal work available in Limerick. A part-time job - officer could co-ordinate students' availability and employers' needs to the benefit of both.

Individual Empowerment

I do feel that there is a prevalent myth amongst students - a myth of powerlessness, a willingness to just moan, an apathetic attitude. Yet students have so much power and influence. Collectively, we have seen

NOW IN CASTLETROY

OPEN 7 DAYS

9AM - 11 PM

Faxe Long Neck Beer

Only 50p

Cobdon's Cider (Can)

Only 50p

All, While Stocks Last



FAN

BEER CELLAR

ties, to be involved in Irish and International Human Rights campaigns, - go for it!

Student Centre

It would strike me as a sad waste of space to see a pub installed in the future

Student Centre because as it is, life for in UL pivots around spending massive amounts of money getting out of your face in order to have a 'good' (and totally unmemorable) time. I would love to see huge, adaptable spaces that can be used for creative purposes such as drama, music, debating, band rehearsal space, creative workshops such as sculpturing, juggling, batik-making, African gospel-singing, Irish dancing - the possibilities are endless and infinitively more diverse, fun and free than a pint of Guinness.

GOOD LUCK AND THANKS ANNE!

One of the "behind the scenes" contributors to An Focal since it's inception has been Anne O'Connell. When I say contributor I don't mean she's been writing for the paper, although she has wanted to make a few written contributions directed towards some people (usually me!!!). Anne has been making sure that there has been an actual physical copy of An Focal for students rather than just a concept in the minds of a few people. Not only has she had to put up with some of the most creative forms of art to be dubbed handwriting but she has had to put up with hours of work that were closer to working hours in Australia. Pizzas being called to Anne's office just before the Pizza delivery man goes home to bed are a common occurrence. Anyway it looks as if Anne has decided that while working till 4am on the paper and having to put up with the whims of the Editor (yours truly) is great fun, the time has come for her to move on and she will miss it truly (at least that's what she said). Anne, best wishes in the future and thanks for everything.

Bye Bye

AND ITS GOODBYE FROM ME.....

by Brian Synnott
(Outgoing President ULSU)

This article is an attempt to summarise my year as President of the University of Limerick Students' Union. In doing so I wish to highlight the success and failures of the year in a simple black and white manner. I am wary of the temptation in this kind of article, to succumb to something akin to an Oscar night thank you speech but the reality is that the achievements of this year were due to a great many people, whether they were rabble rousing, giving advice or just doing their job. However, the main aim of this piece is to illustrate the workings of the SU and to show that amid all the cynicism there is a genuine value in having student representatives to fight for students needs.

Some people may think that I will just crow about the success of the repeats campaign and the referendum on the new Student Centre. Well they'd be right. These two achievements are worth dwelling on because they highlight the value of collective action.

Repeats Campaign

Having sat on Academic Council as postgrad rep the previous year I was aware of the difficulties encountered by Matthew

Hamilton and Cormac Daly previously. The advantage we had was that Matthew had left us an ace by persuading Governing body to have a full review of the system after one year. Matthew, knowing full well that the system was flawed, had the pleasure of watching it being reduced to an unworkable mess. However, the main advantage for myself and Duncan was the knowledge that we had the full support of the students every time we went into a crucial meeting. Two general meetings of over 400 people and a repeats referendum where nearly 4,000 votes were counted gave the campaign momentum. The staff of the university were aware of the issue and the strength of support made an impression.

The campaign was successful because it was planned in stages and had the support of students and key members of the university. Once the decision was made, myself and Duncan had over 30 hours of meetings with the academic regulations committee hammering out a new system, which bore an uncanny resemblance to the system originally endorsed by ULSU. I must thank the committee for the relaxed manner in which meetings were conducted and the open approach they adopted to our suggestions. This was particularly welcome, as we had staged a walk-out at one stage.

facilities for students. Upon taking office I learned that the pool & snooker room was to be demolished. This sharpened the mind as any university without adequate facilities would be a disgrace. After the hectic first semester there was time to focus on this issue. Whereas the union had been at loggerheads with the management over repeats there was nothing but co-operation this time around. Particular thanks must go to John O'Connor, the Director of Finance who added his vast experience. The scheme that was most feasible was a 50-50 payment between the university and the students. This model had been successfully applied in UCC where a £4.5m student centre has just been opened. But the key point in the entire project was whether the students would agree. The results of the referendum gave the resounding answer. Again, what gave the idea substance was the dedicated team who helped give out leaflets, persuaded people of the merits of the idea and gave the campaign the profile it needed. What was most gratifying was the fact that almost 2,000 people voted which to my mind rubbishes the stereotype of UL students as selfish and short-sighted.

