



Changes To Bus Eireann Routes Complete Disaster

Darragh Roche
Editor

The changes to Limerick city's bus routes have been a massive disappointment. The extensive route and timetable changes were meant to provide a more efficient service but it appears the opposite is true. Services to the University are scheduled for every 15 minutes but this is far from the reality. The new 304 route, which replaced both the 308 and 308A, now has to come in from Raheen. This is a much longer route and may explain the increase in late arrivals but it does

not adequately explain the number of scheduled busses that simply do not show up.

Several students have reported waiting for an hour or more at William Street for a bus to the University. This is a result of busses not showing up at the scheduled times and busses that do show up arriving late. An Focal spoke to one bus driver who drives the University route who called the changes "scandalous".

"I don't know who the National Transport Authority is," said the bus driver, "But it's like they've never been on a real bus in their life. People are

waiting at William Street for 40 minutes to get to Castletroy, it's ridiculous."

Similar problems have been experienced across the city as the sweeping changes were implemented. Bus Eireann claimed that the changes would improve the service but reports suggest that less frequent services and longer routes have resulted in delays and a higher proportion of busses not showing up at all.

The previous 308 and 308A services were not perfectly reliable. However, they were markedly more efficient than the current service. The long waiting times and number of no-shows have

resulted in larger numbers of people getting on busses at any given time. This has meant that busses are more crowded. More than once, Bus Eireann has had to bring on a supplementary bus to handle the number of passages. This was as a result of previously scheduled busses not arriving.

For students living in the city or across town, the bus service is vital. There is also a private bus that operates to and from the University, but this is less regular and does not take the same route. The lack of Bus Eireann services and lateness of busses that do show up will certainly mean inconvenience for

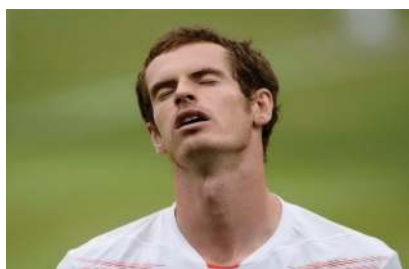
students travelling to University.

A large proportion of students make the commute each day and those living on campus and around the Castletroy rely on the bus service to get to and from town on a daily basis. The remarkable disimprovement in the bus service has already affected the day to day lives of UL students and unless the system is improved, students may have to get used to a less frequent and less reliable transport system.

An Focal will continue to follow this story and report again on whether the bus system has improved or whether the disimproved system is here to stay.



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TD O'Sullivan Addresses Labour Youth On Campus

Fintan Walsh
News Editor

MINISTER for Housing Jan O'Sullivan addressed UL Labour Youth's debut meeting, at the Kemmy Business School, last week. She emphasised on the Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton's "youth guarantee" proposal, marriage equality and the development of youth politics at university level.

Minister O'Sullivan spoke to a small crowd of Labour supporters, praising the proposals of Minister Burton's social guarantee, which is to commence on January 2013. The Limerick City TD stated that it would make the "difference between getting a step on the ladder of your career and not getting it".

"Every person leaving school, or college, would have an opportunity to go into work, go into apprenticeship, go to training and go into some kind of placement," she said before the meeting to An Focal. The Minister of State said that it was "disgraceful" that, during the country's economic apex, the young people were still "dropping into long-term employment", but wasn't happening now.

The Minister reflected on the Party's gay marriage campaign, as well as mentioning that "there aren't that many [liberal issues] left". The Minister confirmed that she was a "supporter of gay marriage". During her speech to UL Labour Youth, she admitted that there was much more on the agenda in this particular campaign. "We have



achieved civil partnership, but the rest of that agenda we have not achieved yet."

She proposed that, during the current recessionary times, it is a fitting time to be in youth politics, with job creation and emigration on the main agenda.

"Many have had to emigrate, my own son included, so I think every family has experienced emigration," she told An Focal, last Monday. "And I think the challenge for us now is to ensure that we can address the problems that we have in job creation."

Not just at national and regional level, she said that she would like to see more students challenging each other on how to make a difference, and that university was the apt place for people to start questioning how society is run. "I would like to see people challenging

each other on what difference can they make – the more of that the better. The concept of university is that it's a place where people learn to question and learn to think."

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67% Of UL Students Have Taken Drugs

Fintan Walsh
News Editor

A THREE-DAY survey that took place two weeks ago, on campus, revealed that a large amount of students have consumed class-C drugs, as well as knowing people who have been drug addicts. Another part of the survey revealed that most students are mildly satisfied with the campus' social experience, and just about most students feel that Limerick City is a safe place.

The survey, which took place in the SU courtyard; The Stables; The Red Reason; on Survey Monkey, and in College Court covered over 100 interviewed students. The survey revealed that 67 per cent of surveyed students have consumed class-C drugs, such as marijuana. 95 per cent of students admitted to knowing people who have abused drugs, both in the past and present. The other five per cent were "unsure" and did not know anyone.

When asked about their feelings on the safety of Limerick City, 55 per cent of students felt that it was a "safe place", while 45 per cent thought the



Treaty City to be a "dangerous place". One student said, "I was in the city with one of my friends – minding my own business – and then, all of a sudden, a few guys jumped him. So, from personal experiences, I do think [Limerick City] is a dangerous place." Others claimed to have "no troubles"

in the city. In light of the SU's proposals for the new student centre, students were asked if they were currently satisfied with the campus' social experience. 55 per cent of students were mildly satisfied with the experience, with some stating that they could not

"commit to The Stables" for nightlife. 17 per cent were "not one bit satisfied" with the social life on campus, while 28 per cent were "very satisfied", with some noting the significance of clubs and societies in the SU. No personal details were made known during the process of the survey.

News in Focus: The High Price Of Drug Usage



“
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comparison
”

Fintan Walsh
News Editor

“THEY give you the best experiences of your life, but also the worst,” says Mr S, a second year student of the University of Limerick, summing up his past experiences with drugs, from around fifteen years ago.

He solidly claims that the drug culture, then, was extravagantly different to the one Ireland is experiencing now, stating that ecstasy pills weren’t “cut with all sorts of rubbish” like they are now. That was one example. Before he was 18-years-old, he says he was dabbling with “weed, speed and various bits and bobs”, which then advanced him towards the rave nature of ecstasy, a class-A narcotic that gives the user feelings of intense intimacy; extraordinary self-confidence; diminished fear; and increased empathy and sympathy for others.

Mr S comfortably admits that his diet of this infamous drug was predominantly during weekends, where he indulged in the drug at an average cost of IR€15 per pill. “This would entail a couple of Es in a nightclub before heading back to a session,” he says, furthermore adding

that it was inevitable for him and his peers to consume more when “coming down from the buzz”. With a usual intake of – more or less – eight pills, Mr S’ Saturday night clubbing would end on a Monday morning. Ecstasy, formally known as MDMA, also has subjective side effects of keeping the user highly alert and awake throughout his or her experience.

He reflects on the cost efficiency of its drug use, back then, in comparison to the current drug culture. Not only has the accessibility of class-A drugs increased by the masses, but it has also wilted in cost. Ecstasy pills, for example, can be purchased from as cheap as five euro, and as expensive as €10 per pill. The tablet itself does not wholly consist of the substance MDMA – a manufactured compound that releases serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine. Modern ecstasy pills, in Ireland, consist of 79mg to 120mg of MDMA. The rest of its components differ with different sources. So, with this increase in accessibility and decrease of cost, Mr S challenges the safety of the modern drug culture, due to the lack of “purity” that it entails. He also states it is a worrying factor that cocaine and heroin are now drugs that can be sold in “every town, village

and hamlet in the country which must be a cause for concern for parents”. It is longer an illegal inner-suburb commodity. It is everywhere.

Mr S did not lead the spoiled-teen-in-Palm Springs life. It was quite the opposite. He says that he was never driven by possible opportunities, goals, or lengthy ambitions. With this in mind, he felt that he was “more than happy to make drug-taking [his] modus operandi”. And as far as society could see, Mr S was not a slacker. Though he wasn’t chasing dreams, like some kids in the 90s, he says he had several jobs, though they were “undemanding”, “menial” and “low-paying”. But even though he did not have any ambition as such, he was heavily motivated by the weekends, where his drug intake cycle would resume. “This allowed me to drift through my working week in a fog of indifference before coming alive at the weekend,” he says. “It was simply a case of living for the weekend. There was nothing else in my life worth getting excited about, so indulgence was the highlight.”

And like students on a Sunday morning after a long night out – head in three places from a piercing hangover – For Mr S, “never again”

introspections were as pointless as a football. The next Friday evening defied his will power, so the cycle continued.

“I took drugs because I enjoyed them and everything else seemed dull in comparison,” he says, but then firmly admits that “they are harmful to your health, both physically and mentally”.

The 30-something-year-old regularly relates to the what-ifs and the what-to-dos, stating that, perhaps, his “escapades” might have been different if he had a career or a tint of ambition in his life. As well, he refers to the people who are now in his past position, telling them “don’t let it drag on throughout your twenties, as by that point you should really be focusing on the more important elements of your life.”

Life now for the middle-aged man is a “mixed bag”. Despite the some negative impact drugs had on him – depression and personality disorder – he tells An Focal that he does not regret being an avid member of that subculture. And even though he wishes he could have stopped earlier, he admits they have “shaped [him] as a person”.

Campus Medical Centre Charges Here To Stay



Lorna Bogue
Assistant Editor

Last semester the Medical Centre charges which have just come into effect were introduced in order to cover the cost of running the frontline student service. This decision was taken as a result of the Medical Centre continuously running a deficit. In the last number of years student services have cost the University on average €3.7 million per annum with student health and counselling services making up 20% of this cost. Dr Cahill, head of the Medical Centre for the past 14 years, however, has reported no decrease in the number of students using the medical centre and maintains that student satisfaction levels with the service have remained high. There are also benefits to the charges according to Dr Cahill. It is hoped that the upfront charges will reduce the number of incidences involving appointments being scheduled and not being attended, which last year accounted for 10% of appointments. As the centre processes over 11,000 appointments per year, the reduction of absentee appointments is hoped to increase its efficiency. With the introduction of the Medical Centre fees the University

has also provided an extra member of administration staff, a move which will again improve the service.

The fees are a work in progress and are subject to regular review by medical centre staff and are also subject to review by the University on a less frequent basis. Yet there are still problems that the introduction of fees has created. Students who are holders of the medical card are unable to use them to pay the upfront medical centre charges, something that was implied last year when the charges were brought in. Medical card holders are being encouraged by the university to go to their registered GP to avail of their medical card entitlements. This is of course inconvenient to students who live far away from Limerick and who will have to travel home to get an appointment with their own GP. Some GPs also don't practice on weekends, necessitating a weekday visit and possibly resulting in students missing classes. Students will also find it difficult to register a Limerick based GP in order to use their medical card as most practices in the Limerick area are full up and will not accept new medical card patients.

Fees paid can be partially reclaimed, either through private health insurance or by filling out a Med1 form to claim

tax relief from Revenue for medical expenses, however, every student must pay the upfront charges and this is not going to change within the next year. The Students' Union has stated that its third priority for 2012 is to 'reduce proposed charges for the medical centre'. An aim which seems redundant, as meetings regarding the charges have already been held. As a result of these meetings some of the charges have already been reconfigured to better suit student needs for the year. The cost of physiotherapy was originally planned to be set at €40. A reduction advocated by Dr Cahill.

Dr Bernadette Walsh, The head of student services has said that the University will only speak with the SU president and with no other sabbatical officer. This interaction is conducted through bilateral meetings, so when the University is getting input from two parties they will speak to both separately as opposed to meeting everyone around the same table. Dr Cahill is not only in the medical centre on a day to day basis but is also the chair of the Irish Student Health Association, a national body for providers of health services in third level institutions. Any concessions that have been gained so far are the result of the advocacy of Dr Cahill.

Medical Centre staff would like to see costs for acute services such as physiotherapy and psychiatry reduced further. If a student arrives with an injury that requires a session with the physiotherapist they are very likely to be in acute pain and need to receive treatment quickly. Picking up an injury can also happen at any time, meaning that the cost of a physiotherapy consultation (€30) is generally an unplanned expense which can impact heavily on a student's budget. Another side effect of the charges is that the cost of making a psychiatric appointment may act as a deterrent for students who may have mental health issues. Under reporting of mental illnesses is already a huge problem. The costs of psychiatric and physiotherapy appointments are also compounded by the fact that they generally require repeat appointments. Despite the cost of making appointments Dr Cahill reiterates that the medical centre continues to provide an excellent service to students and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

For more information on mental health issues <http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/>

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The centre processes over 11,000 appointments per year
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Just Giving You That Old Razzle-Dazzle, Folks

The Elephant's View with
Michael Shea

I'm not one to make political hay out of serious situations but the recent attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi which killed four Americans including the ambassador and the riots across the region have blown the myth of President Obama's 'excellent' track record on foreign affairs. Everything about the current administration's foreign policy stinks and the administration's handling on the crisis would be comical if it wasn't so serious.

Let's start with the rhetoric. As we know, the President is a gifted orator. However, certain words and phrases used by him and the administration give us a hint as to how deluded the President and his cabinet are. For example, the "War on Terror" became "overseas contingency operations"; the Fort Hood Massacre (an act of terror) was an act of "workplace violence" and, perhaps the most egregious, 9/11 became a "manmade disaster" as opposed a terrorist attack. Given this pattern of misleading the public, it should be no surprise that the Benghazi attack has been described as a "spontaneous" demonstration (as Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice said) and the wider Mid-East crisis as "bumps in the road" by the President. Essentially, the administration has

been razzle-dazzling us with words deliberately designed not to incite a powerful response.

But why? Why would the US government lie to the American people about something so serious and why would they lie when any American with access to cable news or newspapers can find out just how ridiculous the notion of the "not pre-planned" attack is? Well, it speaks to the President's wider foreign policy or "Cairo doctrine" as many conservative commentators call it. The Cairo doctrine is named after the famous speech President Obama gave in June, 2009 in Cairo where he promised a "new beginning" and an era of "mutual respect" for the Muslim community as if the United States was lacking respect for Muslims in the past. Those familiar with modern history will note that this is odd considering that the US committed her forces on behalf of oppressed Muslims six times in the past twenty years (Kuwait, Somalia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq). Of the six, three instances were for purely humanitarian reasons such as Somalia, Kosovo and Bosnia. Latter of which, the United States intervened to stop the massacre of Muslims by Christians. Evidently, this is the lack of "mutual respect" to which Obama refers. The President went on to say that "we do not want to keep troops in Afghanistan" and to "leave Iraq to the Iraqis". If you're an Al Qaeda lieutenant

or an Iranian politician, these statements sound exactly like a bugle calling retreat. Either the President was consciously aware of how this sounded and approved of the notion of an American retreat or he is too incompetent to realise how America's enemies will view his comments.

The Cairo speech was the beginning of what has now become known as the "apology tour" where the President went around the world spreading his message of his "new era" of cooperation by contrast to the past of imperialism.

"So how's that hopey changey stuff working out?" Not well. Three years after the Cairo speech, Cairo itself is overrun with anti-American demonstrations and American flag burnings along with the rest of the region. The US Consulate in Benghazi was burned down and four Americans were murdered including Ambassador Christopher Stevens who was dragged through the streets à la Black Hawk Down. The President's response: Claim that the attack was "not pre-planned", blame it on YouTube video depicting Mohammad as a fraud, womaniser and paedophile and apologise for it.

Apologising for an American using his right to free speech is outrageous and an attack on free speech itself.

Of course, the current crisis is not about "The Innocence Muslims" (the YouTube video in question). The notion that the group that carried out



the raid was able to pull off such a well organised attack in a matter of day and do it coincidentally on September 11th is ridiculous. The President seems to be convinced that all evil perpetrated against the United States is the fault of the United States. Either that or the administration made the calculation that it could not afford a pre-planned terrorist attack. This is an alarming, but interesting notion when you consider that all three major terror related incidents that happened within US borders since the President took office (Fort Hood, the Underwear Bomber

and the Times Square Bomber), the American people were told that these were "lone wolf attacks" and the liberal media has told us that Al Qaeda is a "spent force." Instead of strong and decisive action, the President has decided to 'tread softly', only calling it a pre-planned attack almost a week after Ambassador Stevens' death and blaming the whole thing not on himself or even the people that perpetrated the attack but on law abiding Americans. In short, the policy has been to deceive, inveigle and obfuscate to save the Cairo doctrine. This is politics at its worst.

Student Grant System: Abused, Archaic, Abolish?

Colin Clarke

A great number of students moan and groan about how they are ineligible for a grant.

The reality is that 44 per cent of undergraduate students receive a state grant in some form or the other. This is unsustainable and cannot continue. Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn has set in place some reforms of the system, for example taking into account assets of families for the first time when calculating wealth, but I do not think that this is going to completely solve the problem.

We now have a system which allows families who may not have the most cash coming in the door on a day-to-day basis but do have large assets like houses and land or even a large cash balance in the bank, be able to gain access to the grant. However, this is not the fundamental problem.

The problem is how the system is funded in the first place and we need to look at the way third level education is funded in this country.

We now have the situation whereby the student contribution (the less evil way of calling fees fees) is set to rise to €3000 by 2015. If Ruairi Quinn's grand reforms are going to mean that less students get grants but the fees keep rising surely he is cornering himself into a hole of discontent and

anger from the electorate?

Well not necessarily! If we look at other European countries, Ireland is one of the very few who claim to offer 'free education'.

What we must look at doing is introducing a graduate taxation system whereby students pay their college fees back once they start earning a wage. Granted it's not the best time to introduce a system like this given the economic climate but it should ultimately be the system we should look at implementing. It will mean no more corrupt student grant system where students who don't need or deserve it can still gain access to the tax payer's money.

For the time being, we should be looking at trying to make savings in the current grant system and I welcome Minister Quinn's reforms. But by 2015, Ireland will be in a much more productive and healthy position and our financial restrictions will be coming to an end, well at least the programme we agreed with the Troika will be. I think that the next coalition Government should make the brave decision to completely reform the current system. End the grant system for good and ensure that society remains equal and balanced, something that it has lacked in recent years.

Student Nitelink Bus



●	Cappavilla Village	19.00	20.00	21.00	22.00	23.00
●	Thomond Village	19.05	20.05	21.05	22.05	23.05
●	Dromroe Village	19.10	20.10	21.10	22.10	23.10
●	Stables Arch	19.15	20.15	21.15	22.15	23.15
●	Kilmurry Lodge	19.25	20.25	21.25	22.25	23.25
●	Brookfield / Groody	19.30	20.30	21.30	22.30	23.30
●	City Centre -Arthurs Quay	19.40	20.40	21.40	22.40	23.40

Introducing a new hourly bus service for students going from UL's north campus and Students centre to the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Groody, Brookfield and Limerick City Centre 7pm to 11pm [EX-Cappavilla] every Mon, Tue, Wed and Thurs nights (Semester weeks).



Mike
Hynan Coaches

“No Man Is An Island”: Why We Need Students’ Unions

David Hugh Hartery

We all like to think we are born free but no man is an island.

For many, University is the first taste of proper community, a shard of light penetrating the solipsistic self-involvement that typifies the individualism so often apparent in adolescence and the Leaving Cert.

It is here that we first start properly evaluating our place within the world, our politics and our activism. Students’ Unions have often times been a key driver of this most human of student pursuits – the quest to improve ourselves and the world around us.

We have lost sight in the last 2 decades of what it truly means to be a person in a community, focussing on the material excesses that came so easily and Unions of all sorts have participated in this.

Our labour Unions became fat with the bait of Social Partnership. Our Students’ Unions became glorified entertainment promoters, service providers and administrators. However, in the harsh reality of our latest recession, it is time to return to the activist Unions that so defined the early days of the modern Irish university. It is too important not to.

