

The Marriage Equality Issue



Saying 'I Do', Marriage as a form of expression.

Editorial
Page 8

The Real Meaning of Feminism

Life & Style
Page 11



Don't Drink for Ireland, Live for Ireland

Comment
Page 6

Local and International Sport.

Pages 13 - 16

Ireland's First Gay Weddings Expert Hails From Limerick

Sarah O' Dwyer

Sharon McMeel, a wedding planner hailing from Limerick, recently became Ireland's first certified gay weddings expert.

Sharon, started her career in the Castle Oaks House Hotel, and has ten years' experience of wedding planning. She recently completed the course taught by the 14 Stories Gay Wedding Institute, based in New York and Boston. McMeel, upon finishing the course, was especially delighted to discover that she was the first person in Ireland to do so.

"It was great, fantastic to do and a big eye opener actually, because a lot of the time there are things you wouldn't even think about," she explained. "They go through everything from language and terminology, how to be an advocate for your client, traditions and procedures for weddings.

The wedding planner believes that she is now fully prepared to meet the demands of "an emerging market" and that she is now "fully aware of the needs of same-sex couples planning their civil partnership in Ireland".

"At the moment we only have civil partnerships but it is going to a constitutional convention in the next few weeks for gay marriage



so we will see how that turns out," explained Sharon.

"You are talking about an awful lot of people who have been together for years and could never get married, it is a relatively new part of the wedding market and like any professional service I wanted

to make sure I had my skills and knowledge updated."

Sharon says that same-sex couples looking to wed face difficulties in the planning of such an event. "It is something you would have never thought about, but sometimes gay couples nearly have to come out

over and over again with everybody that they are dealing with," she explained. "That is where I would come in, to get rid of all of those obstacles for them beforehand and vet who is gay friendly and who has worked with gay couples before. That can be very uncomfortable or

embarrassing for people to have to deal with.

"For me to be able to take that pressure and that worry away from them is great, so that they can just focus on the day itself," she added.

CREDITS

Editor – Lorna Bogue
Co-News Editor – Sarah O'Dwyer
Co-News Editor – Michelle Ryan
Comment Editor – Eoin Lyons
Life and Style Editor – Emily Maree
Sports Editor – Robert McNamara
Arts and Ents Editor – Fintan Walsh
Film and Media Editor – Aoife Coughlan
Travel Editor – Amy Grimes

Designed by Keith Broni
Printed by Impression Design and Print Ltd.

The An Focal office is located in UL Students' Union.

Visit www.anfocal.ie to view An Focal online.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Sarah O'Dwyer, Michelle Ryan, Yvonne Ryan, Aoife Coughlan, Andrew Moore, Michelle Duffy, Eoin Lyons, Synne Larsen, Marie Enright, Emma Norris, Alana Walsh, Barbara Ross, Amy Grimes, Kelly Ireland O'Sullivan, Fionnarr Thompson, Eoghan Wallace, Conor Canavan, Eoghan Wallace, Darren Mulryan, Conoí Finnerty, Jack Brolly, George Murphy, William Nolan, James O'Mahony, Paul Saunders, Joe O'Brien, Barbara Koskó, Dearbhaile Houston, Mícheál Howard, Patrick Mulcahy, Caoimhe O'Sullivan, Kalani Moore, Jessica Leen, Darragh Roche, Sean Duggan, Aoife Coughlan, Tom Horan, Róisín Delaney.

Brought to you by your Students Union.
Brought to you by your Students Union.
Visit www.anfocal.ie to view An Focal online.
Visit www.anfocal.ie to view An Focal online.

Powered by Paper sourced from sustainable forests

ULSU Update: UGM and Upcoming EGM

Michelle Ryan

The annual Union General Meeting (UGM) took place on March 20th with UL President Professor Don Barry addressing questions posed by students who attended.

As the UGM failed to meet quorum, an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) has been called. Items to be discussed at the upcoming meeting include:

- Minutes of previous meetings
- Motion to establish a new company 'ULSU Trading Ltd'
- Motion to ratify the new constitution
- Motion to stop printing ULSU publications
- Ratify the Audited Accounts for the year ended 30th September 2012
- Ratify the Union Auditor for AY 2012/2013

Quorum is 200 with the quorate being given free packs and spot prizes being handed out during the meeting. A food reception will be held in the Scholars afterwards for all who attend.





University College Dublin
College of Science



Why UCD?

- Top 2% world university
- Research/innovation pedigree
- Strong industry links
- Full professional accreditation
- Earn examination exemptions
- Fast-track your career

MSc Actuarial Science

Graduate Diploma Actuarial Science

UCD School of Mathematical Sciences introduced actuarial science to the university sector in Ireland. We offer the longest running and widest variety of actuarial programmes, having commenced in 1991.

The MSc and Graduate Diploma can fast-track your career, with significant actuarial employment links to Dublin's insurance market.

Both programmes are accredited by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (UK), allowing you to obtain exemptions from their Core Technical (CT) 1-8 examinations.

Applications now open to graduates and final-year undergraduate students with backgrounds in quantitative disciplines such as Mathematics, Statistics, Engineering, Economics, Finance and Physics.

Scholarship and paid research placement positions available for a number of students as part of the MSc programme.

**Further information: www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies
Questions? Contact pgstudies@maths.ucd.ie**

Fundraising for MidWest Rape Crisis Centre

Michelle Ryan

The Psychology and Social Issues 1st year module are taking part in a series of fundraising events in aid of the MidWest Rape Crisis Centre. Last week, Thursday April 4th, a bake sale was held outside of the Students Union where the group attracted a lot of hungry students who were out enjoying the sun.

The group will also be hosting UL's Got Talent, this Tuesday, April 9th at 9pm in the Stables. Admission is €4 with the price being reduced to €3 if you come in a group of five or more.

MidWest Rape Crisis Centre provides a free and confidential counselling service for those affected by rape and sexual assault. Their main office is based in Limerick City with outreach centres in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary and Ennis, Co. Clare. FreePhone 1800 311511 or 061 311511.



News from around UL

Yvonne Ryan

UL Goes Green

In keeping with the worldwide St. Patrick's Day celebrations, parts of the University of Limerick turned green over the St Patrick's Day weekend in support of the global 'greening' movement to celebrate Ireland and St Patrick's Day. The facades of UL's Glucksman library were lit in green along with the iconic flag poles at the main entrance to the UL campus.

World Kidney Day

Students of the Graduate Entry Medical School (GEMS) University of Limerick recently partnered up with the Nephrology Team, University Hospital Limerick and the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) to launch a health awareness drive for Kidney Disease on World Kidney Day.

The interdisciplinary team set up a free kidney health checks and passed out information to the public at the Crescent Shopping Centre and the University Hospital offering blood sugar and pressure checks together with advice on lifestyle and diet. The event was organised by Professor of Medicine and Consultant Nephrologist, Austin Stack and colleagues from the Department of Nephrology, University Hospital Limerick.

Academy of Medicine in Ireland Awards

A paper published by a research team from the Graduate Entry Medical School (GEMS), UL won the General Practice category at the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland (RAMI) Doctor Awards on 21st March.

The winning paper, which examined



'Psychosocial interventions to reduce alcohol consumption in concurrent problem alcohol and illicit drug users', focused on the challenges associated with helping patients with alcohol dependency in Primary Care. The work involved collaboration with researchers based in UCD,

NUIG and HSE. The authors were Jan Klimas, Catherine-Anne Field, Walter Cullen, Clodagh SM O'Gorman, Liam G Glynn, Eamon Keenan, Jean Saunders, Gerard Bury & Colum Dunne and the study was funded by the Irish Health Research Board (HRB).

Cutting Edge Research Day

Alliance partners, University of Limerick and NUI Galway are set to host a Research Day where academics and researchers will present ideas that could lead to new discoveries and innovations. The

day-long public event will take place on Thursday 11th April, Bailey Allen Hall, NUIG campus commencing at 10.30am. Representatives from the Faculty of Science and Engineering, UL will be joined by NUI Galway's College of Engineering and Informatics, and College of Science.



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF DUBLIN



EXPERIENCE TRINITY

TRINITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MASTERS PROGRAMMES

Applications are now invited from exceptional graduates of all disciplines to our suite of Masters programmes

For more information or to apply visit www.tcd.ie/business/masters

MSC IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Offers graduates of business or cognate disciplines specialised classes in all international aspects of management
- Includes an International Residency component in a BRIC country
- Internationally renowned faculty
- Continuous personal development training for managers-in-the-making

MSC IN FINANCE

- Gain key international financial designations from the CFA Institute, PRMIA and CAIA.
- Choose to specialise in: Financial Analysis, Risk Management or Accounting and Finance.
- Avail of outstanding industry links and professional partnerships

MSC IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT (FOR NON-BUSINESS GRADUATES)

- Designed for non business graduates to obtain a sound understanding of business and management
- Students from a diverse range of academic backgrounds, from Law to Arts to Science
- Extensive range of optional modules reviewed annually in response to market conditions

PHONE (01) 8962338 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Don't Drink for Ireland, live for Ireland

Aoife Coughlan

St Patrick's Day was fresh in my mind the day I started to write this article. It was our national day; a day to celebrate our heritage, culture and history. However, I wondered what we were celebrating. If I looked for a visual answer it would be a day to revere leprechauns, Arthur Guinness (Doesn't he already have a feast day?) and anyone with even a blood cell of a Celt in them. Not exactly the celebration of culture one would expect. The problem is that it clings to a culture of stereotype rather than any real sense of who we are. But this begs the bigger question, what exactly is being Irish in today's world?

I think a big complication in answering this question is that we really do not know who we are, or where we fit in. We like the idea of the "Paddy" image as it's easy to play up to, endearing, and even more cynically, exceptionally financially viable. But, in terms of heritage and culture it means very little. It is a cartoon without even the decency to be satirical or witty. Perhaps the modern Irish image is marked by history or, it is more appropriate to say it is marked by our reactions to history.

It does not take a genius to comment that the chip on our shoulder attitude is probably formed by the colonial past. The idea that we were made an "other" in our own country has made the Irish defensive of our image but also left us with the mark of a people

who try to fit in. If you want my personal application of this, however unscholarly it may be, I would see it as the manifestation of the discussed "Paddy" image to please the nostalgic diaspora and the appeasement we seem to fall into within the EU; a small nation needing the support of others.

Also, the Irish seem to be marked by the threat of any oppressive power. The clerical abuse scandals have dragged up the wrath of the people towards the Catholic Church. This is by no means unjust, however the extent that we go to extract not just justice but retribution is a relic of some primitive disdain for an oppressor. It is almost as if the nation feels humiliated by our history and how we could have let what happened, happen. There is an air now that we need to cleanse ourselves of the shame of letting institutions like the church become so powerful. And so we complain, we rant in papers, on the radio, we make documentaries and dramas and films. We will do anything but forget and move on.

That is one of the great failings of the Irish, our inability to move forward. When the British Queen visited, there was the expectation that she should offer an official apology for the years of British rule. In the last few weeks, the issue of an apology concerning the survivors of the Magdalene Laundries was a contention. An apology is just words, it changes nothing and offers no real justice but in Ireland, we feel the need that an admittance of guilt



will save us from our past. It doesn't, it doesn't even change the future.

Ireland needs to move on from a past of troubles without forgetting the honour in them. Equally, we need to stray away from a future solely

created by a globalized society. Pride in sports and music and the arts is not enough, though it can be the mode of articulation of how far we have come. We need to build an identity that takes pride in real people, that cherishes

imagination and that sees the need to progress with a magnanimous outlook. We need to be a nation and not an image, as the only oppressor we have now is ourselves.

Pressure and Expectations

Andrew Moore

We live in a world where there is a constant demand on us to behave in a certain way, a way that society expects of us. Where how we act, how we talk and what we admit to believing is all affected by how we think other people will perceive us.

Group mentality and peer pressure can often cause you to question deeply held beliefs, or at least make you worry about how you'll be perceived for having them. I heard someone refer to God as identical to an imaginary friend and wondered what that said about me. If I were I to talk to anyone about my faith, would they be mocking me internally? But then again, why should I care what they think?

But that's the macro version. It considers the rules society places on us. It deals with topics and opinions which are acceptable on a general scale. What I want to focus on is micro effects; that being, the restrictions we place upon ourselves in interactions with others. We look at other people, and casually adjust our tone and manner which fits the audience we've surrounded ourselves with. And it's different with every single person we interact with. When we love someone, we often avoid specific topics or issues we know will hurt them, and sometimes that

restriction is always at the front of the mind when dealing with that person. We consciously avoid it, rather than start an argument. Personally, I know certain topics can genuinely upset some of my friends, so I don't talk about them, I limit the potential for them to come up in conversation and if they do come up, I make sure they're phrased in such a way that avoids brutal, harsh points.

Other times, though you may loathe someone, you're forced to engage with them by forces outside your control, be it a shared interest neither of you will relinquish. You can limit your dealings with them, but to how much before it becomes self-evident that you really don't like them? Some people shrug. They don't care if it's noticed, they know their friends will accept and recognise the real them. Surrounding themselves with people whose opinions they respect and validate is all they need. Others avoid confrontation, preferring quiet and reasoned discussions to deal with any problems. And others hit the other extreme. They're friendly to a fault, reading the other person behind their back the entire time. We're all guilty of it. We're all programmed to like a bit of gossip. But holding grudges and continually talking about them and dragging them up bores people, and letting yourself get stuck in that rut



isn't good for you.

Even how we present ourselves to the world is a result of societal pressures. We have to reach a level of maturity. We have to be competent in our chosen field, we have to be able to go out and party when asked to, we're expected to drink to a certain amount like one of the lads, but not to be pathetically drunk or you lose face for having no

self-control. We have to be confident. We're conditioned to care about what others think about us, how they view us. Above all, we need to learn not to care. Because lying to society for the benefit of other people about who you are doesn't work. It doesn't work for you, it doesn't work for them when they find out they're being lied to about who you are, and it doesn't work for

society as a whole, because if you aren't honest about who you are, you're just reinforcing the same tired old normal you're aspiring to fit into, rather than breaking the mould we seem trapped in.

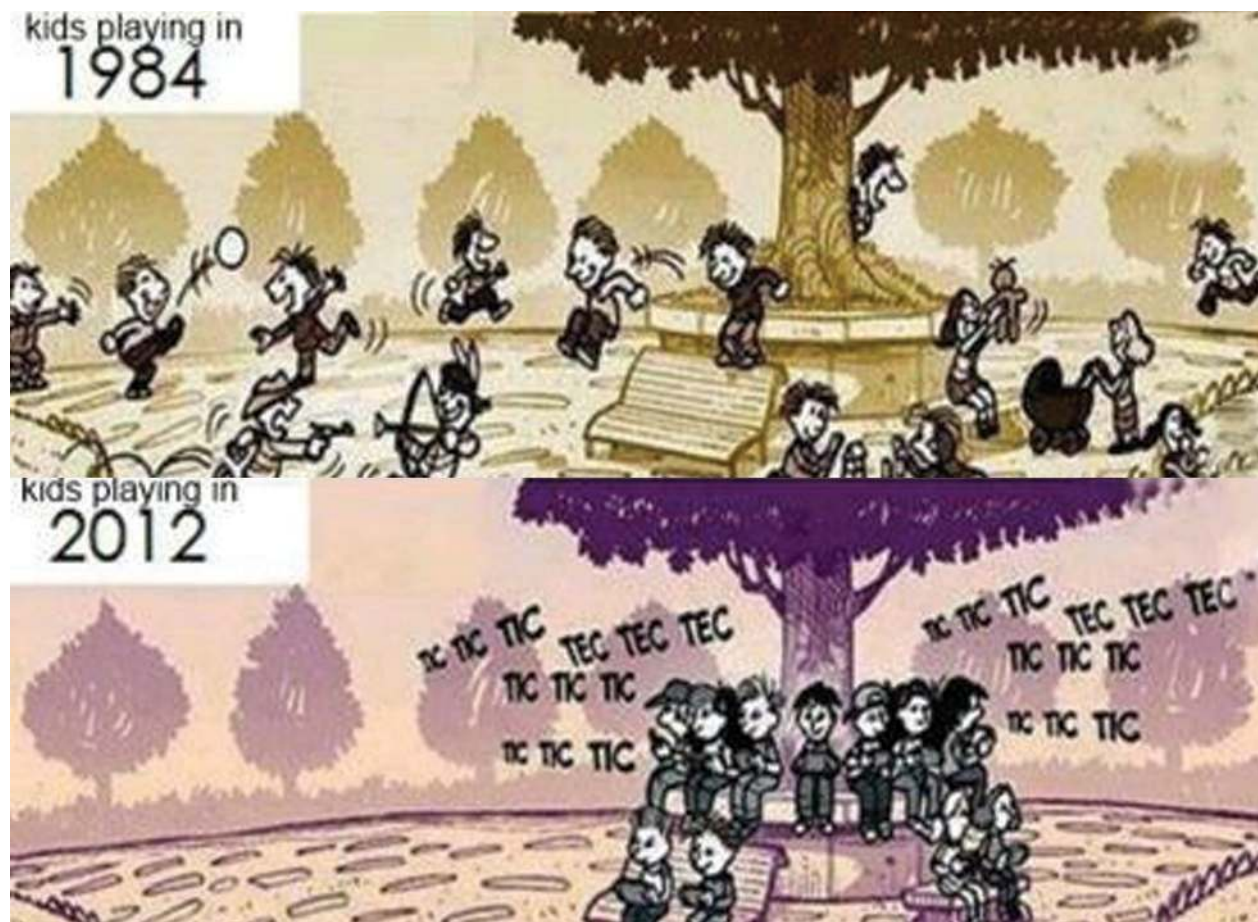
At the end of the day, who are you doing it for?

Talking 'Bout My Generation

Michelle Duffy

When I was growing up, my house was never quiet; I had the primary role as ragdoll to the lads who used me to recreate the latest wrestling move demonstrated by one of the Hardy Brothers. We'd fight over almost everything and anything, negotiated deals over the exchange of football cards and of course, the inevitable tears from whoever fell and hurt themselves. I am proud to say it was not always me. To be honest, growing up I resembled a street urchin rather than a sweet little girl my mother had always hoped for. My childhood was pretty idyllic, it was outdoors and simple. Roaming through the forest made you feel like Indiana Jones plus if you weren't covered in dirt and plasters you would almost feel left out. If kids got lost in the forest now, I really hope they wouldn't resort to Bear Grylls survival methods while they search for phone coverage. But it was only this weekend that it truly dawned on me how times have really changed.

