



ULSU AGM Fails To Reach Quorum

Lorna Bogue
Assistant Editor

The ULSU AGM held at 3pm on Thursday, 11 October in the Concert Hall failed to reach quorum. Quorum was set at 200, which is the minimum amount of students required to be in attendance at the AGM in order for the AGM to be able to make decisions on motions.

There were three motions before Thursday's AGM, all of which could only be discussed and could not be decided upon. Out of a total student population of over 12,000 the meeting only attracted around 80 attendees. The low attendance has been linked to many factors such as a lack of advertisement with an email detailing the time and date and containing documents related to the AGM only being sent around to students on the 10 October, the day before the AGM. This delay in notification has been

attributed to a delay in buildings notifying the SU of the room booking, however, a general lack of advertising has also been noted by students on social media sites such as Facebook, where a poster advertising the AGM was only released on the 9 October. The communication breakdown between the SU and the student body goes further, with a general call for motions only being posted on the 3rd of October. The deadline for the submittal of motions was the 4 October at 4pm, giving the average student 1 day to submit a motion.

The motions that were due to be voted on were; a motion to establish a new company, a motion to ratify the new constitution and a motion to stop printing ULSU publications, specifically An Focal. The motions regarding the new constitution and An Focal were moved to being discussion items. Sabbatical Officer's reports were not discussed. The first

motion regarding the establishment of a new company by the SU was also left without discussion due to a lack of interest.

The first item to be discussed at the meeting was Sabbatical Officer's wages. General Manager Phillip Mudge gave a presentation on the wages that SU Officers receive. The floor was then opened to questions. This discussion item went unquestioned by those in attendance.

There was then a brief discussion on the proposed new student centre. SU President Adam Moursy answered questions on the project such as the amount of money that it would cost and where this money would be sourced from. 'It is anticipated that the entire project will cost between €35 and €40 million, the anticipation is that students would put up half of the funds, between €17 and €18 million and the other side would come from University funding.'

The main concern that Students had with the project was the combination of the three projects into one proposal. This was responded to by Mr Moursy, 'we felt that if we put the three of them together we'd have a better chance of getting them over the line.' This was referring to the referendum which will be held to decide on whether the capital projects would go ahead, although a date still has not been decided. Mr Moursy said that some voters would be in favour of the student centre and not the pitches and some would be in favour of the pitches and not the student centre. If the vote were to be split, 'a certain percentage of the student body would lose out.' The three projects being packaged as one was also a concern financially for the students in attendance. Some felt that it would be an issue because, 'we must commit to spending a lot of money in order to get the pitches done.'

Phillip Mudge then spoke in response

to several references from students to the financial state of the SU, 'just on a point of clarification, except for the minibus and other bits and pieces of equipment the union isn't in debt.' When asked about why the SU needed to go to C&S council for extra money Mr Mudge responded with, 'The SU is not in debt, The SU has to run itself and the SU, all parts of it, have to pay for those costs and that's what I asked both councils to look at and consider.' This exchange was considered to have been off topic and so the AGM moved on the next discussion item, which was the Charity Ball. The new Constitution was the next item to be discussed, although again a decision on the new constitution was delayed due to a lack of quorum. The meeting finished after a discussion on the publication of 'An Focal'.

For more details on discussions on the Charity Ball and ULSU Publications see pages 2 and 3.



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“
I don't
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realise how
irrational
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are...”

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If you are unhappy with how your article appeared in An Focal, please discuss this with the Editor. A number of strict guidelines are followed in the production of An Focal, which means some articles may be altered to allow them to fit on the page and to improve readability.

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G Kelly

An item of discussion at last week's AGM that evoked a lot of questions and statements from the students in attendance was the idea of the University hosting a UL Ball as opposed to a Charity week. Questions on the Ball were fielded by SU President Adam Moursy, who presented a conflicting account of the idea to what was presented by Vice-President Academic Professor Paul McCutcheon when he spoke to Class Reps about the idea.

In Week 4's class reps council meeting Professor McCutcheon spoke regarding the idea of holding a Charity Ball as opposed to the current charity week. Mr Moursy confirmed again at the AGM that the idea originated from the Sabbatical Officers, 'Paddy and myself went to him with the idea of holding a ball'. However, Mr Moursy also stated at the AGM that the Students' Union did not go to Professor McCutcheon with the idea of cancelling Charity Week. Mr Moursy distanced the sabbatical officers involved from the idea of the cancellation of charity week by stating that the trade-off of the Ball for Charity week originated from Professor McCutcheon, 'He said you can hold a Ball if you cancel Charity week.' Also stating on this matter, 'what he said wasn't entirely correct.'

Originally the hope was for the UL Ball to be held in conjunction with Charity Week. Given that this is the 40th year of the existence of the University, the idea of a large event that was student-oriented was what was brought to the University. However, this idea was rejected, and the trade-off was introduced as a means to reduce the amount of reputational damage that is caused to the University by Charity Week. This reputational damage was the main focus of Professor McCutcheon's



speech to class reps council on the 2 October. The trade-off also seems to have been accepted by the Sabbatical officers who were involved in discussions with the University.

Mr Moursy then went on to talk about the Ball and how it could be run, it is envisioned that it would be run along the lines of the UCD Ball, 'having it on Plassey lawn on a Saturday and we can have everyone wearing suits and drinking and having the craic'. Although other sources have since stated that the UL Ball, while some parts may be modelled on events held in other universities, would be an event which will be tailored to UL and will be unique to the University. Students at the AGM then asked questions about

the Charity Ball.

The idea of an unofficial Charity week happening anyway was something that came up straight away, Mr Moursy responded to these enquiries with, 'yeah, of course it's a real fear, but I think, Paul McCutcheon sort of summed it up when he said that he didn't really care that if, you know, people went off and organised their own unofficial one. At least then he could come out and say well this isn't an official university or SU event.' It is hoped by the University that a UL Ball will have less of an impact on local residents than Charity week and will result in a reduced amount of complaints made to the University and the SU, 'I don't think you realise how irrational

some of the residents are.' was one comment that was made by the SU President during the discussion.

The associated costs of Charity Week were then discussed. As well as reputational damage Charity week also has a financial impact on students. The University spends 50,000 a year on charity week, both on hosting events and on repairing damages which are a direct result of the week. According to Mr Moursy, 'That's 50,000 that doesn't go to student affairs, or it's less tutorial hours. They find the money from somewhere pretty much, so the worse it is the more it affects the university budget, which is something, which as you might know, is in pretty dire straits at the minute.'

Letter From The Editor

Darragh Roche
Editor

As of today, I will be leaving my post as Editor of An Focal with immediate effect. I will be leaving the newspaper in the capable hands of my editors. There are a number of reasons for my decision, not least of which is the workload that I have had to bear since taking the job. The job of editor is intellectually demanding and requires much concentration and time. Unfortunately, it has been difficult for me as both editor and a full time student to balance these concerns.

However, I am also stepping down due to certain health issues that I

have been experiencing in the last few weeks and that may persist for the next while. These factors have combined and placed an undue strain on my mental and physical well-being. As a result of this, I feel my decision to step aside is the best one in the long-term. I stress that this is a personal decision and should not be seen as a reflection on An Focal. I am confident that An Focal will continue without me as editor and I hope that I will continue to contribute to the newspaper in a different capacity.

