2009-10

DIT Independent, 1st.-31st. of October, 2009

DIT: Students Union

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Students put on a brave face and protest

By Cliona Ward

Hundreds of DIT students descended on Government Buildings earlier this month to voice their outrage at the enforced cutbacks on campus and to express their dismay at the negative effect the cuts have had on academic and student life.

The protest, which was organised by the Students Union (SU), saw almost 300 students sit outside the Department of Finance each wearing a mask depicting the face of either Taoiseach Brian Cowen or Brian Lenihan, Minister for Finance.

The staffing embargo, which was implemented by the Higher Education Authority in July, has directly caused the closure of all gym facilities on campus owing to the fact that the college cannot renew the contracts of its qualified gym staff. The embargo has also interfered with the employment of part-time lecturers and lab assistants leaving many courses under severe pressure to deliver on promises made to students before the July decision.

The peaceful protest was visual in its conception, not only did students wear 'Brian masks' but they also sported their campus clothing: clubs & socs hoodies, lab coats and SU t-shirts. Many protesters also designed their own t-shirts reading captions like "I'm not crazy, where's my councillor" and "Show me MY money".

Such slogans relate to student outrage at the inflated registration costs this year, of the €1500 students pay in capitation €600 goes directly to the government. Student's Union President, Tracey Flinter, gave a speech to the gathered protestors commending those who turned out to voice their anger. "We've paid for this service, and they're holding onto our money" she told the crowd. "Students are paying more than ever and are getting much less than before, we're not happy".

The SU used the protest as an opportunity to present the Dept of Finance with a petition they had collected of 5,000 signatures from students who are against the budget cuts. A representative from the Press Office collected the petition in front of the assembled protesters prompting loud boos and shouts from the crowd.

In her speech SU President Tracey Flinter encouraged those present to get their friends involved, to bombard DIT president Prof. Brian Norton with complaints and to contact their local TDs and lobby them for change.

Though protesters felt aggrieved that lecture hours have been slashed, many were shocked by the SU's announcement that Library hours may soon follow suit. Tracey Flinter told the crowd that "the library services may be cut as a result of this... we need you to get into your libraries, spend hours in there, and show the college that you need this service".

First year student, Blaithin Henihan, who attended the protest remarked "I
A word from the Editor...

Hello, and welcome to the first issue of DIT News. This year is a turbulent year at DIT; budget cutbacks are severely affecting the quality of services and facilities in college while the staffing embargo has all but put an end to sports activity on campus. We enter this academic year with cautious optimism however; the Student’s Union is battling harder than ever to have your voice heard and the Government has shelved its proposed re-introduction of college fees for the foreseeable future. Wipe your brow young student, we’ve dodged a bullet for now.

The curbing of fees is not the only thing to be jubilant about this year. The academic year of 09/10 is proving to be an exciting one for the News Society. We’ve already launched our first ever glossy Fresh magazine (be sure to pick up a copy) which gave all our incoming students a taste of campus life and a gorgeous guide to going to college. But even more exciting, we’re debuting our brand new Dublin ENTertainment magazine. This pull-out mag gives you all the goings-on in the Dublin entertainment scene; from movies to gig reviews, quirky features to interviews with the hottest acts this magazine will titillate and excite and bring you a new element of DIT News.

Thanks for reading, and enjoy! Much love, The Ed.

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That time of the month...

Brought to you by Fionnuala Holohan

It was a good month for...

Rody Molloy, FAS director general: €1m golden handshake and company car

Dublin Commuters: Dublin Bike Scheme launched with 450 bikes available from 40 stations

Farmers: the National Ploughing Championship and Lisdoonvarna all in one month

Kerry: beating Cork 0-16 to 1-9 to take football’s Sam Maguire home to Kerry for the 36th time

Brendan Gleeson and Dearbhla Walsh: lead actor and director Emmys in Los Angeles

Guinness: 250 years old this year

Dublin skyline: brightened up with the Liberty Hall light show

The Government: Lisbon Treaty referendum passed with a comfortable majority

Bertie Ahern: launch of his autobiography in the Mansion House

Book lovers: Book lovers: free delivery service to Irish customers

Irish Universities: Trinity and UCD both in world top 100 university list and UCC, NUI Galway, DCU all in top 300 and climbing, DIT sitting at 326

Third-level students: college fees plan is shelved for now

And a bad month for...

Mary Coughlan, Tanaiste: in the wars over FAS supervision and ill-judged McCarthy report criticism

Bicycle helmets: ‘not essential’ claims Dublin Bike Scheme mastermind, Labour councillor Andrew Montague

Irish taxpayer: NAMA to pay €54 billion to banks for property-related loans which have a face value of about €77 billion

Damien Murnane: Over 4,000 complaints to date over the ‘Outing-gate’ incident with Danyl Johnson

Dublin commuters: Luas tram collides with Dublin bus on O’Connell Street

Irish “Superpubs”: owners of Café en Seine, The George, Howl at the Moon and Zanzibar move to appoint an interim examiner

Journalism: according to businesswoman Denis O’Brien: many journalists unable to read a balance sheet

John O’Donoghue: announces decision to resign as Ceann Comhairle

Boyzone: The Boyz have lost one of their most talented members, Stephen Gately

Fine Gael and Labour: Greens and Fianna Fail reach agreement on new program for government.
Canteen the cause of fire in Aungier St

By Cliona Ward

Hundreds of DIT students suffered a traumatic return to class when, on the second Monday of term, a fire broke out on the Aungier St campus. The blaze, which began in the canteen on the second floor of the building, interrupted the bustling clubs and societies festival which was being held in the Aungier St campus that day.

The presence of the festival, which showcased some of the eighty societies available on campus, meant a larger than normal crowd was present on campus. The festival also caused this larger volume of students to congregate in the front lobby and courtyard area where the festival was being held.

The blaze broke out just as students were returning to their classes after lunch break. The alarm sounded shortly after 2pm, however, the evacuation was not immediate. The initial fire alarm prompted little response from those inside the building, while the second was perceived more as an annoyance than a caution. Many staff and students were seen eating and ignoring the alarm in the ground floor canteen area.

The actions of the building porters, who alerted those inside that there really was a fire on campus over the intercom, saw the building quickly empty. The resulting throng of students and staff outside the main entrance was the cause of traffic disruption in the city as the large volumes of people cut off traffic access to Aungier St and Bishop St.

Members of the Dublin City Fire Brigade, Noel Hasback, Jim O'Neill and Danny Davero were notably frustrated with the throngs of people outside of the building telling DIT News that due to the crowds they could not get the fire engines "right up to the main door like we should". They were also disappointed with the student's knowledge of building fire safety regulations, stating that "everyone should know where the fire assembly point is, there's a reason for fire safety measures".

Despite the opinion of the Fire Officials, Buildings Officer Peter Heaslip felt the evacuation was a success stating "the building was evacuated when the alarm was raised and all safety systems operated smoothly and correctly".

Many students disagreed that the building was evacuated immediately after the alarm was raised. Second year Retail Services Management students Laura McDermott and Cathy Toomey said "we just looked at each other when the alarm went off and did nothing, we completely ignored it which most other people did, it wasn't until we saw smoke coming out of the canteen that we actually left".

Strategic Management students, Brian Gallagher and Jeff Brennan, had a similar experience "when the alarms went off we all started laughing, no one went anywhere, we just waited for it to stop. When the announcement came that there really was a fire we did eventually go fire escape".

According to a report issued by the DIT buildings office, the blaze was "caused by a deep-fat fryer in the kitchen". However, Dave O'Brien, one of the firemen who put out the blaze, told DIT News at the scene that the cause of the fire may have been something else; "there was a build up of grease in the extractor fan which could have caused it" he said which is "down to poor maintenance". Mr O'Brien also pointed out that the fire was easily contained once they were on the scene "it only took us two seconds to put out".

After the fire had been safely extinguished the Fire Service inspected the area and deemed that due to debris and slippery surfaces the building would have to remain shut for safety reasons. The alarm systems were tested and re-set and following an extensive clean-up operation the building reopened the following morning.

DIT President, Professor Brian Norton was pleased with the actions of staff and students at the scene telling DIT News that what was really important was that "everyone was out in two and a half minutes and no one was hurt".

DIT graduates show ‘creative entrepreneurship’

By Cliona Ward

Irish people have an innate sense of ‘creative entrepreneurship’, which should be tapped into as a means out of the recession. That’s according to the Digital Hub Development Agency (DHIDA), which last week launched its ‘Best in Show’ exhibition which showcases digital media work produced by graduates from colleges throughout Ireland, including DIT.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Stephen Brennan, Director of Marketing and Strategy with The Digital Hub, said the exhibition demonstrates the huge potential that exists for creative outputs to be transformed into practical business opportunities.

“The the works on display have had the potential to become marketable products that would earn money for their creators. This type of creative entrepreneurship needs to be fostered more in Ireland. As a nation, we have a long history of producing fantastically talented writers, filmmakers, artists and designers. What we need to focus on now is how to turn this innate creativity into business opportunities. The smart economy has a creative side and this should not be overlooked in planning our education system and enterprise supports for the future.”

‘Best in Show’ is an annual exhibition, which features the work of many DIT graduates. Twelve works are featured in the 2009 show, which runs from 16th to 23rd October. Exhibits use sound and animation, computer-generated imagery, music, photography and cutting-edge design techniques to depict topics ranging from an unlikely romance to an unplanned pregnancy.

“We have a really good range of exhibits this year,” said Stephen Brennan. “In addition to works based around digital photography, animation and digital film-making, we also have a number of product design exhibits, which were produced using the latest technologies.