My sister was sitting down with her friends on the couch with their faces buried in an iPod screen and the 'click click' typewriter sound of the iTouch has quickly become a soundtrack to their lives. The silence made me uneasy; especially after then finding out they were all talking to each other on it. The concept of actually hanging outside with extended friends was



lost on them because it was too cold, much colder than the lack of actual real conversation. It really got me thinking though; I compared the life I have had to my younger sister. To be fair there is 7 years between us but there might as well be 40. I find myself as lost in understanding popular culture as my

parents even more embarrassingly, my grandparents. I, in some cases have become the person who dishes out the age old 'when I was young' lecture. A lot is said for the type of culture there is now for younger people. While TV was rarely on, computer games were basic. Connecting to the internet wasn't

worth the time and effort when I was younger, now it's easily available and there is more choice than we could ever have imagined. Kids these days have more of a relationship with technology than anything else. I find it ludicrous that young children have the newest mobile phones and 'i' gadgets. But it is

a sign of the times. At that age I reckon I was pretty chuffed with myself in completing a jigsaw puzzle.

Technology has changed childhood. I laugh at the fact my mam disapproved over the older lads watching The Simpsons while I was around, when now my sister can quote Geordie Shore. Young children are now bullied over texting and social networking such as Facebook, however their need for it I will never understand. Putting too much information and photos of themselves is making them vulnerable and pretty much asking for trouble. The problem is that the children of today are open to a much bigger world than the likes of me had.

All in all though, I'm pretty happy that my teen idol wasn't Charlotte from Geordie Shore. My celebrity crush wasn't a member of One Direction who likes cougars, wears tighter jeans and unfortunately has better hair curls than me. I never thought I'd be on the other end of the generation gap or think to myself 'hey nineties kid, your old' but I'll just keep nodding and smiling the next time I hear young ones these days losing the plot over parents confiscating their laptops and iPhone because of excess use and concern over what they were doing online. That wouldn't have happened with my Tamagotchi. Just saying.

A New Face, A New Name, A New Church?

Eoin Lyons

Our most influential and powerful leaders have changed many times in recent years, and with that, we all expected change for the better after some less than admirable predecessors. Take for instance Barack Obama's election; we figured this would spell great change and a more peaceful US after the frequently criticized leadership of George Bush, yet the US remains the biggest bully of the political world, with very few improvements since Obama's term began. Even closer to home we believed that when Enda and his minions were elected, that the corruption and lack of attention given to the needs of the people that Fianna Fáil were accused of would be amended by a more considerate Fine Gael government. Well, need I say more on that? So forgive me for being mildly cynical, but I would like to delve into a deeper analysis of our new Pope Francis before giving him my utmost trust.

Even though Pope Francis has been in his role as the new leader of the Christian faith for only a matter of weeks, it is clear that he is showing signs of a new breath of fresh air for the church and its people. When I first

sought to get an idea of differences between Pope Francis and those who have gone before, I typed in the phrase "is Pope Francis a" and looked at what suggestions I would be given to start my search. I got nothing. I then typed in "is Pope Benedict a," and I got some more fruitful results that I may leave to you to discover for fear of slander. So, from the outset it became clear that Pope Francis, for the most part, is a man free of scandal, with no back story and no questionable life choices; a promising start.

It may then be appropriate to analyse his views on the topics which are the source of most criticism, and in dire need of reform. It is all well and good saying that one will seek to reform the aspects of Christianity such as vast inequality and poverty, yet setting an example for millions upon millions of us to live by is where the success really lies. This is where the greatest debate is centred. On the issue of equality, and the blatant contrast in wealth between the wealth of the church and the wealth of Christ, who the church seek to represent, our new Argentinian pontiff scores some points. Analysts have noted that Pope Francis frequently rode the public bus to work, and is also a great cook who often made his



own dinner, unlike his predecessor. So with the basics, we may be seeing a new type of leader, one more concerned with the original core values of the man who started it all. Many Vatican analysts have also highly commended his reformative nature, and believe his character may bring much needed change.

Yet will the church allow such reform? After all, this is only one man, albeit powerful, but an individual all the

same. The lavish nature of the Vatican and its Cardinals is something which has become enshrined in the culture of Christianity, and many note that Pope Francis' modest way of life may be challenged in a home of such splendour. This view though in my belief, may be all too defeatist. I would fear more for those within Christianity who take advantage of the grandeur and wealth of the church, in a time when reformation is sought, and has finally

been given a spearhead in the form of Jorge Mario Bergoglio. While our new pope is far from perfect, particularly in his views on certain topics such as gay marriage, one can't deny the fact that this is a man far less stubborn than any that have gone before. No matter how you feel about our new pontiff, one thing is clear; his responsibility to live up to expectations may be greater than any before him, as this is make or break time for the church.

A Student Voice!

This year has been an interesting one in terms of media outlets in Ireland. The question of censorship is one that has been brought up by several incidents in recent weeks and it's interesting to read about the various attitudes towards what can and can't be published, whether in a physical format or online.

Many people have heard of the recent spunout.ie controversy, in which attention was drawn to an article about threesomes. An article which was written around three years ago and was displayed on the spunout.ie website. The issue came to prominence when the Sunday independent published a front page story on the existence of the piece giving advice to teenagers about threesomes. Despite TD Michelle Mulherin complaining to Health Minister James O' Reilly about the article, and going on the record as saying that "information is encouragement" when it came to threesomes, the article remains on the website. However it has been altered to account for some of the complaints about the original article. This controversy, which brought up the issue of censorship in the media, received a lot of public and governmental attention. A second controversy, which has not impacted on the mainstream public sphere to such a great extent, is the current and ongoing conflict between the Iona institute and several student led media outlets. Namely the 'University Times', a paper funded by the Trinity College Students' Union and 'Trinity News' another student newspaper funded partly by a grant from the Dublin University Publications Committee. These two student media outlets have both received legal letters from representatives of David Quinn. 'University Times' received the legal letters for their publication of an opinion piece criticizing Mr. Quinn and the Iona institute. In that case, Mr. Quinn acted to protect his reputation as he is entitled to do. 'Trinity News' then covered the story of the legal issues which arose between Mr. Quinn and 'University Times' and received a legal letter for doing so. It seems less clear where the damage to reputation arose in this second scenario as this article wasn't about the Iona institute but was instead covering a news story.

What is the Iona Institute? According to their official website, 'The Iona Institute promotes the place of marriage and religion in society. We defend the continued existence of publicly-funded denominational schools. We also promote freedom of conscience and religion. The Iona Institute is headed by religious and social affairs commentator, David Quinn.' Going beyond their own definition and reading through the documents

and policies of the Iona institute, particularly the Submission to the Convention on the Constitution on Article 41.3.1: Marriage, the stated aim of promoting 'the place of marriage' is in reality promoting the place of only some types of marriage, i.e. that of a heterosexual man and woman. The reason why this type of marriage is advocated for by the Iona institute as being 'unique' and worthy of protection is because 'Every society has an interest in encouraging mothers and fathers to raise their own children together'. In a second statement we are told, 'Every society in history has developed the institution of marriage mainly for that purpose'. The 'promotion' of this type of marriage and the 'family unit' created in this type of marriage, results necessarily in the dismissal of other types of marriage and families, such as single parent families or families in which the parents are the same sex. From personal experience, and from a general viewpoint that I and many others share, this is something which is offensive. There are many ways that people live happily together. If this way doesn't conform to what is perceived to be 'normal' they should not be dismissed for this. It seems wrong to me that human beings who have the exact same motivations as I, to be loved, to have a family, to have security, to be able to express myself, are told every day of their lives that they are not entitled to these basic human rights and needs because the person they love does not 'conform' to someone else's idea of what the ideal 'Marriage' should be. Marriage between same-sex couples is something which is still not recognised by the Irish state (One of our writers covers this in an opinion piece on page 27). The fact that our state, a state of which we are all a part does not grant rights to all of us equally, is something that strikes me as being something that is intrinsically wrong within the status quo. The Iona institute disagrees. This is reflected by their own literature and can be seen in the video that they produced entitled 'the case for man and woman marriage'. A video that I and many others found offensive, given my belief, which I am entitled to express, that same-sex couples who love each other and wish to express their love through the form of marriage and building a family together should have that right, in the same as any heterosexual Irish citizen already has that right. Many were denied that right to expression in that the video, when it appeared on YouTube didn't allow comments under it. The Iona website doesn't provide an adequate platform in which dissent can be expressed.

Mainstream media outlets are not paying this issue enough attention. It is to student media outlets that we as students must turn in order to express our views.

The Iona institute of course is one that has the assets to actually follow through with their threats of legal action. This publically available information can be accessed quite easily through their website donation page where they display their registered charity number ; 17347 (as a registered charity they qualify for tax exemptions) and their company number 424940. A quick look at the Revenue website will reveal that the Iona institutes company is in fact called 'Lolek Limited' (a name which is not displayed on their website). This is where publically accessible information becomes interesting. As of their last financial statement, they had €277,545 in cash reserves. Certainly a greater amount of income than a student's union legal costs reserve. Meaning that the Iona institute (or Lolek Limited) is in a better financial position to pay for legal costs than a student publication, based on empirical and publically available evidence. Would it be completely incorrect to say that in defending their reputation a harmful knock on effect is that they also shut down dissenting voices in student media? Which as I explained before is the one of the few outlets in which students can exercise their right to express dissent to the Iona institute. Which brings me to a final question, why is it important to have student media? Why is freedom of expression important? It seems in general as though the person with the largest team of lawyers, or indeed the biggest bank balance can now disproportionately decide what can and can't be expressed. This is particularly harmful given that student media is so underfunded. Realistically even one law suit can destroy a student media outlet, therefore even the threat of legal action is enough to curtail student media outlet from fully expressing an opinion. Resulting in the loss of a voice which is used to express what students truly feel about certain issues. Destroying a platform for expression and change which can be vital to protecting the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised in society. Destroying a means of sharing and accessing information, of expressing a viewpoint. This is something that shouldn't be allowed to just happen because it's easier and less trouble to say nothing at all.

~ Lorna Bogue
Editor

FOCAL

is Looking for a New Editor



While this is an unpaid voluntary position, it is also an exciting opportunity to manage UL's student newspaper. As editor, you will ensure that there is content for the paper and you will have the responsibility to ensure that it is published in time for deadlines. You will also write an editorial and have control over the editorial line of the paper.

As editor, you will also take responsibility for what appears in An Focal and deal with any complaints which may arise. To apply or find out more about this role email lorna.bogue@ul.ie. Applications close April 19th

Sometimes It Helps To Share

Synne Larsen

Depression is a serious condition and a diagnosis given to people of all ages, both genders and any background. You would probably think that in a country like Ireland where as many as 450,000 men and women, one in ten are affected, you would hear about depression all the time. If you think so, you would be mistaken. Even though chances are you know someone who is depressed, this person might not feel like telling you or others because they are too scared, feel ashamed or like it is their own fault that they cannot shake the feeling of not caring about anything in their own life.

Everyone can and will feel down once in a while, it is only a natural response. The difference lies between having a bad day and not having the energy to even care if your day is good or not. Depression is a mental health condition where everything you are and feel is affected. Many who suffer from depression are struck by an all-consuming feeling of hopelessness and sadness they might not be able to explain the reason for. Some will have problems with sleep, often causing them to be irritable and possibly the worsening of existing medical conditions. As no two people are alike, the way depression affects different people will be different – symptoms will vary from person to person.

The low mood, little energy and difficulties with concentration due to lack of sleep may lead to the sufferer avoiding social situations and various kinds of interpersonal relationships. According to a 2010 survey done in Ireland by the 'Lean on Me' campaign, 75 % of the respondents who had experienced depression answered that they withdrew from



family and friends while they were suffering. More than half of the people who took part in the survey did not tell friends or family about their condition. 57 % of these people told the researchers that they did not want to burden friends and family members with their problems, 29 % were not sure how to share this type of information about themselves and their conditions, and 28 % were too overwhelmed, scared or ashamed to share their problems with loved ones.

As you can see from the statistics, there is a social stigma attached to being depressed. A considerable percentage of the people who suffer from this mental health problem feel ashamed. There is no reason why a depressed person should have to feel this way, and nothing should stop them from sharing with someone that they have serious problems with how they feel. While the depressed may feel like they have no energy to spare, they will still need someone to lean on

and to support them in the difficult times they are going through. Being depressed is not a sign of weakness or something the affected can decide not to suffer from anymore; this is only part of the stigma that has been created around it. Depression is a real condition, and it is treatable.

The false beliefs and mistaken attitudes that exist in connection with depression might prevent a depressed person from seeking the help and treatment they need. They worry

what friends, colleagues, employers or maybe the local society might think of them. If you think that someone you know might suffer from depression – ask them. If it turns out that they indeed do have this kind of problem, support them in any way you can, and most importantly tell them that there is nothing to be ashamed of.

Baring All: The No-Make-Up Stigma

Marie Enright

In today's society there is such a stigma attached to women choosing to bare it all and wear no make-up. It is odd that when women forgo the cosmetics routine in the morning and opt for a fresh faced look they are looked upon as lazy or in some cases not hygienic. Why do females need to plaster themselves in make-up or tanning products to avoid being labelled as 'not presentable'? It is just one of those things that society has normalised and unfortunately, this makes it unacceptable for women to not wear makeup in public.

Many celebrities have been victims of bullying from the media due to their choice to be out in public without make-up. AnnaLynne McCord of the hit TV show 90210, presenter Holly Willoughby and actress Mila Kunis have all been subjected to ridicule by tabloids, online comments and social networking sites for breaking the makeup taboo.

Holly Willoughby was described as a 'playground bully' and 'anti-feminist' for posting a picture of herself without makeup. How can such a small decision provoke such an overreaction? I think women need to feel comfortable in the choice to

either wear make-up or not and not to make that decision based on the fear of what others will say or think. What is even more noticeable in these cases is that more often than not, it is women who are making women not feel comfortable in their own skin.

When AnnaLynne McCord was mocked by online news sites after being photographed without makeup she chose to respond by tweeting a photo of herself without makeup. This au-natural shot showed what in my opinion every woman was feeling and thinking about this subject and was captioned "I woke up this morning and decided I'm over Hollywood's perfection requirement. To all my girls (and boys) who have ever been embarrassed by their skin! I salute you! I'm not perfect either – and I'm okay with that".

It was so refreshing to see this statement from a young Hollywood star and I definitely think more should follow suit and break this ridiculous cycle. In this day and age where airbrushing is the norm and we only see a filtered result, more women in the public eye need to let us girls know that they are just like us and it's okay to not be perfect. In my opinion, this reach for such a high level of perfection is just not achievable and



it is definitely not acceptable to make women feel like it is.

Nobody is perfect and I think we need to stop feeding into this

perception that we are obliged to wear makeup in order to look acceptable. Who is anyone to say what acceptable or beautiful looks like? We are all our

own worst critics but we should not be and have no right to be anyone else's critic.

What Does Feminism Actually Mean?

Emma Norris

The F word. The bad F word. Not Feck. You know the one I mean. Feminism. Feminism has a bad rep. It's generally associated with hairy, men-hating lesbians who vomit at the very idea of a phallic-led society. There's no doubt a couple of people in the world are like that, but there's also every day Joe and Jo Soap who think that women should be equal to men in every way, and then there's people who claim to believe that but who then make 'jokes' about women's rightful place being in the kitchen or on their knees.

I have heard the phrase 'I'm not a feminist but I believe women should be equal to men' far too many times, from both men and women. What does that even mean? There are women who say they don't need feminism but these same women will tell you that they felt obligated to shift a fella on a night out because he kept pestering them.

Feminism is, I believe, about choice – especially nowadays when, yes, women can vote, and women can go to college and it's not altogether shocking when you hop in a taxi and it's a women carting you from A to B. But that's not enough because we do still experience a shock when we see women doing things we might otherwise associate with men.

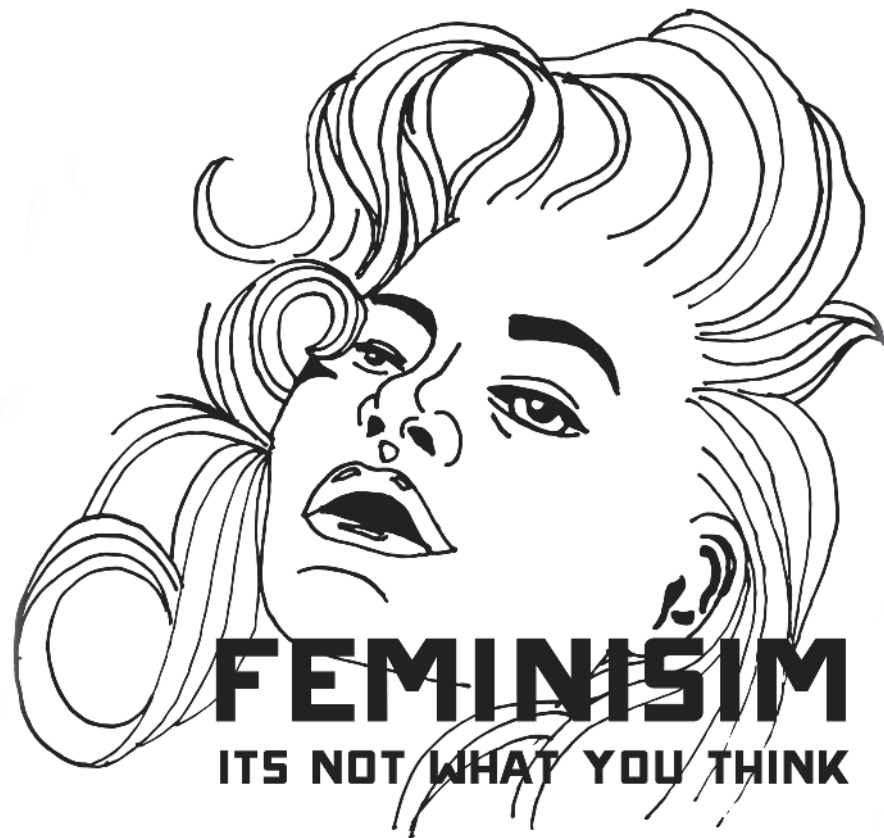
Some people might think, 'A woman shouldn't be doing that; that's a man's job,' and others might think, 'How progressive! How refreshing!' But we shouldn't notice, should we? If gender equality had truly been reached, we wouldn't notice.

If feminism is about choice, then a woman can choose who she shifts or doesn't shift, who she sleeps with and who she doesn't sleep with – a concept apparently lost on the men (or rather, boys) who confess their horror and hero stories to that beloved Facebook

page, Confessions of a UL Student. Women are regularly referred to as sluts when they put out and bitches when they don't. This misogynistic attitude from apparently educated men in the 21st century is shocking, if not heart-breaking.