A collective action problem is an issue where numerous individuals would benefit from an action but no individual can go it alone. This basic tenet of rational choice theory is the explanation as to why people unionise. There are some issues where only force of numbers, people working together, can result in those people seeing benefit. Our voices are stronger when we act in unison. Bigger aims become more realistic when we work together. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

There have been many successes in the Irish Student Union movement. Students were integral in the provision of abortion information, contraception

and other progressive causes over the last 80 years, even going so far as litigating to preserve the ability of Irish women to access information rather than caving to the reactionary threats of organisations like SPUC.

There were very highly publicised and positive pro-marriage equality demonstrations carried out by Students Unions in UCD and TCD this summer. This shows how Students’ Unions can be a vehicle for extremely positive change.

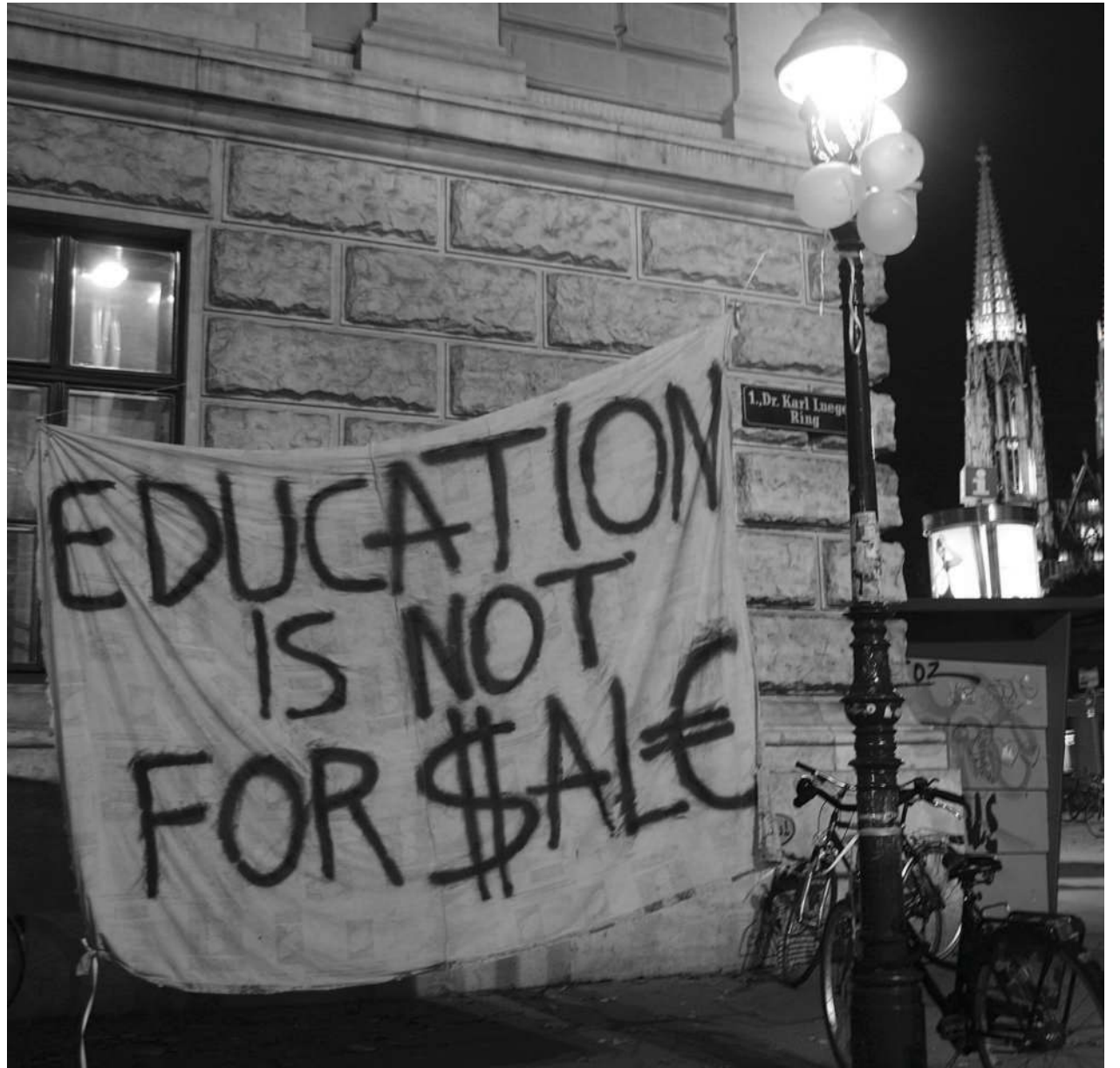
So why should union membership be compulsory? Well the existence of these collective action problems has not gone away. It is grossly unfair for the free-riders to benefit from the benefits that Students’ Union members bring about every day without contributing to help them.

Even more than that, there are changes today afoot that every student should be vocal in. Since the foundation of the state, we were told that the rising tide lifts all boats. We have learned that this could not be farther from the truth.

We live in a country that is even more divided along income inequality lines than ever previously in history. Education is one of the single most emancipatory forces that currently exist. The ability to access the dialogue of power, to understand, critique and digest the technicality of politics and governance is something that is only aided by more formal education.

The majority of those that rule us speak in a way that is not the vernacular which is designed to be alienating and exclusive to the ordinary person. That is how they perpetuate their dominance. In the words of Paulo Freire, “through the right kind of education, every human being, no matter how impoverished and illiterate, can develop a new awareness of self which will free them to be more than passive objects responding to uncontrollable change”.

You have been given this opportunity.



It is now your responsibility to make sure you don’t pull the ladder up behind you. With policies on the horizon like an increased student contribution charge of €3000, a student loan scheme or full fees, there has never been a time when Students’ Unions are more important.

Very few countries in Europe have more than a nominal fee for higher education. It is a lie to say there is no alternative. As we have seen with the

successes of student demonstrations in Quebec, we can fight back against these changes, but it requires solidarity.

Yes, the leadership of Students’ Unions across Ireland has been shambolic at times over the last few decades. But the point of a union is that it is a membership driven organisation. We need to demand action from leadership, speak truth to power. That will not happen if you are not a member.

We are stronger as the many than we are as the one but it does require people to take some initiative and be a member, not a follower. But most of all, it requires an acknowledgement and acceptance of the principle of solidarity. We are all uniquely blessed to have the opportunity to pursue our educations. Please make sure there’s some left for those who haven’t gotten their chance yet.

No One Should Be Forced Into Membership Of A Student Union

James Bradshaw

Early this year, the ULSU called an extraordinary general meeting. It was extraordinary because it was related to the severe financial problems which the union was facing. It was even more extraordinary in that so few people turned up that they didn’t reach the quorum and had to re-schedule.

Welcome, Fresher readers, to the curious world of the ULSU. Come Spring, you will have the opportunity of voting for next year’s union reps. It is old-school democracy at its best. The campus will be littered (literally and metaphorically) with campaign posters and manifestos. Strange Youtube videos featuring the contenders will appear. A candidate for the position of Welfare officer might receive the personal endorsement of a care bear. A rival for the post might elaborate on how

his sole idea for improving the union is switching condom suppliers from Mojo to Durex. Then there are those who say that Pearse and Connolly died in vain.

In spite of having several revenue streams, our union still managed to run up the incredible losses which led to the aforementioned EGM and the eventual abolition of two sabbatical positions.

All told, last year’s controversies did enormous damage to the reputation of the ULSU. Where the prevailing mood had been that of apathy, it is now held in contempt in many quarters. More and more students are questioning why they should have to be part of this organisation.

Alas, those choices are not granted to us. In a free society, we should have the right not to join any association. Were the government to pass legislation requiring annual contributions to

churches, there would rightfully be outrage, and the same would hold true if there were efforts to force citizens to join political parties. After all, it’s no one’s business but our own what organisations we do or don’t join, what causes we contribute to and what causes we ignore.

You might respond by saying that churches and political parties are sectional interests with their own narrow agendas, in contrast to the ULSU which serves all students. Yet that is not so. ULSU is not part of the Union of Students in Ireland, which is never shy in putting forward particular viewpoints without bothering to engage in consultation with the student body beforehand. Its current lobbying in favour of gay marriage (leaving aside the merits or demerits of the cause) is not the activity of an apolitical organisation focused on student affairs.

In the last general election, the USI

even allowed itself to be used as a pawn by Ruairi Quinn and the Labour Party, who promptly betrayed their student voters. Student politics has been a training ground for politicians from all parties but Labour in particular is riddled with ex-USI figures from Gilmore down and the close connection between the two organisations gives lie to any claim of impartiality that the USI or the ULSU might make.

“To compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves,” Thomas Jefferson once said, “is sinful and tyrannical.” Even if it is the business of the USI to engage in such activities, no student should be forced to provide financial support to promote causes which do not themselves support.

Granted, the ULSU provides some valuable services, and that is why I, given a free choice, would continue to be a member. Everyone should be given that choice, with those who pay

up receiving such benefits as being able to write for An Focal or hang out in the Common. Then each student would be faced with a decision about whether those services were worth the price of membership. All of our Clubs and Societies work according to this voluntary model, so why can’t the ULSU?

In a situation where membership was voluntary, more people would take the institution seriously and EGM’s might even reach the quorum the first time around. The bottom line is; if the ULSU is really serious about getting us into student politics, they should first give us the opportunity to get out.

AN FOCAL

Christmas Comes Early For Diageo (And UL)

Some foreign students might have been fooled by the hype, but we're happy to disabuse them of any notion that Arthur's Day was anything but a marketing stunt. It was a remarkably successful marketing stunt, certainly, and one that has successfully embedded itself in the Irish consciousness. For a few short years Guinness has promoted 27 September as a day to toast the man who created an iconic stout. There's no doubt that a pint of Guinness is as much a symbol of Ireland as shamrocks and leprechauns. Part of what it means to grow up Irish is old men in the pub downing pints of the black stuff and wondering why they have such large beer bellies. So celebrating the creation of Guinness seems like a right and proper thing to do. Sadly, the truth is Arthur's Day has nothing to do with Irish culture in any real sense. Its short history has been nothing other than a way to sell pints and line the pockets of a very rich

multinational company. Because Guinness, in case you didn't know, is owned by Diageo, a massive producer of beers, wines and spirits based in London, England. Granted, the Guinness Brewery at St James' Gate is still the spiritual centre of the operation, but the idea that we're celebrating a unique aspect of our Irish identity is totally false. There's nothing wrong with a British company owning an old Irish drinks producer; there's no place for petty nationalist acrimony in this day and age. But we should at least face the truth: Arthur's Day is a way to sell stout by appealing to a latent sense of national pride, tugging at the old timey heartstrings and, most of all, giving Irish people an excuse to bunk off work and go for one or two or ten. Speaking of bunking off work, the University last week launched its 40th anniversary celebrations with a massive concert in the Plaza. While the event was ticketed, we have no doubt that all staff and students were encouraged to take part in the festivities. UL even managed to book the Coronas, a band well known to students who've been

around for two or three years. The anniversary launch also took place on Arthur's Day. We're assured this was a total coincidence. After all, 27 September is the day that the NIHE first opened its doors to students and so was logically selected as the day to begin the 40th celebrations. The fact that it coincided with Arthur's Day was a complete and presumably unforeseeable coincidence. The University also received another birthday present last week with news that former US President Bill Clinton will visit campus in November. Though not officially attending a UL event, Mr Clinton's visit was doubtless greeted with jubilation by the powers that be. The only thing that could beat a visit from Bill would be a fly past by the Blue Angels or a Papal blessing. Christmas comes early for some people.

Faggots, Child Rape And Comedy Soc

Firstly, I very much enjoyed Monday night's Beer Club in the Scholars'. I enjoyed the

beers, I enjoyed Emma Langford's singing and I even enjoyed the vast majority of the performers from Comedy Soc. Many of them told some excellent jokes, while the final performer was certainly the highlight of my evening. However, one performance stood out only for its disgusting, unnecessary and distinctly unfunny jokes. In no more than four minutes, this self-styled comedian said "faggot" eight times in a joke primarily designed to appeal to latent prejudices against the homosexual community. Though the performer may not be aware of it, the word "faggot" is a term of discrimination and hate. Any member of the LGBT community who has ever had that word thrown at them, either in the street from passers-by or in a more private setting, knows all too well why it is not acceptable to use this word as the mainstay of your comedy act. Had this "comedian" used the word "nigger" instead of "faggot" his time on stage would have been brief indeed. But this was only the opening foray in a slew of offensiveness that left many of us bewildered. The second part of his act focussed on the hilarious

subject of child rape. Not for this man simply joking about rape, oh no, he had to go one step further and tickle our funny bones by telling us jokes about the rape of children. One audience member, thoroughly disgusted by the whole ordeal, shouted "Get off the stage!" while at the end, I must admit, I couldn't resist throwing in one last heckle. Let me be clear, this is not what Comedy Soc represents. The other acts had the audience on their side; we were rooting for them. And they managed to be funny, though there were perhaps some ups and downs. Comedy Soc is a fine idea and obviously has some great people who are committed to making their society a success. I wish them well and hope that their acts will improve with time. Certainly, their performances were a vast improvement on last semester. However, when Comedy Soc returns to the Scholars' Club in Week 7, I sincerely hope that the only thing this newspaper writes about is "It was funny".

The Eye Opening Erasmus Experience

Colm Fitzgerald Comment Editor

I write this from my new home of Malta. It's a small island in the Mediterranean often not spoken of, save for when people casually mention they shall attend the University there for Erasmus.

I feel quite guilty and remorseful for previously calling Erasmus students at UL "razzys" or foreigners because quite frankly, as I am now an Erasmus student in a foreign country it would be somewhat unsettling to fall bereft of the local welcome.

The most interesting aspect of this undertaking though, was the mere act of moving out of home. During my time at UL I've lived at home with my parents, mostly because the family home is only about 10 miles from UL. More often than not when I told people this they say "Sure you have your mammy to wash your clothes and make your dinner! That's all very well, but you could guarantee those who have such an attitude did not live at home past their leaving cert.

Expecting your mammy to make your dinner and do your washing as you move into adulthood is almost taking her for granted. Living at home when at college has its disadvantages. It puts great strain on family relationships particularly in first year. When you see your friends in Plassey lolling in their living room 'til the early hours with friends you would naturally wish to have friends in your house to do the same, but living at home precludes it. But most majorly, it lacks independence.

In the immediate few weeks before

I headed off, it made me truly think about what I have at home but more importantly to appreciate it. It would be somewhat unnatural to not think at some stage "I shouldn't go", and indeed Erasmus became a dirty word and was not mentioned for a few days.

The day to head off was somewhat surreal. Thankfully the trip was improved immeasurably by the fact my girlfriend and a classmate both travelled on the same flights, from Shannon to Heathrow connecting to the Air Malta flight to Malta.

Previous participants of Erasmus cite multiple positive reasons for taking part. The experience of living somewhere foreign, making friends from other countries, doing something you wouldn't normally do. For me, even though I'm only here three days, I can easily say moving away from home shall be one of the main experiences.

It is not difficult to interpret the real value Erasmus adds to a degree. If my interpretations are correct, it puts an Erasmus degree miles above the rest.

Is a Students' Union of any value to you?

There is considerable irony in writing about something like this. Those who are ignorant to the existence and function of a students' union may well not read this newspaper, as they may indeed be ignorant to its existence also. Digressions aside, it is interesting to consider the real value of automatic students' union membership.

One considerable downfall is it provides no vehicle by which to measure engagement, or at least student interest. With 12,000 ish students at UL, all of them are members of ULSU.



That is all very well, but it would be reasonable to say the organisation cannot claim it has 100% involvement and engagement with this entire body.

We know well from the events of last year that shady politics has ruffled the feathers of even the most discerning of students. With 12,000 members, it is difficult for real value, real engagement or real change. It's fair to say a considerable number of students just don't care, and to be honest, wasting valuable time trying to engage with them on any decent level is futile. They just don't care. You could well compare

it to the Catholic Church- something a majority are a member of and quite a many care nothing for.

Then there is the services argument. What if a student is not a member but wants to attend a gig organised by ULSU, use a ULSU photocopier or sit in the ULSU common room. Well, if membership is required for these alone, then I'd feel quite hard done by.

The image and perception of a Students' Union by students has become stale and somewhat debased. The response of a typical student of what they think when asked about

the Students' Union is mentions of free condoms (questionable quality), common room, and something about voting.

In an ideal world, we wouldn't need representation because everything should work in a way it should, and additional organisations not required to provide support for something a different organisation does.

A real change would be nice. And no, real change does not mean switching from free mojos to Durex.

Welfare Bear Seriously Injured After Shooting

The Crow's Nest

UL's furred crusader has been shot and seriously wounded following an incident near Dromroe Village. The Welfare Bear, who is the staunch defender of UL students' welfare, was shot fifteen times in the chest by a band of crazed socialists who apparently mistook him for Education Minister, Ruairi Quinn. The Welfare Bear, or WB as he is affectionately known, has protected students' welfare since the sabbatical election campaigns in 2011. WB has stopped at nothing to maintain the rights of the average student in the face of fierce opposition from residents' groups, University authorities and common sense.

Immediately following the shooting, the Welfare Bear dragged his bleeding carcass into the Main Building, climbed the stairs to the Medical Centre while suffering severe pulmonary problems, got lost, found his way again and on reaching the Medical Centre, was told that he could not be seen as the University had adopted a "no bears" policy as part of cost saving measures. After spending several minutes arguing with a surly receptionist from 1954 on this issue, the Welfare Bear collapsed and bled out on the carpet.

"We stand by our decision not to give medical treatment to the Welfare Bear," a University official said, "Times are tough and we have to cut corners. Treating bears has been an enormous cost to us over the years and people need to understand that it's simply unsustainable."

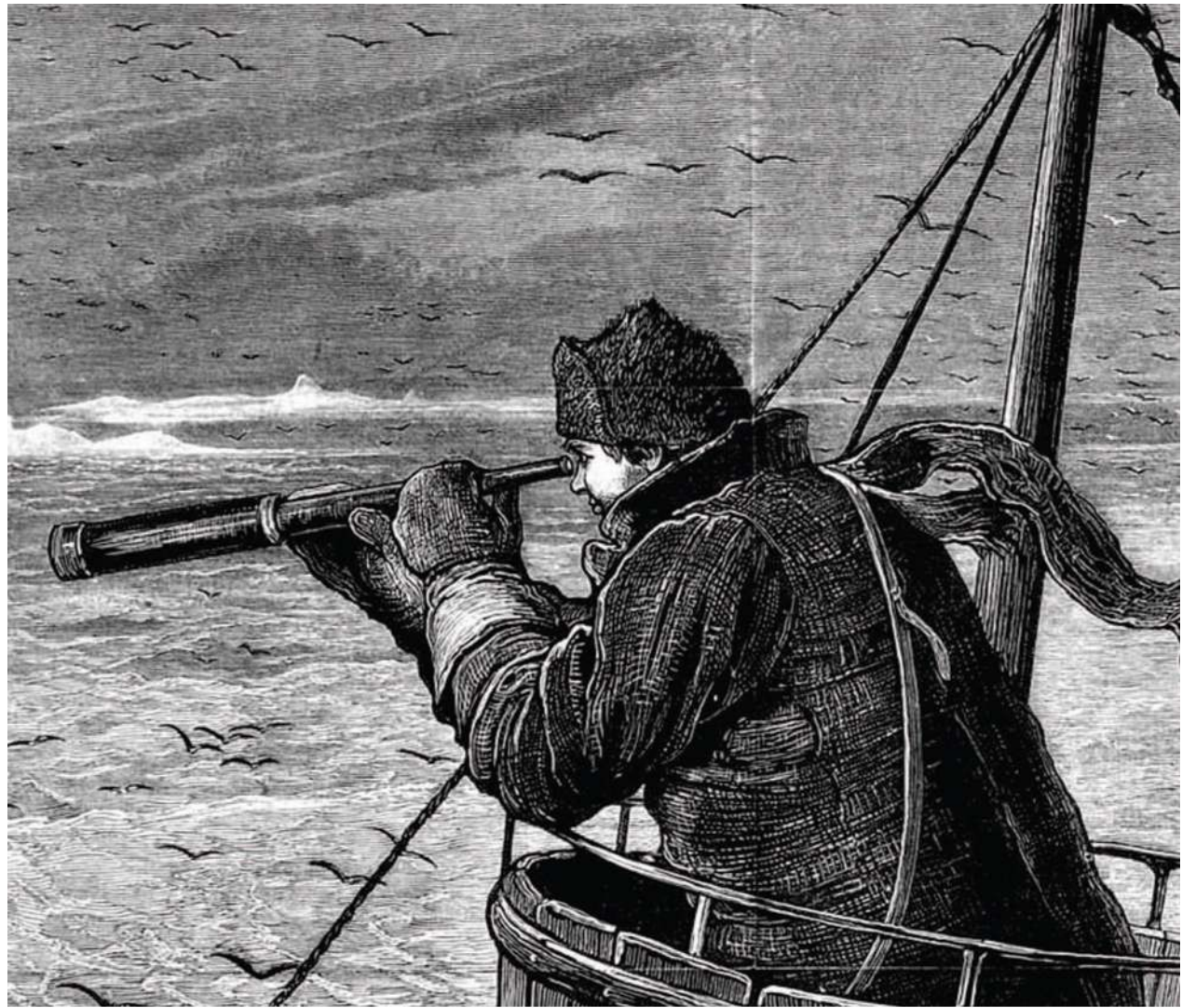
The Welfare Bear was later treated by a passing animal welfare charity run by kind hearted nuns. Luckily, the nuns had taken a wrong turn and arrived outside the Main Building just as the

wounded bear was trudging away from it, having been presented with a bill for the blood stains he left on the Medical Centre's carpet. We expect that such unbelievable coincidences will be made available to all students who would otherwise use the Medical Centre. I heard there's a magical pixie who does blood screenings and doesn't charge medical card holders. The system works.

