DIT Independent, 1st.-30th. of November, 2002

DIT: Students Union

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Bertie backtracks on fees promise

By Darragh Clifford

THE President of the Union of Students in Ireland, Colm Jordan, has accused the government of using "slogging tactics" over the ongoing debate of third-level fees.

This follows a statement by Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, prior to the Nice Treaty referendum, that fees would not be re-introduced in the lifetime of the present government.

Taoiseach Mr Bertie Ahern, prior to the Nice Treaty referendum, that fees would not be re-introduced in the lifetime of the present government.

A letter was submitted to the Taoiseach's office some two weeks ago by USI asking that the Taoiseach state his intentions. As yet, no reply has been received.

When the DIT Independent contacted the Department of Education and Science, spokesman Brian Masterson stated that Minister Dempsey was standing firm on the fees issue and that he is fully supported by all members of the government.

However, he did admit that the matter was still under review.

Colm Jordan stated that "unfortunately, politicians in this country have a tendency to say one thing before polling day and the complete opposite the next."

We have delivered a letter to the Taoiseach requesting that he confirm that this is still the case."

When opposition members in the Dáil quizzed Minister for Education Mr Noel Dempsey on the matter, he assured the Dáil that the matter was "...fundamentally reviewed".

Mr Dempsey said that considering the time lapse since the introduction of fees, and the major question mark hanging over the achievement of the stated purpose behind them, it seems entirely appropriate to review measures that should be fundamentally reviewed.

USI is asking the Government to clarify its position on third-level fees as they are concerned that the Taoiseach made the statement to boost his public opinion while seeking a yes vote in last month's Nice Referendum.

Further protests are due to take place around the country in the upcoming weeks.

Waterford IT and Tallaght IT will take to the streets on Tuesday November 19th, with Letterkenny IT and DIT continuing the protest on November 26th.

USI has estimated that if college fees were introduced, the cost of an average four-year course could be up to €50,000.

The ongoing protests by students across the country is the single largest student movement the country has ever seen.

But if the threat of fees is to be eradicated, students must continue to march.

Colm Jordan has told the DIT Independent that their position on the subject of fees is clear: that all students should be entitled to free education.

Spokesperson on Education for the Labour Party, Ms Jan O'Sullivan has also stated that education is one of the many services that society must provide as of right and pay through taxes.

The debate on fees has now entered its fifth month since Minister Dempsey announced back in July that the registration fee was to increase by 69%.

When USI initially objected to this, Minister Dempsey wanted to meet the student group in November. USI objected, and a meeting between Dempsey and USI was due to take place on September 4th.

However, in September the Government started floating the idea that full third-level fees would be introduced to those who could afford them.

While the government are adamant that they are standing firm on the fees issue, USI are also intent on stepping up their campaign for the right to a free education.

Massive student support for Chernobyl

By Aisling Casey

THOUSANDS of students turned out in Dublin to take part in the annual 10km sponsored walk in aid of the Chernobyl Children's Project.

The event, which took place on Thursday 14th, received great support from Irish students who braved a 10km trek to the Phoenix Park, in an effort to raise funds for the charity.

Students from over 10 of the capital's colleges joined one to support the charity effort, which has become a key date on the annual academic calendar.

DIT Walk Co-Ordinator, Chris Newell said, "Irish students have shown a mammoth effort by all concerned."

The money raised will pay for surgery, medication, physiotherapy, decent accommodation in orphanages, medical and mental development for retarded children. DIT students played a vital role in making the event a success and hope to raise an estimated €100,000 for the charity.

There was great enthusiasm as DIT students took part in the annual 10km sponsored walk in aid of the Chernobyl Children's Project.

DIT students played a vital role in making the event a success and hope to raise an estimated €100,000 for the charity.

There were many enthusiastic students taking part in the event, many of them dressed in sponsored gear and wearing signs in support of the cause.

Students from the 10th of the capital's colleges joined one to support the 10k Walk.
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**News**

**DIT seek successor to throne**

By Aisling Casey

AFTER ten years in office, Dr Brendan Goldsmith is set to hang up his boots, as DIT search for its next President. It is understandable to take on the challenge. The hunt is now on for a suitable candidate to implement DIT's strategic plan, which covers development at the Institute over the next decade. As well as a chance to take up a highly prestigious post at the highest level college on this island, there is also a very lucrative salary of €160,000 for the job.

Dr Goldsmith became the President of DIT in 1993 to serve a ten-year term. Although there have been a few hiccups along the way, he has succeeded in achieving the two main objectives which he set when he first took office. Firstly, in achieving a level where DIT can award its own PhDs and secondly to find a suitable campus to build on DIT’s development.

According to college sources, candidates likely to feature are Dr Ellen Hazelkorn, head of the Applied Arts faculty, Mr Paul O’Sullivan, Director of the Faculty of Business and Mr Michael Mulvey, Director of the Faculty of Tourism and Food. However, they may face stiff competition from applicants abroad.

Following last month’s public embarrassment of DIT’s financial situation, when students were sent home due to lack of funds, the new President will have a tough job on his/her hands. The President will be to get DIT back on track, build on its position as a leading technology institute and ultimately as a university.

The President will have a key leadership role in carrying forward initiatives set up by the implementation of DIT’s Strategic Plan for the period to 2015. The recent acquisition of the site at Grangegorman now presents an opportunity for the advancement of DIT’s vision for the future.

With over €26 million secured for research and development over the coming years, DIT can now focus on developing DIT as an institution which is at the cutting-edge in the application of technology in all of its activities.

With advertisements placed in newspapers worldwide over the last fortnight inviting applications for DIT’s top position, there is expected to be a high level of interest in the esteemed job.

**Continuity needed in smoking issue**

By Darragh Clifford

IT IS common practice in major cities in the United States, but that doesn’t mean it is okay. If you walk through New York’s Wall Street district, chances are you will see rows of workers standing around smoking. Ditto DIT.

At a time when the Government is gearing up to its strongest ant-smoking legislation yet, Dublin Institution of Technology is lacking in a fundamental ruling on smoking.

If you study in Bolton Street, you are unable to smoke within the building, whereas you can in Kevin Street. In Aungier Street, students returned this September to find the smoking section of the canteen gone, with no alternative.

As a result of this, students have taken to congregating outside their various buildings in their hundreds. Darren O’Connor, a third year marketing student at Aungier Street, is not happy.

“You have to draw the line somewhere. Smokers must be given their own space which, if they can smoke, I mean it’s crazy. You come back to college and you can smoke nowhere. Just give us a room outside buildings, yet rooms must be allocated for people who want to smoke. These rooms cannot facilitate the preparation of food, which means all college canteens must be non-smoking.