Modern-day feminism is about women feeling good and sexy and free to choose whatever they want. There's a push in the blogosphere to make feminism a little bit cooler and if you need convincing, check out dating site HowAboutWe.com. Their blog waves cheerful little feminist flags in support of the modern woman. None of it is preachy and not of it is altogether out there. Feminism isn't 'out there' anyway – it's pretty much common sense. Jennifer Armstrong, co-writer of *Sexy Feminism*, says that feminists "envision a world in which women can get as down and dirty as they want to without feeling guilty or humiliated. Some day, maybe we'll even get there." Armstrong throws the texting, sexting and dinner-date rules out the window and calls Liz Lemon of *30 Rock* the ultimate sex symbol.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with make-up and short skirts and housewives. Feminism is not anti these things – it's pro anything you want as long as you're doing it for yourself and not because you think you have to. Equally, you don't have to abandon your razors and lippgloss in order to be a feminist. You just have to know that you can do whatever you want. And, boys, feminism for you means respecting a woman's choices – even if that means you don't get your foreskin sucked.



Porn: Is It A Big Deal?

Barbara Ross

Porn is often a taboo subject that is not mentioned in civilized and polite conversation especially on our little island. In most cultures sex is for procreation and not pleasure so porn, like sex, has always divided people the world over. But what is the big deal?

The porn industry has come a long way since naughty paintings and dirty magazines aimed at men of a certain age. It is now more sophisticated, gender neutral and wide reaching, taking in fantasy and escapism. It is something that everyone indulges in - be it a magazine, video or on the Internet. It isn't real but does watching it give men a false idea about women and sex?

With the Internet comes freedom of expression but also responsibility. There are many extreme porn genres on the Internet and this sometimes is not a particularly good thing. The majority of young people (especially men) now get their ideas about what constitutes 'normal' sex from pornography. And most porn is far from 'normal'. Real world sex is often unglamorous, quite messy and sometimes even a little funny. A lot of the time it is the opposite of sexy.

Pornography is often distinguished from erotica, which consists of the portrayal of sexuality with high-art aspirations, focusing also on feelings and emotions, while porn involves the depiction of acts in a sensational manner, with the entire focus on the

physical act, so as to arouse quick intense reactions. A distinction is also made between hard-core and soft-core porn. Soft-core is generally described as focusing on nude modelling and suggestive, but not explicit, simulations of sexual intercourse, whereas hard-core pornography explicitly showcases penetrative intercourse.

Opposition to pornography comes primarily from three sources, law, religion and feminism. Feminist critics argue that the pornographic industry contributes to violence against women in the production and consumption of porn. However, there are no studies to corroborate this viewpoint. Religious organisations have been important in bringing about political action against pornography. We have become acclimatised to the idea that porn is bad for us, and must only be tolerated due to reasons of democracy and liberalism.

However, porn keeps many relationships going. How many couples do you know whose partners have identically matched sex drives? Not many. Porn is an outlet for the sexual pressure built up in relationships and also for people who feel that communicating or finding a sexual partner is very difficult to achieve. The portrayal of sexually explicit images has become commonplace in today's society. What once was taboo is now openly available. There is a lot of sexual desire out there that needs an outlet and porn often is that outlet.

Are Realistic Mannequins The Future?

Alana Walsh

Swedish clothing store Åhléns received a great deal of attention recently when an image of their fuller-figured mannequins went viral. Internationally, many women have been praising the store as these models depict a far more accurate version of the average woman's body. The lingerie clad mannequins showcase fuller thighs, stomachs and busts than their counterparts in other retailers.

Facebook group "Women's Rights News" shared the picture of the models on their page with the following caption: "Store mannequins in Sweden. They look like real women. The US should invest in some of these". The post has received over 63,000 likes, has been re-shared almost 20,000 times and received 3,350 comments to date.

However, not all of the attention that this image has received has been positive. Some critics have claimed that the mannequins in question condone obesity. I find these statements absolutely ridiculous as the mannequins are said to be approximately (from right to left) sizes 6 and 10-12. I wholeheartedly agree with the bloggers that have stated that the mannequins on display should even start at a size 8.

Several articles reporting about the picture's online success have actually referred to the models as "plus-sized" which is also very frustrating. While plus-sized models should also be introduced, these Åhléns models are



regular sized and a platform for further progression in the fashion industry. If we consider the mannequins to be plus-sized then this is actually a step backwards as it suggests they are depicting a different body type altogether. Åhléns' mannequins are not some radical phenomenon; they are a portrayal of realistic curvy women's figures as opposed to the standard teeny tiny mannequins in the vast majority of stores.

The general consensus of much of the online feedback is that US shops, in particular, need to take a leaf out of Åhléns' book instead of consistently using size zero mannequins. I feel that if a real change is to be made then the models on runways around the world should reflect the body shape and size of the average woman also. Thereby more of the images we are subjected to

via the media would reflect the bodies that the majority of us possess.

In-store mannequins should represent healthy true-to-life bodies and help to boost women's body image and self-confidence when shopping. I view these mannequins as a stepping-stone in the right direction for the fashion industry; it is refreshing to see mannequins of varying body shapes instead of the typical clone-like mannequins of an identical size. Imagine shopping in a store where the mannequin actually closely reflects what the clothing item looks like on in your size. Ideally, all mannequins should be varied in height, shape and size. The average woman does not look like a size zero mannequin and the stores in which we shop should be diverse enough to reflect this.

Cookery Corner: Let Them Eat Cake

Amy Grimes

I deliberated for some time over what recipe to include this fortnight. Since I'm a student sharing recipes with other students, I try to choose things that are accessible and affordable. Perhaps pizza dough, I thought, or a recipe for chilli con carne. Then I realised the answer was right in front of me. I mean that literally, I was eating one as I wrote the steps to make your own pizza sauce. This, dear readers, is a microwavable mug cake - a dangerous combination of modern technology, kitchen ingenuity and eight pantry-staple ingredients. In about three minutes you can have an individual serving of cake. Can you think of any better break from essay-writing or a sweeter consolation for a friend's latest romantic let-down? If there are children in your life, they will also greatly appreciate the novelty.

I've experimented with a few microwavable cake recipes and this one is the best by far, with the most consistent results. You can play around with the recipe, substituting an equal amount of flour and some vanilla essence to make a plain sponge. Nutella makes a particularly good instant chocolate lava cake but

peanut butter, jams, curds or other spreads are equally delicious. If you're the organised type, you can pre-measure portions of the dry ingredients into Ziploc bags to have them on hand. Remember to adjust the cooking time to your microwave's wattage.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons plain flour
2 teaspoons cocoa powder
2 teaspoons sugar
¼ teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons milk
Small pinch salt
1 tablespoon Nutella

- Stir together the dry ingredients in a large mug, making sure there are no lumps.
- Mix in the milk and oil until smooth.
- Push a tablespoon of Nutella into the centre of the batter.
- Microwave for one minute, that's it!

Recipe from <http://budgetbytes.blogspot.ie/>, a site well worth checking out for budget-conscious cooks.



Embracing The Weirdness: Cara Delevingne

Kelly Ireland O'Sullivan

The tagline 'don't worry be happy! Embrace your weirdness' that runs across Cara Delevingne's Instagram account is exactly what this girl has done! When you look past those thick, bushy eyebrows, you are able to see a beautiful girl with almost alien-like features. Her large doe eyes, porcelain looking skin and perfect pout have sky rocketed Delevingne to fame. But why exactly? What is so special about this girl? What makes her stand out?

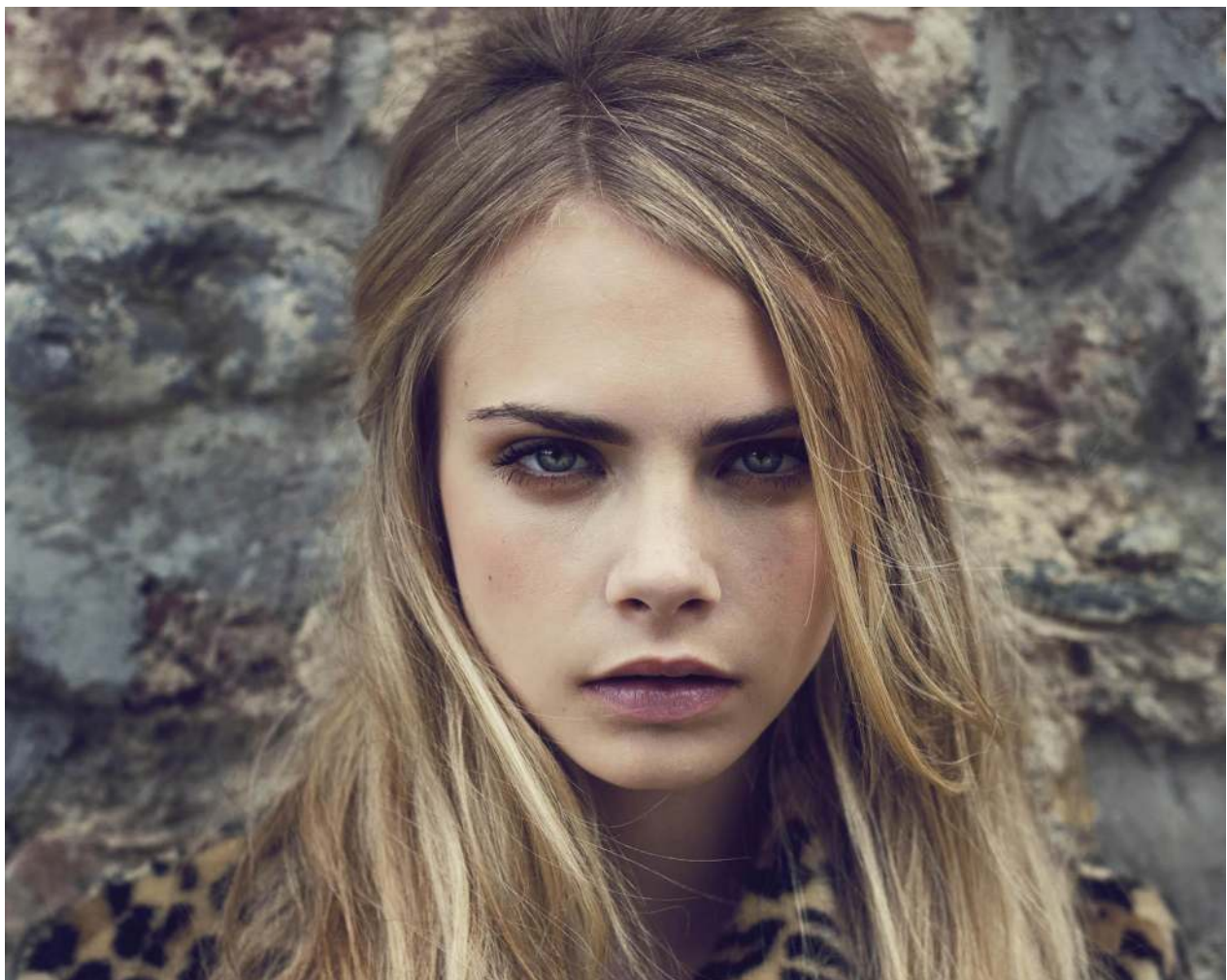
Well, for one, Cara has been able to keep her quirky personality throughout all of her fame. We see this in the many Instagram and Twitter photos she posts of herself. Cara is not afraid of looking 'ugly'. She posts pictures of herself with no make-up and casual clothes, tucking into cheeseburgers and pulling funny faces. Cara is not one of the models that feels the need to pull a trout pout every time a camera is pointed in her direction. This allows girls to relate to her, as she isn't seen as 'perfect' all the time.

As the granddaughter of Sir Jocelyn Stevens (founder of 60's pirate radio station, Radio Caroline and former publisher of Queen Magazine) and also sister of Poppy Delevingne, another model and socialite, Cara was never going to just blend in. She

was scouted while attending school with the daughter of Sarah Doukas (owner of Storm models). Doukas first spotted Poppy, and Cara soon followed in her sister's footsteps.

At only 20 years of age Cara has built up quite an impressive résumé. She is not only the current face of Burberry's Beauty campaign but she was also the face of their spring/summer 2012 campaign. Cara is also the face of Chanel's 2013 Resort campaign. She has also worked with huge brands such as Dolce and Gabbana, Zara, Chanel, H&M, Stella McCartney and Oscar de la Renta. Not to mention appearing in Victoria Secrets 2012 show. She has also graced many magazine covers such as Vogue (U.K. and Korea), Style, Jalouse (France) and Tush (Germany). She has also appeared in the 2012 adaption of Anna Karenina as Princess Sorokina, alongside Keira Knightly.

Cara's social life is just as busy as her career. Lately she has been linked to Harry Styles and singer/songwriter Jake Bugg. Also there have been recent pictures of her stumbling out of nightclubs linking onto best friends Rita Ora and Rihanna. She is never one to miss a party and recently joined Harry Styles to celebrate his 19th birthday. She was dressed head to toe in Burberry and spent the night with other celebs such as model Amber le Bon and X-Factor host



Caroline Flack.

Delevingne has a string of accomplishments under her belt. She won Model of the Year 2012 and

was also named as one of 'London's 1,000 Most Influential of 2011' by the Evening Standard. She is currently ranked no.17 on Model.com's 50 Top

Models. With an Instagram account filled with inspirational quotes and bucket loads of ambition, who knows what's in store for this young model?

IATBA Inter-Varsity Open success for UL Boxers

Fionnbarr Thompson

The University of Limerick Boxing Club may still be considered a fledgling club in terms of the time it has been established, but what can't be argued with is the level of success it has experienced in its relatively short existence. This past fortnight served only as further proof of the club's meteoric rise in the past 24 months with UL claiming two All-Ireland titles and a runners up medal at this year's IATBA Inter-Varsity Open, a competition so large it required two weekends to complete inside the home of Irish boxing in Dublin.

UL sent a team of five boxers with varied levels of experience into this competition with nothing but gold on their minds. This determination was well placed and inspired the squad to a fantastic opening weekend which saw the students go unbeaten in all of their bouts. First to take to the ring was Fionnbarr Thompson who faced an opponent from DCU. The contest was one which was battled a controlled tempo by Thompson who eventually went on to dispatch his counterpart by unanimous judges' decision. This became a theme for the UL 2nd year as he marched on to the semi-finals with another win the following day in similar fashion, dispatching a strong boxer from IT Tallaght with relative ease.

Next to box for UL in the opening weekend's action was newly elected club captain David Lewis in the quarter-finals of his -71KGs section. In what was a highly anticipated bout, Lewis produced a calm and disciplined performance that showcased his experience in the ring. His opponent, John Coyle from GMIT, was unable to match the composed style of Lewis and eventually lost out in a unanimous decision for the UL student.

Postgrad Kyle Preston-Kelly looked to continue in the rich vein of form being experienced by the UL boxers so far in this year's Inter-Varsities. A new addition to the UL boxing team, Preston-Kelly presented himself to be a very tidy and technically astute athlete and endeavoured to prove this in convincing fashion whilst

dispatching his first opponent in the competition through means of yet another unanimous decision for UL.

Last to compete for the University of Limerick was 3rd year PE Teacher Seosamh Ferry. By far and away the most experienced member of the squad, boasting over 60 contests prior to this year's competition, Ferry did not disappoint. Presented with the task of boxing a tough opponent from LIT, who only twelve months previous had beaten club captain Lewis in a pulsating encounter, Ferry remained unfazed and imposed his own unique style of counter punching to suppress a very physically impressive opponent. This immaculate game plan lead to a majority decision and meant UL were returning home with a 100% record from the first weekend of contests.

What can often go unnoticed, and quite often unappreciated, is the commitment required to be a boxer in the modern game. For the week that followed, our athletes were required to maintain their weight to within 100grams whilst also contending with their normal college, work and training schedules. The discipline that must be displayed in order to climb to the top of this sport is often encapsulated in the weeks that approach the contests as opposed to the competition itself.

As the weekend of the finals crept up upon the UL squad, preparation ran smoothly and enabled the students to fine tune their skills for the test that lay ahead. The challenge of opening the proceedings for UL once again on the Saturday fell to -64KGs boxer Thompson. Meeting his second opponent from DCU so far in the competition did little to concern Thompson who managed to stun his counterpart with a fine display of timing and controlled aggression. The first round saw the Dub take a standing count following a thunderous left hand from Thompson. The contest ended in a majority decision in favour of the UL student and set him up nicely for his final the next day against yet another boxer from DCU.

Next to box that day as once again Preston-Kelly. His opponent had been seen as a heavy hitter from his endeavours from the previous



Fionnbarr Thompson (right) of UL Boxing club in action.

weekend, but that held no bearing on the UL man who stuck religiously to his game plan and executed a masterful display of point-scoring boxing. This resulted in another University of Limerick boxer earning their right to compete for a national title and brought the college's representation up to three students standing at the pinnacle of intervarsity competition.

With expectancy now high, and confidence even higher, UL felt they could do no wrong. David Lewis and Seosamh Ferry were the last two athletes from Limerick to enter the ring for the semi-finals. Buoyed by not only their comrades performances, they climbed into the ring chomping at the bit and ready for another big performance. Lewis was up first in his -71KGs section. Faced with a very rangy opponent, Lewis knew this bout would be decided on his ability to set the higher tempo and grab the fight by the scruff of the neck.

Unfortunately, his counterpart was wise to this and set about controlling the ever-advancing Lewis with a stiff jab right the way through the contest. If you were ever to witness a clash of styles, it was unfolding in front of the crowd that very day. At the end of this highly competitive competition, the entire stadium turned to the judges in anticipation of the result of a very close fight. Lewis, however, was unlucky this time but walked away with his held high after a very impressive performance.

Seosamh Ferry is nothing but a seasoned campaigner in terms of boxing, but that could also have been said for his opponent in his semi-final. Boxing a man that only recently brought Olympian Adam Nolan to the wire, Ferry knew that a mammoth task lay ahead of him. Once in the ring, Ferry acquitted himself honourably by displaying flashes of brilliance, landing heavy right hands that

certainly slowed down his opponent immensely. Unfortunately, it just wasn't to be for the Donegal native boxing out of UL.