There was some criticism that there was no NO campaign but that was up to the people who were opposed to the idea. The

Representation

Part of my manifesto had been to make the union more accountable. This was something that was at the forefront of my mind all during the summer, as accountability is all very well in theory but how do you realise the aspirations. This year I feel there was a genuine spirit of openness promoted by the SU. Two quorate general meetings for the first time in 4 years was testament to that. The outstanding work Duncan did with An Focal made the job a lot easier. But there were other areas which could have been improved on further. The executive worked well when the big issues were on the agenda but I should have encouraged more schemes from them. Declan Quinn deserves singling out for the fantastic job he did as Student Teacher Officer. For the future incumbents of this post one should note that the executive needs to be given more responsibility. When chairing a meeting of 12 people it was difficult to find the balance between setting the agenda and encouraging debate. Student meetings have a tendency to ramble on, something which I probably reacted against a little strongly. It is also easy to fall into the trap of forgetting that there are only three full time representatives and that exams and projects tend to occupy the mind. The

it deserved.

Outside UL we had a very good year. The non-USI cooperation with other universities worked very well. The links forged with UCC will continue into next year. The law exemptions, postgrad fees and the student centre issues were much easier to deal with in a joint effort. Having answered a question on USI at hustings it was important to prove that co-operation between unions does not need a £20,000 price tag and the use of a disco 160 miles away.

ULSU Ltd

What is it like to have a £200,000 debt on your head? That was the most asked question when I took up office. Well, if it hadn't been for Matthew and Gerry Barry the figure would have been a lot higher. This year saw the shop improve steadily so that next year prices will be able to come down. Ents had its best year in a long while and Graphics is currently being revamped to focus directly on the student printing needs. It is probable that the company will show a small loss but that was expected as the turnaround in operations can not be done overnight. With the inception of the student centre it is hoped that the company will have a new goal and eventually a new home where specifically designed outlets can be located

workings of the SU and how that amid all the cynicism there is a genuine value in having student representatives to fight for students needs. Some people may think that I will just crow about the success of the repeats campaign and the referendum on the new Student Centre. Well they'd be right. These two achievements are worth dwelling on because they highlight the value of collective action.

Repeats Campaign

Having sat on Academic Council as postgrad rep the previous year I was aware of the difficulties encountered by Matthew Hamilton and Cormac Daly. During the summer myself and Duncan O'Toole immersed ourselves in regulatory minutiae in much the same way that Diarmuid Scully and Enda Lonergan had done three sum-

me issue and the strength of support made an impression. The campaign was successful because it was planned in stages and had the support of students and key members of the university. Once the decision was made, myself and Duncan had over 30 hours of meetings with the academic regulations committee hammering out a new system, which bore an uncanny resemblance to the system originally endorsed by ULSU. I must thank the committee for the relaxed manner in which meetings were conducted and the open approach they adopted to our suggestions. This was particularly welcome, as we had staged a walk-out at one stage.

New Student Centre

Since I came to UL in September 1992, (having survived UCD) the constant cry has been that there were not enough

had been successfully applied in UCC where a £4.5m student centre has just been opened. But the key point in the entire project was whether the students would agree. The results of the referendum gave the resounding answer. Again, what gave the idea substance was the dedicated team who helped give out leaflets, persuaded people of the merits of the idea and gave the campaign the profile it needed. What was most gratifying was the fact that almost 2,000 people voted which to my mind rubbishes the stereotype of UL students as selfish and short-sighted.

