

1995

The DIT Examiner : The newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union, November 1995

DIT : Student's Union

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The DIT Examiner

The Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union

Nov.'95



Third level students from all over Ireland took to the streets last week, forcing the Government to look up and the sceptics to shut up
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DIT Aungier Street has a new Acting Director. Dr Ellen Hazelkorn tells us what she hopes to achieve and what her appointment means
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DIT's rugby team recently returned from a successful short pre-season tour in the United States. We get a first hand report on what went on.
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USI has just published a wide ranging survey into the living conditions of students in Ireland. USI's President discusses the findings
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Two Thirds of DIT Students Set to Vote Yes in Referendum

Two thirds of DIT students are set to vote for the removal of the ban on divorce in Friday's referendum. A little over 14.5% are intending to vote no while there remains a substantial number of undecided voters (18%)

These figures are the findings of a questionnaire devised by DITSU and The DIT Examiner which was handed out across the DIT last week. In all, 246 completed questionnaires were returned to individual students' unions around the institute. Of those 246, 146 answered yes to the question, "will you be voting for a removal of the ban on divorce in the upcoming referendum?". There were 35 no votes and 46 undecided. Of those voting yes, 96 are women and 67 men, a substantial difference, but in the no camp, there were also more women than men, 21 to 14. Of those undecided, 30 are women and 16 are men.

The figures reveal that even in a third level institution, with a young, well informed population the matter is not as clear cut as many would expect and the high undecided vote is an obvious indication of the confusion that the debate has generated in recent weeks. With support for the referendum falling according to recent national polls, it is highly likely that this undecided vote will be crucial on Friday.

In terms of percentages, the highest yes vote was to be found among DIT Aungier Street's students (23 out of 28 returned questionnaires, and not a sin-

gle no vote), while no matter which way you look at it, the highest no vote came from DIT Cathal Brugha Street (14 out of a total of 62 returned questionnaires).

Interestingly, of the 13 respondents throughout the DIT who listed their parents as being separated, 12 will be voting yes in Friday's referendum. One will be voting no.

In the questionnaire, which contained eight questions, students were first asked whether or not they were registered to vote (the vast majority are). They were then asked how they would be voting in the upcoming referendum and were given three options: (1) in favour of removing the ban on divorce, (2) against removing the ban on divorce or (3) undecided.

Those voting yes were asked whether they were so voting because of (a) family or friends' circumstances, (b) the right to divorce should be a basic one, (c) church and state should be separate or (d) other. For the vast majority, the reason given was that the right to divorce should be a basic one.

The No voters were asked whether they were so voting because of (a) family or friends' circumstances, (b) marriage should be a lifelong commitment, (c) financial consequences of divorce, (d) religious reasons, or (e) other. The most common reason given was that marriage should be a lifelong commitment (25 out of 36) with financial consequences some way back as the second most common given rea-

son. Students were also asked whether or not their minds had been changed on the issue in recent weeks. A total of 54 said that this was the case, with the most common reason being discussions on the issue with friends.

At the end of the questionnaire, they were asked to list their three most important reasons for voting in favour or against the introduction of divorce. Here is a sample of the most frequently occurring reasons:

For the no voters: protect the children/effects on children/children are not represented; marriage is an unbreakable promise made between two individuals/marriage is a lifelong commitment/till death do us part; the no fault clause is ridiculous; the act of marriage will no longer be respected as a proper and serious commitment.

For the Yes voters: everyone deserves

a second chance/basic human right/people have the right to choose/nobody should be forced to remain married for life if the marriage is over/freedom of choice; the church should not be involved/ the church should not have the right to decide that divorce shouldn't be allowed/it's not a church issue; children are not always happy when people stay together for their sake/getting children out of a troubled environment.

For the no voters, the opposition was generally based on concern for children and the fact that for them marriage should be a bond for life. The financial consequences of divorce did not figure highly and religious reasons were only very rarely cited. The Yes voters were largely concerned that people deserved a second chance and that no-one should be forced to remain married



Members of the DITSU executive were at the forefront of things during last week's march

The DIT Examiner

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The Show Goes On

It didn't at first seem likely that the day of action 1995 would be anything like as successful as its predecessor last year. First of all, the marches were to be spread out over four centres, Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Galway, which, even though the overall figures might be greater than last year's monster Dublin march, suggested that individual demonstrations would be a lot less impressive. The argument for spreading the marches around the country is sound but it was a risky decision. Secondly, the days leading up to November 15th were distinctly lacking in enthusiasm. Last year, on the morning of November 17th, there was a palpable sense that something was going to happen, aside from the collapse of the Government.

This year, that feeling was missing and as the dawned cold and promising rain, it was beginning to look as if a disappointment was in the offing, if not a downright failure. How wrong we (those of us who doubted) were. For once again, the day of action was an unqualified success and for that all concerned should take a bow. That refers to the organisers, who worked tirelessly and hounded people to get out and make the effort on the day, and to all the students who gave up the afternoon to make their voices heard and to ensure that the Government was reminded once again that life for third level students has not been a bed of roses for a very long time. It is challenging and invigorating and that in of course good, but it is the problems faced by these same students that have nothing to do with grades that are the issue. USI's survey on the living conditions of third level students bears this out - there are students out there who are not eating properly, who cannot afford to go to the doctor, who are working up 36 hours a week in addition to attending lectures, during which it has been reported, some are falling asleep. There are very few students living the pampered lifestyle in 1995.

USI has now built up great momentum. This momentum must be maintained; if it is not, then a great deal will have been lost and the work of, in particular the past two years, will have been for nothing. And that would be unforgivable.

Congratulations

The DIT Examiner wishes to congratulate Dermot Blake, who has just been elected Deputy Convenor in the students' union in DIT Kevin Street. He has been thrown right into the middle of a term and all the frantic activity that goes with this time of the year. We wish him luck and fervently express the hope that the experience will be an educational one. It'll certainly test his nerves.

Deirdre Norton: An Appreciation

Deirdre joined DITSU in November 1992 as the secretary/bookkeeper in our head office. She was quiet, very conscientious, ever helpful, hard working and excellent at her job. The news of her recent untimely and tragic death at such a young age was a severe blow to her family, friends and colleagues and all who knew her.

It has certainly put things in perspective for us all and made us look again at our priorities and reassess what is really important in our lives. Our thoughts and sympathies at this most difficult time are with Deirdre, Paul and her family and friends. Goodbye Deirdre.

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Editor John Carroll
Associate Editor Colman Byrne
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Letters to the Editor

Sir,

In the editorial of the October issue of the DIT Examiner, Will the DIT Take Note?, it was implied that staff in Adelaide Road and Chatham Row had ignored the specific needs of music students. In fact there is a weighty file of letters, proposals and other documentation which bears witness to the constant efforts of staff and management to obtain suitable accommodation and facilities. The needs of our students on third level music and drama courses continue to be a priority for staff in DIT College of Music.