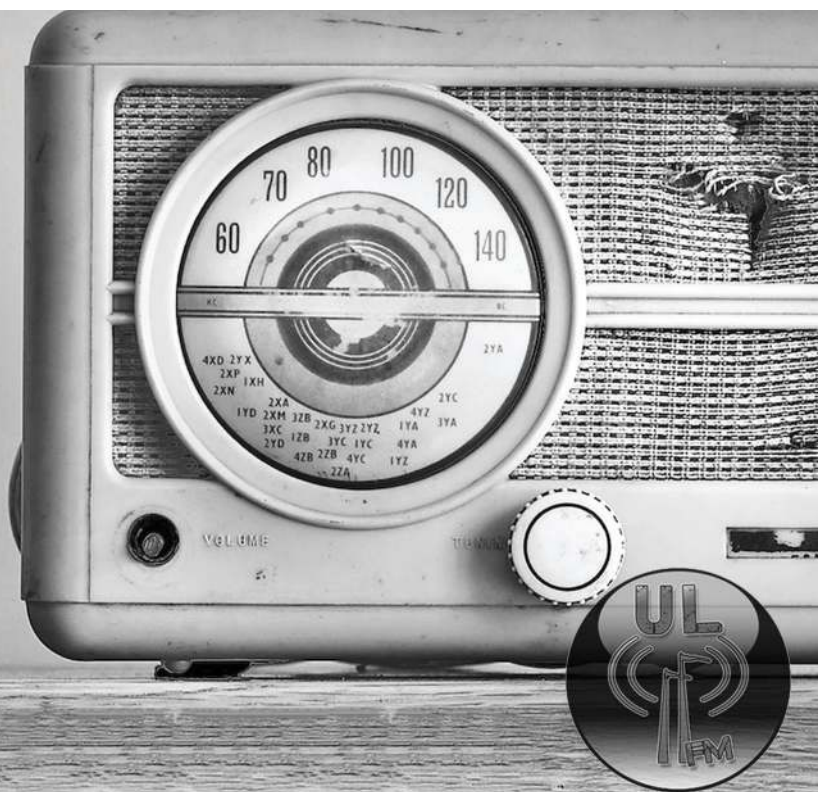
On to the finals for the University of Limerick. Once again to box first was Fionnbarr Thompson who faced Terry Keegan from Dublin City University. In a tight contest that saw two south-paw fighters face off, Thompson edged it with an assured display throughout despite a flurry from Keegan in the closing stages. This win meant that UL had taken the first All-Ireland title in third-level competition in 2013. Closely after this bout we saw the debut of Mark Kirwan, schooled from the famous St. Michael's club in Athy, for the University of Limerick. Weighing in at 60KGs for the final, Kirwan entered into a section that has been traditionally entertaining and quite often electrifying. Fortunately for the Kildare native, those two superlatives could also be used to describe his performance in the final. The speedy Kirwan dominated the bout right the way through, landing combination after combination and leaving his opponent wondering in between round what exactly he could do to turn around this mesmerising performance from first-year English student Kirwan. The answer was simple; nothing. With the boxers called to the centre of the ring for the decision, there was little to no doubt that Kirwan's name lay firmly on the title.

Last to box was Kyle Preston-Kelly. With yet another title in the balance, Preston-Kelly worked hard to focus himself before his bout with a tough UCC opponent. Some times in sports you watch dream finals between the two strongest opponents from previous rounds, this was certainly the case. Preston-Kelly executed the same game plan that had gotten him this far, landing hard combinations to the body and heavy counter hooks to his aggressive counterpart. This day, however, was not to be the day that UL would take the full complement of title on offer to them as Preston-Kelly was edged out in a unanimous decision.

We're too retro for FM
Listen live on ulfm.ie

Or download the Tunein App to your phone or mobile device

Live programming 11am - 11pm Mon-Thurs
11am-4pm Friday
ulfm.ie for full schedule and info



Annus horribilis

Eoghan Wallace

CAST YOUR mind back to February 2nd, the opening weekend of the 2013 Six Nations championship, Ireland vs. Wales in Cardiff. You could be forgiven for believing that you were watching the eventual champions in action, although you may have got it arse-ways. In a 45 minute bombardment Ireland pounded the Welsh defence to dust. Tries from Simon Zebo, Cian Healy, and Brian O'Driscoll saw Ireland take a commanding 30-3 lead after 42 minutes. Zebo's try saw that wonderful pass from O'Driscoll while the Healy try came as a result of that wonderful back-heel flick from Zebo. Wales came roaring back in the second half but to no avail.

Despite not registering a score after the 43rd minute, a reoccurring theme throughout the campaign, Ireland had done enough in the first half to ensure a thrilling victory over the holders. Talk of a second Grand Slam in four years went into overdrive. In hindsight the game was a hiccup. Yes the eventual champions would emerge from that game, but not in the shape of Ireland. Wales recovered from that crushing defeat and inflicted a similar beating upon England on the final weekend to retain their Six Nations crown. Ireland on the other hand had to rely upon Scotland to keep the French score down to avoid the embarrassment of the wooden spoon, after a first ever Six Nations defeat to Italy.

And so another Six Nations championship has come and gone and once more the Irish team have left us with more questions than answers. What has happened to this team? Before 2009 our biggest frustration was our inability to beat France. 2006 and 2007 would have seen Grand Slams if only we had been able to better the French. Our 'golden generation' finally delivered in 2009 but since then our consistency has



tailed off.

Between 2000 and 2007 Ireland never finished below third place. A fourth place finish in 2008 signalled the end of Eddie O'Sullivan's reign but the Holy Grail arrived the following year. Since then Ireland have failed to push on; second place in 2010, third in 2011 and 2012, and fifth this season. For all that pre-2009 'consistency' though we have only won one title. Wales on the other hand have won three Grand Slams since 2005 despite finishing fifth in

2006 and 2007, and fourth in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Another worrying aspect this year was our lack of try-scoring. With the exception of 2008 we've never failed to score less than ten tries. This season we could only manage five, and three of those came in the first game against Wales. We also registered our lowest ever Six Nations points difference this year, -9, as well as our lowest amount of points scored, a measly 72.

To be fair injuries did play a significant role in Ireland's campaign.

In 2009 Declan Kidney only used 22 players, the starting fifteen and the bench. When Stephen Archer came on against Italy he was the 32nd player Kidney used in this year's Six Nations. The list of injured reads like a World War I memorial, fitting since the match against Italy at times resembled the first day of the Somme offensive: Luke Fitzgerald (knee), Tommy Bowe (knee), Keith Earls (shoulder), Gordon D'Arcy (foot), Simon Zebo (foot), Johnny Sexton (hamstring), Eoin Reddan (leg),

Fergus McFadden (ribs) Chris Henry (knee), Stephen Ferris (ankle), Mike McCarthy (knee), Paul O'Connell (back), Declan Fitzpatrick (calf), and Richard Strauss (ankle). As Conor O'Shea kept trying to hammer home after the defeat to Italy; when Carter and McCaw are injured even the mighty New Zealand are a lesser team. The amount of Irish players missing through injury nearly could have fielded a full fifteen on their own.

As it has been in previous years the biggest question we've been left with after a Six Nations is: where do we go from here? Our group for the World Cup in two years, which includes France and Italy, seems a more formidable challenge than it did a few months ago. Ireland could well have another European club champion in the summer but the national team seems to be stuck in the doldrums. Ironically Wales have the opposite problem; their provinces are lightweights in the Heineken Cup but their national team have an envious crop of talent that are actually delivering. You can expect the starting fifteen for the Lions' first test against Australia to be heavily populated with Welsh players. The number of Irish players previously nailed on for their respective positions has shrunk. Rory Best may not even make the plane; Rob Kearney is no longer Europe's premier fullback, while Jamie Heaslip has proven himself to be the weakest captain in the Six Nations.

Which brings us to the man he replaced; Brian O'Driscoll. If the 2013 Six Nations was indeed his last hurrah for Ireland it will have been a most unfitting way for the greatest rugby player of the professional era to end his career. He may get an opportunity to finish his test career on a high with the Lions this summer but the sight of O'Driscoll watching on from the sin bin was a very sad sight indeed

Magical Madigan

Eoghan Wallace

ON 23 March Leinster consolidated their place on top of the Pro12 with a win over Glasgow at the RDS. In the aftermath of their 22-17 victory there was only one topic of discussion on everyone's lips: Ian Madigan.

Scoring all of Leinster's points, Madigan has shown Leinster fans over the past couple of weeks that the departure of Jonathan Sexton may not be as damaging a blow as previously thought. The reigning Heineken Cup champions left it late against the Scots. With ten minutes remaining Madigan had a great opportunity to set up Sean Cronin in the corner but rather than playing the pass he opted to keep the ball. Although the 24 year-old redeemed himself just a few minutes later with the match winning try. It seemed Madigan could do no wrong that night, the only negative being that god awful haircut he was sporting. Leinster's win continued their fine run of form in the league; remaining unbeaten in seven games. His performance came the same

weekend that Paddy Jackson's abysmal kicking cost Ulster a win against Edinburgh, missing three relatively simple penalties in the second half. Declan Kidney must have been pulling at whatever hair he could find. While Jackson eventually eased into the Irish number 10 jersey Madigan showed glimpses of true brilliance against Italy. His running and passing game were reminiscent of a Jonny Sexton on top form, which was the total opposite of Jackson's flat display of kicking. It could prove the case that Sexton's departure for Racing Metro in the summer could see Madigan develop into a truly great fly-half, as was the case in 2009 when Felipe Contepomi's injury provided Sexton the springboard to affirm his position as Leinster's first-choice number 10.

Madigan has already shown he can do it at the highest level for Leinster. Coming on as a substitute in last year's Heineken Cup final he provided the looping pass which set up Sean Cronin for the try which sealed the record for the largest winning margin in a



final. Madigan's performance against Glasgow only adds to the argument against Declan Kidney's selection policy. It's debatable whether starting

Madigan at 10 could have steered Ireland to victory in those close Six Nations games but if the game two weeks ago is anything to go by Ireland

have a potentially world-class fly-half waiting in the wings to replace Jonny.

UL Retain Crowley Plate

Conor Canavan

UNIVERSITY OF Limerick's Men's Division One team travelled to NUI Maynooth to take part in the Crowley Cup. Low numbers at training, injuries and withdrawals from the squad meant that UL entered the tournament in hope rather than expectation. In what was a very difficult quarter-final draw, UL faced Crowley Cup holders, Queens University Belfast. The difficult draw was made even harder by the gale force wind and freezing cold. The game began very open and UL shaded the opening exchanges getting into a number of good positions without ever testing the Queens goalkeeper. It was Queens who took the lead when the UL defence were caught for pace down their left and despite UL having a number of chances to clear their lines, the ball somehow found the net. After this, Queens took control and in the end ran out comfortable 5-0 winners after a disappointing display by UL.

The next day, in slightly better conditions, UL faced DCU in the semi-final of the plate competition. UL started poorly and could have been a goal down in the first 30 seconds if it wasn't for a great block by Nick Gallwey. UL went ahead shortly after this when Darren Harney slotted away the first goal of the tournament, causing jubilant scenes on the UL touchline. Harney added a second shortly before halftime when he pounced on a short back pass by DCU defender Kevin

Mustang. UL captain Steven Byrne then added a third when he powered home a corner 10 minutes into the second half.

UL should have cruised to victory from there but it wouldn't be a UL performance without a bit of drama. With 25 minutes to go DCU pulled one back from a corner of their own and from that point on they pinned UL back. DCU never really looked like scoring until a speculative effort from forty yards out caught keeper Tom Quinn daydreaming and it sailed over his head into the back of the net. A game that should have been dead and buried was now set for a nail biting conclusion and if it wasn't for some brave defending in stoppage time the game may have gone to extra time. In the end UL ran out 3-2 victors.

A tired and leggy UL team then faced St Mary's Belfast in the final of the Crowley Plate on the Sunday. The game took place on a GAA pitch that was twenty metres longer than a regulation Soccer pitch and a lot wider. These were not the best conditions for players who were playing their third game in three days. The game was sluggish and slow paced with St. Mary's happy to play it around their backline and UL happy to let them. UL did take the lead three minutes in when Byron O'Neill found himself in behind the defence and slotted away coolly. St Mary's found a way back into the game when Neil O'Callaghan put a free kick past his own keeper 3 minutes before halftime.



However, St Mary's didn't stay level for long. O'Callaghan looking to make up for his own goal, picked the ball up in his own half, beat four Mary's defenders and slotted it away to make it 2-1. In the second half it was more open. St Mary's dominated trying to find the equaliser but UL looked more like scoring on the counter

attack, squandering a number of easy chances. In the final minutes Tom Quinn redeemed his mistake in the previous match by saving a penalty and UL managed to hold out. At the final whistle there were no scenes of jubilation, just relief. Tough weather meant both teams were just happy to be getting off the pitch. The Crowley

Plate was returning to UL for the second year in a row.

UL Squad: Quinn, Hughes, Duffy, O'Neill, Beggy, Gallwey, Walsh, Byrne, Sweeney, McSweeney, Harney, O'Callaghan, Carney, Mulroy, Coughlan, Mangidi, Byavu, Sheedy.

Great sports teams you've never heard of: Al Ahly S.C.

Eoghan Wallace

AL AHLY Sporting Club was founded by patriotic college students from Cairo in 1907. 'Ahly' translates as 'national'; an appropriate name for a club that became an embodiment of the rebellion against British colonialism. Ironically the club's first chairman was an Englishman, Mitchell Ince. It was he who facilitated the founding of the club and issued the planning permissions for the land owned by the club. In 1910 the club's congress decided to make membership of Al Ahly exclusive to Egyptians. It was a decision which would earn them the title of 'the people's club'. Today the club has the largest fan base in Africa and the Middle East with an estimated 50 million supporters.

The club took Egyptian football by storm. Fans from far and wide would travel to catch a glimpse of the team including Mokhtar El Tetsch, considered the most talented Egyptian footballer of his generation. Such was his status the club renamed their old stadium in his honour after his retirement. He was instrumental in Al Ahly's domination of the newly established Egyptian league. Inaugurated in 1948 Al Ahly won the first ten editions of the competition,



a run which was stopped in 1960 by arch-rivals Zamalek.

A new era of success followed under the management of Nándor

Hidegkuti, a member of Hungary's 'Mighty Magyars' in the 1950s. Hidegkuti nurtured the young talent that was coming through

including Mahmoud El-Khatib, the first Egyptian to win the African Footballer of the Year award. He was awarded the honour after helping Al

Ahly win their first CAF Champions League title in 1982. This would see the beginning of a remarkable run of continental success. A Champions League runners-up spot the following year would be followed by three consecutive African Cup Winners' Cups in 1984, '85, and '86. A second Champions League title in 1987 capped off what was a remarkable half-decade for the club.

Between 2001 and 2012 Al Ahly won five Champions Leagues and four CAF Super Cups. After what was a wonderful period in the club's history came its darkest hour. On 1 February 2012, a year after the Egyptian revolution began; a riot broke out at the Port Said Stadium following a game between Al Ahly and Al-Masry. At least 79 people were killed and over 1,000 were injured when Al-Masry fans stormed the stands and pitch violently attacking Ahly fans. Called "the biggest disaster in the country's football history", the incident saw the cancellation of the entire 2011-12 Premier League campaign. Reports later emerged that the riots were politically motivated. Last month though, despite having not played a league match for over a year, Al Ahly put these recent difficulties behind them by winning their fifth Super Cup.

Champions League Quarter-Final Preview

Darren Mulryan

After yet another intriguing set of last 16 ties, the Champions League quarter-finals return in what will prove to be an exhibition of the finest Europe has to offer. With no British teams left in the mix this year, it will be up to the giants of the continent to pick up the title of the world's most prestigious club competition. An Focal takes a look at this year's quarter final ties to decide who will be progressing one step closer to the final in Wembley.

Paris Saint-Germain FC v FC Barcelona

Big spending PSG's last outing in this stage of the competition stems back to the 1994/95 season where they also faced the Catalan giants. Carlo Ancelotti has a strong squad at his disposal but they need to work hard to keep out Barcelona who are on course for an impressive sixth consecutive semi-final. Ibrahimovic is the obvious danger for Barca but it would be careless to overlook kingpin Javier Pastore in the midfield. Expect a close tie at the Parc des Princes with the Parisians boasting a 23-game unbeaten streak at home in Europe. Barcelona will provide a stern test for PSG's back line in what should be another display of possession from the Spaniards. Overall Messi and Co will prevail especially with a performance in the Camp Nou

Prediction: Barcelona to Qualify
Aggregate Score: 2-3

FC Bayern München v Juventus

An Focal's tie of the round. This match up pits Italian giants Juventus against Bundesliga maestros Bayern. Seven years have gone by since Antonio Conte's Juventus have graced the quarter final stage and they now look like a side to contend with as they defend a unbeaten away record which spans back to 2010. The Bianconeri also hold a good record against German opposition with wins in their previous eight two legged ties. Juventus have a wealth of talent at their disposal which include marksman Fabio Quagliarella who has impressed in the campaign so far. Bayern enter this round high in confidence after they eliminated Arsenal in the previous stage and they will look to improve on their fourth last-eight appearance in five seasons. Thomas Muller and Arjen Robben will again be the key players in a side that love to go on the counter. With both sides holding a comfortable position in their respective leagues we can expect a thrilling encounter.

Prediction: Juventus to Qualify
Aggregate Score: 1-2

Málaga CF v Borussia Dortmund

Jürgen Klopp's Dortmund have impressed this term in a very difficult

group which included Madrid, Manchester City and Ajax. Few would have considered the German's to progress but with the likes of Robert Lewandowski and Marco Reus at the frontline expect Dortmund to show their worth. The Westfalenstadion has a great atmosphere and should prove difficult for Spanish side Malaga. Manuel Pellegrini's side have a determination about them and are considered the outsiders in this year's competition. Malaga are in poor form domestically failing to get three points in their last four La Liga meetings. But in Europe it is a different proposition with the Spaniard's unbeaten at La Rosaleda. Key players include Martin Demichelis and Roque Santa Cruz who have both played with the Bundesliga side amassing over 300 appearances for the club. Klopp's Dortmund remain unbeaten in the Champions League this season and should progress here with relative ease.

Prediction: Borussia Dortmund to Qualify
Aggregate score: 1-4

Real Madrid CF v Galatasaray AS

Galatasaray are looking like an improving side of late and confidence is growing in Istanbul following the arrivals of Wesley Sneijder and Didier Drogba. However the focus of attention for the Turkish side should be placed on Burak Yilmaz.



Didier Drogba was the talisman for Chelsea when they won the Champions League last season. Can Wesley Sneijder help him to sping a surprise with Galatasaray this season?

The frontman has been talismanic this season currently sitting second top of the scoring charts in the Champions League. On the other side of the coin Los Blanco's enter this round boasting a fantastic Home record having won 13 of 16 European fixtures at the Santiago Bernabéu since José Mourinho's appointment. The Portuguese has a 100% success rate in this round of the tournament,

from six previous attempts, though that statistic could be shattered by frontman Didier Drogba who Mourinho signed for Chelsea almost a decade ago. This won't be as easy for Madrid as people expect and Galatasaray will give as good as they get.