“One of the exhibits, for example, is a prototype for a watch that would administer prescription medicine to the wearer, using micro-noodle technology. While functioning as a regular watch, this product would also allow people who are dependent on daily doses of medicine - such as diabetics or people with high cholesterol - to adhere to their daily prescription in a very hassle-free manner, with no risk of forgetting to take their medication.

In addition to the various design prototypes on display at ‘Best in Show 2009’, the exhibition also features a number of projects based on animation, computer-generated images, digital photography and video installations.

One of the exhibits on display was inspired by the internet phenomenon of couch-surfing and recreates the artist's living-room, including the actual couch on which a number of backpackers slept after making contact with the artist through the CouchSurfing.org website.

Another exhibit, 'The Common Senses Project', aims to highlight how the five senses; sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, can be manipulated and tricked!
Students protest

P1 contd

may be cut as a result of this... we need you to get into your libraries, spend hours in there, and show the college that you need this service”. First year student, Blaithin Henehan, who attended the protest remarked “I had no idea they were thinking of cutting the library hours, I can’t believe they can do that”.

The strain the embargo has put on administrative staff is also affecting many students. Mechanical Engineering students, Sean Preston, Dean McVeigh and Paul Gannon told DIT News that they have already been affected by the cuts: “I haven’t registered yet” explained Sean, “the results of my repeats are at least three weeks late now, I don’t know if I’ve even passed and should be going to classes”.

Paul Gannon highlights the significance of delayed registration: “We had two weeks of college before we even knew if we should be here, none of us have been able to apply for our grants which is making life really tough for the class.” Dean McVeigh points out that other courses outside of Mechanical engineering are suffering too, “my mate can’t even do her labs now because she’s lost her lab assistant. Students aren’t getting the same education as before”.

The problems are not only being felt in academic circles, the Sports Service at DIT has been hit the worst by the staffing embargo. Both Fit2Go clubs have been closed as a result of the embargo due to the fact that the college is now unable to hire new staff. During the summer, the contracts of all part-time gym staff expired along with three of the four full-time contracts; this lead to the closure of the Linenhall gym at the start of the academic year. Up until last week there was just one remaining qualified trainer maintaining and running all of the remaining gym facilities, however, her contract has since expired leaving the college with no gym facilities. This raises issues for students who are attending DIT on a sports scholarship. There are 160 students who currently receive a sports scholarship with DIT, each of these students having been promised full access to a gym as part of their contract. The closure of the gym facilities can be interpreted as a breach of contract on the part of DIT. The Sports Service is searching for alternatives to accommodate these students.

Many of the protesting students voiced concerns about how the Dept of Finance’s came to adopt such a stance on higher education. “How the hell are we supposed to get out of a recession if we don’t have a well educated workforce?” asked first year Cassie Delany, “Ireland is the land of saints and scholars, I don’t understand why the government are imposing such stringent measures on our colleges”.

Many students attending college at present are becoming frustrated with DIT as services continue to be slashed; however, Brian Gormley, manager of Campus Life explains that the college’s hands are tied on the issue: “We’ve been informed that any college which breaches the rules will be penalised severely. Any exceptions to this rule have to be approved by the Dept of Finance”.

PICTURED:
Left: Student’s Union President Tracey Flinter addresses hundreds of protestors at the SU flash mob earlier this month
Below: Tracy presents a representative for the Dept of Finance with a petition of 5,000 signatures against the cutbacks
Bottom: Protestors cheer as Student’s Union denounces budget cutbacks
Silent protest speaks

By Cliona Ward

Minister of State Sean Haughey, was no doubt shocked when he entered DIT Bolton St on October 1st to be met by over a hundred versions of his own face staring blankly and silently at him. The stunt, which was part of a Student's Union organised silent protest, saw 120 students don masks of the Minister’s face and flank either side of the large entrance into Bolton St as Mr Haughey visited the campus for a design exhibition.

The protest, which was held by the SU was designed to draw attention to the effect the staffing embargo is having on sports facilities on campus. The 120 students who took part in the protest wore their clubs and societies clothing to show the Minister of State at the Dept of Education their connection to the affected sports facilities in DIT and the strong presence that sports have in campus life.

Barry Morgan, a member of the Mountaineering Club, told DIT News of the importance of clubs and societies to campus life and to his own college experience “I love mountaineering. I get to go outdoors, its fun and very important to student life... it's a great way for people to make friends”. Mr Morgan explained that he took part in the protest because “our instructors have been taken away and now we can’t train”.

The protest was kicked off by Student’s Union President Tracey Flinter who gave an impassioned speech to the assembled students on the state of the sports services in DIT. She told the protestors that they are paying more in registration and capitation this year than in previous years, while at the same time receiving less in terms of service. Her speech was interrupted by sporadic cheers from the crowd of gathered students.

Each of the protestors was given a full size print-out of Minister Haughey’s face which they were instructed to hold over their own faces when the Minister arrived. The Students Union warned Mr Haughey that they would be protesting his visit to the college and assured him the protest would be peaceful, silent and respectful. The Junior Minister appeared shocked upon entering the building, and realising what SU had in mind when said ‘peaceful’.

Following the protest Minister Haughey spoke to Ms Flinter and remarked that he was pleased that SU had kept their word and that the protest remained “respectful and dignified”. He told Ms Flinter that he had received the “message and [would] take what was said back to the Department”. Ms Flinter responded by telling the Minister that this was only the beginning and that there was “more to come”.

Speaking to DIT News after the protest, Ms Flinter said she felt the protest was a success: “We just wanted to highlight the effect the cutbacks are having on sports in DIT. We wanted students themselves to turn out and show the Minister that this is affecting them and we were pleased with the numbers who came on short notice... the Minister said we were respectful and dignified and he knows now that this is only the start, there’s more to come”.

Sorry state of student services said at Dáil

By Cliona Ward

On Wednesday October 7th, to coincide with the student protest at the Department of Finance, the Student's Union handed letters to all TDs, Ministers and Senators as they entered Leinster House. The letters contained information on how the Higher Education Authority cut-backs are affecting DIT students highlighting issues such as overcrowding, gym closures and reduced lecture hours. The severely affected services in DIT made an impact on several members of the Oireachtas with the issue being raised twice during official proceedings.

On the day of the protest Dublin south TD Aengus Ó Snodaigh questioned the Minister for Education and Science and also the Taoiseach on the education Bills included in the Programme for Government and asked whether they will help the situation in DIT. “I spoke to several students from the Dublin Institute of Technology who protested outside the House about the disgraceful situation in their college. The Bill in question might address their health and safety concerns and the fact that there are no lecturers, desks or white boards.” Deputy Ó Snodaigh also asked of the Taoiseach whether the relevant legislation could be fast tracked in order to “address the problems at the Dublin Institute of Technology in particular which does not - based on what I heard today - have quality assurance.” The Taoiseach responded by stating the legislation is “due next year”.

The following day Labour Senator for Dublin University, Ivana Bacik, made a speech to the Seanad to highlight the issue. “Yesterday I attended a protest organised by the students’ union of Dublin Institute of Technology, DIT, at which protest the impact of cuts at the institute was very clearly outlined by the large numbers of students present... The cutbacks have had a severe impact and the hours worked by both full-time and part-time staff have been cut. The staff complement has decreased and laboratories and libraries have been closed... We need to address this issue.”
College Fees off agenda for now

By Patrick Gormley

Minister for the Environment John Gormley, in a statement regarding the Green Party’s decision to remain in government, stated that there was no intention of reintroducing third level fees.

However, the government has not dismissed an increase in registration fees. He stated that the commitment to maintain free fees for student is included in the new Programme for Government 2007-2012.

These comments were welcomed by the Union of Students in Ireland, who, on hearing the governments promise not to reintroduce fees, cancelled a series of planned protests in colleges around the country.

USI President, Peter Mannion, stated; "the issue of third level fees has been in the public sphere for many months and we are glad that, through the negotiations for the Programme for Government, the Greens honoured their word and would not allow fees to return".

Minister of Education, Batt O'Keefe, has since cast a grey shadow over the argument for the reintroduction of fees, stating that the commitment to maintain free fees for student is included in the new Programme for Government 2007-2012.

The USI have condemned the Minister's endorsement of the reintroduction of third level fees. USI President, Peter Mannion, says "if Minister Batt O'Keefe cannot respect the Programme for Government and insists on embarking on his own agenda, the USI will be forced to call for his resignation. The Minister should realise that continuing on a solo run is no longer in the best interest of the country. Clearly his colleagues in Government do not share the same stance on college fees as he does. This makes the views of the Education Minister redundant".

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Initiative combats bullying of gay students

By Cassie Delaney

A new resource for teachers and principals to deal with homophobic bullying in secondary schools was launched last week by Minister Sean Haughey the Minister for Lifelong Learning.

The guidance booklet entitled Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) Students in Post-Primary Schools: Guidance for Principals and School Leaders has been designed by the Department of Education and the national Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN).

Figures released by GLEN indicate that 58% of LGB students have encountered homophobic bullying. A staggering 34% claim they have experienced homophobic comments made by teachers and additional staff.

The inability of the school environment to tackle the concerns of LGB students was evident with 60% of students claiming they did not feel that a teacher or suitable staff member was available to talk to.

The aim of the Department of Education and GLEN to improve the current situation was made clear by Minister Haughey at the launch of the booklet. He commented: "The 21st century school is one that is safe and supportive of all students, including lesbian, gay and bisexual students."

"As with all bullying in schools, homophobic bullying is unacceptable and a whole-school approach is required to ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual students are safe and supported and achieve their full educational and personal potential."