I believe strongly in the importance of a student newspaper. As long as I've been here, I have believed that An Focal can and should be an independent voice for students and act in the interests of students. This

has not always been possible. It has not been entirely possible to maintain absolute independence nor has An Focal received the kind of respect that it needs. However, that does not mean it cannot continue to achieve excellence and constantly improve. I believe it can and will do so.

This year has already been an interesting one. The Students' Union has given itself many hurdles to overcome. Whether it will be able to achieve these aims remains to be seen. I will watch developments closely throughout the year. An Focal will never be far from my mind.

With the future in mind, I commend this newspaper to those who read it and those who write for it, for good or ill. I'm confident that the difficulties

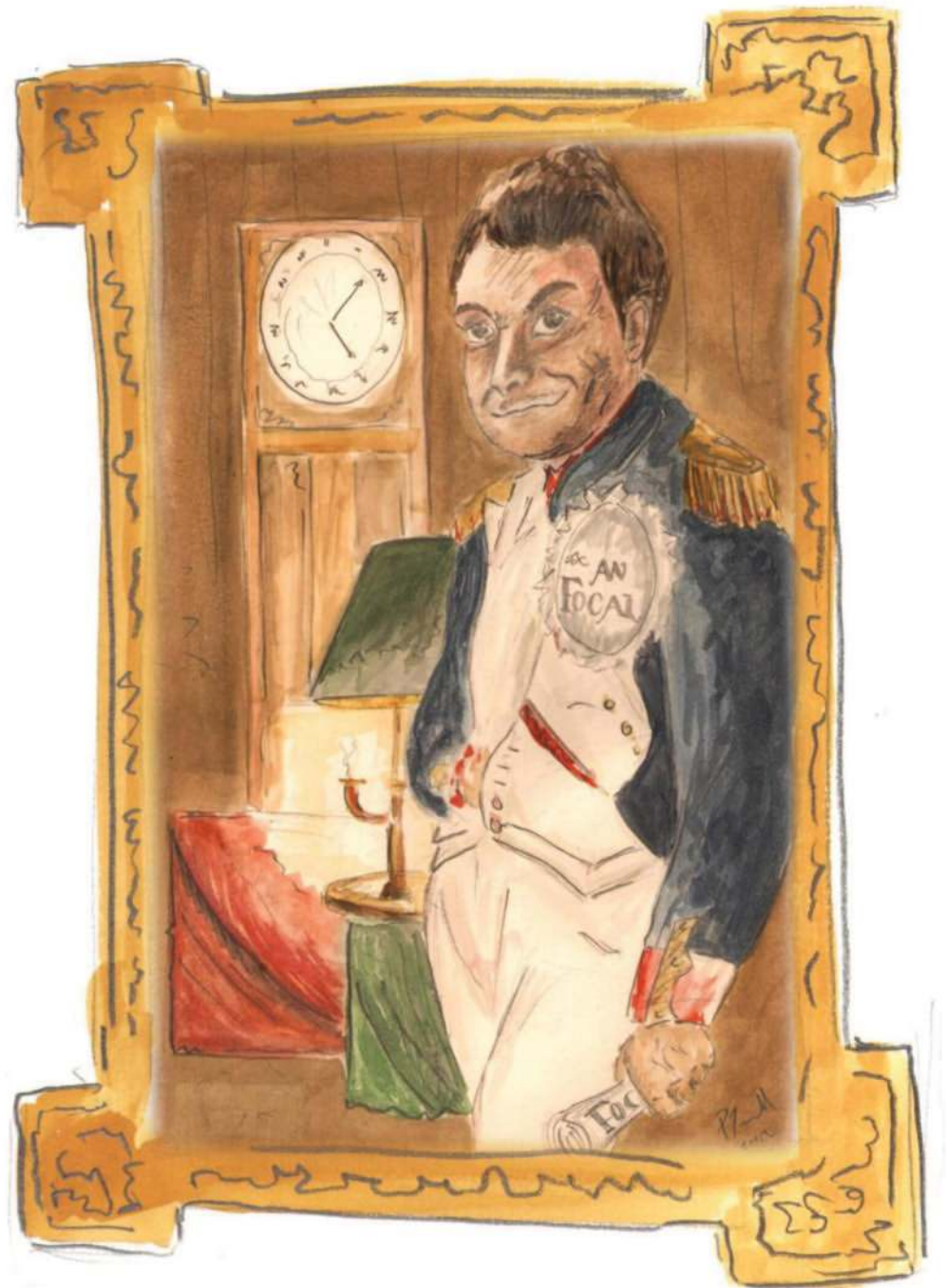
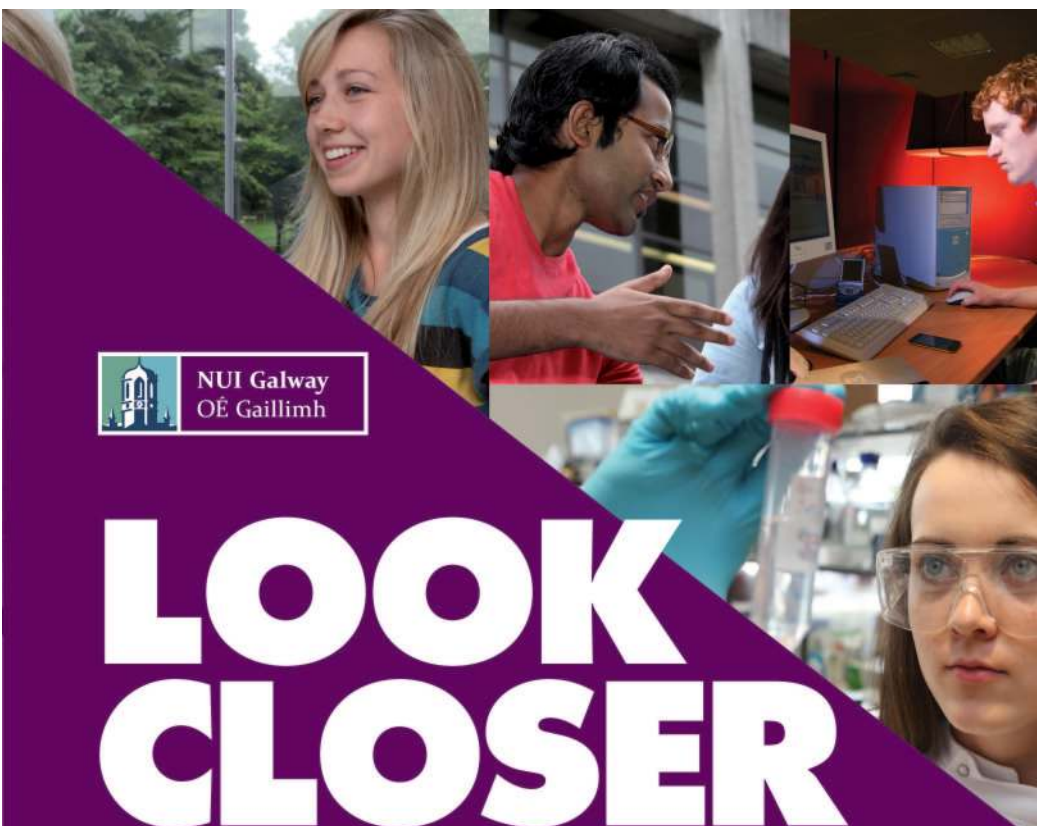
we face can be overcome and that An Focal will be here for another long while yet. Whatever happens to those who open this newspaper today, and whatever happens to future of print media, a university will always need a newspaper. Newspapers may become new and strange things but media will not go away. It is essential to the freedom and ability of individuals to express themselves.