Prediction: Real Madrid to Qualify
Aggregate Score: 3-2

The Forgotten Man of Donegal

Conor Finnerty

KEVIN CASSIDY is a Donegal footballer from Gweedore. Cassidy is a former county player and was infamously dropped from the squad in November 2011. Cassidy is regarded as one of the best attacking wing backs of his generation. He has won two All Star awards, one in his debut season and one in his final season.

Along with his personal accolades Cassidy has one two Donegal senior club championships with Ghaath Dobhair, a National Football League title with Donegal in 2007 and an Ulster Senior Football title in 2011.

Cassidy lived in Glasgow until he was eight years old before returning to his mother's native Ghaath Dobhair. Cassidy has spent time playing football in Boston and has also represented Ireland in the International Rules Series. He was

dropped from the inter-county squad after becoming involved in a dispute about a book with manager Jim McGuinness.

"This Is Our Year" is a book written by journalist Declan Bogue. The book examines the All-Ireland Senior Football Championship 2011 from the perspectives of ten Gaelic footballers from Ulster.

The book achieved notoriety after Donegal footballer Kevin Cassidy was dropped from the team squad by manager Jim McGuinness over his contributions and Cassidy has not played for Donegal since.

At the post-match press conference following the 2012 All-Ireland Senior Football Championship Final Jim McGuinness declined to answer questions until Bogue was ejected. When Bogue was removed from the room McGuinness explained; "There were a lot of things said in the book

that were incorrect and untrue, some of it possibly lies about me personally and about some of my players. It was all-out attack for a couple of months on my character. I know what I've done, I know what I've coached, I know what I am as a person. And that's the situation. So I'm not going to let somebody sit in a room and fill their pages tomorrow on the back of what we done today when they in their wisdom degraded me as a person and some of my players."

One of the highlights of Cassidy's footballing career was a long range point that secured Donegal an extra-time winner against Kildare in the All Ireland quarter final in 2011.

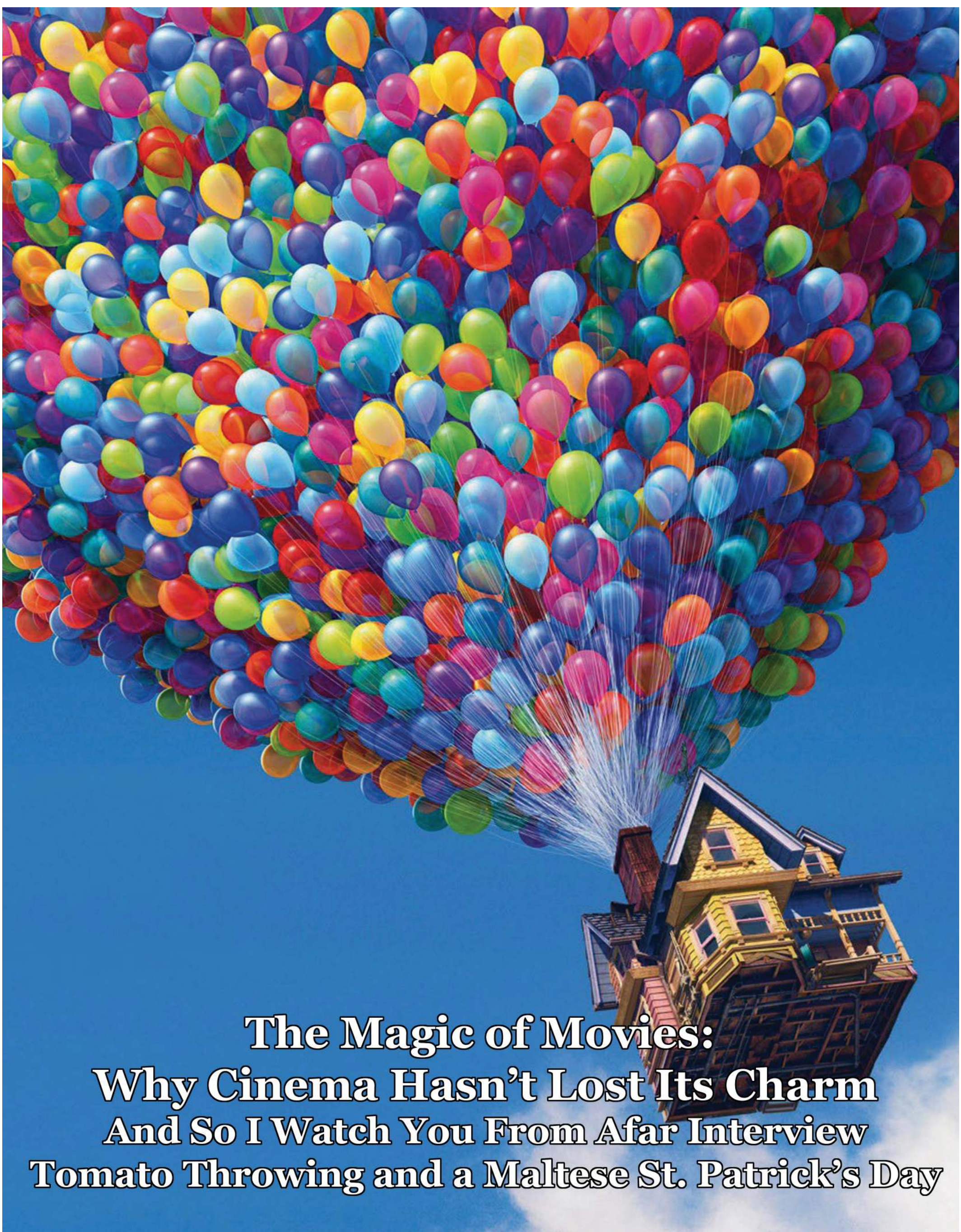
It is a pity that Kevin Cassidy will be remembered more for his disagreement with Jim McGuinness rather than his footballing skills and his contribution to Donegal football.



FOCAL *Extra*

9th April 2013

Volume XXI
Issue 11 FREE



**The Magic of Movies:
Why Cinema Hasn't Lost Its Charm
And So I Watch You From Afar Interview
Tomato Throwing and a Maltese St. Patrick's Day**

Arts & Ents Editorial

Jack Brolly

A moment of change for me came in 2010 when I finally got to see Adebisi Shank live. I had been listening to them for about a year previous to that and I waited patiently for them to finally come to Cork. FMC graciously satiated my thirst. The line-up included Heathers and O Emperor. Both of whom were very good on the night but I had eyes for only one. They came out to set up their equipment and I stared intently at their faces, noticing the absence of one particular red mask. "Oh! That's what Vin looks like."

After a while, it began. Lar let a few chords ring out before muting them and allowing Mick to begin International Dreambeat. I believe it was the first night of that tour so they were ready to give it socks, not that they ever don't. International Dreambeat stuttered its way toward that cathartic explosion of guitars. I don't think I've ever been as excited for anything in my entire life. Here I was, about to hear Adebisi Shank live. "Oh eh eh oh eh he ee ah eh", International Dreambeat gained momentum. Mick hit his drum and an eternity passed before we were flanked on all sides by an explosion of sound. There was no escaping it. You couldn't sit idly by sipping your whiskey and discussing the subtle genius of Naked Lunch. This demanded your attention. My excitement disappeared and was replaced, for a moment, by a feeling that I'll never be able to describe again, it was closer to fear than anything else, and then replaced by absolute joy. This feeling held for the rest of the night.

When all was said and done I walked up to Lar and talked to him for a bit. I told him how much I enjoyed the set and a smile broke across his face. That's a great moment. I've never really been starstruck but standing in-front of Vin all I could blurt out was some nonsense about Cork and Adebisi Shank and how they



should come together more often. He endured 20 minutes of this while also replying with words - words that I do not remember, but at the time they made perfect sense and made me deliriously happy. This is the Second Album of a Band Called Adebisi Shank might as well have grown limbs, patted me on the head and acknowledged my existence. I bought 4 freddos, walked back to my girlfriend's house and fell asleep 10 minutes into 10 Things I Hate About You. I'll never forget that night.

A month earlier something similar happened when I went to see ASIYWFA, I spoke to Tony for 10 minutes. At all the gigs I went to in the Quad or any of the gigs I go to now if I enjoyed it I always try to tell someone from the band. In those seconds or minutes where you exchange a few words you get to connect to the artist on another level, a more human level. This person whose entire being is composed of bleeps and bleeps in your mind is having a drink and enjoying themselves. Personally, I

love this aspect of local music. After years of "You guys mean a lot to us! All 50,000 of you who stand here" being the only one-way dialogue I could have with the artists I liked, it was rewarding to be able to tell someone what their music meant to me and see them appreciate it. It's definitely something that draw me back and draws me in deeper every time.

When the Richter Collective announced it was closing, all corners of Ireland belatedly wished them the best. On the surface all that happened is a label closed. None of the bands broke up so we still get enjoy them. Mick and Barry will still be involved in music. The roof that was over the artists on RC had collapsed but they'll move to a different home. However, RC was always imbued with a unshakable sense of community. The Richter Collective wasn't just the bands and the people directly involved. It was everyone. Everyone who ever thrashed around sweatily at one their gigs, bought their releases

or shook their hand after a gig. RC helped people create some of their fondest memories and soundtracked them with some of their favourite music. Needless to say I have my ticket for Nov. 24 and I'll up there right at front. When the final dissonant chord rings out at that final gig it'll never end because the relationships that RC inspired won't end. Irish music has a brilliant community spirit and, while I won't attribute that directly to RC, they certainly drove it forward.

You can be as involved in or a detached from the community as you want. There's a place for everyone, writers, photographers, artists, pumpkin carvers, musicians, promoters and people who just want to make friends. It's great to see people bond over a love of good music. One particular part of Ireland that really benefits from and contributes to the sense of community are the independent record stores all over Ireland. Plug'd, Elastic Witch, Wing Nut Records (Ray WingNut is going to take over the world, lads) and a

load more.

I go into Plug'd fairly regularly, if I want an album I'll always buy it there, even if it's a euro or two dearer than HMV or wherever. It's not just a place where you buy a product and leave, you invest in an important establishment. You help Albert and Jim pay their bills while they tell you what new releases they like or why Spurs are the bee knees. Most of the time when I go in I just want to chat. I stand there for ages browsing the same shelves over and over just so I can stay a bit longer, I'll put an album behind the counter and pretend I have to get money just so I have a reason to come back again later.

I'm sure it's that same sense of community that has incited Nay over at Harmless Noise or Nialler9 or countless other Irish music blogs to write great articles on great bands. It inspires artists to work creatively with each other and that's pretty fantastic. It makes people contribute with whatever skill it is that they have. Everyone can be involved if they want to. That's another thing that makes me come back.

I think my two points feed each other. Irish music is more than a scene of musicians. It's a community, a collective of people. It goes beyond being merely about music to being about connections, collaborations and relationships. The music is fantastic but I think the people are more so. Remember, without you it doesn't exist and without it you lose a slice of meaning and direction. It reminds us that we are good people and it helps us acknowledge that we are only as good as what we do. Don't be afraid to get involved. Those ideas you have for a gig, podcast, band or blog can come to fruition in the fertile soil of Ireland. Storm your local record store. Storm your local venue. Connect, collaborate, create. Get involved.

Youth Lagoon - Wondrous Bughouse Review

George Murphy

AFTER the release of his first album, 'The Year of Hibernation', in 2010, Trevor Powers' music was widely referred to as bedroom rock. It was an intimate journey through the anxious mind of the 22 year-old. His songs were drenched in psychedelic flourishes and driven by brilliant melodic hooks. Now, for his second album, Wondrous Bughouse, his curtains has been drawn back and the whole world is looking in to see what his next move is.

Despite the obvious fact that, due to his popularity, Powers' has presumably got help from a professional producer to tidy up his raw mixes, Wondrous Bughouse still feels like a Youth Lagoon record. Powers' meek voice-- albeit not as

reverb-drenched as it was on his debut-- echoes out over a colourful array of sounds. His compositions are still inflated by a psychedelic fuzz that accentuates the melody of each track.

Lyricaly, Wondrous Bughouse has that same child-like innocence as, The Year of Hibernation. On 'Dropla', Powers recites "you'll never die, you'll never die," like a brutally optimistic mantra. The child-like innocence of the lyrics on his debut is still a major part of his new album. Powers' ear for a seriously catchy melody hasn't waned; after one listen, it's easy to recall all the major melodic riffs on the album.

Yet, for all its catchiness, Wondrous Bughouse is a rewarding as anything else. There's a lot going on in a lot of the tracks and, when revisited, there's something new to take from it--



particularly on the opener 'Through the Mind and Back'. If there was any weight of expectation on Powers'

shoulders, he's definitely met it with an incredibly accomplished second album and avoided the dreaded

"Sophomore Slump."

Damien Dempsey - Almighty Love Review

William Nolan

For Damien Dempsey fans, the last four years have dragged by, as they waited patiently for new material from the Donaghmeade man. In fact, Euro 2012 single "The Rocky Road to Poland" aside, much hasn't been seen of Dempsey for a few years, since he took a well-deserved break from touring after the release of the last album, as well as reportedly suffering from minor bouts of depression. But finally the wait is over, as Damo's sixth studio album "Almighty Love" is set to hit store shelves on the 28th of September. So has the wait been worthwhile?

The first thing any fan will notice upon hearing the album is the difference in Dempsey's diction. The strong, often unintelligible Dublin brogue, which was often a barrier for newcomers, has cleared significantly, something which the man himself puts down to extensive touring in the UK and Australia over the past few years. If anything, this adds even more power to the often poignant and heart-breaking lyrics which grace the album in songs like "Chris and Stevie", a song about two of Dempsey's childhood friends lost to suicide. It is a song which really stands out on the album, not just for its message, but for the haunting chorus on which Sinead O'Connor plays a pivotal role.

The album opens with a soaring "Intro", before unleashing into the title track (which incidentally is one of the stand out tracks). At first, it seems as if Dempsey is going in a wholly new direction, with a far more

reggae vibe in the earlier part of the album, especially in "Born Without Hate" (which features a powerful rap section by up and coming London artist Kate Tempest). But as the album progresses, it definitely reverts to the trademark Damien Dempsey sound – familiar guitar strumming and heavy reverberating drum rhythms which have been a feature of his music from the beginning-- which fans know and love, and get progressively more so with each passing song. I'm not saying that the sound needed to change, but at the same time I can't help but be a little disappointed that this new sound wasn't explored further.

Tracks thunder past at breakneck speed at times. After my first full listen, I found it hard to believe that an hour had gone by. Even the lengthier tracks towards the back end of the album are fast paced, and generally don't outstay their welcome.

Overall, the album proves to be just about worth the wait. It cements Dempsey's uniqueness as an artist, and may finally serve to shake off comparisons to Luke Kelly, which intensified following the release of "The Rocky Road", an album choc-full of songs synonymous with Kelly. While I don't believe many of the album's songs will become as iconic among fans as "Colony" or "Sing All Our Cares Away", I have no doubt that a number of tracks will become very welcome additions to the live show set list.

If you're a Damien Dempsey fan, you're likely to enjoy this immensely. If you're not, I have my reservations that this will be the album to convert



you. And if you're in that rare cohort of people who haven't heard Dempsey's music, then this may be just the introduction you need.

Rest - I Hold The Wolf Review

James O'Mahony

Rest's debut album, 'Burning in Water, Drowning in Flame', was a post-rock/metal album that was released at a time when lengthy progressive jams were very much in vogue. In the nine years that have passed between the release of their debut album and their follow-up, 'I Hold the Wolf', Rest have severed all ties to their former selves and released a slab of genre-crossing metal.

The new sound is apparent from the first few seconds of the album's opener 'Babylon - Constructing the Cosmos' which opens with a high-pitched angular riff. There are plenty of opportunities to catch your breath on 'I Hold the Wolf'; crushing, cathartic guitars often segue into a clean, exploratory sound. 'Scaradh' begins with some ambient electronic buzz which locks into a gloomy guitar and synth groove.

No matter how slowly they reach it, you always know the destination each song going to eventually arrive at: monolithic guitar and drum racket. It never really becomes tiresome because it's essentially what you'd

expect from most metal albums. 'Descent With Modification', the first single released from the album, is one of the most satisfyingly aggressive songs in recent memory. Over the course of 4 minutes it morphs from one beast into a completely different one, without losing any of its momentum.

The highlight of the album is 'The Waters Withdraw', which sounds like a cut from Leviathan-era Mastodon. The acoustic passage at the beginning has a meaty, substantial tone and, as the songs progresses, it changes from slow-moving and eerily atmospheric to a fast-paced jam. Harmonising guitars warble over the crash of cymbals.

This is a really strong metal album and one of the best Irish metal albums I've heard in a while. Rest manage to make it feel substantial without ever becoming over-indulgent. 'I Hold the Wolf' is the culmination of 9 years meticulous planning but it never feels overwrought.



Films That Had An Impact On Me

Paul Saunders

If you were to ask somebody their favourite film most will struggle to give you an answer because they have so many films they love that they can't narrow it down. Films are universal they touch everybody across the world, when on co-op in China we didn't really share similar interests but the one interest we could share was films.

There are some films that have really affected me or some that just made me go "Wow" I have just watched a masterpiece. Firstly, Pulp Fiction just blew me away. Watching it for the first time most people are scratching their heads trying to work things out but I was genuinely just shocked at how amazing it was. It combined everything you wanted in a film; it was funny, cool, tense, violent, and quite outrageous. I have never laughed so much at somebody dying before and if you show anybody the "Marvin" scene they'll nearly die laughing too. It made you think that one shouldn't be laughing at this but it's too damn hilarious not to. It's also a real inspiration for up and coming filmmakers because it shows films as something anybody can do. Throw in enough pop culture references and you'll get yourself a classic.

This may seem like a giant shift



in tone coming from Pulp Fiction but Up has to be a film that is quite amazing. It shows Pixar at its best. While I'm sure many of you had this uncontrollable leaking from their eyes for no strange reason watching Toy Story 3, for me Up was the film that just literally turned me into a complete mess. If you have seen it and you're not crying after watching the first ten minutes then you could quite possibly be heartless. I personally

believe that it is Pixar's best and while watching it you'll be sad, exhilarated and above else wonderfully happy and charmed by the end of one of the sweetest movies ever.

You might be thinking romantic comedies aren't the most powerful films, in the world but I would be inclined to argue. The romantic comedy genre back in the 70s and 80s was a huge critical success long before it has fell into this generic brand seen

nowadays. And the two best for me are done by the master of the romantic comedy and that's Woody Allen. Most of you are thinking he doesn't sound like the kind of guy who could do a good romantic comedy after marrying his kind-of daughter but he has delivered some of the greatest cinema we will ever see. The two films are Annie Hall and Hannah and her Sisters. Annie Hall follows the struggling life of Alvy Singer (Allen)

and his relationship with Annie Hall, it's a very romantic and often hilarious film about two people who just can't get their relationship right which is very relatable to most people. The second film I think surpasses Annie Hall in certain respects. It follows the struggles of three sisters, one who is successful, talented and has everything, one who is addicted to drugs and struggling to get her life together and the last one is having an affair with the first sister's husband and is frustrated that he won't leave her. The topic of an affair isn't the most romantic but watching Michael Caine who won an Oscar for this role play a love struck but shy man is completely worth the watch. It also features a superb jazz soundtrack and is definitely worth the watch. Allen is the master of the genre which is why thanks to my amazing girlfriend I now have his autograph.

