2013


DIT News Society

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DIT could need bailout without shops on GG campus

Low reserve funds in SU accounts could mean a loan would be needed for winding up of shops, according to president Glenn Fitzpatrick.

Legacy of shops' debt continues its hold over DITSU finances

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Survey aims to clear the smoke

DITSU to survey students on whether to implement a wider ban on cigarettes in DIT

Conor Campbell

A student survey will take place this week or next over a possible smoking ban across DIT, according to Fiachra Duffy, VP for welfare for DITSU. The survey will ask students separately whether they would support a smoking ban on current DIT campuses and whether they would like a smoking ban to be imposed on the future Grangegeorge campus as of its opening.

Smoking is, of course, already banned inside all public buildings in Ireland, but the proposed ban would mean that smoking would be disallowed on any DIT owned property, inside or out.

As of the last general meeting, DIT-SU was evenly split on whether to disallow smoking entirely or to maintain the current policy of designated smoking areas.

Based on evidence from other third tier institutions around Dublin, however, the results of a student survey could be very different.

“We have the results from Trinity and UCD,” Duffy told The Edition, adding that both colleges voted in favour of a smoking ban at opposed to designated smoking areas.

As such, Duffy is confident that he will be able to “guide policy and guide decisions better from the results of a survey”.

While the survey will be primarily focused on whether a smoking ban should be implemented across DIT campuses, it will also ask about other aspects of smoking culture.

“One of the questions we are going to be asking students is “Are you a smoker? How often do you smoke? Would you like to quit?”” said Duffy, adding that “if a student is thinking of quitting, we should be encouraging them in that direction”.

Regardless of how the survey pans out, there may be problems in implementation.

The current policy of designated smoking areas is often flouted around the DIT campuses, with smokers often congregating outside the front of Aungi-er street’s campus, as well as on other campuses, despite clear warning signs.

Additionally, the proposed new ban on using electronic cigarettes indoors, as highlighted in The Edition (Issue Three, the 6th of November), has yet to be ratified following the deferral of a health and safety sub-committee meeting, and its implementation remains unclear.

Glenn Fitzpatrick is still finalising the dates of the smoking questionnaire, but the survey will most likely take place this week and possibly continue into next week if needed.

Drink can lead to break-ups

After USI ended its relationship with DrinkAware.ie, DITSU will ask the Student Council whether they should follow the same route

Al McConnell

Following USI’s decision to end its relationship with industry-funded responsible drinking body DrinkAware.ie, DITSU will be putting it to the students in semester two on whether to maintain dealings with the organisation.

The decision was made at USI National Council earlier this month, based on the widespread criticism of DrinkAware.ie’s effectiveness as an industry self-regulator. The group is funded by the drinks industry, including major corporation Diageo, owners of Guinness and the body behind Arthur’s Day.

DITSU remains free to link with DrinkAware.ie for the moment, though signals from sabbatical of the welfare officer are clear that they do not wish to engage with the organisation.

Duffy, who made his openness to a re-relationship with DrinkAware.ie known to Student Council personnel in a recent meeting, and its implementation remains unclear.

“Would you like to quit?” said Duffy, adding “If a student is thinking of quitting, we should be encouraging them in that direction”.

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DIT's a circus

Rebecca Brannigan

Circus and Juggling Soc

The National Circus Festival of Ireland was held in Tralee from November 15 to 17. The three day event happens around the same time every year and was once called the Tralee Circus Festival but has only been the National Circus Festival of Ireland for the past two years.

The festival is jam-packed with things for all the family to enjoy, from workshops in the convention hall to shows in the local theatre; there is something to entertain everyone. DIT itself had over 50 students representing The DIT Circus and Juggling Society along with several members of the DIT Samba Society.

The festival is the first trip away of the year for the Circus and Juggling Society, as there are a few different festivals and conventions on throughout the year around the country, including the European Juggling Convention which will take place in Cork in summer 2014.

The circus acts performing were of a high caliber and from all over the world, which brought many different cultures and themes together. These artists not only performed but most also taught a workshop at one time or another in the convention hall during the three-day event.

The highlights of the Festival this year were when the entire main street of Tralee was closed for a few hours so that a show could take place in the street, and when the chairman for the Circus and Juggling Society, got up on stage and had his chest waxed for DIT’s chosen charity Barretstown. He raised over €300 in a few hours.

The atmosphere at the festival was lively and energetic from the convention hall to the street performance and open stage. All in all the weekend was well worth the trip.

The Dare2BDrinkAware competition has been heavily criticised by DITSU president Glenn Fitzpatrick

Credit: DrinkAware.ie

Any decision on the relationship between DITSU and DrinkAware.ie will rest with VP for welfare Fiachra Duffy, who made his openness to a rethink of the second semester clear to The Edition, as well as questioning a decision by the drinks body not to come onto DIT campuses as part of the ‘Welfare November Vice Week’, which cited a lack of resources as the key factor.

DrinkAware.ie has defended its position, and told The Edition that it would be happy to engage with DITSU and Student Council over the USI decision and future cooperation.
No consensus yet on Academic Calendar

Discussions continue over whether to hold exams before Christmas, after, or a week either side

Al McConnell
Editor

The future structure of DIT’s academic calendar, including when exams take place, remains in doubt as discussions between students, DITSU and the college seem to have reached an impasse.

No date has been set for a final decision on next year’s calendar, with three options currently on the table. One includes exams before Christmas, another has exams after the holidays, and a more recent plan from the college shows the same split in opinions between students, DITSU and the Academic Calendar Implementation Committee. Several are still in the process of compiling a report, but the Engineering & Built Environment, Science & Health, and Conservatory of Music & Drama reports demonstrate the same split in opinion.

A change to the current calendar has been proposed by DITSU since 2011, in the hope of improving retention rates. DITSU are now surveying student opinion on the calendars, but if no majority of desires can be found through these processes, it is likely that the status quo will remain. The future structure of DIT’s academic calendar has been ongoing for over three years, Dempsey continued.

The current calendar has been in operation for at least five years. Another factor in the debate will be a formal response from the TYI on calendar reorganisation, which is expected at the next Committee meeting.

Pre-Christmas exams would remove reading week from the first semester, and would reduce the overall teaching time in the term, which has been raised as a concern by several staff members.
DIT at Pink Training 2013
College brings one of the biggest delegations to 21st annual LGBT event

Al McConnell
Editor

DIT’s delegation was among the largest groups present at this year’s Pink Training weekend, which took place at Queen’s University in Belfast earlier this month.

DITSU VP for welfare, Fiachra Duffy, told *The Edition*: “I wasn’t sure what to expect on the way down, beyond some form of training, but I was hugely impressed with the whole event.

“The creation of a safe space was a very effective approach to the training. There are people present who are either L, G, B or T and are coming from a similar background, or are ‘allies’ to the cause.”

Duffy highlighted the importance of this approach, in the context of the stigmatisation and taboos that continue to constrain the lives of people with a certain sexual orientation.

Over 350 third-level students attended the weekend – the 21st event of its kind.

The weekend included workshops on certain LGBT issues, which attendees can choose between, including sexual empowerment, discussion around bisexuality and the stereotypes surrounding this, and the importance of LGBT ‘allies’.

This concept is designed to promote support for LGBT awareness and equality from those who do not necessarily identify within that community. ‘LGBT Ally’ wristbands were included, as a public signal of support, which Duffy feels is of huge importance to the cause.

“There was a lot of discussion around how much it can mean to someone who sees an LGBT Ally wristband in everyday life,” said Duffy. “It’s no great effort for me to put on a band that identifies me as an ally, but it can mean so much to someone else.”

Duffy also told *The Edition* that the weekend will inform DITSU’s approach to this year’s SHAG week, in the second semester.

DITSU is also now in favour of equal marriage, following a unanimous decision at the last Student Council, and will be along side the USI in their campaign in support of the 2015 referendum.

DIT’s student council voted last Wednesday to support the government’s proposed referendum in 2015, which will give equal marriage rights to same sex couples.

The motion was proposed by Welfare officer Fiachra Duffy who said that “There was no doubt in peoples minds that supporting it was the right thing to do”.

The proposal itself noted, the “diverse student body from which our elected officers come from” as one of the reasons the bill was of such importance.

The bill passed unanimously on the floor as not one of the council raised their hands against the proposition, “the students all backed it entirely” said Fiachra, “it was great to see the progressive change in the students, this is not something which could have been passed even ten years ago”.

When asked whether the stance taken by the union might ostracise students who would oppose the coming referendum he stated that, “no opposition came from the Christian union, the Islamic society or any other body you might believe would oppose it”.

“We published the decision both our Facebook page and our Twitter, and most of the information can be found on the DITSU webpage”.

UCD’s student union had been met with some opposition from religious societies following a referendum held on abortion, but Fiachra was quick to draw a distinction between the two decisions. “Abortion is a very different topic, it plays on people’s emotions… There was some talk of in council last year and maybe it will be looked at over Christmas… with issues like these you have to gauge the student reaction to it first”.

Fiachra remarked that the marriage referendum would be a less contentious topic than either smoking or abortion, saying that it was his recent engagement with the LGBT society which led him to draft the proposal.

After attending Pink Training, a workshop for LGBT students Fiachra said he became more aware of the communities concerns. He highlighted transgender students as the topic for discussion which will be coming up in the next council meeting.
Academic writing centre put on hold

Al McConnell

The expected establishment of an Academic Writing Centre, to assist students in essay and thesis work, has been called off due to a lack of funding.

It was anticipated, following months of planning and widespread support for the idea, that the centre would be established for semester two of this year.

However, when a final proposal was submitted to the Student Finance Committee, it was felt that the €30,000 necessary for the centre could not be found by the college.

DITSU VP for education, Rebecca Dempsey, who has been involved in discussions toward establishing the centre, told The Edition this decision was “entirely unexpected” by the Union, particularly in light of the unanimous support from students, staff and Union officers.

The Student Finance Committee, a sub-committee of the Student Life Council, confirmed to The Edition that the plans were halted on November 19, but a spokesperson also stated “it is hoped the Institute can find alternative resources to develop the centre on a pilot basis for one year”.

A centre would provide assistance in structuring essays, citing and referencing, avoiding plagiarism, formatting, and in other areas.

Manager of Campus Life, Brian Gormley, also told The Edition: “There are several successful models of Academic Writing Centres nationally and internationally, and the Maths Learning Centre has proved vital for DIT students... We have identified some spaces that can be used for the writing centre, and hope we’ll be able to get it going this academic year.”

DITSU president Glenn Fitzpatrick echoed the widespread support for the idea: “It’s very short-term thinking to feel that €30,000 isn’t available. It would improve retention, it would improve the experience for foreign students, and would be hugely valuable to those who come from a different referencing and essay-writing culture.”

“During my term, I hope to work cohesively with Student Unions on issues of mutual benefit,” he says adamantly. “In particular issues surrounding the mental health of young people. We now have a unique opportunity, seeing as our party is in government, to advocate our change and our views.”