In other news, noted philanderer Bill Clinton will visit campus in November in an event that has already got University staff as excited as a pack of interns at a White House brunch. Sometime president Clinton is currently trying to get his wife Hillary elected in 2016 and in order to that he's been supporting that guy from Chicago who's keeping her seat in the Oval Office warm at the moment.

Slick Willy's visit here isn't likely to do much good for Barack Obama (or Hilldog for that matter) but the usual Clinton charm will pervade campus and even Don Barry won't be able to resist the draw of Seducer No 1. After all, Bill Clinton has more seductive power in one expression than the whole Irish government put together, which explains why he's a much better person to visit campus than that hardy Mayo man who never seems to look you straight in the eye. Maybe Americans just do personality better. Or maybe the razzamatazz of American politics can't help winning when it's compared to the hatchet man of the old sod, who these days don't even bother fixing the roads.

Our final observation this week concerns our neighbours to the north, NUI Galway. Our "strategic partners" have jumped to the front of our minds as a copy of their lovely college newspaper, SIN, was very kindly sent



to the offices of An Focal. It seems that the good students of Galway are most exercised about the new closing times of pubs in the city. Some of our readers may have heard of the controversial decision to impose draconian opening hours on the famously party-loving city. NUI Galway Students' Union has hit back, claiming the early closures will affect students' part time jobs. On SIN's front page, Roisin Peddle, late of this parish, recounts a sad tale of clubs closed early and students

being forced to drink at home. All of us here send our best wishes to our extroverted sister college and hope that their travails are so ended. Though we would like to point out that a headline reading, "Man Burned at the Stake in Limerick" was somewhat misleading, as we expected an account of the recent witch trials initiated by an overly cautious residents' association here in Castletroy. After all, if students can drink, do drugs and break windows, they're bound to be sacrificing virgins,

drinking blood and having romantic congress with the Devil. It only stands to reason.

Dear Angie...

Dear Angie,

The other day I loaned €20 to my housemate (we'll call them Y) who said they needed it to pay an electricity bill, all well and good, but when it came to actually paying the bill they told my other housemate who's in charge of this stuff that they didn't have the money, and borrowed another €20 off them to pay it. I only found out about this from talking to my third housemate who asked me why 'Y' asked to borrow €40 from them in order to pay the two of us back. This inquiry sparked off a house meeting where I discovered that the housemate who was looking for money had borrowed from all of us, and now owes the house in general €80 in total. I've reached the end of my tether because it's been weeks now and the borrowing housemate hasn't paid any of us back, and we've all got bills to pay. Not only that, but the money wasn't spent in the way that I was told it would be spent. Instead of paying bills my housemate went to a certain local establishment and spent the money on (to use their terms) "beaus"

and "a few naggins". When confronted about it they simply give this big long excuse which is lost in a maelstrom of "yurts" and "nice wans", I can't even understand them when they talk. What can I do to get my money back? I swear if they say, 'It'll be graaaaand' one more time I will not be held responsible for my actions.

Furious, Briarfield

Dear Furious,

Let me begin by commending you on how you've dealt with this debt-dodger so far, the best way I've always found to deal with these vagabonds, or vagabond-holders as I prefer to call them (excuse my little joke. Laugh? No? Suit yourself) is to join together with the other debt collectors as a "collective". Yes, yes, I know, the word "collective" is veering dangerously close to Marxism but I find that it's much easier to pressure the money out of this dangerous subversive by acting as a group, or indeed to use another Leninist term, a "Union".

You need to play hardball with this

debt riddled fiend. I had a friend once who did something somewhat similar to this, their name was Greece. I need not say more, but if you don't do something about getting your money back then you will ultimately lose. Firstly you will lose out because you will not get back the money you originally lent, but then you will lose out in a secondary way. It will be said that you are an easy touch and your debtor's vagrant friends will try to get money out of you too. My friend that I was telling you about hung around with a filthy pack of delinquents; Spain, Ireland and Iceland, who all thought that I too was easy to touch. I certainly proved them wrong. Vultures the lot of them.

To ensure that your message gets across to your housemate simply follow these easy steps. Firstly, do not lend them any more money under any circumstances. They do not deserve your help. Secondly, cut them off from any other benefits that come from living in your house. Do not for instance, allow them to eat anything that you have bought. When I was



young I did not let my housemates have access to the branded cola drink that I bought on the black market from West Germany. It was all 'Vita-cola' for them, a punishment worse than death it was said. Ah, the heady days of youth. Thirdly, and this is the most important step of all, you must put in place punitive measures to stop them from reoffending. Interest is of course the best way to do this. An interest rate of 12% per day should be enough of an incentive for them to pay you back in as efficient a manner as possible. It doesn't

matter where they get the money as long as you are paid back. They are then forced to go back onto the market in order to get your money. In this case the market may be the local loan shark with 'DAN' and 'GER' tattooed on his knuckles, but if it becomes his problem instead of yours then that can only serve as a bonus. Everyone could do with a bit more GERDAN in their lives anyway.

Grosse Küsse,
Angie x

AN FOCAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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An Focal endeavours to accommodate all letters as far as legally possible. All parties have the right of reply to letters printed herein.



This poem was delivered to the An Focal office anonymously in a brown envelope addressed to the Editor. We are printing it as it was received.

The Times They Are A Changin'
By Lynn Guistic and Alf Abet
(With apologies to Bob Dylan)

Come UL Academics
Wherever you roam
And admit that the student
Population has grown
And if the admission office
Would just put down the phone
There'd be plenty more time
For researchin'
And use PBL
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

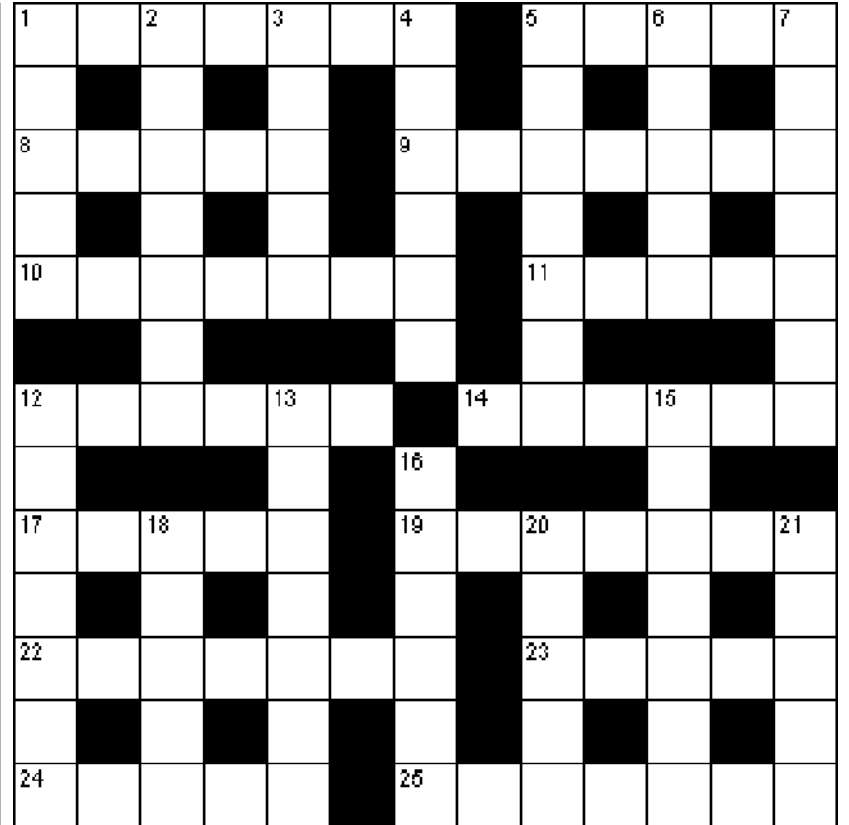
And first year when you come
Into your lecture hall
Don't block up the doorway
Don't lean by the wall
Just listen with care

And take in it all
In your head
The thoughts should be racin'
It'll soon shake your pedestal
And you may even fall
For the times they are a-changin'
For the first seven weeks
We'll help you get around
With a phone app that knows
The UL campus ground
And read all the books
We believe are profound
Picked to teach you
Independent learnin'
It's a pedagogic theory
That is perfectly sound
For the times they are a-changin'

If you stay out till dawn
And you're havin' a blast
You don't go to class
Your exams aren't passed
Just use the phone app
To locate double mast
And leave through the gate
That you came in

With all play and no work
You will leave very fast
For the times they are a-changin'

Come mothers and father
Throughout the land
And criticise Ruairi Quinn
For his sleight of hand
By your sons and your daughters
He promised to stand
Their trust in him
Is rapidly fadin'
Next time don't be fooled
By the Labour Party brand
For the times they are a-changin'



CLUES

Across

1. Gallantry (7)
5. Subsequently (5)
8. Extreme contentment (5)
9. To be incredulous of (7)
10. Pills (7)
11. Essence (5)
12. Gaped (6)
14. Concurs (6)
17. Proverb (5)
19. Recite (7)
22. Feed (7)
23. Water lily (5)
24. Frock (5)
25. Use again after processing (7)

Down

1. Established custom (5)
2. Symbol of a covenant (7)
3. Publish (5)
4. Humble (6)
5. Comical (7)
6. Heading (5)
7. Cryptograms (7)
12. Hankered (7)
13. Nemeses (7)
15. Stretchable (7)
16. Fix firmly (6)
18. Sharp, fleeting pain (5)
20. Artifact (5)
21. Follow (5)

ISSUE 1 SOLUTIONS

Across

1. Trick
2. Village
3. Eternal
4. Award
5. Erode
6. Elector
7. Adjust
8. Safety
9. Reclaim
10. Hotel
11. Cairn
12. Earnest
13. Trellis
14. Drove

Down

1. Theme
2. Ice
3. Kennels
4. Velvet
5. Lease
6. Apartment
7. Elderly
8. Objective
9. Apricot
10. Adhered
11. Embers
12. Annul
13. Lithe
14. Ego

how
will
you
get
involved
with

AN FOCAL

call
into
ulsu
or
contact
E: sucommunications@ul.ie
T: 061202363 | M: 0860435304



The Problems With Those Pesky Paparazzi

Jane O’Faherty

IN A year that was to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II’s diamond jubilee, the past few months have been tumultuous for the British monarchy. The publication of photos of Prince Harry in August was an embarrassment to the royals. However, the recent photos of Kate Middleton topless while on holiday have shaken them to the core.

Unfortunately, unwelcome publicity goes hand in hand with being a royal. As such, it should be expected and avoided if possible. Harry should know this better than anyone, with a youth marred by being papped underage drinking and dressing up as a Nazi.

However, Kate’s case has provoked much debate over “crossing the red line” – when privacy must be respected. She was staying in a secluded chateau in rural Provence. The photos were taken with a long lens from a distance. Surely this was a step too far, even in the competitive world of celebrity journalism?

The British press and St. James’ Palace have unanimously decried the photos. Indeed, this tabloid story is having far-reaching consequences on how far the media goes for a story. In Ireland, the editor of the Irish Daily Star Michael O’Kane was suspended over his paper’s publication of the photos. Already French courts have granted the couple an injunction against the photos, even if many magazines are still threatening to publish.

Given what we have learned about how the press monitors its celebrity subjects, it has become difficult to defend the media in this case. The

idea of monarchy will always divide opinion, but in this case the issue becomes irrelevant. Privacy is a universal entitlement, listed in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and other international treaties. As much as they are the target for our admiration or cynicism, celebrities should be allowed space to breathe, to live part of their lives without scrutiny.

These pictures would be justified if Kate did something wrong, but she didn’t. Consider the actions of other Windsors – she hasn’t cheated, like the previous royal generation. She hasn’t amassed huge debt, like Fergie. She was doing what any of us could have done on holiday, in what she thought was a private setting. Clearly there has been some confusion as to what the public interest really is.

It is interesting that the photos were taken in a country that treats privacy as something sacred. France’s culture does not really lend itself to inside scoops on celebrities’ lives. When it was revealed that former French President François Mitterand had had an illegitimate child 20 years previously, France paid little attention. This is reflected in the country’s stringent media laws, which will work in the royal couple’s favour. However, the damage is done. It’s likely that these photos will plague Kate’s life as a duchess. If there are any gains from this debacle, perhaps it can make us think about how far the press can go to reveal the inner details of people’s lives.



How To Detect A Toxic Friendship

Barbara Ross

A GOOD friendship has to have a number of ingredients such as shared interests, memories and experiences to work. With emigration becoming rife and technology allowing people to stay in touch so easily friends have become a fabric of our lives, which also explains why it hurts us when a friendship is fraught with confusion, heartache and tears.

But how do you know when a friendship turns toxic? No one needs a friend like that so here are nine signs to spot a toxic situation.

1) Your friend is jealous of you. A jealous friend will want to cut you out of her life because she really wants what you have and can’t stand to be around you anymore.

2) Your friend is a “doormat”: It’s tiring to always be with someone who cannot make a decision.

3) Your friend wasn’t there for you. She doesn’t celebrate your good news

nor does she help you in times of need.

4) Your friend is draining you: You listen to her non-stop complaining and ‘fml’ moments and receiving nothing in return.

5) You don’t share the same values or the same world views: It’s a red flag that this isn’t the right friend for you if you don’t respect her for who she is.

6) You are using one another: You want to be friends with your neighbor because they have a wardrobe full of designer clothes to borrow is not the basis of a long-term friendship.

7) The relationship offers no return on investment: If you are the one calling your friend to make plans and going out of your way to be with her, but she makes no attempt to go out of her way for you, then she’s not meeting you halfway.

8) Your friend is harming someone else or doing something illicit. Do you want to be associated with someone who is morally unjust? That’s a

judgment call on your part.

9) Your friend burdens you with a secret: Your friend trusts you with the details of her affair, but keeping the secret is way too much for you.

If any of these signs describes one of your friendships, it’s likely to be a toxic relationship. The best way to get out of this situation is to deliberately distance yourself and let the relationship fizzle into oblivion.

If you want to give the friendship another shot then be honest with each other and hope things change. Toxic relationships are harmful to both parties and let’s face it: A mean friend is just as scarring as a bad mother or husband.

The bottom line is, don’t surround yourself with people who don’t deserve your friendship!



Commodity Kids: The Culture Of Celebrity Children

Sarah O' Dwyer

IN THE past, it used to be celebrities clothes, cars and relationships that dominated the public interest. However, of recent times, there is a sudden interest in Hollywood's newest additions, celebrity kids. The majority of these kids are not famous in their own right and are only in the spotlight because of their parents, yet the public just can't seem to get enough of them. Why? Because they're just too cute!

Everyone knows that celebrities give their kids less than common names. The Beckhams famously named their first child Brooklyn as that is where he was conceived, and Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin named their little girl Apple, long before the iPhone became a massive brand. The Daily Mail reported that for the first quarter of 2012, Ivy was the third most popular name for kids in the UK, making Blue Ivy one of the most famous babies in the world. However, her name can never really be re-created, with parents Beyoncé and Jay-Z trademarking the name.

Many of us envy the styles we see worn by celebrities in the pages of fashion magazines and on the red carpet, but what about when the celebrity children are as stylish, if not more so, than their parents? From casual beach style to high-fashion chic, celebrity children are no strangers to fabulous fashion.

At just seven months old, Harper Seven Beckham already has a

Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week under her belt. And it's not her first encounter with fashion excellence: Harper has been spotted shopping with style icon and designer mother Victoria Beckham at spots like Prada and, has been seen wearing fashion from designers like Stella McCartney, Bonpoint, and Marie Chantel. And, of course, it certainly doesn't hurt that she has the best accessory in town, dad David Beckham.

While these children have only been just born, it seems inevitable that they will become instant celebrities too, and with a mum like Snooki, baby Lorenzo has no choice but to be in the public eye. At only a few weeks old, Snooki shared yet another snapshot of the beautiful boy drinking from his bottle on Instagram. This is one of many she has shared in the first three weeks of his life and it seems certain that it won't be the last!

Robbie Williams' new baby Theodora 'Teddy' Rose posed for a picture on her father's chest at just two days old. Beaming, and showing off his body art and baby girl Robbie wrote on his official website "Daddies second nappy change...Teddy's second day on the planet." Baby Teddy is Robbie and wife Ayda Field's first child, and it's sure not to be the last time we see her, or any of these other children for sure.



Harper Beckham seen shopping with Victoria in Selfridges in London.

A Guide On How To Style Your Hair This Season

Emily Maree
News Editor

WHEN we enter a new fashion season, we always keep our eyes out for the latest fashion and beauty trends to keep our eyes on the style button. But the last thing we think of is the way we should wear our hair. Hair is one of the most striking elements of a catwalk show, photo-shoot or even a night out, so we've come up with the best styles for you to try and achieve this season!

1) Buns. Whether its high buns or low buns this season, buns have been seen on the catwalks from Diane von Furstenberg to Louis Vuitton. It can be petite like a ballerina bun or a big and bold statement, any bun will do! Keep the hair sleek at the front of your head with a side parting and using hairrips to lock away those strays. If a simple knot isn't your thing, try a multi-twist bun like at the Rick Owens catwalk show.