Aungier Street students’ Union president Paul Malone is also unhappy with the situation. “It can be very intimidating for anybody walking through the front doors, having to make their way through dozens of smokers”, he stated.

The issue of smoking has been brought up at the last faculty review meeting by Paul Malone and is hoping that by Christmas, DIT will have a definite solution to the problem. But this will be difficult as there seems to be no confusion on the present legislation.

Smoking is prohibited in all Government and public buildings in the country and is not permitted in this area. Also, given that the Government is running out of money, expect a price increase for cigarettes in December’s budget.
Dublin students' housing problems

By Colin McGann

STUDENTS looking for
accommodation in the Dublin area may once again have to fork out exorbitant sums to secure a place to live. The housing
boom comes following a new
doing by Dublin Institute of Technology.
The report, produced by the Society of Chartered Surveyors in association with DIT, found there will be a huge shortfall in the supply of new homes for Dublin. The research team from DIT's Faculty of the Built Environment, conducted a 12 month research programme. They concluded that "present housing policies are causing continued constraints on housing supply, with a negative impact on general affordability."
The huge shortfall in new home construction is still an issue and this new study is our second 'wake-up call' to government," states SCS president John Daly. "As long as supply production levels remain at 10,000 units per annum, the annual demand in excess of 15,000 new homes will continue to support the existing unaffordable house prices in the Dublin market."

Finding houses in Dublin has become a major problem for students to the extent that some now pay rent from the month of August onwards. Many students who go abroad for the Summer are left searching for accommodation well into October and November, time that should be spent meeting college deadlne.

Accommodation agencies provide another problem for students. Finding a house through "The Irish Times", "The Irish Herald," or other newspapers has become impossible and when resorting to agencies they are required to pay fees of up to 50 euro each to find a house. Over the last three years, rent for student accommodation has risen by almost a third. While the quality of student housing hasn't improved greatly, the price continues to rise. Brian Conneli, a Dublin student from Dundalk, has decided to move back to the country because of the cost taking him between an hour and a half and two hours to commute to college daily. "It seems crazy but the only house I could find was in the country and I could take me just as long. At least this way I'm not paying 80 euro a week on rents."

For the moment this report throws no light on the issue. Students will have to content with paying exorbitant rents for sub standard accommodation in order to avail of the privilege of going to college in Dublin.
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And we thought Haughey was bad

Donal Griffin investigates
French President Jacques Chirac’s shady history

Jacques Chirac has been around for a long time. So long, in fact, that it was he who led negotiations with the protesting students in France in the 1960’s.

He became Prime Minister in 1969. It’s difficult to tell exactly when the corruption began although his election as mayor of Paris in 1977 is a good place to start.

French mayors actually wield power, unlike their Irish equivalents, and nowhere is there more power than in Paris.

During his lengthy term of office (1977-1995), Chirac was involved in a massive kickback scheme for his RPR party. Public secondary schools in Paris in the 1980’s were badly in need of refurbishment. Chirac, as mayor, was responsible for choosing the best construction company for the job.

The Parisian population was three times that of Ireland in the 1980’s so the contracts would have been huge.

In order to find favour with the mayor, it seems all a company had to do was send him a sizeable backhander and the contract was theirs. Chirac was also party to a similar scheme involving the allocation of public housing contracts.

Irish people were disgusted by the revelations of Charles Haughey, not as bad as Jacques Chirac

Jacques Chirac - as corrupt as our very own Charlie Haughey

Haughey received over £2m in gifts but this took place over twenty years. In 1986, Chirac had a meeting with a group of characters looking for a public housing contract.

Five million francs, roughly £600,000, was passed across the table in order to secure the contract. This was not an exceptional payment; it was just common practice with Chirac.

Such amounts of money have been accounted for so an arrangement emerged between the donating firms and the RPR party. The firms would create fictitious jobs and pretend to hire members of the party.

Accounts would then show why there were vast sums of cash flowing towards the party and would cover the posteriors of all involved.

Chirac’s other means of disposing of the bribes was to spend it on family holidays, e.g. the 1991-1995, the Chiracs spent between 1992 and 1995.

Which certainly puts Charlie’s £511,000–splurge in the shade.

Like Haughey and Burke, Chirac has endured allegations about his corruption for most of his political life.

He probably thought nothing would come of the allegations until, in 1999, a political scandal rocked France.

Investigators had been sniffing around Chirac and the man who organised the kickback scheme. Jean-Claude Mery, for a couple of years. While under investigation, Chirac had been elected President of France. Mery, dying of cancer, made a taped confession and instructed his solicitor to send it to Le Monde, the largest French daily newspaper, after he died.

Unfortunately for the French prosecutors, who were probably salivating at the thought of finally nailing Chirac, the thorny issue of the French Constitution reared its head. According to

This brings us up to May 2002 when Chirac thought he would chance a second term of office (a cushy way of avoiding a nasty corruption trial).

French voters chose to eliminate the sleaze-free Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, after the first round of the Presidential Elections. 18% voted in favour of Jean Marie Le Pen, the anti-Semitic, Muslim-baiting leader of le Front National, who has called for all those born outside of France as well as their French-born children to be deported (roughly a quarter of the French population).

Donal Griffin investigates French President Jacques Chirac’s shady history

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Charles Haughey, not as bad as Jacques Chirac

Shocked by what they had allowed to happen, French voters rallied around Chirac for the second round and gave him 82% of the vote.

Chirac won’t have to face any investigations until 2007, at which stage he will be 74.

Five years is a long time in politics and the chances are he will have weathered the storm.

And we thought Haughey was bad.
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Gay pride for DIT students

Through the eyes of a student

Gay students should be able to feel free to express themselves, writes John Dunne

The DIT LGB society acts as a resource for anyone (regardless of orientation) who may find himself/herself in a situation they should not have to face alone.

The society has gone through various stages of activity from a quiet, almost subcultured society to a vibrant and dynamic society, winning 'most improved society' 2 years ago at the DIT Awards Night. In the past, the LGB has experienced a rocky and unsettling time, with peers and staff in DIT this could be viewed as discriminatory and offensive; highlighting the need for an LGB campaign to attack, and break the homophobia barrier that exists in the educational circle of life.

The Union of Students of Ireland launched a LGB campaign 2 weeks ago in an attempt to re-integrate the LGB movement in modern day colleges. It is sickening to hear of Galway's LGB "Pride" being spat at on club's roof days. We are very much aware that some people may not accept members but who asked for acceptance?

We ask for tolerance, tolerance in an ever-changing world.