Stephen O’Connell, a third level student and representative of the national LGBT network recalls his experiences in secondary school: "As a whole I do not feel that my sexual orientation influenced my school life, although I would have always tried to keep my personal life and school life separate."

"I never felt outcast by my school but at the same time I never felt there was any support there either. There was the odd religion class where we touched upon the subject but that was it."

On the question of whether Stephen believed homophobic bullying was more likely to occur in a same-sex school as opposed to a mixed school he remarked "I went to a mixed school and I think that definitely helped the situation because no matter what anyone says a gay guy always needs his fag tag".

The USI have condemned the Minister’s endorsement of the reintroduction of third level fees. USI President, Peter Mannion, says "if Minister Batt O'Keefe cannot respect the Programme for Government and insists on embarking on his own agenda, the USI will be forced to call for his resignation. The Minister should realise that continuing on a solo run is no longer in the best interest of the country. Clearly his colleagues in Government do not share the same stance on college fees as he does. This makes the views of the Education Minister redundant".
Drinking films show student's talent

By Cliona Ward

Student film-makers the country over are showing the world that attitudes to drinking have changed by taking part in the annual DARE2BDRINKAWARE film competition.

Speaking at the launch of the 2009/2010 competition earlier this month Fionnuala Sheehan, chief executive of drinkaware.ie said that the DARE2BDRINKAWARE entries in the past two years have given interesting insights into students' perceptions of Ireland's drinking culture.

"People mistakenly assume that all students see getting drunk as a cool thing to do and that younger people are unaware of the risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption," she said. "However, the film entries received in the DARE2BDRINKAWARE competition in the last two years show that students actually have very strong opinions on the negative effects of drinking, and are much more aware of the risks associated with drunkenness than they are often given credit for."

"Last year, the shortlisted films in the competition tackled hard-hitting issues such as homelessness, alcoholism and drink driving, as well as the more common side-effects of excessive alcohol consumption such as memory loss, blackouts, illness and conflict with family and friends. The film-makers were not afraid to portray the grim underside of Ireland's drinking culture, and they skilfully depicted the sometimes embarrassing and even dangerous situations that students can find themselves in when they drink too much."

A prize fund of €5,000 is up for grabs by the student film-makers that enter the DARE2BDRINKAWARE competition this year. The competition asks aspiring film-makers and young people interested in social issues to produce a short film exploring the relationship between Irish culture and drinking. Entries must be made specifically for DARE2BDRINKAWARE, and must be produced entirely by third-level students over 18 years. Winning entries are chosen for their creativity, and for the insight they offer into students' attitudes to drink.

John Hurley, Director of Learning at The Digital Hub, highlighted some of the benefits of entering the competition: "The overall winning film last year was screened at the Oxegen music festival, the Cinemagic film festival, was broadcast recently on City Channel, and will be shown on RTE 2 in early November. So the exposure that students can gain from entering DARE2BDRINKAWARE is really quite significant. This is a fantastic opportunity for up-and-coming film-makers to meet key industry figures and establish a name for themselves at an early age."

Students now have six weeks to come up with film ideas for DARE2BDRINKAWARE: the deadline for receipt of proposals is Friday, 20th November 2009. Teams that have submitted successful proposals will then have until 6th April 2010 to produce and submit their short films.

DARE2BDRINKAWARE will culminate in a screening and awards ceremony in late April 2010. Further information and full guidelines for the competition are available at www.DARE2BDRINKAWARE.ie.

Architects fail to see results

Architecture department awards no 1.1 degrees for second consecutive year

By Paddy Smith

It came as a shock to many fifth year architecture students this year that no first class honours degrees were awarded by DIT. Despite the large workload involved in completing the fifth year architecture thesis an entire class was left without any 1.1 degrees for the second year running.

The final year architecture thesis is a difficult task with many students stating that they receive as little as 20 hours sleep a week over the final 2 months of the project. In spite of the large amount of effort students put into their final architecture year, almost all expect to face a low to medium mark.

Many students remain unclear as to why the department has not issued a first class honours mark for a second year and are beginning to question the subjective marking system. This system of marking is used throughout the degree in architecture while many students complain of a lack of academic break down or explanation of the marking system while the fourth year remains exempt from this style of marking. Within architectural circles in DIT any score above 60% is viewed as a very good result.

Most architectural students at DIT have taken at least 6 years to complete the course, mainly due to the almost mandatory year-out third year while many others have had to repeat due to the strict marking system; this means that most final year architecture students started in DIT in 2002/2003. These graduating students are now facing unemployment owing to the drastic downfall of jobs in the construction industry.

The approach to the architecture thesis differs from a typical academic thesis. Rather than produce a large body of text, architectural students must complete an Architecture Project which involves selecting a site, developing a brief, producing a full set of drawings and models, conducting research and presenting findings on 12 A1 boards, a logbook of ideas and development is also required.

This approach is only taken in final year, many students to find it a tough task as a result as most architecture students will be used to having only 3 smaller projects a year, where the schedule of accommodation and site were already decided by the academic staff.

The DIT architecture thesis system has come under a lot of criticism recently, particularly from students. A complete overhaul of the thesis approach has been in operation in UCD for the past two years in an effort to better adapt to semesterization and the Bologne accord to the programme. This has resulted with ten 1.1s being awarded this year and eleven the previous year.

Many DIT architecture students who have attended exhibitions of the final year work of both UCD and DIT students remain unsure as to why such a discrepancy in marks exists.

Students who are entering their final year of architecture in DIT face the problem of trying to discern what could put them in the first class honour bracket, one such student who wished to remain unnamed commented "we can use examples from the older years, but the risk there is that technology and presentation techniques move so fast that in current times even these projects can be of limited use".

DIT News October 2009

News 7
President responds to student concerns

By Cliona Ward

DIT President Prof Brian Norton along with the faculty heads and staff of DIT took part in a 'town-hall' style discussion in Gleeson Hall on October 19th. The meeting was organised by the Student’s Union (SU) in an attempt to better inform students on the implementation of cutback policies on campus, and also to provide them a forum to tell the President and staff directly how the new policies are affecting their campus life.

SU President, Tracey Flinter, began the meeting by welcoming Prof Norton and explaining to the crowd that the purpose of the gathering was so that "DIT and the students can work together to improve student life" and not to "give out". Prof Norton began by outlining his personal position in relation to the cutbacks: "We are simply trying to do things with a lot less money... I feel personally ashamed that we haven’t delivered on our promises and would like to apologise for that”.

The floor was opened up to students who were free to ask the President a question on any issue relating to the cutbacks. The most widespread concern which was raised consistently throughout the meeting was in relation to lab technicians and classroom aids. Many students are missing classes or labs due to the shortage of staff in this area who are not considered to be ‘academic staff’ by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Under the system all part-time staff members sign contracts each year which state they are employed by the college from September until June. When the embargo was introduced in July, the college was prohibited from re-hiring any staff whose contracts had run out during the summer. As this system is not used in other third level institutes they have not experienced the massive staffing losses seen in DIT.

Suzanne Tuttie, class rep convener for Bolton St, asked the assembled staff how aware the HEA are of the unique problem in DIT and questioned whether Prof Norton should be lobbying harder. She pointed out that DIT had ranked a solid position of 326th in the world top university list and that this rating with inevitably drop under current circumstances. David Cagney, director of Human Resources at DIT, told the crowd that the directors of the college have met with the HEA on four occasions over the summer and have already curbed the enforced cutbacks: "We’ve gone from a system of a one in three cutback of academic staff to only 3% which we feel is an achievement. All our efforts are now concentrated on the non-academic staff and there’s a strong indication the HEA are listening to us”.

The greatest complaint aired during the meeting was in relation to communication. Jonathan Hayes, class rep convener for Mountjoy Square, pleaded with the directorate to keep students informed on any changes that occur in relation to the cutbacks. Mr Hayes told the group that students were showing up about things like this. We need this information”.

World News in Brief

By Jenny Dunne

Obama wins Nobel Peace Prize

President Obama was awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize on the 9 October for his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and co-operation between peoples". Mr Obama told press that he was both “surprised and deeply humbled by the decision”. Many have criticised the choice and highlight the fact that the deadline for nominations for the prize was just two weeks after President Obama took office. The president has said he will donate the $1.4 million prize money to charity.

Roman Polanski arrested

Oscar winning director Roman Polanski was arrested in Zurich last month. Polanski has been exiled in France for over 30 years having fled the US in 1978 after pleading guilty to charges of unlawful sexual intercourse with a 13 year old girl. His victim, Samantha Geimer, has asked for the charges against Polanski to be dropped, saying the publication of the details of the case "causes harm to me, my husband and my children". Polanski is expected to be extradited to the US by the end of the month.

60th anniversary of Communism in China

China celebrated 60 years of Communist rule on October 1st with a series of celebrations in Beijing. Chinese President Hu Jintao spoke to crowds from the same spot as Mao Tse Tung proclaimed the founding of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949. His speech was followed by an extensive military display including 8000 soldiers, tanks and missiles. This was followed by a parade of singers and dancers in lavish costumes.

Earthquakes hit Sumatra

The Indonesian island of Sumatra was hit by a powerful earthquake on the 30th of September. The quake measured 7.6 on the Richter scale and devastated the city of Padang and the surrounding areas. Many buildings collapsed, trapping survivors underneath them. The death toll is estimated to be over 1000 by the UN, while many more are injured. A second quake measuring 6.6 hit the island on the morning after the initial quake. None are believed to have been killed by the second earthquake.