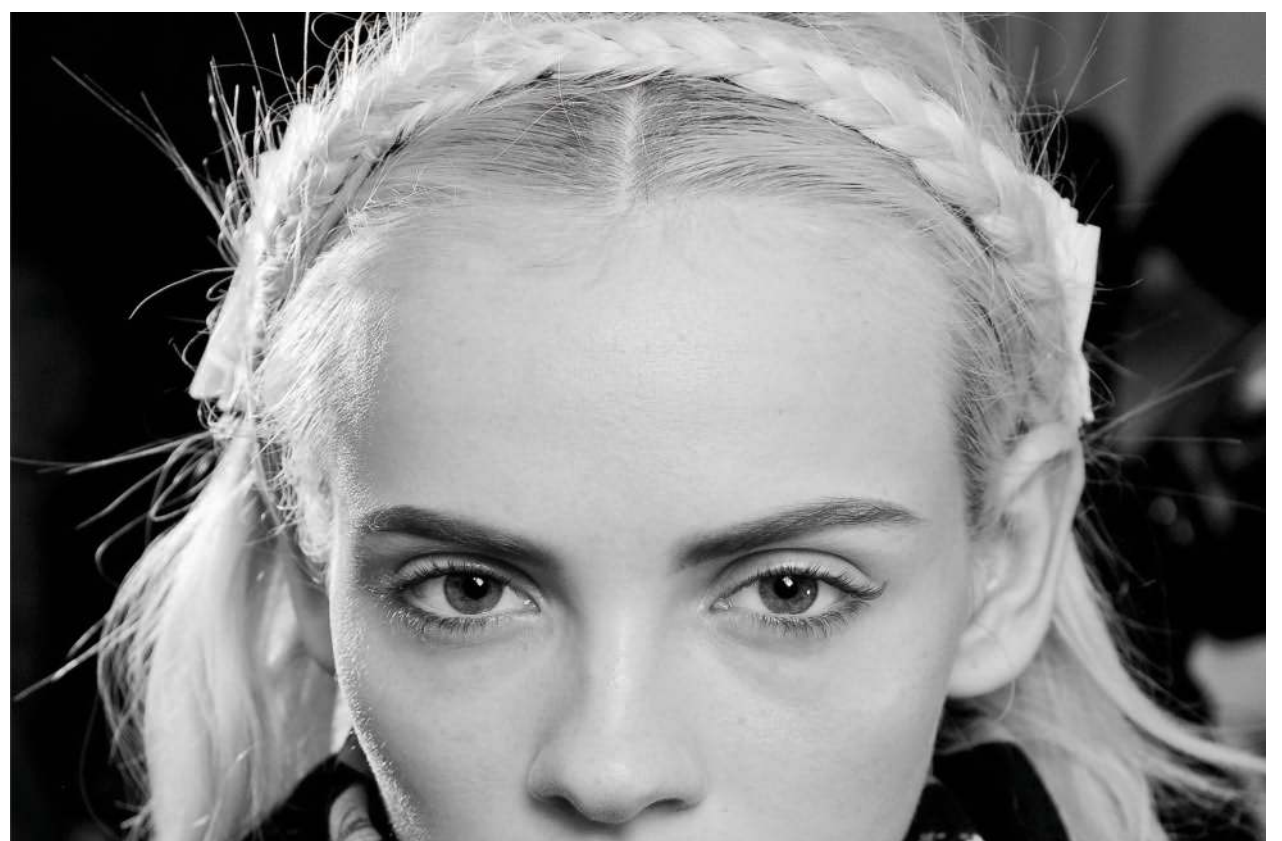
2) Centre-partings. Not just a hairstyle from Dynasty, centre-partings are now back with a bang. This season, straight lines and wet-look waves are all in style as shown by designers like

Roberto Cavalli and Gucci. Think off-duty model and beach ready waves.

3) Braids, twists and plaits. Add a little princess glamour to a relaxed look by adding a cool double-twisted halo braid or for an easy look, tying back the two front sections of your hair and securing them with a pretty clip at the back of your head. This look was seen at Emilio Pucci, Fendi and Valentino.

4) Quiffs/Bouffants. Backcomb the hair at the roots and gently comb the front section back over the volumised locks before spraying into place for a classy, regal look, perfect for nights out. This was seen everywhere from Alexander McQueen to Anna Sui. The look isn't about being sleek so this season, give your bouffant a windswept chic look.

5) Wavy hair. This means, leave the straighteners down. Sleek straight hair is out and those effortless beach babes waves are here, just listen to your rejoicing hair! Leave it to dry naturally for an easy look, spray your hands with hair spray and rub them through your hair for a tousled style. Burberry Prorsum and Chloe have both used



this with neutral make-up for a high fashion look.

6) Last but not least: accessorise! It's never been so cool to wear a hairband for that princess look or clips

in backcombed hair for a bit of an edge! Everyone from Rodarte to Dolce and Gabbana is accessorizing hair and on the days you don't want to make an effort, a hairband is the perfect thing to brighten up a dull outfit.

Get those hair ideas flowing and create some masterpieces with your hairstyle. Even if you're just walking round campus doesn't mean you can't look like a supermodel!

A Gaga-Licious Event

Louise Harrison

GAGA'S haunting black and green face peers down from large screens. Her dedicated fans scramble to get into the monster pit near the stage as a choral version of Beethoven's Ode to Joy resonates around the Aviva Stadium.

The Born this Way Ball attracted a varied audience, from classic blazer and jeans wearers to teenagers in suspenders, knickers and corsets, even drag queens. At times, it felt like a Halloween costume party.

With mutual dedication to her fans the concert started at 8pm. GaGa made her entrance dressed as an alien mounted on a metallic horse onto a stage setting, which looked like a castle from a pop up book with multiple turrets.

The first section of the show was semi-erotic: lots of leather, masks and semi-naked dancers with GaGa posing in suggestive positions. A haunting face descended in a lantern shaped box like something from a Disney film, this is Mother G.O.A.T., who says Lady GaGa has escaped and needs to be killed.

At some point there was a black Jesus parading with a crown of thorns and many other jibes at any type of establishment. But this is GaGa's world where the only rules that apply are that you're true to yourself whatever your thoughts, feelings or sexuality.

The concert was an extravaganza of costumes, props and a stage setting that opens up and shows the various rooms in the castle. It was

like an opera with an alien theme and the creation of humankind thrown in.

However the complicated story line, multiple costume changes and stunning set don't take from the fact that GaGa can sing. In fact she has a gorgeous, deep, rich voice which she displays in a more sensitive part of the show where she sits on her motorbike and accompanies herself on piano without any dancers or other distractions.

GaGa explains how her mother always believed in her talent and took her to auditions and music lessons when she was young but always allowed her just to be who she was. I couldn't help imagining her parents who were in the audience and looked like a conservative couple, saying backstage, "It was wonderful dear, but did you have to use so much bad language?"

GaGa thanked the audience for spending their hard earned cash on her concert and promised a fantastic night and she didn't disappoint. Her reputation for outrageous costumes made sense in the world she created on stage. Even the meat costume had its place, where she said that's how women are treated, like a piece of meat.

Somehow she has managed to corner a more conservative market with her dance tunes like Poker Face, Just Dance, and Marry the Night while simultaneously appealing to a hard rock and an overtly camp audience. Love or hate her, this is the genius of GaGa.



The Five Greatest Books On Fashion

Dearbhaile Houston

BOOKS about fashion: what was once a tiny section in the library or bookshop is now a growing trend. No better has this been seen than on my bookshelf, where the tomes of glossy photographs and beautiful illustrations are threatening to take over. Of course, they should really be displayed properly on a coffee table for everyone to see but in the meantime (and until my next trip to Ikea), here is but a small sample of the finest fashion books you can buy.

For anyone who feels that fashion is nothing but frivolous, I would like to introduce you to Fashion. Written by several people from the Kyoto Costume Institute in Japan, it is a two-volume history lesson of fashion from the 18th to the 20th century. Starting off with the French and English courts it brings you all the way up to the designs of Gucci and Tom Ford in the 1990's. For those of you who hear the word "history" and instantly feel narcoleptic, these books are heavier on pictures than on text, although great essays on the history and sociology of the eras preface them both.

Laird Borrelli's Fashion Illustration by Fashion Designers showcases the often unseen process of sketching before any patterns have been made

or models booked. It's intriguing to see the different processes designers have. Some use the more traditional techniques of ink on paper, with others going for collage or digital drawings to conceive their future designs.

Vogue Covers: On Fashion's Front Page is a visual feast of one of fashion's most iconic magazines. Whenever I flick through it I like to play a game called "How Many Times Has Kate Moss Been on the Cover?" The answer is: a lot. Not only is it entertainment for all the family but also it's interesting to see the progression of the covers through history, from the sumptuous illustrations from the 1920's to the beautiful Cecil Beaton and Mario Testino photographs of today.

Both inspiring and envy inducing is The Sartorialist by Scott Schuman, an anthology of photographs from his blog of the same name. Showing the best street style from across the globe, it's a good one to look through when you just don't know what to wear and to see how people wear clothes from the high street to haute couture in different ways.

Coco Chanel is a biographer's dream given her controversial and mysterious life. There is currently a glut of books about her on the market, ranging from her views on style to



her "secret life" as a Nazi spy during the war. My favourite so far is Coco Chanel: The Legend and The Life by Justine Picardi. Comprehensively

covering Chanel's life, it's a balanced and credible account of the grand dame of fashion. Also, unlike the previous books mentioned you could

actually fit this one in your bag. No need to bring that coffee table with you.

NHL Lockout Looms

Garry Irwin

The new Hockey season was scheduled to begin on October 11th, but as each day passes, that looks less and less likely. As of midnight September 15th the old Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) expired and the owners and the players could not agree on a new CBA that would be satisfactory to both parties.

American sports have been plagued by owners and players squabbling over league revenue. Last years NBA season was cut short due to a lockout, while the NFL narrowly avoided cancelling games the year before thanks to an agreement being reached almost at the eleventh hour.

Ice Hockey of course has been hit worst of all by lockouts. This will be the fourth shut-down of the NHL in the last twenty years. The 1994-95 season was cut short to only 48 games because of the dispute over the introduction of a salary cap, and the 2004-05 season was cancelled totally due to the lockout, again centring around money.

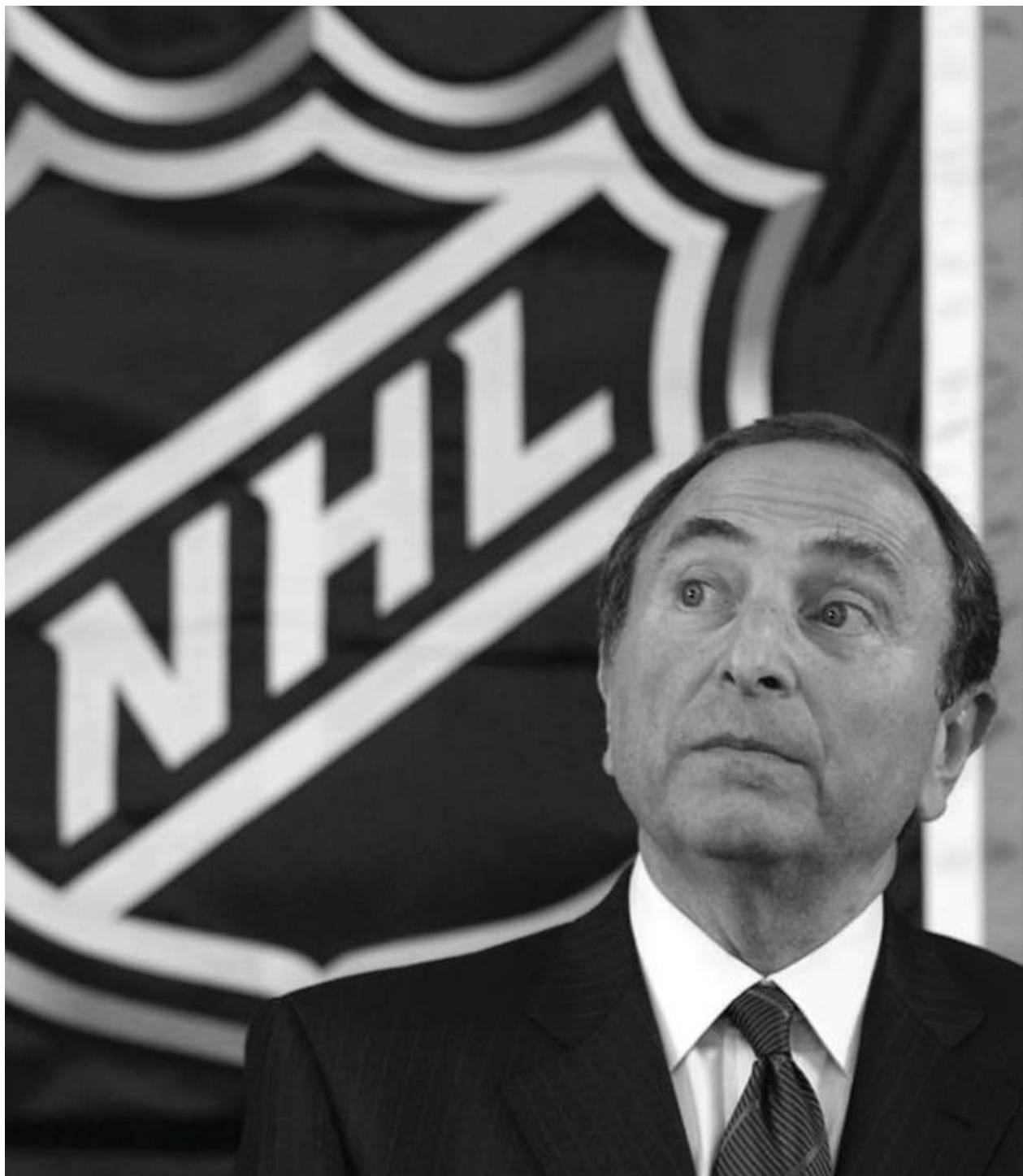
The main sticking point this year, preventing a new CBA being agreed upon, is the owners insistence that players wages drop from 57% to 46% of league revenue. The 29 league owners, led by NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, cite that due to the recession, they need more of the money to run clubs than they should be made to pay players with. The NHLPA point out that revenue in total for the league is increasing, and that the NHL took in well over two billion dollars last year.

While most people would not think

of agreeing with greedy owners, it must also be said that a lot of the top players are on massive contracts. The players are in a sense only looking after themselves, while the owners have to take into account the strength of the whole league. Going by figures over the last three seasons, half the teams are running at a loss. A loss that is made up of a number of factors, teams not making the playoffs, or simply not getting the attendances to the rink to justify having a hockey franchise in the town (Atlanta Thrashers had to go north of the border and become the Winnipeg Jets in 2011), but also, smaller teams have to overspend on getting good players in to compete, with what would be a drop in the ocean for teams who rake in the money over a season, like New York, Detroit, Vancouver etc. We won't even get into the backsliding deals bigger clubs do to circumvent the league's salary cap.

So as the lockout rumbles on, it is ultimately the fans who are hurt. It also destroys any work the league was doing to promote the game in traditionally non-hockey parts of the country. Not to mention the enormous number of staff and business' that depends on ice hockey to earn a wage.

The demand from the fans for hockey action is there. EA Sports are reporting record sales of its NHL13 videogame. Unfortunately, now with the NHL having cancelled much of preseason, it seems that if fans want to watch the top stars hit the ice this year, they may have to do so on their Xbox or PlayStation.



Allow Me To Be Frankel

Andrew Cunneen

Let's be honest, horse racing isn't everybody's forté. Given the stereotype of horses being majestic creatures being put selfishly on display for the benefit of the upper classes to admire, most people have no time for the sport and, bookmakers aside, do not see anyone who truly benefit from it.

You may not like horse racing. You may not like horses. You may not even like sport, but to witness greatness and experience history being made first-hand is a universal enjoyment.

How do you achieve greatness? Surely greatness can only be obtained by being, at one stage, the greatest ever at your individual discipline. Galloping off a mark of 147, the Henry Cecil owned colt is now considered the greatest racehorse of all time, surpassing the French thoroughbred Sea Bird in May 2011.

Unbeaten in all of his thirteen races, Frankel sweeps past opponents with relative ease. Tom Queally is the jockey who is put in sole charge of the colt and has developed a fantastic understanding with the world-beater over the last four years.

Frankel's first race was in class four company – a race deemed by most as too much of a challenge for the colt on his debut. Defeating the highly acclaimed Nathaniel, the name Frankel

was slowly beginning to circulate around the racing world after a debut that simply blew people away.

As every owner will tell you, any horse's second race will define the class it belongs to for the foreseeable future. With all the pressure on the Queally/Cecil partnership, Frankel stormed to a 13 length victory in class two company, much to the dismay of Rainbow Springs.

Victories at Ascot, Newmarket and Newbury set the scene for the 2000 guineas in April 2011. What the world expected was a narrow Frankel win, what the world saw, was simply the greatest performance by any racehorse ever. Defeating Dubawi Gold by over six lengths, the world began to realise this horse was one in a million.

Having previously defeated Excelebration at Newbury, Cecil and Aidan O'Brien locked horns once more at the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot. Going off at a starting price of 4/11, Frankel strolled to victory by four lengths, making a top class horse like Excelebration look fit for the knacker's yard.

Perhaps his most memorably of victories will be in the Queen Anne Stakes, when, for the third time in a row, the O'Briens wanted to challenge the credentials of Cecil's wonder-horse. From three furlongs out, Queally got to work on Frankel and the acceleration shown by the colt was considered the



best ride Ascot had ever seen.

Winning by a total of 11 lengths in the end, Excelebration ended his interest in challenging Cecil's prized possession. Favouring a mile, Frankel was condemned earlier on his winning streak for playing it safe and not stepping up in trip. In a brave move from his owner, Cecil entered Frankel into a 10 furlong sprint to prove all

the doubters wrong. The Juddmonte International Stakes at York was the race and the winner, naturally, was Frankel by quite some distance.

Farhh became the newest challenger to try and dethrone Frankel. All the Eastern promise accumulated to nothing as Frankel simply eased to victory at Goodwood and York. Frankel's next race will be the

Champion's Stakes in October.

As this horse looks to bow out with 14-0, it looks as though this irresistible figure will stand as a stallion undefeated, rising above the heads of his bitter rivals. While horse racing might not be appreciated, greatness always will be and Frankel defines greatness.

Should Messi Have Played For Spain Instead?

Eoghan Wallace

“When Messi scored 1,283 goals like me, when he’s won three World Cups, we’ll talk about it.” That was Pelé’s scathing response to French newspaper *Le Monde* earlier in the year when asked whether Lionel Messi was the greatest football player there’s ever been. Pelé was of the belief that Messi needed to emulate his form for Barcelona with the Argentinian national team before he could be even considered Argentina’s greatest ever player.

“He’s a great player for Barcelona, but when he plays for Argentina he doesn’t have the same success.” His only successes with the national team were winning the 2005 under-20s World Cup and an Olympic gold medal in 2008, both of which are youth tournaments. The only time he has come close to tasting success with the senior team was finishing runners-up in the Copa América in 2007, a tournament nowhere near as prestigious as its European counterpart. Messi’s lack of success with Argentina continues to be a millstone around his neck, an obstacle it seems he must overcome before being fully accepted among the all-time greats.

Success at international level has eluded many of the game’s true greats; Cruyff, Best, and Di Stéfano but to name a few. In fact Di Stéfano never even graced the World Cup despite playing for both Spain and Argentina. Which raises an interesting question: should Lionel Messi have played international football for Spain instead

of Argentina? It was an opportunity he was presented with in 2004 when he was offered a chance to play for the Spanish under-20s team. He declined, wishing instead to play for his native Argentina and made his debut for their under-20s in June of that year. When asked, in a 2011 interview, whether he regretted that decision he replied “I would never have chosen to play for Spain because I am Argentinian [...] I have spent almost as many years living in Barcelona as in Argentina and that leaves you with divided loyalties, but it doesn’t change your true colours.”

When Messi plays for Argentina he cuts a frustrated figure. Rather like Diego Maradona at his peak, Messi is an extraordinary player surrounded by a team not worthy of his talents. However unlike Maradona who dragged Argentina to World Cup glory almost single-handedly in 1986; Messi has yet to actually make an impact at the tournament. When Messi declared for Argentina it seemed the more sensible option at the time; in 2004 Spain were still the perennial underachievers of world football. However let us entertain the notion that he was interested in playing for Spain in the first place. Had he decided to play for Spain he would already be a double European champion and a World Cup winner. Any doubts of his greatness would have long been silenced. Playing alongside Barcelona teammates Xavi and Andrés Iniesta would give Messi the opportunity to emulate his club form on the international stage. Also, Spain could be performing like Barcelona at international tournaments rather than playing like Mexico and Portugal in



Lionel Messi often cuts a forlorn figure while playing for his country.

‘The Simpsons’.