On a personal note; when I first started coming to DIT in September 1998, I was not "out" but yet I knew I was gay from a very early age. Society stereotyped everyone as being 'straight' but this view has changed, the world is now more black and white but very much a vivid vibrant array of colour. I always remember the anti-gay slogans in the toilets and remember hearing people talking about such matters which made me hide in the box. 'If I told I said enough is enough. People don't care what way people are or who you hold hands with, or who you got to bed with, but some' narrow minded, ignorant people still perceive the gay in disgusting or offensive. What does it matter to you what someone else is in the privacy of their own home? As long as no civil laws are broken this matter should not need such aggression or not meet such hostility.

The ethos behind this society is to break down the stereotypical barriers and we are all guilty of stereotyping people from time to time. This society is open to anyone who wants to come along, sit, listen and talk to people. We actively welcome anyone, staff or student who wants to ask questions on any issue, to either contact the editor of the paper, or any of the students unions, or the society's organiser Anita Conway who can put you in touch with me, or the council.

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The USI campaign posters around college ask simple questions, the most effective is "If 1 in 10 are gay, how many gay people do you know, and are they afraid to tell you?"

?” Excuse me, could you tell me where the STD Clinic is?”

Visiting a Genital Urinary Medicine clinic is supposed to be a worthwhile experience and a vital move for anyone who has had one or more sexual partners. Joanne Burke braves the reality of an STD check-up

The appointment was the easiest part. A bond was signed. The receptionist handed over the form and directed me to the washroom. Yes, this is my first appointment. No, it's not an emergency. Yes, two weeks from Tuesday would be fine.

I tried the nearby Blood Testing Centre for directions. There, a friendly receptionist told me how to find the clinic, adding that it was the fifth person along the queue looking for the STI clinic.

STI? How many names can one reasonably remember? A few minutes later, I reached a white building with a large conservatory and a small discreet sign saying GUM Clinic.

The conservatory seemed to be the waiting room so I sat and took a ticket from the machine on the far left and waited. About ten people were waiting to be called. The queue moved quickly and was relieved when my turn was called. The silence was unnerving.

Condoms are a must when it comes to your protection and safety. The doctor was courteous, understanding and reassuring. I was told I could go back in the corridor around the corner until I was called.

"I was somewhat surprised to read a sign on the wall, which read 'A waiting time of at least two hours should be expected'. Once I had rounded the corner, I understood why. At least fifteen people lined the walls of the narrow corridor and a further ten or twelve sat on wooden chairs in a small rectangular waiting area. I settled against the wall for a long wait."

On the next hour and a half, I covertly scrutinised the activities of people waiting to be seen. I don't know what I had been reading.

"I know someone can be infected with a sexually transmitted infection but subconsciously I think I was expecting to see thin looking characters."

Despite the receptionist's assurances, any hopes of anonymity were dashed as nurses with clipboards rushed by calling out various names. Some people seemed to know where they were going; perhaps they were on their second or third visit. Others moved uncertainly, heads bent low.

Eventually, my name was called. I hurried after a young nurse who led me to a world of mystery. The Health Advisor was a dark haired woman in her thirties. Despite the fact that she probably had seen more than fifty people a day, she seemed calm and professional and actually reminded me at ease.

I told her that I just wanted to see a check-up, despite having no symptoms. I didn't feel that it was a time waster, so I was relieved when she told me I was doing the right thing and that I needed it more people did. I was thankful to be led immediately to another room where a young nurse carried out an examination.

Features

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November 2002

IT IS far from the Stonewall Marches of '69 with its needless physical violence and death that we find ourselves today, however, pockets of internalised homophobia do exist, both in college and in public.

It is a little over 10 days since posters went 'missing' in DIT Kevin St, and only 6 weeks since 3 gay men over a 2-week period were savagely beaten in Dublin's City Centre. This spate of intolerance rears its ugly head every few years. When students come to college irrespective of race, creed, socio-economic background, ability, disability of orientation, they should be able to feel free to express themselves in a manner they feel appropriate. They certainly shouldn't have to suffer any emotional/physical violence or intimidation.

Ireland and its political leaders boast so proudly of our 'equality' for all peoples, where is the equality when people suffer needlessly over the most privy of issues? If this were the case, people wouldn't have to hide their true lives and would not have to lie to parents, family and friends.

It should be made known that 1 in 3 teenagers suicides occurs due to homophobia. Sexual orientation should in no way be the prevailing factor in a person's life - it should only be a piece of the puzzle which happily co­habitantes with the person. Some feel the need to come out, some don't, and sadly it is very real fear revolves around the possibility of being "found out," some don't, and sadly it is very real fear revolves around "gay bashing".

It is a little over 10 days since posters went 'missing' in DIT Kevin St. I settled down in a small rectangular sitting area. I finally dawned on me that I was the fifth person along the queue looking for the STI clinic.

The ethos behind this society is to break down the stereotypical barriers and we are all guilty of stereotyping people from time to time. This society is open to anyone who wants to come along, sit, listen and talk to people. We actively welcome anyone, staff or student who wants to ask questions on any issue, to either contact the editor of the paper, or any of the students unions, or the society's organiser Anita Conway who can put you in touch with me, or the council. The USI campaign posters around college ask simple questions, the most effective is "If 1 in 10 are gay, how many gay people do you know, and are they afraid to tell you?"
By Sean Fay

What do you do for the summer? 

By now you've probably been asked "What did you do for the summer?" for the millionth time. Especially when you have spent the entire summer swimming with pigs and veins from pigs into a basin where a small child used to wash his hands. As a little girl, I used to dream of becoming a colonist and living in the scary and beautiful world of the colon. My life was filled with adventures and exciting stories.

But, alas, the dream of becoming a colonist was not meant to be. I realized that the harsh realities of life in the colonies were not worth the risk. I decided to stay home and continue my education.

So, what did I do for the summer? I spent the entire summer working at a track maintenance job. It was a grueling job, but I knew it was necessary to make ends meet. I was responsible for cleaning up after the horses and dogs, and it was not an easy task.

However, I took the job with the understanding that it was only temporary. I knew that I would eventually find a better job that would allow me to pursue my passion for writing and journalism. And that's exactly what happened.

I landed a job as a reporter for the local newspaper. It was a dream come true, and I couldn't be happier. I knew that this was the path I was meant to take, and I was determined to make it happen.

So, what do you do for the summer? How did you spend your time? I'd love to hear your stories.

The top five worst jobs - Graduates, beware!

1. Track Maintenance Worker

2. Performing in a pudding factory

3. Colonic Therapist

4. Artistic Insulation of Animals

5. Dream to Become a Colonist

Sometimes I feel that I have the worst job in the world.

However, I am grateful for the experiences that I have had. They have made me a stronger and more resilient person. And I know that I will continue to grow and learn from each new challenge that comes my way.