I step down with a heavy heart but also in the knowledge that I do not regret what I have done as editor. And when I look back on this brief, stressful, exciting and tumultuous period, hopefully many, many years from now, I will be able to hold my head high and say "I did that".

WHAT A
MAN....!



DARRAGH.T. ROCHE
EDITOR
Sept-Oct 2012.

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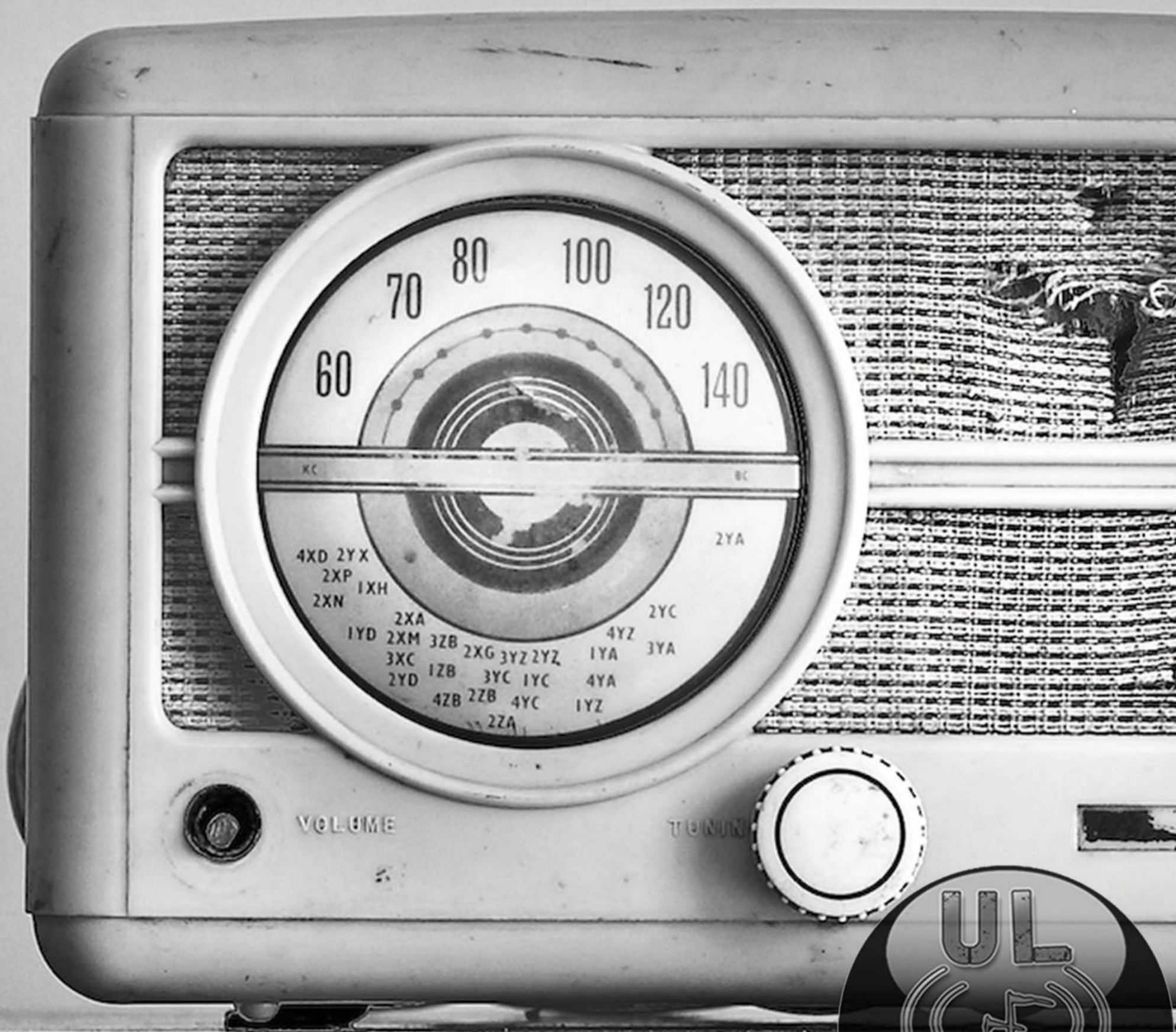
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Adams Must Decide How History Will Remember Him

Conor Forrest

If the truth will have its way, another sad chapter of Northern Ireland's violent history may finally be closed, should the testimony of an ex-IRA volunteer be joined to that of former IRA man, Brendan Hughes, and other past members who told their stories to the Boston College project, whose aim it was and is to create and collect a repository of oral history concerning the Troubles.

Major pressure is to be heaped upon Gerry Adams in the Dáil following an interview given to the Sunday Telegraph by Dolours Price, a former member of the feared inner sanctum. Price, who was married to actor Stephen Rea, has remained disillusioned by the peace process and what she sees as Adams' betrayal, and gave the Sunday Telegraph an interview concerning the secrets she told to the Boston project. The 61-year-old, who now lives in a quiet suburb in Dublin, has claimed that not only was Adams in the IRA but it was on his orders that victims were ferried across the border, a bombing campaign against a series of targets in mainland Britain, including the Old Bailey, as were the kidnappings of those viewed by the IRA as traitors, including one Jean McConville.

The allegations against Adams are nothing new. The family of Jean McConville in particular have always maintained the Sinn Féin leader's role in her execution during the early 1970s on the basis of accusations concerning repeatedly relaying information to the British army through a radio in her

home. Adams resolutely denies any involvement in the young woman's death which has in some manner come to represent the atrocities committed by the IRA during the Troubles, alongside the Omagh bombing. And until now no real hard evidence could be put forward to stick on Adams. Even when combined with the testimony of Brendan Hughes released by the Boston College after his death as per his agreement in the book 'Voices from the Grave' which offers a starkly different story to the one which Adams has always painted (namely his active involvement in the IRA), the proof is circumstantial and those who criticise him have a potential bias; being former IRA men and women who felt betrayed by a former leader. Unsurprising, really, when considering that the Troubles and the truth rarely go hand in hand.

The response from Adams hasn't really been surprising. The solid, hard, evidence mightn't be there but public opinion will quite possibly mount against Adams, alongside political pressure from his colleagues in the Dáil who wouldn't mind having a different scapegoat in the public eye (James Reilly, we're looking at you). So really, at the heart of it, Adams will decide his own destiny. Despite the Good Friday Agreement which finally ended the Provo's long armed campaign in the North, a page cannot be truly turned to a new side while the major players on both sides of the coin are not only publicly active in the present but shadily skirting their past. A new dawn is on the horizon with a new generation but the truth must out first.



While he keeps his mouth shut, no one wins. The families of the disappeared want to know who and what caused their loved ones to die and is a constant and horrifying reminder of those thirty years of fear and violence.

Eventually, the truth will come out. Whether through legal wrangling or the passage of time and the deaths

of those who told their stories, the contents of the Boston College project will be revealed, and new evidence will undoubtedly come to light. Two corroborating oral witnesses could be dismissed. Many more will surely not. And who knows what other dark secrets are yet to be revealed from within the depth of those archives. Adams and his

image would do far better if he revealed any secrets he might be hiding about his past now, under no pressure and of his own accord. History, they say, will be the judge of us all. Adams must decide what exactly it will say.



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What A Difference A Mayor Makes

James Bradshaw

One of the headline initiatives of the Green Party (remember them) when they went into government in 2007 was local government reform. One of their main promises was the institution of a directly-elected mayor for Dublin.

