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Vicar
Street



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at
Christmas



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and women



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DITSU turns its back on fees protests

By Darragh Clifford

THE Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union (DITSU) has dramatically withdrawn their support from Union of Students in Ireland's (USI) campaign on third level fees. The decision came just two days before USI staged one of its largest demonstrations yet on Budget Day.

According to DITSU President Hugh O'Reilly, the decision was made by DITSU's Executive Council on December 2nd not to support USI until the focus group set up to examine the national campaign has issued its findings. The report is due to be finalised by December 13th.

Paul Malone, President of DIT Aungier Street stated that "it was an executive



Paul Malone, President "it was an executive decision not to support USI in their protest against fees"

decision not to support USI in their protest against fees. All they do is run around and make a lot of noise, without making a tangible argument. They are not prepared to meet half way. We do not want to jeopardise our students' education by taking part in

these protests." However Colm Jordan, President of USI stated that while he respects DITSU's decision, participating in protests is not going to put students' education at risk. "Having a registration fee of 1,000, which was suggested in the Budget, would jeopardise the education of students far more than going out and protesting for an hour", he said.

"USI is not a trade union so we cannot go on strike. All we can do is negotiate. We did this for two years. We sat down with the Minister (for Education), and he promised us the sun, moon and stars, but after the election he threw it back in our faces. All that is left to do is protest" stated Jordan.

Another site president with DIT told the DIT

Independent that while DITSU officially wanted to distance themselves from the campaign, they would not prevent USI from independently rounding up DIT students to take part in protests.

However, when USI Deputy President Noel Hogan tried to put up posters informing students of the Budget Day protest in Aungier Street, he was asked to take down the posters and leave by members of Aungier

Street Students Union.

DITSU's decision not to support USI's campaign comes at a time when almost every other college and university in the country are getting bodies out on the street to protest. Students in Athlone, Galway, Mayo, UCG, UCD, UCC, Trinity, Dún Laoghaire, Carlow, Letterkenny, Sligo, St Pat's Drumcondra, Maynooth and Limerick have been protesting. But the country's largest third level institution's

decision to go it alone will hurt the campaign.

The issue of student fees is very much a national issue now. In the aftermath of the Budget both TV3 and the Pat Kenny Show on Radio One felt it necessary to consult USI for their opinions on the Budget. Buried in Budget 2003 are documents that shows the Independent Estimates Review Committee proposed a 50% increase in the student registration fee to €1,000 per year.

DIT honours Quinn and Finucane

Former Republic of Ireland soccer star Niall Quinn swapped his jersey for a graduation robe when DIT awarded him with an honorary degree in philosophy at a ceremony at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham.

Also receiving honorary degrees on the day was RTÉ broadcaster Marian Finucane and educationalist William Salters Sterling.

Quinn was awarded with a Doctorate of Philosophy for his exceptional contribution to Irish life and for the enjoyment he has given to the public during his long career as a professional footballer.

Marian Finucane, also conferred with a Doctorate of Philosophy, was honoured as one of the country's most respected and experienced journalists and as a distinguished figure in public broadcasting.

Speaking to the DIT Independent, Niall Quinn said that "it is a great honour and I am very proud. It is wonderful to be here, especially as it is in Kilmainham, as I was born only up the road.

"At the moment, I am just catching up on things I should have done a long time ago. Generally just enjoying myself. I'm winding down, trying to get the right balance. We're moving home shortly, so I'm looking forward to going to a few hurling and Gaelic football matches." While proposing the honour on



Niall Quinn and Marian Finucane: honoured by DIT

Quinn, DIT President Dr Brendan Goldsmith recognised the significant and positive ways in which Quinn has used the public support he receives to the benefit of others.

Speaking at the event, Dr Goldsmith stated that "the three individuals we honour today have made an outstanding contribution in their respective disciplines and have each had a significant impact on the lives of others. They reflect three diverse areas, all of which play a huge part in our society today."

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DITSU 



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Irish Independent 

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Grangeegorman finally kicks off

By Miguel Delaney

IT HAS been a long time coming but Grangeegorman is finally open to DIT students. Those planning to turn up to lectures will have to wait some time yet though, as the site is merely DIT's new home sports ground.

As part of the Institution's planned move to Grangeegorman, DIT's sports teams will be using St Brendan's Gaelic Football team's pitches, which are situated on the grounds, as their new base.

This move marks the first time DIT's teams have had their own home ground. In the past, they have had to rent pitches such as the VEC Terenure in order to play and train.

The absence of a home ground was often blamed for teams' poor performances in



Grangeegorman is finally open to DIT students

major sports. It is hoped that the stability a home pitch will provide will help DIT's teams compete on a higher level in third level sports.

DIT Aungier Street's sports officer Herbie McLelland is delighted with the site. "On behalf of the sports officers in DIT, it's great to finally have our own home ground. I've

waited 22 years for this to come."

"It's great to be able to talk to our own groundsman and have our own equipment and changing rooms," said McLelland.

"The pitches need work and development but it is a fine playing field for students

and only a mile away from the Bolton Street campus." Mr McLelland was also grateful of the work done by both the DIT Students Administration Officer Deirdre Coughlan and Grangeegorman's Dr Noel O'Connor.

"They gave first class help and because of them we're

here now" It was DIT's soccer players that had the honour of being the first students to play on the Grangeegorman pitch as they took on Limerick IT there on Tuesday December 3.

The day was however spoiled as Mickey Whelan's team lost 1-0.



The Overall View

Hugh O'Reilly

Hello everybody, Christmas is upon us and I hope you are all looking forward to this holiday season. I suppose I should extend a very merry Christmas to you all and I know your Christmas will be a great deal merrier if you come along to the Students Union Christmas Carnival in Spirit on Abbey St. this Wednesday 18th of December 2002 (a cheap plug but Paulie asked me to do it) It promises to be a great night with 24 live dancers, flame throwers, jugglers, 4 rooms of differing entertainment, masseuses, fortune tellers and lots, lots more. So please come along and join in the Carnival atmosphere, it promises to be a night to remember... (even cheaper plug I know)

I do not want to be Christmas Humbug but after Charlie's Budget last week it spells leaner times for all in the education sector, with the third level sector feeling the pinch most acutely. The pressure is now being applied to re-introduce fees and students need to get their voices heard on the issue. If you are opposed or in support of the re-introduction of fees then let us know in the Students Union and we will do our best to represent your views.

On a lighter note, congratulations to those DIT students, particularly Kevin Street, where a large proportion of you joined in on the protest at the Dail on the day of the budget.

10K: Just to let you know that the money raised by you - the students of DIT - for the children in Belarus is near approaching €35,000 and we still have a lot more cards to collect. Congratulations to everyone. The amount raised is a massive success. Anyone who has not got their cards back please do so as soon as possible.

Finally just to inform you that the students Union will have its first ever DITSU Council meeting on the Grangeegorman site on December 12th. It is an historic occasion for the union to be able to host an official meeting on the site and may it be the first of many for the future. Also may I wish the sports clubs every success on their new home ground. The sports pitches in Grangeegorman hosted the DIT soccer club's first home fixtures last week on the site.

May you all enjoy the very best of this festive season and we look forward to seeing you all again in the new year. Merry Christmas from your Students' Union. Hugh

€274,000 taken for Aungier Street development

By Aisling Casey

IN AN effort to secure the completion of the Aungier St development, the DIT Independent has learned that €274,000 was taken from the student development fund.

The money was used to complete the new student union area in Aungier St. This fund was being used to save money from each student's capitation fee every year to fund student services in Grangeegorman when building would begin.

DITSU President Hugh O'Reilly said, "The money was always meant to be for Grangeegorman. The money was never intended to be used for the Aungier St development. But from the beginning money was tight. It wasn't supposed to be taken out".

The Aungier St development ran into difficulty when money ran out to fund the completion of the building.

However, dipping into the student development was not enough to finish the work. At present, there are two developments left to complete. One of which, the refitting of the old library, has already been approved for funding. However, the new canteen is awaiting a government decision on funding.

Hugh O'Reilly told the DIT Independent how funding for the canteen was mismanaged. "The design and layout of the canteen was all wrong from the beginning. They (DIT management of the Aungier St development) didn't look at it properly and it had to be redesigned. More money had to be thrown at redesigning it". He added that DIT rushed into giving a submission to the government and were turned down. They have put forward another submission and are waiting a department decision which may not be until after the new year. March is

now supposed to be the opening date but that does not seem real at the moment", he said.

Michael Marnane, Co-ordinating and services officer feels work in Aungier St is going well. He said, "At the moment Aungier Street is nearly complete. There are two projects left to complete. One is the refitting of the existing library, which has been approved for funding. Also, some work on the 5th floor has been approved and the students union is also coming towards completion".

However he added that the only problem left to solve is the canteen. "There will always be some issue to clear up but 99% of the work is done. My understanding is that people in Aungier St are happy".

DIT is now awaiting a government decision on the final canteen design. Until then work on the new canteen is at a standstill.

Four week wait to see GP

By Aisling Casey

STUDENTS seeking medical attention at the Aungier Street Health Centre have been forced to look elsewhere because of unacceptable lengths of time to see a GP.

In a statement left in the Aungier Street Health Centre, Dr Brendan Clune apologised to students for the delay in appointments. He said, "Our workload has increased considerably with the arrival of more than 1500 students at the new Aungier St complex. There has been no increase in nursing or medical times as a consequence. Hence our waiting list may be more than 4 weeks in advance".

However, medical staff at the health centre have become increasingly frustrated by the problem and they have contacted the student union leaders and student services to address the issue.

While there are three doctors practicing at the medical centre, only 2 hours of surgery are allocated each day. However, there are 2 nurses available from 9am-5pm each day to deal with medical problems.

Deirdre Corcoran, Student Services, informed the DIT Independent that doctors' hours at the centre would be increased soon. She also confirmed that interviews will take place for an additional nurse this week. Student services are currently looking at increasing the resources at the medical centre. Enlarged accommodation will hopefully be available to the medical centre by March/April of next year.

This revelation comes in light of a USI survey, which shows that one in five students do not see a doctor because of financial reasons. The survey also highlighted the unacceptable lengths of waiting time to see a GP. Of the students surveyed, 12pc had to wait three days for an appointment, while 17pc had to wait a week. 16pc of students also said they had changed GPs because they were unhappy with the college service.

USI, Welfare Officer, Maureen Woods said, "In 1983 the automatic entitlement of all third level students to a medical card was revoked due to healthcare spending cutbacks. Since then access by third level students has been through the GP system".

She added, "We are calling for the age for independent assessment for entitlement to a medical card to be changed from 23 to 18".

Hospitality management set for face-lift

HOSPITALITY management in Ireland is set to move to a new level following a study launched by DIT, which highlights the areas of the sector in need of revamp.

Minister of State at the Department of An Taoiseach, Mary Hanafin has finally launched a major national study of hospitality management education carried out by DIT. The study entitled 'Hospitality Management Education in Ireland' examines all undergraduate degree level programmes in Hospitality management and Hotel and catering management in Ireland.

The demand for food and hospitality services is growing each year within the leisure, industrial, business, health and education sectors, however a decline in Leaving Certificate numbers by 25% is expected by 2010, which will inevitably affect this sector. The study provides a wide range of recommendations for approaching this area of education in the future.



Mary Hanafin has finally launched a major national study of hospitality management education

The DIT study surveyed students, lecturers and industry figures to find what the feeling was like on the ground. Dr Noel O'Connor, Faculty of Tourism and Food at the Institute, who led the study, said, "In addition to the many challenges higher education is facing over the coming decade."

He added that incorporating "demographic considerations, the impact of technology on learning, access to research funding and growing competition abroad, the hospitality management area itself is

facing its own particular demands which educators must reflect in curricula"

According to result from the study, students and graduates of the hospitality management area are on a whole satisfied with hospitality management curricula. However, the study highlights the growing demand to expand and develop certain areas of programme content. The areas pointed out for development are information technology, international business, creativity and innovation.

Interestingly, people in the hospitality management sector are keen to read the feedback in the hope of attracting more suitably qualified graduates. From the reports first findings, it appears the image of the hospitality industry is the principal motivating factor in a student undertaking a programme in hospitality management. The Minister's decision to launch the DIT study is a major step in developing the sector.

NEWS

Colleges cash crisis

By Barry J. Whyte

THE Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology has warned that a financial crisis is looming for the next academic year.

The Chairman of the Council, Professor Ciaran O' Cathain, said that the level of services currently being provided would be reduced in the coming year.

Irish Institutes of Technology may be forced to borrow heavily to keep going next year. The shortfall is expected to be in the region

of €40 million.

At the moment, DIT are redirecting funds which should have been used for Grangegorman to finish the Students Union in Aungier Street and they have had to apply to the government to get funding to finish the canteen.

The Institute is still waiting on a decision from the government on that funding.

Professor O' Cathain also said that the institutes had been committed to certain

financial arrangements by the Department of Education and the Department of Finance through the Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) which means that they are spending money they did not anticipate having to spend.

This will impact heavily on the amount of money available for provision of services next year.

This comes at a time when the matter of a reintroduction of fees in order to fund third level education has become a

major issue. Student protests at Minister for Education Noel Dempsey's suggestion that full fees might be reintroduced indicated the strength of public feeling about free third level education, which was introduced under the Rainbow Coalition in 1995.

Current Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, called the abolition of fees by that government a retrograde step.

Noel Dempsey is currently in talks with the OECD on an

alternative means of funding third level education.

The Institutes of Technology, however, are not the only third level institutions that will be feeling the pinch next year. Both Trinity College and NUI Maynooth have ordered a freeze on new jobs and others are expected to follow.

The president of UCD Dr. Art Cosgrove has said that the government can't afford to maintain a university system that is internationally competitive.

DIT join St Luke's in venture

THE Minister of State Sile de Valera, TD has opened a new translational research laboratory at St Luke's Hospital in Dublin, which is a joint venture between DIT's Radiation and Environmental Science Centre and the Department of Radiation Oncology at the Dublin hospital. It is designed to be a research facility linking basic radiation research with clinical practice. It is designed to make progress in the areas of treatment techniques and protocols and is a fine example of the multi-disciplinary co-operative approach to research, which will have a real beneficial outcome for patient care. The research hopes to minimise side effects of radiation on cancer patients.