Academic writing centre put on hold

Al McConnell

DIT’s Maths Learning Centre has received some significant interest in its first year of operation as part of the School of Maths, though limited resources and some degree of maths hatred remain an influence, according to co-ordinator Cormac Breen.

Following a study into low rates of attendance and uptake for maths support services, published in this December’s issue of Teaching Mathematics Applications journal, Breen told The Edition: “I’m happy with the numbers so far, but I would like to increase it next year. Certainly, I’d also like to increase the number of tutors and the opening hours, but it will all be down to resources.”

The study found that a significant majority of survey respondents indicated their reason for not using maths support centres as ‘not needing help’, but a range of other factors were also highlighted.

The second most cited reason was limited opening times, at services in NUI Maynooth, UL, IT Tallaght and DCU.

Breen felt this was also an issue for DIT’s service, which had its operations moved under the aegis of the School of Maths this year, but highlighted that finding the funds to sustain the service is the limiting factor.

“We don’t have the resources to open all the time,” he said. “And, unfortunately, there’s always going to be some hours that don’t suit certain students.”

The study also highlighted reasons of embarrassment and outright hatred of maths as influencing students away from the service.

“There’s a fear among students of asking for help, maybe out of shyness or being afraid of asking a silly question,” said Breen. “But our approach is that no question is too basic; everyone has something to clarify now and then.

“There’s also no reason for people to hate maths,” he continued. “I personally believe everyone is capable of a reasonable level, but a lot of people have a certain block about it. Encouraging people to overcome this can be a huge benefit to them.”

Breen will be continuing to promote the service, in his first year as co-ordinator, to all students who feel it could help them achieve their full potential, whether in terms of passing marks or moving beyond the 70 percent mark.

The Maths Learning Support Centre has bases in Kevin Street and Bolton Street, and is available for all students on a no-appointment, first-come-first-serve basis. Students can also use the centre as a study space, in order to have a helping hand available when they encounter a problem.
Homelessness up 200%

Ronan Morrissey

The homeless charity ‘Trust’ has warned many more homeless people will die over the coming winter months due to a lack of emergency accommodation in the capital.

The prediction follows a report issued last week by Saint Vincent De Paul which said that the number of people living rough on the streets of Dublin has trebled in the last year.

Earlier this month a man was found dead in Bray as a result of sleeping rough in the town.

Growing concerns for the city’s homeless have since increased after a man was found dead in Phoenix Park last Friday after being found burned in his sleeping bag. Authorities believe he had been sleeping in a wooded area which is popular amongst the homeless.

A homeless action plan, ‘Sustaining the Pathway to Home’, is being conducted by four of Dublin’s local authorities and will be implemented early next year.

The report states, “the demand for access to emergency accommodation and related homeless services in Dublin is deepening”, while affordable and adequate housing remains extremely limited.

“The Government is not accepting the fact that there is need for emergency accommodation” - Alice Leahy, Trust Ireland

The draft also highlights the growing issue of people living on the streets for the first time.

One third of the 2,886 people accessing homeless services in the first six months of the year were using them for the first time.

These figures follow on from last year where over half of the 4,837 people using such emergency services were utilizing them for the first time.

The decision to move away from an ‘emergency accommodation approach’ to a ‘housing first solution’, in order to combat homelessness appears not to have aided the drastic situation.

Last year only 879 people “successfully moved away from homelessness back into independent living”. Francis Doherty of the Peter McVerry Trust said that these figures would continue to increase as a result of rising rents in Dublin City despite the economic troubles of many Irish people.

In February the Minister of State for Housing Jan O’Sullivan announced the Government’s ambition to eliminate long-term homelessness by 2016.

Despite this, Government expenditure on social housing has been slashed from €1.3 billion in 2008 to €275 million last year, resulting in only 1,500 units being constructed annually for social housing initiatives compared to 9,000 previously.

Alice Leahy of Trust Ireland said: “The Government is not accepting the fact that there is need for emergency accommodation”, before declaring Trust cannot accommodate the high demand for places in its already fully occupied premises.

Doherty of the McVerry Trust was more optimistic, praising the new government initiative which allows people in financial trouble to receive rent allowance while working.

The next set of results, acquired two weeks ago, are expected to show another increase in people on the streets.

Islamic Soc 'United for Orphans' demonstration

Eoghan McNeill
Chief News Reporter

The alleged electrocution of a baby and use of rape as a weapon of war in the Syrian conflict was depicted in a DIT Islamic Society demonstration in DIT Aungier Street on the 9th of November.

The demonstration was part of the Society’s United for Orphans campaign, which raised €1,500 for Syrian orphans.

Speaking to The Edition, Mohammad Elsayed – chairman of the society – said the demonstration was held because “a lot of people don’t realise how bad things are in Syria: it’s inhumane”.

The demonstration was held in the foyer of the Aungier Street campus and featured depictions of brutal acts attributed to President Bashar Al-Asaad’s forces.

One participant held a gun to the head of a fellow participant who was on his knees. Elsayed explained: “It’s what Al-Assad’s people do in Syria. Anyone who speaks out about his regime is killed or tortured.”

Another scene showed two Islam Society members lying prostrate on the ground, their hands reached out to the other. A sign beside the pair read: “They broke our families apart.”

Elsayed said the scene referenced the killing of Syrian children’s mothers and fathers, and the rape of Syrian women.

The demonstration also featured two women holding a bloodied toy doll, holding a sign stating: “The government electrocuted and tortured my four month old baby to death in front of my eyes”.

The scene refers to the Alaf Maahmod Al-Sarakhi who – it has been alleged by several news sources – was tortured and electrocuted to death by Syrian security officers in January 2012.

A banner reading “Silence is Betrayal” was hung behind the Islamic Society demonstrators. Elsayed explained the banner’s message: “When people see injustice, they need to speak out and make their opposition to this injustice known”.

He stressed: “Whether this injustice occurs in the West or not, it’s an attack on humanity.”

Welfare November-and-some-of-December

Al McConnell
Editor

DITSU campaign ‘Welfare November’ is now rolling into ‘Welfare November and some of December’ as events continue into this week.

After the decision was made that the campaigns were spread too thinly across DIT’s campuses, DITSU VP for welfare Fluacha Duffy changed the plans so that engagement with students could be maximised.

“The original plan was to visit six sites throughout mental health week,” he told The Edition. “I realised, though, that it just wasn’t feasible to do that in such a limited space of time.”

The campaign has now become the biggest in DITSU’s history, with 19 site activities taking place over a total of 23 working days.

Its social media-based approach is unlikely to be repeated, however, after a lack of engagement online saw interest in the campaign fall away over the month.

“Social media was a trial this time around, it had never been done before,” said Duffy.

“Welfare November-and-some-of-December”

WELFARE NOVEMBER

WEEK ONE: PHYSICAL
WEEK TWO: VICES
WEEK THREE: MENTAL
WEEK FOUR: STRESS

Duffy. “We wanted to avoid any bias, particularly on drugs and alcohol, because a lot of what’s out there can be very preachy. Finding content that avoided this, but was engaging at the same time, was a big challenge.”

Duffy also felt that the available information on gambling awareness was particularly limited, with a vast range of alcohol and smoking-related apps and websites with engaging features such as drink calculators available, but little of that nature on gambling.

“In future I think we will use social media as a support, rather than a lead on a campaign,” he said.
Leabhar glaimh: An Rothreacht – Eagarthóir Ghaeilge Stiofán Ó Conaill. mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scór, mar fhocail scó
Four things I don't give a shit about at Christmas

Eoghan McNeill

1 Precocious children on the toy show

Why can’t RTÉ find some nice, well-mannered young fellas who will talk about how they like football and want to see what second place at Christmas? Instead we get children like John Joe talking about horology in a manner deserving of a solid slap. The rest of the Toy Show children all blur into one irritating, cheeky, only-child type. It’s a child with “surprising” interests in “kooky” topics, who has learned a few big words and will say something mildly insulting to Tubridy. I blame the parents.

2 The Coke ad is on

Every November Facebook and Twitter alight with simpletons telling us “OMG just saw the Coke ad”, or words to that effect. Even though the ad is run at the same time every year, people still get excited about seeing it. It’s the same thing as getting excited about the clocks going back. If you need a drinks company to tell you when Christmas is coming, you are more than likely a moron.

3 ‘Hilarious’ campaigns for the number one

In Ireland and the UK – countries where protests are generally met with derision from the public – you can always rely on people to get worked up about an X Factor winner taking the Christmas number one. In 2009, Rage against the Machine’s “Killing in the Name” was Christmas number one following an online campaign. A campaign conducted largely by idiots. Of all the things to get worked up about, people decided to “fight the system” by seeing to it that the middle-aged, dreadlocked Zac de la Rocha took the Christmas top-spot. Incidentally, I find white men with dreadlocks considerably more offensive than any X Factor winner.

4 Those wise men and their star

There will be a considerable chunk of people who will agree with me that Christmas is not about consumerism, global corporations’ advertisements or the Christmas number one. They reckon it is about a group of wise men following a star and finding a family in a shed with a baby. It’s a nice story, but they may as well try to tell us Christmas is all about a young boy called Jack who bought some beans at the market that turned out to be magic. Actually, that’s probably a better fairy tale. I mean, Jesus never killed a giant.

Three in the bed and the little one said: 'GET OFF FACEBOOK'

Amanda Connolly

When our parents and grandparents met they had to make genuine efforts to see one another. They didn’t have WhatsApp or text to arrange dates. In fact, a lot of them wouldn’t have had phones at all.

They had to base these arrangements on trust. If you said you would be at a certain place on a certain date at a certain time, you were there.

Back then you didn’t have the option of knowing all but your prospective partners blood type prior to meeting. Google wasn’t there to keep track of accomplishments. Facebook wasn’t there to act as a personal reality show, and there was no Twitter to express your opinion.

Everything your partner knew about you and you about them was based off what you told one another or learned through the relationship. This may all sound very “pure”, but it was. These were real relationships built through trust and effort.

People had faith in their partners and society supported this. The proof lies in the statistics – divorce rates in Ireland have been soaring for the past ten years with almost 90,000 people now declaring themselves legally divorced in Ireland and more separating every day.

There are many contributory factors to this but it is undeniable that the presence of social media and its niggling role in modern relationships is important. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Snapchat etc… All of these social media outlets together act as the “all seeing eye” on your life. Chances are that Facebook knows more about you than any girl friend or boyfriend you have ever had.

Recent studies show that when web sites such as Facebook are used in excess they can cause conflict in relationships. These websites offer temptation on a plate, and often give users a false sense of privacy.

Dr. Russell Clayton of the University of Missouri conducted a survey amongst users of social media sites ranging from 18 to 22 years old.