This would mark the beginning of a new era where residents of cities would elect mayors whose responsibilities would extend further than the usual ribbon-cuttings into areas such as the provision of public transportation, the organization of waste collection services and the allocation of housing. Yet, today the Green Party are just a footnote in our recent history, and after multiple delays a mayoral election in Dublin seems as far away as ever.

Around the world, the situation is much different. This year's mayoral election in London was very important, and not just because the winner later got to bask in the reflective glow of the Olympic torch. The Mayor of London heads the Greater London Authority, and its remit extends even further than transportation and environmental policy to overseeing the work of the London Metropolitan Police. When Ken Livingstone was in office, for instance, he introduced the London congestion charge to reduce road traffic and encourage the use of public transportation.

In the United States, where the separation of powers has always been one of the foremost governing principles, directly-elected mayors have also achieved great feats. New York's city government, for example, has an annual budget of 50 billion dollars, and the mayor has enormous power to influence life in the Big Apple.

Rudy Giuliani became world-famous after 9/11, but he had already shot to prominence stateside as a result of his successful crusade to make New York a safer city through effective community policing.

No Londoner or New Yorker would countenance the prospect of losing the right to elect their city's leader. It would seem logical that a Dubliner would also yearn for that sort of representation, however, when it comes to proposals for a directly-elected mayor the prevailing mood appears to be apathy. Of course, politicians are far from popular, and the idea of another over-paid scoundrel joining the other pigs at the trough doesn't meet with much approval. But the problem extends much further into how our local government operates, or to be more accurate, how it doesn't operate at all.

Article 28A of the Constitution states: "The State recognises the role of local government in providing a forum for the democratic representation of local communities, in exercising and performing at local levels powers and functions conferred by law and in promoting by its initiatives the interests of such communities."

Noble aims indeed. Local government does indeed facilitate discussion of issues of concern to the public. However, neither De Valera nor any of his successors have given local government very many "powers" or "functions"; in fact where local government used to have a considerable influence on how the education and health systems ran it has over time had these responsibilities stripped away by the Dáil. Now, when an ordinary citizen thinks about what their county council does for them, little springs to mind except the occasional roadworks,



planning permission approvals, perhaps some involvement in the local library...

What more can be expected of institutions that have neither the legislative basis on which to act nor the revenue sources to engage in independent action? In a normal Western society, the soon-to-be-introduced property tax would go towards funding local services, but here there is no guarantee that the money will not simply vanish into the coffers of the central government.

This lack of a clear distinction between the local and the national has had other baleful consequences. In

a world where local politicians have few actual responsibilities; citizens often turn to their TDs for help with matters that have nothing to do with national legislators: letters to judges; appointments for the doctor; requests for pot-holes to be filled and so on. TDs revert to being county councillors to ensure local support at the next election, and many others like the Healy-Rae's were never nationally-minded representatives to begin with. In this case, don't blame Jackie: blame the system.

Yes, Dublin needs a directly-elected mayor. Such a person could ensure that a basic service like integrated ticketing

could be introduced without a ten year wait, and if they didn't the voters of Dublin could throw the incompetent out. But having mayors in our cities would be a waste of time and money if we did not first embark on a process of delineating the boundary between local government and national government, declaring what services each party was to be responsible for providing and laying out a clear process for the raising of revenue to fund such services.

First, we need to draw up a mayor's job description. Then, we can start looking for applicants.

Tread Carefully With Your Charity Week Plans This Year

Colm Fitzgerald
Comment Editor

There is great trepidation involved in mooted alternative Charity Week plans.

ULSU is quick to point out the aim of the week is to raise money for worthy causes. Sadly, the majority of students would fail to name even a single nominated charity which is not surprising when they have no say in where the money should go. I do recall something about golf a few years back, however.

Many students await the traditional annual event in earnest, an opportunity for them to bask in a highly relaxed and carefree atmosphere and most likely rampantly consume alcohol several nights of the week. You can be sure many of these students do not know or care about the fundraising aspect.

Many do, however. They shave their heads, dye their hair and swim in the

river Shannon. They drive around the country and have their photo taken with the local Garda. They do the yard of ale and vomit all over the Scholars.

It is claimed the University wishes to peruse an alternative plan with earnest. It's mostly because there is always trouble at charity week. Because for every student that shaves his head for Golf or whatever the charity is, there are probably 20 others doing little good. There may well have been no arrests, but you can be sure many hysterical local residents will call both ULSU and the University and claim all sorts of fallacies. The students urinated on my doorstep, they overturned my car, they upset my children. These people do deserve to be taken with a grain of salt, but there is a genuine point to be made. The University wishes to do away with the week in a bid to prevent this behaviour.

Take what happened at NUIG. Behaviour there was particularly bad

during charity week (or college week as it became known) for many years, and was often reported in this newspaper. The college made clear firm intentions that the week would never ever happen again. The students who wished to consume alcohol in an inconsiderate fashion did so irrespective of this ruling, and followed up with the usual urinating in doorways, overturning bins etc.

UL will need to be prepared for this eventuality, particularly this year, should the plans bear reality. Professor McCutcheon who tabled the idea to class reps said that if anything happened outside of the main event, it would "not be the fault of the University or the Union". That's all fine, but is that not the case now anyway?

A UL Ball held on the plaza perhaps is not an unreasonable idea. It would put an end to the unnecessary and annoying bag searches that take place daily, whilst making your way to a



lecture to be the only sober person present. I speak for many when I say I really dislike charity week. I despise the notion of a weeklong binge. There is an "atmosphere" alright, but the atmosphere reeks of stale cider.

But what about the fundraising aspect? I get a feeling that a UL Ball would quietly place fundraising in

second place. Like a Trocaire box in the corner, not many would pay attention to it. ULSU will need to make clear its stance on the entire issue quickly. More importantly though, students should not be afraid to say what they think. Somehow, I doubt this will be a problem.

AN FOCAL

And The Alfred Goes To...

“A European Union?” Montgomery Burns once intoned in scandalised tones, shortly after singing his rendition of the “My country ‘tis of thee, Austria-Hungary” and as bizarre as this comparison must sound, in many ways it explains the rationale behind the Nobel committee’s decision. The world is a less peaceful place today than it was a year ago. The Syrian civil war continues to kill innocents, riots in some Middle Eastern countries have highlighted deep divisions and the Taliban justifies murdering 14-year-old girls. With all this, it must have been extremely difficult for the committee to choose an individual. Who really deserved it? Previous years have seen the prize go to president of Liberia, who shortly afterwards supported homophobic policies; when Barack Obama won the prize, no-one really believed he deserved it; while the year it went to Al Gore, the world wondered whether An Inconvenient Truth had anything to do with peace. And

there is precedent for rewarding an organisation. In 1944, the International Committee of the Red Cross won, a fitting tribute to the organisation in the midst of the Second World War. Since then several prizes have gone to organisations like the UN or peacekeeping forces. The choice of the European Union was based on contributions to peace over the last six decades, a justification that has raised more than a few eyebrows. Has the EU really kept the peace? After 1945, European countries were dishevelled and broken, stuck between two rival superpowers, dependent on foreign support to rebuild. Half the continent was occupied and would stay that way for 40 years. It’s no surprise that the countries of western Europe huddled together to wait out the Cold War. And when the Iron Curtain fell, the EU triumphantly expanded eastward, taking in countries that were not altogether ready for membership. Promoters say these actions helped to guarantee democracy and peace. But peace is just as much a human phenomenon as war; it is very difficult to adequately explain. Peace in Europe is due to a variety

of factors, not least the closeness of our economies and our dependence on each other. It’s also due to the relative closeness of our societies, especially in the second half of the 20th century and the development of technology from the telephone to the fax machine to the internet. If the EU is a force for peace, let’s not forget its failings as well. The EU’s prevarication over the former Yugoslavia is a black mark against the EU’s peacemaking credentials. Divisions over the Afghan and Iraq wars showed the EU was not a united bloc on foreign policy issues. Most recently, the Eurozone crisis has shown Europe at its worst. Germany, amongst others, has attempted to impose rigid austerity on citizens of countries in dire straits, Greek protesters respond with violence and call Angela Merkel a Nazi; democratic governments have been buckling under the strain, with countries like Spain coming apart at the seams. The Nobel Peace Prize for the European Union should not be seen as an endorsement of the EU’s austerity policies. If we are all in this together, as they like to tell us, then we all deserve credit for the prize. If the EU is responsible for

peace in our time perhaps there is hope, if we find a way to pay for it.