Messi is adored in Catalonia for the success he has brought to F.C. Barcelona and for the spectacular quality of football he has produced in the shirt. Back home in Argentina though he is not treated with the same reverence. Argentines have mixed feelings about him since he has lived in Spain since he was 14 years old and never played club football in Argentina. Since Messi has made his name abroad he is treated as a foreigner, seen as half-Spanish half-

Argentine. While they acknowledge that he is as good as, if not potentially better than Maradona, Argentines are continually frustrated by his inability to produce the goods for the national side when it matters; at the World Cup.

That said, there are far too many mercenaries in the modern game, those neither patriotic nor hungry not for success but for the next big wage packet. Messi, as a proud Argentinian, opted to play for the land of his birth which is highly commendable. While

it is possible he may end his career without a World Cup winner’s medal this should not be seen as a hindrance to his greatness. George Best is fondly remembered for his majesty in the red of Manchester United, not the green of Northern Ireland. If future generations only remember Messi for his magnificence in a Barcelona shirt then so be it. He has already done enough in a red and blue shirt to leave his mark upon the game for a very long time.

Tapping Up: A Poison Within The Beautiful Game

Michael Ramsay

27th January 2005. Arsene Wenger was putting his squad through their paces as they prepared for a gruelling visit of Manchester United in just five days time. The focus was surely on Roy Keane and co. rocking up at Highbury, ready to inflict another confidence-sapping defeat on the faltering Gunners – a shadow of the media-christened ‘Invincibles’ side of just three months earlier.

However, there was one mindset within the ranks of Arsenal FC that was not focused on the upcoming colossal game – for him, it was on the backburner. When training finished Ashley Cole, Arsenal’s prized full-back, would go home, choose a nice suit from his legions of clothing, before meeting with Jose Mourinho and Peter Kenyon in a London hotel. This underhanded tactic would cost Chelsea a fine sum of £300,000, while Cole, Mourinho and the agents involved also felt the harsh sting of the FA.

However, in the end, Arsenal would soon lose the best left-back in the

world to their lavishly rich London counterparts. Did Cole lose any sleep over the £75,000 he had to dole out as a result? His assortment of medals and monthly pay cheques might have an answer to that.

Tapping up has long been a part of the game, as it is so hard to detect. For example, Mark Hughes shares the same agent as a number of clients, including one Carlos Tevez. Where is the line between an innocent meal among acquaintances, and an illegal approach for a player without a club’s consent? Due to this, tapping up is rife within the world of soccer and has been for years. The late Nottingham Forest manager, Brian Clough, admitted that “we tapped more players than the Severn-Trent water board.”

The lengths clubs go to with these illegal approaches are growing with every year. While clubs took the risk with superstars in the 90s, such as Manchester United’s unlawful pursuit of Dwight Yorke, it seems these days, clubs don’t even think twice. In 2009, Chelsea were imposed with a transfer ban for bribing Gael Kakuta’s family

with a house whilst a youngster at Lens. Now, he can barely make an appearance for the reserves.

In the last couple of years, Messrs Ian Holloway, Arsene Wenger and Martin Jol have expressed their disgust at the way their players’ heads have been swayed. Even through the most subtle of avenues, such as a manager expressing his admiration for a player through the medium of the media, can cause a wave of unrest to ripple through a dressing room.

The FA have a hard time clamping down on this murky poison within our beautiful game, as phone calls can’t legally be banned. Can a ‘random’ meeting at the local supermarket be branded with the tag ‘tapping up?’ Where is the line? It appears that these underhanded tactics are here to stay. With the Premier League already having a hierarchical monopoly of superpowers, with bully-boys David Gill and Daniel Levy throwing a tantrum when things don’t go their way, the chances of smaller clubs holding onto their best players is rapidly relinquishing.



“Do you want to see my medal collection or my bank account?”
– Ashley Cole

Murray Proves He's A Winner And Then Some More

Robert McNamara
Sports Editor

Victory is sweet until the murmuring of dissent becomes a noisy din drowning out the cheers. Before he captured Olympic gold in London, Andy Murray must have looked in the mirror every morning and said, "I am not Tim Henman, I am not Tim Henman."

After that dramatic game against Roger Federer, when the celebrations had died down, he must have looked again and said, "I am still not Tim Henman", to reinforce the belief. He'd just achieved the greatest feat of his career yet the debate in the sporting media continued. It wasn't a Grand Slam. No matter how much that gold glistened around his neck, a question would always remain if he didn't win one of the big four in his career.

Murray flew into a two set lead, in the US Open final at Flushing Meadows against Novak Djokovic, with a maturity and assurance in his tennis that belied his previous final displays. Just when you thought that Djokovic would be dispatched in a three set shut-out, the Serb came back at Murray and the doubts began to surface yet again.

The fact that Murray held out and won the remaining set shows that he has learned from all those pastings that have been handed out to him by Federer, Rafal Nadal and Djokovic over the years.

At 25, Murray can move forward, safe in the knowledge that he has done what no Briton had done since Fred Perry won the US Open in 1936 – win a major. Now he just has to go that little bit further and win Wimbledon to finally get the naysayers off his back once and for all.



At 25, Murray can move forward, safe in the knowledge that he has done what no Briton had done since Fred Perry at the US Open in 1936 – win a major.

It's Our Ball And We're Taking It Home!

Andrew Cunneen

Rome, October 8. This is the day we will know more about the future of the Heineken Cup in its current format, when stakeholders from the European Rugby Cup (ERC) meet to discuss their future. For now, we have two television deals on the table and one fractured competition.

It seems arrogance, greed and a bit of jealousy was at the forefront, as English Premiership rugby clubs decided to alienate themselves and sign a TV rights deal worth €152 million with BT vision. This came as ERC was signing a deal with Sky Sports to show games until the end of the 2017/18 season.

You have to go back to the 2006/07 season to find the last English winner of the Heineken Cup, when the London Wasps defeated the Leicester Tigers by a scoreline of 25-9 at Twickenham. Coincidence? Or a realisation that the English clubs are not as dominant on a level playing field as they would be if they could control their own competition and get a bigger revenue slice? They say it will benefit everyone financially, but those with an agenda rarely care much for the greater good.

Anybody who watches Premiership rugby with a keen eye will tell you that English club rugby's problems

are deep rooted. The standard has fallen dramatically and this may be the reason for the absence of an English winner for the last five seasons, rather than the qualification structure that they claim, along with the French, is levelled in favour of the Celtic nations.

It is true that the Celtic nations should have to qualify for the Heineken Cup through the Rabo-Direct Pro 12, as English and French clubs do through their own leagues. However, to hold everyone to ransom by signing a renegade TV deal, questions the legitimacy of governing bodies and creates factions rather than unity between clubs.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that the English RFU have said they did not sanction or condone such a deal. The whole thing is a mess and an end is unlikely to come to the matter until the end of this season at least. As the lawyers go to work, it is unthinkable yet not impossible that we may not see all encompassing European rugby being played in 2013/14.



English Premiership clubs believe the Heineken Cup favours Celtic teams like Leinster and Glasgow.

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Definitive Guide To The Champions League 2012

Darren Mulryan

There is simply no other way to put it. The only club competition to make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up has arrived with great anticipation. Every time I hear The Champions League anthem it lifts memories of some fantastic battles from the past. Need we mention Manchester United's three minute fight back versus Bayern in 1999 and Liverpool's heroic comeback against the mighty AC Milan in 2005. These are just a few of the many fairy tales this magical competition has conjured up over the years. In this edition of An Focal we assess this year's group stage with a fine toothcomb and also give our predictions in what is sure to be an unforgettable tournament.

GROUP A

This should be a straightforward group. One certainty is Dinamo Zagreb conceding a truck load of goals again this year. The Croatian outfit set the wrong kind of record last term when they conceded 22 goals in the group stage. Don't expect any different from them this time around. Dynamo Kyiv appear in this year's group stage and provide a stern test for the visiting teams to the Ukraine. Star man Niko Kranjcar will be providing the ammunition for the Ukrainians. Don't expect a top two finish from them but they play a bullish 4-5-1 formation and are difficult to break down. Paris Saint Germain represent Ligue 1 in Group A and are considered favourites in this one, mainly due to the crazy amounts of "Monopoly Money" they have spent, albeit on world class talent. With Ibrahimovic and Lavezzi leading the frontline expect goals galore. Their defence looks patchy but needs time to gel with the recent arrival of Thiago Silva. They should top the group. Finally FC Porto complete the line-up and will battle it out to do one better than last term as they were eliminated at the group stage. Star midfielder João Moutinho needs to be on form if the Portuguese are to progress.

Prediction to Qualify: P.S.G/ FC Porto

GROUP B

Arsenal find themselves on familiar soil when they line up against Greek side Olympiakos. One win and a loss against the Gunners during last term shows they are no pushover, however ex Man Utd keeper Roy Carroll lines up for the Greeks so don't expect any clean sheets. Arsenal should have enough firepower to progress to the knockouts but it is also dependent on how much delivery the midfield can supply to Lukas Podolski and the misfiring Olivier Giroud. Bundesliga representatives Schalke are expected to pull some punches in this group. Their home form is solid and a front line consisting of a red hot Klaas Jan Huntelaar gives them every chance. Surprise Ligue 1 champions Montpellier complete our line-up. The loss of Giroud

has not helped their cause but they remain upbeat. No doubt they deserve to be here but they face different opposition in Europe's premier competition. They lack in star power but have plenty of grit and determination.

Prediction: Arsenal/ Schalke

GROUP C

AC Milan are the big name in this group. The Rossoneri are currently in a major rebuilding process and have lost no less

GROUP D

The group of death. For whom, is unclear for now. Manchester City have a tough task in this group after losing in dramatic fashion at the Bernabeu. Mancini's men need to find consistency away from home in Europe this season. Their domestic form at the Etihad is impressive and if translated they should have a glimmer of hope. Frank de Boer's Dutch maestros Ajax are technically

at home. They have strengthened significantly with Roman Abramovich's Roubles by investing in Eden Hazard and Oscar. Avoiding complacency is key here in succeeding that they should progress smoothly. It's a long time in waiting but finally the old lady from Turin has graced European football again. Juventus return with a fresh impetus and opened up their European campaign with a well-deserved point at Stamford Bridge. Ukrainian outfit Shakhtar Donetsk will not be anybody's whipping boys. Their domestic

group. Key figure Roberto Soldado must find the net in these crucial group games. French side Lille have made a poor start to Ligue 1 and are not the same smooth and creative side with the departure of Eden Hazard. They lack strength in depth and should fight it out for third place at best. Belarus Champions BATE Borisov exploited Lille's weaknesses in their opening game by producing a win and that should be their final points tally come December. It is highly unlikely BATE will pick anything up in the Mestalla or the Allianz Arena.

Prediction: Bayern Munich/ Valencia

GROUP G

It all seems so straight forward on paper but Catalan supremo's Barcelona made hard work of it against Spartak Moscow at the Camp Nou. Coming from a goal down only for Leo Messi to rescue them once again. Tito Vilanova's side should still top the group despite this scare. Scottish giants Celtic started off with a deserved point at Parkhead against Portuguese side Benfica. Neil Lennon's side need to drastically improve their away form in Europe if they stand any chance of qualification. Lisbon based Benfica are fully capable of improving on their opening point with the progressive Iberian style that they possess. A flurry of star players including Nicolas Gaitan and Nemanja Matic are on the radar of Europe's elite and will be looking to make an impression. Finally Spartak Moscow should consider themselves unlucky for not holding out at the Camp Nou, but they did remarkably well to score two goals. The Luzhnik Stadium is a hard place to find three points for any visitors in this group and if they pick up points in Scotland and Portugal they have a chance.

Prediction: Barcelona/ Benfica

GROUP H

Manchester United find themselves in a group in which they should qualify comfortably. Despite an unconvincing performance against Turkish side Galatasaray, Alex Ferguson's men claimed three important points. The arrival of Van Persie and Kagawa should strengthen their chances of goal mouth opportunities but the red devils need to rid themselves of the complacency that has plagued them in recent seasons. Galatasaray won't make it easy for visitors in Istanbul. They have a decent chance of finishing second in this group if they pick up points in the intimidating Turk Telecom Arena. Romanians CFR Cluj produced a shock three pointer in their opening game against Portuguese Liga side Braga and might just continue to sneak a point or two along their travels. Braga completes our line up and after spending much of their time in the shadows of FC Porto and Benfica, Europe might just prove a step to far again this year.

Prediction: Manchester United/ Galatasaray



than 7 star players during the summer. The likes of Seedorf, Nesta, Silva, and Cassano have left and new recruits have been brought in to strengthen. With Pazzini, Bojan and De Jong in town, Milan should be looking at Qualification despite their 0-0 draw against Belgian champions Anderlecht. They make up the numbers in this group and don't hold any of the cards in what will prove to be a difficult time for them. Big spending merchants Zenit looked to rate their chances of qualification with deadline day transfers of Brazilian supremo Hulk and Belgium Midfielder Alex Witsel. Although a drubbing against Malaga has dented these expectations. La Liga debutants Malaga have exceeded their goal by claiming all three points in the opening game and a lot of the responsibility will continue to fall on midfielder Isco to supply the passes. Tight group.

Prediction: Malaga / A.C Milan

efficient and play some good stuff but may fall short on the goals needed on their travels. Man Utd and Real Madrid target Christian Eriksen will look to shine, but don't expect qualification this time. Dortmund are a real threat here. They possess an abundance of attacking talent in Mario Götze and Robert Lewandowski. They have improved dramatically in the Bundesliga in the past three years and are definite contenders to qualify. José Mourinho's men should be confident now. Los Blanco's scored 24 goals in six home matches in last year's competition and are not afraid to showcase their talents to anyone. They will provide the flair and swagger in this group.

Prediction: Real Madrid/ Dortmund

GROUP E

Last year's champions Chelsea enter the fray in what looks to be a manageable group for Robbie di Matteo & co, despite their opening point against Juventus

form is outstanding especially at the Donbass Arena and that was translated with a solid win against European virgins FC Nordsjaelland. The Danish Superliga champions will not be expected to qualify but hope to put a few of their players in the limelight.

Prediction: Juventus/Chelsea

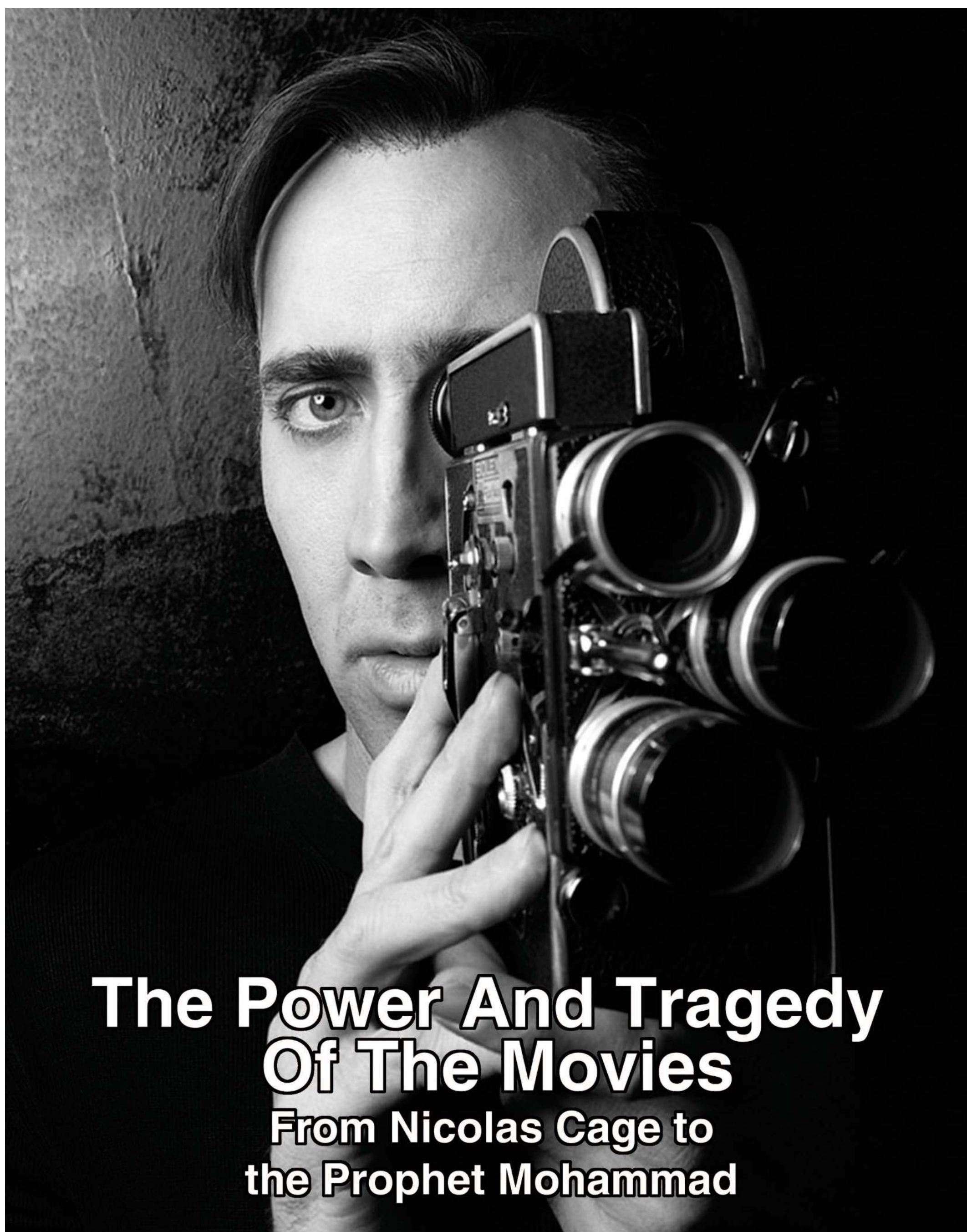
GROUP F

Group F started off with a solid performance from Bundesliga runners up Bayern Munich. Jupp Heynckes men claimed all three points against Spanish side Valencia. Look out for Schweinsteiger and Kroos to provide the creativity to open up defences in this year's competition. Meanwhile Valencia will look to bounce back to winning ways on their return to the Mestalla. The club has been circled by debt and stability problems off the field, but the nature of their play suggests that the La Liga side are capable of claiming points in this

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**The Power And Tragedy
Of The Movies
From Nicolas Cage to
the Prophet Mohammad**

'The Wicker Man': A Journey Into The Sublime

Lorna Bogue
Assistant Editor

Sublime is an adjective that's used to describe something that is both repulsive and fascinating, while at the same time being almost too vast to comprehend. The Nicolas Cage remake of 'The Wicker Man' is the epitome of the sublime.

Where to begin with this man? Cage has turned creating terrible film into an art form. The gems of his art contain absurd storylines, wooden dialogue, ham fisted plot exposition and acting which is actually indescribable because there aren't enough synonyms for terrible. All of these factors combine to create works that are terrific. In that they invoke terror. And not just any old terror, but they create a condition that the philosopher Hegel called 'absolute terror'. The viewer, rendered incapable of performing any kind of act that conforms with the norm of mediated self-expression is left only capable of performing the anti-deed: destruction itself. A nothingness born of nothingness, the sole deed of the condition of 'absolute terror' is death. Why yes Hegel, this film does make me want to hulk out and smash things, who said philosophy wasn't relevant?

The closest human experience that we have to watching 'Wicker Man' is that of deep grief. There are stages to watching any Cage masterpiece. Firstly there is disbelief, a denial of the fact that the film even exists in the first place. Questions spring to mind such as 'who would allow this

to happen?', 'Where did the money come from to fund this travesty' and 'how much is that actress being paid to shift Nicolas Cage onscreen? Is any amount enough to be paid for that?' The questions continue relentlessly until you find yourself questioning even your own basic concept of humanity. Once the viewer has accepted that yes, this film actually happened, the second stage is pain and guilt. This normally emerges towards the middle of the viewing experience when you are capable of examining what is actually happening on the screen in front of you. The brain, now able to process the subtext of a Nicolas cage film can see that the basic message of the film is 'women are evil and are scheming together against men'. This painful realisation is quickly followed by stage three, Anger and Bargaining. Did Nicolas Cage just punch a woman in the face, why yes he did, and oh, there he is again, literally kicking a woman in the ovaries. What is this! No way! Actually no way! Please someone tell me that this is not happening.