International students angered by fees

By Aedin Donnelly

INTERNATIONAL students attending Irish universities have angrily protested about tuition fee increases.

The non-EU students, some of whom pay up to €20,000 a year, have approached An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern and Noel Dempsey, Minister for Education, about the matter and are planning a national awareness campaign. They will also be contacting their embassies in the State.

Non-EU students attending DIT fare only a little bit better than their counterparts in the State's Universities. This college's Admissions office told the 'DIT Independent' that international student's fees for the academic year



Mr Colm Jordan, said: "We hope this does not mean we are becoming Ireland of the rip-offs, rather than Ireland of the welcomes"

2002/03 stood at €8,000, regardless of the course, an increase of €400 on the

previous year's fees. A source within the Admissions office estimated that fees for international DIT students could be as high as €9,000 next year. This is an increase of 12.5%, which exceeds even the Irish inflation rate (4.25%).

Irish colleges have been aggressively recruiting non-EU students over the last five years, partly because they provide such a high fee income, compared to Irish students.

According to the DIT Admissions office, there were 562 applications from international students wishing to study in DIT last year; 72 of the students were accepted.

Roughly 22,000 students, both full and part-time, attend DIT, this means that non-EU

students represent less than half a percent of the student body.

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has called on the Department of Education to investigate why the fees are so high. The president of the USI, Mr Colm Jordan, said: "We hope this does not mean we are becoming Ireland of the rip-offs, rather than Ireland of the welcomes".

Because places for EU students are subsidised by the Government, non-EU students have always paid higher fees.

However, recent increases have angered the students, particularly those in UCC and Trinity College. The students have accused the colleges of charging exorbitant fees and not

justifying the increases.

'The Irish Times' reported that a letter to the Taoiseach and Mr Dempsey, from a group of UCC medical and dentistry students, expresses serious misgivings about the situation.

"The fees for the medical and dental students rose from the current €18,670 to €20,316 for the next academic year (2002-2003).

The fees for medical and dental students from outside EU comes to more than the average disposable income of people in Ireland. It is obviously not a small amount. However, unlike universities in Britain and America, the National University of Ireland has not introduced scholarships or a loans system for college fees".

Lecturer publishes book

DIT lecturer Thomas Cooney has published a new book on entrepreneurship, aimed at undergraduate entrepreneurship programmes. The book, entitled 'New Venture Creation in Ireland', is designed to provide fundamental questions and answers that must be considered when establishing a business. It does this by breaking down the elements of business planning through its different chapters.

Trinity, UCD to remain in USI

Following recommendations by students unions in UCD and Trinity College to remove themselves from USI, students in the respective colleges have voted to remain affiliated to USI. Trinity students voted in favour by a margin of 65% to 35% to remain affiliated to USI while UCD students voted by a margin of 73% to 27%.

DIT musician wins award

Amy O'Neill, a second year student in the Ballymun Junior Comprehensive School and a tenor saxophone with the DIT's Wind Band project, has been awarded a Higher Achiever's Award by the Royal Irish Academy of Music for her performance at a recent grade two music exam. This young musician's career began in St. Joseph's Primary School where she played the recorder in a 'Breaking the Cycle' initiative. This scheme was so successful that a The 'Wind Band' project was put in place last September in collaboration with the Department of Education & Science and the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, after the success of its sister scheme, 'Breaking the Cycle' initiative.

Furious Cork students protest

THOUSANDS of Cork students took part in a huge demonstration against the announcement of government education cutbacks.

The protest, organised by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), followed the mass demonstration held in Dublin on budget day last week. It is the largest student rally of its kind ever to take place in Cork.

Tommy Reidy, President, University College Cork Students Union said: "Just last week students of University College Cork presented Minister Noel Dempsey with 4,000 signatures from furious students who have not forgotten about broken election promises or cutbacks aimed at the poor".

He added, "Today the same students have taken to the streets. Student activism is alive and well in Ireland, and today is evidence of that fact. This is the largest student demonstration ever held in Cork, and sends out a clear message to the powers that be".

New Delhi students set to take DIT Journalism Degree

FROM next year, students from New Delhi will have the chance to take DIT's BA in journalism following a partnership agreement by the Institute and the Institute of Integrated Learning Management (IILM) in India.

DIT's Director of Academic Affairs, Dr Frank McMahon recently visited IILM, along with other members of the validation panel to endorse the new venture.

Dr McMahon said, "The panel is very pleased to recommend that this programme be validated. We discussed ways in which the course material needs to be adapted - for example a working knowledge of Hindi will be essential - but otherwise, students in New Delhi will learn and be assessed on the same basis as their counterparts in DIT".

He added, "It's a very



Students at the university are looking forward to the new degree

exciting development, and we hope there may be further opportunities for synergy with IILM in the future".

Speaking from New Delhi, the Head of the School of Film and Media at IILM, Mr Surya Prakash said, "I look forward to

greater to greater collaboration between our two media schools, including media-impact research".

The 3-year degree programme will be delivered in New Delhi by the School of Film and Media at IILM.

The course will be very similar to the journalism course currently running in DIT. The programme hopes to provide a high standard of professional training and education, as well as instilling and understanding of ethical issues facing young journalists.

DIT Independent

Repercussions for DITSU protest decision

DITSU'S decision to refrain from taking part in last weeks largest fees demonstration can be looked on in two ways; as a responsible decision by the union in the protection of their students education or a bad decision which will now cause a rift in student solidarity.

The latter actually seems more appropriate for one simple reason. The fact that if fees are reintroduced, thousands of students will actually be eliminated from third level education as they will not be able to afford to go to college. Lets not be naive here, students education was in no way being jeopardised by USI when they decided to take to the streets and protest on one of the most important days of the government calendar, Budget day. In fact, what could have gone wrong? The Minister for Education, Noel Dempsey has refused to negotiate over the fees issue recently and he is adamant that the only solution is to reintroduce them. What students need to show is solidarity. Not only that, but we should not forget how quickly Minister Dempsey threw the fees issue at students as soon he got his place on the government bench.

From the outset the DIT Independent has strongly supported the student campaign in saving our generation and future generations from falling behind in terms of an educated workforce. While students are willing to meet the government half way, Minister Dempsey has made no attempt to hold his hand out and offer help.

Although DITSU can not take back their decision now, they will have to do all they can to regain the trust of other colleges around the country. Maybe DITSU can interact more with students on the ground to find out whether their students actually want to protest for their right to a free education.

Students full of spirit

The recent budget has imposed an increase of 25c on a single measure of spirits and 35c on 'alcopops', the sugary bottled drinks, which are especially popular with underage drinkers. The Government is attempting to curb the youth drinking culture in Ireland, i.e. the fact that we drink while underage in the first place and that we drink to excess when we do. Although commendable, this move is lacking in any imagination or determination in tackling the problem. There seems to be an attitude held by decision-makers that young people, underage and students, woke up one morning and decided to drink more than any other social grouping in the country. Like any culture, the youth drinking culture has developed over time. Young people have no problem with drinking to excess on a regular basis and a 10% price increase on selected drinks will not affect this in the slightest.

If the Government wishes to really confront the problem, they must address that the youth drinking culture is a product of this country and did not appear overnight. Alcohol is everywhere. Pat Kenny recently gave away free bottles of Champagne on the Toy Show. Milo Corcoran, the head of the second-largest sporting organisation in the country, suggested that those without Sky Digital should watch the Irish soccer team in their local. When an impressive foreign leader comes to Ireland, Bertie Ahern takes him down the pub for a pint.

These examples don't seem inappropriate or out of place. This is the point that the Government seems to be missing. The youth drinking culture is a product of the national drinking culture and one will not be remedied without the other one. This move shows that the Government wants to stop young people drinking so much but also shows that they have no idea how to do it. The first step politicians should take is to open their eyes and recognise that this problem didn't simply appear overnight.

It is the policy of the DIT Independent to correct any inaccuracies as soon as they occur. An corrections or clarifications will be printed in the next edition of the newspaper. It is also the policy of the DIT Independent to offer the right of reply to any person who feels aggrieved by comment or opinion contained within. Please forward any such comments in writing to the Editor. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Students' Union.

The DIT Independent
Room A418 (The Newsroom)
DIT Aungier Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 4023071 Fax: (01) 402 3284
email: diteditor@hotmail.com

Editor: Aisling Casey
Deputy Editor: Donal Griffin
News Editor: Darragh Clifford
Features Editor: Barry J Whyte
Entertainment Editor: Eoin Murphy
Sport: Miguel Delaney

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Dempsey considering 'learn now, pay later' scheme

By Barry Whyte

THE Department of Education are currently considering a "learn now, pay later" scheme in order to fund third level education.

The scheme would work on the premise that a student would not be charged any tuition fees while in college but would make some contribution from their wages after graduation once he or she reaches a certain income threshold.

This system is, the Minister is at pains to point out, just a suggestion. He is currently examining a number of other countries' systems in order to

find the best manner of funding third level education.

Other options to fund education include: a full return of fees, which were abolished in 1995; the involvement of banks in providing low-cost loans to students and an increase in the annual registration charge on top of this years 70% increase.

The Independent Estimates Review Committee, a team of former civil servants, recently recommended that a €1,000 registration fee should be charged.

The Committee said that this would not be

unreasonable given the cost to the exchequer of tuition fees.

In Australia, where the "learn now, pay later scheme" is in operation, it is believed to be the fairest system available. It has also widened the access to third level education by students from all social and economic backgrounds.

The USI, however, says that the system has led to large student debts in Australia and that it leaves a large burden on the state since the fees may take some time to be repaid.

The USI have opposed the

"learn now, pay later system" and the re-introduction of full fees, which could be as much as €3000.

They also protested against the increase in the annual registration fees this year.

The Minister is currently in contact with the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) on the matter of a suitable system of funding for third level education in this country, while at the same time trying not to disenfranchise students from less wealthy backgrounds or irritate the USI.

What the Budget means to students

By Darragh Clifford

ISSUES surrounding VAT, excise duty, benchmarking and the first-time buyer's grant may have made the headlines with Budget 2003, but a little-known report on third level registration fees published with the Budget might have far-reaching effects for students.

Documentation released with the Budget shows the Independent Estimates Review Committee proposed a 50% increase in the student registration fee to €1,000 per year. This would mean that, in the space of two years, the registration fee would have increased by over 120%.

However, the move has been rebuffed by the Department of Education, pending the review of all third level charges due early next year. But the committee states that "having regard to the overall cost of providing places at third level, the committee believes this (charge) is a reasonable proposal".

But apart from fees, what does Budget 2003 mean to students? The price of 20 cigarettes went up by 50 cent. While some will see this as somewhat harsh, it is a lot better than the €2 increase that was rumoured in the weeks leading up to the Budget. The price of beers, stouts, ales, ciders and wines remain unchanged. A single measure of spirits will now be 25 cent more expensive while the so-called 'alcopops' have increased by 35 cent. This is a smart move by McCreavy, as he is targeting the drinks most preferred by under-age drinkers.



Minister McCreavy: The 1% increase in VAT will have far-reaching effects for all strands of society, including students

The stamp duty on ATM cards has risen from €6.25 to €10 per annum, but this should have little bearing on anyone who has a student account, as these stamp duties do not apply.

The 1% increase in VAT will have far-reaching effects for all strands of society, including students. Students will notice the increase in the cost of, amongst others, newspapers, magazines, driving lessons, takeaway foods, foods in vending machines and cinema tickets.

Letter to the Editor

Madam,
The drink problem associated with our country should have been tackled long ago- nipped in the bud from the outset. This culture has to change - or we condemn another generation with our inaction. Some or preferably all of the following points should be implemented:

Ban ALL alcohol advertising (TV, cinema, print, billboard, sports etc)

We have heard of "the polluter pays"- intoxicated people being treated at casualty departments in hospitals should have to pay for the full cost of their treatment.

Reduce the Alcohol driving level limit from 80mg to 0mg. Anyone over the limit (by any amount) to have their license revoked for 10 years automatically.

De-regulate the industry completely (quantity of pubs and opening hours).

Massive investment into education promoting health, sports and other activities which change the focus from pubs to other social activities.

Tax relief or funding for clubs, societies, businesses etc who actively encourage other social activities. Parents need to stop indoctrinating their children into the Irish pub culture.

We need a viable alternative to the drinks industry. We need to change our culture and our mindset. But above all, we need to acknowledge that we have a problem.

Is Mise,
Jarlath Molloy (non-drinker).

Take a break

Soothing back massage and yoga sessions were some of the free treats on offer in DIT during National Health Awareness Week.

Professional holistic therapists were available to work their magic on staff and students during the week that started on Monday 25 November. Staff and students could sign up for free Indian head massage, back massage, reiki or yoga lesson with friends.

Aungier Street student Natasha received an Indian head massage and a reiki treatment. "The head massage was amazing. I felt like I was walking on air when it finished, now I'm so relaxed. I didn't get too much out of the reiki, after working on my energy she just told me to drink lots of water to get rid of the toxins from my body which I knew already."

USI Launch Sex-Awareness

In an effort to educate Irish students on sexual health, USI has launched an awareness pack which will be distributed to students on college campuses across the State later this month.

The packs, which come in sealed A5 envelopes, contain a condom, a lubricant, a glove and an information leaflet. USI have launched the campaign because of the growing problem of sexually transmitted infections in this country.

USI President Mr Colm Jordan said: "While this is obviously important in its own right, there is little emphasis on the risks from sexually transmitted infections. By informing students, we are empowering them to take full responsibility for their sexual health".

According to the National Disease Surveillance Centre (NDSC), the number of registered cases of STDs increased by 298 per cent between 1989 and 2000. The number of cases of syphilis increased from six cases in 1999 to 46 cases in 2000.