The results showed that overuse of Facebook led to an increase in the chance of cheating, breaking up and divorce. People who are using Facebook excessively are more likely to become jealous and troll their partner’s online activity, leading to FB isolation and investigative research on their partner and frequent arguments.

Interestingly some of those using the website more than average run a greater risk of falling for the openness of Facebook in the chance to reconnect with ex-partners and this often leads to cheating emotionally and physically. The study, published in the Journal of Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking, recommended that couples in their early days should be wary and possibly stay away from the site.

This advice was based on the fact that the findings of the study only stood for couples who had been together less than three years. This implies that Facebook is a threat for couples whose relationships aren’t fully matured. Cutting back to moderate use of Facebook could reduce the risk of conflict, giving the relationship the time it needs to grow.

Too many temptations are at the tips of your fingers these days. While there’s no denying that social media has made vast improvements on our social lives, it also seems to be taking some of the charm away.
Is Sinterklaas a racist?

Dutch Santa's black little helpers are under fire – The Edition's Joseph Conroy investigates a controversial tradition

Let me introduce you to Sinterklaas, Saint Nicholas's Dutch incarnation. He’s little taller and leaner than Santa - more dashing bishop than chubby happy man. Sinterklaas has friends, lots of friends - and they happen to be black.

Every year Sinterklaas and his friends, the Zwarte Pieten (Black Pete) undertake an arduous voyage, sailing from the south of Spain (where they live) to The Netherlands, via steamboat (as you do)...

Sinterklaas is paraded through the streets on a white horse. Zwarte Piet is in mischievous form, running around, playing little tricks, throwing sweets and gingerbread into the crowds of thousands that line the streets. The children laugh, everyone having a good time.

The only problem with this scene is that Zwarte Piet is a fully grown Dutchman in blackface - wearing an afro wig, bright red lipstick, large hooped gold ear rings and colorful 17th century garb.

I lived in Amsterdam for a year. Moving over in September for college I had a pretty good read of the Dutch by November, then Piet showed up. Me and rest of the Erasmus sect asked our Dutch friends what the deal was with this ‘Zwarte Piet’ thing.

They told us the origin myth, that Sinterklaas, being the patron saint of children had saved a Moorish child called Piet from slavery. Out of gratitude he decided to stay with Sinterklaas, being the patron saint of children had saved a Moorish child called Piet from slavery. Out of gratitude he decided to stay with Sinterklaas, being the patron saint of children had saved a Moorish child called Piet from slavery. Out of gratitude he decided to stay with Sinterklaas, being the patron saint of children had saved a Moorish child called Piet from slavery.

So for years the Piet debate centered around whether Piet was Sinterklaas’s slave. Its safe to say that in the modern narrative he isn’t. He’s a happy little character, loved by children, a colorful counter point to the slightly ecclesiastic Sinterklaas. He plays the same roll as Santa’s elves, or Rudolph do in our Christmas.

So he’s not a slave - but there’s still lads walking around in blackface, and that seems pretty racist...

At a party during the festivities one of our Dutch friends who had been defending the tradition over heard a group of us foreigners having a “Ow my God, I can’t believe they go around in blackface, that’s so f**ing racist” conversation. She seemed really disappointed to hear us talking about lovable little Piet like that – almost to the point of being offended. Clearly we just didn’t get it.

News organisations all over an anglophone world have been wagging their fingers at the Dutch for the last few years, registering their #outrage. Naughty Dutch - walking around in blackface.

A tipping point came when the UN chimed in last month, their high commissioner for human rights formally wrote to the Dutch government warning that the character is a racist stereotype and that the government was failing to engage with people opposing the tradition.

The Dutch were quick to back Piet. All major news organisations took pro-Piet stances. Pro-Piet Facebook pages propped up, some getting over 2,000,000 likes.

Mark Rutte, the Dutch Prime Minister said that the tradition could not be changed by government decree, or a ban, concluding: “Black Piet is black, we can do little to change that”.

Geert Wilders, leader of the anti-immigration, populist Party for Freedom was quick to tweet that he’d rather get rid of the UN than Zwarte Piet.

Wilders is a character lurking in the shadows of this whole debate. If you aren’t familiar with him he’s worth a search on Youtube where you’ll find documentaries like ‘Wilders: Europe’s Most Dangerous Man’, ‘Wilders: The Reality of Islam’ and ‘Wilders’s Warning to America’.

He has been banned from entering the Netherlands but puts forwards his argument:

“The rise of Geert Wilders and the vociferous defense of the tradition now do correlate. Its not that the Dutch weren’t racist before, they were just far more sneaky in their overt and covert racism. But as the wider, especially Anglophone world comes closer to the Netherlands, the Dutch aren’t getting away with their racism any longer. The issue is more caught up in class issues, which are even more of a taboo in Dutch society than race.”

He also says that the tradition upholds old racist ideas, and that its wrong to get children involved, “due to the nature of the Sinterklaas celebrations, children are being made complicit [...] What is behind keeping the Zwarte Piet image is fundamentally keeping down the black population of the Netherlands.”

Taking apart folk tales in any culture is a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of the black Other, pro-Piet people arguing that it’s racist to think that the tradition is racist, and so on...

During my Christmas in Amsterdam I definitely got where the Dutch were coming from, basically if they had a term for “it’s just a bit of cracik” it would be central to their defense. But it’s the 21st century, Piet has been politicised, and the fight against the tradition looks set to grow rather than fade in the coming years.

Sinterklaas, but not as you know him (above): A Zwarte Piet (‘black Peter’), who have been accused of racism in the past

Credit: Greater Stranger's Dutch Network (top): Jeremy Threliving Fish (above)

Black Piet is black, we can do little to change that
- Mark Rutte, Dutch Prime Minister
Illegally blonde: no 'girly girls' in the workplace

Features Editor Amanda Connolly questions whether appearance should have a bearing on your working life

Outing her lips as she puts on a coat of red lipstick, she adjusts her pencil skirt and puts on her high heels. Perfectly manicured hands pick up her tote, and her swelle arms slide into her pea coat with ease. It's 7.45am and she is ready for the day ahead. She is your boss.

Women are seen today as supposed equals to their male counterparts in work and play but why should this be such a surprise? Why is this even something worth noting? – Because that statement is simply not representing the whole picture.

While the European Union focusses on equality as one of its fundamental principles of EU law, this gender gap still exists – and with equality has come more divisions within the female gender role itself. Are all females treated equal? Or just the ones who are seen to be more like their male counterparts and perhaps less feminine? Are pretty women taken seriously? Can more ‘girly’ girls be discriminated against fairly because while you were reading your newspaper this morning they spent an extra fifteen minutes getting ready? The EU has introduced several pieces of legislation in an attempt to narrow this gap involving equal treatment in the job application process, equal treatment in the workplace, protection for pregnant staff, protection for breastfeeding mothers and rights to maternity leave and parental leave.

Equal pay is always a bone of contention and you will be leaving that aside, more needs to be done. Violence against women, the reconciliation of work and family life and the balance of genders in positions of power are just some of the issues still in need of attention.

In Ireland the rights of women have greatly improved since joining the EEC, but full equality still remains something to be desired. Compared to men in Ireland, Irish women work fewer hours, earn less money and are inadequately represented in business, the Oireachtas and in local and regional authorities. Women in Ireland are facing difficulties every day in both the public and private sectors. Pay gaps exist with around a four percent difference for the bottom ten percent of earners. This difference jumps to a staggering 24 percent for the top 10 percent of earners. Under-representation is probably one of the most visible examples of this inequality. In Ireland’s largest publicly-listed businesses women make up less than nine percent on boards of management. This is significantly lower than the 15.8 percent EU average.

Controversially, according to European Commission statistics published in January 2013, there are no women board chairs or CEOs in any of the top publically listed companies in the ISEQ20 index.

Interestingly, Eurobarometer figures suggest that 96 per cent of the Irish population believe that given equal capabilities, women should be equally represented in positions of leadership.

In October of this year, MEPs backed a European Commission proposal to ensure gender balance on boards for publicly-listed companies. The measure calls on Europe’s top firms to ensure at least 40 percent of their non-executive board members are female. Listed companies will have until 2020 to reach the target while public ones will need to do so by 2018.

Throughout Europe, sectorial divisions also continue. Male workers predominate in traditional sectors like construction, utility services, communication and manufacturing. Women are dominant in health and education and also outnumber men in the wholesale and retail trades as well as other service-related industries.

In Ireland workers in the health and education sectors are more likely to be women than men, while the opposite is true for workers in agriculture and transport.

The workplace itself then bares its own types of discrimination on the women who have made it there. Think about your own work place, be it a supermarket or an advertising agency – is there a difference between the women there who are regarded as pretty, and the women who are taken seriously? Steve Carell articulated this divide clearly in this quote about Mindy Kaling, when he said: “Mindy is exceptionally smart, but is not afraid to talk about nail polish… And yet her love of nail polish does not take away from her smartness.” Admittedly there is nothing inherently dim about liking both nail polish and being girly but why is it that these opposites can so easily be drawn?

Recently in America, Politico reported that Col. Lynette Arnhart, the woman leading the Army’s study on the impact the integration of women into combat arms would have on unit readiness and morale, advised against using “pretty” women for its advertisements and communications. To illustrate her point, Arnhart cited a photo used with an article by Gen. Robert W. Cone in Army Magazine. Cone, the TRADOC commanding general, wrote about Soldier 2020, the Army’s effort to open up all Army jobs to women. But it seems that Arnhart thinks the point of the article was lost because of the photo of an attractive female soldier that was used with the article.

“For example, the attached article shows a pretty woman, wearing make-up while on deployed duty. Such photos undermine the rest of the message (and may even make people ask if breaking a nail is considered hazardous duty),” Arnhart wrote, according to Politico.

This raises the question – will expressing your femininity in a male-dominated working world hinder your chances at being taken seriously? It certainly appears so.

Will expressing your femininity in a male-dominated workplace hinder your chances of being taken seriously? It certainly appears so.

The second seems more favourable. It could go full circle. Imagine the respect these people would have for the girly girl almost pity at work when she comes in and blows all her co-workers out of the water with her brain… while still carrying her Balenciaga bag.

"The girly girl, according to WikiDefinition: wearing make-up, dressed in pink, and apparently impossible to take seriously"
Question marks remain at Grangegorman

Ryan Nugent visits the new site

Thirty-nine education- al buildings combined into one state-of-the-art 73-acre campus. DIT’s intention is an exciting prospect, but with construction yet to begin, many questions marks remain over the time it shall take to implement these plans and where the funding shall come from. The Edition finds out.

Less than a month ago, DIT put out to tender the contract to construct and maintain two planned quadrant buildings in the new Grangegorman campus in Cabra, Dublin 7, under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) scheme. This is a method for the college to get both quads constructed but also maintained over a 25-year contract, costing more than a loan but ensuring that the standards set from the beginning will be kept up until the end of the contract.