Marge Simpson to appear on cover of Playboy

Marge Simpson is to become the first cartoon character to be a Playboy cover girl. The November edition of Playboy will feature the blue haired character on its cover, a 3 page picture spread inside and a story entitled “The Devil in Marge Simpson”. Marge’s cover is intended to celebrate the 20th anniversary of “The Simpsons”. Circulation of the magazine has recently plummeted, and it is hoped the cover will attract younger readers who may have grown up with the cartoon to the magazine.
Cutt Off
The day Kasabian broke our heart

THE
GANDHIS
The great soul of Lucan

Alan Stanford
From A secret affair to Z cars

Plus fashion, art, photography, going out guide and much more
Hello and welcome to the very first issue of DEnt Ed magazine...

This is a departure from the staid entertainment stuff you've seen in the past...

No longer will we consider a movie review or two a comprehensive look at the entertainment scene...

Oh no, at DEnt Ed we strive to deliver to you a taste of the freshest, new and upcoming names in the entertainment scene....

But we're not all about the Johnny-come-latelys here either...

We also give you updates and interviews on what some of the biggest acts are up to right now...

This issue we bring you an glimpse of what UK chart-toppers Kasabian are like ahead of their big gig in the 02 next month...

We consider the theatre scene as we hear from actor Alan Stanford...

And check out Whelan's most recent offering to the Dublin bandscape The Ghandis...

For a look at fashion, photography, art, food, music, movies, theatre, culture and more here's DEnt Ed.

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Picture Perfect

Showcasing DIT's finest photography talent

This month’s featured photographer is: Aoife O'Donnell

Aoife O'Donnell is a Dublin based fashion and music photographer contributing to such magazines as Rogue, Star and Synergy. Most recent high profile bands she has photographed include London's The Rifles and Melbourne's JET.

Her work focuses primarily in the body with particular emphasis on subjects such as gender, sexual orientation, the grotesque body and the gaze.

Her most recent fine art body of work entitled Dismantled Bodies.

The pictures are a series of surreal sculptures using mannequins and various manmade objects which contain references of human gestures.

Others are minimalist images using the mannequins as a metaphor for the human form.

2010 shall see O'Donnell exhibiting her current ongoing fashion project which seeks to reinvent global idol symbols of idolatries influenced by the role of national identity.

This will be exhibited at either The Gallery of Photography or The National Photographic Archive, June 2010.

All photos can be viewed at www.aofedonnell.com
THE
GANDHIS

By Áine Gilligan

Whelans' was absolutely 'bammers' last week when the Lucan-based band The Gandhis took to the stage. The gig marked the official launch of their debut album 'You are my Friend'.

This four-piece indie band have been strumming their guitars for years and officially formed in 2007 having been signed to Dublin indie-label 1969 Records. The group consists of guitarist and lead vocalist Aidan McKelvey followed by Conor Deasy on lead guitar and backing vocals, The rich harmony of the group's songs is further enhanced by percussionist and vocalist 'Bazz' O'Reilly and Niall Cullen on bass guitar and vocals.

Fans crammed together downstairs mouthing along to a litany of The Gandhis songs, while a large Lucan contingent bordered the stage. Cheers resounded for the song Primrose Lane dedicated to the band's home village. The crowd nodded along to the catchy favourites Guy Like Me and Don't you want to be loved by me, while the renowned 222 had the masses moving.

The set was interspersed with cello and banjo players as well as three female backing vocalists who intensified the motown soul-sound of the band. After the end of their set The Gandhis made return on stage for an encore after the exhilarated crowd begged for 'one more tune'. Confetti streamed across fans' heads as the musicians brought the show to an end.

While the crowd dispersed I snuck backstage to meet the band and chat to them about their new album. I was greeted by a tired yet elated group who were able to enlighten me about the work that went into the album's creation.

The band insisted that no one songwriter was responsible for the album but that it was a mutual writing process, though the majority of ideas were brought to the table by Aidan and Conor they were then developed by the entire group. The album took roughly a year to write while time constraints infringed on their creativity, Conor Deasy commented that "the label was actually pressuring us to take our time". The musicians described the main themes of the album as love, Lucan, tv, friendship, chess and general cheesiness.

The Gandhis influences resonate their work and consist of The Beatles, The Kinks, Motown and the Beach Boys. This sound reflects the band as a whole although each of the members contributes an eclectic mix of their own musical tastes.

When asked what sets The Gandhis apart from other indie groups, Niall Cullen replied "we're more song based... we don't have a specific sound, we go with whatever" while Conor Deasy states with a wide grin "we're better than every other band".

The Gandhis are looking forward to promoting their eleven-track album across the country, with their next gig set to take place in Electric Avenue in Waterford on October 16th.

The band are ambitious and hope to be working on their second album by this time next year. Niall described the lowest point of their time together so far as "arriving at practice, two hours late, after a two hour journey and forgetting all the gear".

The Gandhis have a winning formula an infectious familiar sound combined with well polished talent. Their four part harmonies and catchy melodies linger in the ear long after the music has ended. There is no doubt that the coming year will see their popularity increase dramatically.

Their sound is lurking on the 'Beatlesque' side however and I can't help thinking the group would go much further in an indie saturated market if they experimented more with different sounds and techniques. That said, a night with The Gandhis was well worth the ten euro entry fee!
History is cyclical and repeats itself. That is a fact. Fashion follows this same pattern; and while it morphs and changes with every season, it does pay homage to the seasons of yesteryear. While one could argue that fashion should be all about looking to the future for new styles and inspiration that is often not the case. Fashion, if anything doesn't look forward but backward, drawing from the past. It analyzes what came before and moulds it to suit a new generation. An ideal example would be the current eighties craze that has hit the fashion world in the last eighteen months. But then if fashion is all about looking to the past, then how could it offer something new? And more importantly, for you reading DIT News, what can it offer to students?

We've all read fashion magazines that bandy around terms like 'a touch of forties elegance', 'fifties prom skirt' or even 'the eighties excess in shoulder padding' and frankly to an average student it doesn't say much. How many of us were actually around to see these so-called 'forties' fad of hair? And also, one quick glance at an old photo of our parents in full-on eighties fashion will have us running for the hills at the very mention of an eighties revival. Yet, even the most hardened of critics can nowadays be seen in high street creation that possesses touches of past styles.

Despite all the critics arguing that fashion is repeating itself, innovation can still be found. Even though the predominant trend is leaning towards eighties inspired clothing, there's still newness to be found beneath the shoulder pads, luminous eye colours and stacks of 80's. The shoulder pads, though present, are not as severe as they were in Dynasty, the PVC leggings are toned down and even the high hairstyles are toned down and have lost the Joan Collins appeal. Simply put, the eighties revival is in full swing, but the style has progressed in the twenty years and learned to pick and choose. No longer is fashion about daring to try all the styles at once, instead the fashion world and the student have learned to pick and choose the elements they prefer.

As a consumer and a student we shouldn't focus too much on the eighties revival as being fashion de jour, but for the beauty of this industry, it never stays still and this time next year we could all be raving about the revival of eighties hippie chic. What we can take from this are two important lessons; the first is that there is no point in obsessing too much about having the latest trends as soon as the garments are bought they soon go out of style; the second is that a particular style, such as pegline skirts, will eventually come back so it's worth holding onto clothes, from a few seasons ago. A double advantage to this second scenario is that it's a lot easier on the pockets. Irish students give us a perfect example of recurring themes in fashion as they have single-handedly kept the high hairstyles and have lost the Joan Collins appeal. Simply put, the eighties revival is in full swing, but the style has progressed in the twenty years and learned to pick and choose. No longer is fashion about daring to try all the styles at once, instead the fashion world and the student have learned to pick and choose the elements they prefer.

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What we wear is a rich tapestry that traverses through the annals of fashion style.

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Looking for something to do that doesn't require insane amounts of alco pops, and the fear of culchie mob attacks at Coppers? Looking something that doesn't involve smoking furiously in so-called indie bars on Wexford St? Then get your art-loving behind down to The National Gallery; it's running an exhibition of Edward Munch Prints at the moment. The exhibition features such jaunty titles as 'Death and the Woman', 'The Sick Child', and includes a portrait of ole misery guts Frecknick Nietzsche; it will hardly have you rolling in the aisles. But who says art is about laughs? Munch certainly could capture the highs and lows of the human condition better than any modern emo band. Check this with one with a hangover or just for something to do on some annoyingly bright afternoon. So do something cultural cos it's good for your soul!

I went on a quiet Monday afternoon - silently surrounded by poite Europeans before we were admitted into the gallery, and not a My Chemical Romance T-Shirt in sight. The light inside is drastically dimmed in order to protect the prints, but this is also perfect setting for channelling all your favourite negative feelings! I do a couple of loops of the place as the poite Europeans stick to walking almost in single file. Then the sheer force of the artist's work hits home and the other visitors blend into the darkness.

All points converge on 'The Scream' in the gallery space - parting of the seas, parting of tourists - moving out in waves of Scandinavian discontent. Once inside, Munch pulls you into a nether world, where the familiar is con-torted, where he muses heavy kohl-like from distant shorelines. Vistas and figures are encased in cold light inside worlds, like snow globes frozen in time. black on white, every which way. And then, in a rapid dui dream the visitor is cata­putted back into daytime.

The Edward Munch exhibit runs til December at The National Gallery, is free Mondays, and three Euros for students every other day. Get down there and embrace your inner art-efied!
Alan Stanford

Artisan before artist

By Fionnuala Holohan

Alan Stanford, one of the best-known English-born actors working in Ireland, gave a public interview recently in the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin.

The first few questions brought us quickly through his early career — he was born in the Isle of Wight, was encouraged to pursue his interest in drama by his teachers, attended Guild Hall in London, worked initially in repertory, was invited to Ireland in 1969 for brief stint in Killarney and then moved to Dublin, where he has stayed for the past 40 years.