If you are a recent graduate and are feeling lost and overwhelmed, know that you are not alone. Many others have faced the same challenges and have come out stronger on the other side. Keep the faith and remember that the best is yet to come.
Garda image in trouble

The Morris tribunal has uncovered some horrifying allegations against the Gardaí, including alleged Gardaí involvement in the planting of bombs, the reported killing by two gardaí of cattle dealer Mr Richie Barron, and alleged Gardaí collusion in a terrorist explosion in Strabane.

The Tribunal has been set up to investigate alleged Garda corruption in Donegal and it is not assumed, uncover more as the projected two years of the tribunal go on.

It's hard to determine whether the most worrying of the allegations is the murder of cattle-trader Richie Barron, the explosion in which three people died, or the actual planting of bombs by members of the Gardaí. Or maybe it's the fact that serious allegations like these have been made against the Gardaí before.

In May of this year, it was alleged that the Gardaí had been given important information regarding the Omagh bombing.

The North's Police Ombudsman, Liam O'Croinin, told the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Brian Cowen, that she received information suggesting Gardaí failed to pass on information that might have helped to apprehend those planning the Omagh bombing.

It is alleged that a number of days before the bomb went off a informant told his Dublin-based handler that American dissidents, who had asked him to steal a car, told him they no longer needed it because they had already obtained one.

The Gardaí Commissioner, Pat Byrne, vehemently denied the claims, saying that they emanated from "mischievous sources." Everyone remembers last year's incidents on Dame Street in which anti-globalisation groups were involved in what amounted to a mini-riot.

Whether the protesters started the riot or not, the Gardaí behaved in an unacceptable manner. Some removed their badges and hats and any forms of identification and waded into the crowd, leaving most with headaches the next day, but leaving some with quite serious injuries.

They were criticised heavily by Civil Liberties groups. Freelaace journalists accused them of trying to cover up their actions by confiscating cameras and other equipment that was being used to document their actions.

There was the infamous Abbeylea incident, in which members of the Armed Response Unit shot dead Mullan's book "The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings" finally publishes its report.

Many people said that there was no need for John Carthy to have been fatally wounded. It was suggested that Carthy's actions were simply bravado and that there was no intention of actually shooting anyone.

It's hard to determine whether the most worrying of the allegations is the murder of cattle-trader Richie Barron, the explosion in which three people died, or the actual planting of bombs by members of the Gardaí.

John Carthy outside his farm. After a day-long siege at Carthy's farm in Abbeylea, Co. Longford, Carthy came out brandishing a gun and was shot by Gardaí.

After the incident, an inquiry was called to investigate the circumstances surrounding Carthy's death. The Gardaí were criticised for their actions.

The reputation of the Gardaí Síochána has suffered in the last number of years, and is about to suffer more, according to Barry J. Whyte.

By Cian O'Sullivan

WHAT is it that students are looking for from their college canteens? There is a very simple answer: good, cheap food. It's just unfortunate that these two things so rarely go together in Dublin, the most expensive city in Europe. For the next few issues of the DIT Independent, we will be critically assessing all the canteens in the six major DIT faculties, to see if any of them manage to eat properly to their (let's face it) captive audiences.

The challenge is this: how much food can I get for a fiver? I want to see what the quantity and quality of food will be if I spend less than five euro, and whether or not I can get a drink along with the food as well.

The Aungier St. canteen is the first to be examined. There have been major changes in this part of DIT since last year, including the opening of a huge new block of classrooms and the addition of a deli and Starbucks-style coffee shop, but the main attraction here is the still the canteen in the old section of the building.

The atmosphere is slightly better than last year, given that smoking has been banned, so it's pleasant enough to eat there, despite the way that it looks like a hospital ward.

A major advantage the Aungier St. canteen has is its water cooler. For the true penny-pincher, there is free, cold water to go along with any meal you eat, although it did not settle well.

For my part, I ordered the beef burger with side-salad and chips, for just under 4 euro, and because of the free drink, I was able to beef it up with some salad on the side. Now, that's plenty of food, even without the salad. I could have bought a coffee instead, and still have had plenty of food in just the burger and chips. So, Aungier St. does well on the quantity side.

Unfortunately, the quality wasn't so good. The chips were underdone, the salad was soggy, and the burger was cold. It filled me up, but it did not settle well.

I was delighted when I was finished, and if you're looking for a large, cheap meal, you could do much worse than Aungier St.

Still, I'd rather have gone for a Burdock's.
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Is Ariel Sharon’s government about to collapse?

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process appears to have come to a halt with Ariel Sharon’s government on the verge of collapse. Sharon’s survival is likely to be precarious, in the face of continuous pressure from the right to step up military action against the Palestinians, writes Aisling Casey.

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Ariel Sharon faces a tough battle in the coming months.

The level of government funding for Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, Labor leader Binyamin Ben-Eliezer threatened to quit the governing coalition unless the money allocated for the settlers was instead spent on social programmes.

However it seems his intentions may not have been entirely based on the interest of the people but rather a popularity trail.

Critics, believe Mr Ben-Eliezer took such a strong stand in an effort to gain popular support ahead of his party’s primary elections on 17 November.

However, according to Sharon’s camp the only rivalry comes in the form of Binyamin Netanyahu, whose tactics against the Palestinians would be even more hard-nosed. Recent opinion polls indicate that Sharon and Netanyahu are neck in neck in their quest for power, leaving Sharon hot under the collar.

As for any impact on the peace process, there has been little movement for some time now. When Labor joined the coalition, a number of its members argued that the party would provide a moderating force that could help the political process move forward with the Palestinians.

However the feeling in Israel is that there can be no negotiations unless the Palestinian leadership end attacks by militants.

People often ask why Israel’s governments tend to appear fragile. Well there are several reasons but the most important and most historical is the result of the proportional representation system in Israel.

With no party ever winning a majority in parliament, the system encourages the growth of sectional parties, which are then given a disproportional voice in matters of government.

Now that Labor have exited the government, US efforts to win support for a three-phase peace plan that envisions a provisional Palestinian state by 2003 and full independence by 2005 are severely damaged.

How Ariel Sharon will cope over the next few months may well be played out against the backdrop of a US war with Iraq that could bring even more unrest to Israel.

With tense leadership battles within the main parties and a looming general election any progress toward a peaceful resolution is certainly on the back burner.

This political turbulence threatens not only to cause difficulty in moves to deal with the country’s worst-ever-economic crisis, but also in world efforts to end the violence allied with the two year Palestinian intifada.

As well as that, political rows may well be played out against the backdrop of a US war with Iraq that could bring even more unrest to Israel.

With early elections now inevitable, the battle is now on to gain popular support for each party.