HIV infections have also increased significantly. In the first six months of this year, 70 per cent of HIV infections diagnosed were among heterosexuals, most of them women.

Compiled by Shannon Rushe

FEATURES

The Colombia Three: bring them home?

With the trial recently postponed until February, Barry J. Whyte looks at the volatile Colombian situation...

ON the road from Dublin to Belfast you pass through South Armagh. On the side of the road are a number of signs and posters on which the residents make quite obvious their Republican leanings.

The largest sign is one on which lie the images of the three men allegedly found training FARC guerrillas in Colombia: Niall Connolly, James Monaghan and Martin McCauley. Over the images of the three is the slogan, "Bring them home".

Those in South Armagh would ask if we can trust Colombia, a country in a state of emergency at the moment, to try these men. There is plenty to support this argument. Their case has already been prejudiced by public comments made by senior political and judicial figures in Colombia and by David Trimble over here.

They will also be tried under one judge and no jury. On the 4th of December, the trial was suspended, set to resume in February of next year.

The case was suspended as the two key witnesses for the prosecution, defectors from FARC, were due to give evidence but neither turned up. One was afraid to travel to the court in Bogota by road since his life had been threatened. No reason was given why he couldn't travel by plane. The witness, Mr Edwin Giovanni Rodriguez, was described as a former FARC guerrilla, currently in detention for unspecified reasons. The second man, John Alexander Rodriguez, not related, was in a state witness protection programme and could not be found in time for this week's hearing. Both witnesses are in State-controlled programmes but they fail to show. One can only guess at



The Columbia Three, trial postponed until February

the agenda of the Colombian government. Is this the country to which we are entrusting these men?

Although Colombia has the oldest formal democracy in South America, it is a country

torn apart by civil war. The war pitches the guerrillas - consisting of the main FARC movement with 20,000 members or sympathisers - and the smaller ELN against the government and 6,000 strong right-wing paramilitaries.

The guerrillas claim to be fighting for so-called justice, equality and participation. The drugs trade finances the activities of the rebels. The rural south of Colombia has been controlled by FARC for decades.

The American government, with their knack for making a bad situation worse, (for example Vietnam, Cuba, the early support of the Taliban) have begun a policy of military aid and fumigation to destroy the coca crops.

The fumigation has affected the poor peasant farmers who have had to move off their land because of fears that it will damage their health. Meanwhile, FARC can simply move to another part of the area given to them during peace talks as an inducement to stay in the talks. It's roughly the size of Switzerland and they use it to produce drugs using the local peasants.

The other branch of the American solution to the current war is to provide arms for the government forces.

If indeed these men were acting under orders from the IRA, then those who gave the orders were acting well outside of any remit they might claim to have.

Their cause is not served by training FARC guerrillas. FARC have caused newsmen to come up with a totally new title for their particular brand of terrorism: narco-terrorism, i.e. half left-wing terrorist group insistent on civil rights and half drug-manufacturing industrial corporation. Although they have a human

rights agenda and intend to address issues of justice and the overall political system, it seems slightly hypocritical when compared to the treatment of the local farmers.

And this is what the IRA have linked themselves to in this time when they are supposed to be decommissioning and leaving the war behind.

The guerrillas claim to be fighting for so-called justice, equality and participation

This issue has relevance way beyond its effect on what, surely, is now a dying peace process.

September 11th, as we are constantly reminded, has changed the world for everyone.

Terrorism is now the number one crime in America

and Irish-Americans are now placing the emphasis on their Americanness rather than their Irishness.

Sinn Fein must be very careful of how they deal with this situation.

They've always been quite good at manipulating their own image in the media and among their followers.

But the United States has experienced an upsurge in hyper-Nationalist feeling that has impacted on their casual support among the Irish-American community.

If it is proved that Sinn Fein have linked themselves to an organisation at war with the United States, they will have suffered a serious blow in their support where they financially need it most.

The trial collapsed because of the Civil War in Colombia and the emergency situation that this has brought about. This situation will not have changed significantly by February.

Therefore, whatever crimes they have allegedly committed, the three men cannot be assured of a fair trial. This trial must not take place in Colombia.

It must take place in an international court where justice, whatever the outcome, can be seen to be done.



Gerry Adams faces tough time ahead

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Luasing the Plot

THE Luas system was to bring to Dublin a sensible solution to problems relating to public transport. It was to be operational by 2003. It was to consist of three functioning lines for the trams to run on. Now, the earliest date for Luas to be in operation will be some time in 2004. Even then, the opening of the lines will be staggered. After the Tallaght line is opened, there will be a delay before work on the next line is complete.

In Montpellier, the light rail system is called le tramway, or les Hirondelles - the swallows, so named because images of the birds are portrayed on the trams. One line has been in operation since July 2001, and the same style of tramlines is now being planned for Barcelona, Paris, Lyons, Melbourne, Rotterdam and, of course, Dublin.

Both Dublin and Montpellier decided in 1998 that they would develop a light rail transport service for their respective citizens. Dublin set itself the target of 2003 and Montpellier set itself the deadline of 2001. There is a lesson then to be learned from Montpellier.

Of course the comparison between the two cities is not an equal one, after all, Dublin is a European capital and, as

As the date for completion looms closer, Jon Lee compares the troublesome Luas system to its French equivalent...

such, has had to deal with an increase in population. But this is also true of Montpellier, which has, over the course of the last thirty years, moved up from the twenty-fifth to eighth largest town in France in terms of population size.

Still though, there must be some mistake when the European capital in question has not been able to find the funding to finish the development of its Luas project and Montpellier's project was finished three months before deadline and within budget.

70 million was allocated to the development of the required railways for les Hirondelles by the French government. Has this been the difference in how the matter of development has

been handled by both the French and Irish authorities?

Hardly, as the Department of Transport's estimates for next year grants 127 million to the Railway Procurement Agency but also stated that the RPA will have a borrowing requirement of 90 million in 2003.

There are 26 tram carriages that have been procured already for the Luas project. They are currently in storage near to the Red Cow Inn. Each carriage means an expense of 1.1 million of the project's funding.

The cost of the carriages is now a drain on public funding. This is the same funding that will not cover the development of the lines in time for the planned opening.

The longer the time these trams are kept in storage, the more opportunity for the service to recoup the initial investment is lost. More than 28 million in public funds will be spent on the trams. It is impossible to predict what level of income is being lost by the delay to the service's completion.

This situation is like someone buying a television before they had access to any electricity source or procuring a fishing rod while in the Sahara desert. The trams currently have no use



The Luas may be a major contribution to alleviate pressure on the existing forms of public transport

without the tracks and power lines they need to run on.

The Luas system seems to be a fantastic idea. It is to be quick and efficient. It is to be the most environmentally friendly option available in public transport as it will be electrical and without the use of fossil fuels. The newly designed trams were conceived with considerations for ease of access; there are low floor to ensure wheelchair and buggy accessibility and the trams are supposed to be thin enough to operate on most

roadways. The overarching issue right now is that one has to travel to the south of France to appreciate what the system might be like. Even then, there is more than just the three hundred days of sunshine per annum to overlook in order to compare the situation to Dublin.

The Luas will not have the 10,000 parking spaces which have been provided for the tram-using citizens in Montpellier nor did the French railway system have to be constructed around a road system as idiosyncratic

as the one in Dublin. Not for the French the suspension bridges or tunnelling underground that is involved in the construction of Luas.

Only the increasingly distant future will reveal whether public transport in Dublin is going to receive an increase in the travel options available. When it finally arrives, Luas may be a major contribution to alleviate pressure on the existing forms of public transport but the recent delays only serve to remind how Irish planning can hinder progress.

Iranian students fight for freedom

Widespread student demonstrations broke out in Iran following the announcement that history lecturer Hashem Aghajari had been sentenced to death for a blasphemous, speech he gave. By comparison, Irish student politics seems concerned with quite trivial matters, writes Aisling Casey

A CRISIS over the sentencing to death of a pro-reform academic, Hashem Aghajari has sent thousands of students to the streets demanding greater freedom of expression.

Protests began at the Amir Kabir University of Technology, Tehran's main technical school, following the arrest of Aghajari for saying Muslims were not "monkeys" and should not blindly follow the teaching of senior clerics, who are also leading politicians. At a closed trial soon after, he was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death by hanging for his statement and also given 74 lashes, 8 years' exile to three desert cities in Iran, and 10 year ban on teaching.

In protest of the conviction, 5,000 demonstrators took the streets chanting "The execution of Aghajari is the execution of the university". The point is that while Irish students fight over money, there are actually people less fortunate in the world who still remain at the bottom of the ladder, trying hard to take the first step towards freedom of expression.

Yashar Ghajar, a spokesperson for the Islamic Students Association said, "We are not looking for a revolution. We are looking for freedom of expression and freedom after expression". The death sentence is punishing Mr Aghajari for his opinion, which is certainly against international human rights



Widespread student demonstrations have broken out recently in Iran

standards. Just for a moment, pause and put yourself in the shoes of the Iranian students.

Who would be the first candidates for execution? USI's Colm Jordan would certainly be first on the list for his continuous attacks at the government, followed of course by all of his officers.

Then, possibly, your own students union although our

union tends to be less vocal than others so this may be a slight exaggeration. The Minister for Education, Noel Dempsey and the judiciary would have a field day in taking student bodies to court and executing all and sundry.

In this light and the absolute ludicrousness of anything like this ever happening in Ireland, it makes student politics in

Ireland pale by comparison. However, pro-reform students hit a wall after 10 days of demonstrations, when they clashed with hundreds of Iranian hardliners outside the Tehran University.

The violence started after riot police sealed off an area and parked buses around the campus to obscure the view from outside. Students later emerged from the university

with blood on their faces.

However, this did not halt their protests. They emerged jubilantly, throwing their fists in the air, chanting "referendum, referendum" in a call for a people's vote on the future of the Islamic Republic. Student protests in Iran have now grounded to a halt following the governments' decision to ban demonstrations.

However, Aghajari will not backdown.

The Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ordered the judiciary to review the verdict.

However, the chief prosecutor in the case said it is up to the lecturer himself to lodge the appeal.

How many Irish student activists would put their lives on the line for the sake of freedom of expression?

While Iranians continue to fight for freedom, Irish students will continue to fight over money.

It really does make Irish student politics quite petty.

FEATURES

Croatia: something different



By Ian Mannix,
DIT Cathal Brugha St

Why would you want to go to Croatia? Isn't that where the war was? Eyebrows were certainly raised when I announced this year's travel plans - three weeks back-packing around Croatia with my girlfriend. I admit that when she first suggested it, I was a little sceptical. I knew very little of Croatia except of the conflict that raged there in the last decade. However, after chatting to a few people and reading the Lonely Planet guide we decided to take a chance. It looked great, had been a big tourist destination during the 1980s, and most importantly it was cheap (my girlfriend and I are both students!). We bought the tickets, packed our bags and our tent, and headed for the Balkans.

We left in late August, which is probably the best time of year to go. The weather is still hot and the crowds aren't too bad. Our plans were simple: fly into Zagreb, the capital, and then tour the coast, enjoying some of Croatia's 1185 islands or 1500km of beautiful beaches, which line the Adriatic Sea.

After landing in Zagreb, we headed straight for the coast. There isn't much to keep you in the city, especially when it's hot, and anyone with any sense has left for the coast as well.

Our first stop was Plitvice Lakes National Park, halfway between Zagreb and the coast. The park is 20 hectares of wooded hills, which hold 16 turquoise lakes, linked by a series of waterfalls. It's a beautiful place, and also a world heritage site. There's a good campsite nearby so it's well worth spending a day there.

From Plitvice, we headed

directly to the sea, as the inland weather was getting too hot. From the coastal city of Split, we caught a ferry out to Hvar Island, where we camped. The island boasts 2724 hours of sunshine per year, and local hotels even give you a free night if you ever see snow there! We took advantage of the fine weather, pitched our tent a few metres from the beach, and chilled out. We also had to avoid the aging German nudists, who roam around many of the country's beaches and coves!

After a few days had passed, we caught another ferry to Korcula, a neighbouring island. When we got here we were lucky enough to find another great campsite, again beside the beach, with its own pool and other amenities. At this stage, it was early September, and we were able to get good value from the low season rates, which come into effect in many places at the end of August. Again, we enjoyed the beaches and cheap restaurants at night. That's one of the great things about Croatia, eating out is actually affordable, not like in Ireland. In most good Croatian restaurants, a big pizza and a pint will only set you back about 5 Euros.

After a few days in Korcula, we sailed back to the Croatian

mainland to Dubrovnik, which we were both keen to see. This beautiful old city had been heavily shelled during the 1991 - 1992 conflict. Up to 2000 shells severely damaged many of the city's historic buildings, palaces and old tiled roofs, for which the city is famous. I remembered seeing this on the news at the time, and was interested to see how the city had recovered.

When we arrived there we were amazed. The locals have gone to huge lengths to repair the terrible damage caused and have recreated the splendour of the city. For a place that was so badly damaged only ten years ago, there is very little evidence of the damage remaining. The city is really nice, and we spent five days there, taking day trips, going scuba diving and generally just enjoying the place. It's the nicest city I have ever been to and I could happily have spent much longer there.

Dubrovnik has loads of accommodation and restaurants and it's one place you really shouldn't miss. One of my most memorable days was when I escaped from my girlfriend for the day and went exploring the city on my own.

I ended up snooping around an old hotel in the centre of the city that had been shelled and then deserted after the war. It was a surreal experience, walking around some of the 400 empty bedrooms and seeing the crater holes in the outdoor swimming pool.

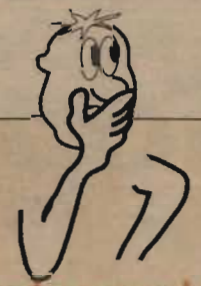
After Dubrovnik, the holiday ended and we went home. I would like to have stayed in Croatia and would happily return. There is little evidence of the war that only ended in 1995. It's a very safe country and, unlike neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina, you don't have to worry about landmines.