Padraig Ó Cuinneagáin
Course tutor Dip Mus Education

David Mooney
Course Tutor Dip Mus Teaching

Miriam O'Meara
Course Tutor Dip Speech and Drama Studies
Kathleen Hegarty
Course Tutor Grad Dip in Music

Students Silence the Sceptics ... and Stop the Traffic

For a moment, it looked like Trinity college was actually blushing with embarrassment. As the marchers filed past the front gates, they cat called and jeered and the very building seemed to cringe in the face of very justified derision. Inside, cosseted from the real world, they tackled the pressing issue of graffiti. It was November 15th, the weather held, Trinity copped out and this correspondent will later on have to buy a hat, which won't be too bad. Eating the damned thing will be the problem.

third level students made themselves heard very clearly.

It wasn't the monster that was last year's demonstration, and it was unfortunate that the stage had to be set up in Molesworth Street rather than Kildare St itself or the GPO, a la 1994, but Dublin city's traffic was suitably disrupted and the noise level ensured that everyone knew what was going on and why.

The mood throughout was lively and there was thankfully no repeat of last year's silliness involving the

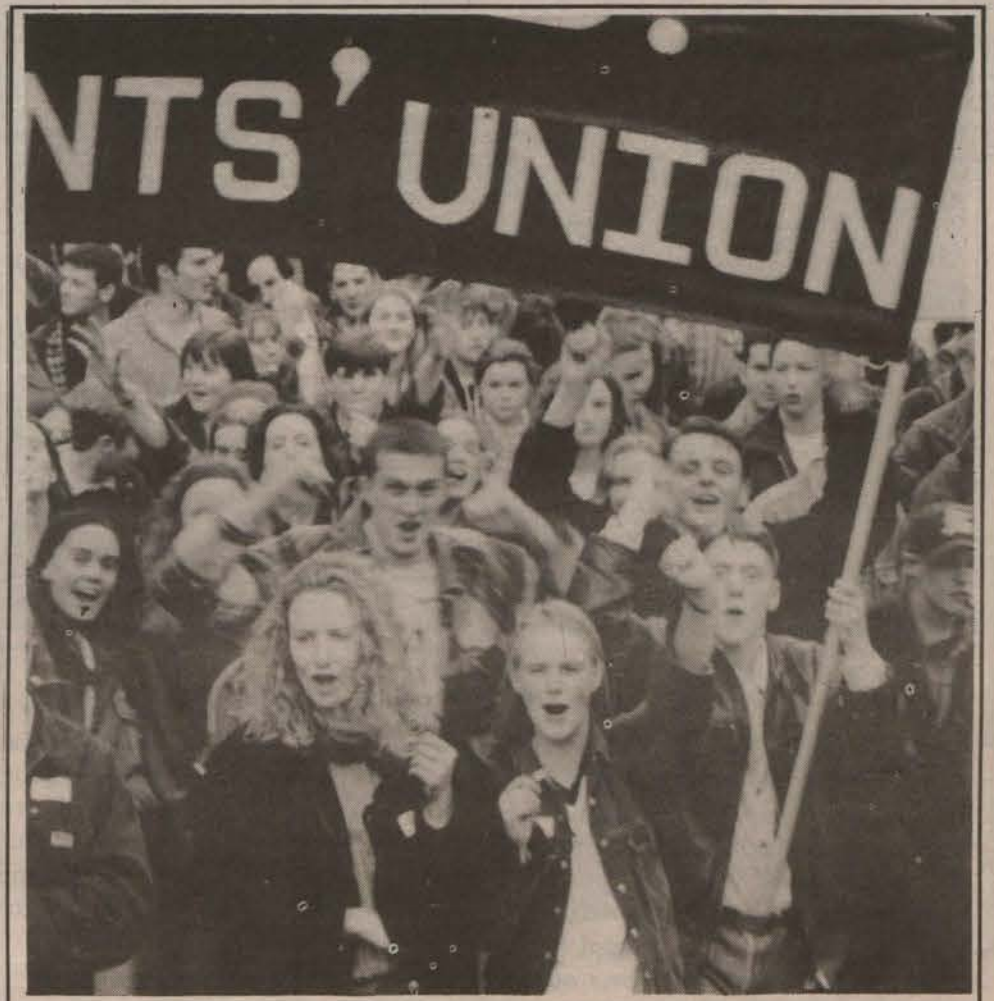


Y'see, the week of action had not really set the city on fire. True, Cathal Brugha Street's soup kitchen managed to attract the attention of the Gardaí and DITSU's occupation of Democratic Left's headquarters brought about a meeting with Prionsias da Rossa, but overall, the phrase 'low key' summed up the mood and indeed the activity. The protest outside the offices of Dublin Bus on Tuesday attracted a little attention and a communications breakdown resulted in a later demonstration outside the Department of Education being somewhat desultory, despite the best efforts of those who attended. With this in mind, and with the weather forecast promising bad things, it wasn't looking good for the highlight of the week, the march. The show of force. Strength in Numbers. That sort of thing.

So much for guesswork and journalists scepticism. They came, everyone saw and must concur – the march was a noisy and cheerful success. If there were any lingering doubts about the determination of Ireland's recently rejuvenated student movement, the events of last Thursday dispelled them. In Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast,

Socialist Workers Movement, some barricades and the Gardaí. Beginning at Parnell Square, the march made its way through the centre of the city, around Trinity – extra loud behaviour at this point, much sitting down – and then up Dawson Street and onto Molesworth Street. As close to the gates of the Dáil as was possible, the stage has been set up and from there, a number of well received speeches were made, with Colman Byrne acting as chief rabble rouser and emcee. USI President Colm Keaveney, normally a quietly spoken and eminently affable fellow, was clearly impassioned by the numbers present and the enthusiasm. He made an angry speech denouncing pitiful grants, scoring the pronouncements of 60s students for attacking today's batch and winding up with repeated assurances that third level students do have a voice.

The day was rounded off with music and though the crowd began to fall away much sooner than last year – the position of the stage meant that many further down the street were left feeling slightly out of it – everyone involved can be proud. Now, a homburg or a trilby.



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BAND on the Run

The BAND Soc. was conceived on the 25th of October and a fortnight later, Wednesday, November 8th, the first BAND gig kicked off in Charlie's Bar in Aungier Street.

Two bands played, one of which had only been spawned a few days previously. Both bands, Bullring and Foursped, went down extremely well, thus ensuing

Skippy the bush kangaroo at the drop of a hat, to the tune of Parklife.

Though no-one was in need of extra beer, we did adjourn to Gleeson's for a £1 a pint reception with some receiving more than others. Fair play to Paul for posing as photographer for the event. Linda should be the judge of how good a performance he put in.



Bullring playing their socks off for the BAND soc.

that your truly did not have a heart attack. The crowd must be commended for putting up with the late arrival of all the necessary equipment for the show. It eventually arrived and there was no stopping the BAND Soc.

The concert was highly professional, with people prepared to prompt lyrics for the sides and also members of the audience prepared to do impressions of

The BAND Soc. would like to extend its best wishes to Alexa who was involved in an accident that afternoon outside Charlie's. We would like to thank Charlie's, the BAND Soc., promotions team, Rachel, our treasurer, the bands who played and Morgan for providing the equipment.