What Can Be Done With The SU?

Most of you will not have attended the ULSU MAGM on Thursday. The required number of attendants was 200, the actual number was 80. This should come as no surprise. SU meetings rarely meet quorum. Most students seem to be apathetic about student politics. It’s hard to blame them. Student politics is hardly inspiring and rarely impacts on the lives of ordinary students. This paper has carried several articles about how to reform the SU, why to support the SU, why you shouldn’t be forced to be involved in the SU and so on. Here are some facts: the SU will continue to exist because there will also be a small number of people who’ll run it. The SU will always attempt to do things that they consider positive for students, even though they won’t always do them well. Sometimes the SU will fail miserably, either because of the people involved or just bad

ideas and organisation. The life of university students in Ireland is not so bad. Yes, the Government has introduced fees by stealth in the form of the registration fee. Certainly, the quality of third level teaching could be improved and so could the facilities and curricula available to students. Whether students’ unions will do anything about these issues is anyone’s guess. The Union of Students in Ireland has been woefully ineffective. Its leaders seem to believe nothing. The problem is one of impact. When an organisation has no discernible effect on ordinary people’s lives, those people won’t care about it. But how do you make them care? How do you convince 200 people (a tiny number) to attend a meeting so you can meet a constitutional requirement? Posters? Advertising? Facebook? None of these are the answer. It doesn’t matter how many people know an event is happening, or how many people know there’s an SU. If they don’t care, no amount of publicity will make them care. The challenge for this Students’ Union, and indeed all students’ unions, is finding reasons why students should care.

Shock And Awe

If anyone has ever wondered what the term ‘Shock and Awe’ actually means, the recent US Presidential debate provided a staunch demonstration. Shock: How could a gifted orator such as President Obama fall so flat on his face as to make Brian Cowen look and sound like JFK? Awe: Mitt Romney showed himself to be the more knowledgeable, Presidential, serious, prepared and likeable of the two candidates.

President Obama walked into the debate leading Mitt Romney in the polls. People were saying that the election was leaning towards a re-election. Mitt Romney had a tough week with the “47%” tape. However, with the two candidates in the same room, with no prepared statements, no staff, no teleprompter, and no media to act as a conduit to the voters, the American people got a taste for what a Mitt Romney Presidency would be, and they liked what they saw.

The Real Clear Politics Average (which takes all the major political polls and takes an average) shows that the President had a 5 point lead nationally going into the debate. Gallup had a poll showing that 67% of people expected him to win the debate. Now, Mitt Romney leads the President by one point; that’s a 6 point jump in a week. So what happened? A lot... and the President has himself and his campaign to thank for it.

Ever since the first televised Presidential debate, looks and demeanour have mattered. For example, during the Bush-Clinton debates of 1992, President George

H.W. Bush was criticised for constantly looking at his watch during his 1992 debate, giving the impression he didn’t want to be there. In 2000, Vice President Al Gore was lambasted for constantly audibly sighing into the microphone while George W. Bush spoke, making Gore look uninterested and self impressed. Voters respond to these gestures often very harshly.

Knowing this history, President Obama’s campaign and debate prep staff in particular should be ashamed that they let their candidate go out so unprepared that he did not know enough not to look down at his shoes almost the whole time Romney was speaking. President Obama did not look at his opponent, did not look at the audience, did not look at the moderator, and was not looking at his notes as he wasn’t taking any. President Obama was looking down at his shoes, foreshadowing being down in the poles.

That is just the optics of the debate; let’s speak to the substance of the debate. Despite what the Democrats claim, Mitt Romney gave a very detailed plan for the future of America. Not very detailed, to be sure, but a debate is not the place to get bogged down in specifics; you only get a limited amount of time when the voters can view you and your opponent unfiltered. Candidates must use this time efficiently and not bore or confuse voters with the specifics of any proposed new tax code for example. Regardless of what the President and his campaign say about Mitt Romney “not being specific”, he was much more



specific in the debate than the President himself who did nothing but tout his administration’s “successes”, albeit very few and extremely exaggerated.

To add insult to injury, the President’s supporters and staff began to provide ridiculous excuses for the President’s lacklustre performance from “Mitt Romney had more time to prepare” to Denver’s altitude as proposed by Al Gore.

All the excuses as to President Obama’s poor performance are a disservice to the other half of the story; Mitt Romney won on substance and style, full stop, end of. Whereas the President seemed uninterested, unprepared, and lost without his teleprompter; saying very little despite having more speaking time, Mitt Romney seemed to be enjoying himself. He hit the President on taxes, the deficit, on job

creation and on energy, all the time making the President defend himself, at which he failed. When the President spoke, Romney looked at him the eye, looking down only to take a note. Mitt Romney knew his stuff and said it well. This fact induced awe in the minds of the audience.

President Obama is a gifted orator when giving a prepared speech. He knows how to deliver a statement and trigger an emotional response. This is the Barack Obama we think about when we say “Obama”; the man giving the speeches that make us stand up and cheer. However, closer examination of the Democratic primary debates, 2008 Presidential debates and unscripted encounters with the press show that the President is simply not the same man without a speech. The President Obama we saw on October 3rd was

the same President Obama we’ve seen where there’s no script. However, this fact has come as a shock to many.

Likewise, those who followed the Republican primaries of the past year would know that Mitt Romney is an excellent debater. Romney actually seems to do a better job in a debate or a press conference than a speech. However, not many people did follow the primary and that is why Mitt Romney left a lot of people in awe. This debate was pure political shock and awe.

Thing more shocking than the President’s lack of preparedness is Vice President Joe Biden laughing while Paul Ryan was trying to speak during the Vice Presidential Debate on October 11th.

Two Signs Of The Apocalypse, SU Makes Contingency Plans

The Crow's Nest

It began with a cloud crossing the Sun last Tuesday. SU President Adam Moursy and Academic Officer Paddy Rockett were in the courtyard operating the SU's brand new telescope, watching the skies for the inevitable signs of the end of days. This was prompted by the discovery of ancient documents in the SU archives that prophesied the fall of eternal darkness. "These documents date back to at least 1995," High Priest of the Last Days Adam Moursy said, "We observed the first sign on Tuesday, as a cloud in the shape of a fluffy sheep crossed the Sun. We knew then that the end was nigh."