At that time, theatre in Dublin was dominated by the Abbey, and to a lesser extent, the Gate, and it was a bleak time for new, young, hungry actors who just wanted to work and also for the public, who were treated to unquestionably accomplished productions of classic plays, but not to the newer, more experimental works by modern playwrights.

It was simply the quest for work and pay which initially prompted these young actors to start their own grassroots theatres but it grew into a larger rejuvenation of Irish theatre with the staging of many neworiginal plays written by up-and-coming playwrights throughout the capital, and this experimentation has continued to this day.

Alan was part of this whole movement and he still continues to support the experimental and the avant-garde, however, he has no patience with sloppy or lazy work.

"There is no excuse for neglecting the craft — I can forgive failure, which is an attempt at greatness, than incompetence and just being bad”. The actor must master his craft, be artisan before artist, Alan tells us, and when imagination is combined with mastery, we can have great art.

And great art, he feels, is when human thought or emotion is perfectly evoked. To illustrate, he sits forward and quotes the first few lines of Romeo’s breathless ‘bright angel’ monologue:

The latter being mainly reportage and opinion.

“If a critic is good, the critique is never objectionable. Not nice to hear, but necessary” he says firmly.

Alan continues to act, direct, adapt and write and is currently running a Shakespeare-for-schools company which aims to help school children discover the joys of Shakespeare as a dramatist, rather than author or poet.

He has recently become a member of the Arts Council of Ireland and is continuing to promote and develop theatre in Ireland and abroad.

(Photograph courtesy of Tourism Ireland/Photoforum)
What’s happening this Halloween

By Jenny Dunne

For a holiday based on sweets and dressing up in scary outfits, Halloween can be a pretty dull night. It’s often just like: any other night out except you’ve a piece of paper pinned to your top saying ‘ghost’, or if you’re a lady you’re barely wearing a top at all to fit into the aesthetic of your sexy witch/pirate/brain surgeon ‘costume’.

To make sure your Halloween this year is a bit more bloodcurdling, try some of DIT News’ suggestions for getting yourself in the spirit of the season before the big night, and head to the parties that are sure to be terrifying this year....

The Irish Film Institute is having its annual Horrorthon festival from the 22-26th October to get you scared silly before Halloween arrives. It will feature both big budget horror movies like Jennifer’s Body starring Megan Fox, as well as indie shockers such as ‘TI West’ Houses of the Devil.

Dawn of the Dead’s Ken Foree and Day of the Dead’s Joe Pilato will be present at screenings of their classic films to add to the atmosphere. Bring along someone you wouldn’t mind cuddling up to during the scary bits and prepare to be scared witless. To book call 01 679 5744 or visit www.irishfilm.ie.

If you can spare a few moments between the 12th and the 31st of October then get involved with the Trick or Treat for Temple Street fundraising campaign.

Volunteering to spend a few hours selling “Spooky Spotlights” to raise money for equipment and research for the children’s hospital is a great way to feel you’ve earned your Halloween sweets/alcohol binge.

If selling isn’t your thing, you could also hold a Trick or Treat for Temple Street Halloween Party to help raise money for the charity. Party and helping sick kids? Seems like a win-win situation to us. More details at www.templestreet.ie or to volunteer call 01 878 4344.

Beginning with a tour of Dublin’s most haunted spots, and culminating at the infamous Hellfire Club, Hidden Dublin’s Special Halloween Excursion is guaranteed to chill you to your very core.

You will be told the darkest secrets of the city’s past, and then driven to the isolated, burnt-out shell that was the Hellfire Club. A place that was once a hunting lodge for Dublin’s elite as well the scene of their animaland human sacrifices and card games with the Devil himself. The Hellfire Club is not a place for the faint-hearted. Walks will take place from the 29th to the 31st October and cost €29. Book online at www.hidden dublin walks.com.

A great way to get yourself into the spooky mood on Halloween night is to go to the Rocky Horror Picture Show Extravaganza at the Sugar Club. Dig out the corsets and fishnets from the back of the wardrobe, paint your face white and get ready to do the Time Warp again!

Audience participation is required at Rocky Horror, and the madness of the plotline is sure to make the night eventful! There will also be prizes for best dressed so get your tickets from www.tickets.ie.

If anyone can do Halloween right, it’s the ‘alternative’ folk over at Phantom FM. This year the Phantom FM Halloween Ball at the Academy is the place to be, with bands such as Codes, The Basics and Dinosaur Pile-Up playing along with the Phantom DJs themselves.

The dress code is ‘dress to distress’, and there’s sure to be many outrageous costumes on the night. There’s a prize for best costume and the competition is sure to be stiff so get planning now. Tickets available from www.ticketmaster.ie, as well as Ticketmaster outlets nationwide.

Apps-olutely insane!

When Luc O Cinnseala picked up his brother’s iPhone, he was both entertained and enraged by the amount of pointless apps created to numb the minds of faithful users.

10: iSteam: “Wow! Look at me draw a dirty picture in imaginary steam.” Best avoided if you’re one of them “hygienic types” who has never witnessed a steamy mirror in your bathroom after a shower.

9: Earn-O-Meter: Enter your home time and rate of pay and set the Earn-O-Meter ticking and watch it multiply your minimum wage down to a millionth of a Euro.

8: The Shotgun: Cook the phone down and up to lock and load, take aim and fire. Bang! Now do it again. And a few more times. Now delete.

7: Lightsaber Unleashed: Swish! Swish! Thwang! A little more fun than the shotgun just as mind-numbing.

6: IMilk and iBeers: Look, if you can afford an iPhone you can afford a glass of beer. The latter might actually involve human contact... That is a good thing dear iPhone owner.

5: Bubble Wrap: This would have been dull if it wasn’t A RACE AGAINST TIME!!! Oh wait, it’s still just as dull.

4: Zippo Lighter: If you find this amusing you should probably be kept away from fire anyway. Hit the cap and wind the wheel and, surprise of all surprises, a flame pops out.

3: Hello Cow: Picture of a cow plus your finger equals “Cow mooing sound effect type A”. Need we say anymore?

2: Teen Drug Use: 34 Warning Signs “Hmm, Phil is chewing the inside of his cheek off and is trying to swim across the room, I better check my iPhone because he may have taken something.”

1: SeeThruWeb: An app that makes your internet semi-transparent and shows you what’s in front of you through your camera. Set to splash diet-related accidents by half by the end of the year.
Me plus one unanswered phone call equals trouble. This is the third day that I was supposed to talk to UK chart-toppers Kasabian and now I’m deeply deeply concerned. Friday was rescheduled for Monday which was rescheduled for today and now, sitting in a dingy call shop on Georges St, I am slowly beginning to see through the cogs of the music promotion machine and am peering at purity and chaos of the rock and roll within.

I keep phoning the mobile number of Serge Pizzorno, the band’s guitarist and chief songwriter, but no answer. After a few rings the message minder kicks in, a low, croaky voice with a northern English drawl says “Shiiiiiiiiiiiiit”. How very rock and roll, no “Hi you’ve reached Serge, one quarter of one of the UK’s most successful bands, please leave a message after the beep” just one simple, versatile word – shit!

This sentiment echoes my overall feeling at this moment. I’ve pushed back my printing date to accommodate the band’s schedule, and now reading week is looming on the horizon where no newspapers (complete with sexy new Dent pull-out magazines) will be read. Reading week is hardly associated with its eponymous verb, perhaps it should be called ‘sleeping week’, or ‘drinking week’, or ‘watching Jeremy Kyle week’, and chances of there being student journalists, who could, under the student union regulations, be called leaping continuously for the 3.34mins of Club Foot is to their loutish following. Their latest studio offering, West Ryder Pauper Lunatic Asylum, represents a rebellion for the band from their image and loyal laddish following. It is a conceptual psychedelic experience and is getting mixed, slightly wet reviews in the industry. It’s been called everything from sprawling, and disjointed to overly polished and produced. That said, it’s had its share of fair dutes from those who recognise it for what it really is: a balls-out risk.

This is precisely what I see as being so very rock and roll about Kasabian, sat here pondering Serge’s bizarre message tone. The band are so often categorised as being broad and commercial (by their massive record sales and loyal following) and I’m hoping to hear from your real selves very soon!

Jeez, that’s a bit harsh, lets move onto some easier questions. Messi or Ronaldo?

Serge: Shiiiiiiiiiiiiit.

No, I wouldn’t say that now, I certainly liked it, so what if the common hooligan won’t enjoy it as much as the last two! You’re obviously doing something right, how do you feel about the Mercury nomination?

Serge: Shiiiiiiiiiiiiit.

God, I’m sorry to hear that, I think it’s a great achievement, we can’t all be winning Oscars and Grammies and things now can we?

Serge: Shiiiiiiiiiiiiit.

Well, I wouldn’t say that now, I certainly liked it, so what if the common hooligan won’t enjoy it as much as the last two! You’re obviously doing something right, how do you feel about the Mercury nomination?

Serge: Shiiiiiiiiiiiiit.

That’s just a little disgusting... Thanks for talking to us here at Dent we hope to hear from your real selves very soon!
Due to the recent fire, you have a second chance to sign up to your favourite societies!!!

Get Involved

www.socs.dit.ie | socsoffice@gmail.com | facebook.com/ditsocs
Job front less bleak for those who get creative

By Louise McHenry

Whether you’re first year, final year or a postgrad chances are you’re aware of, and contemplating, the shaky Irish jobs market even at this early stage in the year.

For many students their first indication of how tough times are is the sudden realisation that even part time jobs to supplement their income can be more difficult to come by.