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REEL Life

Guilty Without Sinning

Guiltrip has received so much pre-release publicity in recent weeks that it was bound to suffer from too great a sense of expectation. Sure, it's great to see Irish films being made, particularly films as contemporary and uncompromising as this one is, but really, isn't it about time we stopped heaping so much praise on such achievements? Hype is a very sharp double edged sword.

Thankfully, in the case of *Guiltrip*, written and directed by Gerry Stembridge with an enviable assuredness, the strengths do overcome the weakness and the lasting effect is disturbing and desperately pessimistic. The film tells a story of psychological brutality within marriage in a small, unnamed Irish town.

Liam is a corporal in the army and the army is probably the only institute in which such a man can function without seeming, or becoming, obviously insane. His life is one of order and repressed feelings and he is so tightly wrapped, that you know something will give and when it does, it will be brutal. He has taken this order and brought it home to his marriage. Tina is his long-suffering wife, terrified to put a foot wrong, staying with him it seems out of pure terror at what would happen if she tried to leave. There is no love in this relationship and we are given no indication that there ever was any, save for some wedding photos which try to look proud in their drab terraced house.

This is a world with which we are made familiar with economical skill at the beginning of the film. From there we are taken through one day in the life of this shattered set up, with Stembridge shifting focus casually and without chronology to various events involving Liam or Tina, which culminate with jangling and swift brutality. The whole film builds inexorably towards the event but still succeeds in its shocking intent.

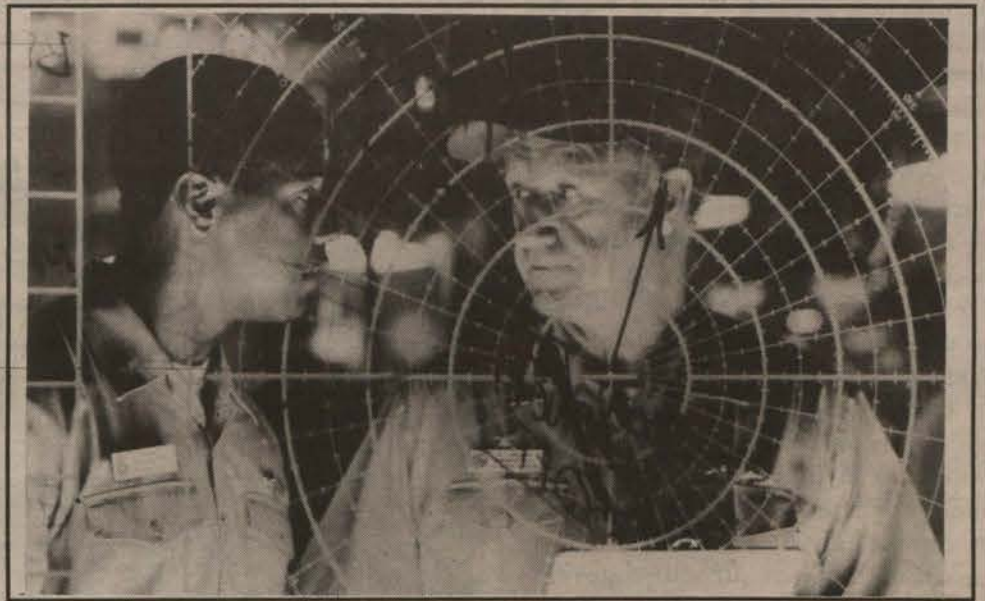
Stembridge does not flinch as director or writer; to do so with such har-

rowing subject matter would have been a travesty. If we do not know people in similar situations, we at least know that such appalling and brutal situations exist in modern Ireland. Or at least we should.

As Liam, Andrew Connolly gives a chilled, dead-eyed performance. His character cannot deal with anyone except through the giving of orders. He outlines to his wife exactly what he wants for dinner, and the time it had better be ready, even as he is going to work, and his monotonous suggests he is either talking to himself or someone of absolutely no consequence. He thinks nothing of everyone around him, but to be honest, the supporting characters are not at all attractive and this is a weakness in the film. All the performances are strong but the characters are largely one dimensional, though Tina (played by Jasmine Russell, who looks like Emily Lloyd) is allowed a little extra. There is humour, though notably it is outside the house. In fact the viewer can be thankful for the moments of humour, brief respites in an otherwise dark and distressing tale. But even this humour is not easy; it often has malevolent intent and is designed to belittle others in one way or another. The end result is that there is little enough goodness or decency on show here. What there is depicted of the various characters is depicted convincingly - Stembridge has a great ear for the pauses, repetitions and sheer normality real life conversations - but they are not given sufficient depth and there is even a little slide toward caricature in the case of one crucial character.

Nonetheless, *Guiltrip* is a powerful and memorable film, a supremely confident feature film debut from Stembridge, and one that bodes very well for the future. Aside from the clutch of fine performances, the editing Mary Finlay, is particularly noteworthy, effecting clever yet unobtrusive links between the chronologically unconnected scenes.

DIVE DIVE DIVE



One of the top grossing films of the year will surely turn out to be *Crimson Tide*, Tony Scott's slick, well performed but very predictable submarine flick starring Denzel Washington and the great Gene Hackman. Worth watching for those two alone. Yes, this still is a giller

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D - Day Looms for Ireland

This week the people of Ireland will decide whether or not to remove from our constitution the ban on divorce. A debate that was initially low key has become increasingly bitter and in some cases, downright unforgivably stupid and nasty with preposterous comments coming from people who should know better. The arguments for both sides have been damaged by certain remarks and will probably be the cause of many a sleepless night in the future. Good. What follows are arguments for and against divorce and the results gathered from a questionnaire handed out to DIT students last week. Read carefully and make up your own mind, but whatever you do, use your vote this Friday.

The Case Against....

Many people often feel powerless in the face of the laws enacted by their political masters. The law can seem like a great immovable dinosaur, lumbering along and slow to change. What change there is often comes about as a result of political agitation by pressure groups. It is no wonder that ordinary people often feel weighed down and helpless in the face of legislation that they cannot influence.

However, this is not always the case, and later on this week, on November 24th, Irish people have an opportunity to mould the type of society we want over the next few decades when we are asked to vote on the 15th amendment to the constitution, the divorce amendment.

You might be forgiven for pondering on why we are being asked once again to vote on a divorce referendum, a mere nine years after we rejected the last one so emphatically, by a majority of two to one. But it seems successive governments just can't take 'No' for an answer, so here we are again.

When I began to think about divorce at the start of this campaign, I felt it was a mistake, a road we shouldn't follow. Even though I didn't agree with it, my opposition to it was more benign and laid back. I was willing to do all I could to campaign against it, but I approached the topic on an intellectual rather than an emotional level.

But the more I read into the studies done on the effects of divorce, the angrier I have become. I don't mind admitting now that my response to divorce has been enhanced by simple anger at the gross injustice of it all. Well-placed anger is no bad thing.

It is simply not good enough for the pro-divorce activists to tell us that we already have divorce in all but name,

and what we are really voting on is simply the right to remarry - just a little tidying up exercise on behalf of a few people who have made a mistake.