“It will mean that the college will look the same in 25 years’ time as it does at the start. The onus is on them to keep it warm, lit and maintained,” said Dr Paul Horan, Head of Campus Planning at DIT.

The capital cost is €200m for both buildings, which are proposed to be ready in time for the 2017/18 academic year. There are approximately 22,000 students at DIT, 14,000 of which are studying on a full time basis, 22,000 is double that of which DIT will be capable of hosting come 2017, so how does that work?

The sale of property currently owned by DIT, such as Cathal Brugha, Kevin Street and the potentially lucrative Aungier Street campus may become pivotal in determining the wait for the other blocks, of which there are eight that relate directly to college education, being constructed.

“We can’t do it without the money so we’ll be patient and wait for these buildings to rise in value, so we can then fund more building at Grange- gorman,” insisted Horan.

One of the Institute of Technology’s largest schools is its School of Business. However, Horan indicates that until the Aungier Street campus is no longer owned by DIT, the Business school will remain in the City Centre.

“The future value of the Aungier Street site will determine when the Business section of the college moves to Grangegorman.”

Patience is the mantra for DIT’s decision makers, and they’ve been advised to wait for a property market pick-up in order to take something substantial away from the buildings they currently occupy.

The more pressing matter, however, is that of next year and whether the 1,000 or so students will have the amenities expected of Ireland’s largest Institute of Technology. Horan’s answer is yes.

A students Union lounge with pool tables and a cafe serving hot food – similar to what is already in Mountjoy Square – will be ready come September, while the college’s medical centre for the northside will remain at DIT’s Bolton Street campus.

“Bolton Street is less than 12 minutes away and closer to these students than it was from their previous campuses.”

A temporary library will be located above the cafe at Grangegorman next year and will be a straight movement over instead: “Here you have it.” - Dr Paul Horan

“We legally have to tender [the shop] services. We can’t just say to Super Valu: ‘Here you have it’.”

If all goes to plan DIT will have a campus to be proud of, but with only sewerage and water systems underway at the moment, there’s a long way to go yet.

The non-existence of parking facilities for students may disappoint some, but a less traffic congested city is intended by the Government, according to Horan.

“We can’t do it without the money so we’ll be patient and wait for these buildings to rise in value, so we can then fund more building at Grangegorman.” said Horan.

“Bikes will be encouraged. We will be talking with Dublin City Council to bring the ‘Dublin Bikes’ initiative up here. It’s already at Bolton Street. We’d like them to extend it up here. We’re also well served with buses and the Luas will be up and running by 2017. “It won’t be like UCD, who have 3,000 parking spaces. Even if we had that many, there still wouldn’t be enough. “It’ll be paying for staff. We don’t want to encourage people to drive. We want them to cycle or use public transport. “It’ll be an underground carpark at a cost of €20,000. So we’d need to cover the cost of that anyway.”

An SU shop has been up for discussion, but similar to the construction of its buildings, DIT will have to put the space for a shop up on offer, indicating a franchise may be taken over instead.

“We legally have to tender these services. We can’t just say to Super Valu ‘here you have it’.

“We want to give students a choice. There’s Tesco, there’s Thunders. There are three or four options. We’re also leaning towards a food court instead of a restaurant to provide more choice.”

If all goes to plan DIT will have a campus to be proud of, but with only sewerage and water systems underway at the moment, there’s a long way to go yet.
Students on this year's charity list

Appeal will include SAF, adding to DITSU donations and fund-raising from Campus Life

Al McConnell
Editor

As well as the Christmas Appeal electing to donate proceeds to the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), DITSU’s four sabbatical officers and CEO Pat Kearney have donated €500 each out of their wages.

The unexpected run-out of the fund two weeks ago, compared to last year’s expiration in February, has had severe implications for a large number of students across DIT, and has been highlighted as another concrete example of the hardship facing students at the moment.

The DITSU decision was made last week, when it was also decided that one of the four Societies Christmas Appeal charities for this year would be a fund to help students who cannot receive funding through the SAF.

DITSU president Glenn Fitzpatrick also told The Edition he has been in contact with TDs in an effort to increase the pressure towards another extension to the SAF, although the indications are that last year’s top-up was as a once off, due to the SUSI crisis.

Any extension to the fund would have to come in the near future, as Fitzpatrick continued: “We don’t want this to be seen as a replacement for what is a very necessary fund. It’s just a gesture of good will from ourselves to all the students who are struggling.”

It remains unclear whether a form of Student Assistance Fund will continue into the next academic year. The fund in its current guise, as funded jointly by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the European Social Fund, is due to expire in 2014, but there are indications that a similar fund will be created.

“Students have genuinely been squeezed from literally every angle,” Fitzpatrick said, before pointing to a “disconnect between the people who are making the decisions and what’s happening on the ground.”
This year’s Societies Christmas Appeal launched on Monday, as DIT students across all Socs undertake a fund-raising effort between now and the end of term.

Four charities have been elected as recipients for the money raised over the two weeks: Saint Vincent de Paul, The Irish Cancer Society, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland, and the Children’s Medical & Research Foundation.

As well as these four causes, money will also be donated to services that can help students who have been affected by the early expiration of the Student Assistance Fund.

As Kaytee Behan told The Edition, this money will be put towards food vouchers, under the umbrella of the SAF, which are distributed by the chaplaincy, so as to avoid an amount going to only a handful of students.

Behan said: “The charities were chosen through a survey sent out to the Socs, which narrowed it down, and then there was a vote at Forum.

“The forum felt that as the SAF ran out so early and unexpectedly, they wanted to do something for students, so the some of the money raised will go towards food vouchers, distributed by the chaplaincy.”

Behan went on to say that this week will be the busiest of the 12-day Appeal, each day including events from 9am to 8pm.

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<th>Wednesday Dec 4th</th>
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<td><strong>Vintage Clothes Sale</strong>&lt;br&gt;10 - 4 Anghier St</td>
<td><strong>Carol Singing</strong>&lt;br&gt;12 - 2 Anghier st</td>
<td><strong>Guitar &amp; Croc Soc Busing</strong>&lt;br&gt;12pm Grafton st</td>
<td><strong>Pub Quiz 8.30</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lafayette</td>
<td><strong>House Alone screening</strong>&lt;br&gt;7 - 9 Denzilles cinema</td>
<td><strong>Mathlette Society event</strong>&lt;br&gt;5pm Bolton st</td>
<td><strong>Shopping for Toys</strong>&lt;br&gt;Return to SVP headquarters</td>
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<td><strong>Electronics Gadget Sale</strong>&lt;br&gt;10 - 4 Anghier St</td>
<td><strong>Mathlettes Quiz Room 236 Bolton st</strong></td>
<td><strong>HipHop for Hayran</strong>&lt;br&gt;7pm National Stadium</td>
<td><strong>Salsa &amp; Juggling Busting</strong>&lt;br&gt;12 - 2 BST - AST</td>
<td><strong>Bake Sale 10 - 2 Cathal Brugha</strong></td>
<td><strong>Africas &amp; Islamica Societies basketball match</strong>&lt;br&gt;8 - 10 YMCA</td>
<td><strong>Candy Cone Sale 1 - 2 Cathal Brugha</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Launch of News Soc Xmas Edition</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 hour Cycleathon</strong>&lt;br&gt;All day Kevin st</td>
<td><strong>Carolling Singing</strong>&lt;br&gt;6pm Stephens Green</td>
<td><strong>Dance Soc performance</strong>&lt;br&gt;11 - 1 Anghier st</td>
<td><strong>Dance Soc performance</strong>&lt;br&gt;11 - 1 Bolton st</td>
<td><strong>Pub Quiz 8.30</strong>&lt;br&gt;Solas</td>
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<td><strong>Game Soc table flipping</strong>&lt;br&gt;1 - 2 Anghier st</td>
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<td><strong>Fashion Show 5.30 Gleeson Hall</strong></td>
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DIT Student Assistance Fund

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The 12 Sins of Christmas

Nutrition Soc’s Meg Croinn sets a course through the treacherously unhealthy festive period

Break at those Penneys’ Christmas Jumpers and clear your December calendar for pantomimes, shopping and the 12 Pubs of Christmas – the holiday season is upon us! Finally us college students can put away the notes, log off webcourses and put our feet up with a tin of roses to indulge in the festive season. Sure feck it, we all deserve it!

But when the Christmas euphoria has ebbed away, the tree goes down and exams grow ever nearer, most of us find that the bathroom scales are more terrifying than the prospect of last-minute cramming.

The average person is said to gain between 1-2.5 pounds over the festive month of December. Although this may not seem like a hugely significant figure, in time, it could make a difference not just to physical appearance but to overall health. It is vital that we watch out for these sly extra pounds that “mysteriously” deposit themselves on our physique and make sure they do not become the foundation stones to further, post-festivity weight gain.

Now, we dieticians of the Nutrition Society are by no means discouraging the holiday indulgence of mince pies and mulled wine. But, acting as your Christmas guardian angels of wellbeing and positive health attitude, we are giving you a list of 12 common “Christmas Sins” that, if avoided, may avoid that extra holiday weight gain while still enjoying the festive “noms”.

Sure, what other way to herald in the big day of the 25th of a large, well deserved glass of vino? However, with close to an average of 600 calories in a bottle of your festive red wine, these are calories easily “sipped” away over the Christmas feast. While still enjoying this Christmas treat, the option of toasting with a glass of sauvignon blanc over the festive days to follow cuts back to only 100 calories a bottle and allow you to partake in festive merriment.

There is no doubt that if most of us missed out on the glorious post-Christmas Day turkey sandwich; we might have a Ross Geller moment! To get the optimum healthy balance while still achieving the ultimate turkey sandwich experience, why not make your sandwich with brown bread and add a salad filling to pack in more festive turkey noms!

Nothing says Happy Holidays like the comforting aroma of fresh minced pies with a cheeky dollop of cream. Naturally, it is easy to lose track of just how many of these festive treats we eat. Recent statistics show each person eats on average 27 mince pies over December – this amounts to over 8,500 calories! While we wouldn’t encourage you to avoid these Christmassy delights, maybe consider tucking into one a day, before realising you guzzled half a box of them!

Christmas is a time for friends, partying and basically enjoying the craic! However, over the Christmas break, whilst having as much fun as possible, being drink aware is encouraged more than ever. Not only will opting for a “light beer” option still ensure top banter but it cuts back on half the calories beer normally provides.

With hot chocolate consumption doubling in December alone, it is one of the best parts of getting cosy by the fire to watch Home Alone for the 5th time that week. Why not try making hot chocolate with some seductive dark chocolate and using low fat milk so as to not only cut back on calories but create and more indulgent chocolate experience?

I’ll admit it, mashed potatoes with a healthy drizzle of gravy is one of my favourite parts of Christmas dinner, and to be honest, the more butter the better. But when most people add 4 tablespoons of butter to a pound of mashed potatoes, try to avoid adding even more butter to your potatoes when they are served in a mouth-wa tering mound on your plate.