For others looking further into the future, there is a desperate fear that when all this comes to an end – and by all this, we mean years of studying, something that is not cheap when rents, living costs and academic costs are taken into consideration – there will be no reward in terms of employment.

True, Ireland is not at its strongest point at the moment, and certainly there was a overconfidence in the air even just two years ago. Any intelligent graduate felt confident that they could find work in their chosen field – and those who had no concrete direction felt they could spend some time earning cash in a call centre before moving along their career path.

It truly hit home for me when last year a fellow Masters student on my course, a law graduate with years of managerial and retail experience, failed to be shortlisted for a post in Penneys – it was the latest in a list of job rejections.

It’s going to be difficult for any graduate, lets be honest about it. An almost graduate from the School of Media, I have entered into a world I never expected. It wasn’t supposed to be like this. In all my projections of my future I would leave university and impress employers with my fabulous skills, earn my wage, settle into a working life and hey, life’s wonderful!

Okay so it hasn’t quite happened like that but it hasn’t been as disheartening as I thought. There are opportunities out there for intelligent, skilled workers. If you have desire and drive – and a little bit of creativity – there is no need to panic, just be prepared for a harder struggle than you intended.

If you’re wondering why this piece is in the first issue of DIT News instead of the final one as you head out on your job search, well it’s simply because now is the time to start making yourself employable. Personally I have benefitted from the fact that I started gaining work experience in my chosen field from the minute I started university five years ago. College is a brilliant time for partying and having fun but it is possible to do all that at the same time as building your CV.

Firstly joining a society at college is a great idea and DIT has a huge range of options. Becoming involved in the committee and helping to organise events, dealing with financial issues or whatever else the society or club needs, is a great skill – and it’s fun too.

Think about giving up an evening or weekend to do work experience and remember companies may be more willing to accept you if you show some initiative. Prove to them that you will be an asset rather than a drain on their resources.

For students in the creative arts, a blog to perfect and showcase your talents is great and take advantage of the college’s excellent equipment. If you have permission to use equipment then think about doing projects outside of your class requirements to help build your portfolio (but ask your tutor first so you aren’t overextending yourself). And don’t forget, writing for the college paper means you become a published writer, whose name has been read by some of DIT’s 22,000 students!

And when the time comes and when you are out there in the highly competitive jobs market, there is one other important thing to remember – stay positive. It’s often draining and heartbreaking but you remain a far better asset to yourself if you stay confident. Believe in your abilities. Get out there and make others believe them too!
Given the Government’s callous disregard for students and the working people of this country, can we trust their assurances that fees will still not be directly reintroduced? According to the recent “Programme for Government” signed by Fianna Fáil and the Green Party, a direct reintroduction of third level fees has been removed from the agenda. It states: “Conscious of the economic pressures on parents today, this Government will not proceed with any new scheme of student contribution for Third Level education.”

Regardless of how it may seem at first glance, it is no great victory. The Programme does not mean we are maintaining our “free” third level education. Once upon a time it was cheap, but it was certainly never free.

This statement has never been more true as the registration fee now stands at €1,500 per annum a 67% rise on last year. This seems like an expensive and burdensome education, rather than the much talked about “free” education.

There is also nothing to stop the Government from reneging on the promise on fees outlined in the Programme. We would be wise to bear in mind that this commitment has not been made during an election, and even those assurances are inevitably retracted, retrenched and removed by each elected party – apparently surrendering to a collective amnesia. Should the Government change its mind, it won’t feel the need to hold onto the pretense of having made a “real” promise to the electorate.

The Programme’s commitments were made to the Greens. Unfortunately, this is the same (supposedly environmentally conscious) party that abandoned the Shell to sea campaign in Erris, Co. Mayo as soon they were given the privilege of entering into Government with Fianna Fáil. They’ve opted for NAMA and photo opportunities of John Gormley biking his way to work.

It’s obvious that increasing the registration fee (fees by stealth), is seen as more politically palatable than a direct reintroduction of fees. This kind of public manipulation can be compared with the 10% pay cut for public sector workers, but rebranded as a “pension-levy” by the Government. It seems that the Minister for Education, Batt O’Keefe, is not prepared to lose face by implementing a direct reintroduction of fees with the political climate as chilly as it presently is.

Former Minister for Education, Noel Dempsey TD, similarly backed out of the reintroduction of fees in 2002 due to public outcry, and what became an indefensible argument by the Government. The registration fee rose under Dempsey to €670 that year, representing a staggering increase of %250, from IR£190 in 1996. It’s obvious that O’Keefe has followed the pattern set down by his predecessor by overseeing a similarly colossal rise in the registration fee.

So why should we be against third level fees? Surely, it has been argued that fees should be reintroduced to the high-earners in Irish society, along the lines proposed by O’Keefe himself. To think that this Government would hit their rich supporters, and leave working people alone conjures up images of floodgates opening is as naïve a notion as it is dangerous.

In reality, any attempt to reintroduce fees for those who can afford it will eventually mean a reintroduction of fees for those who can’t – those hit worst by cutbacks to the public services, who now face redundancies, reduced pay, and regressive income levies. Given an inch, the Government will implement its plans for a UK / US type of education system based on class and privilege.

That’s not to say that our current education system is some ideal of equality and wealth redistribution, it’s not, but fees would make it worse. The only changes to the funding of education in this country should be made on the basis of the progressive taxation of high-income earners, and increases in taxes for corporations. Proper funding for genuine free education should be provided through a massive increase in public spending, and this money should be used to reduce the inequalities that exist in Irish education, and it must start from primary school onwards.

The Government should immediately remove the embargo on hiring in the public sector, and increase the third level maintenance grant, which is currently frozen amidst growing need for financial support. Cutbacks at all levels of education should be reversed, some of which have included cuts to the most vulnerable, those in special needs education. Public money, currently used to subsidise the salaries of private school teachers, approximately €90m a year, should be removed and injected into public education.

For now, it seems that the Government has backed down on its plans for a direct reintroduction of fees, but it is inevitable that the attacks on our education system will continue. No assurances were given in the Programme, that the Government would not increase the registration fee, which may mean the attempted introduction of fees by stealth continue as early as next year. This Government has attempted to set a precedent for working people; that we cannot expect education to be free, but it’s time for students and workers to set a precedent of our own; no cutbacks, no fees, no Fianna Fáil TD’s.
How to beat the ‘Freshman 15’

By Deirdre McGing

Not only can binge drinking cause a filthy hangover, it can also cause filthy fatness. Most people don’t care or don’t think about calories when they drink, but believe me they’re there!

Let’s discuss calories for a second... if the average calories in a can (550ml) of lager: is 221 calories, even if you only have one a beer a night, that plan up to an extra 1547 calories a week, which results in 6188 calories a month.

That’s equivalent to eating just over ten McDonalds Big Macs, one after the other. Which could lead to gaining more than a pound a month, there’s a reason its called beer belly!

On the other hand, maybe it’s not all our fault. The recent closure of Linenhall and the potential closure of Kevin St are bound to have implications on the DIT student body’s waistlines. It’s always good to blame the Government for our personal problems! Regardless of a rare gorge, gaining weight in your freshman year is not inevitable, it’s a choice.

A few simple changes can help fend off that extra weight; walk that extra bit instead of taking the bus, use the stairs as opposed to the lift, and you’ll keep those fifteen evil little fresher pounds away.

Finally you can eat whatever you want, how much you want, wherever you want and its totally acceptable. On the contrary, as spiderman says ‘with great freedom comes great responsibility’ and unfortunately it’s all about balance and choices if you want to still fit your wardrobe next year.

Havana a food haven

By Aidan Knowles

The seductive smell of Spanish tapas lingers in the air whilst young waitresses, looking almost as if fresh out of an Almodovar film, attentively go about serving eager customers with a smile.

Looking around one will find everyone from busy professionals to hipsters, students to curious tourists and other assorted eclectic clientele; all undoubtedly enjoying the worldly flavours of the kitchen to the sound of funky Latin music. Is this heaven or is it just Havana?

Those who have been abroad in mainland Europe, and more particularly in Spain, will most likely have heard of the Tapas. For the uniformed, a tapa is a tasty, often simple snack ranging from cheap and cheerful to something a little more special.

However, in Ireland this concept hasn’t really caught on. Establishments offering so called ‘tapas’ today in Ireland are best to be approached with caution. Thankfully, Havana Tapa Bar and Cafe on Georges Street succeeds in creating much needed authentic tapas with style and substance right in the heart of Dublin City.

I still vividly remember my first very visit to this small yet cozy eatery one fateful Thursday afternoon. Firstly I was stricken by the obvious charm found on the walls; a chaotic visual medley of artwork, photographs, flags and posters.

Then I began to notice the décor; it was colourful, inviting and most-notably incredibly quirky. Rest assured the eccentricity does not stop there; the rather comfortable couches are complimented by an assortment of masks, cactuses, pink ukuleles, animal skulls and let us not forget the unusual bongos (yes, bongos!).

For entertainment purposes, there is a generous bookshelf complete with magazines, newspapers and even a few board games to pass the time. After sitting down, I suddenly began to debate frivolously in my head whether I should give into the undeniable charm of the place or be very, very afraid...

Fortunately, aside from all distractions, Havana lives up in the department where it matters most—the food. Simply put, Havana does exactly what it says on the tin - Spanish Tapas; and it does it with great efficiency. With favourites such as Paella, Calamares, and Spanish Omelette next to some more unusual eats, it is hard to be disappointed by the excellent diversity (including many vegetarian choices) in the boni fide dishes found the menu.