While I feel sorry for those in broken marriages, I don't think we should solve their problems at the expense of creating huge injustices for other people, particularly women and children.



And it is this pain and suffering to women in broken marriages that the government has singularly failed to address. The stock response to this argument is that we already have broken marriages, with all the suffering that they entail.

But this misses the point of the argument against divorce. Those of us

against divorce do not lack compassion for those in broken marriages. It is because divorce creates more and more broken marriages that we are against it.

Some scoff at the idea of the idea that having divorce on the statute books will create more divorces and broken marriages. But who is to say that only those marriages that have irretrievably broken

down will act upon the divorce option should the amendment be passed. It is not within the bounds of possibility that people in marriages that are perhaps going through a difficult patch may rashly precipitate divorce proceedings.

Experience in other countries shows that when divorce is introduced, or when divorce laws are liberalised, the rate of marital breakdown increases dramatically.

In MY opinion, not only is this scenario within the bounds of possibility, it is highly likely. And apart from those whose marriages get into what otherwise be temporary difficulty were divorce not avail-

able, there are also those feckless individuals for whom the lure of getting out of a marriage that has perhaps lost a little of its sparkle and starting a fresh marriage, with Constitutional support, would prove too attractive to resist.

Just think of a situation where a young woman, who gives up her career when she and her husband have chil-

dren, might be thrown onto the vagaries of social welfare if her husband decides to opt out of their relationship if he falls in love with another woman. It is women who usually gives up their jobs and careers a few years into married life, and it is women, therefore, along with their children, who have most to lose if this amendment is passed.

It is just that such women should be discriminated against? Is it compassionate that women who give up so much, in the belief that their husbands are willing to work hard at making their marriage a life-long commitment, should find that this commitment is not life-long but can be reneged upon at will?

In all the literature about divorce that I have read, I have come across nothing suggesting that divorce is a good thing, with beneficial effects for society. Even those who support it realise its drawbacks and downside.

We do not need divorce to solve the problem of marital breakdown. This problem is already dealt with in whole raft of legislation that has been introduced since the last amendment was rejected in 1986.

We deal with marital breakdown well enough in this country without having to introduce such a fundamental and cultural change that will undermine all marriages.

Having looked at all the salient evidence about divorce that has been expounded, chewed and mulled over in the newspapers and on TV over the past few weeks, it would not be an exaggeration to ask why any sane person would have anything to do with the legal, social and economic mess that is divorce.

by Cora Sherlock (law student and member of Students Against Divorce)

Overall Results of the DITSU divorce questionnaire. Questionnaires handed out across the DIT last week and returned to individual students' unions.

Returned completed questionnaires: 246

Numbers who will be voting for removal of ban on divorce: 164 (66%)

Numbers who will be voting against removal of the ban: 36 (14.6%)

Numbers who are undecided: 46 (18%)

Of those voting yes, numbers who are male: 67

Of those voting yes, numbers who are female: 96

Of those voting no, numbers who are male: 14

Of those voting no, numbers who are female: 21

DIT Site breakdown of questionnaire

DIT Bolton Street

Questionnaires returned: 44

Numbers voting yes in referendum: 28 (17 males, 11 females)

Numbers voting no in referendum: 7 (3 males, 4 females)

Undecided: 9 (4 males, 5 females)

Numbers voting yes whose parents are separated: 2

Numbers voting no whose parents are separated: 0

DIT Kevin Street

Questionnaires returned: 50

Numbers voting yes in referendum: 34 (15 males, 19 females)

Numbers voting no in referendum: 7 (4 males, 3 females)

Undecided: 9 (2 males, 7 females)

Numbers voting yes whose parents are separated: 2

Numbers voting no whose parents are separated: 1

DIT Aungier Street

Questionnaires returned: 28

Numbers voting yes in referendum: 23 (12 males, 11 females)

Numbers voting no in referendum: 0

Undecided: 5 (3 males, 2 females)

Numbers voting yes whose parents are separated: 4

Numbers voting no whose parents are separated: 0

DIT Cathal Brugha Street

Questionnaires returned: 62

Numbers voting yes in referendum: 38 (13 males, 25 females)

Numbers voting no in referendum: 14 (5 males, 9 females)

Undecided: 10 (5 males, 5 females)

Numbers voting yes whose parents are separated: 0

Numbers voting no whose parents are separated: 0

DIT Mountjoy Square:

Questionnaires returned: 61

Numbers voting yes in referendum: 40 (6 males, 34 females)

Numbers voting no in referendum: 7 (2 males, 5 females)

Undecided: 14 (3 males, 11 females)

Numbers voting yes whose parents are separated: 4

Numbers voting no whose parents are separated: 0

The Case For....

It is a debate that has filled thousands of column inches in the papers, has dominated the chat shows on radio and television and has doubtless generated more heated discussion all over the country than even the future of Irish soccer. The referendum on divorce takes place this week and with claim and counter claim, accusation and refutation, and the endless flow of contrasting facts and figures, it is very possible that saturation point has been reached and that a great many people are simply fed up, not knowing who to believe and beginning not to care a great deal.

People do tend to become sick of rancorous debates, and although the debate this time hasn't, generally, been as roundly vicious as that of 1986 (Muintir na hEireann's comments about Alan Shatter and Mervyn Taylor were more ignorant and stupid than vicious), there is still more than enough meaty bones of contention at which to pick.

One of the sticking points has been in relation to figures for marital breakdown in this country. The Government's figures and those of the anti-divorce groups have tended to differ wildly, by around 20,000. For the record, the latest Labour Force survey, published in the last couple of weeks, shows that 40,100 women consider themselves separated. Only 22,900 men say they are separated. The disparity may perhaps be explained by the fact that if men accept they are separated, the unwelcome spectre of maintenance rears its head. Extrapolating from the given figures, the Government is running with a total of 80,200 separated persons in the country. Not surprisingly, the anti-divorce groups are claiming that the figure is much smaller, somewhere in the region of 58,000. The truth is probably somewhere in between but the fact is it that it does not matter which figure is accurate: there are a substantial number of people in this country whose marriages have irretrievably broken down and they are prohibited by our 1937 constitution from getting a divorce and, by extension, having the opportunity if they so wish to remarry. It is as simple as that.

The anti-divorce lobby has claimed that the introduction of divorce will be a disaster of cataclysmic proportions for Irish women, that it will result in them

being thrown onto the streets, that they could be divorced against their will, that they will have no money. Right. Here we go. Leaving aside the disgraceful patronising attitude this displays towards Irish women, a recent ESRI survey, Marital Breakdown and Family Law in Ireland effectively shattered a number of the myths being desperately clung to by the anti-divorce lobby. First of all, 75% of legal separations are initiated by women so it seems that whatever difficulties are experienced during the breakdown of a marriage, they are for women infinitely preferable to remaining in a bad or abusive marriage. Secondly, the notion that divorce will result in women being thrown onto the street or that the state would be crippled such would be the cost of rehousing them is another in a veritable shoal of red herrings. In the same survey it emerged that in 60% of cases of separation, the husband moves out.