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Early elections are certainly a problem for Sharon. Firstly he has failed to fulfill his election promise to provide security for the Israeli’s and secondly he needs more time to fight off stiff competition.

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How Ariel Sharon will cope over the next few months to gain popular is unclear, however for the people of Israel and the Palestinians any chance of peace is on the brink of destruction.
It's a 'Bel of a Ball

By Maria O'Connell and Ciara O'Connor

A festive night of revelry was in the air as DIT broke the trend by producing an event that was profitable, enjoyable and economical on the pocket. Students oozed from their fragile dwellings and put on their most beloved grant money to take part in what is quickly becoming one of the trendiest nights of the year, the Halloween Ball. While some still regard Halloween as a night for building huge fires and the odd satanic ritual pet laying, it was clear that the ball was set to be a thriller.

One eager beaver at the top of the queue was Sarah Campbell (or was that Supergirl), studying at Kevin Street. "It said on my ticket doors to Club Anabel opened at 7pm this Thursday, as DIT broke the trend by producing an event that was profitable, enjoyable and economical on the pocket. Students oozed from their fragile dwellings and put on their most beloved grant money to take part in what is quickly becoming one of the trendiest nights of the year, the Halloween Ball. While some still regard Halloween as a night for building huge fires and the odd satanic ritual pet laying, it was clear that the ball was set to be a thriller.

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I t's just me, or are student nights supposed to be sloppy beer-fuelled events? The only place where you dance shamelessly to S Club 7 and wake up with an overwhelming aftertaste of burger. Not anymore. 'Spirit' on Middle Abbey St. home to 'The Highline Stage', has reinvented yuppie chic with its student nights Thursdays. From the white-velveted bouncer to the comparatively steep €10 admission price, it is clear that Spirit attempts to lift itself above the standardized student haven. The venue operates on three floors. The ground floor presents a hyper-trendy bar with lots of seating and a small dance-floor area set up against a wall of flashing blue-led panels. Unfortunately, the silhouette effect of this paved floor presents a claustrophobic and as my claustrophobic friend Keith eloquently put it; "It's small!" Combined with the immeasurable style on display, it felt like an audition for 'Popstars' series 8 (or whatever the latest count is), and left this level somewhat intimidating.

In keeping with the 'Stella Artois' mastra of 'Reassuringly Expensive', a bottle costs €5.15. However, there are various student deals from week to week. This week a 'Sex on the Beach' was €2, although it seems to have been prepared in roughness rather than mixers. Each such was the demand for the stuff and was decidedly unfruity. There was also a cocktail available for €2. Worryingly, the bouncer was unsure of how to classify it.

Temple Theatre Vs Spirit

At the front of Dublin's thriving student scene are the Temple Theatre and novel eccentri club Spirit.

Deirdre Reynolds and Claire McKay visit both and see where best to spend that coveted boozey budget

Olympia blown sky high by JJ72

By Clara Cunnane

Tonight is the last and most important show in the Irish leg of JJ72's tour. This is the band's home venue so it will always be resonant for them and the many fans that attended tonight.

The singing in HMV earlier today gave JJ72 a chance to meet and greet tonight's audience; perhaps this is why their rapport with the crowd is much more relaxed than usual.

First though, is support from Melaton, which is well received by everyone, much to the band's surprise and delight. The mood is euphoric by the time JJ take to the stage, and the highly charged ambiance continues throughout the show. The majority of the set list consists of spiritual 'I To Sky' material, and hence the hectic rushing characteristic of previous shows is largely absent. The new songs sound even denser and more textured than on the record, aided by an added guitarist/keyboardist. 'Serpent Sky' and 'City' see Mark in his element, as he spits out the chorus with a clenched face in time with a screeching guitar. However, these are exceptions as the majority of the set list is emotive and sincere.

Among these, classics from the eponymous debut are thrown in to keep us happy. Although, calls for 'Long Way South' are stubbornly ignored.

Highlight of the night is the encore, when a frantic jam culminates in Mark pogoing into centre stage and collapsing to the floor, holding his reverberating guitar aloft while Fergal and Hilary sustain momentum. Even after they leave the stage, the front man lies on his back as the song fades into feedback and the crowd goes crazy applauding. An appropriate finish to an inspiring night.
Effervescent sound in still water

Melaton 'Still Water' EP
By Lauren Molloy

Dublin band Melaton have released their second, internet only EP 'Still Water'. The four track EP produced by Grammy award-winning engineer Richard Rainey adds a new dimension to the Melaton repertoire, and truly brings the band into their own.

Described as a tangle of glorious contradictions, Melaton release this EP with all its ethereal complexities, combining the mellow, eerie beauty of 'Burning Bush' and the gorgeous guitar lines of 'Still Water' with a song writing verse that is all their own.

The band revolves around the magnetic forces of lead singer Luke Scott whose haunting impact is overwhelmingly reminiscent to that of Jeff Buckley.

The band is one of Ireland's hottest new prospects, and this internet only EP is released in homage to their fans and is available to download exclusively from the bands website www.melatonmusic.com. The EP is angry as it is elegant, and is a real indication of what Melaton are capable of.

David Gray - A New Day at Midnight
By Eoin Murphy

I HATE to say it but it seems that if its not broken don't fix it. David Gray has been rehashing the same album for four years and gaining himself demi stardom. Then what does he do but go and record a new album. Was it worth the wait? God no.

From the moment you hear the first track and first single 'Dead on the Water,' you realise that little has changed and that dreary tone that you hoped had been long since banished has returned with a vengeance. Sadly as the album went on, I didn't lose this feeling. Most of the songs, particularly 'Long Distance Call,' 'Freedom' and 'Kangaroo' could easily have been on 'White Ladder' and no amount of head shaking or anglo-saxon warbling can change this.

The only major change that has occurred since 1998's album is that the lyrics have become much darker. 

"there's nothing here to hold me now and I've got no more tears to cry...we're running through a world that's lost its meaning"). The death of Gray's father has clearly influenced the mood and Gray himself has said that the album is about loss. So what of David Gray in the whole? Well for a man who is producing his sixth album you would think that he would have grasped the knack by now, yet sadly trial and error is a method he has not quite grasped. I don't think this album is worth the one cent a minute it costs to download this off the internet.

Pirate station release treasured album

Phantom - Volume 1
By Aoiilaine Dunne

PHANTOM FM pride themselves on "broadcasting rock and indie music to the world from Dublin." They have compiled this album of eighteen highly-requested songs which have defined the station over the years.