In addition, if you are as indecisive as I am, there are a number of convenient platters on offer, which combine several dishes together for some digestive sampling. Luckily, all of this comes at competitive, student friendly pricing!

For thirsty patrons, there are host of appropriately authentic drinks available from the Havana Bar to wash down your meal. For a real treat I would highly recommend the homemade Sangria, a refreshingly fruity concoction of red wine, lemonade, fruit juice and other slightly more secretive ingredients. However for the less adventurous amongst us there a number of more traditional beverage choices such as cocktails, beer and wine up for grabs too.

To say I was very impressed with Havana would be somewhat of an understatement. It certainly may not be fine dining but for those who want a cheap and relaxing lunch served by excessively friendly waiting staff look no further.
It's that time of year again when we're all back at college and the novelty of the first week has already worn off. It is usually at this point that we begin to daydream about next summer and already start making plans as to consider which destinations tickle our fancy.

Most students at the beginning of the year decide on an American J1 visa and set the preparation wheels in motion, why not be that little bit different and consider visiting alternative destinations.

Go somewhere that has never crossed your mind and that allows you to open up to a world of opportunity and experiences beyond your wildest dreams. Perhaps next summer you might ditch traditional destinations and consider a more undiscovered country like India?

Don't let your first impressions of India cloud your judgment: get behind the wacky façade and discover the inner peace of a country rich with culture, architecture and human diversity, drenched in history and excitingly addictive to epicureans.

Nothing in this country is ever predictable, the only thing to expect is the unexpected, which comes in many forms: India is a stepping stone for many travellers - some are only too happy to leave, while others stay for a lifetime.

If you are looking for more than just miles of beautiful sandy beaches and warm tranquil settings then visit Agra City, birthplace of the Taj Mahal that stands breathtakingly on the banks of the Yamuna River and the world's largest marble quadrangle.

The Taj Mahal is synonymous with love and romance, built in 1632 by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal this superbly crafted monument took thirty years to build with a labour force of twenty thousand workers and costs that even in today's currencies run into their trillions.

The purity of a structure made completely from white marble, the majestic ornamentation, precious gemstones used and its picturesque location, all make visiting the Taj Mahal a must on anyone's list.

Delhi offers endless streets of designer fashions, exquisite restaurants and the bustling and busy of India's capital life. All that Delhi has to offer can be experienced at bargain prices so be sure to keep plenty of room in your suitcase!

Mumbai is the second most populous city in the world; an estimated 16 million people call it home. It also accommodates India's television and film industry Bollywood. You never know, if you hang around Mumbai long enough you might even get the chance to play the part as a western extra in a Bollywood movie it has been known to happen! If you want to experience what life is really like in India then visit Mumbai.

As on the other hand is the most westemized district in India and offers brilliant, white sand beaches and a warm climate. There is a terrific atmosphere in Goa and you will find that accommodation, food and more importantly alcohol is quite cheap. Travellers carrying Euro in their pockets will find the exchange rate to the rupees quite favourable. However, India has a closed currency which means you can only purchase it on arrival so be wary of unlicensed offices! There is phenomenal beauty to experience in Goa and plenty of places to relax at the beach on your hammock sipping Malibu watching the sun set over Anjuna bay.

Anjuna attracts a weird and wonderful collection of defiant ex-hippies, gentle lunatics, artists, artisans, neers, searchers, sybarites and itinerant expatriates, but fear not this is a good place to meet many like minded people from the west.

At full moon the infamous parties take place, a particularly good time to visit if you want to indulge in drunken delights!

One of the main sources of Anjuna's enduring popularity as a hippy hang out is its superb beach. Fringed by groves of swaying coconut palms, the curve of soft white sand conforms more closely to the stereotyped vision of paradise than any other beach on the Indian coast. Bathing is generally safer than at most of the nearby resorts, too, especially at the more peaceful southern end, where a rocky headland keeps the sea calm and the undertow to a minimum.

Life is full of the good, the bad and the ugly but certainly India does not fall into any of these categories. I categorically believe India falls under the headings of excellent, amazing, picturesque, and idyllic. It's certainly an experience that I won't be forgetting in a hurry!

So this year you guys forget the J1 Spain, Greece, The Caribbean and Costa Del Sol, live a dream, live an experience that will last a lifetime, lives like you've never lived before, take a trip to India!

Martin Guilfoyle talks about his summer being part of the Atomic Revolution in Lanzarote

Working overseas was something I wanted to do from day one, however with the current economic climate it really seemed like an impossible task. Working abroad would mean giving up the jobs I had here back in Ireland for three months and not knowing that I had them back when I returned.

Putting this aside for the middle of July me and 7 of my mates decided to go to lanzarote for a two week holiday. The holiday itself was amazing! Weather was fantastic around, 35-40 degrees everyday, the nightlife was incredible as there was over 25 mini clubs along with 3 main clubs along the strip and another 4 near the beach which I rented for 60 euro a week, even had my own bathroom and pool!

The following day I was on the phone home to tell everyone I was staying. Work told me I could have off up until the 21st of September which was perfect as this was when I was due back in college! So all my mates went home and I stayed. A girl I knew went out every night, meeting new people every hour was great, throw in the good music and it just felt like another night out.

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The following day I was on the phone home to tell everyone I was staying. Work told me I could have off up until the 21st of September which was perfect as this was when I was due back in college! So all my mates went home and I stayed. A girl I worked with had a spare double room in her house which I rented for 60 euro a week, even had my own bathroom and pool!

Ok so had a dream job, on a dream island with a dream lifestyle but did not exactly have dream wages. I was on 3 euro an hour though was basically brought no money home but this experience was just immense.

Going out every night, meeting new people and waking up next to a pool or beach was incredible. More can you ask for? I stayed working for a total of ten weeks and I wiu definitely considering going away for a summer.

While everyone was working in Canada or America I was in little old lanzarote just off the coast of Africa enjoying every minute of every day. Go for it!
FIFA causes the ‘death of football’ - Trappatoni

By Sean Duffy

The FAI yesterday attempted to draw a line under FIFA's seeding furore, which caused consternation in Irish football circles last week. Fans and players alike were left dismayed when FIFA announced a playoff seeding system which would hinder the qualification prospects of smaller countries like Ireland.

FIFA's decision is widely believed to be a fillip for bigger nations who have had difficulty in qualifying for the finals in South Africa in 2010. It ensures European heavyweights Portugal and France are certain to avoid each other in the draw, and will come as a blow to each of the smaller nations which will be participating in the upcoming playoffs. Further anger has stemmed from allegations that the decision has been made purely on commercial grounds.

Ireland goalkeeper Shay Given, labelled the decision "disgusting", while team manager Giovanni Trappatoni claimed the decision would signal "the death of football". Veteran Kevin Kilbane, further underlined the sense of frustration by claiming FIFA had "changed the goalposts at the last minute".

Despite having received verbal indications that the draw would not be seeded, the FAI has been somewhat more reticent in condemning the decision. Chief executive John Delaney expressed "disappointment" at the decision, but those comments aside, the association have been conspicuous by their silence.

The FAI yesterday confirmed no official complaint would be lodged to the world's governing body. "We had received a verbal indication that the draw would not be seeded, but that position was changed unanimously by FIFA's congress," said one FAI source. "Effectively the Congress is strongly influenced by (FIFA President) Sepp Blatter and (Uefa President) Michelle Platini. It became clear that it was based as a commercial decision, and in fairness it does make commercial sense for them. That's how it is and we just have to put up with it".

The source also attempted to assuage anger amongst the public by claiming the association "were never at any time, given any guarantee about the final nature of the playoff draw." However, should Ireland be drawn against one of Europe's leading lights, pressure may mount on the association to put forth a formal complaint against the process.

GAA gone to the dogs

By Billy Norman

Had enough of trying so hard to get your mates out for a class night out in some backstreet club no-one has heard of? Being messed around with promoters charging too much? Then DIT GAA has the answer for you.

DIT GAA Club’s Annual Fundraiser takes place on Tuesday 10th of November 2009 and everyone is invited to attend a ‘Night at the Dogs’ at Harold's Cross Stadium.

Tickets are priced at €10 and are available from the GAA stand in Aungier Street, Bolton Street & Kevin Street campuses from Wednesday the 4th. The DIT Dog Night is always a great laugh at exceptional value and this year promises to no exception.

This event is organised as a much needed fundraiser for the DIT GAA club that has over 350 active members, but it is also a perfect ready-made class night out. Getting an event together can be tough work, so why not jump on board and have a great laugh with your mates whilst supporting a great club.

The night kicks off with admission into Harold's Cross stadium where you will be met with your race card and sausage and chips. Then you and your winnings are whisked off to coppers were your admission is covered and you and your class can dance the night away. Now that's a night out the Ben Dunne way.
From DIT to the land of Oz

Bolton Street to Australia: A lot has changed in the life of Michael Quinn over the past 12 months.

By Alan O'Mara

Michael Quinn’s time in DIT was cut short when AFL outfit Essendon offered him a chance to become a professional sportsman ‘Down Under’. Part of the Fresher GAA team that won the All-Ireland in 2008 and a sporting fanatic, it was an opportunity Quinn could not turn down. Here, he talks to DIT News about how his life has changed.

The former DIT student, who hails from Longford, came into the college two years ago as a down to earth ‘Fresher’ and while the rest of us continue to enjoy the laid-back lifestyle Michael’s life has transformed.

Last November, Quinn accepted a contract offer from Australian Football League club Essendon and made a brave decision to leave Ireland and try his luck as a professional athlete in Oz.

He left his family, his friends and a very promising future as a GAA player behind him – along with the glamour of Bolton Street where he studied Civil Engineering.