There is no doubt that if most of us missed out on the glorious post-Christmas Day turkey sandwich, we might have a Ross Geller moment! To get the optimum healthy balance while still achieving the ultimate turkey sandwich experience, why not make your sandwich with brown bread and add a salad filling to pack in more festive turkey noms!

While it may not be everyone’s favourite festive drink, there is something about egg nog that smells Christmassy. Considering it is the only time of year suitable to enjoy such a drink, a glass or two is no harm. But in the lazy days after the 25th, it is important to be aware that the full fat cream and milk used to make this creamy treat may bump up your calorie and fat intake that little bit more.

Nothing signals the start of Christmas quite like the arrival of the first tin of Roses to the local shops! While it’s both hard to resist reaching for yet ANOTHER strawberry cream, piling up your Roses wrappers in front of you instead of tossing them back into the box is a good way to keep an eye on just how many sweets you’re enjoying (and helps make the tin last longer!)

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EXCESS

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While it may not be everyone’s favourite festive treat dished out by aunties, uncles, Kris Kindles, grandparents and the man in red himself, leading to a Christmas Day tradition of the “selection box brekkie”. With each one of us receiving a generous 9 selection boxes each year, saving the selection box breakfast is a good idea to keep to Christmas Day so the others may be enjoyed more extensively over the holiday break.

EGG NOG

Selection Boxes

SELECTION BOXES

Sophie-Sloth

Nothing says Happy Holidays like the comforting aroma of fresh minced pies with a cheeky dollop of cream. Naturally, it is easy to lose track of just how many of these festive treats we eat. Recent statistics show each person eats on average 27 mince pies over December – this amounts to over 8,500 calories! While we wouldn’t encourage you to avoid these Christmassy delights, maybe consider tucking into one a day, before realising you guzzled half a box of them!

Christmas is a time for friends, partying and basically enjoying the craic! However, over the Christmas break, whilst having as much fun as possible, being drink aware is encouraged more than ever. Not only will opting for a “light beer” option still ensure top banter but it cuts back on half the calories beer normally provides.

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Nothing exceeds like excess

Culinary columnist Ciarán Hyland challenges Nutrition Soc's sensible approach

It won’t be long before that gloriously red ‘Special K’ temptress is bragging about how she can fit into a tiny polka dot bikini. I can see her now, waving that tiny measuring tape at us in disapproval. It’s the catwalk’s way of mutilating “bah humbug”, I reckon we should throw on some festive Sammy Davis Jr and ignore her.

And when the hand strikes twelve and you raise a glass of champers to the new year, be careful when conjuring up your very own resolution. Every year there is always one. That uncle or aunt knee-deep in a mid-life crisis who embarks on a drunken bout of self promise: “I am going to lose ten kilos by March,” they proclaim.

This onslaught is usually fuelled by ‘Special K’ woman and the dietary guilt she instills. But resist it I say! “Food for thought is no substitute for the real thing,” said cartoonist Walt Kelly. Thinking only serves to remove the pleasure from our eating. So slouch in front of some soaps and enjoy satisfying one of man’s most conscious frenzy lingers just around the corner.

New Year's Eve: the expectation and reality

Lilah Gaafar

It doesn’t matter where in the world you are on the 31st of December, if you’re not “doing anything” there’s a problem and whatever you end up doing is going to be more than likely a let-down.

In the grand scheme of things, the transition from one year to the next really isn’t that exciting. Sure there is always the excitement of looking towards the possibilities of starting with a clean slate. Yet, without the excitement created by the countdown and celebration of the “New Year” the day would come and go with little notice. It is in the suspense the elation lies.

The false optimism never fails to escape us year in, year out, as we vow this year will be “different”. All of a sudden it’s mid-February and those New Year’s resolutions are history.

Queues are longer, prices are trebled, and once you’re in town it proves difficult to escape

So why is it that New Year’s Eve is hyped up so much? The whole night more often than not is an anti-climactic, over-expensive exercise that never meets our expectations.

Going into town on New Year’s Eve and expecting to have a good time is not likely. If you have a good night, relatively cheaply, there’s a major chance you’ll be royally ripped off, again, by any taxi you’re lucky enough to catch. You can’t help but wake up feeling completely defeated, only to welcome a hangover and empty pockets rather than kick-start those New Year’s resolutions.

We remain suckers to the night that’s in it. Most of us are guilty of ringing in the New Year in a bathroom cubicle or a queue, whether alone, with strangers, or with friends; the choice of staying in doesn’t seem so unappealing as the years go on. It is any wonder older generations opt out of “celebrations”.

New Year’s Eve, along with the end of a year, and the beginning of a new one, marks the end of the “silly season” and back to reality. The reality is a sore head on the January 1, only to discover nothing has, or probably will, happen a year later.

That insufferably small paper hat is in disapproval. It’s the catwalk’s way to listen to an aul lad regurgitate the same old story with jokes so cringe-worthy you want a bottomless Viennetta. A trail of mince pie pastry crumb meanders from your post-Mo moustache down to your crumbly ankle. I can see her now, waving that tiny measuring tape at us in disapproval. It’s the catwalk’s way of mutilating “bah humbug”, I reckon we should throw on some festive Sammy Davis Jr and ignore her.

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The 12 misconceptions of Christmas

Ann-Marie Donelan

You’ll catch up with old friends

Let’s face it, you won’t be close to sober the majority of those festive nights to know an old work colleague or classmate from one of the three wise men themselves.

You’ll stick to budget

The hope is quickly destroyed with the lack of giving the 12 pubs another bash, and the mentality of “ahh sure it only happens a year lat’ is quickly adopted.

Dinner will look as it should

You’ve drooled over supermarket advertisements since mid-October, but your dinner isn’t going to look like one, simple as.

The toy show will live up to the hype

You dedicated your Friday night to it, perched yourself in front of the tv following a week where no one has discussed much else. Unfortunately you came to the conclusion around 11pm that you’d wasted your night.

You’ll get on with your family

Christmas is all about rows; whether it’s over someone forgetting an essential item in the grocery shop, the lack of AA batteries in the house, or which sitcom has the best crimbo special. Everyone particular cattiness as the amount of roses in the tin whistles down.

You’ll get anything great

Can you remember what you got last year? Probably not. Expect last-minute grabs that you’ll struggle to find use for.

Mass will be enjoyable

It’s one of the longest hours of the year as the men want to get pint guzzling, mummies are gagging to get stuck into dinner preparations and the kids feel like you’ve played with their emotions beyond belief offering them an array of toys only to whisk them away to listen to an ail laid regurgitate the same old story with jokes so cringe-worthy you want a bottomless hole to swallow the church up.

It’ll snow

Sure there’ll be sleet; it’ll have turned to a nice dirty grey colour by the time dinner has been served. You’ll be dreaming as long as Bing Crosby though if you think you’re going to get an instagram like a snow globe on the 25th.

You’ll have the best jumper

You thought you could out-do everyone, but chances are someone else will have the same daft looking garment as yourself, even if it does light up.

Christmas ‘number 1’ will be decent

What was last years? Exactly. And this year’s won’t be much better. X-factor will dominate yet again!

It’s a time for giving

At the moment, the chances of this being everyone’s philosophy is slim.

You’ll learn from mistakes

Yes, despite knowing these misconceptions, we’ll all fall into the lure of it once again...tis the season after all.

- (Happy Christmas! Ed.)
**DIT Fashion: What’s covering the student body?**

It’s all about accessorising this Christmas as these stylish DIT students demonstrate not only are accessories practical but can also make or break an outfit! Lilah Gaafar and Ann-Marie Donelan; Photos: Pier Paolo Lisarelli

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**Who?**

David Walley

Rachel Humphries

Sam Hanley

Sinead Dennehy

**Where?**

MA Public Relations

Retail Management & Marketing

Business & Management

MSC Strategic Management

**Style icon?**

Ryan Gosling

Cara Delevigne

Bradley Cooper

Rihanna

**What’s in?**

Bobble hats

The ‘laid back’ style

Winter cardies

Fedora hats

**Outfit:**

Shoes – Schuh

Chinos – Topman

Bag & Scarf – Debenhams

Jacket – Levis

Boots – River Island

Leggings – Misguided

Jumper – Topshop

Jacket – Topshop

Hat – Zara

Bag – Michael Kors

Shoes – Schuh

Chinos – Zara

Jumper – Topman

Who?

Sinead Dennehy

Where?

MSC Strategic Management

Style icon?

Rihanna

What’s in?

Fedora hats

Outfit?

Hat, chain, bag, shoes and top – Pennys

Skirt – Dunnes

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If you would like to be part of the DIT Style page, get in contact with The Edition’s lifestyle team! E-mail: lifestyle@edition.ie
'A lot of guns, but a lot of accepting people'

Conor Campbell talks to an American-born, Tulsa-educated, pan-sexual playwright

The ins and outs of the life of a budding playwright in 21st century Dublin are not particularly common knowledge. Nico McNamee is one such playwright, but hardly typical. She was adopted at birth in America, and emigrated to Ireland last year. As we sit down in The Oarsman (Ringend, well worth a visit) she’s already picking out details of how they’ve moved it around.

" Those chairs have moved, that table is new," she remarks. Apparently the candles have also gotten bigger. She has a couple of pints of Guinness while we talk, and our interview is occasionally interrupted by her friendly exchanges with the waiters. She comes here all the time to write apparently, and on an average night you could probably find her nursing a pint and scribbling in her notepad in the corner.

Nico moved to Dublin in September last year to study a Masters in playwriting at Trinity College Dublin, where she wrote her current play Party Games. She has stuck it out here ever since, obtaining Irish citizenship in this August. She is from Chicago originally (and doesn’t let you forget it), but her mother’s family is from Ireland. She was adopted when she was three days old, but through a curious coincidence her genetic parents, who she has never met, also have connections to Ireland: her birth father was born in Dublin. "I saw what it did to her family," she remarks. "I'm not sure what kind of a situation her parents have, but through a curious coincidence her genetic parents, who she has never met, also have connections to Ireland: her birth father was born in Dublin."

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Nico McNamee, author of Party Games

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Playwriting is a writer’s medium, and film is a director’s medium

Given Nico’s remarkable life, it’s interesting that the play is based on the events of someone else’s. "I saw what it did to her family," Nico tells me of the tragedy, and she wanted to “make sense of it” herself. Even though she is writing about other people, she tells that she “can relate with all of them.”

She thinks writing about difficult periods in people’s lives can be cathartic; and in many ways she is merely trying to show the audience a distorted version of themselves.

She deliberately avoids what she terms as simply "holding up a mirror" to the audience. If not a mirror, then what?

“They want to see, well, not a foil…’ she ponders, and it’s hard not to think of the play as a foil to the audience. If not a mirror, then what?

“Playwriting is a writer’s medium, and film is a director’s medium”.