Look beyond Croatia's past troubles, and take the plunge. Your friends will think you are mad, but don't mind that. The country has so much to offer, especially to backpackers. The transport system is good so you don't need a car, and the weather and beaches are great. Most importantly, for students, it's great value for money.

Forty euros per day would cover everything you need, from accommodation to food, drinks and activities. Give Croatia a try, as you won't regret it. Just watch out for those scary nudists lurking around the beaches, they will chill your blood!



After landing in Zagreb, we headed straight for the coast. There isn't much to keep you in the city, especially when it's hot, and anyone with any sense has left for the coast as well.



Independent Thought

NADINE Coyle missed out on Six, the Popstars band, because she was too young. The rules stated that she wasn't old enough to be in the band, and so she was drummed out in tears.

The old adage, "if you're good enough, you're old enough" obviously was not something that had occurred to Louis "Music's Very Own Hitler" Walshe. Youth is no barrier to talent, surely a man who claims to have an eye for talent should know this.

No one is saying that these people are not talented. They all have fine singing voices, they've all got unthreatening good looks that appeal to all sectors of the market and they've all got very, very nice (and by nice I mean bland) personalities.

And therein lies the problem. Although they're talented, they're not creative. And creativity sometimes harbours an unruly streak which cannot be tamed or packaged or sold to preteens without any fear of them being corrupted. Not that I'm claiming Nadine Coyle is a precocious genius who was hard done by in the Popstars programme. She is more likely to become the next Dana than the next Aretha Franklin. She was just like the rest of the young hopefuls who auditioned, except she was a year younger. It is the idiocy of the system that the likes of Louis Walshe has set up that I'm trying to highlight. If he'd been even slightly flexible on the rules and admitted Nadine then he may very well have saved Six from the fate that they've slumped to.

Louis Walshe clearly failed to see what centuries of history should have taught him. Talent and creativity should be nurtured, not subjected to silly rules and regulations. George Harrison was 17 when The Beatles first went to Germany (he was later sent home because he was too young to play the seedy venues they frequented); Pele was the youngest player ever to play in the World Cup 1958 (he was then superseded by Norman Whiteside in 1982); Alexander the Great was only 20 by the time he had conquered most of the known world; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was nine when he composed and performed his first symphony.

However, my point is not that Nadine should have been given a chance. My point is that Louis Walshe's system, which he is simply copying from the British themselves had copied it from the Americans, does not allow real talent to grow and real creativity to shine. The fact that it places such strict rules on the ages of the performers when history has proven time and time again that youth is usually more conducive to talent and creativity than those who are old and set in their ways is just one of many examples.

Call them prima donnas, call them arrogant, call them what you will, but the creative amongst us will not put up with the same rules that we have to live by.

Nor should they have to. Talent and creativity makes this dull world a better place to be. In order to nurture real creativity and talent, we should scrap programmes like Popstars, Popstars the Rivals and the rest of them. Otherwise we will get what we deserve - a world filled with Westlives, Sixes and Nadine Coyle/Dana hybrids.

FEATURES

Top ten greatest Irish men and women

1. MICHAEL COLLINS

Such was the bitterness of the Civil War and the ensuing gulf between the two sides of Irish society that the Big Fella's achievements and influence are sometimes overlooked.

Born in Woodfield, Co. Cork in 1890, he was treasurer of the London IRB before returning for the Rising in 1916.

Upon release from Frongoch Prison, he reorganised the Brotherhood and revitalised the IRA.

He changed the culture of Irish Republicanism, refusing to accept the ideal that to die for Ireland is the only acceptable outcome.

Why not live for Ireland and make our oppressors die for it, he asked.

He changed the rules that dictated that Irishmen and women should engage in static warfare, introducing an urban form of guerrilla warfare which British forces could not overcome.

His ruthless intelligence network paralysed the British spy system.

From Belfast to Cork, British agents could not operate.

It was so effective that some of his operatives in Dublin Castle retired with British Secret Service pensions.

Under the Treaty, which Collins despised, the British conceded that Irish people have a right to self-rule.

He knew that, while the country wanted a republic immediately, if they conceded this principle, they would concede a republic in the future.

2. SEAN LEMASS

It was Lemass' fate to spend almost his entire political life under the considerable shadow of the Long Fellow, Eamon de Valera, but this cannot hide a life dedicated to bettering this country and the achievements of a remarkable man.

Born in Ballybrack, Co. Dublin, he fought in the Rising at 16 years of age.

He was a member of Michael Collins' 'Squad' and he fought with the Irregulars in the Civil War alongside his brother Noel.

But it was as Taoiseach that Lemass changed the face of this country forever.

His cabinet brought about

With the recent 'Great Britons' causing a million pub arguments, Donal Griffin attempts to start a million more with his list of the Ten Greatest Irishmen and Irishwomen...

an end to economic isolation and the absolute reliance on agriculture as a means of employment.

Free secondary education was introduced which brought thousands of people into the economy who had previously been left in the cold.

Without Lemass, this country's success would not have happened.

3. CHARLES STUART PARNELL

Parnell was different from Collins and Dev. They were Gaelic Catholics and were products of British oppression. Parnell was a Protestant and was educated in Cambridge University.

If any group of people did well out of British occupation, it was the landowning Protestants.

But Parnell united Irish people, Catholic and Protestant, rich and poor, in their desire to see Home Rule introduced to Ireland.

He achieved much-needed land reform that helped reduce the absolute poverty of the majority of the population.

He succeeded in uniting a 'bickering' Irish Parliamentary Party and they held the balance of power between the Liberals and the Conservatives in the House of Commons.

His party came within a whisker of achieving some freedom for Ireland without bloodshed which, given the warfare which has come since, is an achievement of almost unfathomable proportions.

4. EAMON DE VALERA

Dev was living on borrowed time and he knew it. Sentenced to death for his prominent role in the Rising, he cheated the firing squad through his American citizenship.

This escape gave him the determination to act, and to govern, as he wanted.

Born with a magnetism which commanded respect and utter devotion, Dev was always going to be a leader. Once he achieved power with Fianna Fail, he set about doing what the country wanted: the complete removal of the British government.

Such was his success in this area that by the time a Republic was declared in 1949, it almost didn't matter. It is his achievement that the 1938 Constitution is a more significant historical date than the 1949 declaration.

De Valera was flawed. He made mistakes. His life is littered with examples of unbridled arrogance but a man doesn't live for 92 years without making mistakes.

He balanced these mistakes with moments of absolute greatness and this is why he deserves his place in this list.

5. WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Yeats was born in Dublin in 1865 but lived in London until 1880.

He spent his holidays with his grandparents in Sligo and developed a love of the countryside that never left him.

He played a vital role as the GAA and the Gaelic League in asserting the nation's claim that the Irish were different from the British.

He founded the Irish National Theatre with Lady Gregory.

In the Abbey, plays were produced which dealt with an Irish subject matter but through English, the language of the majority.

As Yeats said, "I turned my back on foreign themes and decided that race was more important than the individual".

Both for his work as a writer, which earned him a Nobel Prize in 1923, and his work in developing the mindset of a nation, Yeats is in this list.



Bob Geldof's humanitarian efforts show a man of conscience and conviction

6. BOB GELDOLF

Bob Geldof was born in Dun Laoghaire in 1954. A highly intelligent man, he did poorly in his Leaving Certificate and left the country. After a brief sojourn in Canada as a journalist, he formed the Boomtown Rats and moved to London.

His humanitarian efforts show a man of such conscience and conviction that he deserves his place.

He was behind the 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' single and the 80 million dollars raised went to relieve the plight of the Ethiopian people, who were suffering from a famine, drought and civil war.

He organised the Live Aid concerts in London and Philadelphia which raised another 10 million dollars for the people of Ethiopia. The futility of this money in the face of extortionate debts led him to spearhead the Jubilee 2000 campaign.



Bono is politically aware of world troubles

7. BONO

Paul Hewson was born in Ballymun in 1960 and his talent and drive propelled U2 to the status of the biggest band in the world.

One would imagine that, having written some of the greatest music ever produced, he would retire to Killiney and live off the interest. But U2 were always politically aware and this was Bono's doing.

He was heavily involved with the Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel the crippling debts of many

African countries. He travelled to several African countries this year to campaign for debt relief, accompanying the US Treasury Secretary. Many rock stars preach about world issues but only Bono is taken seriously by those in power. This only happens when you know your stuff and can do damage if not taken seriously.

8. JAMES JOYCE

Joyce's magnum opus, *Ulysses*, is widely regarded as the greatest work of fiction ever. Which really should be enough reason to be in this list. The fact that he continued to write some of the most challenging and consistently interesting prose in English certainly guarantees his position.

The stream of consciousness style was used in *Ulysses* and his final work, *Finnegan's Wake*, which is a circular narrative with no beginning and no end. Although he wrote plays and poetry he is more famous for his prose, including the semi-autobiographical "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" and his collection of short stories, "Dubliners".

Joyce deserves to be here if only for the fact that his international fame exceeds that of Irish writers of the calibre of Beckett, Yeats, Shaw and Behan.



Mary Robinson, a woman of great courage and independence

9. MARY ROBINSON

It is often overlooked that Mary Robinson was facing electoral defeat until a series of Fianna Fail cock-ups. But one would be struggling to find an Irish person who thinks that Brian Cowen would have done a better job.

Robinson was the first president to take a hands-on approach in the role of independence that no one realised was missing from the post.

Much to the consternation of Irish politicians, she shook hands with Gerry Adams before it was common. On the other hand, she showed solidarity with the victims of IRA violence in Warrington and Manchester. She visited Somalia when the world's leaders covered under their desks. As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights she showed the same independence, and even today, heavily criticising the United States when Taliban soldiers were massacred at the hands of the Northern Alliance. She exposed the presidency for what it was: a position of potential, not a politician's retirement home. She came to symbolise an Ireland that was rapidly changing: assertive, confident and no longer male-dominated. As the first President of Ireland to exercise her rights to the utmost, she earns her place.



George Best: the first sexy footballer

10. GEORGIE BEST

It is accepted that the three most naturally talented footballers to walk this earth were Pele, Diego Maradona, and a Belfast boy, son of a Harland and Wolff shipyard worker.

Born in 1946, George Best was only 17 when he made his debut for Man Utd.

He was only 19 when he destroyed the legendary Benfica team, scoring twice in a 5-1 victory. It was this match which made him a star.

His looks, charisma, style and staggering talent knocked the game of football on its head.

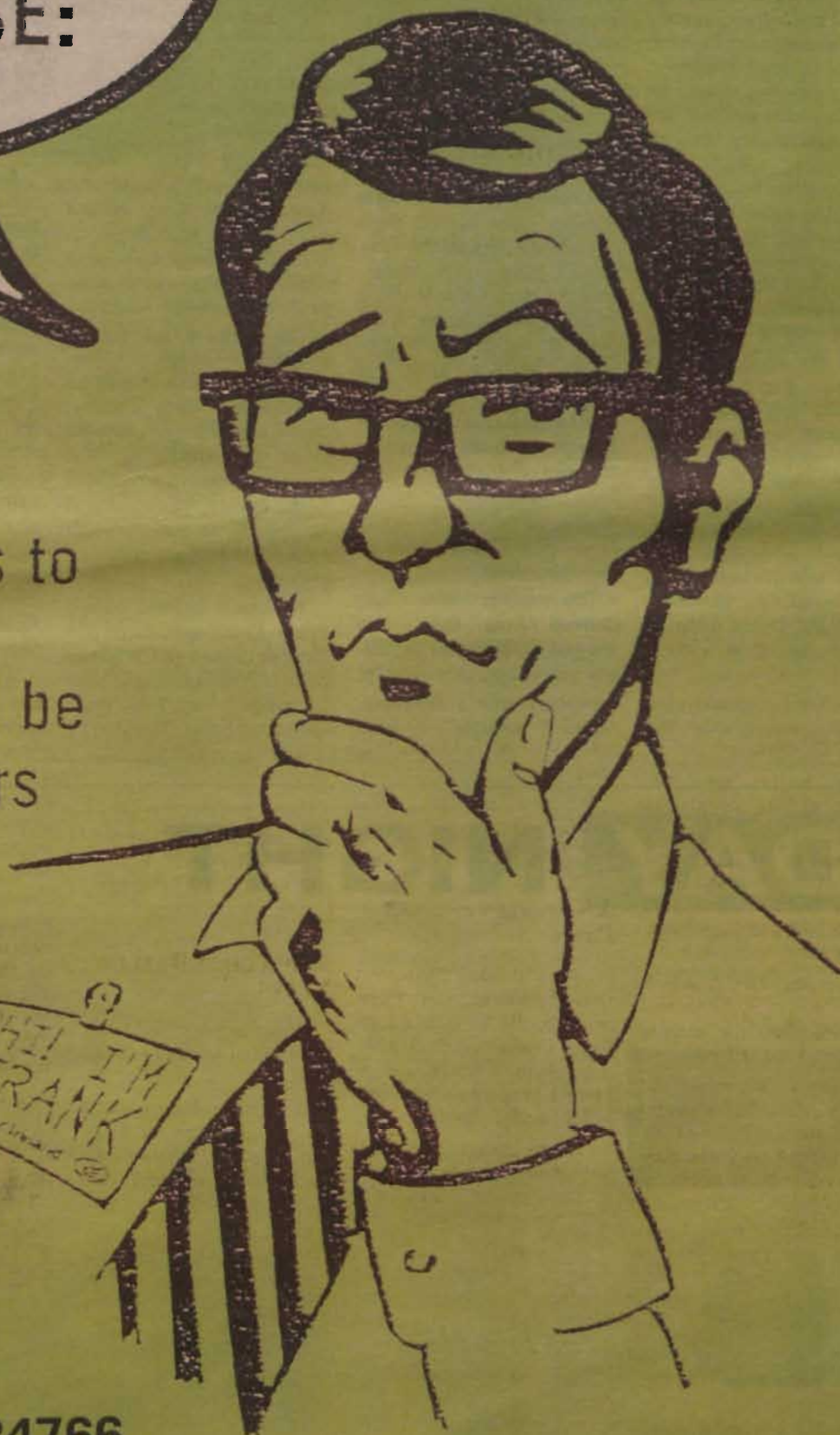
He was the first sexy footballer, replacing the Bobby Charlton types in the world's imagination of what a footballer should be.