“It was a really hard decision but it was one of them things where if I didn’t try it, I think in a few years I would have always regretted it” says Michael of the move.

“It’s the hardest thing I’ve ever done, moving so far away from home and everything I know.”

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It was a big change and you have to be open to learning. At home with Gaelic, sometimes you feel like you know it all but I was starting a lot of things down there new. The club was great and I got so much advice and all that had to be taken on board.”

“At home, there were times when I’d be training with five or six teams on the go between GAA and soccer but it doesn’t prepare you for training six days a week over there. Your life really does revolve around the club,” added the Killroe clubman.

When most people think about the life of a professional sportsman, they often think of fame and luxuries. However Quinn revealed when you are training as intense and as often as he is now able to look back at the days he expected when he made his full-debut against Fremantle in the AFL second round at the start of last season, (owing in part to a few injured absentees). In doing that the former DIT student surpassed everyone’s expectations – including his own.

“It was a bit surreal to be honest and I wasn’t expecting [my debut] to happen so quickly.”

Surprisingly, Quinn received his rewards sooner than he expected when he made his full-debut against Fremantle in the AFL second round at the start of last season, (owing in part to a few injured absentees). In doing that the former DIT student surpassed everyone’s expectations – including his own.

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“I do miss playing locally with my club and with the county. There might not be sixty thousand at the games but it is a different kind of buzz.

“I’m home now at the minute and it’s great to catch up with all my old mates. Playing Fresher football here was so enjoyable and I met some great people. It was great to win the All-Ireland as well. It’s not the real deal but it’s probably as close as I will get to one at this stage,” confesses Quinn.

While it is good to switch off, he knows he can’t take his foot off the gas - even during the off season.

“I just have to keep working hard and keep improving. I’m back again in November but we all got a gym programme to do, so it’s basically pre-pre-season,” said the Longford man.

Some high-profile Irish AFL players like Tadhg Kennelly and Martin Clarke have returned to Ireland – despite being highly successful with their respective clubs. Quinn admits he does miss playing GAA but has no plans to come home any time soon.

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As much as Gaelic football is held in high regard by many all over the country, it is important to remember that it is still an amateur game. When Quinn switched codes, to a game he had never played competitively before, sport was no longer a hobby it was his livelihood.

“For me, it was a huge change and you have to be open to everything I know. You just have to be certain and really want it. Because you will have to work hard - you just have too,” he explains.

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FAI fights racism with football
By Cliona Ward

Former Ireland international star Curtis Fleming last week launched FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) Week 2009. Speaking at the launch, Mr Fleming said he believed football helps combat discrimination and can be particularly influential in tackling racist attitudes among young people.

"Children's attitudes are heavily influenced by images they see in the media, and by the views and actions of their parents and heroes," he said. "With football – media, parents and sporting heroes all converge, so it can be responsible for shaping the attitudes and mindsets of our young population. It is because of this that football is a vital tool in growing cultural awareness and respect for diversity."

Fleming, who is also the FAI's Ambassador for FARE Week 2009, said football had always been a refuge for him when he experienced hostility or discrimination: "My mother is Irish and my dad is from Jamaica, so I did experience some racism growing up in Dublin in the 1970s; football was a great outlet for me."

"As a footballer, you can be in a dressing room with maybe 15 different nationalities – people with different skin colours and different religious backgrounds – and it doesn't matter in the least because everyone's focused on one goal: going out there and playing a good game. You don't think about differences; you just think about what you have in common."

"We need to get the message out that discrimination of any sort, whether based on religious background, nationality or skin colour, is simply not acceptable, on or off the pitch. Fans and footballers alike have a duty to promote this message."

"Footballers playing with the top clubs are hero-worshipped by young kids, so they can be hugely influential in challenging negative behaviour and promoting respect for cultural diversity. But it's equally important that when children go to matches they don't hear adults around them using racist language or taunting opposition players because of cultural differences. Respect for diversity needs to be encouraged at all levels of the game."

FARE is a European-wide initiative, aimed at tackling discrimination and racism. It is supported by FIFA, UEFA and the European Commission. In Ireland, it has been promoted by the FAI for the past three years, and is supported by the Office of the Minister for Integration. FARE Week 2009 runs from 15th to 27th October. The FAI is marking the Week in a number of ways; at the Ireland v. Montenegro game last night, a special exhibition match took place during half-time and an anti-racism advertisement was broadcast in Croke Park, additionally a friendly match between representatives of the Houses of the Oireachtas football team and the diplomatic corps is taking place this week.

According to Des Tomlinson, National Coordinator for Intercultural Football at the FAI, "Over 140 clubs, schools and community groups are involved in FARE Week 2009, and a number of footballers have also personally backed the initiative. Ireland is now a multicultural society, so it's important that we find ways of challenging prejudices and growing awareness of different cultures. Football is the world's most popular sport, played in every corner of the globe, so it can play a hugely significant role in combating racism and promoting cultural diversity and respect."

"At international and professional club level, racism is less of an issue, but it still persists at a more local level. In parts of Europe, we are also witnessing a rise in racism. Irish fans can play an important role in ensuring that racist behaviour does not take hold here," he added.

Full throttle for DIT Karting
By Graham Higginbotham

The opening trip of the 2009 year rolled into Santry's very own Kart City. An exciting outdoor track, this venue always produces some closely fought battles all the way down to the flag. A full turnout of 32 drivers arrived at the track with high hopes. The track has recently received a face lift with all sections of the curbs and tyre walls getting a well deserved covering of red & white paint. All in all giving the venue a professional looking appearance and the new karting members a taste of what was to come.

Track conditions for the event were absolutely ideal. With dry sticky tarmac, grip was not a problem and the screeching tyres from all competitors verified this assumption. All racers got a 5lap practice session to allow them to familiarize themselves with the Karts and the track. With the formalities out of the way it was time to go racing! Each competitor had two heats consisting of 5laps to score as many points as they could in order to progress into the semi-finals.

The heat races were fast and furious. Good racing was on show and a few racers were turning heads. There were also a few closely called races sometimes getting closer to the gravel traps than they might have liked. It was all laughed off though by the on-looking karting members.

With points tallied and some race time under everyone's belt, it was time to get down to business with the semi-finals. Two 8-Kart semi-finals took place with the top 4 from each progressing to the 10-lap Karting final. In typical DIT Karting style, the racing was a close affair with Karters falling casualty at the 1st and 2nd corners. The top three of J.Dalton, E.McGeough and D.McKnight got away at the front as a result of this and never looked back. S.Colley and G.Higginbotham finishing less than half a second apart in 4th and 5th place so it was a hotly contested race all round. The victors received medals and trophies and once the champagne had settled it was time to return to reality.

So I'm glad to report that the first event was a great success and all the karting members having a good days racing. Interest for the trips have been high so in order to book you place, keep looking out on the notice boards and via your email/texts as there are many trips to come.
Irish foosball champ
By Niall O'Connor

With Ireland competing in the foosball world championship in Prague this month DIT News caught up with Irishman Des O'Rourke who is ranked 5th in the world.

DIT News: Des how did you get involved with foosball?
Des: I first started playing the game when I was 14 in the late 60’s with a friend mainly in the arcades and pubs in Sligo where I’m from. Of course we weren’t supposed to be there but the times were different then and it was feasible to slip under the radar. And it wasn’t too long before we had mastered the technicalities of the game and were the best in Sligo. Then in 74 I went to study at UCD and I discovered the game was very different in Dublin in comparison to Sligo, and it definitely made me a better player, there were big tournaments during the likes of rag week involving players from universities like DIT Kevin St and Bolton St. I have fond memories of playing in Belfield in 75, which was a huge tournament involving all the various college’s; and that was the first big competition I won with my tag partner Shane Boland, the prize was 200 cigarettes and a barrel of Murphy’s stout.

DIT News: How did you progress from there?
Des: Well I suppose a huge step forward for the game came in 77 when some of the top players in the world travelled from the states to demonstrate their new table which is called tournament soccer or TS for short, having these guys take the time to teach us really made us better players, they also sponsored big money competitions, I remember the top prize was an all expenses paid trip to Dallas to play in the world championship. Foosball was a semi-professional sport in the US and very few players could earn a living so these guys really were an inspiration, and as a result of their influence foosball in Ireland enjoyed a ten year spell where we were at a higher standard than the whole of the UK.

DIT News: How did this spell come to an end?
Des: Basically it was because of video games, they became a huge part of Irish culture with the likes of the CommoDese 64 and the Nintendo and in essence foosball was not as attractive as Mario jumping about the place.

DIT News: How long did this success continue for?
Des: Pretty much from 95-99 and then in 99 a 13 year old wonder kid named Rob Atah emerged from the UK and between 99-2003 he single handily dragged the entire level in the UK up and once again they passed us out.

DIT News: So it was 2003 when the Irish struck back?
Des: Yes the digital TV station had an invitational tournament which was aired and the top players in the UK were coming from the likes of Oxford and Cambridge, and it’s amazing to see the cultural clash but a mutual respect remains between the skobies and the students, the colleges in Ireland are integral and are once again showing an interest in the game and therefore students are the future of Irish foosball.

DIT News: How did you combat this?
Des: The survival of Irish foosball came down to myself and a group of hardcore fans who would meet up and we kept the game alive by looking towards Europe where we competed at a high level in Belgium 85, Luxembourg 86, and then I won the European championship in Switzerland 87, which to this day is still very special to me.

DIT News: How did Irish foosball evolve from there?
Des: We continued to compete on a yearly basis and then in 95 our American colleagues again set the standards with the introduction of the Tornado table which is what we’ve been most successful on, and once again we were at a higher standard than the UK.

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