Films have a unique appeal to just about everybody and if you don't like the films I have discussed that doesn't matter those films are special to me and I'm sure you have a list of films that are just as equally special to you, which is the beauty of cinema it's for everybody. You'll always find something you hate but you also find those special movies that have a profound effect on you like no other.

The Best Shows You're (Probably) Not Watching

Joe O'Brien

I always hear people talk about how there is never anything on television. How there are no good TV shows floating around these days, and how all the best television days are behind us. I am here to tell you (yes, you!) that this is a load of rubbish, and that I truly believe that we are currently experiencing one of the best eras the small screen has ever seen.

The demand for quality programming has never been so high, with literally hundreds of new shows being picked up by television networks. Also, with the internet being most people's optimal choice of medium, there is really no excuse for not exposing yourself to the variety of terrific shows that are out there. If there's one thing that I've learned from my many years of watching, analyzing and obsessing over TV, it's that ratings does not equal quality.

The Big Bang Theory is America's most watched unscripted show, and is a prime example of this. Although it's certainly a watchable show, with a chuckle every now and then, it's fairly predictable, uninspired stuff. Then you have a show like Parks and Recreation, the brainchild of Greg Daniels and Michael Schur who were

responsible for The US Office. Parks is a "mockumentary" style sitcom. It has arguably the best comedy cast on TV, including Amy Poehler, Aziz Ansari and Rob Lowe, to name but a few. These are actors who are on top of their game. They are talented, full of life and when watching the show, it is so easy to see just how much fun they are having. Most importantly, the characters they play are genuinely funny and lovable, which is a credit to the witty group of writers the show possesses. Going by American viewing ratings, it's easy to see why a show like this could be overlooked. It averages roughly 3.5 million viewers, which is merely a footnote on The Big Bang Theory's current season rating of around 20 million. A figure that makes me feel a tad bit ill. Ignore the figures and seek this show out online (It hasn't reached DVD in this region just yet, but Netflix has got it).

Again, on the note of sitcoms with lower ratings, NBC's Community is something, which unless you're rather nerdy, you may not have encountered yet. Despite the current season being the weakest and, most likely, last season, it's holds easily the biggest cult following since Arrested Development (which, on a side-note is the best show ever. Just watch it), and is certainly

better than the vast majority of its competitors.

It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia just finished up its 8th season on FX, and was created by Rob McElhenney, who also stars with co-writers Charlie Day and Glen Howerton. It's a low budget show made by friends having a laugh. And it shows. The chemistry between the three leads is fantastic, they play off each other, and if you don't mind the ruder, more politically incorrect side of comedy, then this one might be for you. Check it out.

With regard to non-comedy shows, we currently enjoy a great choice of American exports. HBO gave us the, in my opinion, overrated, but still impressive fantasy epic, Game of Thrones and recent years have seen other networks push their way in too. AMC boasts some of the best dramas on TV, including The Walking Dead, and the holy grail that is Breaking Bad. But, it's AMC's lesser talked about show Mad Men which deserves the attention.

Mad Men is something, which at first glance is something you might sneer at. A show set in the 60's about middle aged men sitting around in an office, smoking and drinking but before Mad Men, I didn't know how incredibly entertaining that could really be!



When trying to explain what the show is like to someone, there is no word I use more often than "atmosphere". A lot of the episodes might be slow moving and "unexciting", but every aspect of the show is so pitch perfect. The acting, writing, direction, set design, music are all sublime, you can't help but be in awe of it. Oh, and the creator and head writer of the show, Matthew Weiner is of Sopranos alumni, so, that says enough in itself. Season 6 is starting this April. You better start catching up.

I couldn't live with myself if I didn't briefly mention a little gem of a show called Enlightened. I only just finished

watching the show myself this week. It weighs a mere 18 episodes, and was only just cancelled. A pity really, because Mike White and Laura Dern's HBO drama/black comedy is beautifully woven, funny, charming and incredibly poignant. It's something I highly, highly recommend.

So, next time you sit down to watch that episode of Friends on Comedy Central that you've already seen 700 times, don't complain that there's never anything good on. Go explore. There are hours and hours of great television out there. It's just a matter of filtering out the gold from the turds.

Screen Icon - Humphrey Bogart

Paul Saunders

Regularly placed on the list of greatest actors of all time Humphrey Bogart is idealised by some to be the toughest, coolest, and most romantic character ever to grace the film screen. Bogart shot to fame the 1930's and starred in some of the greatest classics of early 20th century cinema. Bogart is most remembered for his portrayal of the broken hearted club owner Rick Blaine in *Casablanca* and the majority of you will instantly be able to quote some of the greatest lines in cinema history. But Bogart was much more than just Rick and I'd rather discuss some other characters he portrayed, defining the generation.

Bogart is the quintessential private detective starring in numerous films as a loner in a trench coat and fedora that must unravel a web of lies and deceit. After starring in John Huston's first film *The Maltese Falcon* he shot to fame. Huston who had never directed before decided to take a risk casting Bogart. The film was already a giant risk itself as it had already been adapted to film two previous times and they were both flops. Huston decided that if he only got one chance to make a film he wanted to make it

the way he wanted and to everyone's surprise the film was a massive success and was considered "the stuff that dreams were made of" and yes, that quote you've probably said or heard before came from that film.

Bogart took the lead in other films trying to show his versatility as an actor and in one such instance he played a mad scientist with spiked up hair but it was when he played the strong hero who would stop at nothing to obtain the truth that he truly shined. It never seemed like he was playing the same characters in every film. He portrayed Raymond Chandler's iconic detective Philip Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* which, without a doubt, has one of the most confusing plots ever and makes *Inception* seem like child's play, but just watching Bogart investigate this convoluted mess makes the trip completely worthwhile. He also starred in other classics such as *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* following three drifters search for gold, the early gangster movie *High Sierra* which features a *Scarface* like shootout in the Sierra Mountains, the alcoholic violent writer in *In a Lonely Place* and his Oscar winning role as Charlie, a

steamboat captain in *The African Queen*. Bogart carved himself out a smart-aleck, tough but incredibly lovable guy and once you get familiar with his persona it is quite enjoyable to watch him play against type, he even parodied himself in one of the earliest parody films in cinema called *Beat the Devil*. Bogart makes fun of himself constantly throughout the movie as he plays a slightly wimpy character and features numerous trademarks of the film noir genre but makes absolutely no sense but this time it is on purpose as neither do the characters in the film which adds to its enjoyment. He did lose a lot of money on the film and thus hated it. He despised it so much he didn't bother to renew its copyright.

But Bogart will forever be remembered for his portrayal of Rick Blaine the depressed alcoholic who just can't get over the loss of the love of his life. *Casablanca* can be universally agreed on as a film masterpiece. If you have watched the film and wonder why I am not quoting during this article it is because there are just too many amazing quotes from that movie to just pick one. I could say that this article doesn't amount to



"A Hill of Beans" or "Of all the gin joints in all towns in all the world, she walks into mine", "This could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship". Any film buff can't call themselves that unless they have seen this film

in my opinion! So check out some vintage Bogart this weekend and you will not be disappointed! "Here's looking at you kid", sorry just couldn't resist!

Why I Love The Cinema: Perspectives From Home and Abroad

The Home Perspective: Dearbaile Houston

While it is nice to have home comforts watching a film, nothing can be compared to the cinema. Detractors can complain all they like about rising ticket prices, the cost of refreshments or fellow cinemagoers but to me going to the cinema is akin to a religious experience.

Seeing a film on the big screen is hard to match. You take your seat, ticket stub already put away as a sentimental keepsake, the smell of popcorn and high quality surround sound filling the air. No interruptions, no ad-breaks or pauses for buffering - just you and the film. The cinematic experience is all encompassing and something near impossible to re-create at home. Think of all the times your viewing has been interrupted by questions, a bad internet connection, the phone ringing, and all other mundane aspects of home. I love watching a batch of films one after another on the couch in a pair of mismatched pyjamas as much as the next person but a trip to the cinema? There's something still exciting about going there, perhaps it is a hangover of childhood wonderment. Back then being taken to the cinema meant a birthday party or a day out, the ultimate fun thing to do.

One of my favourite things about going to the cinema is being in a room full of strangers but experiencing the same thing at the same time. All of you laughing, and feeling and taking

in a story together. The social aspect of watching films at home proves to be more of an annoyance than a profound experience. It becomes less about watching and more about fielding questions about plot points and characters. It's like a press conference. Talking is frowned upon in theaters; you can even get thrown out of a cinema for talking too much. This is just one of the many ways I think life should be more like cinemas. Well, that and all the popcorn.

For me, watching films at home is the least productive way to watch a film. There are too many distractions. I don't think I'm alone in getting bored or otherwise entertained half way through a film only to forget about whatever I'm watching. This is simply not an option in the cinema because it is so immersion and, also because you have probably spent a sizable portion of your hard-earned money on a ticket so the film has to be pretty bad before you even think of leaving. In the cinema, there is nothing more pressing than the film itself. You can't pause a film in the cinema, there is no intermission. This is often noted as a negative but I love the captivity of cinemas. Going to the cinema is the nicest way to be held hostage for 90 minutes. I sometimes feel that there is something not gained in watching a film at home instead of in the theatre. A story will never ingrain itself in me as much as it does if I have seen it on the big screen.

So say what you will about the future

of cinemas, surcharges on 3D glasses or stale popcorn. Just think about that reverential hush once the lights dim and the trailers begin. There's really nothing like it.

An Abroad Perspective: Barbara Koskó

In the last months I took to going to the cinema. It might be my backwardness - or my first experience with the big screen which is said to have been a disaster to which I do not remember but I guess my subconscious vividly does -, but I spent years of my teenage life opposing against the cinema before I realized how great it is. Reasons like the price, the toilet issue or the noisily dating couple behind me come as my black list of the cinema. Strange as it may seem I kept every single ticket I have ever bought.

Although we can buy huge TVs or expensive wall-covering projectors with sophisticated audio-visual equipment and cover the sofa with leftovers of popcorn, it is still not the same. We can download anything nowadays, often on the very day of the release, turn up the volume full blast, lean back and enjoy, but we do not get the little interludes. And it is not about the old clichés that the screen is still bigger in the cinema. First and foremost, going to the cinema means that you undertake the movie you want to watch as you have to - at least - murmur the title



to the cashier. In return, you can giggle at the henpecked boyfriends suffering during the newest *Twilight* episode or smile on the complaints of the grandmothers about the extreme noise conditions when taking the kids to Hotel Transylvania. My favourites are the elderly couples holding each other's hand while watching *Up!* and murmuring about the nice old times.

Then, there is the fact that we can actually miss the movie in the cinema - as opposed to the tv series which it is impossible to be late for with the smart televisions devices these days; We have to arrive in time and sit back to be part of something we cannot gain control over. It is not our personal game with avatars and Wiis, it is something old fashioned. And in this sense, it takes us back in time a bit.

Also, cinemas still have a bit of a theatre-like atmospheres where we

laugh and cry - or try not to cry, together with dozens of strangers who have the same on their minds. In our self-centered century where, thanks to the countless types of gadgets occupying our attention full time, we can hardly be with someone in total even if we are sitting right next to them on the bus. It is a relief to know that we can still feel a connection in the dark cinema.

I have never been as shocked after leaving the living room as I felt after leaving the multiplex when there was no snow outside after *Narnia*, or no one came to rescue us when we got lost on the highway still living in the reality of *Gotham City*. This is again something only a cinema experience can give: the sudden shift between the two realities when the lights cruelly turn on and we are left with nothing on our way back home.

UL Kayak Club White-Water Antics & Success at Awards Night

Mícheál Howard

The last few weeks for the UL Kayak Club have been a rollercoaster of success and adventure for the club. Recently at the Clubs and Societies Ball ULKC was awarded “Best Club” award and “Best Club Event” award for the 2013 Kayak Intersivity’s. The club is delighted to receive these two great awards and see’s it as recognition of all the great work the club members and committee over the past year. Simon McCormack, former Club Captain (2012-2013) said he “was delighted to see the club receive these awards and would like to thank all the other clubs and societies on UL for their recognition of our achievements.”

Following their success at the awards night, on Friday the 22nd of March, 21 members of ULKC travelled to Sligo for a weekend of paddling fun, training and adventure. The groups stayed in holiday homes in the small seaside town of Enniscrone. On the Saturday there was an early start and the whole group went to the Deel River, a nice consistent Grade 2 river with plenty of rapids for training sessions. This involved practicing boat maneuvering skills such as breaking in and out of the main flow on rapids, travelling across rapids as well as more advanced members practicing some safety skills and group leading skills. Saturday evening five members took on the challenge of paddling the Ballysadare rapids. This was a short but very technical and challenging set of rapids culminating with a twenty-five foot waterfall at the end. On Sunday the group paddled the Upper Clydagh, Co. Mayo. However due to low water levels to group only paddled a short section of the river, which included the “Five Steps” rapid.

Despite the low river levels on Sunday the trip was a great success,



with many new skills learned by all members and enjoyed by all.

Over the next few weeks there will be more river trips run by the club as they prepare for a three-week kayaking trip to the Italian and Slovenian

Alps. This trip will include Level 4 and Level 5 kayak skills training, the highest form of training available. There will also be River and Group leading training run as well over the course of the three weeks. The trip

is open to all club members of any ability from beginner to expert.

For anyone who wants to get involved with the club or find out more information about the upcoming alps trip, they can find more information

on the club website at <http://kayak.csn.ul.ie/> or by emailing the club at ulkayak@gmail.com.

UL History Society- We're still around you know!

Patrick Mulcahy

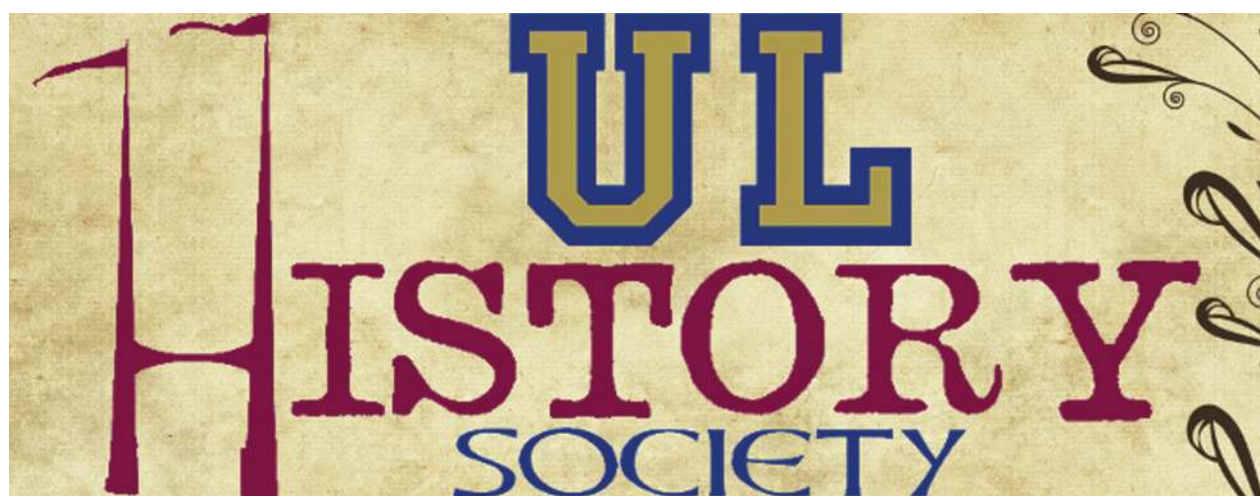
February 28 last, The History Society held its Agm. Each member of the outgoing committee stepped aside meaning that a completely new committee was elected. Patrick Mulcahy was unopposed in his election as President of the Society, Grace Courtney was elected Secretary, Marian O'Donnell became Treasurer, Andy Reddin was elected PRO and Dan McInerney, the new Events Officer.

The elections for the Secretary and Events Positions were particularly competitive, with three people being nominated for Events Officer, thus showing many that the History Society has the potential for growth again and with the New Committee eager to hit the ground running. The Society has

begun engaging again with the student body, gauging the most popular activities that would appeal to people.

We feel it is important to mention that we are a society first and history loving second. This distinction is necessary so as not to dissuade students of other disciplines from joining. The New Committee is experienced, with some of the members having served on Committees of other Societies. The New Committee has been busy establishing contact with the history department to hear ideas that may prove productive. The New Committee wishes the re-invent the society somewhat and the New PRO has designed the new society logo.

After a period of decline, the outgoing committee succeeded in encouraging interest in the society culminating in a most successful night



at the Banquet at Bunratty Castle in Co.Clare last semester. The New Committee's main objectives are to maintain this progress and revitalise the society. Ultimately, it is the student interest which will dictate whether

we become relevant again which is why we strongly welcome feedback from students about what kind of activities they would like to see and come along to them. We are building from a low base and we hope to hold

some informal events in a relaxed atmosphere and move it from there.

If you wish to join the History Society, email ulhistorysociety@gmail.com

UL Ninjas travel to Dublin for Mixed Intervarsities

Caoimhe O' Sullivan

It was an early start for the UL Ninjas Mixed squad with their first game kicking off at nine against the relatively new team of ITB (Institute of Technology Blancharstown). It was a great warm up game for the team and saw them gel together and take an easy victory with a final score of 13 - 1.

There was no rest for the team with their next game following straight after against Trinity. It was an exceptionally close fought game with UL establishing an early lead. Trinity were soon back in it, and both teams traded points for the remainder of the game. The final score 9 - 7 was unfortunately in Trinity's favour, but the Ninjas were happy with their overall performance.

Our next game saw us come against the Mixed winners from the previous year UCD. UCD dominated the opening half of the game, but the UL Ninjas regrouped, came out fighting and took control of the game reducing the margin. Unfortunately UCD continued to add points to the board even with our comeback. The final score was 10 - 5 to UCD.

Not dismayed by our defeat, we looked ahead to our next game against the tournament hosts DIT. This game got off to a great start with UL dominating early on. DIT started to get back into it but the Ninjas continued to increase their lead through some great plays. The final score saw 10 - 5 victory to UL.