In the end, he was consumed by the swinging culture from which he came but every time you see a footballer driving a flash car or wearing an Armani suit, remember that Georgie started it all.

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FEATURES

A myth at Christmas

Coca-Cola invented Santa Claus. Right? Christmas is therefore a corporate event, far removed from the feelings of love for your fellow man and Christian charity. Right? Coca-Cola, being a large multi-national corporation, have high-jacked a religious festival and made money more important than the birth of Christ. Right? Therefore, as the cynics would have us believe, Christmas is not worth celebrating at all because of its crass commercialism? Right? Wrong. The belief that Coca Cola invented Christmas is entirely erroneous and based on a tissue of lies which the *DIT Independent* will now sneeze a large hole through.

Santa has always been an essential part of the Christmas celebration, but the modern image of Santa didn't develop until well into the 19th century. He was an evolutionary creation. In 1804, the New York Historical Society was founded with Nicholas as its patron saint, its members reviving the Dutch tradition of St Nicholas as a gift-bringer.

In 1810, Washington Irving became a member of the

Society & the annual St Nicholas Day dinner festivities included a woodcut of the traditional Nicholas figure (tall, with long robes) accompanied by a Dutch rhyme about "Sancte Claus".

On Christmas Eve of 1822, another New Yorker, Clement Clarke Moore, wrote down and read to his children a series of verses; his poem was published a year later as "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas" (more commonly known today by its opening line, "Twas the night before Christmas...").

Moore gave St Nick eight reindeer (and named them all), and he devised the now-familiar entrance by chimney. Moore's Nicholas was still a small figure, however -- the poem describes a "miniature sleigh" with a "little old driver."

Meanwhile, in parts of Europe such as Germany, Nicholas the gift-giver had been superseded by a representation of the infant Jesus (the Christ child, or "Christkindlein").

The modern Santa Claus derived from these two images: St. Nicholas the elf-like gift bringer described by Moore, and a friendlier "Kris Kringle", from

Christkindlein. In 1863, a caricaturist for Harper's Weekly named Thomas Nast began developing his own image of Santa. Nast gave his figure a "flowing set of whiskers" and dressed him "all in fur, from his head to his foot." Nast's 1866 montage entitled "Santa Claus and His Works" established Santa as a maker of toys; an 1869 book of the same name collected new Nast drawings with a poem by George P. Webster that identified the North Pole as Santa's home.

Although Nast never settled on one size for his Santa figures (they ranged from elf-like to man-sized), his 1881 "Merry Old Santa Claus" drawing is quite close to the modern-day image.

The Santa Claus figure, although not yet standardised, was ubiquitous by the late 19th century. Santa was portrayed as both large and small; he was usually round but sometimes of normal or slight build; and he dressed in furs or cloth suits of red, blue, green, or purple.

A Boston printer named Louis Prang introduced the English custom of Christmas cards to America, and in 1885 he issued a card featuring a red-suited Santa. The chubby

Santa with a red suit (like an "overweight superhero") began to replace the furred, multicolored Santas.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the burgeoning Coca-Cola company was still looking for ways to increase sales of their product during winter, then a slow time of year for the soft drink market.

They created a series of drawings that associated the now ever-present image of Santa as a red suited fat man with Coca-Cola and their colours.

Coke's annual advertisements became famous, and are still used even though Coca-Cola no longer needs to bolster its sales during the Christmas period and the success of this advertising campaign has helped fuel the legend that Coca-Cola actually invented the image of the modern Santa Claus.

The jolly, ruddy, sack-carrying Santa with a red suit and flowing white whiskers had become the standard image of Santa Claus by the 1920s, several years Coca-Cola used their first Santa illustration.

All this isn't to say that Coca-Cola didn't have anything to do with



Contrary to popular knowledge, Coca-Cola did not invent Santa Claus

cementing that image of Santa Claus in the public consciousness. The Santa image may have been standardised before Coca-Cola adopted it for their advertisements, but Coca-Cola had a great deal to do with establishing Santa Claus as a ubiquitous Christmas figure in America at a time when the holiday was still making the transition from a religious observance to a largely secular and highly commercial celebration.

Santa Claus was a figure derived from the gift-bringing, Christmas-time characters of a number of different cultures and diffused through the American society of the early 19th century.

Coca-Cola certainly helped make Santa Claus one of the most popular men in America, but they didn't invent him.

DAY & NIGHT

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Irish Independent
DAY & NIGHT

Wyclef over the edge at Ambassador

"I REMEMBER... when we used to sit, in a government yard in DUBLIN!!!!" And so the crowd went wild. Wyclef Jean started off on a great note and didn't let the standard drop once throughout this three-and-a-half hour gig. Stevie G, a Cork DJ, had warmed the crowd up and Creative Controle played a fired-up support set but the minute Mr. Jean walked on stage, the Ambassador Theatre erupted with life.

Wyclef's choice of cover versions was very clever. After 'No Woman No Cry', he launched straight into House of Pain's 'Jump Around' and every single person in the place got up from their seat and...jumped around.

We didn't sit down once after that. It's impossible to do justice in writing to the energy that Wyclef poured into this gig.

This may, however, have been due to the pints of Guinness that he was pouring into himself throughout (or 'Black Velvet' as he called it - apparently Bono had recommended it to him) but his enthusiasm is unbelievably infectious. Speaking of U2, we all spotted The Edge in the crowd giving it loads to Bob Marley's 'One Love'. Wyclef obviously spotted him too as he played an

Aoife Dunne took in a night of the ex-Fugee, freaky girls, grinding men and tunes aplenty...

instrumental version of 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' and every head turned to stare at the U2 man.

The highlight of the night followed shortly afterwards when The Edge was invited on stage and accompanied Mr. Jean in a fifteen-minute version of 'With or Without You'.

It could have easily come across as a cringy, record-company-organised affair but it certainly didn't seem like that. Wyclef appeared to be genuinely in awe of The Edge and it did, at the time, feel like a special moment, even to someone like myself who's not a huge U2 fan.

Crowd interaction plays a major role in Wyclef's live shows.

He got men up on stage throughout the gig to 'grind' with his two lady dancers from New York (who were brilliant) but threw them off if they weren't any good. Before '911', he invited a



Wyclef Jean sent the crowd wild at the Ambassador with his creative covers

competition winner on stage and serenaded her with his guitar and his bare chest. There was also female involvement during 'Perfect Gentleman'.

He told the crowd that he wanted a "freaky girl" to come up stage with him (freaky in the Sugababes sense, not in the bearded lady sense...).

He finally picked one and it all resulted in some lapdance action on the stage.

Wyclef really did mix with the crowd, particularly when he walked all the way up to the balcony area and stood amongst us while the dancers did their thing on stage. While up there, he spotted a 'large' man in the crowd whom he affectionately called 'Bigman,' and invited him up on stage to get up close and personal with the dancer.

Bigman graciously accepted the offer.

I only have one criticism of this show: there wasn't exactly an equal balance of original material and cover versions. However, at the time, it wasn't really an issue. If I was a die-hard Wyclef fan, I probably would have had a problem with the fact that the last hour was basically just Wyclef dancing around on stage to songs being played by his DJ (Aha's 'Take on Me,' and Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun' amongst others).

However, it was irrelevant on the night because it was more like a huge nightclub atmosphere than a serious gig. Nor could a Fugees fan have been disappointed because he performed an excellent medley which included 'Ready or Not' and 'Fugee-La.'

There is no doubt that Wyclef was there to provide everyone with a great night

out. He knows as much as we do that it's brilliant fun dancing around to familiar songs rather than sitting through obscure Fugees B-sides. I'm sure there are many who would question this approach but in terms of entertainment value, it's unbeatable. His own songs, like 'It Doesn't Matter' and 'Gone Til November' stood impressively beside ye olde disco classics that were booming from the decks too. It was this perception on his part that caused this to be an amazingly energetic gig, without a dull moment.

After a blistering three-and-a-half hours, The Edge appeared on stage again and they finished with a very 'lighters in the air' version of 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door.' We finally left the Ambassador at 12am, completely and utterly wrecked after an unforgettable night's dancing.

Good Day's ahead for Doris

By Eoin Murphy.

IN THE midst of Dublin's eclectic music scene lies a band on the verge of success. Doris, a three piece cum' five piece band are burning up the circuit in an effort to do what most other small groups have failed to do, pass out the Commitments.

In fact some worthy comparisons could be made with the Commitments and Doris: they have a unique sound that has been absent from the music scene since the early Picture House and Stunning albums were released. They are producing their own albums, ensuring that they can be their own bosses (no fear of Mariah Carey syndrome here).

The band comprises of Chris Mc Donnell, his brother Ger and Phil Redmond. They hope to add drums and electric guitar in the guise of Ken O'Flaherty for their next gig in an effort to solidify their already impressive sound. The band are a regular fixture at the Da2 club, the newly renovated live music venue on Wexford Street and the Music Room on abbey Street.

It certainly seems that the future is bright for this year-old band whose influences range from the Sultans of Ping to Travis. They are about to record a double A-side comprising of new songs, Don't Try Change it and Never Ending. Dublin is no easy ride for a young band and for Doris, it is no exception. They played their first gig over a year ago in O'Dwyers Howl at the Moon and have been slogging it out on the circuit ever since.

Bass guitarist Chris believes that, "it is definitely a labour of love ... what we produce speaks for itself. We would love to pack in the nine to fives but first we need a foundation. I wouldn't say we're nearly there but we are definitely on the way".

So keep an eye out for Doris, who will play in the Da2 club in January.

Exiled Culchies must have justice

Thirty years ago, a great civil rights activist, in whose symbolic shadow I write today, delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C the "I have a dream" speech. This momentous decree came as a great beacon of light to thousands of culchies in Dublin who had been seared in the flames of withering prejudices and mockery. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of inferiority.

But, thirty years on, we must face the tragic fact that the culchie is not seen as equal. Thirty years later, the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination sadly cripple the life of the culchie. Thirty years later, the culchie is still languishing in the corners of Dublin society and finds himself an outcast in his adopted city. Today, we demand justice. When architects of the Republic wrote the Proclamation, they dreamed of a society where jackeens and culchies lived side by side. It

Has anything really changed for the country people? Kieran Dineen has a dream...

would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the culchie. There will be neither rest nor tranquillity in Dublin until the culchie is granted his citizenship rights.

Go back to Kerry, go back to Cavan, go back to Waterford, go back to Mayo, go back to the green fields and cattle crossings of our towns and villages, knowing that, someday, the situation of jackeeness will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, that, in spite of the difficulties and frustrations, I still have a dream. I have a dream that high-pitched



The fact is that the culchie is not seen as equal

Clare and Kerry accents will not be the butt of jackeen jokes. I have a dream that one day Ballyfermot will have a representative in the King of the Culchie contest. I have a dream that even Connemara men will be able to wine and dine daughters of Malahide businessmen.

I have a dream that our children will be able to live in a city where

they will not be judged by their culchiness but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that the City of Dublin, where jackeens' lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little culchie boys and culchie girls will be able to join hands with little jackeen boys and jackeen girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that every jackeen will learn the value of tilling the land, of drinking Murphys, of experiencing the Puck Fair, of inhaling clean air. This is our hope.

This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith, we will be able to teach the jackeens that they do not hold a monopoly on this city, that the culchies who live in inner-city flats

know as much if not more about this city than the jackeens who live in nice suburban houses with their parents. And, if Dublin is to be a great city, this must become true. So, let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of Donegal. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of Kerry. Let freedom ring from the small farms of Louth.

Let freedom ring from the fields of Fermoy. But not only let that freedom ring from Tullamore. Let freedom ring from Lahinch.

Let freedom ring from every hill and every monolith of Wexford. From every culchie town, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and townland, from every county, we will be able to speed up the day when all of Dublin's children, culchies and jackeens, will be able to join hands and say, "free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, we are free at last"

ENTERTAINMENT

Shortt stretches Vicar St stint

By Nicky Griffin

PAT Shortt extended his stint in Vicar Street, adding six extra nights due to the popular demand for his unique style of comedy.

By the end of the run he will have performed for over 14,000 people. Shortt, formerly of D'Unbelievables, has taken his sell-out solo show to Vicar Street for a fortnight's stint.

Pat was in fine form on the night and went down well with his bold head, cheeky grin and flamboyant costumes.

Many of his well-known characters from the D'Unbelievables act featured and some new ones were thrown in for good measure.

Maurice Hickey, a local political candidate was a real crowd-pleaser as he kick-started the show sharing "Bridie's" concerns over the plastic bags! Shortt terrorised the audience in a very interactive show in which he picked random unsuspecting punters out for a laugh.

At one point, Shortt had a step-ladder up on the Vicar Street balcony to stick up to Maurice Hickey's election posters and, as he said himself, "to clean out the gutters!"

Shortt's stage show proved clever as one of his characters was narrating and would suddenly have a flashback in which another character would be introduced.

He spent most of the show walking among the audience and chatting away with people.

This familiarity wasn't confusing as it was along the lines of what D'Unbelievables usually produce. The audience got into his act and a lot of laughs were had all round.

It was particularly memorable for those poor unfortunates who were dragged up on stage!

Supporting Pat on his nationwide tour was comedian Deirdre O'Kane.

A former actress and best remembered for her appearances on 'Fergus's Wedding' and 'The Fitz' (BBC), O'Kane started on the

comedy circuit in 1996.

She warmed up the audience nicely and, unlike many female comics, she avoided using sexist jokes as the basis of her routine.

The show provides welcome financial income for Shortt since it is uncertain whether he will work again with Jon Kenny of the D'Unbelievables. Kenny took ill this year with a rare form of cancer and is still in recovery period.

Even without his partner in crime, Pat Shortt gave a sterling performance and looked solid throughout.