"I’m much happier here," she concludes, after extolling the virtues of Irish theatre. "She’s a happy person in general, certainly throughout the interview, and as such it’s a bit of a shock to read her play, Party Games. Focusing on the birthday celebrations of a pair of twins at their parents’ house, it is a harrowing read. By her own account the piece is hugely influenced by the absent-mindedness and the alludes to works by Beckett and The Chairs by Eugène Ionesco. The events of her play are loosely based on a tragedy that befell one of her close friends (by the interviewee’s insistence I’m setting up camp in spoiler-free territory), but the final product apparently bears little resemblance to the original subject.

"It’s much easier to look at problems when you remove them psychically,” she concludes, after putting them into perspective. "You can never solve your own problems. I can give as much advice as I want but I can never apply it to my own life.

She’s trying to get the play running in Dublin now, and despite some clear interest it can be hard to get a commitment. She agrees that theatre has become a bit of a niche market, so why doesn’t she try her hand at another format? "Playwriting is a writer’s medium, and film is a director’s medium,” she tells me assertively, and Nico is certainly a writer.

Quick Guide: Five horrible Christmas present ideas

Hannah Popham Lifestyle Editor

Shittens

I’m not sure what kind of a situation would warrant hand-shaped wet wipes. According to the websites trying to sell them: “Shittens are suitable for “your baby, your dog or your slowly deteriorating mother-in-law”. Personally I preferred my life before I learned of their existence.

Bacon Body Wash

I’m not sure the perfume department in Brown Thomas has anything directly inspired by fried pork and probably for good reason. Its marketed as “the perfect way to put everybody you meet in a good mood”. The dogs that will inevitably attack you will definitely love it.

Egg Box of Odd Socks

The real advantage with this present is that each part of it is equally useless and consequently you can easily make your own. Marketed as a weird answer to those infuriated by constantly losing socks, it could well go down in history as your worst Christmas present ever.

Ear Guards

I have watched far too many episodes of Monsters Inside Me for this not to be absolutely terrifying. This gift will not only protect your ears but give you endless nightmares too. Because, as the manufacturers remind us: “Bugs love exploring oriﬁces they don’t belong in.”

Egg Poncho

Because nothing says hilarious like looking like a wet fried egg, here’s a poncho that wouldn’t go entirely astray in a serial killer’s bedroom. Unless you are willing to wait 10 months for Halloween, everyone will probably be right to think that you’re cracked (sorry).
There’s no doubt that when people are asked what their favourite Christmas film is, Home Alone makes it into their top choices.

We delight in the antics of young Kevin McCallister as he is accidentally left behind when his family takes off for a vacation over the holiday season. He learns to fend for himself and eventually has to protect his house against two bumbling burglars who take advantage of the situation.

The major theme of the film is appreciation and importance of family. It is only when Kevin’s family is gone that he realises just how much he needs them. On Christmas Eve he goes to his local church where Marley, his neighbour, sits beside him and the pair talk.

He learns that Marley is there to watch the choir that his granddaughter is in and as he never gets to see her because he and his son have not spoken in years after they had an argument. Kevin suggests he reconcile with his son. This scene is one of my favourites as it portrays how Kevin has learned to value family and at a young age has given mature advice.

On Christmas Day, he is disappoint- ed to find his family is still gone until his mother enters the house followed immediately by the rest of the McCallisters. Once reunited with everyone he feels safe. Looking outside, he smiles as he sees Marley with his son and his family. I find it a great ending to the film because it is symbolic of the theme of family running through out which is summed up in this simple final scene.

The best thing about this iconic film is its obvious embrace of cheesy Christmas culture. This Christmas staple has been featured in family households since its release in 1946. The plot is fairly easy going: man questions his place in the world, queue guardian angel who stops him committing suicide, spends the film seeing what life would be like if he had never been born, end credits after predictably happy and emotional ending.

Even if you don’t like it, no one ever complains when it is pulled out of the back of the DVD drawer or pre-recorded on Film4.

All family members sit down dutifully and embrace the Christmas tradition – even if the story is a bit cliché and you have watched it once a year for your entire life. The iconic scene of George Bailey running through the snow covered streets screaming ‘Merry Christmas’ is as much a Christmas staple as the Coke ad (Everyone’s pretty sick of it but we all burble like idiots when it hits our screens).

This is proper cheesy, selection box eating, tinsel hanging, Christmas carolling fun. Without cliché Christmas classics like this, Christmas just wouldn’t be the same. But watch it in March and you deserve a slap.

Near the start of die hard, John McLean’s taxi driver Argyle asks his passenger if he can put on some music. After sticking the tape into the deck, Run D-M-C’s Christmas in Hollis comes belting through the speakers, its thick hip-hop beat coursing through the limousine.

‘Don’t you have any Christmas music?’ a grumpy John McLean asks. ‘Man, this is Christmas music!’ Argyle tells him, grinning maniacally. McLean looks out the window, but can’t help cracking a smile in spite of himself.

And that, in a sense, is Die Hard summarised. It is the filthy hip-hop track of Christmas films. Die Hard shouldn’t be a Christmas film, and yet it is.

The main character spends the majority of his time covered in blood, cursing and killing European terrorist. Alan Rickman’s charismatic villain murders two civilians, and tries to kill all of his hostages by blowing them to smithereens. It’s a Wonderful Life this is not, but in its subversion of the traditional Christmas film Die Hard stands out.

In fairness, the film is littered with Christmas references. As McLean clambers around the burning building, miniature snowmen get blown to pieces and policemen sing ‘let it snow’ as bodies smash into their windscreens. As the entire building collapses, the filmmakers took the time to make sure we saw a fully decorated Christmas tree collapse, jingling, into the flames.

So if someone complains when you put on Die Hard when they asked to watch a festive film, tell them it is a festive film. And if they don’t grin like John McLean, well, you shouldn’t be spending time with that person anyway.
Why I love Christmas music

By Gavin Lacey

Christmas songs are also fantastic for their nostalgic factor. Don’t tell me you don’t get a warm tingle in your ‘Jingle Bells’ when Wham comes on the radio and you instantly recall that time you were a teeny bit too merry at your mates Christmas party and you tried chatting up his younger sister: “C’MONNN YOU HAVEN’T GIVEN ME A PRESENT YET!!!?”

Or that time you fell over ice-skating while trying to do the ‘Las Ketchup Xmas Mix’ dance in front of your classmates in 6th year. A boogie a bah boogey mah gee.

Eoghan, maybe underneath that beautifully silky and hairy Donegal chest of yours there is a piece of dark coal lodged where your Christmas heart should lie.

And if listening to ‘Fairy Tale of New York’ while sipping on a fine glass of Tesco sparkling wine doesn’t cause you’re sooty arteries to be transformed into beautiful trails of sparkling magic, then I only have two words for you - Cliff Richard.

Why I hate Christmas music

By Eoghan McNeill

Nazi war criminals had the “superior orders” defence; people who like Christmas music have “ah sure it’s only a laugh”, equally inadequate excuses - for equally contemptible people. Christmas music is not a laugh. It’s senseless and encourages reckless behaviour.

If there’s one thing I want from my music, it is sense. Logical songs. Songs like Daniel O’Donnell’s “Home to Donegal”. Everyone loves going home to Donegal. Songs like “The Gambler” by Kenny Rodgers. You genuinely do need to know when to fold ‘em. Where’s the sense in saying you “wish it could be Christmas every day”? It would be disastrous economically. Productivity would be terrible. Businesses would remain closed. Thanks to arteries clogged with brandy butter, life expectancy would plummet.

What I want from a song is logic, and Christmas every day would be disastrous economically.

What I want from a song is logic, and Christmas every day would be disastrous economically.

Not, Andy. It’s cold. It’s dark. You have the same conversation about your “Christmas plans” roughly 43 times a day. Oh, “there’ll be parties for hosting and marshmallows for toasting”? You can toast marshmallows and throw parties whenever you want. A senseless argument.

In 1971, John Lennon and that doll who broke up The Beatles told us war is over, “only if we want it” - ah I see. Cheering for that, John. International warfare is deceptively simple, it seems. If you want it to be over, it will be. I can’t believe the secret has been hidden in a Christmas song for years. How world leaders have missed it, I don’t know. Of course, John Lennon has form in talking this kind of muck. Imagining there are no countries or possessions is, actually, very hard to do.

I can’t listen to Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas is You” without thinking of the senseless behaviour of both Liam Neeson and his son in “Love Actually.” Every time I see the film, I’ll be enjoying Hugh Grant being a bumbling Englishman, Alan Rickman being a bit of a bastard, and Keira Knightley being Keira Knightley. My enjoyment is always interrupted by that eejit of child who’s “in love” with an American girl at his school.

What Neeson should have done was simple; tell the boy to cop on. Instead, he encouraged him to perform Mariah’s number with the girl, and break through airport security to say goodbye to her. Ludi-crous behaviour, no doubt encouraged by the dangerous sentiment of the song. At the same time, some of the songs have nice bells.
DIT's death metal scene

Conor Campbell meets Dead Aeon, a band with two DIT students and a big reputation on a niche scene

If you're a fan of the Dublin death metal scene, you might well have heard of Dead Aeon, the Monaghan based quartet with two members at DIT. Chris Winsryg and Jack Penders are guitarist and vocals respectively, and both study Music Performance at DIT.

Darren Walsh plays bass and Evan McGuigan rounds them off on drums, and as I sit down for a chat with Evan he orders himself a rather conservative hot chocolate.

They first gave music a go in Monaghan, a county with an undernourished death metal scene, to put it nicely. "Organising gigs in Monaghan, you might as well be smacking your head against a wall," Evan admits, sipping on his drink.

Originally they mainly played covers of softer stuff (the likes of Rage Against The Machine and Metallica are mentioned), but around the start of 2011 they began composing their own songs more in the style of Deicide and Behemoth. By the summer of 2012 they were in a studio in Blanchardstown recording a five track EP, released in November that year.

"Recording can be a stressful business, but thankfully they had the right man for the job. The producer was Michael Richard for it, who was amazing," Evan tells me, adding that he even managed to persuade the band to sneak some synth into their tracks. Their EP got a warm reception in the Irish metal community, and so they were able to get themselves gigging in Dublin. Fibbers is a regular spot for them these days, but they’ve travelled around the country a fair bit, playing in Limerick, Belfast, and many stops in between. That, in fairness, makes them an international band, but Evan says they fancy themselves across the world. It would be “like an expensive vacation,” he tells me, but the UK has a serious metal scene and they would like to get involved.

For now, they’re fairly well settled in Dublin, with Evan having just finished a masters at TCD, Darren studying at DCU and Jack and Chris studying Music Performance at DIT. The latter two’s studious efforts have had a knock on effect on their music outside of class as well. I ask Evan if he’s been learning the course by osmosis, and he certainly concedes its effecting the band’s performance. "It has had an impact on our music in that a lot of different techniques and dynamics can be used," he says.