"We've been warning the SU about this for years," said Kevin Brennan, self-appointed Pope of the Church of the Fluffy Sheep of Endless Mercy, "Our church has been preparing for this momentous calamity. We told the SU that if they didn't invest in sacrifices to the Fluffy Sheep, he would rain destruction down upon us! It is coming! It is upon us!" His Holiness then proceeded to strip, run around the SU courtyard, smear his body with vaseline and catch the next bus into town. Unfortunately, the bus took 45 minutes to arrive and His Holiness was forced to stand at the bus stop in the cold, while passers-by mocked him.

Having investigated the claims made by the Fluffy Sheeppers, the SU authorities discovered that there was, in fact, a motion on the agenda of the SU AGM to make the aforementioned sacrifices to the Fluffy Sheep but it had never been voted on due to the lack of quorum. As such, an Emergency General Meeting was summoned. It was then that the second sign of the Apocalypse was observed.

The meeting was deemed quorate.

Though this may sound unbelievable, it was attested by no fewer than 200 attendants who counted each other in the meeting hall. More than a dozen of these attendants were wearing long, black hooded robes and chanted throughout the proceedings about the coming end of days. Still others waved pitch forks and shovels and held banners saying "No to Everything!" There was only one item an agenda, however, which was passed unanimously. As a result of this vote, the sabbats brought forth a donkey, declared it King and begged for its intercession to prevent the coming disaster. So far, this method of problem solving has been ineffective.

Meanwhile, away from the fervent religiosity of farmyard inspired fatalism, campus has been torn apart by one man's relentless quest to destroy Spider-Man. That man is the editor of this newspaper, who has consistently become unhinged in his attempts to find your friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man. Our glorious editor has been a noted enemy of all masked superheroes for many years and has recently turned his attentions to Spidey. "I will find him! This campus is no place for spider themed superheroes. Who does this person think he is? Running around UL in spandex or whatnot! I'll not stand for it!". His outburst complete, our editor proceeded to bring out a harpoon, a spyglass and a map of campus with several areas marked with an "X" to indicate where Spidey has been seen.

"He just won't accept that Spider-Man is fictional," bemoaned an assistant editor, "We keep trying to tell him he's just a comic book character, but he just refuses to listen. We tried to tell him Spider-Man was Peter Parker...he laughed in our faces!"

At the time of going to print, our



editor has compiled a list of potential identities for Spider-Man. Having constructed an elaborate suspect

tree, our editor has taken An Focal's journalists off regular duty and assigned them to investigate the

suspects in question. It is expected that intense interrogations will begin in earnest next week.

Dear Angie...

Dear Angie,

I've been going out with my boyfriend for a few weeks now and I don't think it's working out. I mean, I love him and all that and I really want to stay with him, but a few things have come up that we always seem to fight about. I want to be in a relationship but it's just too much work and it's really draining me. He also always tries to guilt me into feeling sorry for him, even when he is to blame for us fighting! Should I stay and work on it or should I just cut and run and save myself?

Emotionally Drained, Elm Park

Dear Emotionally Drained,

The most logical answer that I can give to you is indeed to cut him and run, however, I too have felt those strong bonds that you are now feeling and know how much it will hurt you to do so. When you have those strange stirrings in your heart and you can't get that one person out of your mind it can be difficult to see any way out, but

there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I myself was trapped in this manner and felt miserable for a long time, but luckily I had my friends to support me. Ah yes, for a while I was living for those conference catch ups with my BFFF (Best Friend From France) Christine LaGarde. She would often say to me during those long evenings in front of the fire with a glass of claret in her hand, 'Angie, you need to leave this man, you cannot continue to support him'. Which was more true than I cared to admit at the time. I wanted to have him around just so I could say to certain people 'look at me' and the relationship that I'm in. It was all an indulgence for my ego. Chrissy pointed out to me, quite correctly, that he was always taking my money and giving me nothing in return. It took me a long time to see it. I was blinded by my love for Antonis Samaras. It seems silly now but there you have it. One cannot control one's urges. Particularly when Greek Lotharios are involved. Eventually I decided to cut him out of my life completely.

It took a long time for us to get back

to normal and being just friends. I went over to pay him a friendly visit just a week ago. I'm not going to lie to you, there were some awkward moments on the trip, like when his citizens threw petrol bombs at me, but if you hold your head up high and just be yourself then you can rise above such things. Nothing says dignified like looking well, behaving politely and an ample supply of teargas.

Sure, he was in a bad way, but I was in control. It's ok to feel empathy for someone even if they have hurt you, just make sure that you are not being manipulated into feeling bad for what you have to do to take care of yourself. The things that I do are for his own good and for mine. Even if he lacks the capacity to understand this, I know it myself, and that's good enough for me. I must confess the satisfaction of being able to feel pity for someone who once held power over me was quite the good thing (although don't sink into Schaudenfreud). Now I can laugh at the times when I felt responsible for the troubles of this pitiful man. Some people will just use others for their



own ends, but that's no reason for you to stop being kind. Just accept the fact that there are selfish people out there and don't let them change who you are. Sure, work on your relationship if you like, but the best advice I can offer you is to look objectively at the harms and benefits of your relationship with a bit of perspective. Yes, sometimes this is one of the most difficult things in the world to do, but you don't have to do it

alone. A trusted friend will have more perspective than you while at the same time caring about what's best for you. Sometimes we are simply unable to decide what's for the best for ourselves. Even a leader who strides the world stage, such as I, can be blinded by wants as opposed to needs, so you can too!

Grosse Küsse,
Angie x

AF Letters & Crossword

AnFocal.ie
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AN FOCAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, UL Students' Union, Castletroy, Limerick. T: 0860435304 E: darragh.roche@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.

Dear Sir,

It is with the deepest regret that I am writing to you at the news that you will be resigning your post as editor of 'An Focal'.

This, however, does not come as a complete shock as any fourth year student could denote the impracticality of taking on such a post with the stresses of one's final year. I believe it was you who stated last year at (one of the few quorate AGM's) that it would be impossible for a full-time student to fulfil the role of communications officer, an eventuality which the powe's that be at our "Students" Union failed and continue to fail to appreciate. I recall how your predecessor stood by and allowed the office to essentially be destroyed without much recall, the overwhelming emotion of the meeting (and of all AGM's) being that of 'we've just about made quorum now let's not bore attendees with the details'.

I have admiration for the fact that you tried to fulfil the role of editor of 'An Focal' and complete your final year at the same time.

Of course, perhaps it would have been easier for you to juggle

your two duties had you received support from the Union.

I and many others feel that you were under appreciated by the current Union and Sabbatical team for the service that you have provided for the Students of UL. When an SU President stands up in front of a class reps meeting and defames your paper (as I read on anfocal.ie), when an education officer takes time out of his day to shout at a co-op student who is working for free for the SU (as I have heard from said party and others in the office), it is clear that there is something rotten to the core of the Union, I regret that I can no longer use the word Students'; the vast majority of the student body don't care and those that do are being silenced.