This EP represents a collection of songs, an attempt to celebrate the success of Phantom FM. This is an EP produced by Grammy award-winning artists, such as PJ Harvey, Radiohead and Massive Attack seem like more obvious choices. Our own music scene is well represented here too, with the likes of Bubedfish and The Frames sitting comfortably alongside Jeff Buckley and Fun Lovin' Criminals. If you're a fan of Phantom FM then you won't be disappointed with this album, I don't like all of the songs here (particularly 'To the Bright and Shining Sun' by the Walls which I HATE) but most of 'Volume 1' is well worth listening to. Phantom hope to release one of these albums every year so this is a positive start to what looks like being a good series of CDs. There's nothing new here, but as a collection of songs it'd be a much better choice than "Bizar Acid House Beatz 2002" or something along those lines.

David Gray - A New Day at Midnight

A New Day at Midnight

（The Guardian）

No More Silent Nights

Aqualung

Aqualung

Aqualung featuring the beautiful
"I Put A Spell On You"
"Think Radiohead before they got difficult, or Coldplay with less complemacy"
(Independent)

See Aqualung live at the Point on December 6

Missy Elliott

Under Construction

Under Construction featuring the brilliant
new single "Work It" and tracks with Beyonce Knowles, TLC, Jay- Z and many more

Die Another Day

Die Another Day

OST

Enhanced CD featuring Madonna "Die Another Day" and the Paul Oakenfold "James Bond Theme Remix" and loads of extras.

Polyphonic Spree

The Beginning Stages Of

featuring "Hanging Around" and "Soldier Girl".

"Best described as Mercury Rev turned into a Hare Krishna orchestra playing Paul McCartney...it's irresistibly, overwhelmingly joyous."
(Independent)

"So who are The Polyphonic Spree? Buggeder if we know. Buggeder if we care. Whatever they are, they're amazing." (NME)
Harry is top of the Pots

By Eoin Murphy

PARENTS will be delighted this year with the release of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, the film that has been in production for four years. The director of the film is Chris Columbus, who directed the previous Potter film, Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone. The film is set in the fictional world of Harry Potter, created by J.K. Rowling, and follows the adventures of Harry Potter, a young wizard who attends Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. In this film, Harry and his friends must face the challenges of the Chamber of Secrets, which is said to be the location of the Dark Arts. The film features an all-star cast, including Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint, who play Harry, Hermione, and Ron, respectively. The film is a masterful piece of cinema with an extremely varied and talented cast from a timeless storyline. The film is a must see for Potter fans and for those who are new to the world of Harry Potter. The film is highly recommended for all ages.
Senior Football - Higher Education Gaelic Football League Division 1
Marrinan inspires long awaited win

By Seamus Reilly
DIT 1-13
TRINITY COLLEGE 4-9

On a blustery October day in Ballymitty, pride was finally restored to the long suffering DIT senior Gaelic football team with a superb win against Trinity College. With only two years to their regular players from last year's team, and just the bare 15 altogether, DIT dug deep into their reserves of skill, courage and determination to produce a truly remarkable upset in this league.

Playing with a diagonal breeze, DIT showed their resolve right from the throw in, quickly taking control of the game. By half-time their new found form was well shown as they led by 0-6 to 0-3.

In the past such a slender lead at the break would usually be the ideal for DIT to slip back into their defensive shell in the hope of hanging on. However this performance was very different.

DIT edge out DCU in tight encounter
DIT 0-16
DCU 0-15

In a dogged, resilient performance DIT followed up their victory over Trinity with a superb win against a star studded DCU side in Longmeadows.

Buoyed by an early win at the weekend, DIT started with poise from Carlton, Marrinan and a magnificent shot from the bar by Gabriel Prior, setting up comfortably in the midfield for the injured Hugh McNerney. Stephen Bray and Derek McCormack slotted frees from every angle and distance to merciless unindisciplined and leave departures leading by 0-9 to 0-3 on the half hour.

However, the last minute of the first half finally fortuitous for DCU. They were awarded a soft free that was kicked off the corner from the kick-out their corner forward latched onto which he sent crashing into the net.

Lesser teams would surely have crumbled, as DCU's team much was everything (including their International Rules goalkeeper) at DIT.

However, DIT battled stubbornly.

In defence, time and again Duffy, McCormack, McGrath, Faughnan, Smyth, Hanafin came out with balls they had no right to win. So often in this game DCU were forced to give away possession or overcarry the ball.

Meanwhile snipers Bray, McCormack, Carlton, Doyle, Marrinan and McCaughey were easily picking off easy points despite playing off minimum possession. Despite intense DCU pressure DIT managed to maintain their composure and discipline.

FRESHERS' managers Barney Rock and Reilly still have a lot of work to do if they are to improve the fortunes of the team as DIT succumbed to a very disappointing defeat to a solid DCU team.

DCU were extremely disappointing winners on the day as they too easily outjuggled DIT, taking points far too easily. Inexperienced players like Willie Murphy was the inspiration behind the Northsiders win, at the centre of every move. His creativity, combined with the turning kicking of Sean Burke ensured DCU were always in a commanding position.

The fact that this was the DIT players' first game was glaringly obvious as they lacked cohesion and organisation. Both parties were pressing for signs of Rock and Reilly. For short periods of the game it managed to press, to hit the DCU back line, while both Damien Smyth and John Doyle put in solid performances. The game began ominously as DCU were DCU stormed into a three point lead after only five minutes. DCU looked like they were taken apart as they gave up no space at the back and showed a great deal of imagination up front.

However, having established their lead the Northsiders began to relax too much and allowed DCU to enjoy their best spell of the match.

It was Damien Smyth who first exploited this, breaking through on the left and forcing an excellent save from DCU goalkeeper John Coughlan. DIT finally got their first point when Colm Maguire kicked off the right. Then in the fifteenth minute went into the lead with a brilliantly worked goal.

DIT followed up their impressive win against Athlone with a creditable draw to move up the table. Although the day was disappointing Athlone side at VEC Terenure.

DIT were always in control as they cut through Athlone's defence with ease and never let the Kilkenny midfielders Martin Phelan was outstanding in midfield, scoring the most points on the day. There were also fine performances from Dublin centre-back Sean O'Connor and Westford full back Kieran Pampoe.

UCD 1-8
DIT 1-8

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DUBLIN UNDER 21 CHAMPIONSHIP
DIT 0-16
DUBLIN UNDER 21 CHAMPIONSHIP
DIT 4-11 Cumbria 3-7

DIT are through to the quarter finals of the Dublin Under 21 Championship after a stunning win over Cumbria in the semi-final at Parnell Park.

Kildare were eliminated by DIT's inspiration on the day, scoring eight points. DIT however had to contend with fellow DITman Declan Gormley who was Cummock's team scorer.

Dublin man Joyce scored the equalising point as DIT's Freher's against UCD only a few days beforehand.