Our final game of the day saw us face NUIM. Shrugging off the tiredness



that was creeping into the team we drew on our last energy reserves. The Ninjas started off excellently and only built on that, never allowing NUIM to get a strong hold in the game.

With some great offensive plays it resulted in one of our best results of the day, with a final score of 13 - 1 to UL, which saw us finish in 6th - an excellent result for the Ninjas.

Congratulations to our MVP for the tournament Jamie Chambers, our MSP Barry Walsh and finally to Hannah McDonald for winning A Game. Finally a big thank you to DIT

for hosting the tournament, a great day was had by all!

UL Boarders Enjoy Success And A Brilliant Weekend At Intervarsities

Kalani Moore

The weekend began haphazardly to say the least. Late sign-ups, late drivers and forgotten equipment all contributing to ensure a stressed but excited bunch of individuals turned up outside the stables on Friday evening, laden with boards, wetsuits and, knowing Kerry's reputation, a lot of waterproof gear. A weekend in the water was anticipated, both on land and off it.

Sign-ups completed and finger food devoured in Spillane's pub, the time came to inspect the accommodation, an amazing 12 person house on the beach in Brandon Bay. A laid back night was then enjoyed, everyone mindful that competitors needed to be in top condition for the contest in the morning. Saturday came and proved to be one of the coolest days in many of our lives, exceeding all expectations. The scene was set even as we arrived in the morning. Blistering sun, clean overhead waves, a marquee with resident DJ, and even a PORTABLE SAUNA (we were as surprised as anybody) were all nestled in the sand

dunes. All this, with a backdrop of snow topped mountains made the question "are we still dreaming?" very much valid. It was all real and a great day of competition ensued with all surfers from UL making it past their first round heats and those being introduced to surfing for the first time emerging from the water with beaming smiles (and a few shivers) from the water. Anybody out of the water filled time by taking turns on skateboards racing up and down the empty country roads, and just relaxing either in the dunes or sauna, appreciating the tunes being pumped from the marquee. By evening the finalists for all categories had been decided and as darkness descended everyone retired to the house to cook up a feast of bolognese. The night out was crazy, with nobody having expected to be dancing in a marquee with 100 others on the beach at 2 a.m. 24 hours earlier! It really was unbelievable.

Competition concluded with some great action, a few airs even being thrown down by top competitors. Stand out performances by UL came from Ben O'Connor and



Photo by Tim Smith

Jack Sutcliffe, placing second and fourth respectively, helping UL to 6th place finish out of 11 overall and winning goodie bags full of ripcurl

gear! Cleaning was done, a final surf enjoyed, goodbyes were said, promises of a return were made and that was it, a truly awesome weekend done and

dusted, one which will live long in all our memories.

**TRADING MINDS: AN
EXCHANGE OF IDEAS****PRESS
RELEASE**

Contact: Mark Murphy (Head) Kevin Mulligan (Media Officer)
Phone: 0879945571 0868413033
Email: tradingminds353@gmail.com

The first annual **Trading Minds: An Exchange of Ideas** forum will take place on **17th April 2013**, in the **University of Limerick's Kemmy Business School**. Trading Minds is a new and exciting intervarsity initiative, bringing students from all of Ireland's major universities together for the nation's first and only dedicated finance and investment forum. The event has been made an official partner of the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET).

Industry leaders and economic experts such as Hugo MacNeill (MD Goldman Sachs), Brian O'Reilly (Head of Strategy, Davy Stockbrokers), Robert Johnson (Head of INET), Stephen Kinsella (UL Economics Lecturer), Donal Donovan (Irish Fiscal Advisory Council), and Limerick native Brendan O'Connor (Department of Finance) will be the event's key speakers, to name but a few.

An Exchange of Ideas

The global financial landscape has changed dramatically in the last few years. With the world in flux, how will we overcome the challenging economic issues of our time? Trading Minds aims to promote fresh thinking among students, create a national exchange of ideas between industry and students, and give students the opportunity to showcase their talents.

Trading Minds will be a key stepping stone in creating a financial community whose fresh ideas will lead to new policies, responsible investment, and improved financial awareness.

Stephen Kinsella, UL Economics Lecturer: "This event is exactly what students of finance should be looking to for the creation of a community of people who question the status quo and push against the old ideas that have caused us so much trouble in recent years. I can't wait to see what they come up with."

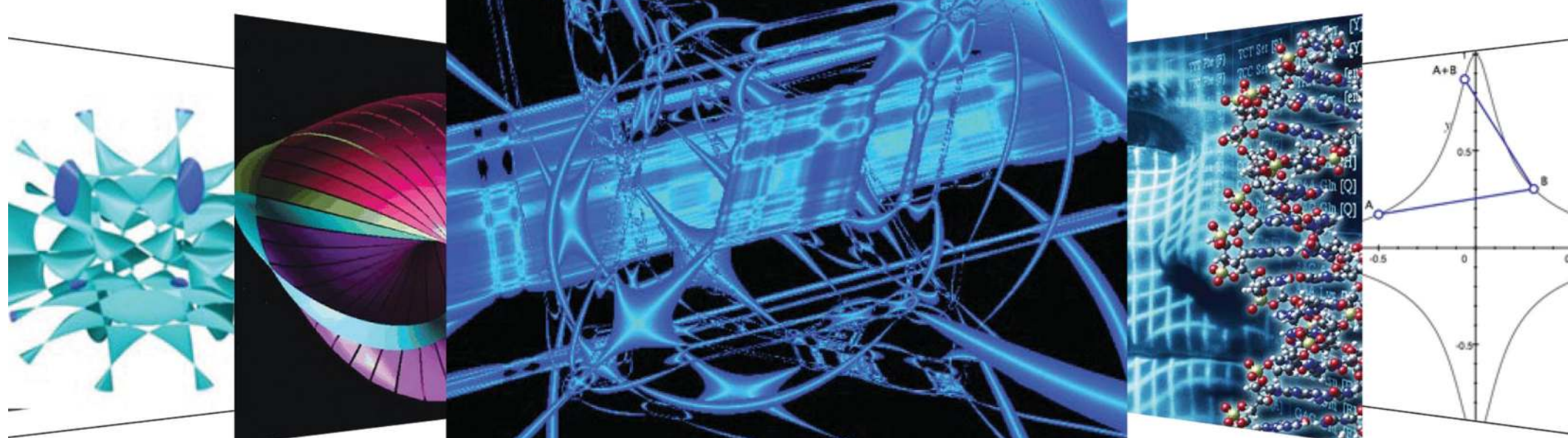
Highly Interactive

Unique among student forums, Trading Minds specifically aims to engage students with industry leaders on the most pressing financial issues of today. As such, the forum will be highly interactive, with audience participation encouraged throughout. Trading Minds will be webcasted live, and have a live twitter feed to allow those watching online to participate.

Financial Pitch Competition

In front of a panel of financial industry leaders and economists, students will get the opportunity to pitch financial, economic or investment related ideas. A fantastic opportunity in itself, substantial prizes are also on offer for the best three pitches.

Peter D. Sutherland, former Attorney General: "I wish to commend the initiative of creating the Student Finance and Investment Forum Trading Minds 2013 to be held in the Kemmy School at the University of Limerick on April 17th. I am sure this will provide an opportunity for real interaction with industry leaders and policy makers for the benefit of all who take part. The organisers are to be applauded."

UCD School of Mathematical Sciences
www.ucd.ie/mathsciences

Graduate Studies

UCD School of Mathematical Sciences

Why study with the UCD School of Mathematical Sciences?

The School is the largest of its kind in Ireland. It is a dynamic, multi-disciplinary department spanning the three disciplines of Mathematics, Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics and Actuarial Science. The school engages in research of international renown and teaches students in almost all of the colleges of the University.

UCD School of Mathematical Sciences invites applications to its graduate programmes from graduate and final-year undergraduate students with backgrounds in quantitative disciplines such as Mathematics, Statistics, Engineering, Economics, Finance and Physics.

Programmes available:

Grad Dip/ MSc Actuarial Science (Institute and Faculty of Actuaries accredited)

MA Statistics/MSc Statistics (Royal Statistical Society accredited)

HDip Mathematical Sciences, HDip Mathematical Studies & HDip Statistics

MSc Mathematics, MSc Mathematical Sciences, MSc Meteorology,

MSc Simulation Science

PhD's in Statistics, Applied and Computational Mathematics, Simulation Science and Mathematics

Further information and scholarship information
www.ucd.ie/mathsciences/graduatestudents

Questions?
Contact pgstudies@maths.ucd.ie

False feminism is more harmful than chauvinism

Darragh Roche

THE IRISH Sun has a two page section aimed exclusively at women. 'Sun Woman' aims to present topics women will find interesting, while at the same time acting as a counterweight to the very male-focused sections of the paper, particularly Page 3. This might be admirable on the face of it, but a quick read of its content puts that idea to bed. 'Sun Woman' is sexism in disguise. Like many media today, it takes traditional sexism and repackages it for women. On Thursday, 28 March it devoted two pages to a story entitled 'We just love to dress up as Disney heroines'. The article featured several young women who said they did not feel comfortable unless they were dressed as the Little Mermaid, Cinderella et al. These women were so uncomfortable in their bodies that they felt the need to act out fictional roles of totally unrealistic women. Saying they felt prettier and more comfortable dressed as Disney princesses, this article was the perfect example of how gender performativity is ingrained in media aimed at women. Performativity means that women are socially induced to behave, look and dress in ways that are defined as feminine. This includes when women are 'supposed' to look pretty, wear make-up, keep up with current

fashions, be maternal, be passive etc. In the past, this was achieved through oppression, both actual and socialised. Today, however, it's no longer possible for men to openly oppress women – so we've found a more insidious way. Media, aimed at women, pretending to be feminist, promotes exactly the same sexist ideas that have plagued society for centuries.

'Sun Woman' is an excellent example. On its website, it carries articles about which celebrities look good, which ones don't, how to lose weight and all the usual things we expect from most women's magazines today. Papers like the Sun, as well as magazines, routinely engage in slut-shaming, fat-shaming, promoting gender norms (such as maternity) and praising women who conform to beauty and social stereotypes. This is a double-edged approach to making women perform: on the one hand, women are told they should criticise other women who deviate from accepted behaviour (this includes gaining weight, being unfaithful etc) while admiring women who perform their role well (by dressing well, raising children, getting married in a lavish ceremony etc). And the most insidious thing is that none of these ideas are presented as sexist stereotypes. Magazines written by women about women and aimed at

women peddle sexism and chauvinism but are happy to pretend that it's empowering, and worse, that it's normal female behaviour. Women are exposed to these media from cradle to grave, so it's no wonder many women buy into them.



no doubt thought he was being very progressive and pro-female. Ms Porter may be a good president because she is a good leader, or an accomplished politician, or intelligent or talented but under no circumstances will she be good because she is a woman. The idea that her reproductive organs would make her maternal (bearing in mind that maternal behaviour is cultural and differs from culture to culture and across time) is ludicrous. Saying that a woman is better because of her sex is exactly the same as saying a man is better because of his sex. It is sexist and ridiculous. Unfortunately, this is another example of the false feminism that pervades society at all levels. It is a combination of media actively cloaking sexism as something women should adopt and people who just don't know what they're talking about.

I look forward to a time when women are not assumed to behave in a certain way because of the organs they're born with, though I know that is far away. For now, we need to recognise that not everything that claims to be feminist really is. In fact, the idea that feminism is mainstream has allowed sexism to cloak itself in the trappings of gender equality and perpetuate all the harms that feminists fight so hard to undo.

Many people present themselves as feminists and yet are exactly the opposite. A particular blog commenting on ULSU politics recently suggested that newly elected president Emma Porter will be good because the SU needs a mother figure. The author

Marriage Equality is more than 'Civil partnerships'

Sean Duggan

The United States Supreme Court is currently reviewing a constitutional challenge to Section 8 of the 1996 Defence of Marriage act, which defines 'marriage' as being between a man and a woman. This definition of marriage, which is important for over 1000 US federal laws on taxes and federal benefits, effectively denies equal treatment to same-sex marriages at the national level. It's a reminder that while marriage is a huge personal commitment, it has important practical and financial effects as to how the state and the law treat you, your partner and your children.

In Ireland, same-sex couples are granted certain rights under the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act of 2010. This act does not grant same-sex couples the right to get married as such, but the right to enter into a 'civil partnership', which includes similar (but not exactly the same) legal rights and obligations as marriage, which remains open to opposite-sex couples only. Leaving aside the inappropriateness of offering different legal rights and protections to those in heterosexual 'Marriages' and those in homosexual 'Civil Partnerships', why was there ever a need to create a different label in the first place? Why

doesn't the word 'marriage' suffice for all such relationships, straight or gay?

I've had this discussion with a lot of close friends and family recently, and have been surprised at how often I stand alone in thinking that this distinction should not exist.

"Gay people are perfectly entitled to live their lives together", I've been told, "and they deserve all the equal rights as heterosexual people. But marriage means between a man and a woman. They should have the same rights, just as civil partners rather than a married couple". Many well-meaning people seem to think it important to preserve the definition of 'marriage' as it is, and that granting gay couples an equivalent approximation is enough. Why did it matter to Rosa Parks if she had to sit at the back of the bus? The bus took her to all the same stops regardless of where she sat. Plenty of people once supported racial segregation while denying being racist: "I recognize black people deserve all the same rights as me, but they aren't exactly the same as me." If everyone has an equal right to ride the bus, why should it matter if half the seats are for black people and half for white people? What does it matter if half of the relationships are 'marriages' while the other half 'civil partnerships' if all are treated effectively the same?

The problem is 'equal but separate' or

'equal but different' never leads to real equality. It leads to an 'us versus them' mentality that will always be harmful to minorities, whether minorities in race or sexual orientation. Gay people want total equality, not to be judged because of their sexual orientation. Redefining our idea of marriage is a necessary step toward that goal. This notion of "separate but equal" needs to end, and it won't until gay marriages, not just same-sex civil partnerships, are recognised. But it's not the first time such a notion has been so wrong and yet so commonly-held. I've actually seen people claim that combining 'civil partnership' with 'marriage' will be somewhat confusing, and that there's no harm in having different terms to clear up the distinction between the two. You can't claim you have absolutely no antipathy at all towards gay people and simultaneously say 'but calling it all "marriage" will be confusing'. To be fair, most people probably do have a preconceived notion that if a man says he is married, it is to a woman. If you find out he's actually married to another man, that might lead to a second of 'oh, my mistake', but why should it be any big deal after that? If you do find out that man is married to another man, and it bothers you at any level beyond that split second of mental self-correction, then you are judging them based on their sexual

orientation, and it is in a negative way. If gay and straight couples are equal, it should not matter one iota to you which one is being referred to.

The current US Supreme Court case is likely to succeed or fail solely on the judgment of one man, Chief Justice John Roberts, who recently gave a particularly bewildering analogy on the attempted relabelling of marriage. "If you tell a child that somebody has to be their friend," Roberts said, "I suppose you can force the child to say 'this is my friend.' but it changes the definition of what it means to be a friend."

Saying that redefining 'marriage' is like calling two children who hate each other 'friends' is an insultingly bad analogy. It necessarily implies the relationship experienced between homosexual partners is any different to the relationship experienced between heterosexual partners. It isn't. By forbidding gay marriage, you're not labelling two enemies 'friends', you're telling two people who want to be 'friends' that they can't, because they don't fall under your category of what 'friends' are supposed to be. You can try to give them another label to use, tell them they should be referred to as 'Fairly Amicable Guys' (yes, that was a deliberate acronym) rather than 'friends', but you shouldn't feel the need to differentiate at all if they truly

were equal and if you truly believe the relationship is no different. The man-and-woman definition of 'marriage' is not sacred, or beneficial, or anything other than merely the status quo. It's not even the only logical definition. What reasons are there that 'marriage' should mean 'between a man and a woman' rather than 'between two people', status quo and traditional interpretation aside? Extending the term 'marriage' to cover same-sex couples does not impede anyone's enjoyment of their lives or change their marriages in any way. It's not a zero-sum game, you aren't losing anything by giving full marriage right to others. If you think that you are, then that is undoubtedly a sign you feel those who don't have that right *are* inferior and that they will make *your* marriage somehow less special.

Just because people use the term 'gay marriage' isn't an indication that gay marriage is actually different to heterosexual marriage. It's merely a necessary description of the distinction which they are trying to remove. People talked about 'Women's voting rights' back when only men could vote, but now we just talk about 'voting rights'. Hopefully, someday 'gay marriage' will be as redundant and embarrassingly outdated as 'women's voting rights'.

It'll just be 'marriage'.

FOCAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, UL Students' Union, Castletroy, Limerick. E: lorna.bogue@ul.ie. W: www.anfocal.ie.
An Focal endeavours to accommodate all letters as far as legally possible. All parties have the right of reply to letters printed herein.

Uluru

I've been looking forward to your return;
your crescent moon is our sinking sun see
and his tune has sunken slightly since you left.
The grains of earth you walk past would
be better under everyone's feet, maybe
we'll come visit and test the waters too.
The waters and the wild are *far from Coole*,
and pub fires and quiet gatherings,
there is no greater longing than his for your song.
Speak, you sir, of great lights and little shores,
for we believe we are in the wrong city,
but these two lovers' escape is for now elusive.
He has been looking forward to your return;
to pub fires and quiet gatherings,
where there is no greater city than ours for your song.

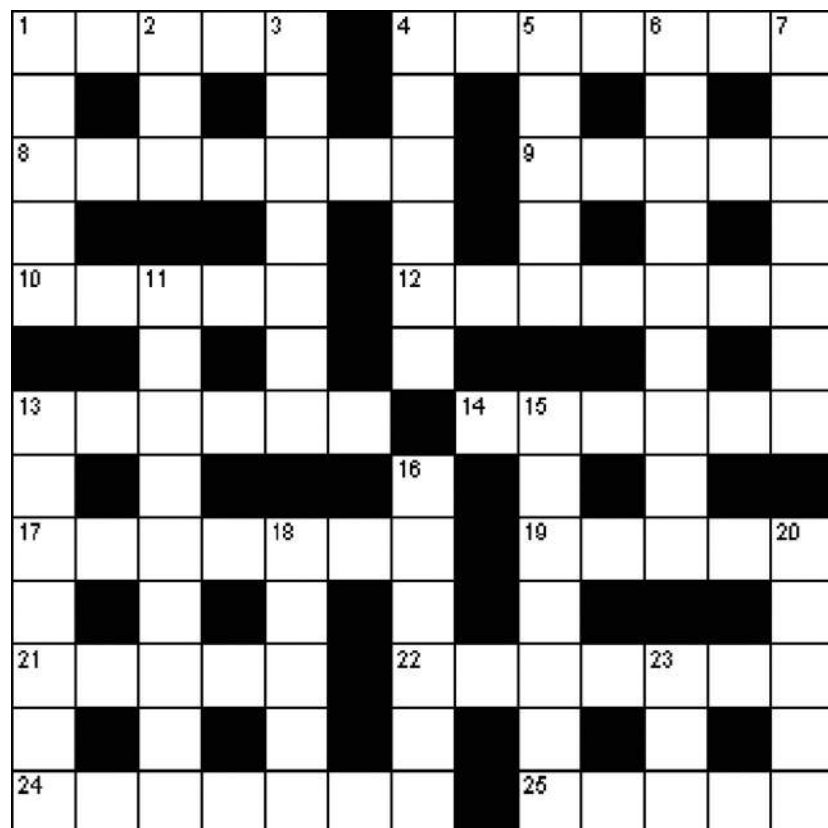
By Jessica Leen

<http://thewaitingpoet.wordpress.com>

Good Friday? Good God!