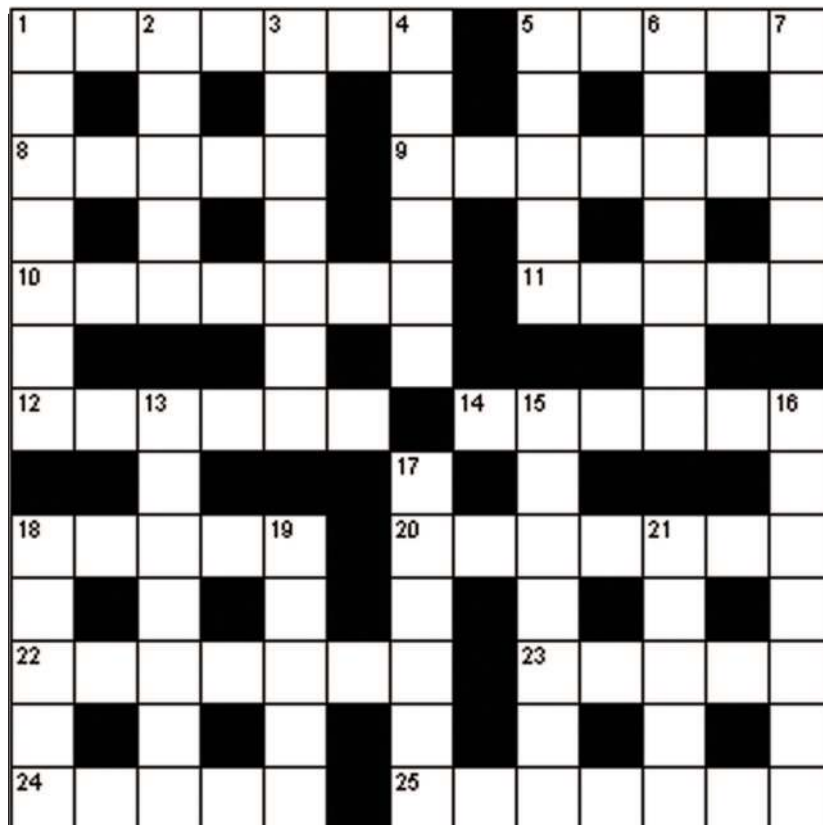
'An Focal', as it stands this year has been one of the only coherent representatives of the students body (another being the wonderful and much appreciated TST). At a time when the Union grows less and less representative this is a testament to your editorship. The Students deserve to know the truth about a Union which year upon year is providing less and less services, a Union

where the Elected Officials are only there for their own self-interest and couldn't care less about the average student. That there should be attempts by this Union to kill off this student voice, that there should be attempts to silence something that is only trying to tell the truth without bias or favour is something that is shameful and something which shouldn't be allowed to happen.

When a paper is cut for unnameable "services" which are neither explicit nor publicised in a University which boasts one of the best Journalism courses in the country it is easy to tell that something big is wrong here.

Sir, we students, all of us, pay for this service, nay these people cut every service that you and I are aware of: no opposition to the Medical Centre, the Shop, Charity Week, Campaigns of any sort and now the Paper. Membership of this Union is compulsory, but I for one am no longer happy to pay. A very well done job sir, I can only hope that the unpaid coop students can hold in there and continue to publish a great paper.

A.K 14th October 2012



CLUES

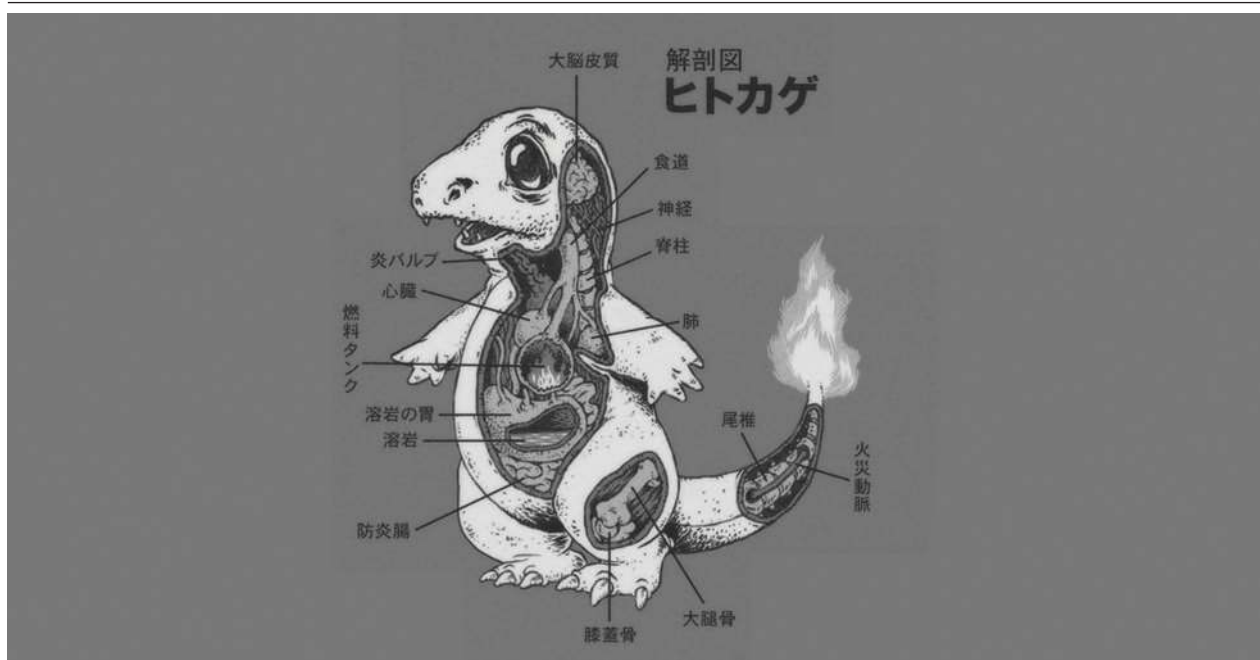
Across

- 1. Theft (7)
- 5. Ambit (5)
- 8. Relating to a city (5)
- 9. Closest (7)
- 10. Foster (7)
- 11. Public square (5)
- 12. Floor covering (6)
- 14. Soldiers (6)
- 18. Percussion instruments (5)
- 20. Burrowing rodent (7)
- 22. View (7)
- 23. Stroll (5)
- 24. Choose (5)
- 25. Pull out (7)

Down

- 1. Curt (7)
- 2. Watercourse (5)
- 3. Leave out (7)
- 4. Distant but visible (6)
- 5. Acute (5)
- 6. Aromatic herb (7)
- 7. Additional (5)
- 13. Habitual method (7)
- 15. Oddment (7)
- 16. Excess (7)
- 17. Opportunity (6)
- 18. Stingless male bee (5)
- 19. Change position (5)
- 21. Shinbone (5)

ISSUE 2 SOLUTIONS



how will you get involved with

AN FOCAL

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Heroin: The New Black?

Emma Norris

I wonder if all the emos, goths and grunge kids are sad to see their individuality ripped from them and thrust onto the masses? Do they cringe when they inadvertently stumble across photos of Emma Watson or Miley Cyrus in layers of lace and skull-appliqued corsets wearing superfluous amounts of eye-liner and blood red lippy? If high-street style at all cared for individuality, they might feel sorry for the emo kids but as it goes, they're just trying to spin a few Euros and at the moment, goth sells.

Think furs, feathers, studs, leather, black, burgundy, creepy cemetery florals, military boots, sky scraper studded heels, creepers, and all things tacky metallic.

Company Magazine recommends going for a tough, vampy edge to hair, make-up and nails. Black nail varnish ('goth polish'), backcombed hair, and layers and layers of kohl eyeliner. Charcoal eyes and blood-stained lips might be bordering on the insane compared to last season's neon brights but, trust me, looking like Marilyn Manson's ex girlfriend is absolutely bang on trend at the moment. (Company also advises its readers to avoid looking "pretty" this autumn/winter, which, to me, is a positive). With your talons, you have two options: go long and vampy or short and grungy. Either way, stick with dark reds, shiny blacks or charcoal greys. Pale skin is key so ditch the fake tan.