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DIT were always in control as they cut through Athlone's defence with ease and never let the Kilkenny midfielders Martin Phelan was outstanding in midfield, scoring the most points on the day. There were also fine performances from Dublin centre-back Sean O'Connor and Westford full back Kieran Pampoe.

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SPORT

Last minute winner ends DIT’s frustration

DIT 1-0 NCI
By Jason Burke

DIT’s seconds left it very late before winning their challenge match against NCI at the Aveis Grounds. Having missed a host of chances, they finally secured victory through a last minute header from Marks Henning.

Conditions were perfect and both teams slowly settled into a passing game on the excellent surface. The first chance fell to DIT following a mistake in the NCI defense. DIT forward Steven O’Toole intercepted Paul Grant’s attempted ball across his own box. He played it to his strike partner Derek Lynch whose low shot was comfortably saved.

DIT began to take a grip on the game and on 25 minutes the NCI keeper had to be sharp to smother at O’Toole’s feet. O’Toole then played a one-two with right back Graham Corran, whose deep cross was well cleared, Corran proved to be a good outlet for DIT throughout the game.

DIT should have taken the lead in the final five minutes of the half. O’Toole latched on to a long ball and was denied by the feet of NCI defender Colin Loughley. A minute later, Loughley was only able to parry a McAleer shot and the resulting cross rebounded to Corran whose shot was well blocked. NCI manager Ger Whitehead could see his side fortunate to go in level at the break.

As the game wore on NCI managed to get their wingers into the game. In the 65th minute Neil McConville skipped past two challenges before been taken down on the edge of the box. Paul Fitzgerald cleared the resulting free kick, Fitzgerald, along with Conor McGlynn at the heart of the DIT defense, dominated everything in the air.

DIT seemed the likeliest to break the deadlock and with 15 minutes to go, Corran and Goverin combined well down the right and Goverin sent in a deep cross. O’Toole headed the cross back across goal but agonisingly there was nobody there to meet it.

In a frantic last ten minutes both teams had chances to win the game. NCI nearly bagged the goal they so desperately needed after good work down the left by Gary Brophy.

His low cross was just inches too far in front of Phillip Riordan who was unable to get on it. Two minutes later NCI had their best chance. Brophy’s cleared an excellent through ball by Mick Roche. His pace took him beyond the DIT defense but he shot wide of the far post.

Just as it looked as if DIT would pay for their inability in front of goal. Henning popped up at a corner to send a glancing header into the far corner of the net. It was the goal DIT had deserved but the relief was all too clear when it eventually came.


NCI: Colin Loughley, Mick McNamara, Pat Grant, Simon Dallin, Gary Brophy, Neil McConville, Phillip Riordan, Conor Berney, Robert Berigan, Mick Roche, Will Murphy, Mark Mc Liam, Nick Taff.

Referee: Ian Bradley

DIT in action against NCI at the aveis grounds

Athletics
Intervarsity Road Relays on the 16th November in Maynooth, men & women’s teams, 5 per team - 1 mile, 2 mile, 3 mile. 2 mile and 1 mile legs.

If you are interested in competing for the Institute, contact Herbie on 087-2245907.

Ladies Rugby
10-a-side rugby league organised for third level college, first round fixtures commence weekend ending 8th November.

Any ladies interested in playing rugby this year contact Niamb on 087-2985849 for further details.

Tennis
Coaching lessons every Thursday in Leinster Sports Centre, Rathmines from 3 to 7pm. Contact Colin on 087-961521 for further information.

Basketball
Recreational hour for students who don’t want to play competitively with the college teams in Larkin College Sports Hall at 5:45pm. Contact Niamb on 087-2985849 for details.

Rugby
The squad will this year be competing in the Irish Colleges Rugby Union Division 2 league.

Squash
Squash classes every second Thursday in Phoenix Squash Club from 7 to 9pm. Contact Pellett Clarke on 040429509 for further details.

Martial Arts
Check sports and recreation activities timetable for martial arts activities, clubs include: Kempo Karate, Shotokan Karate, Wushu Ryu, Taekwon-do & Jujo.

Volleyball
Training will commence on Monday 4th November in Belvedere Sports Hall from 5 to 7pm. Galway Mixed Blitz 23rd & 24th November - 6 players on a team, 3 men & 3 women.

Squash
Squash classes every second Thursday in Phoenix Squash Club from 7 to 9pm. Contact Pellett Clarke on 040429509 for further details.

Waterpolo
Training session every Monday in DIT Keven Street Pool from 7 to 9pm. The Irish national waterpolo team will supervise the training sessions.

Any interested can contact Dermot at 087-9017862. This is your paper and we’d love to hear from you!

DIT Basketball Report
Ladies aiming for title
By Dermot Kavanagh

The season is now well under way for all of DIT’s Basketball teams, and the players are picking up where they left off last year.

Both the girls’ and men’s teams began their league campaigns this month and all eyes were on them to see how they started.

The girls played their first game away to St Vincent’s in Glasnevin. Coach Karl Finn had every confidence in his team as the match began a fast pace which suited the younger DIT side. Their nerves did show in the first half, and DIT found themselves trailing by 6-4.

However, thanks to the fast counter attacks of Lisa Maher and Patricia Howell, DIT started the second half in fine fashion and managed to pull themselves back into the game.

The strong defensive work of Niamh Griffin managed to counter Vincent’s height advantage, while the efficient boarding by Cathy Molloy meant DIT were well managed for the game.

With Alice Heffernan leading the scoring, DIT emerged victorious at the final whistle.

The girls travelled to Ennis next week where there was another home game against Ennis. However despite a poor showing midway through the second half when DIT’s player coach Careeat Gorse unfortunately suffered an injury.

Thanks to some good coaching calls though she managed to reshuffle DIT’s defence and still Killester’s attack.

DIT also won the opposition and it finished a comfortable 51-36.

With Heffernan and Molloy putting in consistently good performances, combined with strong play off the bench from Sarah Dallin, DIT girls look like they will be hard to beat again this year. They can rightly see themselves as favourites for the title.

The men’s team meanwhile are having to adjust to a higher level of opposition having stepped up two divisions this season. Their first game of the season was the difficult task of St Marks, a team who finished in the top three last season.

However, thanks to the meticulous preparation of Ronan O’Holohan over the previous weeks, the men rose to the challenge.

The game was very physical with rebounding a major factor. John Norris had good games under the boards as captain Alan Gunning racked up point after point. Putting in some overall team performance, DIT ended up with a narrow but deserved 68-64 victory.

It was Danny Bates though who could claim man of the match. His control over the floor was the inspiration behind the victory.