Only twelve less Sundays in the year
we haven't too many chopped yet.
Passing the time should be harder now
considering the state of the place,
the state of here.
Good Friday? Good God!
Sure what's good about empty pubs,
and grumpy men with pitiful pouts
because the ale today is ginger and a tap
for washing feet?
Unclean, unclean streets for the
town criers with a cause for tears.
No shelter for the panic stricken
fumbling amongst the numbing sober mind
of a fallen, broken state.
Open your doors for God's sake,
for their sake and for ours.
A crying man is a dying man,
which roof would you prefer he be under?
Your lore is but a bore, but tis' no roof
And tis' certainly no shelter.
Good Friday? *Good God!*

By Jessica Leen



CLUES

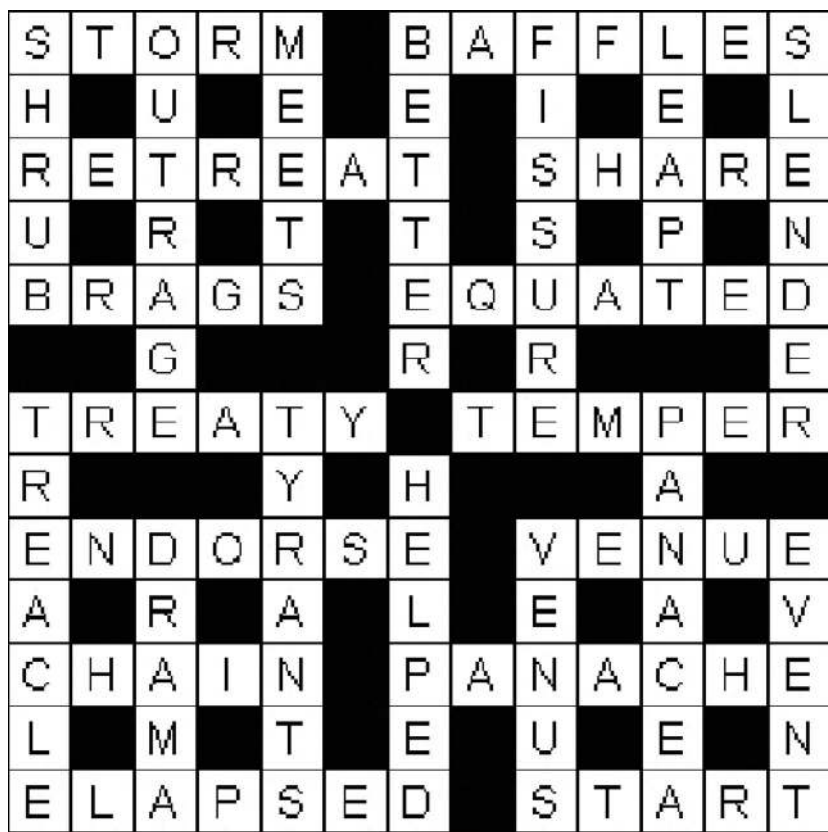
Across

- 1. Prank (5)
- 4. Small community (7)
- 8. Everlasting (7)
- 9. Accolade (5)
- 10. Wear away (7)
- 12. Voter (7)
- 13. Alter or regulate (6)
- 14. Refuge (6)
- 17. Repossess (7)
- 19. Travel lodge (5)
- 21. Mound of stones used as a marker (5)
- 22. Sincere (7)
- 24. Latticework (7)
- 25. Herd or flock of animals (5)

Down

- 1. Subject (5)
- 2. Frozen water (3)
- 3. Dog houses (7)
- 4. Smooth fabric (6)
- 5. Letting contract (5)
- 6. Flat (9)
- 7. Senior (7)
- 11. Target (9)
- 13. Fruit (7)
- 15. Stuck (7)
- 16. Hot fragments from a fire (6)
- 18. Declare invalid (5)
- 20. Supple (5)
- 23. Self (3)

ISSUE 10 SOLUTION



Set yourself apart.

Invest in your future with a
Postgraduate qualification in Law.

Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Law (NQAI Level 9, full or part-time)

Law is important to a career in business, finance, human resources, insurance, and in the public service or voluntary sector. The Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Law is ideal for graduates in any discipline who wish to set themselves apart with a legal qualification. The Postgraduate Diploma in Law is a one-year intensive programme. Students can pick from the 'core' modules (e.g. Contract, Tort, Property, Equity, Constitutional, Company, EU, Criminal Law) or a range of interesting optional subjects (Human Rights, International Trade, Criminology, Media, Intellectual Property Law).

Graduates of the PGDip are eligible to complete the Master of Arts in Law. MA students receive individual supervision on a sustained research project, which will enhance their marketability by deepening legal research, reasoning and writing skills.

Also offered in the School of Social Sciences and Law:

MA Criminology MA Child, Family and Community Studies

Deadline for applications: 29th April 2013, though offers will be made on a rolling basis. Apply now to secure your place for next year!

To discuss the programme in more detail, call Bruce Carolan, Head of Department of Law at (01) 402-3016.

For further information or an application form, please contact Ms. Emma Linnane

E: emma.linnane@dit.ie or

T: (01) 402-7181

W: www.dit.ie/socialscienceslaw



Covered In Grease and Tomatoes: That's One Way to Holiday

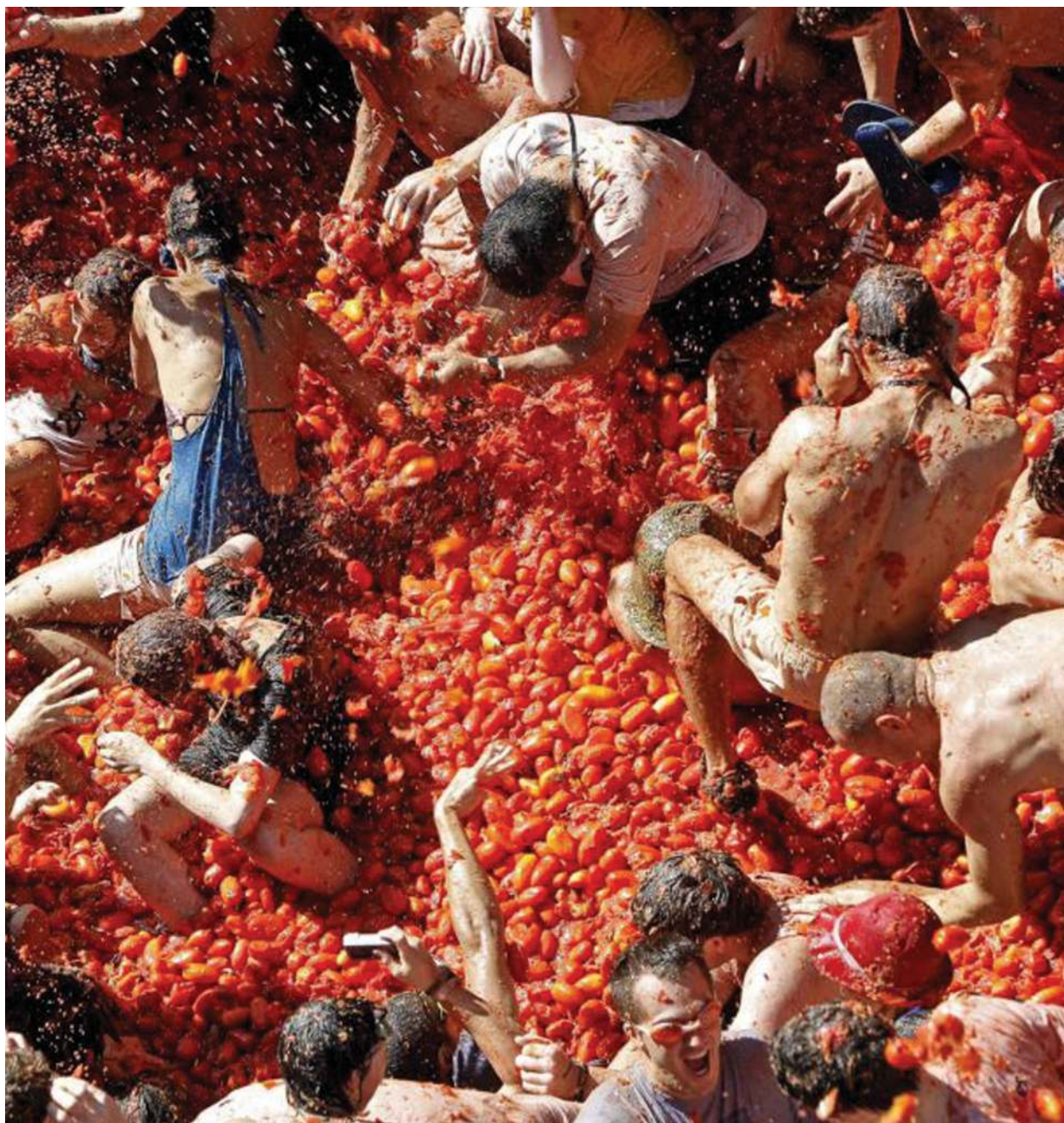
Aoife Coughlan

The alarm goes off at 5am, you grab the small bag you packed the night before and discard bed clothes for white t-shirts, its freezing at this hour but go jacketless anyway, and a hoodie is just another thing to lose. This all sounds pretty strange, and even stranger if I try and convince you that it is the start to one of the best travel and holiday experiences you will have.

That was the start of my day last August when two friends and I made our pilgrimage to Bunol, a small town in Valencia and unknown except as being the home of La Tomatina or tomato festival. Promising more ketchup carnage than a Tarantino film it seemed like one of those things that must be done even once in your life.

The early start was in order to catch the 6am train. A quiet tram ride and it seemed there was only a handful of the slightly insane doing the same as us, we went on anyway. Arriving at the train station, as yet unopened, we were proved wrong in our assumptions that it was going to be a sedate group attending. Hundreds of people of all nationalities were queuing waiting to be let onto the boarding platform. This was the beginning of an epic experience. Beer and lots of banter with aesthetically pleasing Aussies, it could not fail to be a good day.

Getting to Bunol and the party kicks off for real. Everywhere people are drinking and eating ham sandwiches, if that is not enough to make an Irish person feel at home then there is the massive sense of craic to go with it. Bunol is usually a backward, sleepy



town but for one day of the year it is party central. You wait until 11am in crowds for the tomato throwing to start, this may seem like a lot of

standing around but they know how to keep the tipsy mobs entertained. Hang a ham on a greased telephone pole and make people climb/battle

to grab it, it sounds mad, stupid and crazy but really it is the best fun. The tough beat their way to the front to climb first the crush of human

pyramid for the leg up to get the climb started. Believe me it is not for the faint hearted. I am proud to say that I was the first woman of the day to attempt the climb, making it half way up, standing on numerous people's heads, losing my shoes and getting absolutely covered in grease. It was worth it and made me a mini celebrity for a few hours!

The festival itself starts with a cannon sounding. Then trucks drive through the streets pelting tomatoes. It is then the carnage of a crush, water cannons, and a street flowing with juice. Absolutely unbelievable and terrifying at the same time. My memories are of trying to stay upright, the urge to take out any feelings of violence with the hurling of tomatoes and the pain when you get blasted yourself. It was a sea of red and limbs, and then red limbs, word of warning, tomato juice burns!

After the epic fight it is a walk to find friends and regroup, you get sprayed and cleaned by locals as you make your way back. Adrenalin is pumping like never before and like it never will again. The party continues, the fiesta flows and those staying make for the bars or those going back to Valencia make their way for the train. I would urge anyone to make it a bucket list contender, it is one of the strangest things you will do and the feeling of pride in survival is thrilling. By the end of the day you are tired, wet and if like you're anything like us you will have lost a few belongings and may never use ketchup again. The hostel back in Valencia was waiting and so were good tapas and excellent beer, a perfect way to celebrate one of the ultimate travel experiences.

Erasmus in Stockholm

Aoife Coughlan

St. Patrick's Day has never held any real significance for me growing up. I was never in the right mind-set for it, and instead of seeing a celebration of all things Irish, I saw people on trailers being pulled around by tractors for no particular reason. On March 17th, people got pulled around on tractor-trailers through urban centres, just because. I didn't have a grasp on what it was to be Irish, so I didn't have anything in particular to celebrate, and Irish people celebrating being Irish in Ireland hit me as self-indulgent. In Stockholm on the other hand, everyone I've met has been unanimous in thinking the Irish are a brilliant bunch of lads altogether, and after the city's St. Patrick's Day celebrations, I'm inclined to agree.

On the Saturday before Paddy's Day, a few of us Erasmus students planned to go to one of Stockholm's many Irish Bars, and so agreed to meet up in the train on the way to the city centre. When the other Irish and I found the rest of our group on the train, they were already mid-conversation with a middle-aged man; a fellow Irishman named Sean. Working in Stockholm for the past year, Sean was well on



Stockholm's Friends Arena, lit up green for St. Patrick's Day.

his way to being sozzled, carrying with him a shopping bag containing a six-pack of beer and two cakes. He offered us cans of 2.6% beer, but we of course declined as drinking in public

is illegal, and we had our respective Universities' reputations to uphold.

He told us the cakes were for the birthday party of his twenty-something-year old Tanzanian

ladyfriend and then immediately sensing us judging him, said: "Don't ask me how I pulled that one off!" as he tried to pry open a beer bottle with a key.

The real prize wasn't the birthday girl though, it was her equally young model friend, a former Miss Tanzania, who would also be at the party. Uncertain if we were impressed or appalled by his wanton womanising, Sean continued to regale us with tales of his other conquests, including the time he got the phone number of a forty-something-year-old Norwegian woman who "was a bit older" than what he was used to, but also had once slept with George Best. We couldn't help but be a little impressed.

As the train arrived at Stockholm Central station and our group parted ways with Sean, I wasn't sure if I was proud or embarrassed to share a nationality with him. He was undoubtedly a creep - drunk and alone on a commuter train, chatting up anything under thirty - but if his stories are to be believed, his methods obviously get results. There must be a charm to his red-faced drunkenness that only the Irish can pull off. As we watched him chase down a pair of stereotypically tall, blonde, Swedish women and disappear into the crowd I thought; "the Irish really are a brilliant bunch of lads altogether".

Postgraduate Opportunities

KEMMY BUSINESS SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

Learn More. Live More. Be More.

TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

MA in Business Management

MSc in International Management & Global Business

Masters in International Entrepreneurship Management

MSc in Marketing, Consumption & Society

MA in International Tourism (f/t & p/t)

MSc in Economic Analysis

MSc in Human Resource Management (f/t & p/t)

MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology/Behaviour (f/t & p/t)

MSc in Financial Services

MSc in Computational Finance

MSc in Risk Management & Insurance

Master of Taxation

MSc in Project Management

MSc in Project & Programme Management (p/t on-line)

MSc in Software Engineering & Entrepreneurship

MSc in Finance & Information Systems

Corporate MBA with an Aviation Management Stream
(p/t block release)

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Full details on www.ul.ie/business



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH



The Irish in Malta

Róisín Delaney

Malta is a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, just a short boat ride south of Sicily. At 122 square miles it is seen as inadequate to many in the European Union but after living on the island for many months it is obvious Malta represents the future of Europe.

When I first arrived in January, I was shocked at how Middle Eastern the surroundings seemed. It's as if the country is confused as to whether it is in Europe, North Africa or the Middle East. Every building is different to the next and the landscape varies from auburn soil to luscious green farmlands. Even the language is influenced by Arabic.

The natives shocked me the most. As one of Europe's lesser-known tourist destinations, not many people realise that this oasis exists so close to the continent. As a result of the lack of in-your-face tourism developments, the Maltese people are extremely friendly to foreigners. The Maltese seem to embrace visitors to their Mediterranean gem and they especially love the Irish.

Saint Patrick's Day 2013 saw the first ever parade on the 17th of March in the capital of Valetta. Republic Street was lined with people of all nationalities and generations, soaking in the atmosphere in a sea of green and even dancing to traditional Irish music. The 1994 Riverdance Eurovision special proved a particular

favourite.

Saint Patrick's Day as an Irish person abroad is an experience. I now understand why there is a perception of the Irish being obsessed with alcohol and potatoes. On entering an Irish bar in the St. Julian's area on Saint Patrick's Day, a bar man informed me that the first pint of Guinness poured in Malta was in his pub in 1998. Why he thought I needed to know this is beyond me. He also offered me a bowl of stew which was generous if not stereotypical.

People everywhere wanted a picture taken with the 'real Irish', they were clearly delighted to witness the Irish on the most anticipated day in Irish culture. Whether it's the milky skin tone, the thousands of freckles we gain under the sun or the drinking habits we acquire, the Maltese can spot an Irish person in a crowd like a needle in a haystack.

This little island has grown on me like a labradoodle with a cheeky smile. It has led me to new friendships and has taught me a lot about where I want to be in life. With cheap transport, friendly natives and an array of activities that you would never find yourself signing up to in Ireland, Malta is a Mediterranean home away from home.

I would urge any Irish person on any budget looking for a break away to discover Malta as a world of sun with an upbeat atmosphere. You won't be disappointed.



Win €1,500 with the EM Ireland – KBC Bank 40 Years of Change Essay Competition

The European Movement Ireland *40 Years of Change* Essay Competition, supported by KBC Bank Ireland, challenges undergraduate students across the island of Ireland to write an essay addressing the following question:

“Ireland and the EU: Forty Years of Change: Critically examine how the relationship between Ireland and the EU has developed over the past forty years and how this relationship may develop over the next forty years.”

How to enter: Essays must be between 1,500 and 2,000 words and should be submitted electronically to Billie Sparks, EM Ireland's Education and Advocacy Manager, at billie@europeanmovement.ie.

Deadline: 5pm on Monday, 15 April 2013.
The winning entry will receive a €1,500 bursary award at a special event in Dublin in May.

UL Boarders Enjoy Success At Inter-Varsities