Divorce will of course cost money, but certainly nothing like the £15 million being suggested by the anti-divorce campaign and neither will the taxpayer be paying an extra 10% in tax to finance divorce. The fact is, and this seems to be getting lost among the statistics, predictions and accusations, that if divorce is introduced, it will simply mean that people will have the right to remarry. That is the very core. Legislation governing the financial fallout in the case of marital breakdown is already in place and the financial cost of marriage breakdowns has been with us for some years. Divorce will simply add the right to remarry to the equation. All legal arrangements will be governed by the 18 pieces of legislation introduced since 1986. This legislation will remain regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

The Judicial Separation and Family Law Reform Act was introduced in 1989 and is presently the most comprehensive legal remedy in the case of irretrievable marriage breakdown. Under the act, the courts can order the following:

- maintenance for either spouse which can be a lump sum and/or regular payments
- maintenance, lump sums and property for any children
- the right to live in the family home
- the right to have any property

belonging to either spouse transferred to the other spouse

- custody and/or access to any children.

This being the case, the extra cost incurred by the introduction of divorce is likely to be minimal. The Department of Social Welfare currently supports separated people to the tune of £100 million so the money is already being spent.

Moving onto the argument that the presence of divorce will lead to something called a 'divorce culture', it doesn't make sense. The closest we have at the moment to divorce is judicial separation which recognises the irretrievable collapse of a marriage. One would presume, with this divorce culture waiting to pounce, that people would currently be availing of the closest thing to it. Not so, because most family law business in the state occurs at District Court level and applications for judicial separation are made to the Circuit Court. In 1994, there were 2,806 applications made to the Circuit Court under the Judicial Separation and Family Law Reform Act whereas there were 8,000 applications dealing with family law made to the District Court. Thus, people with marital difficulties are seeking redress not through permanent legal separation but through barring orders, protection orders and maintenance orders. It seems logical to suggest that the situation would be somewhat similar after the introduction of divorce.

Ah, but let's look at other places where divorce has existed for some time, say the anti-divorce groups? OK, let's. Please let's.

In Europe, Britain and the countries of northern Europe have the highest rate of divorce, four or five marriages out of every ten. In what could be called more traditionally Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Portugal, the rate is much lower, about 11% in Spain, 19% in Portugal and only 7% in Italy. Although we cannot make direct comparisons, it seems likely that divorce figures here would be at least somewhat similar. Closer to home, the figures for Northern Ireland are perhaps the most revealing of all. Overall the rate of divorce is about half the general UK figure and with that in mind, the probable rate here would be lower again. The influence of the Catholic Church may

be waning, but it remains a very powerful persuader for many people. The figures for and experiences of other Catholic countries and those of Northern Ireland do not suggest that Irish society would be gravely threatened by the introduction of divorce. In a recent article in *The Irish Times*, Mr Justice Rory O'Hanlon, chairman of the No-Divorce Campaign, expressed the fear that "divorce would undermine the Catholic traditions and values which form a precious part of our heritage". Accepting for the moment that such things are inherently good purely on the grounds that they are long established, one can ask the question: has it done so in Northern Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy? It does not seem so; indeed in parts of Spain, as unemployment rises, the family is being embraced tighter than ever (presumably, for Rory O'Hanlon, the traditional family forms part of our precious heritage).

The No Divorce Campaign has also said that divorce would accelerate the rate of marital breakdown, place a massive burden on the social welfare system and leave children feeling rejected by their parents. As regards the first, well at least the campaign accepts that marital breakdown occurs (and the incidence of breakdown has been steadily increasing since the last referendum in 1986, without the whispering devil of divorce). The second point has already been dealt with and as for the third, no-one is arguing that divorce is difficult on children, but as American researcher Julia Wallerstein (whose work has been cited by the anti-divorce lobby) has said, "what we find destructive to the children is ongoing conflict between the parents". What must be the effect on children of seeing one parent at the throat - often quite literally - of the other? Dr Wallerstein has not argued against divorce, indeed believes that it says "you don't have to stay with the mistakes of your youth all your life nor live alone and in misery".

We have marital breakdown in this country. It is on the increase and it is time we accepted this fact. The legislation dealing with breakdown is well established, scare mongering should not be a factor here. All that is being asked is that those whose marriages have collapsed and are beyond hope should be permitted to remarry if they so wish.

18 separate pieces of legislation relevant to family law have been passed since the 1986 Referendum on Divorce:

1. *Domicile and Recognition of Foreign Divorces Act, 1986*

Provided for independent domicile of spouses; liberalised rules on recognition of foreign divorces.

2. *Status of Children Act, 1987*

Removed discrimination in the law between children born within and outside marriage. Put all children on the same footing as regards maintenance and succession rights, regardless of the marital status of their parents.

3. *Jurisdiction of Courts and Enforcement of Judgements (European Communities) Act, 1988*

Provided for recognition and enforcement of civil orders including maintenance in the EU.

4. *Adoption Act, 1988*

Allowed adoption of children whose parents are married in exceptional circumstances

5. *Family Law Act, 1988*

Abolished action for restitution of conjugal rights

6. *Judicial Separation and Family Law Reform Act,*

1989

Extended the grounds for obtaining a judicial separation. The courts can order a distribution of the property of the spouse on separation. The courts also have power to order maintenance (including lump sums) for dependent spouses and children. The Act specifically recognises a spouse's work in the home, or in looking after children, as a contribution to be taken into account in making such orders.

7. *Children Act 1989*

Made provision for care of children in certain cases.

8. *Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act, 1990*

Extended the offence of rape to include marital rape.

9. *Child Abduction and Enforcement of Custody Orders Act, 1991*

Provided for international co-operation on enforcing child custody.

10. *Adoption Act, 1991*

Provided for the recognition of foreign adoption orders.

11. *Child Care Act, 1991*

Comprehensive code on welfare, care and protection

of children.

12. *Courts Act, 1991*

Extended jurisdiction of Circuit and District Courts in family cases; additional judges.

13. *Jurisdiction of Courts and Enforcement of Judgements Act, 1993*

Enforcement of civil orders including maintenance orders in other European jurisdictions.

14. *Maintenance Act, 1994*

International enforcement of maintenance orders.

15. *Social Welfare (No. 2) Act, 1995*

Ensures that divorced people will not be disadvantaged in terms of their social welfare entitlements.

16. *Family Law Act, 1995*

Strengthens powers of courts in relation to maintenance and pensions; raises age of marriage to 18; three month notice period; new procedure for declarations as to status of a marriage; provides role for welfare service in family cases.

17. *Civil Legal Aid Bill, 1995*

Puts legal aid service on a statutory basis

18. *Domestic Violence Bill, 1995*

Extends Law on domestic violence.

Directing the Way Forward

There are pitifully few women at the top of the tree in Irish third level institutions. There are no good reasons for this state of affairs, only bad, inexcusable ones. Five weeks ago, of the six DIT sites, only one had a female acting director, Dr Ita Beausang. Now, there is a second, DIT Aungier Street's Dr Ellen Hazelkorn. She is American, she is outspoken and full of ideas for the future of Aungier Street and the DIT in general. Her appointment came as a surprise to many and is likely to have put one or two noses out of joint but it is the kind of move that can shake up the institution, which is trying to change but is finding the process slow and difficult.