Nicolas Cage plays a police officer haunted by his past (wow, I've never seen Cage play that character before) who receives a letter from his ex-fiancée asking him to go to an obscure island to search for her missing daughter. Cage upon arriving learns that the island is run by women who are all part of a pagan cult. Naturally Cage is suspicious so he then proceeds to stomp around the island making thinly veiled references to the supremacy of the 'our way of life' and attempting to assert his dominance,

all in the search for the missing girl. Originally he is just looking for the girl because 'that's my job'; however, his character is given paternalistic motivation by the discovery that she is in fact his daughter. Cage eventually finds her, but, because this is a society run by women, she is of course tied to a tree and is about to be burned as a human sacrifice, because, silly me, that's how matriarchal society works. Cage is captured in his attempt to free his daughter, who it emerges lured him into being captured, what with being a treacherous female and all, and so Cage is placed into the 'wicker man' to be the human sacrifice.

As Nicolas Cage is burned you burn with him, your old attitudes are purged and you emerge, a phoenix from the ashes. After a truly terrible film there is always that golden moment of silence, in which your brain will try and fail to answer the most vital question of all, 'Are repressed memories really that harmful?'. If you are with a group of people you might even be able to joke about it. Although this is simply the camaraderie of the trenches, a coping mechanism for the horrors you have just observed. True, a terrible film is a bonding experience, but at what cost? Is it worth being able to say the phrase, 'How'd it get burnt? How'd it get burnt?' if the laughter doesn't reach your soul? If the eyes you are looking into are a cold, empty abyss in which the film is being replayed over and over again. Sometimes I lie awake at night and just think about the bee scene.



Christopher Lee in the original and not awful Wicker Man.

The Killers' Battle Born

Gerard Flynn

After 4 years without an album, a year and a half of which being hiatus, the Killers return with their fourth effort Battle Born. The Las Vegas foursome continue on in the same style for this record as their previous, Day and Age, by once again opting for larger than life Stadium rock choruses and cheesy Americana-centred lyrics that very few bands can pull off. Thankfully, the killers make it brilliant at the best of times and bearable at the worst.

The album doesn't get off to a great start however with Flesh & Bone being a very poor opener from a band who usually start records with the great, pulsating songs they tend to finish with. The super Mario like techno lead in beat sets the tone for a song whose lyrics and guitar fail to live up to some great work by Ronnie Vannucci and Mark Stoermer's ever excellent rhythm section.

Runaways, the first single, is one of the standout tracks from the album and after listening to the whole thing you realise why that choice was made with very few other standout singles to be found. Ronnie Vannucci's drumming in this song in particular stands out with the marching band rhythm in the chorus complimenting both Stoermer's

bassline and Flower's wailing vocal.

Here With Me features a piano opener with Brandon Flowers distinctive voice lament the fact that "wheels are turning, I remember when you were mine." This is one of the examples of when the Killers get Stadium rock right on this album with simple lyrics that aren't overblown, impersonal and drowning in sentimentality like some of the love songs from Day and Age.

Miss Atomic Bomb starts the second half of the album off with the jangly guitar synonymous with the Killers while Day and Age style synths accompany a tale of your typical American love story. The song itself is soppy and guilty of not being as catchy as others in their repertoire like Read My Mind and Mr. Brightside. The line "You're gonna miss me when I'm gone" could very well have been a dropped lyric from 2008 single Human such is the similarities in delivery of the line from Flowers in both tracks.

Rising Tide is yet another song about Flower's love for the dark of night and all the "mystery underneath those neon lights", that he's been fascinated with since all the way back to 2004's Hot Fuss. The song ends with a rather Tom Verlaine like riff from Keuning who remains on top form throughout this album with the exception of Battle

Born's opener.

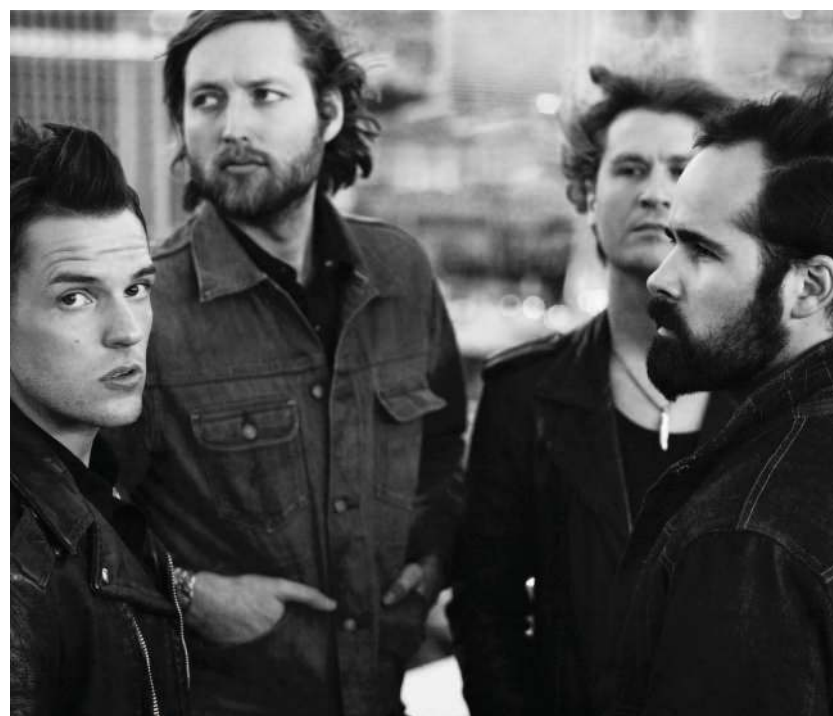
Songs like Heart of A Girl incorporate a country feel to the Killers already techno-guitar rock and at times is very reminiscent of U2's When I Look At the World.

The penultimate track, Be Still, sets an ominous tone for some aimless, melancholy lyrics like "nobody knows what lies ahead. Life is short to say the least." It reminded me of some of the slower, more monotonous songs from Day and Age such as Goodnight, Travel Well but never really builds up for power chords or the uproarious ending that made the latter such a great closing track.

The self-titled album closer finishes off the album nicely with the band returning to some of the high octane stadium rock they began experimenting with on Sam's Town, with Brandon Flower's whimpering vocal being complimented wonderfully by Dave Keuning's raucous Baba O' Riley like riff.

Like the majority of albums, there are lowlights however. Deadlines and Commitments, though increasing the tempo nicely all the way through, never really finds its feet and isn't a song that makes an instant impression with the listener.

A Matter of time, despite once again



trying to emulate a Who-like opening, comes off as being a miss match of reference points and influences with Springsteen, Brian Fallon and Brandon Flowers all fighting for lyrical style supremacy.

The Killers certainly aren't reinventing the Stadium Rock wheel with this latest effort but manage to sometimes reach the heady heights of Sam's Town on songs like Here with Me and Runaways.

If anything, this album could be the last time the Killers go for all out crowd pleasing anthems before perhaps going in a different direction for album no. 5.

The album is exactly what you'd expect from the Killers but leaves you wondering if Brandon and co. really have anything left up their sleeves at this point.

7/10

Billie Joe's Meltdown Dismays Green Day Fans

Rachel Dargan
Arts & Ents Editor

Green Day fans all over the world were shocked when they heard of frontman Billie Joe Armstrong's meltdown at the iHeart Radio Festival in Las Vegas on the 21st of September. The trio were playing as part of the festival, when the time screen showed that they had one minute of stage time left. This is what prompted the outburst from the Green Day singer. Feeling like they were being cut short (it remains up for debate whether the band was, in fact, cut short, but some believe that Green Day's set was lessened by 25 minutes after Usher's ran over), Billie Joe launched into an all-out rant that holds all who watch it spellbound.

"You're gonna give me one minute?!" he yelled, distraught, into the microphone. "I've been around since fucking nineteen eighty fucking eight, and you're gonna give me one minute?! You've gotta be fucking kidding me!"

"I'm not fucking Justin Bieber, you motherfuckers!" he continued. "Let me show you what one fucking minute fucking means," he yelled, before both he and Mike Dirnt took their guitars and smashed them into pieces on the stage. They then left the stage to a mixture of stunned silence and cheers from the crowd.

There has since been a statement put on the band's official website refuting the claims that their set was cut by 25 minutes at the festival for Usher, and also stating that Billie Joe is now in rehab. "Billie Joe is seeking



treatment for substance abuse. There has been some speculation that Billie Joe was drunk onstage at the festival, but these rumours have neither been confirmed or denied. "We would like

everyone to know that our set was not cut short by Clear Channel and to apologize to those we offended at the iHeartRadio Festival in Las Vegas. We regretfully must postpone

some of our upcoming promotional appearances."

The whole debacle just goes to show that no one tells Green Day when they're leaving the stage and gets

away with it, at least not without a few smashed guitars and a whole lot of expletives.

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The Innocence Of Internet

Tom Horan

Have you seen *Innocence of Muslims* yet? The film reaches such dizzyingly terrible heights of acting, production, and editing that it deserves the same level of ironic admiration conceded to *The Room* and *Birdemic: Shock and Horror*. Granted, neither of these films have the added stigma of being partly responsible for the deaths of at least twenty-eight people.

The film accuses the Prophet Muhammad of being a womanising, homosexual pedophile; three things I didn't realise were simultaneously possible before I watched the film's YouTube trailer. But what amazes me about *Innocence of Muslims* isn't its offensiveness, but how something so obviously juvenile managed to be taken seriously by an entire religion. If people took every bigoted remark on the internet seriously, the world would have ended a week after the invention of the dial-up modem, so what raised this video above being more than just a crime against film-making?

The film was screened in its entirety only once, less than ten people attended the screening, and the trailer was online for two months before entering the public consciousness. For two whole months it was justly seen as not even being worthy of causing offence, like a racist granddad who doesn't know any better. The trouble arose when the film caught the eye of mainstream media outlets.

An Arabic language version of the trailer was produced at the start of this month, and spread by an Egyptian-American blogger named Morris Sadek, which then caught the attention of Egyptian Islamist television station Al-Nas TV. It was their coverage of the viral video that sparked the first demonstrations, fittingly enough, on September 11. The issue here isn't the message the film promotes, but the mediums through which that message was spread.

For better or worse, the internet is a democracy, and every member has equal right to say anything they please. A sort of information capitalism is its only hierarchy; the important or



Muslims protesting against an online film they consider blasphemous.

entertaining information climbing to the top, and the childish, trivial information languishing anonymously at the bottom. When Al Nas TV aired the trailer, they broke this natural order, and the trailer gained a legitimacy not possible on YouTube. An easily-offended Muslim must have a very hard time prioritizing their rage while browsing the internet, which probably distributes approximately seventeen anti-Islam ideas every second, and so needed an authoritative, established voice like a TV network to point their rage in the right direction.

AlNasTV didn't present the *Innocence of Muslims* as the pet project of one disturbed man, but as a legitimate American film. To justify twenty-eight

dead, the rioters must have seen past the film's green-screen backgrounds and general terribleness, and believed the film to be a big-budget blockbuster bankrolled by Obama himself. To kill over *The Innocence of Muslims* gives the film an undeserved legitimacy. Even writing the film's name in italics is giving it undue legitimacy.

Twenty-eight people have died over a viral video. By the logic of these recent events, the next set of riots could be sparked by a teenager writing "Islam is gay" on a bathroom wall, provided it makes the six o'clock headlines. In fact, riots could be sparked merely by typing "Islam is gay" without any context in a Irish student newspaper.

This incident is comparable to the

backlash following a cartoonist's depiction of Muhammad in Danish newspaper, *Jyllands Posten* in 2005, though at least that cartoon was published in a legitimate newspaper. No violence could ever be justified against a cartoon, but the fact that the cartoon featured in a professional publication meant some Muslims taking offence was somewhat foreseeable. Unlike *Innocence of Muslims*, the cartoon was not intended as an attack on Islam; it was just a piece of light satire that spiralled out of control.

In a morbid way, it's actually quite impressive that something filmed in a guy's back garden has had such a drastic effect across the planet. These recent events may be used as an argument

for regulation and censorship of the internet, but I believe the opposite is in fact true. As long as the internet is an unregulated melting pot of every conceivable set of ideals, its users have no choice but to view its contents with a pinch of salt. If it were to be regulated, media sharing sites such as YouTube would become as "reputable" as newspapers and TV stations, and just as people begin to have faith in the web's every word, it would spark riots by convincing an entire religion to protest against a film with about as much artistic legitimacy as *Charlie Bit My Finger*.

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What Makes A Memorable Movie Quote?

Tom Horan

On Monday, 17 September, "I'll be back" was voted the most memorable movie quote of all time in a poll commissioned by Sky TV. But the American Film Institute have a poll too, which says *Gone With the Wind's* "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn" is the top quote. Then again, at the top of the painstakingly comprehensive AMC filmsite is *On the Waterfront's* "I coulda' had class. I coulda been a contender. I coulda' been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am, let's face it." The recipe for a good movie quote is impossible to pin down, and your personal favourite line can change as regularly as the wind, but let's not have that stop us from trying to figure it out.

For efficiency's sake, let's assume "I'll be back" is the greatest movie quote of all time. What makes it so? First of all, it's vague enough to be slipped into everyday situation, and saying "I'll be back" in a deep Austrian accent on your way to the bathroom is sure to raise an approving smile. There's no reason not to say "I'll be back" every time you leave a location with the intention of soon returning. Other quotes that fall into this category are "Use the Force" to give encouragement, "I'm King of the World!", when on high things, and "Houston, we have a problem" when... you have a problem.

Quoting is an easy way of sounding clever too, and a day doesn't go by without me piggybacking off some far cleverer person's wit. This is why I can't talk about a carpet without imitating the dude from *The Big Lebowski*, and why I constantly tell anyone called Luke that I am their father (Even though the line is in fact "No, I am your father"). It's a social shorthand that allows us to connect over a shared knowledge. We both know who Arnold Schwarzenegger is, we both know what *Terminator* is, so when I say "I'll be back", the other person usually responds with "I also understand that reference. Let's be friends". I have a casual acquaintance who I communicate with solely through *The Big Lebowski* Quotes. These conversations don't even make sense, they're just a mess of vaguely connected phrases from the film;

"They p**sed on the f**king rug man"

"Well that's like, your opinion man"

"F**k it Dude, let's go Bowling"

Neither of us really really go bowling, the quotes are just a smug way of sharing a common knowledge.

Some quotes aren't clever in the slightest. However they catch on because everyone alive has seen the movie in which it was born. In this regard, "Snakes. Why'd it hafta' be snakes?" springs to mind. That quote can't be adapted to everyday life unless you're a Zoologist, yet it's memorable



merely for being attached to a great scene; the one in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* where Indiana's trapped in the snake pit. No matter how witty a given quote is, it's a great film, makes a great quote, and not the other way around. The exception of *The Big Lebowski*; a film that is basically a bunch of funny quotes linked together with a string-bare plot.

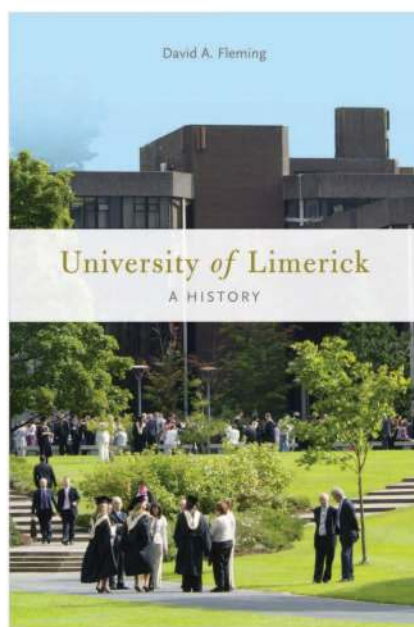
Like their respective films, the best quotes have earned the right to be considered classics because they have stood the test of time. Can you think of any immediately memorable quotes from recent movies?

Everybody has their own favourites, but only years after a film's release will we have a consensus on which quotes deserve to be added to the archives. A few of my own choices from recent years would be "I don't sit in while you're running it down. I don't carry a gun. I drive" from the aptly named *Drive*, "We have to go deeper" from *Inception*, and "F**king Prawns!" from *District 9*. I can't explain why these were the first three to come to mind, just that due to some perfect mix of film-making alchemy, they resonated with my brain. I cannot find evidence online that the exact

phrase "we have to go deeper" is said in *Inception*, but it wouldn't be the first film to be misquoted for the sake of a good sound bite.

Interesting piece of trivia: "I'll be back" was originally written as "I'll come back", but changed just before filming for added punchiness. Would something as trivial as the difference between "come" and "be" have affected its staying power in the public consciousness? At the risk of making you cringe, "Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown."

New Book from FOUR COURTS PRESS



University of Limerick A history

David A. Fleming

A timely account of the history of the University of Limerick, now celebrating its fortieth year.

The University of Limerick was the first new university created since the foundation of the state. Its emergence was the result of a long and determined local campaign that compelled successive governments to respond. Conscious of the importance of higher education and eager to harness it for economic expansion, the state, in 1972, established a National Institute for Higher Education in Limerick. Under the leadership of a young and energetic director, Edward Walsh, the Institute forged a radical curriculum and courted the captains of the industry to support its endeavours.

The first years were difficult for the new Institute and its neighbour, the National College of Physical Education, later Thomond College of Education, which had been established at the same time to train specialist teachers. Government policy obliged both institutions to become part

of the National University of Ireland, and by doing so attempted to marry two very different approaches to higher education. Although the policy proved unsuccessful, these events shaped the Institute, and prompted it to strive for university status with power to grant its own degrees. In 1989 the University of Limerick was founded, the result of hard work and careful manoeuvring. David Fleming's book masterfully recounts the University's history, detailing the experiences of presidents, governors, staff and students. 344pp; colour and b&w illustrations. Hardback. ISBN 978-1-84682-378-7 [Retail: €55]

David Fleming is a lecturer in history at the University of Limerick. He is author of *Politics and provincial people: Sligo and Limerick, 1691-1761* (Manchester, 2010) and has most recently edited, with John Logan, *Pauper Limerick: the register of the Limerick House of Industry* (Dublin, 2011).

This book will be available in all good local bookshops and online from mid-November 2012.