"We’re able to play stuff that about a year ago we would not have been able to play."

The variety of the course is one of its main appeals by the sound of it, and having half their band exposed to different sorts of styles and genres at DIT has certainly helped them grow. The guys are playing Fibbers on the 6th of December, headlining a Christmas Bash called ‘Seasons Beatings’.

"Organising gigs in Monaghan, you might as well be smacking your head against a wall."

- Evan McGuigan

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War Photographer

Considered by many the greatest war photographer ever (!) James Nachtwey takes us to the front lines of the last 20 years of war, explaining the inner conflicts that witnessing the most atrocious war atrocities could create in whom wants to give a voice to the unseen.

Joseph Conroy
Culture Editor

Irish producer and director of The Summit, Nick Ryan, addressed DIT students in Aungier St last Wednesday at a talk organised by Reel Soc and the PRPA society.

The film documents a 24-hour period on K2 when 11 people lost their lives. Using a mix of interviews with survivors, raw footage taken by mountaineers who were on the mountain, and some impressive reconstructions, the film attempts to work out exactly what happened on K2 that day.

Ryan told of the struggles of producing, funding and editing the now critically-acclaimed film. He originally set out to make a TV documentary about the Sherpas who were on the mountain, and to use it as a platform to look at the Sherpa people in Nepal.

That project soon ran into funding issues as Ryan began interviewing other survivors. It was particularly interesting to hear him speak about conducting these interviews, especially when he talked to climbers who had written books about surviving K2 in 2008, and who thought they had the definitive account, only to have them all dramatically contradict each other.

The project saw Ryan and his small team flying all over the world from The Netherlands to Italy, to Norway and Nepal.

He told the audience about the struggle they went through to get original shots of K2, an endeavor that saw the crew go to Pakistan to fly a Pakistani military helicopter past the mountain. The trip was delayed after Osama Bin Laden was killed. When they eventually got there, they drove through the town where he had been killed and eventually got their shots with the help of the military.

Away from the actual filming of the project there was also the small matter of funding. They eventually got money from RTÉ, The Irish Film Board, the BBC and other investors. Ryan also spent time talking about the process of using special effects to make a mountain in Switzerland look like K2 in the reconstructions and the lengths they went to in making sure everything they filmed was as true to life as it could possibly be.

After all that there was the final edit to be put together. Acting as both producer and director Ryan faced the challenge of taking the hours of film they had and turning it into a cohesive narrative. It all worked out for him – the film was selected for Sundance and given an award for best editing in an international cinematic documentary.

"The Summit is currently in select cinemas, and those who were present at Nick Ryan’s talk can contact Reel Soc for a concessionary ticket.

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Spragann playing live at Brighton Pride 2013.
Credit: ultimate planet via Flickr
Abbay Christmas everyone

Love/Hate’s Ian Lloyd Anderson talks to Culture Editor Joseph Conroy about his role in the Abbey’s Christmas production of James Plunkett’s The Risen People

Almost a month after the season four finale, Love/Hate is still the talk of the town. I ask Ian how he thinks Dean will be fixed if it all kicks off next season, and he’s cautiously optimistic:

“People don’t realise that I’ve been in it now for three years, I’m always in the background. I say to Stuart [Carolan] every time he writes it – it’s all about surviving so the plan for me basically is eventually if I can dodge the bullets for another three years there’ll be no Tom Vaughan Lawlor [Nidge] and no Peter Coonan [Fran] left, so I might be the leader!”

So it could be Dean’s crew by series eight or nine?

“It could be 10 or 11! It’s all about staying alive you know!”

Over the last few years he’s been working on stage more than screen. He points out that a really successful run of a show at the Abbey will have between 30,000 and 40,000 people come see it, so it’s a bit surreal for him to see Love/Hate getting over the million mark.

“It’s an incredible thing,” he says. “It’s a huge achievement by everyone, I guess there’s a real sense of pride to see something be so successful.”

Ian is currently in previews for The Abbey’s adaptation of Joseph Plunkett’s The Risen People, the play based on Strumpet City.

Strumpet City has been a fitting selection as the featured text in Dublin’s 2013 ‘One Book One City’ campaign. It seems to have hit a spot with Dubliners on a deeper level than any of the campaigns previous selections. Early on in the rehearsal process the book’s significance was made clear to the cast.

“We had some talks early on in the rehearsal period from some real experts on that time, historians like Pádraig Yeates and Francis Devine, and something that they kept relying on was that The Lockout is a strange period in our history where people know more about it through the arts and through the likes of Strumpet City than they do from historical writing or any other sort of historical learning. I think it really shows the importance of the arts”.

Ian talks about the significance of reexamining this period in 2013.

“I think that’s really interesting and also that it’s really important, and I think a production like this in 2013 – 100 years on – is of great importance.”

Ex-X-Factor, now success

Michelle Dardis meets Lucy Spraggan, an unlikely star who has gone from the X-Factor to Columbia Records

A year after an illness made her leave the X-Factor live shows prematurely, Lucy Spraggan is doing better for herself than anyone could have ever imagined. As if millions of Youtube hits, a record deal with Columbia, and an album weren’t enough, Lucy has also gone and sold enough, Lucy has also gone and sold out the majority of her tour – her Columbia, and an album weren’t ever imagined. Lucy’s hard work has paid off. Lucy made sure to stay true to herself during her time on the show, and stay original even when doubts cropped up that producers may try to change her style, and make her sing regular pop songs like the rest of the contestants.

“That did happen but it’s about staying true to who you are - that’s what all my music’s about.”

Very soon after leaving the X-Factor, Lucy was offered a record deal with Columbia Records, a deal and opportunity which any aspiring singer/songwriter would kill for.

“It’s amazing. They’re such a prestigious and iconic record label. They are such a nice team too. It’s really fun.”

The Abbey’s promo material promises punters that the production will bring the period “vividly to life through music movement and song”, but Ian warns that this is no “hits and teeth musical” – it’s a truer, grittier production.

“This play wears its heart on its sleeve, it’s not trying to be anything that it’s not, it’s not glitz and glamour, it’s very honest, we only have one or two top trained singers in the cast, I think that adds to the effect.”

The Risen People opens on the 4th of December and runs until the 1st of February. Student tickets are available from €13.00.
Heartbeat at Lansdowne: what next?
A look back at NZ, emotions in check
Simon Maguire
Chief Sports Reporter
New Zealand eventually completed sixth in the Six Nations, after being pushed to the brink by an outstanding Irish team on the day. It’s difficult to analyse the game without bringing emotion into it but ultimately Ireland failed to score in the second half and the Kiwis’ gradually clawed their way back on the scoreboard and eventually nicked it at the end.
A draw would have been a fair result but sport is rarely fair. A stalemate would have left a vacant feeling in the gut and this New Zealand team rightly went 14 from 14 without bringing emotion into it but ultimately Ireland failed to score in the second half and the Kiwis’ gradually clawed their way back on the scoreboard and eventually nicked it at the end.

I don’t think I have to name them anymore because I’ve shame them plenty, I hold my own against a lot of big names here,” explained CJ Molloy, standing 6’4, with the build of a heavyweight fighter. He has a confidence to match. He says “shaming” big names as “the beauty of playing in New York. You can play against the big boys, the supposed big boys, of Gaelic football.”

CJ is a New York born, New York raised, Gaelic footballer. The “big boys” include Armagh full-back, Brendan Donaghy. Playing for Kerry in the New York Senior Championship final 2012, Molloy, who played at his favoured full-forward position, was marked by Donaghy, and scored two goals. He played in last winter’s All-Star exhibition match in the Bronx’s Gaelic Park, facing a full-back line that included both All-Star O’Shea brothers from Kerry. His name, again, decorated the score-sheet. CJ now wants to bring his “looks, charisma and excellent left foot” to Ireland. He wants to become the first American to play in the Sigerson Cup and inter-county football.

He has transferred from the Donegal New York club in the Bronx to Ardara CLG in South Donegal, and will start a Master’s degree in Ireland in January 2014. While he was coy on the subject of which university he will line out for, he confirmed interest from a number of third-level institutions, saying: “I’m talking to a couple of different schools”.

His aspirations to play in the All-Ireland championship, however, were articulated in a more forthright manner: “You don’t play the game to be second best. I’d like to be wearing a county jersey. It won’t be for lack of effort.”

The county jersey CJ wants to wear is that of 2012 All-Ireland winners, Donegal. CJ’s uncle, Anthony, captained Donegal to their first All-Ireland win in 1992. Connie, his father, won a county championship with Ardara in 1981 before emigrating to New York a year later. He managed CJ on the New York panel for a time.

Growing up, CJ was not without his sporting suitors. He is an accomplished basketball player. He played throughout high school, basking in the glow of selection to the Stade de France and the Sigerson Cup, and to Union College in upstate New York. He quit the college’s basketball team to play for a New York football panel. He accepts that the panel could not match the basketball team for organisation, commitment from players, nor the credit he would receive from his peers. He would “get shit for being the

American guy playing Gaelic football.” Why football, then? He started playing football “the same way anyone in Ireland does”.

He recalls being 5 years old, his father taking him to training: “I went down there kicking and screaming, like any young kid. I didn’t want to be a footballer.”

Like most of those kids, particularly those born into footballing dynasties, he gradually stopped the kicking and screaming. Apologising for the “corny” answer, he says: “It’s in my blood. It’s the truth.”

Remnants of his basketball-playing past are to be seen on and off the football pitch. CJ boasts fielding capabilities not unlike Kieran Donaghy, another basketball player-turned-footballer.

He also displays self-assurance perhaps more readily-associated with basketball than football. “Talk the talk, walk the walk, that’s how I try to do it. That is basketball’s influence, in a big way.”

Those who couldn’t hold their own vocally on the court didn’t survive: “Part of growing up in New York, playing basketball, if you couldn’t talk and back it up, then you didn’t last.”

Although bragadocio is not something generally accepted from Gaelic footballers, he doesn’t worry about being perceived as arrogant. It’s not something he considers: “Nah, I’m never going to think about that. I’m just always going to be myself.”

When asked what he thinks he brings to the game, he’s happy to joke that he “puts fans in the stands”, before giving himself the more pragmatic appraisal: “I try hard, I’m big, I’m physical and I score.”

Donegal captain Michael Murphy, a big, physical full-forward known for his scoring, recently led Glenswilly to victory in the Donegal county championship. CJ laughs that if he “had been running out in MacCuamhaill Park on county final day, Glenswilly wouldn’t be champions right now.”

The more outrageous the utterance on his footballing abilities, the more generous the self-deprecating laugh to soften it.

If I had been running out in MacCuamhaill Park on county final day, Glenswilly wouldn’t be champions right now.

CI shows us how it's done
Eoghan McNeill meets a rare breed – an American, born and raised, GAA star

His imminent move to Ireland is not born solely from the desire to play football at the highest level. He lined out for his new club, Ardara, in a relegation play-off last month. He is excited to join Ardara’s footballing community. Reflecting on the difference between football in Ireland and New York, he said he’s “looking forward to being part of ‘the club’ in Ardara.”