He is by far one of the finest comics in the country and brings something a little different to the stage.



Pat Shortt: spent most of the show walking among the audience and chatting away with people



Crème de la Femme

By Eoin Murphy

LAST time the Violent Femmes came to Dublin they were on a mission to promote a long awaited album release. This time they took over the newly renovated Vicar Street to give a homage for their fans.

The sold out arena was waiting with baited and slightly beer drenched breath for a special show and what a show they received.

For the Femmes consoir, it had it all from the moment they opened the show with the familiar twanging of blister in the sun.

They provided a healthy mix of both old and nearly new to whip the crowd into a frenzy. It seems that even in today's popstar and rivals market there is still room for the old reliables.

One of the more impressive aspects of the concert was the international appeal that was created by this eclectic band.

Aside from two crazy Italian women, swilling beer and moshing at the fore of the crowd, there were notable contingents of Australians, New Zealanders, English and a hearty collection of Americans.

It is clear that time has not afflicted these aging rockers as they belted out their classic hits for nearly two hours in front of a grateful capacity crowd.

The band that started off as buskers and rose to fame with a string of catchy hits in the 80's still have their finger on the musical pulse as their unorthodox semi acoustic style is still wowing audiences.

This was an incredibly intimate gig with the crowd practically up on the stage and if they ever decide to come back this reporter will be front row centre.



Black Magic in the Olympia

*Black Rebel Motorcycle Club,
The Olympia*

By Ciara Cunnane

A strange sight greets us when we race into the Olympia tonight. Instead of the usual bright lights and empty stage while the venue fills, darkness rules as a DJ spins mellow dance and rock grooves on a smoke filled stage. It sets the tempo for an extraordinary and inspiring show.

The DJ set creates a blissful ambience that gently eases us into support act, 'TyCobb's' performance. They create an unusual visual spectacle; just two guitarists, a drum machine and amps embellished with lights. Lead guitarist, the hugely afroed Ryaa, told me afterwards that there is also a bassist and drummer, but they could not afford to fly from Philadelphia.

Nevertheless, the two men aptly fill the stage with their adroit guitar licks and rhythms. Similar to BRMC, they alternate lead vocals and guitar parts and to an equally great effect. An EP is planned for these shores soon.

After 'TyCobb,' the DJ reappears to lead us into the main act. BRMC arrive to a euphoric reaction.

Controversially, they open with new song, '6 Barrel Shot Gun', but it is well received. The set is a superb blend of crowd pleasers from the eponymous debut, and brilliant new tunes from a new LP the band expect to have out by April.

The difference between BRMC and other bands is that they create such an amazing atmosphere, not by stage tricks, but their mesmerizing playing.

Their reticence during the show carries on offstage, although they are polite with it. The songs begin to

merge into a spellbinding mesh as I relinquish myself to the music.

Deafening guitars, pounding drums, flashing lights and swirling red smoke transcend the room to another level. 'Whatever Happened to My Rock 'n' Roll (punk song)' is the highlight, as the crowd connect with the band in a perfect unity of understanding.

The moshpit loses control, but even getting soaked with a pint cannot lessen my elation.

A truly religious experience.



Anarchy from the UK

The Alabama 3 are eternal underdogs and enjoy that status. They have often been heralded as Britain's most underrated band, but one can't help feeling that the zillion-selling power of Britney is not really on their agenda.

On November 25th, the eclectic collective played that beacon for the alternative and wonderful that is Vicar Street (although, it is rumoured that our very own 'Six' are to grace the stage around Christmas time - get your credit cards ready now!).

Defining the Alabama 3 is a task which any writer would relish. It would not be impossible to write an academic thesis on this lot, although their non-pulsed demeanour would not welcome it. Let me throw in

Caoimhe Lane witnesses the explosive sound of the anti-everything Alabama 3...

my own suggestions on their melting-pot style. Cross Deep South NRA advocates with Marxist reading hard-core socialists and you're still not even close.

Their countrified-gospel rock from Nashville via Brixton has made the sextet something of a mysterious cult. The band's sound is as strange as their physical presence, which itself is reminiscent of the wizened

characters of an Irvine Welsh novel.

I had never seen the group live before but having experienced their unique take on life, I can say I was suitably impressed.

Their ferocious intense heat of performance is infectious, yet this passion never concedes to sloppiness and each number is performed to perfection.

The thin and gnarled silhouette of the band's frontman, the Very Reverend Dr D Wayne Love, is indicative of his post-modern, post heroin-chic, narcotic ravaged insatiable persona.

Their energetic performance owed to their three albums in equal measure. The audience reserved special enthusiasm

for classic numbers from their first album 'Exile on Coldharbour Lane' such as 'You Don't Dance to Techno Anymore' and the theme tune to 'The Sopranos', 'Woke Up This Morning'

However, their latest album 'Power In The Blood', was equally well received, indicating their avid following had been swatting up on this recently released material.

The new album reinforces their political views with contemporaneous references to the British Nationalist Party 'scaring refugees senseless up in old Oldham Town'.

If you're not familiar with the Alabama 3, buy all three of their albums.

At once. They are anarchists. They're the Sex

ALABAMA 3

LOVIN' MEN, LOVIN' WOMEN, LOVIN' ALL GOD'S CREATURES



Pistols for the new millennium, but much, much better than Rotten or Vicious even dreamt of being. They 'Don't have no country, don't fly no flag. They cut no slack for the Union Jack. The Stars

and Strips have got them jet-lagged'.

They're anti-Bush, anti-Blair, anti-capitalist, anti-free trade and anti-World Bank.

It's all very refreshing really!



Santa Cruz is Comin' To Town

By Alana Doogan

The Thrills

Santa Cruz (You're Not That Far) E.P.

The Thrills released their debut single, Santa Cruz (You're Not That Far), on 8th November. Their style is based somewhere between the Beach Boys, Ryan Adams, and Travis. Notably, they share the latter's fondness for the banjo and use of the ballad.

The title track is the most upbeat song they offer on the EP. It gets off to a slow start, with a honky-tonk style accompaniment and slow back beat but the tight harmonies and syncopated, vamping piano in the chorus soon boosts the tempo and give the song a bit of life.

The second song on the single, Deckchairs And Cigarettes, is a ballad with minimum accompaniment, emphasising lead singer Connor Deasey's voice, adding a bit of emotion to the song.

The third song, Your Love Is Like Las Vegas starts with alarming similarity to Gene Pitney's Twenty-Four Hours from Tulsa but thankfully breaks free from the similarities to a Burt Bacharach tune as soon as the vocals enter.

The fourth song, Plans, is another ballad with little to offer lyrically but a good melody with strong harmonies.

The 5 lads, formerly known as The Cheating Housewives, hail from Dublin and are currently in Los Angeles recording their album due for release in spring 2003.



Nothing Posh in D4

By Stephen McMullin

The D4 - 'Come On' EP

If you've never heard of the D4, you have my sincerest sympathies. While New Zealand may not be the first place you might consider as the home of dirty, raw garage-punk, this quartet prove that Kiwis can give it just as much as New Yorkers.

Their debut album, 6Twenty, released earlier this year showcased the immense energy in the music these boys play and their packed-out gigs in Whelan's proved that they are not just another bloody new rock band, à la The Strokes.

Come On! is one of the standout tracks from that album and was always destined for release as a single.

With its infectious bouncy party feel and heavy dose of late-seventies punk attitude this song will have you torn between dancing the night away and spitting on everyone within range.

The B-sides themselves aren't at all bad either. Obviously intended to take the Christmas market by storm, I Don't Believe in Xmas and Santa Claus are like anti-hymns put through a heavy distortion unit and given a New York Dolls kick.

If Johnny Thunders were still alive, he'd be proud to see his legacy stretching as far as it has.

Pure quality and the perfect stocking filler.

Thanks to EMI records and Friction records



Memories of Mic with posthumous LP

By Nicky Griffin

Mic Christopher - Skylarkin

This is Mic Christopher's first full length album, following the 'Heyday EP' released in 2001. It has been released posthumously, following his tragic death this time last year.

Raised in Dublin, he has a rich background in the music scene, varying from busking on Grafton Street to two studio-produced albums with his former band, the Mary Janes. Following their split in 1999, he toured solo, before being invited to open for the Waterboys on their 2001 European tour.

The album's tender acoustic sound coupled with its heartfelt lyrics make it extremely pleasant to listen to. His lengthy time spent as a busker shines through, delivering the uncluttered sound of one man and his guitar.

The four songs that constitute the 'Heyday EP' are also on Skylarkin. 'Heyday' is an upbeat showcase of his deep vocals, 'Kids' Song' is a fragile, innocent song about segregation and 'Listen Girl' is a melodic, dreamy love song. 'Looking for Jude', although uplifting, has a chorus a little too similar to 'Heyday.'

These four songs really stand out on the album, but there are a few other gems such as the Beatles-esque 'That's What Good Friends Do,' and the lush, reflective 'What a Curious Notion.'

The album is being released on the first anniversary of his death, November 29th. This will be celebrated with a gig in Vicar Street at which Mic's friends will perform his music, with all proceeds going to a children's charity.

From Hobbits to Light Sabres

By Bryan Collins

This Christmas, two major franchises are gunning for a space in your DVD collection. Peter Jackson is having a second go at the market with the release of a special edition of 'The Fellowship of the Ring'. Meanwhile, Lucas is rousing his sizable fan base with 'Attack of The Clones'.

A long time ago in a galaxy far far away, there lived a hobbit or something to that effect. Jackson's interpretation of JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings is a hair-raisingly epic masterpiece. Still though, I approached this special edition with a touch of scepticism. Its release is a slap in the face to those who bought the no-frills edition, released last August.

Not only that, but the special edition is especially expensive at just under €50. Hasn't the franchise made enough money already?

To Jackson's credit, his special edition tale of Elves, Orcs and Wizards won me over. The four CD volume contains more features than you can shake a hobbit at. The DVD holds not one but four, yes, four, commentaries by the cast, the production crew, the writers and of



course Peter himself. There's plenty of behind-the-scenes footage, more than enough documentaries to pass the festive season; there's even an interactive map of Middle Earth!

It is, however, the new cut of the film that puts the special in special edition. Peter Jackson has seamlessly edited an extra half an hour of footage into the film. Wasn't it long enough at just under three hours before?

The answer is a definite no. The extra half-hour adds greatly to what was already a film so broad in depth and scope. It was frightening.

Included in the extra half-hour are scenes in the Shire, the gift giving sequence, and extra action footage. This is the definitive version of the film. (Alas no Tom Bombadil, though Jackson explains why in the commentary.)

If you hated The Fellowship of the Ring, this special edition won't change



This Christmas, two major franchises are gunning for a space in your DVD collection: a special edition of The Fellowship of the Ring and Attack of The Clones

your mind. This DVD is going to appeal to those who devoured the book and praised the film. The exhaustive list of extras should satisfy even the hungriest hobbit enthusiast.

Reviewing Star Wars is a mute point. Fans are going to buy this no matter what the critics say. Still, are they right to part with the overvalued Euro?

Attack of the Clones had its problems. The dialogue was awful. The acting was ropery in patches and why did that middle bit go on for so long? But, people have been unfairly harsh on the film. The prequels had quite a

legacy to live up to, i.e. one of the greatest franchises ever. Also, I don't know if anyone has watched the original trilogy recently but the dialogue wasn't up to much then either.

Despite its problem, Attack of the Clones is a success. The film looks great, its climax being a case in point (hell, even Yoda uses a light sabre). Acting wise, Ewan Mc Gregor and Christopher Lee hold themselves admirably.

Hayden Christensen is good at the angry bits while Nathalie Portman looks hot. Plot wise, Lucas ties some of his strings together nicely. Lucas's far away galaxy might not be as profound as Middle Earth but

it's still good fun.

When it comes to the stronger film the force might be with Peter Jackson but don't write off Lucas's Attack of the Clones DVD either.

The Phantom Menace's extras were, in the words of a certain baker, 'exceedingly good'. The ample supply of extras turned what was a mediocre film into an essential purchase. There's no let up with Attack of The Clones. Included is the obligatory commentary, an extensive series of behind the scenes documentaries and the famous or perhaps infamous deleted scenes.

Those criticising this DVD argued that the deleted scenes

were not of the action kind, and focused too much on the poorly written romance between Anakin and Padme.

Maybe, but the film itself is bloated with action sequences. The deleted scenes add a nice touch to the film's background. (Perhaps Lucas should have deleted a few more scenes from the actual film though?) The documentaries are insightful and prove interesting viewing for any self-confessed fan.

Ultimately, if you have to make the call between the two franchises this Christmas borrow your mate's Star Wars. Jackson's offering is lord of the DVD's and worth every inflated cent.

Two Towers to lord over Christmas box office

By Miguel Delaney

The hype only just seems to have died down since the last Harry Potter but excitement is already building for yet another fantasy novel sequel. Yes, December sees the



much-anticipated release of the second installment of the Lord of the Rings trilogy: the Two Towers.

The film of the second book in JRR Tolkien's saga has a lot to live up to. The Fellowship of the Ring was a breathtaking visual epic featuring groundbreaking special effects. Probably the biggest movie series since the original Star Wars trilogy, its four Oscars, host of Baftas and millions of dollars taken in reflect its huge popularity.

There looks to be no reason why The Two Towers will be any different. It was shot at the same time as The Fellowship of the Ring so there should be a great deal of continuity in the quality of the acting and atmosphere. With the special effects, director Peter Jackson has already said that they are "ten times better" this time around so we should be in for another treat.

One of the most impressive aspects of the Fellowship of the Ring was how Jackson

managed to condense the vastness of the book onto the screen.

With The Two Towers however, it will be interesting to see how he copes with the new problem of having to deal with the two different stories of the book.

One part covers Ring bearer Frodo and his faithful companion Sam as they continue on their perilous quest to Mordor.

The other follows Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli as they hunt the Orcs who captured Merry and Pippin. They must also seek allies as they face the combined forces of Orthanc and Barad-Dur, the strongholds of Saruman and Sauron to which the film's title refers.