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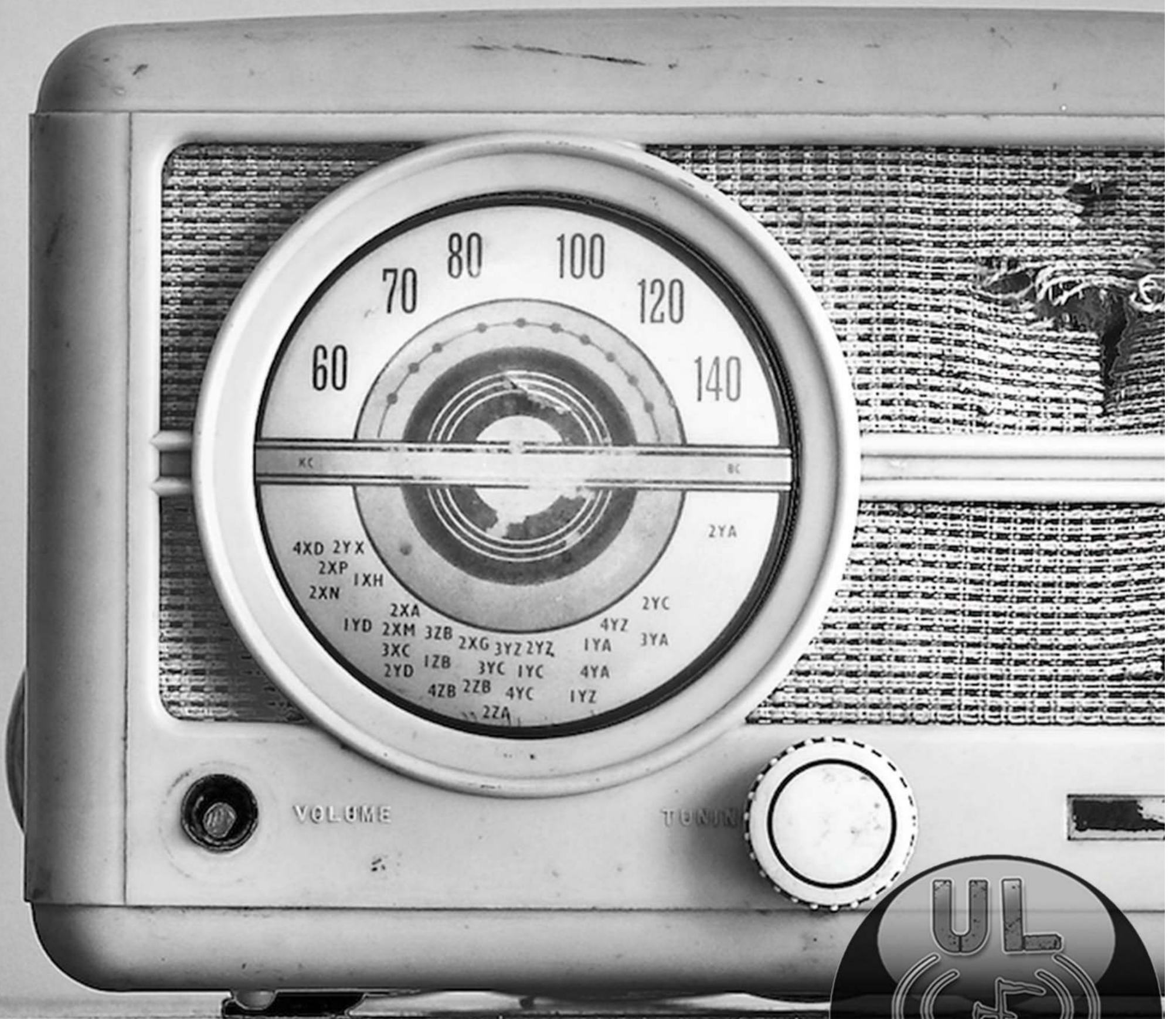
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Trouble With The Doctor: Who's Responsible?

Doctor Who's return to our screens this September was eagerly awaited by Whovians the world over. With the promise of a new, exciting assistant and plots driven more by adventure and less by an overarching story arc, fans' expectations were as high as ever. Under the creative direction of Steven Moffat, the show has become not only better science fiction but better drama. Since taking over from the man who relaunched the series, Russell T Davies, Moffat has made the Doctor his own, showing greater nuisance and creativity than Davies. So when the newest series aired on the BBC, the disappointment was palpable.

The favourite characters were reunited, to the surprise and initial delight of fans. In an earlier story arc, Whovians had followed the developing relationships of the 11th Doctor (Matt Smith), his oft replaced assistant Amy Pond (the sometime caustic Karen Gillan) and her husband and complicated third wheel Rory Williams (the surprisingly likeable Arthur Darvill). As a well-written and well-loved trio arrived in a fittingly bizarre scenario, how could Moffat go wrong? To the dismay of fans, the first few episodes were an overwritten mess. It seemed that in his efforts to avoid an overweening story arc, Moffat allowed his writers to fill scripts with poorly thought out, predictable plots and worse, jam packed episodes with the unusual for the sake of it.

There were, however, some genuinely good ideas. The best Doctor Who episodes have three main features: there is a mystery to be solved; there is something bizarre about the mystery that makes it more compelling;

the solution to the mystery raises interesting ethical or philosophical questions. Four of the new episodes had kernels of this formula, one lacked it entirely and one successfully deployed it.

The season opener deserves particular attention. Asylum of the Daleks touched upon the idea of what it means to be human. The relationship between humanity and the distinctly inhuman Daleks was the philosophical crux of the episode. The Daleks, of course, are simply creatures that represent the worst aspects of human nature - blind hatred, racism and genocide. Exploring the transformation of a human woman into a Dalek had the potential to be fascinating but the episode was hampered by the need for the characters to be in constant peril from mindless Daleks. Rather than examining the nature of human evil, the conclusion amounted to little more than the Doctor getting one over on his old enemies. The most disappointing thing about the season premiere were the good ideas. There were plenty of them, with strains of Moffat's self-reflexive Doctor shining through, but little interesting remained at its conclusion.

Of the second episode, Dinosaurs on a Spaceship, nothing good can be said. It was a mess. The plot threw together an Egyptian queen, a Victorian big game hunter, the trio, Rory's endearing father and a ship full of dinosaurs plagued by an uninteresting villain and two slapstick robots. It felt like Red Dwarf had smashed into Jurassic Park.

Drawing another comparison, the second episode felt vaguely like a ham-fisted remake of Star Trek: The



Original Series (or possibly a send-up, hard to tell). This feeling persisted into the third episode, which concerned itself with a town in the Old West, a war criminal living a new life and a monster bent on revenge. It could certainly pass as a combination of Star Trek's Spectre of the Gun and Kodos the Destroyer, with the Doctor little more than a foil for Captain Kirk. The similarities with a 1960s space opera were worrying.

The Power of Three, which should have been called The Slow Invasion, was a distinctly unremarkable effort. The opening voiceover from Karen Gillan seemed to place set the episode in an historical past, something which provided a bizarre jarring effect. It

certainly felt like Moffat was trying to introduce an interesting new character in the person of Kate Stewart, head of UNIT. The potential was spoiled, however, by the discovery that Stewart was the daughter of a well-known character from the very poor 1970s Who episodes. Her insistence that she didn't want favoured treatment was laughable; she owes her very existence to nerdy fans who remember her father. The episode's conclusion was sentimental rubbish.

However, the series is not a total write-off. The final episode, The Angels Take Manhattan, was a saving grace. Written by Moffat himself (unlike the rest of the series), the show saw the return of a favourite monster, the Weeping

Angels. The Angels are Moffat's own invention, so he could be accused of being a bit of a cheat. But the plot was strong, the story was compelling and the final scenes pulled the heart strings sufficiently to make the episode a success. The return of the Doctor's wife, River Song, and the ideas of fate and predestination reminded us why Moffat is in charge. It is disappointing that it took until the final episode for the series to be anywhere near as good as its predecessors. But Moffat still has true believers who will wait for the Christmas special. If Moffat can pull off a Yuletide coup, all could be put right in Wholand.

MEP Predicts That Greek Unrest Will Spread Throughout Europe

James Bradshaw

Socialist Party MEP Paul Murphy has said that the growing turmoil in Greece is rapidly spreading to other countries affected by the Eurozone debt crisis, and that it could yet see lead to major changes in Irish politics and society.

His remarks come during a week that has seen yet another general strike in Greece against austerity cuts, which resulted in violent clashes between protestors and riot police in Athens.

Speaking at an open meeting in the University of Limerick, Mr Murphy spoke about his own experiences during recent visits to Greece, and about how the mass protests there are being replicated in other affected countries such as Spain and Portugal.

"In the past couple of years, Greece has been on its own at the forefront of the struggle across Europe," Mr Murphy said. "Now actually the Greek workers are being joined in particular by the Spanish workers

but also the Portuguese workers. Greece is really important; it isn't about Ireland, it isn't about Greece, it isn't about Portugal, it isn't about Spain. It's about all of Europe and how society is run."

The general strike in Greece came as the recently elected government announced budget cuts of 11.5 billion euro as part of the fiscal adjustments the country needs to undertake before receiving a fresh instalment of bailout funds next month.

Greece has already endured several rounds of such cuts since the beginning of the financial crisis, which has had severe repercussions within Greek society.

Salaries, pensions and benefits have all been slashed, and many social services have been curtailed or discontinued entirely. Statistics from Eurostat show that 53.8% of Greeks under the age of 25 are now unemployed. Similar conditions among Spanish youth have contributed to rising tensions

there, with further clashes between protestors and police occurring this week in Madrid.

Such economic and social upheaval has also transformed Greece's political system. Syriza, the radical coalition of left-wing parties led by Alexis Tsipras, reached an historic milestone during this summer's elections when they became the second largest party in Greece.

Though New Democracy eventually emerged victorious, Syriza are now the most popular party, and Murphy predicts that Syriza winning the next election would have major ramifications right across the continent.

"If Syriza was to take power in Greece, establish a left government, not implement austerity, the message that would send across Europe would be 'you don't have to have austerity'. It's such a dangerous message for the establishment of Europe, for the bankers of Europe and for the bondholders of Europe."

With the prospect of a very



harsh budget being introduced in December, Mr Murphy hopes that the Socialist Party and the United Left Alliance will be successful in rallying public opposition to austerity, and in emulating Syriza by becoming a major political force in

Irish life.

"One of the things that I think is going to happen in this country, is that out of this crisis a Left will be built," he said.

Play Hard On And Off The Pitch With Ladies' Hockey

Steph Peters
Division 1 Captain

UL Ladies Hockey Club would be delighted to invite both experienced and beginners to join us this coming season. As a club with two teams we're searching for players with a range of abilities. As a member of the team for the past two years, I can guarantee a competitive club with many laughs and banter along the way.

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Our Division 1 intervarsity team competes at a high level in both Munster and Irish leagues. The intervarsity competition is being held this year in Cork where we will take part in the 'Chilean Cup'.

The Division 4 team play at a more relaxed level in the Munster league and cup. League matches at weekends are mostly in Limerick.

Last season we recruited some lads and we entered into a mixed intervarsity tournament finishing third after getting as far as the semi-final.

The club has a great social aspect and is a great way to meet new people.

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For further information contact us at our Facebook group: University of Limerick Cricket Club.



Windsurfing in Castlegregory

Patrick Bergin
ULWC

On our first beginner windsurfing trip of the semester, we visited Castlegregory, Co. Kerry, which is almost the club's second home by now! We had great help from our resident windsurfing expert Jamie Knox, who must be thanked for all his efforts and putting up with us for so long. I don't know how he manages so many of us without going crazy.

On Friday evening, all 22 of us packed our bags, and with anticipation in the air, we took the quick spin down to the gorgeous Castlegregory. We arrived to Fitzgerald's Hostel with plenty of time to unpack, and within the hour, we were ready to start getting to know each other. We even managed to drop downstairs for a chat and a song with a few locals.

On Saturday morning, we were all ready to hit the water by 11:00. Jamie gave a few lessons to the beginners before sending them off on their boards. I was impressed by how quickly all the first timers got the hang of it. By the end of the first day, the beginners had already learned to complete turns, thanks to the light wind and Jamie's coaching. Although we were all tired afterwards, it was definitely a rewarding day of windsurfing.

When we woke up Sunday morning, we discovered that the water was too choppy for beginners. Luckily, Jamie gave us the use of his water trampoline, which was greatly enjoyed by all and was much appreciated. In the afternoon, a few of the more experienced windsurfers went out on the water while the rest of us went surfing. After our fun-filled weekend, we cooked up an awesome fry and had a well deserved rest on the bus home. From the look on everyone's faces, it was clear they could not wait to return to our



beloved Castlegregory once more.

French Erasmus student Corentin Villemur described his first trip with ULWC:

"I spent a wonderful weekend with the Windsurfing Club in

Castlegregory for my first trip with a UL Club. The sunny weather waited for us until we arrived. I could enjoy the first feeling on a windsurfing board on Saturday and a campfire on the beach under the stars. On Sunday,

we couldn't windsurf because of high waves so we learned about balancing on a board instead. I really enjoyed this trip and I will be sure to be involved in the next one."

For anyone interested in

windsurfing, our next trip is the weekend of October 12, so make sure to sign up in time!



Charity Week 2013 In Doubt As UL Lines Up Alternatives

Gerard Flynn
Political Editor

UL officials are considering cancelling Charity Week 2013 as a result of the damage done both on and off campus last year and the amount it costs for the college to fix.

It was revealed at week two's Class Representative Council meeting that Charity week is costing the university €50,000 a year. This figure is almost €40,000 more than the week raises with the average donation per student last year working out at €1 per person.

Speaking at the Class Rep Council, UL President, Adam Moursy, made the point that UL remains "one of the few universities that have an official rag week." He was quick to point out that college authorities have "no qualms with an unofficial Charity week, as long as the UL name is not used."

Moursy noted that the main problem college authorities have is that the damage is to the name of UL, admitting that "you can't put a value on that." He was adamant that the "University has to be mindful of people in the area" as the real issue is that "a lot of problems don't happen on UL campus but in the surrounding area" before adding that the "true nature of Charity Week is pretty much dead!"

This comes with the news that neighbours of the surrounding area have also complained to the SU about this year's current crop of first years, citing them as being "the worst they've ever seen" said Moursy.

There have also been discussions to replace Charity Week with a UL Ball, which would consist of the cancellation of lectures for a full day of gigs during sometime during week 6 with the likely venue being Thomond Park. Such an event would model the UCD Ball whose guests in the past have included Professor Green, Calvin Harris and The Saturdays.

Academic Officer, Paddy Rockett stated that should the Ball go ahead it would be in a "contained environment so we can look after it easier." He also supported Moursy's claims that Charity Week is no longer of benefit to the Student's Union any more as it is the SU itself that is "fronting a lot of the bill."

ULSU General Manager, Phillip Mudge stated that as long as there isn't an official Charity Week, Plassey Campus Centre have gone on record to donate more than the SU can raise.

He also pointed out that an after effect of Charity Week's cancellation would be a reduction in accommodation costs due to the large amounts of money saved by the PCC from not having to employ as much security during that particular week.

Senior staff of the SU have met with Paul McCutcheon, Vice President Academic & Registrar of the University, who has stated that there may instead be potential plans of putting in a mid-term break during the date afforded to Charity Week in order to cut down on damage to the surrounding area entirely.

Moursy pointed out that students



UCD (above) host an annual ball in place of a Rag Week.

would not see this as a cancellation of Charity Week and instead have their own unofficial one during term time anyway. The SU sabbatical officers were quick to quell any notions of an unofficial Charity Week being as

bad as NUI Galway's last year which saw a flare lit as students drunkenly congregated outside a Supermacs in the city centre.

Adam Moursy did say however that most of the coverage of the NUIG

Charity Week was embellished due to videos and webpages on social networking sites as well as the popularity of NUIG Charity Week memes.

From The An Focal Archives

As part of ULSU's 40th year, and An Focal's 22nd, we are re-printing articles from the archives. The following was on the front page on 17 November, 2009 (that year, the paper called it "Movember" on every page). Written by then editor Aoife Ní Raghallaigh and concerned the future of that campus institution, Rag Week. As the issue of what to do about Rag Week resurfaces, it's no harm to take a look back.

THE future of Raising and Giving Week remains uncertain following continual displays of antisocial behaviour by students in the Castletroy area. The threat comes after increased pressure on the Students' Union from the University, Gardaí and local residents to cancel the week long event which will take place in semester two.

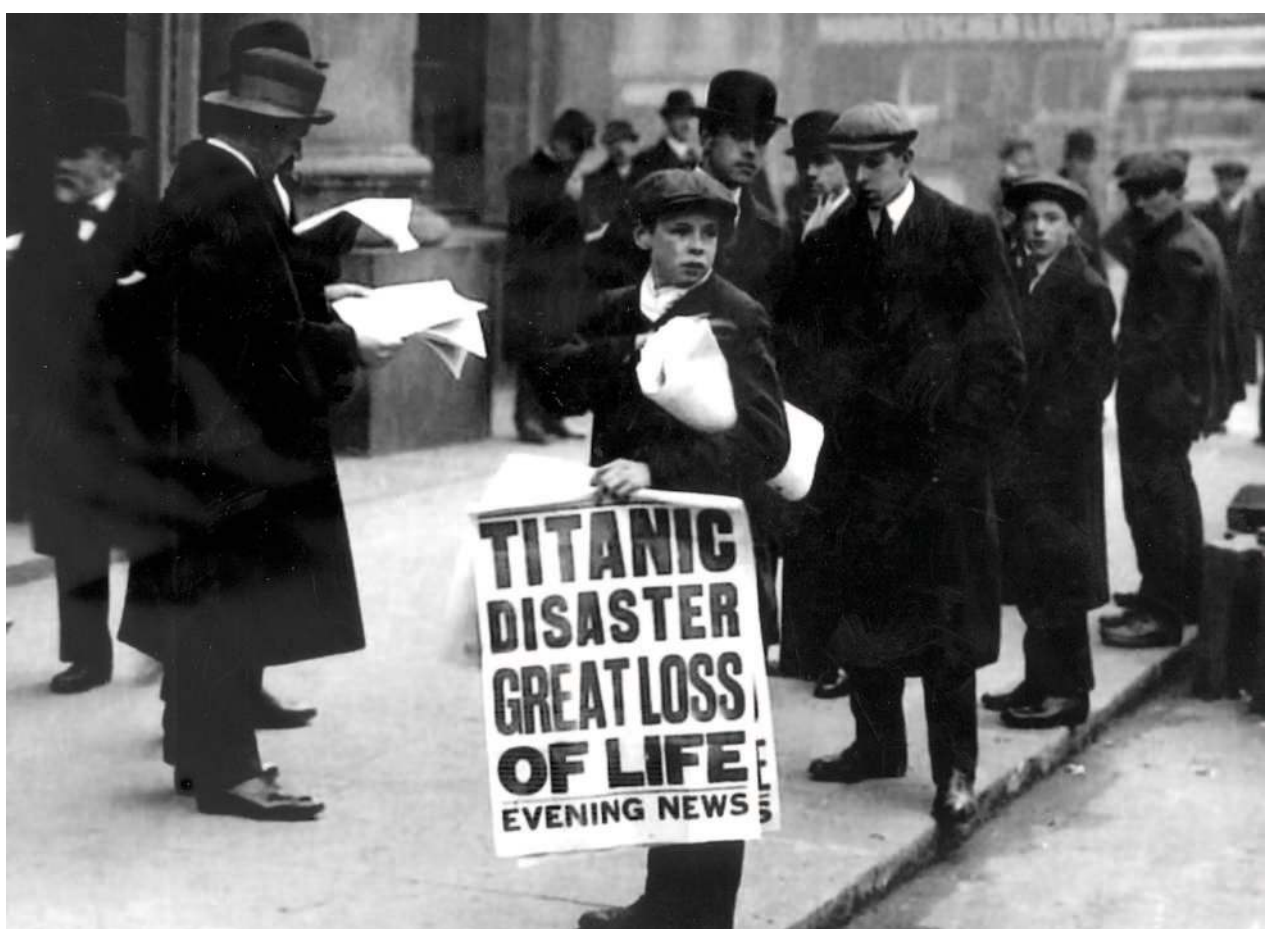
Members of the Castletroy community are very aware that drunken and antisocial behaviour increases during Raising and Giving Week and as such are calling for the 2010 event to be cancelled. Since the beginning of this semester Castletroy residents have been subject to nightly displays of antisocial and drunken behaviour from students. These events include students throwing loud house parties before going out or shouting on the streets on their way which prevents permanent residents and their children from being able to sleep. Students are also repeatedly leaving broken bottles

on the paths and roads around the area. This poses a threat of serious injury to children who are playing in the area. Welfare Officer Derek Daly said students need to "Respect your neighbours and respect your housemates."

Students are also reminded of the serious events which occurred during Raising and Giving Week last year. In 2009 students overturned a resident's car in one of the off campus estates and also lit numerous fires which posed a danger to everyone living in the area. In one of the most serious events an object was thrown through a window of a young baby's room which could have killed or maimed the child. Mr Daly also stated "We know that the freedom of being away from home may facilitate behaviour that is not acceptable here either. While we don't want to ruin all your fun a bit of cop on wouldn't go astray."