Playing personnel of US clubs tends to be transient, “a revolving door of players”, as CJ puts it. “You never really establish a ‘club’.”

That is not to say New York football is not without its qualities, according to CJ.

Often derided for being an arena for mercenary inter-county players to make easy money, or one where talent is too sparsely-spread, CJ thinks that “the standard of football there is a lot better than people think”. He reserves an almost-bullying pride for the championship he has grown up playing in.

He challenged any footballer in the country to go to New York for a summer to experience its quality themselves. Having been involved in senior football in Ireland and Donegal this year, he maintains the standard in New York is higher.

Wanting to be a part of a parochial Gaelic football club and saying the sport is in his blood could easily be dismissed as characteristics of a “plastic Paddy”, a term CJ says he has been rid of in the past.

His pride in both strands of his heritage is evident, however: “I’m a Puck first. That’s something I’ll always be proud of”. He can quote from Jay-Z’s oeuvre just as easily as he can from that of the Wolfe Tone’s.

Maurice Fitzgerald, Kerry All-Star footballer, and New York Knicks fans’ favourite, John Starks are both considered sporting heroes.

I na effort to earn the county jersey he wants to wear, CJ will spend the next three months in the gym in New York, trying to get his fitness levels up to inter-county football standards.

He recognises his fitness as the main aspect of his game needing improvement: “It’s the way football is going”, he says, “kicking has kind of gone out of it, and that’s something I’d be happy to do.”

By this time next year, CJ’s attributes, fielding, kicking, and physicality, will have been showcased in the Sigerson Cup and in a big way, he hopes, in the All-Ireland Championship.

Along the way, he may still “get shit for being the American guy playing Gaelic football”, but questioning his place on the Gaelic football field, however, he responds: “I may be a Yank, but my left foot has a bit. That’s my answer to anybody.”

CJ Molloy, left, will bring his “left foot brag” to third-level GAA next year.
Rooney bobble-head

The present for that special person you really don’t like. How desperate are you for a present if this is your answer? I think once you get to this stage, you have to admit, you really don’t know the person that well. At least the figure has better hair than the real thing.

Norwich oven mits

What else would you expect from a club owned by Chef Delia Smith? There’s no need to burn your hands cooking the Christmas turkey this year with these fetching Norwich City oven gloves. Based on their form this season, maybe the goalkeeper could do with a pair too.

Liverpool champagne

Liverpool FC’s own brand champagne. Nothing oozes sophistication and class like Liverpool champagne right? Right? After a few glasses of these you too could play football like Jordan Henderson, or get in a fight outside a nightclub, one or the other.

Chelsea shirt

Picture the scene: a small child on Christmas morning, full of excitement, opening up his present of… a Chelsea Jersey. See the tears in his eyes, the confusion on his face. Why would anyone do this to me he’d ask? That’s a fair question kid, fair question.

Class victory built on solid foundations

Architects win five-a-side soccer tournament held to raise money during Welfare November

Piers Moyles
Sports Editor

DIT Soccer Club played their part in November Welfare last month as they hosted an inter-class five-a-side soccer blitz at the Digge’s pitch opposite DIT Aungier street.

The event was organized to raise money for Barretstown children’s charity, which helps children who have been diagnosed with a serious illness.

All students paid an entry fee of €2 and all the proceeds raised went to the children’s charity.

Seven teams competed on the day with a total of 41 students in attendance.

The Soccer club secured the services of an FAI accredited referee who officiated over a total of 24 games which included two semi-finals and a final.

The teams were made up of students from courses, including Marketing, Business & Chinese, Automotive Technology, Architectural Technology, Engineering, Leisure Management and a team of Erasmus students.

The final, which was the 24th match to take place on the day, was between Architectural Technology and Erasmus.

The architects edged the clash winning by three goals to two after extra time. A thrilling final, which was belting of the both the day and the occasion.

The Edition entered a team for the second event on Monday the 2nd but the less said about that the better. Both events were well attended and organiser John O’Carroll deserves immense credit for bringing it all together.

The DIT Soccer Club would like to thank all the students that attended on the day as well as Luke McCarthy, David Rake from the FAI and DITSU.

THE EDITION
HAVE YOUR SAY

Sinéad Farrelly asks: are cricket, darts, snooker and ultimate frisbee 'real' sports?

Cricket's a real sport, it's more interesting than the others
Eric Lanville
(French & Tourism)

Cricket's a real sport, but I think the others are more hobbies
Sadhbh Ni Nualláin
(Film & Broadcasting with Irish)

Snooker definitely is, cricket goes on too long to end in a draw
Ryan O’Shea
(Business)

They're all played professionally and for fun, so are sports
Tim Allman
(Computing)

SPORT

O'Byrne Cup preview

DIT will be back in action in the O’Byrne Cup in January, as they prepare to face Meath in the opening game.

The opener will take place on the 5th of January in Navan, as DIT look to get off to a good start in the football competition early next year.

DIT has been drawn in Group C and will have to overcome Meath, Wicklow and IT Carlow if they are to advance further in the Cup.

If DIT is to be successful in the competition this year they will have to fight off some very tough opposition.

Group A includes Wexford, Laois, Offaly and either UCD or TCD.

Meanwhile, Carlow, Longford, Kildare and Athlone IT are the four sides in Group B, and Group D is comprised of Dublin, Westmeath, NUIG and TCD.

The opening round will be played on January 19 and the final takes place on the 26th of that month.

- Liam Kennedy

Frisbee Plate victory

The DIT Ultimate Frisbee Club’s Women’s team was victorious in their bid for success, when they won the Plate (second) Division at the Women’s Indoor Intervarsities on Sunday 24 November in Galway.

The team started the day well with a win over UCD3, but were then beaten by Trinity1 before narrowly losing 7-6 against DCU.

The team beat Pick-Up in the Plate quarter-final before overcoming UL2 in the semi-final. In the final against NUI Maynooth, DIT put in a big performance to win the Plate, adding to the club’s success in the Plate Division in the Open Indoor IV’s earlier in the month.

Aoife Bermingham received the team’s Most Valuable Player award for her performance, while Aoife Delaney was voted DIT’s Most Spirited Player for her knowledge of the rules and positive attitude.

- Matthew Colfer

Karting en route to win

DIT Karting took part in the SSI Karting Intervarsity Championship in Watergrasshill, Co. Cork last Wednesday.

After the successful qualifying round in Kart City two weeks ago, the 15 DIT students were selected to compete in the second round, with a total of 53 drivers on the day.

There were many intense battles all day with CIT, DCU, NCI and UL, with the DIT A team coming out on top with 1st place going to Peter Campbell, 2nd to Niall Murray and 5th to James Newe. Graham Higginbotham and Andrew McCormack also scored points for the Team Championship.

Peter win has moved him up is 2nd in the Driver’s Championship. James 6th and Andrew drove exceptionally well for the DIT B team and is currently in 7th place.

DIT A are currently 28 points ahead of CIT, leading 135 to 107.

- Myles Redmond, DIT Karting
Soccer in DIT continues to grow and the teams are becoming some of the most feared in the country. 

The most anticipated match-up of the Senior football season so far enticed more neutral spectators than supporters of either side, in expectation of a high footballing standard at DKIT. 

This was precisely what they got. DIT took an early lead through a Bernard Allen free and apart from a scary interchange between Kieran Hughes and Ronan O’Neill that should have resulted in a finish from Caolan O’Boyle, only for the forward to scuff his shot, the DIT were in control.

Niall Scully proved to be the focal point for DIT in the first half, bagging a couple of points to compliment to excellent left footed free-taking of Bernard Allen and some great points by Ross Hazley.

DIT went off at the break with a 0-7 to 0-4 lead. However, this lead was decimated in a matter of minutes at the beginning of the second half, as Jordanstown, inspired by a Paul McPolin fist goal, went 1-9 to 0-8 up.

DIT never gave up and were helped by a slice of luck as Harry Dawson lofted the ball towards goal, flying over Mark McReynolds in the Jordanstown goal and into an empty net. 

With DIT being the current champions of both the Ryan Cup and the Sigerson Cup, and the Jordanstown College labelled the team to beat this season, a tight, tense affair was always to be expected, and so it proved.

As we entered the final few minutes, DIT pressed. They passed hand-to-hand, working all the way from the full back line into Michael Shields at half back to Ross Sheridan on the wing. The college were playing patiently; they’d been there before and knew it was a small margins game at this level. ‘Smart football’ was the mantra from the coaching staff of both teams.

And that is why it was surprising that DIT couldn’t convert their chances. With the sides level at 1-10 a-piece, a free from the left went wide, and Ross Hazley, who’d been terrific throughout, shot wide shortly after.

Jordanstown pushed forward, working the ball out from the back, from former DIT captain Colin Walshe, who found Niall McKeever, who ensued to loft the ball into the forward line. Four minutes into injury time at this stage, Jordanstown won a free-kick, to the left of the post’s and about 20 yards out. The consistent Kieran Hughes had no problem converting. The referee blew the final whistle almost immediately after.

There was disappointment, of course, but it was only the league. There are bigger fish to fry after Christmas and this was certainly the view of DIT and Offaly man, Bernard Allen: “Our priority is the Sigerson and winning it two years in a row. So we’ll put in some more hardwork before Christmas and be ready come January.

“We’re not far off. We’re still a good team and one defeat won’t change that. A lot of people are tipping Jordanstown for Sigerson so we’d like to get them again and challenge ourselves.”

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I may be a Yank, but my left foot has a bróg – that’s my answer to anybody

- CJ Molloy

Soccer in DIT continues to grow and the teams are becoming some of the most feared in the country.

For the first time in the college’s history the first team, B team and Fresher’s team all qualified from their group to progress in the next round of the league.

The reorganisation of the league may have contributed to this achievement, with four teams qualifying from the group compared to only two in the last few years.

The first team continue to impress following their success last year. They needed results on the last day to go their way to get out of the group but they scraped through and they also progressed into the next round of the Umbro Cup following a comprehensive 4-1 thrashing of Dundalk IT.

A number of league of Ireland players are currently plying their trade with DIT, including Paul Malone, Bohs centre back Roberto Lopes and Shelbourne’s Ryan Mathews. DIT could have as many as six league of Ireland players amongst their ranks when the season kicks off again in February.

The form of the Fresher’s team highlights the strength in-depth running through all the sides. They were unbeaten until last month when they went out of the Bob Eustace Cup, following a 3-2 defeat after extra-time at the hands of Moate Business College.

The B team had also been mirroring the other sides, racking up good performances and results to back them up. The league quarter finals are on the horizon in which all the sides hope to continue the sizzling form which has seen them installed as one of the favourites for the competition.

Five-a-side fundraiser

Vox Pop: is it a real sport?

Sporting gift ideas