Dr Hazelkorn's immediate priorities for Aungier Street are "improving the quality of life for students and staff" and "the pursuit of excellence in our courses". The first involves such things as brightening up the canteen, improving the staff section of the canteen, turning the foyer into a proper meeting point and getting students access to the internet. These seem eminently achievable and would appear to be unlikely hackle raisers. The "pursuit of excellence in our courses" would seem to be a different matter altogether.

Dr Hazelkorn says that it will involve a "thorough examination of our courses", upgrading where necessary, dissolving if necessary.

"It's about making them more competitive, facing the challenges of the marketplace, involving staff through committees, involving students through their representation on the academic board, trying to seriously upgrade because I think that it's really in the interests of students that the quality of education they are getting is second to none."

She would also like to see all kinds of new courses developed within the DIT.

"I think we have to look wider, we have to look more innovatively, more creatively at the courses we offer, thinking about new mixes, new demands. It's about thinking more imaginatively and aggressively about what we are actually offering."

She talks about the idea of double

majors, developing new combinations such as media with business or science with business. In such a way will the DIT be taking advantage of the huge range of options at its disposal.

"So I think there is a range of combinations. I also think that a lot of our courses, while there is a five year review process, we need to look long and hard at the courses that we are offering and not to be copying what's down the road. We need to be looking more internationally, at best educational practice, new ideas, see what's happening, talk to industry in its widest sense, not really making courses so that industry is happy but that there is a kind of dialectic that occurs between education and the community widely. I think it affects quite a lot of courses, particularly here in Aungier Street."

With such ideas and a willingness to freely express them, it is obvious that Dr Hazelkorn will be viewed with some interest from certain quarters, the more so because she is a woman. Aungier Street is the newest third level institute in the country, the responsibilities are huge, the scrutiny will be intense.

She recognises that it is "extremely important" that a woman has been appointed to such a high profile management position within the field of third level education. There are few enough women in similar positions.

"I think it's really important. Not that I think that role modelling is in any way an answer to gender segregation. It's not, and I'm not suggesting policies of positive discrimination in a narrow sense either. I'm just saying that the problems of gender segregation are far more structural within society and the way we think about gender."

She says that someone (she cannot remember who) said that women are natural managers because they have done the double job of domestic and work routines for years and that managing an institution is only second nature then.

"Perhaps that's true. Perhaps women have a different way. I would certainly see myself as more consensual, as looking for people with ideas. I'd see that as a pri-

ority, encouraging staff. Lots of people have lots to contribute."

Dr Hazelkorn clearly sees herself as one of those with a lot to contribute. She has come from an American system and is therefore very familiar with faculty structures and semesterisation, two changes to the system that the DIT is attempting to implement, with so far varying degrees of success. It will happen, but oh so slowly.

"I don't have a problem with semesterisation. I don't know what the problem is." I suggest that it has something to do with the very idea of any change. She says maybe this is so.

"I think that some people think that it might offer more work for them, I don't know why. It is the only basis by which we can loosen up the system or that you can take a range of courses. We have a ridiculous think here - very un-American, I come from an American system - you are on a course and it's prescribed and you take everything on it, it doesn't allow you to be more flexible, to almost self design your own course. That of course has problems as well, you need something that has accreditation qualities and so on." She believes that as we make greater inroads into Europe, with student and staff exchanges, that we will have to have a more flexible system."

Whatever about staff, one of the biggest problems for students within a semesterised system is post-Christmas examinations. They place an inordinate amount of pressure on students, and with the break that follows, there are fears that student life will suffer. Dr Hazelkorn accepts that exams immediately after Christmas are "a bit of a pain" but adds that people should look positively at ideas.

Not surprisingly, she also thinks highly of the faculty structure, which the DIT is struggling to introduce - faculty directors still have not been appointed.

"It's the first time that people in DIT are being asked to think less parochially. We've grown up obviously with the history. It's a very parochial institution insofar as people are very much bound by the four walls of their particular campus."

There have been rivalries that aren't particularly healthy and I think we need to look across the institute. It has enormously rich potential, even if you were to compare it with places such as UCD or Trinity. We have an enormous wealth from apprenticeships to postgraduates, including music, science, engineering, media." She returns to the theme of combinations and thinking in new way other than in terms of lectures, suggesting seminars and tutorials. "Things that are common elsewhere but we have not done." Presumably this means universities.

When people move from academic to management positions in third level institutions, there is a good chance that they will lose sight of what is happening outside of their new offices. It is inevitable that some contact is lost and if the ivory tower becomes too comfortable, well this is bad news for any institution. Dr Hazelkorn will continue to lecture on a part-time basis and is also committed to writing "at least one book".

"I think educational life, part of it is the highly intellectual experience, and I enjoy it. I enjoy the students and I would miss the rapport with them."

In any case, she believes that posts such as hers should largely be contractual.

"That's not to say that you should be unemployed afterwards but they should be revolving, heads of department should be five year appointments. All those posts should ultimately be such. After, there is research and teaching, so that you are not lost to the institution because you then have valuable skills in both directions."

Dr Hazelkorn came from an American educational system and she has spent many years in the VEC and DIT systems. She should know the score, she is not shy about putting forward her ideas and criticisms. It is important that the day to day business of management does not distract her to the exclusion of everything else. She will probably find that there is more to it than may be first apparent but in this time of change for the DIT, she could play a major role.

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DIT Students Show Their Skills

The DIT took two gold and two silver medals for Ireland at the 33rd International Youth Skills Olympics (International Vocational Training Competition) held in Lyon last month.

The four day event attracted 26 nations and competition was fierce but the Irish team, consisting of overall winners of the Department of Education's National Apprentice Competition, proved more than equal to the challenge.

Garret O'Donnell, a fourth year mechanical engineering student from DIT Bolton Street was the highest scorer

on the Irish team. He was presented with a Best of the Nation plaque by the French organisers, as well as his gold medal for welding.

The second gold medal winner from the DIT was Thomas Dunne, who won in the Constructional Steelwork category. Thomas is a third year student in metal fabrication in DIT Bolton Street. The silver medal winners were Shane Fitzpatrick, DIT Cathal Brugha Street in the waiting category and Michael O'Sullivan, DIT Bolton Street, in the Brickwork category.

The Sound of Music

The President, Mrs Mary Robinson, last weekend attended a gala concert organised by the DIT as the centrepiece of the Music Education National Debate (MEND) symposium which was sponsored by the institute.

The evening's entertainment, which took place in the National Concert Hall, was split in two, with music in the first half being provided by the National Children's Choir and internationally renowned traditional group, Na Casadaigh. After the break, the symphonic wind band and choral society of DIT Adelaide took centre stage with a selection of numbers from Hollywood and West End musicals.

The National Children's Choir, for whose members this must have been a hugely memorable evening, were in fine and enthusiastic voice, offering a series of American and Irish folk songs which

delighted the audience. Na Casadaigh were up next and they were as polished as one would expect. The highlights of their set were a recently discovered song about the Famine and the closing number for which they employed the National Concert Hall's organ.