Mr Dillon McLoughlin [SU President] also said "Unfortunately some students have lost sight of the true meaning of RAG Week; this being the Raising and Giving aspect for charity." Last year students raised €20,000 for four worthwhile charities but caused over €45,000 worth of damage over four days.

When faced with figures like this one can't help but wonder if it's Raising and Giving Week really holds any sort of worthwhile future at all. Campaigns and Services Officer, Fergal Dempsey,



echoed this stating that "the essence of RAG week is lost." Mr Dempsey said that if students wish to see Raising and Giving Week continuing in future it's going to have to take the average student to stand up and vocalise that this behaviour is not acceptable in UL and will not be tolerated by UL

students."

For the future of Raising and Giving week to remain safe students need to remember that the event is about helping those less fortunate and is not about getting drunk and making life hell for everyone else.

An improvement in night time

behaviour throughout the year is also necessary.

The same edition carried a story about the opening of a new shop in Cappavilla, which was well received at the time and an extensive article on witchcraft, which was presumably in vogue back then.

UL Boarders Head To Lahinch For Surf, Sand, Sun And Fun

Tom Horan

This year the Boarders started off the year with a bang! After an outstanding recruitment drive in week 1 and a great turn out at the first general meeting, we went on our first weekend surf trip to Lahinch in week two.

It was a chilly September morning when the weary heads and bleary eyes shuffled towards the bus at 7:30am on Saturday. We checked into West Coast Lodge with no bother, dumped the gear and grabbed a much deserved brunch involving a full Irish breakfast and lots of coffee and tea. The day was getting better and better as the sun was high in the sky, plus no straight winds.

We couldn't have picked a better weekend to teach the beginners as the waves were just the right size to get their technique right. While the more experience surfers were left wanting for bigger waves, the craic and good banter kept their spirits high.

When the tide was out we decided to head in and to our delight, we found that some of the gang had made tea and coffee which instantly heated us up and we were very grateful for it.

To get everyone closer and more like a big family, we organised a massive meal. We all pitched in €3 and bought a load of paste and luckily enough one of the lads on the tour was a part-time chef, so we all ate like royalty for one night. It also turned out it was one of the girls birthday, so we bought her a cake and sang happy birthday.

The craic continued late into the night as we gathered in the common room sharing stories over a little social game called "Never Have I Ever", which



some of the international students have never heard of but quickly picked up and became naturals.

The next day started off pretty much the same way as the day before with

heads weary and eyes bleary from a good night of bonding and friendship making. We were back in the water as soon as the rocks were out of the way. The waves were the same as the day

before so it was great for the beginners again. Everyone was getting the hand of the "pop-up" and was starting to look like proper surfers!

The bus came later in the day and

carried us home to some beds and dry clothes. All in all, it was a great trip. Two days of surf, sand, and sun mixed in with a load of friendship making.

Ogra Fianna Fail Continues To Accomplish Nationally

Gerard Flynn

The Third Level Representative position on the Ogra Fianna Fail Central Officer Board was recently vacated by Brendan Finucane of UCC, due to his appointment as a Local Regional Representative for Fianna Fail.

The Ogra National Council received two nominations, one from Cumann De Barra of NUIG and the other from Con Colbert Cumann of UL. It was a close election, but the UL Candidate, Mike Forde, managed to succeed and won the election by 3 votes. Mike is a 3rd Year Politics and Public Admin Student who joined Ogra in 1st year. Speaking after the result he said that "it was a fantastic run and I'm delighted to have met so many new faces as well as old. I'm really looking forward to working with everyone in the coming months and to adding a new Ogra voice to the Fianna Fail National Executive"

UL Ogra Chair Enda Costello commented after; "This election was a brilliant result for the UL Cumann, which has uplifted the members and is a fantastic way to start the year for the society" UL Ogra now has three ex

or current members sitting on the 10 seat Central Officer Board. Enda went to say that "UL Ogra now has a very strong presence at the national stage of Ogra Fianna Fail and will continue to use that to voice the concerns and issues that face young people in UL and around the country."

At the same National Council, which took place in Dublin last Saturday, Ogra passed motions to join LYMEC (the European Youth Wing of ELDR) and called on Minister Ruairi Quinn to scrap proposals to include business premises and land in the means testing for student grants. The location of the next Ogra National Youth Conference was also decided upon and Sligo Ogra was the lucky winner. The members are anticipating a great weekend soon in the north-west!

UL Ogra Fianna Fail meets every Monday at 6pm in Room 3 of the Student Union. All are welcome to attend.



A newspaper can be many things



UL's student newspaper is recruiting

Be part of it

Email the Editor: darragh.roche@ul.ie

**AN
FOCAL**

Glimpsing The Italian Life

Aoife Coughlan
In Venice

I must admit to finding it rather difficult to write this piece under the title of "Erasmus Diary". The reason for this is that for the past few days I have been on more of a holiday than ever and college feels so very far away. In fact everything feels very far away when in Venice. At the time of writing I have yet to begin modules and so am still in anticipation of the college experience. Induction days were generic, tours and talks and only the vague notion that I have so much to do and so much to sort out. Until my start into the reality of Erasmus I have been enjoying my new abode in the spirit of an interested traveller trying to morph into a Venetian citizen.

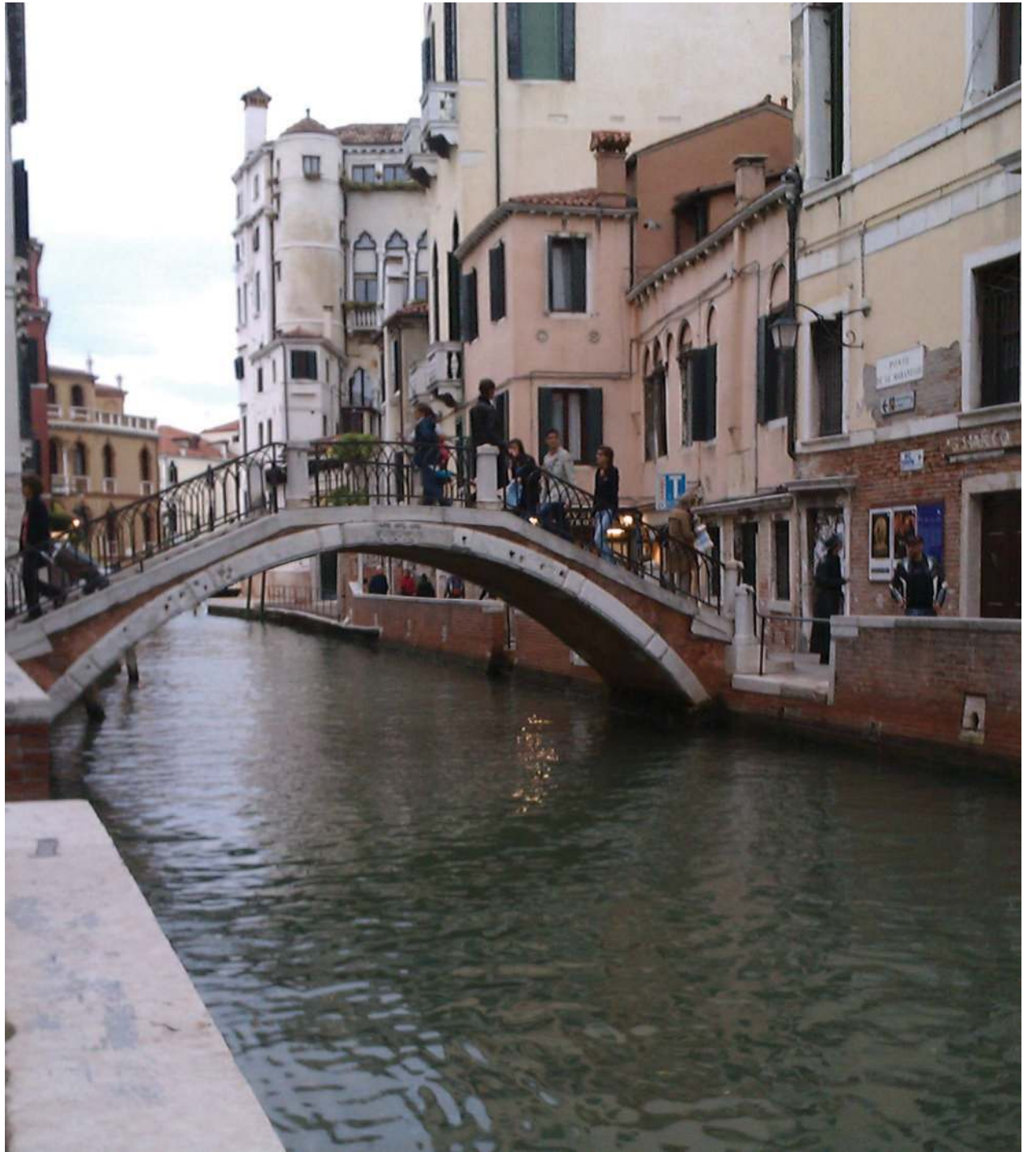
Having destroyed two pairs of shoes, acquired numerous blisters, and after drinking lots of cafe espressos I have finally orientated myself in this city of canals and mazes. This has not been entirely stressful or laborious a task. Around every corner is another enviable view, another glimpse into Italian life and sometimes tourist ignorance. Bacari, the small bars serving wine and cichetti, bustle at lunch time with locals and often the befuddled tourist. Rialto market is full of shoppers buying meat, fish and bread but also crowded with the American, Japanese and English looking for photo souvenir snapshots. The two sides to Venice make it diverse, sometimes crazy; yet never take away from the utter beauty of the city.

The amazing Piazza San Marco still

holds a strange sensation for me. The neon and commercial cannot degrade the glamour of years gone by. In Venice you must look past what is straight in front of you and go behind the facade. When you do you are rewarded with small village-type areas where smaller bars operate for all walks of life, where local shops reign supreme and an altogether quieter life exists.

My area is the university hub, pretty piazzas, almost prettier pizzas and quiet canals are all found nearby. The Campo di Santa Margarita is alive at night with spritz drinking students, the buzz of bars more than makes up for the lack of clubs we are used to at home. My flatmates' photos and stories assure me one can still have a student centred social life if that is what you are looking for among Venice's many paths.

Venice has many guises but as I come to be here longer I feel that so do I. I am the student who will look at home amid other bag bearers and laptop carriers; I am the tourist to some, my Italian poor and my face still lingering longer on sights others have known for years and yet to the other vacationers I look like the seasoned local as I stride now without a map to guide me. Fitting in is hard for all on Erasmus but in this city so full of different people it seems even more difficult. However being odd is not a bad thing. Indeed Venice is odd itself, in nature, culture and sensation and I think I like oddness very, very much.



Settling In On The Island Of Malta

Rachel Dargan
In Malta

We've arrived! We've got all our body parts intact, and a landlord who has decided that we can call him Granddad if we want, and who wants to take all of us dancing next Saturday night!

We flew out to Malta a week before Orientation, so we've been able to spend our first few days getting used to Malta, the people, the buses, and the HEAT! I have to say that their bus system knocks Bus Eireann out of the water. If an Arriva bus timetable says that the bus will be leaving a bus stop at 17 minutes past the hour, you can be sure that it more than likely will leave on time.

As far as our apartment goes, it is basic enough, but it's fine for two people. We've found out that we live in the newest suburb of Msida, in a place called Swatar. We really landed on our feet with the location, as there is a bus stop at the top of the road which takes you to the university, the hospital, Sliema and Valletta. (We tried walking to the university, but trying to run across the dual carriageway really isn't the brightest of ideas, so we've decided to steer clear of that!)

On a trip into Sliema, we found a beautiful café, which may turn into be the Maltese version the Scholars! We went to the beach in Sliema,



and it was exactly my kind of beach, there was no sand! All of the beaches in Sliema are made of sandstone, and some even have areas of sandstone that have been completely flattened out, so serve as areas to sunbathe.

Before we came on Erasmus, all we heard from people who had been to Malta before us was 'Go to Paceville!'

so, we went. Paceville is one of the sub-areas of St. Julian's, and is where the majority of the island's nightlife is located. We wandered around for a while, looking for our bearings and decided to try a bar called peppermint Park, which turned out to be a really good idea! It was quiet enough, but sitting outside you

got an idea of what all of the other clubs were like, and I heard PSY – Gangnam Style more than once!

St Julian's itself though, is beautiful. Portomaso Harbour gives the most wonderful views of the harbour, and the sea in the background, and is home to quite a few lovely looking cafés. We went to Paparazzi, a

restaurant with an outside seating area and bar right on the harbour for lunch on our first day, and the value was incredible. I don't think a glass of Coke has ever tasted as good as that afternoon.

Adjusting The Canadian Way

Aoife Murphy
In Canada

ONE of the biggest adjustments I had to make over here was dorm life. I did find that I adjusted to this easily. In Canada you don't live in a house with six or seven other people, instead it's a residence with about 100 other people. To some people that can sound daunting. It did to me at first. When I got here though, it quickly dawned on me that these residences were a family away from home. Every residence has their own council, Residence Advisors, Dons and Assistant Dons. These people help to create the family atmosphere. Soon enough you begin to recognise people that live in your residence, and you bond quickly because of the "family pride" (Go Harper!).

Another adjustment has been the nightlife. Unlike Ireland where most of us go home at the weekend, that is pretty much not the picture here. So, they have no need to go out during the week. Some do, but the majority don't. Instead the weekend is when most of the events are planned for. The first event was held last weekend, The Northside Threesome. This involved all of the residents on the Northside of campus getting together for a huge party outside. House parties are also another popular way to pass the time.

Classes have also started. The way courses over here are picked confused me for some time. It turns out that you can do anything, literally anything. Want to do an Arts degree? With a bit of biochemistry involved? Go for it! You can also choose when you want to graduate. This does involve taking classes over the summer though. But, it means you can graduate in two



"It turns out that you can do anything, literally anything. Want to do an Arts degree? With a bit of biochemistry involved? Go for it!"

to three years if you really want to. However, if you didn't do the work you're not going to get away with it. The lecturers tend to set these weekly tasks for you to complete. Some even set up a surprise test for the second

week of a semester. So slacking isn't something that can be done here. Needless to say, the student work ethic is good. So there is never a lack of motivation and more emphasis is put on studying than partying.

I also have no labs or tutorials. Classes are 20 to 40 minutes longer though. The only class I have a lab in is my language course. But there are no labs for most Arts courses. Only the science courses have labs. This of

course took no time for me to adjust to. Who am I to complain about lack of labs and tutorials? It just means more free time!

New York City: Urban Unknown

Darren Mulryan

The Big Apple. Capital of the world. Call it what you want but there's one certainty - there is something to do for everyone. Being a native New Yorker I am proud of what the city offers in terms of culture, food and entertainment. We all know the obvious tourist traps and sites but what really makes your next trip to NYC an unforgettable one is when you venture into the unknown. Let An Focal give you an insight into the many hidden gems that this wonderful city has to offer.

Manhattan is the largest borough in the metropolitan area. It offers every imaginable option to those wanting to explore the city. If you have done the obvious tourist sites, why not try taking a quick trip to the West Side where you can board numerous ferries that circle the magnificent island taking its route down the Hudson and along the East river. Catch the circle line at night on Pier 83 at West 42nd street. For 20 bucks it's a great way to take in the newly adapting skyline with the Freedom tower taking shape.

A trip to Manhattan is simply not complete without renting a paddle boat in Central Park. On a summer's day with your eyes closed

you would be forgiven to think you were a castaway on a desert island. Sometimes the city can prove to be too much of a non-stop rollercoaster and this is a great way to chill out.

For those who love to shop, ignore the high street shops and go downtown to the districts of Soho and Greenwich Village. Quaint little boutiques offer a selection of trendy urban styles that you won't find anyone else sporting on campus, at affordable prices. Desigual is one example of a Spanish based outlet that offers cool styles at cheap prices. If you are on a budget avoid Broadway, which runs laterally through midtown to Soho, though it's no harm to look in Bloomingdales and Armani Exchange for those who like the finer things in life.

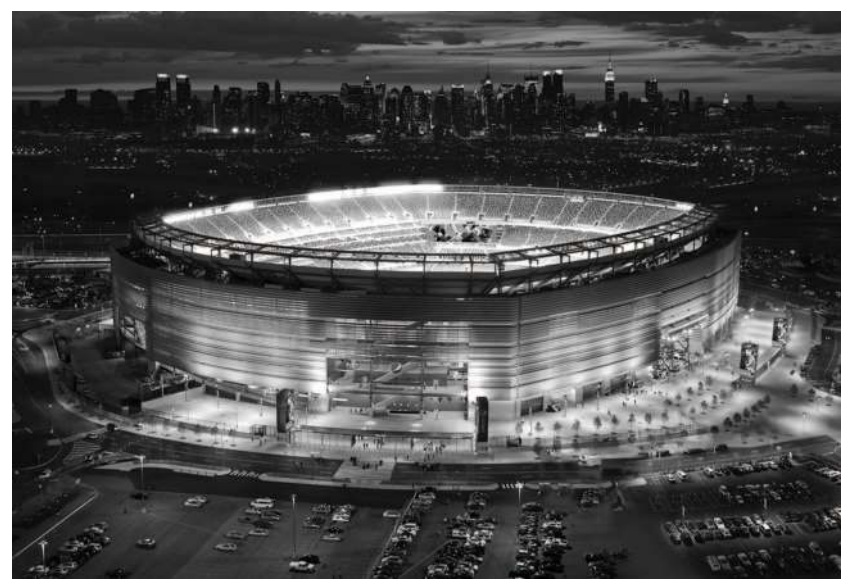
A few sites to consider before you go are: www.nycgo.com, www.iloveny.com and www.citypass.com.

Finally the best part of the city - Mulberry Street, Chinatown. The second you arrive down here your senses are surrounded by local businessmen offering you the latest Louis Vuitton handbag or Prada perfume. A fan of Rolex watches but don't have the dosh? No problem 20 dollars will get you the next best thing. If you're the type of person that likes being brought down into a dingy basement with flickering

lights and dodgy characters this is for you. Think Fight Club! It's the black market of the city. If you're looking for a special something, chances are you will get it and with change left over.

If you are peckish after your shopping, dine in the hundreds of eateries that downtown has to offer. I recommend some of the street-side pizzerias so that you can sit on the curb in Little Italy and watch the city life go by. Chinatown is a great chance to sample all the different noodle dishes and things you wouldn't get back here in Ireland.

Now that we have mentioned the shopping, on to something else NY is known for. New York is world famous for its sporting heritage. In midtown you have "the Garden" as referred to by locals. It is home to the NBA basketball team the New York Knicks and seats for a game range from \$40 to \$135. It's a chance to bump into Jay z and Beyoncé, both regular visitors to the Garden. If American football is your thing then look no further than Super Bowl Champs the NY Giants. The newly developed Meadowlands Stadium is based in New Jersey but buses leave on game days from Grand Central Station. Again expect tickets to be around the \$50 mark. Finally, the world famous New York Yankees:



if you have the patience to sit through a few hours of baseball and appreciate the game this is a real treat. Yankee Stadium, based North of Manhattan in the Bronx, is a 20 minute bus ride from Midtown with bleacher tickets from \$27.

Consider a couple of things before you go. Get a MetroPass which will give you unlimited travel on the city bus and subway for one week. For \$30 that's a bargain. Don't get a taxi if you can avoid it. It's expensive and if you don't know where you're going the cabbie might just take you on an unexpected detour. Put on your finest

Goodfellas accent and you should be OK. NYC is one of the safest cities in the US but that doesn't mean you should flaunt your cash around. Subways after 10pm on busy lines such as Midtown are safe but consider travelling in groups if going between the boroughs to Queens or the Bronx. And most importantly buy a map! It is one of the easiest cities in the world to navigate as the island works on a grid system comprised of streets and avenues but it's always a possibility to get lost. Even so, getting lost is just another part of venturing into the unknown and having a great trip!

UL Debu and UCC philosophical society
Comedy Debate
THIS HOUSE REGRETS



The Rise of The Hipster

October 4th Jonathan Swift Theatre 8.30pm

make a note in your feelings journal