Jackson will also have the task of making this film a lot darker. Gone will be the innocence of the hobbits. Instead, we will see Frodo increasingly succumb to the evil of the Ring, while there will also be a much greater dose of death and carnage.



The film of the second book in JRR Tolkien's saga has a lot to live up to

The majority of that will come in the film's centre-piece - the Battle at Helm's Deep.

Described by the film's special effects guru Richard Taylor as "one of the greatest triumphs of cinema history" this digitally created battle will consist of Aragorn leading the Riders of Rohan against 10,000 Orcs.

The Two Towers will also see a host of new characters introduced, including the

digitally created Treebeard and wise King of Rohan, Theoden, played by Bernard Hill.

The film also marks the return of Gandalf (don't worry, it's not a spoiler, he's in the trailer), reborn as the infinitely more powerful Gandalf the White.

However, the most eagerly awaited aspect of the Two Towers will be the appearance of Gollum, the emaciated and twisted former

bearer of the ring. WETA Workshop, those responsible for the effects in Fellowship of the Ring, have employed the groundbreaking technique of digital motion capture to animate the character and it will be intriguing to see how he is brought to the screen.

If Jackson manages to pull such brave moves off, then The Two Towers looks all set to surpass the Fellowship of the Ring and provide a true classic this Christmas.

SPORT

UCD end unbeaten run

Senior Football

Higher Education Gaelic football League, Div 1
DIT 1-07 UCD 3-06

By Seamas Reilly

DIT's Senior Football side finally saw their unbeaten run in the higher education league come to an end as they fell to a strong UCD team this month.

After the recent victories against Trinity and DCU, DIT were full of confidence going into the game.

It was a sign of the newly elevated regard in which the side are held that UCD fielded 13 of their championship winning team.

DIT started the game brightly, quickly going into a two point lead.

However the sheer quality of the Belfield side was displayed in devastating fashion as UCD scored a brilliant goal from a sweeping counter attack only moments later.

DIT split the UCD defence to create a good goal scoring chance. However the shot was saved and four swift passes later the ball



was nestling in the back of the DIT net.

Two more UCD goals followed in quick succession and a rout looked a distinct possibility.

However DIT showed the character that marked them apart in their last two games as they fought their way back into the game.

Points from McCormack, Carlton and Marrinan brought DIT to within five points of UCD at the break.

After the restart two quick UCD points only served to galvanise DIT as they enjoyed their best passage of the game. McCormack hit a deflected goal while points from Stephen Bray and the

dynamic Declan O'Mahony brought DIT to within two points of UCD with 15 minutes to go. The final minutes however proved agonising for DIT as they missed a host of good opportunities in their search for the goal that would win the game. UCD finally killed the match off with three unanswered points in

the final moments.

DIT however could be proud of their performance as they were never overawed by UCD's big names.

They displayed excellent teamwork, passion and commitment and in truth dominated 50 of the game's 60 minutes. Duffy, Kelly, McCormack and Carlton were all central to this, but DIT's man of the match on the day was full back Stephen Halpin who put in an awesome performance.

UCD's three first half goals however simply proved too high a mountain to scale.

DIT: Duffy, MacMorrough, Halpin, Faughnan, Smith, Kelly, Hanafin, Mooney (C), Walsh, Marrinan, Bray, McCormack, Prior, McCaigue, Carlton

Subs: O'Mahoney, McGrath, Lowery, Canning, Gahan

UCD: McGill, Costello, Evans, B O hAnnaidh, Maguire, Lucey, Breen, D O hAnnaigh, Magee, Barry, Fallon, Hanley, Casey, Ronaghan, McDonald

Subs: O'Connor, Murphy.

	Played	Won	Drew	Lost	Points
UCD	5	5	0	0	10
Maynooth	5	4	0	1	8
SHOOTERS DIT	5	3	0	2	6
DCU	5	2	0	3	4
Trinity	5	1	0	4	2
Dundalk IT.	5	0	0	5	0

Third place finish shows progress made

A walkover against Dundalk completed a hat-trick of victories for DIT leaving them a very creditable third in the Higher Education League Division I.

Third place gives DIT their best league position for some time and is a sign of the progress Joe Moran's side has made. The performances should give the team confidence as

they prepare for the Sigerson Cup after Christmas.

DIT turned in exceptional displays in their victories over Trinity and a formidable DCU side.

Meanwhile the team could take heart from their spirited defeat to a star-studded UCD team.

Ultimately, it was the

loss to a well organised Maynooth in the opening game which cost them a landmark place in the top two and qualification for the semi-finals of the League.

Joe Moran can now consider his side serious contenders for the Sigerson Cup.

Even a slight improvement in performance in the Cup

would see DIT break into the country's elite top six. It can only be hoped that the panel continue the good work they have put in already this season.

Meanwhile DIT play their first match in the new Grangegorman pitch on Tuesday December 10 against St Patrick's Training College.

There is much optimism that having their own

home ground will at last put DIT on an equal footing with all the major powers of third level Gaelic Football.

Up to now, poor performances have often been blamed on the lack of a quality training ground.

The new facilities are no more than a 10 minute walk from Bolton St and should be a huge boost to DIT.

Controversial penalty spoils Grangegorman debut

By Kieran Dineen

DIT 0-1 Limerick IT

DIT's debut in Grangegorman reflected the long awaited move to the northside campus, full of promise and potential but ultimately wasted opportunities.

A controversial Limerick penalty in the final minutes spoiled the opening of the site as the Munster men came away with a 1-0 victory.

Coming off the back of a recent 5-0 victory, and finally playing at their own ground, the omens were good for DIT. However it was the visitors who started most promisingly.

Limerick's Shane O'Donoghue initially proved a real threat for DIT's defence as his pace saw him continuously beat the Dublin side's offside trap.

It was only a combination of poor finishing and some excellent saves by Ogy Kennedy in the DIT goal, which prevented Limerick taking an early lead. However, once DIT's back line nullified this threat by

playing deeper, they started to gain control.

The central midfield pairing of Mooney and Nolan began to increasingly impose themselves, feeding pacey winger Paul Bradshaw.

Always looking dangerous on the ball, Bradshaw's mazy dribbles often flattered to deceive. Too many times his crosses failed to meet their man.

On the half hour mark he had DIT's best chance. He received the ball from the tidy, industrious left back Fergus Quinn. Bradshaw took on Limerick's right full and dropping his left shoulder, cut inside. His shot was powerfully struck but sailed wide.

That was a reflection of DIT's first half performance, as for all their hard work they simply lacked cutting edge.

In the second half DIT came out all guns blazing. Twice it looked like a defender would break the deadlock. Alan Ramsey and Seán McManus both surged into the box

from the right, only to have their shots smothered by Limerick keeper Canavan.

At the other end Limerick's centre-forward was harshly ruled offside, as he was put clean through on goal. The linesman was embroiled in further controversy later on in the half.

DIT manager Mickey Whelan, serving as the referee's assistant, was involved in a scuffle with Limerick's John McNamara after the full back noticed Whelan had flung his flag on the ground.

Then disaster struck. A Limerick ball into the box caused confusion for the defence. Tackles flew in, and Nicholas Nolan was adjudged of taking down an attacker in the box. The penalty was placed firmly into the corner.

Disaster struck again for DIT when Bradshaw was stretchered off after a hard tackle from the Limerick centre-half. DIT, having already used their one outfield sub, were forced to bring on sub keeper Paul

Morgan. Morgan however almost saved the game in dramatic fashion as he narrowly missed with an exquisite chip.

With time running out DIT laid siege to Limerick's goal. The ball bounced and bobbed in the box but just would not go in. Peter Boyd finely-struck curling shot forced a finger tip save from Canavan. With only seconds remaining a flying header hit the crossbar. It just wasn't to be DIT's day.

DIT: Ogy Kennedy, Steven Levins, Fergus Quinn, Alan Ramsey, Andy Farrel, Jonathan Mooney, Shane Brennan, Nicholas Nolan, Kieron Redmond, Paul Bradshaw, Peter Boyd. Subs: Paul Morgan, Ciaran Spratt

LIT: Niall Canavan, Seán McManus, John McNamara, Paul Finucans, Keith Hartnett, Brian Conlan, Simon Keating, Eddie Clancy, Patrick Girkey, Shane O'Donoghue, Gary Spadden. Subs: Ian Lancaster, Kevin Mahoney, Niall Mills

Under 21s make semis

Dublin Senior Championship

DIT 3-12 O'Toole's 2-4

DIT's under 21 team are through to the semi-finals of the Dublin Senior Championship after a convincing victory against a strong O'Toole's side.

The win was never in doubt as DIT were always in control, scoring all three of their goals before half-time. Paddy Bowden scored two of the goals while Martin Phelan, Michael Grennan and John Shaw all scored on the day. Central to DIT's victory were the defensive pair of James Moran and Michael McEvoy who disrupted every O'Toole's attack.

The victory marks the first time DIT have reached this stage of the competition and they will now face either Erin's Isle and Naomh Triom Bearra in the last four.

Freshers' Hurling

DIT 3-9 GMIT 2-9

A last minute Conor Delaney goal ensured DIT continued their recent good run of form as they defeated GMIT in a tight game at Ballymun.

DIT were made to work very hard on the day as they never really found their rhythm. Neither side ever really managed to pull away, resulting in a very scrappy encounter. However, DIT were defensively strong with Kieran Parrock, Alan Fennolly and Adrian Cahill all impressing. The scores were 2-9 to 2-9 going into the final moments when Delaney stole in to put the ball under the bar for the win.

Hurling news

DIT students Martin Phelan and Sean O'Connor have been selected for the Leinster Senior Council Scholarship.

In senior hurling meanwhile the poor weather over the past month has meant all play has been suspended. However training is continuing as normal on Monday and Wednesday nights.

Freshers looked to have turned corner

It appears the work of Barney Rock and Paddy Reilly is finally beginning to pay off as November saw DIT's Freshers, record their first win of the season.

The month started badly when DIT was beaten away to a formidable Jordanstown. There were promising signs on the day as DIT produced good passages of play and Joe Mella and Cathal McKenna put in fine performances.

That defeat however was followed up with an exceptional 0-16 1-4 victory over Trinity. On the day, Augier St student, Hugh McKennery was inspirational in midfield.

Doyle up front and Paul Begley and Brian Flynn at the back also impressed. But the man of the match was Mayo's Cormac Egan whose timely interceptions & perfect distribution were a feature of DIT's victory. The Freshers now play Queens in their next game of the League. A good showing in this match could see DIT qualify for the play-offs after Christmas.

SPORT

Hynes takes silver as DIT come fifth in Cross Country Championships

By Colin McGann

SINCE we have arrived back to college it's been raining non-stop, or so it seems. Every weekend the sports news is littered with cancellations. For a while Tolka Park could have replaced the under construction national aquatic centre. It's not very glamorous being a sports person during an Irish winter but this is what cross-country runners prepare for during the other three seasons.

On Tuesday the 26th November Athlone IT played host to the HESF Cross Country Championships. DIT has always been well placed in these championships despite a lack of athletes. On this occasion four of our boys went to the starting line.

Athlone have hosted this race for the last number of years and the course has gained a reputation for being very fast. Despite the amount of rain we have had the course remained remarkably dry and so suited the quicker runners.

Gary Hynes, who had finished a remarkable 10th in the All Ireland Inter County Cross Country championships the previous Sunday, again showed his ability by racing himself into second place.

With three runners to score this put DIT in contention for a high team placing.

Liam Dunne followed Gary home in 16th place and the DIT team was completed by Austin Denis in 29th and Cathal Doolin in 34th. Sligo IT claimed the first team prize with their runners finishing on 22 points.

Surprise second team was Tralee IT on 23 points with



Despite a lack of athletes, DIT have placed well in the HESF Cross Country Championships in the past

Tallaght IT placing third. Garda training college beat DIT for fourth.

The race was won by David Kelly of Tallaght IT and third was Gearoid O'Connor also from Tallaght IT. DIT Sports Officer, Herbie McClelland, was delighted with the display by the team and said, "Gary gave a brilliant performance and fifth of fifteen teams is a very good result for us."

This is in light of the recent Inter Varsity Road Relays that were held in Maynooth. This consists of a relay of five legs, with distances varying from one to three miles.

On the day DIT had only four athletes and so one athlete had to run twice. This meant that DIT couldn't place in the team competition.

The seven athletes are due to travel to Nenagh for the Inter Varsity Indoor Track and Field Championships.

Gary Hynes will be in contention for a medal in the 3000m, and Herbie is hopeful that DIT can also pick up a medal in the sprints.

The next important athletics fixture takes place in Dublin. On the 15th February DCU will be hosting the Inter Varsity cross-country championships.

In the New Year Herbie is looking to attract new athletes to the club. Runners of all levels are welcome and this race would be ideal for people to come together for the coming year.

For track athletes the college season begins in April. The dates have yet to be finalised but during

this month the Inter Varsity championships will take place in Galway. Athletes looking to take part in these are asked to get in touch with the sports officer as soon as possible.

DIT have had serious trouble forming competitive teams and coming up to Christmas Herbie would appreciate anyone looking to get involved in athletics in DIT to get in touch sooner rather than later. Judging from the results in Athlone there is potential there, now it is a matter for numbers to show.

As of yet there are very few ladies involved in the club but New Years resolutions to get some exercise would be much appreciated.

Herbie McClelland Sports Officer can be contacted anytime on 087 2245507

DCU and St Pats interrupt winning run

By Sarah Graham

DIT Ladies basketball team started the ICBA colleges League in style on November 6th with the complete destruction of a less experienced Inchicore team. DIT were missing a few players but had the advantage of playing in Belvedere, a court they are very well accustomed to by now. It was indeed an enjoyable game but with a score of 75-10, the girls hardly broke a sweat.

However, on November 13th it was a completely different story as DIT hosted St Pats, a college rich in basketball tradition. Although a little intimidated in the first quarter, the DIT girls settled down in the second and began to profit from well executed plays. They picked up the pace in the third quarter and thanks to the clever passes of point guard Lisa Maher and the all-important scores from Alice Heffernan, the girls came within a basket going into the fourth quarter. Unfortunately St Pats edged ahead despite the excellent defence of Cathy Molloy and Olwyn Lawlor and stole the game by only a handful of baskets.