After the interval, the DIT's concert Band and Choral Society gave us numbers from The Sound Of Music, Oklahoma, West Side Story, Cats and other musicals. There were one or two sound problems but such are minor quibbles; it was a vastly entertaining evening, and what was most remarkable was the fact that the concert band and choral society had had their first full rehearsal only that afternoon. As Peter Sweeney, the evening's presenter, pointed out, just think what they could achieve if they had proper facilities. DIT please take note.

When Presidents Meet



The President of Ireland, Mrs Mary Robinson arriving at the National Concert Hall with the President of the DIT, Dr Brendan Goldsmith

THE IRISH TIMES

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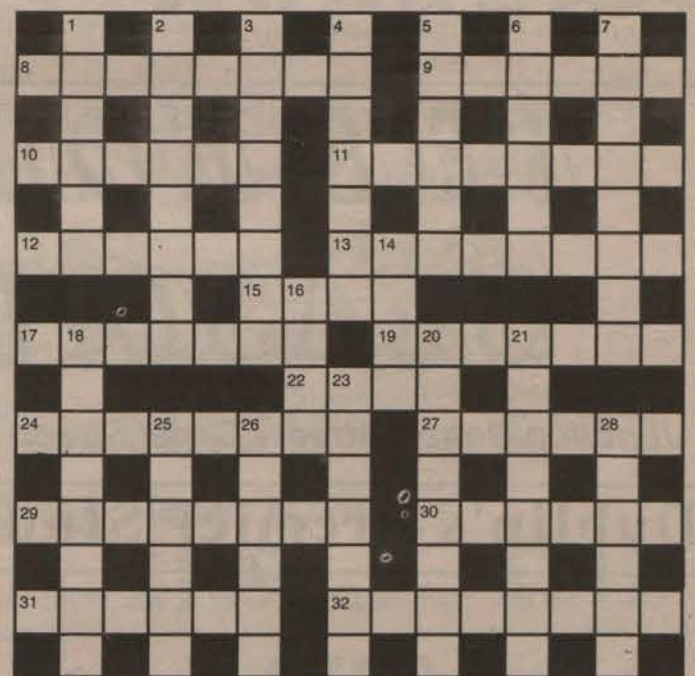
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Last Issue's winners were:

Matthew Lyons
(DIT Kevin St.)
Laura Breen
(DIT Cathal Brugha St.)
Jason Kenny
(DIT Bolton St.)



ACROSS

- 8 Ha! Look, am in the US! (8)
- 9 In the nature of a horse. (6)
- 10 One's manner of standingl. (6)
11. O, if I turn, it will bear fruit. (8)
12. Poor part of a city inhabited by a racial group. (6)
13. Sinner, violator of a law (8)
15. Bill of fare (4)
17. Fern growing abundantly on hillsides (7)
19. It's Saturday for Jews(7)
22. Flat, thin, circular object (4)
24. Lest cats be indiscreet (8)
27. Water-bottle for the table (6)
29. It's set to go off (8)
30. Ed lies about the fuel (6)
31. Calm unruffled, as a princess maybe (6)
32. Disclaim, disown(8)

DOWN

1. Rough drawing without detail (6)
2. Magic net is attractive. (8)
3. Sadly, on one's own. (8)
4. Dried crocus used as dye or flavouring. (7)
5. Snub, unexpected refusal. (6)
6. A fastener or badge. (6)
7. Not disposed to activity. (8)
14. Bustle, commotion over trifles. (4)
16. 'All's well that ...well' (Shakespeare). (4)
18. Came to know, understood. (8)
20. Unforeseen, unexpected event. (8)
21. Outdoor feast cooked over coal. (8)
23. Lines of equal pressure. (7)
25. Subjects for discussion, essays etc (6)
26. Brings to mind, produces memories. (6)
28. Shorn wool of sheep. (6)

COMPETITION NO. 2

DIT's Rugby Tour of Duty

The tour began with a miracle. Nobody forgot their passports! We received a great send off at Dublin Airport from Phil Flood, President of the Irish Colleges Rugby Union, Sr. Mary Chaplain in Mountjoy Square and Patron (acting) of the rugby team, and Mark Lee and Colin Joyce, Students' Union convenors in Mountjoy Square and Cathal Brugha Street respectively.

Copious amounts of dry sherry were consumed by the team by the time we has passed over the Aran Islands. Alan Keyes did a Finola Bruton (smoking in the toilets) and managed to set off the smoke detector, resulting in a threat from the head stewardess to have him arrested in New York if there was a

by our pre-booked Yellow School Bus. More dry sherry followed and Aidan O'Brien led the lads in the lovely old Scottish ballad, the Ball of Inverness. Four hours later, we arrived at our hotel and somewhat later the team was experiencing its first "Frat Party" in Union College. Breakfast at the crack of mid-day and the team was psyching themselves up for the match against Siena College. Siena however failed to turn up and we organised a training session and seven a side match against Union. All good fun and straight into another party with the Union Colleges Women's Rugby Team, meaningful relationships being established in nano seconds with Cathy, Tanya, Amanda, Catherine and their friends.

against the crossbar which caused it to fall on the Union College pack, a cunning ploy which settled the result in DIT's favour. However, the fierce tackling of Union and the training sessions took their toll and we now had a substantial injury list.

Union college was one long happy festival of rugby, romance, parties, sing and we made many friends with our very hospitable hosts. We look forward to welcoming Union to Ireland in March and promise more of the same.

Wednesday morning sees us back on the Yellow School Bus on our way to Boston for the match against Harvard University. This was to be low point of the tour. The wear and tear in Union took its toll and we lost a game we should have won. However we easily won the trading battle after the game with battered old Bective jerseys and smelly old training gear jerseys being swapped for brand new Harvard memorabilia. Our back line was by now decimated with further injuries to Lloyd Kearns, Jason McNally and Neil Kelly. Ken Beattie came to our rescue for our match against MIT in Tufts University the following day. He managed to get his hands on two ex-DIT rugby players now working in Boston and Sean and Conor played a vital part in our 42-5 victory. Scott Hannon did a great impression of serious injury during the game and managed to get an ambulance out to look after his broken finger nail. Post match entertainment was provided in the form of the Boston Celtics-

Milwaukee basketball match in the new Fleet Centre and then onto the Irish embassy for a dry sherry reception. Colman Byrne must have had one sherry too many because he asked me to "trash a caveller's cheque" one stage.

Looking back at the tour I know that all of us will have long and happy memories of our time in Union College. Our thanks to Tom, Skip, Bill, the men's and women's rugby teams, Sigma Phi and Phi Sigma, Jensi, Lothar and others too numerous to mention.