There was some criticism that there was no NO campaign but that was up to the people who were opposed to the idea. The SU, having listened all year to the calls for an improvement in facilities, could not then have a Janus-like approach to the campaign.

worked well when the big issues were on the agenda but I should have encouraged more schemes from them. Declan Quinn deserves singling out for the fantastic job he did as Student Teacher Officer. For the future incumbents of this post one should note that the executive needs to be given more responsibility. When chairing a meeting of 12 people it was difficult to find the balance between setting the agenda and encouraging debate. Student meetings have a tendency to ramble on, something which I probably reacted against a little strongly. It is also easy to fall into the trap of forgetting that there are only three full time representatives and that exams and projects tend to occupy the mind. The Class Reps Council will be remembered for the people who gave up time, even at the weekends, to help on the various issues but again it was difficult to give the Council the influence

€200,000 debt on your head? That was the most asked question when I took up office. Well, if it hadn't been for Matthew and Gerry Barry the figure would have been a lot higher. This year saw the shop improve steadily so that next year prices will be able to come down. Ents had its best year in a long while and Graphics is currently being revamped to focus directly on the student printing needs. It is probable that the company will show a small loss but that was expected as the turnaround in operations can not be done overnight. With the inception of the student centre it is hoped that the company will have a new goal and eventually a new home where specifically designed outlets can be located to answer student needs.

Festivals

This year we had a major festival in each semester. I chaired the organising committee for both Soul'95 and Rag Week'95. What was so gratifying was that the organisers are among the most committed I have met. So thanks to the ubiquitous Matt for Soul and the dream team of Keith Pigott and Ruth Scott for Rag Week. Seeing the amount of effort put in was something that won't be forgotten. While not counting social events among my skills it was a privilege to be part of events which gave enjoyment to thousands of people. Drugs awareness week instigated by Lorna Kerin was another valuable addition to the calendar and will hopefully stay in place for years to come.

So that's a dash through the year, hammered out, as usual, two minutes before the "final, Final I mean it deadline". I have only given a tiny flavour of the up and downs of the year. Good luck to Seamus and remember to enjoy the year. I think I have just about managed to refrain from thanking everybody which is fine because everyone who helped didn't do it for praise. It's been a privilege.

WHY BE A FEMINIST?

"Because a woman's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get the sack and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get 'real' man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect community care for children we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and unfeminine and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the

about an abortion andfor lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement." So to all those still in deep denial about the urgent need for women & women, for men & women and for men & men to have sincere dialogue, why not come along to the UL Women's Studies exciting conference on Monday, **May 27th**, in the Schumann Building. Starting at 10am in room S114, the topics include: Violence against women in Ireland; Childbirth Education; Homelessness and Young Women; Stereotypical Children's Literature; Women's Role in the Northern Ireland Peace Process; Infanticide; Juvenile Prostitution and many more fascinating insights into the experience of women within our contemporary and historical Irish patriarchal society. Seminar schedules available in the Student's Union.

McELLAGOTT COACHES

Clarina, Co. Limerick.

Tel.: 061-353477 or 353019. Fax: 061-353035



Operator of 16, 20, 25, 29, 32 & 51
Seater Luxury Mini-Coaches
PERSONAL. EFFICIENT

READING ROOMS DISGRACE

Just what do the University authorities think they are playing at? Its not enough that they close some of the precious reading rooms in the A1 block but they have come up with other much more ingenuous ways of hampering students studying.

The Library, regardless of the number of books has a woeful lack of seating. And as everyone is kicked out of their respective desks at 10-11pm. in the Schuman, Schrodinger and PE buildings, the canteen is closed off for an hour. So you have some few thousand students roaming the college in search of an unused orange box or unoccupied corner to continue their study. But the college authorities in their wisdom said "Oh we have to close the A1 reading rooms for tutorials but you can use EGO10 or any lecture theatre" -Wrong. The cleaning ladies unceremoniously kick everyone out of the lecture theatres and tutorial rooms and lock them just when everyone is being kicked out of the bloody library. The original A1 reading rooms are

open late at night again but its no bloody use if there are only 3 desks and 60 seats sitting stacked in a corner!

So what are students supposed to do? Where the hell are all the desks? EGO10 is a joke. Shannon airport's runways have a lower ambient noise pollution level. There are more students than ever in this University but the seating available has been reduced roughly by one third.

Just because we've been fobbed off with promises of a new library doesn't mean that what few bloody resources we have should be downgraded. The new library won't be around for another few years. What are the rest of us supposed to do as another extra thousand or so are admitted to the University over this years quota? Perhaps the University could put desks into the Aeronautical Engineering hole seeing as it's doing nothing at the mo.

Pádhraig