The men’s college team are anxious to face their next opponents. They have some tough games coming up, starting this weekend at Maynooth and RCSI in the next month, before they face the big boys of Trinity and DCU after Christmas and show them how to play their game.

As club of the year last year DIT basketball has proven very popular this year, but still welcomes new members to play.

The club this year has more potential than ever and is becoming very competitive and great to be involved in.

Anyone interested can contact Dermot at 087-9017862.
Harrington aiming high

By Darragh Clifford

IT IS a question often asked. Who is Ireland's greatest sports star? The answer changes on a regular basis. Through the years it has been sportsmen like Ronnie Delaney, George Best, Eamon Coughlan, Sean Kelly, Paul McGrath and so on.

But now? People like Adil Rami, Brian O'Sullivan, DJ Carey and Keith Wood are definite contenders. Over the past year though, it has become clear that Dublin's Padraig Harrington is a step above the rest. And he shows no sign of letting up.

Harrington is currently ranked number six in the world; the highest an Irish golfer has ever been. At time of print, Harrington was gearing up to go head-to-head with South Africa's Retief Goosen for the coveted title of European Tour Order of Merit winner at the end of the season. The last Irish golfer to win the order of merit was Roman Rafferty back in 1989.

Harrington embodies everything that is good about professional sport. When he failed to sign his card properly at the Benson and Hedges Masters in 1999, he took disqualification with the utmost grace. The fact that he was leading the tournament by three strokes makes it all the more remarkable.

The 2001 season was the crunch year for Harrington. He had been improving steadily, but lacked that killer punch. Throughout the year, he finished runner-up no less than seven times. He was beginning to be known as the bridesmaid of golf.

All that changed in November of 2001 at the Volvo Masters in Montecastillo, Spain. There, Harrington sunk a 20-foot putt on the 18th green to win Europe's showcase tournament. Suddenly, Harrington was a real force in the world of golf.

At the start of this season, Harrington was ranked 11th in the world. Excellent. Harrington had one of the strongest defences in the world. Amazing. And the young Irishman had another championship in his cabinet. Harrington was climbing the ranks steadily.

Harrington received some unqualified criticism after the British Open, which was won by Ernie Els. Standing on the 18th tee, Harrington was six under, two behind Els, who was playing the 14th. Harrington took a risk and used his driver, but ended up in one of the many bunkers at Muirfield.

He bogeyed the last to drop six under, he would have qualified for the play-off. Had he blown it? Those who said yes missed the point. Standing on the 18th, Harrington knew he was two behind Els. Nothing less than a birdie would do. He gambled, but lost. For now.

In the history of golf, only three players have been capable of winning everything without actually learning how to lose first. They were Jack Nicklaus, Seve Ballesteros and Tiger Woods.

So many other golfers, like Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson, Nick Faldo and Greg Norman, learned to lose before they started winning. Harrington now has the game to win a major or two over the next couple of years.

At present, Harrington is going through a purple patch. He played a key role in Europe's victory over the USA in the Ryder Cup. His performance during Sunday's singles match against Mark Calcavecchia was simply superb.

A week later at the Dunhill Links Championship at St Andrews, Harrington won by defeating Eduardo Romero on the second play-off hole. The manner in which he won was outstanding.

He sunk a 15-foot downhill putt on the 18th to force a play-off. On the second extra hole he sunk a ten-foot putt to win the title and a cheque for $500,000.

Last week at the Italian Open he put three disappointing rounds behind him by carding a final round 63 to close the gap on Order of Merit leader Retief Goosen to just £231,119. With a prize fund of over £3 million at stake at the Volvo Masters, a single stroke between the two players could mean all the difference. But win or lose at Valderrama, one thing is clear. Harrington is the leading sports personality this country has at the moment. Who knows what will happen next year. Tiger Woods presenting Harrington with the winner's Green Jacket at Augusta maybe?

By Claran Murray

DESPITE their mixed display in the Champions League, Liverpool's doggedness and consistency in the Premier League have seen them poll clear at the top. Currently four points ahead of nearest chasers Arsenal, and eight ahead of a struggling United side, Liverpool seem to finally have the wherewithal to mount a serious title challenge.

Houllier has done a remarkable job in rebuilding a struggling side into a formidable and resilient force, since taking over as sole manager in December 1999. Lacking the dynamism and creative flair of the two teams directly below them in the table, Houllier's strategy has compensated by building the strongest, most tenacious squad in the league.

Houllier's team has been levelled against Liverpool all season, always being marked, happy to soak up pressure and use the outlet of Michael Owen's pace to launch counter-attacks..Valid criticisms. Certainly, from the relative clarity of a neutral's perspective, Liverpool are rarely an entertaining side to watch.

Liverpool seem to be getting away with what Arsenal were hated for ten or twelve years ago being a dull, over-defensive team of battlers with little attacking ambition. And certainly, like that Arsenal side, Liverpool have the strongest defence in the league.

Hoeness is over-rated, and has an alarming tendency to handle the ball in the penalty area, which he generally gets away with. Hypocritically, however, is Magath, a real mountain of a player in the centre of defence.

In the centre of midfield, the determination of Gerrard and the high work rate of Diao Huang ensures that very little gets through.

Houllier has developed Liverpool's squad to the extent that it is arguably the strongest in the country with the nucleus of playing in the Premiership and the Champions League than Manchester United. In this noted cover is lacking in attack. Despite Houllier's nagging, protests to the contrary, the side struggles badly when Owen is unavailable. Why? Emile Heskey never fails to make it into Liverpool's starting eleven. The greatest spoiling mystery of the modern era. Whether as a striker who can't score or make goals, or as a winger who can't cross or dribble, Heskey's continued inclusion in this side defies logic. He's a big, powerful lad, granted, but this is football, not boxing.

The young Czech Milan Baros looks good for the £3.5m the club bought him for.

His strength and speed, added to his killer instinct in front of goal give him an edge lacking in Heskey. Seregnese isolated international El Hadji Diouf is entertaining enough, to watch but rarely effective.

The decision by Liverpool to let go of Jari Litmanen during the season seemed an odd one. They may yet live to regret it. The one thing the club lacks badly is a creative attacking player. It has also been argued that there is too big a gap between their midfield and the front line (much like Bergkamp does at Arsenal) and his vision and creativity would not go amiss in the current Liverpool side. Whether Liverpool can maintain their challenge over the course of the season depends on whether or not they can keep their key players fit. They will probably end the season with the best defensive record in the Champions League. At the other end, they will need to keep Owen away from the treatment table.

This could prove difficult, should they progress to the knockout stages of the Champions League, with the increasing workload that entails. They are certainly hungry enough to go the distance, however, and that could well prove decisive.

"Boring, boring Liverpool!"

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