This was a flagship event, not just for the rugby team. I hope that Josephine Rogers and her GAA teams will visit New York and Boston next year and that other leading DIT clubs will go overseas also. Sport can be a great unifying force in DIT. During the eight days of the tour I cannot once recall hearing the words Mountjoy Sq, Cathal Brugha Street, Bolton St, Aungier St or Kevin St. We were a DIT team. The rugby team has now one more target this season: we want to bring the Bank of Ireland Ascent Cup to DIT.

by Joe McGrath,
Tour Director (Acting)

The DIT Rugby Team would like to sincerely thank: Guinness, DITSU Trading, The Four Seasons, The Shakespeare, Campbell Bewley Group, Flynn Letters Ltd, Irish Rubies, Allied Irish Banks (Capel Street, O'Connell St), Airways, Stoneys, The Hill, Mayfair Canteen, DIT Student Services Council



repeat occurrence. Hoping for the best, the team promptly presented him with a box of cigars.

On arrival in New York we were met

And so to our first competitive match. Donal Riordan wouldn't give anyone else the ball and scored five tries. Lloyd Kearns kicked a conversion

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Worth Checking Out

USI Survey Highlights the Reality of Student Life

Half of Irish third level students are working part-time jobs. One third never eat breakfast in the morning. One third could not afford to visit a doctor last year. Over 40% never eat fresh vegetables.

These are just some of the findings of a survey published last week by the Union of Students in Ireland. The results of the comprehensive survey (which consisted of face to face interviews with 400 second year undergraduate students in 16 colleges of third level education) into the living conditions of students in the Republic of Ireland are to be used by USI to increase pressure on the Government to increase student grants, restore the rights of students to supplementary welfare benefits and implement improvements in other areas relevant to third level students.

Speaking about the results of the survey, Colm Keaveney, President of USI, said that while he was well aware that student grants were woefully inadequate, he was surprised at the numbers of students who are "being forced onto the black economy. You can interpret this a number of ways, that students are trying to supplement their income, that they are trying to avoid falling into debt".

He said that the quality of education must be called into question if students are combining part time work with a full time academic course. Of those who are engaged in part-time work, 59% said that it was interfering with their study in a negative way. Only 15% are members of a trade union and 76% do not have a written contract of employment.

Such results as appear in the survey relating to part-time work, eating habits and average expenditure per month (£406 for those living away from home, £244 for those living at home) do give ammunition to USI which can be used against decision making agencies - "it addressed the stereotypical notion of students as spoiled brats" said Keaveney - but in one area at least, the survey is less than supportive of USI policy.

The summer job scheme, so controversial when it was introduced by the Government, and opposed by USI as policy, is a huge success according to the respondents. Almost three quarters said that participating in the scheme was a "useful experience", 92% said they were treated fairly by their sponsor, with a similar percentage saying they would participate in the scheme again.

While it is difficult to know exactly what is meant by "a useful experience" and bearing in mind that many have little choice but to participate in the scheme (though 52% were able to find additional work), it still seems that USI have it wrong on this one.

Keaveney accepts that students do seem to be enjoying having regular income during the summer and being able to find other employment but remains firmly opposed to the summer jobs scheme.

"Effectively what we've seen is that the Government is spending twice as much money as it did under the previous scheme and there is a dual approach here; we would consistently highlight that it is a stupid policy and that it's not an optional policy but if they are spending money, let them spend it wisely instead of having students picking stones from golf courses that they would invest it in training. I mean the beauty of the course is that you're not unemployed and you can hold a second job, there are so many hours a week you can do and a lot of people are enjoying having regular income and holding a second job.

I mean I am fundamentally opposed to the policy itself but the bottom line is that in the last three years the Government have doubled or even trebled the funding in this area and if the Government is going to spend the money in this area, we should be in a position to tell them how to spend it as well as oppose the scheme because we do fundamentally oppose it."

Mr Keaveney said that the results of the survey will be used to lobby at central and local level.

"What is coming out of this document is that the whole student body is aggressively pursuing an education and competing like hell for that education. This begins at second level and then you expect this to be the norm. I think students are very conscious about of coming up with the goods, there's a lot of psychological pressure and sense of responsibility. It is very difficult for me to say that third level isn't only about education, that it's about self-development, political development, social development, sexual development. The most obvious income of the survey is the whole competitiveness thing is more transparent than it ever was."

Getting in Tune



One of the young musicians who took part in the Oireachtas festival tunes up in DIT Aungier Street

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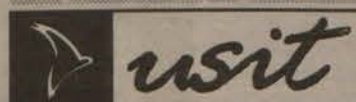
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DIT Begins the Sporting Year With a String of Victories

The DIT has begun the GAA sporting year in tremendous style, racking up a number of notable victories. Here are the results to date:

Senior Hurling:
DIT 3-17 Queens 1-10
DIT 4-16 DCU 2-05

Intermediate Hurling
DIT 1-10 Queens 0-8

Freshers Hurling
DIT v Dundalk RTC (walkover)
Waterford RTC 1-7 DIT 2-10

Senior Football

DIT 3-9 Inchicore 0-7
DIT 4-20 Coleraine 3-10

Intermediate Football
DIT 2-9 Coleraine 1-9

Freshers Football
DIT 0-11 DCU 2-5
UCD v DIT (lost, no score available)

Camogie
DIT 1-9 Dundalk RTC 0-12
DIT 2-5 St Pats 2-5

Dress Dance Die Hards Keep Going 'Til Dawn

On Friday, November 10th, DIT Cathal Brugha Street held its dress dance.

The college's social event of the year took place in the Country Club, Portmarnock. It was the third year running that the event was held there and once again, we were not disappointed.

DIT Cathal Brugha Street, with its strong catering ties, prides itself with being able to organise one of the most spectacular events in the DIT's students' unions calendar. An indication of its prestige is the amount of competition to be part of the Dress Dance Committee. This year, 23 people applied for the two places on the committee. Ciara Ballantyne and Rory O'Neill, both third year students, were this year's chosen ones.

Most of the union officers played a major role in the organisation of the dress dance. Patricia Moran (Deputy Convenor), Bertrand Boisse (Entertainments) and myself were the officers with the main responsibilities.

The cost of a ticket this year was £20 and this included buses to and from the venue, a meal fit for a King (or Queen), complimentary flowers for the ladies and chocolates on each table. Dignitaries this year included Mr and Mrs Brendan Keyes (Secretary Registrar), Mr and Mrs Joe Hegarty (Head of School Hotel and Catering Operations), Mr and Mrs Frank McMahon (Acting Director), Mr and Mrs Bob Lawlor (Secretary of DIT) and Colman Byrne, President of DITSU (dignitary? yer man? Ed)

A presentation was made to Brendan Keyes who has been in Cathal Brugha Street for the last 18 years and he received a standing ovation from the 700 students present when he went up to receive his award. To many of the students it was the last chance to say goodbye to the man who has always been there for the students in Cathal Brugha Street.

Then it was time for the after dinner speeches, myself and Frank McMahon, and after those the Glam Tarts took centre stage. People got up and got down to hits from the 70s. The revellers continued to party until the buses left at 4.30am but then it was back into the city centre to a couple of parties and a lot of prominent people were seen entering the White Horse Inn and Slattery's at 7.30am



Well, that was it. Sure, there are a lot of things that happened that I cannot remember and I know that there a lot of things that myself and others don't want to remember.

I would especially like to thank our sponsors on the night, Guinness, Bank of Ireland, AIB and Airways and also the many other companies who kindly donated spot prizes.

By Colin Joyce

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