The 21st of November witnessed another whipping by DIT. This time in the IT League and against a small number of players from Tallaght IT (TIT). This was a very enjoyable game to play as Coach Claire Goss promised everyone a pint if we reached the hundred mark. Much to our dismay, we only managed 89 points to 17, which was still our best scoreline of the season so far.

Our next opponents in the ICBA League were the extremely skilled DCU team. This was our first away game in this League so it took awhile to get used to the court. The clear plastic boards and titanium rings ensured that not a single shot would drop for DIT, who are accustomed to the traditional wooden and steel hoops. The high-speed game was neck and neck for three of the quarters with DIT matching DCU score for score. However, disaster struck in the last quarter as DCU found a new lease of life and hit long range shots in our faces. Nothing could be done only accept the deceptive score of 36-56.

The Ladies and Men's teams must brave our national buses and travel to play Carlow IT on Thursday the 28th of November. Although beating them last year, the Carlow team can never be underestimated and with only one win from three in the ICBA League, we need to beat them again.

Halligan stars as DIT fall to Trinity

By Seosaphine Ni Ghallúnaigh.

DIT ladies Gaelic Football Team fell to Trinity College at mud-sodden Trinity Grounds in Santry this month, despite putting in a spirited and at times exciting performance.

Playing with a strong breeze, Trinity went into a 2-01 lead before Laura Halligan expertly converted a penalty she had won herself. Trinity hit back with a goal and two points, before Halligan again slipped her marker and fired over the bar to leave the half time score 3-03 to 1-01 in favour of Trinity.

Playing with the breeze, Halligan started the half with a typical poacher's goal, following a rasping shot from Ann Marie Buckley which the keeper failed to hold.

A real tussle seemed in store but sadly, the heavy conditions took their toll on DIT and it was the Trinity girls who finished the stronger, scoring freely in the last quarter to win by 5-06 to 2-02.

Best for DIT on the day were forward Ann Marie Buckley, midfielder Lindsay Gilmurray and in defence, Ashling, Gillian and Suzanne Ledwith tried hardest. However player of the match was without doubt Laura Halligan who got all DIT scores for the day. The full forward has proved to be a real class this season.

DIT performances have improved dramatically this year under new manager Michael Roddy. If we can get one or two of our top players out for training and games, success will not be far behind. Anyone available contact Michael at 087-9874455. DIT ladies plan to go on a ski-ing trip at Christmas and need all your support in Kavanaghs, Temple bar on Wed 10th Dec. A great night is guaranteed to all!

Unbeaten and hungry for success

DIT Men's Basketball

By Dermot Kavanagh

The DIT Men's team has had a great start to the season with an unbeaten record so far. And that form has continued into November as the team is well in the hunt for honours.

DIT played Tallaght IT on the November 21 in what was a tight game at Belvedere. It took DIT a long time to get going but after stepping up their defence in the second quarter, they soon began to take control, going in at half-time with a four point lead.

ITT's slight height advantage had been a constant threat to DIT, but after changing tactics and introducing a faster line-up, DIT soon regained dominance.

Dermot Madson was inspirational on the day, while both Declan Rice and Shaun Coughlan put in fine defensive displays to hold off a late ITT surge and ensure DIT ran out 14 point winners.

Next up for DIT was RCSI on November 23. Having just beaten Trinity the previous week, RCSI were a team on form so the DIT side had to



The Basketball Club won Club of the Year in February 2002

focus on their own strengths. They did so, with big men John Norris and Dave Harrison putting in fine offensive displays and grabbing big boards, helping DIT to secure a commanding lead before half-time.

DIT however had a bad third quarter going down by 13 points. The side showed their remarkable resilience in the final quarter regaining their lead within two minutes. Declan Rice and Dermot Kavanagh both worked very hard in defence to hold off the RCSI attack and

hold out for a hard-fought eight point victory.

DIT next faced Carlow on November 28. Carlow have proven tough opposition for DIT in the past but this time the Dublin side ran away with a 81-41 victory. James Doran stood out in what was a magnificent team performance.

So after a mixed start to the league season, DIT's men are beginning to show how well they have adapted to the higher standard of opposition this year. The team's strengths are

beginning to shine through and hopes are high going into 2003.

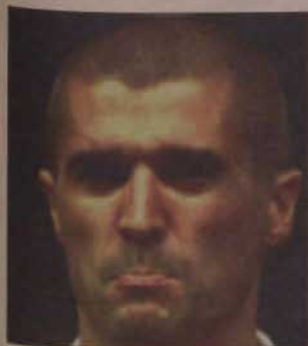
Meanwhile the club is organising a trip to Italy for a basketball tournament during the Easter break from April 17 to 21. Attempts are currently being made to organise a funding event for what would be a great chance to put DIT on the map in Europe. A raffle for an X-Box will be held just before Christmas and your support would be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in seeing your team and/or club featured in the pages of the DIT Independent, or if you have something interesting to share with students about sport in college or in general, please contact Sports Editor, Miguel Delaney at 402307/1, or by e-mail at ditsport@hotmail.com. This is your paper and we'd love to hear from you!

Top ten sporting moments of 2002

Compiled by Miguel Delaney, Daragh Clifford, Jason Burke and Ciaran Murray

Lazy journalism or an informative thought provoking piece on the state of sport today? Either way we've decided to celebrate the passing of 2002 with the ten most dramatic and important sporting moments of the past 12 months. Enjoy.



The Saipan affair has dominated Irish soccer this year.

1. Saipan

Perhaps a more traumatising than celebratory moment, the Saipan affair was without a doubt the defining moment of 2002. A young, gifted and exciting Irish side led by Roy Keane was meant to deliver the nation to another level in international soccer.

However in the cabin fever atmosphere created on the Pacific island, ten years of buried resentment between Mick McCarthy and his captain finally came to the fore. Cue Keane's walk-out/dismissal (whichever side you're on) and blanket media coverage. Ireland performed well in the World Cup, but there will be the lingering doubt that it could have been so much more.

Having split the country, it is an issue that has dominated Irish soccer since, and one that looks set to for some time to come.

2. Armagh take Sam

The script was supposed to read Kerry v Dublin in this year's All-Ireland Football Final. Kerry did their part, producing some fine displays of football against Kildare, Galway and Cork. Dublin however, succumbed to a stubborn and often inspirational Armagh side, led by the brilliance of Kieran McGeeney.

The final though, was supposed to be a dance in the park for Kerry. But the overwhelming tag of underdogs served only to inspire Armagh. The Ulster county produced one of the greatest defensive displays ever in the second half of the final to give Armagh their first All-Ireland. The pitch invasion that followed summed up the spirit of Armagh: Electric.

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The less controversial Keane saved Ireland against Germany

3. Robbie Keane v Germany

The one moment of true drama (on the pitch) in Ireland's World Cup campaign. Having been much

the better side throughout the game, McCarthy's side, 1-0 down to a Miroslav Klose header, found themselves within minutes of a World Cup exit.

Having thrown everything including Kevin Kilbane at the German goal, Ireland had simply been unable to beat Oliver Kahn. Deep into stoppage time a long ball was ploughed up towards Niall Quinn. He flicked it on for the less controversial Keane to bury past Kahn and keep Ireland in the World Cup.

4. Paul McGinley wins the Ryder Cup for Europe

Tactically it was a brilliant move by European captain Sam Torrance. For Sunday's singles matches, he sent out his big guns early, and they delivered. Colin Montgomerie, Pádraig Harrington, Bernhard Langer and Thomas Bjorn all recorded early wins. But the drama, fittingly, came down to the 18th green and "little McGinley".

Just like Christy O'Connor Jr. had done so in 1989, fellow Irishman Paul McGinley won the Ryder Cup on The Belfry's famous 18th. In the previous match, Paul Azinger chipped in from the bunker to give the USA a crucial half point. Enter McGinley. He pulled his approach shot to the green, and his chip back on left him with an 11-ft left-to-right putt, to halve his match, and win the Ryder Cup. Talk about pressure. But it was nothing to the Dubliner as he slotted home the toughest

putt all year.

5. Ireland beat Australia

On a unique day when all three of the Southern Hemisphere rugby powers were beaten, Ireland finally banished the memory of Michael Lynagh and the heartache of the 1991 World Cup. At a windswept Lansdowne Road, Ireland triumphed 18-9 to record the first Irish victory over Australia on home soil since 1968. Man of the match Ronan O'Gara converted six penalties. The Aussies could not cope with Ireland's tactics and excellent kicking game. This combined with a passionate defensive display led by captain Brian O'Driscoll ensured a famous win for Irish rugby and a place on our top ten.

6. DJ Carey

Well what can we say? DJ played a total of 140 minutes in this year's championship, but somehow did enough to capture the hearts of the country all over again. Kilkenny, who looked sluggish in the Leinster Final against Wexford, was turned around magically by the presence of DJ in the semi-final against Tipperary.

Against Clare in the final, DJ teased a traditionally strong Clare defence from the first minute. The greatest forward of our day, and possibly of all time, DJ ranks up there with other hurling gods like Christy Ring and Nicky Rackard.

7. Media Puzzle wins the Melbourne Cup

Not only the highlight of the year for Irish horse racing, but also a landmark

victory in one of the world's greatest races. In winning the race that stops a nation Media Puzzle became only the second Northern Hemisphere-trained horse to do so. Huge credit must go to Dermot Weld who took the brave decision to send Media Puzzle to Australia, despite the horse's loss of form and the fact he was not guaranteed a place in the Melbourne Cup field. After a thrilling victory in the Geelong Cup, Media Puzzle was backed from 66/1 to 4/1 favourite for the Flemington spectacle and he duly obliged with a stunning victory.

8. Ronaldo's miraculous rebirth

When Ronaldo's knee collapsed three years ago the injury was more than a blow for his club Inter Milan and Brazil - the whole world felt his pain.

Twice voted World Player of the Year, the hugely popular striker had become a symbol of the game. Yet at the age of 23 his career was threatened and he faced the prospect of being remembered as one of the finest talents never to fully realise his unquestionable ability.

His two goals in Brazil's World Cup triumph over Germany topped off his wonderful performances throughout the tournament and restored him to his status as the world's favourite footballer.

9. Five-star Ferrari

Formula 1's credibility took a battering during 2002. At times the season was dull, contrived, and controversial. However it would be wrong to ignore the achievements of arguably the greatest driver

ever. Michael Schumacher joined the legendary Juan Manuel Fangio as a five time F1 Champion.

Along the way, he amassed a record points total, won a record 11 races, became the first driver to complete every race on the podium, secured the title in the quickest time, and now holds the record for race wins.

The perfect driver in a flawless Ferrari made for a dream season and thus it makes our list.



Galway-born Lord Clifton Wrottesly narrowly missed out on a bronze in the Skeleton event

10. Ireland's Winter Olympian

It had been a long time coming but the Irish public finally got the sporting success they craved: credibility in the Winter Olympics.

It was a British peer of the realm that delivered as Galway-born Lord Clifton Wrottesly narrowly missed out on a bronze in the Skeleton event.

An Irishman is now the fourth best skeleton slider (or should that be skeleton) in the World. Truly an achievement to be proud of.

Darts hits the Bulls-eye this Christmas

By Jason Burke

Over Christmas and New Year, grab a can, sit back and watch the darts. Before you go flicking the page, this article is in the right section of the paper. Yes it is a sport and yes, darts players can be classed as sportspeople - not quite athletes though.

Over the festive season, two Darts World Championships will take place. Why are there two? The simple answer stems from money and advertising and a split that occurred in 1994. This irreparable rift means fans of darts get to enjoy two great tournaments each year.

So, which is better, the BDO Embassy World Championships as seen on the BBC or the PDC Ladbrokes World



The ten-time World Champion Phil Taylor

Championship that Sky Sports televises? A case can be made for both. Statistically, the Embassy is regarded as being better. However the exodus from the BDO to the PDC over the years means that now, many of the best players and exciting characters are part of the PDC.

Nobody would suggest that many of these players could run a quick hundred metres or indeed run that far. However, darts takes a vast amount of mental strength and concentration. Gone is the old stereotype of the player who steps up, merry with pint in hand. The sport has taken on a more professional

attitude. Players have swapped pints for glasses of water. Darts is perfect for television. The format is simple and exciting to watch. The action is fast paced and there is an endless array of characters, not least in the commentary box, to keep anybody interested.

If it is something different you are looking for then look no further than the voice of PDC darts, Sid Waddell. Waddell has a unique style of commenting.

His sanity is debatable but what cannot be questioned is his genius. Classics from the man include: 'Rod now looking like Kevin Costner when told the final cost of Waterworld', 'It's the nearest thing to an execution this side of Saudi Arabia' and speaking of one particular dart player 'He may practice

12 hours a day, but he's not shy of the burger van'.

Favourite for this year's Embassy championship will be world number one Tony David. The challenge may come from the gargantuan Andy Fordham, known as the Viking and not because he hails from Scandinavia, and Ray Barneveld. Dutchman 'Barney' is arguably the most exciting player in Embassy Darts.

The PDC championships may take a familiar look to it with Phil Taylor sweeping all before him. The ten-time World Champion thought by many to be the greatest player ever to throw a dart and following 'the Powers' recent live televised 9-dart finish, few would bet against him. However, others have been gaining ground recently and players to look out for

include the outspoken and controversial Peter 'one dart' Manley, and Canadian John Part. 'Darth Maple' is the current world number two and a former world champion.

What fans of Darts would like to see would be both organisations amalgamated and then the important questions could be answered. Which association is the stronger? Would Phil Taylor be number one in the world? Who would lose their job at the BBC to accommodate Waddell? For now though fans of darts can hardly complain.

So this Christmas check out the Darts. As Waddell puts it: 'You couldn't get more excitement here if Elvis walked in eating a chip sandwich'.

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