And it's all over the catwalks for A/W12 – heroin chic is back. Do you take drugs? Do you look as though you take drugs? Great! Hollowed-out cheekbones look great this season and if you don't have them you can fake them with some know-how in



the contouring department. Use some creamy ashy grey foundation and get to work with the contouring brush to get that *Trainspotting* extra look down.

In terms of hair, blunt bangs à la Rooney Mara (the modern day all-empowered girl goth) are the way to go.

If you're feeling brave, go for a fringe that sits high above your eyebrows – it's certainly a statement.

Think blood-shot eyes and red eye-shadow for some added grunge appeal. Team with some black patent Dr Martens, a black mesh maxi skirt, and

a studded leather jacket for a grunge look worthy of Wednesday Addams herself. These key pieces will see you through the fashion season, even if you can't summon the courage to go the whole hog. Be warned though – once you go back, you never go back. It's

all human sacrifices and Ouija boards from here on out.

Are We Looking For Love Or Just Adventurous Sex?

Barbara Ross

Once upon a time, on a tiny little island called Ireland, sex was a solemn act of duty between a husband and wife. It was a taboo not to be talked about and was for procreation, not pleasure. If your family couldn't field a football or hurling team on its own then you were a failure.

With the legalisation of contraception in 1980 and the popularity of shows like *Sex and the City*, sex was no longer a duty but a source of pleasure. It was still however an act of love. But what is it today? With the rise of *50 Shades of Grey* mania, has lovemaking become all about the sex?

At every turn women are looking for their very own Mr Grey with all his erotically charged expertise and titillating gadgets rather than Mr Right. Dating and handholding has gone out the window to a certain extent and been replaced with one-night-stands and erotic foreplay. Some acts aren't regarded as being as intimate as sex and therefore can be done with no thoughts as to the consequences. It is all harmless kinky fun.

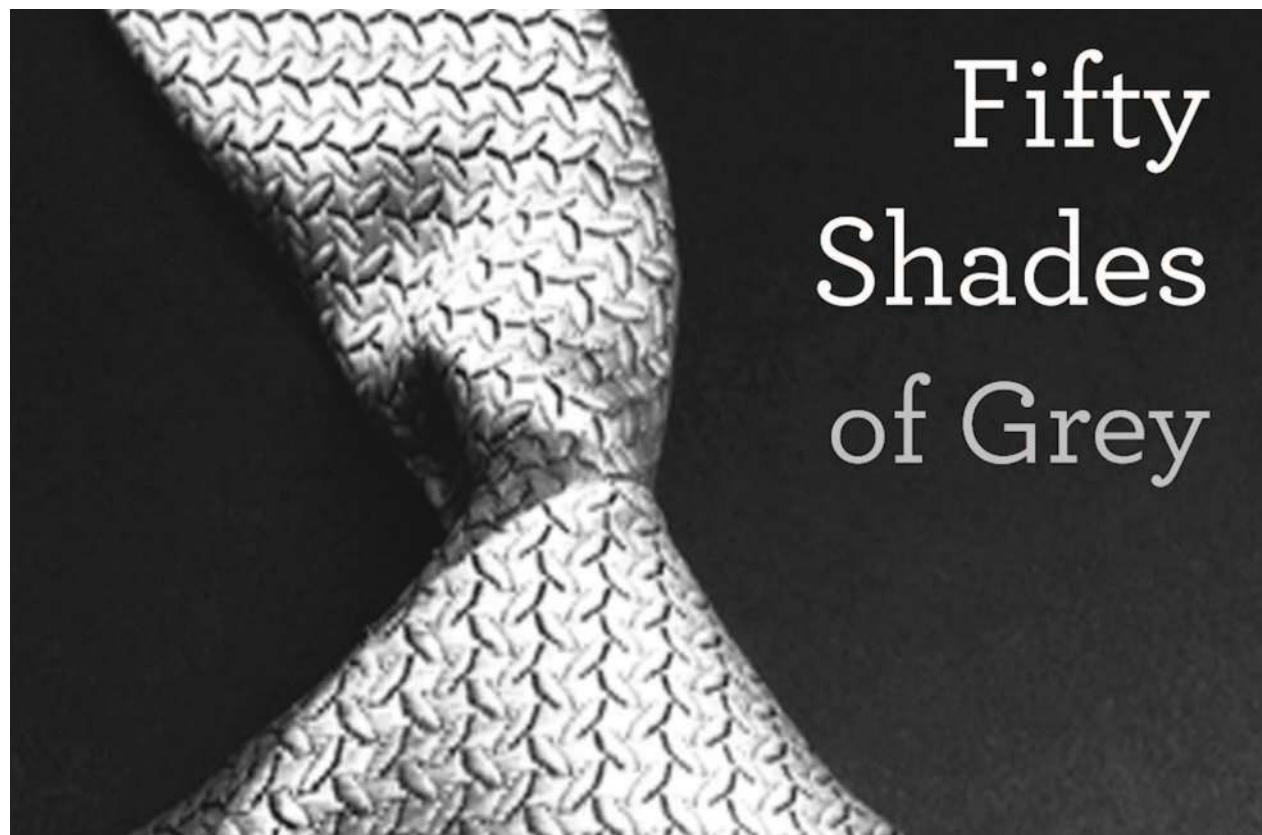
Sexting was popularized in the

early 21st century and is the act of texting sexually explicit messages or photographs to others in the flirty hope of mutual arousal. Sexting is by no means a new phenomenon and it has become not only acceptable in Irish life but a legitimate stage in the courting ritual of Ireland.

This behaviour has its roots in the union of the ever-changing technological revolution of the last decade or so and the process of sexual liberation. It is often used as foreplay; promises of what is yet to come are made and it is generally the modern gateway to coitus.

With *Fifty Shades* author EL James set to unveil a collection of branded sex toys inspired by her racy trilogy is it any wonder that it is now seen as acceptable to introduce sex toys into the bedroom. A range of official merchandise that has been inspired by the erotic novel and developed in close association with the author include the infamous silver pleasure balls, handcuffs and crops immortalised in the trilogy.

The sale of sex toys is spiking since the release of the ultimate mummy porn sparking a sexual revolution on our little island. Spicing up the bedroom



is not only the penchant of toys but also movies. More and more women, men and couples are using porn to get ideas and in the mood. Late night television is obsessed with sex chat-

line advertisements and it has never been easier to watch free porn on the internet.

Sex is no longer a naughty little secret that we should be ashamed of.

Embrace the joys of sex, don't be afraid to experiment but most of all be safe and use protection.

Irish Males: Putting The Fear In Fashion

Claire McDermott

Ireland is traditionally known as 'The land of saints and scholars.' Yet in this modern age, the men of this country could be known more for their fashionable and sometimes questionable ensembles. Long gone are the navy O'Neill's adorned with dirt and mud from last week's GAA match. A new hierarchy of men have now emerged: the metrosexual. Here we'll categorize some of these fashionable fellas so that the young Irish women of today will know if their boyfriends are robbing their moisturiser for a sprain...or for a rejuvenated glow!

One look has taken over the majority of Irish twenty-somethings in university: the One Direction style. Never mind the fact that these boys are not actually out of teens yet, if you can grow a curly fringe apparently you can catch a cougar à la Harry Styles. This newly discovered species are clad in various muted shaded chinos with a scarf, if they want the look to be edgy. A beanie can also be worn just with a little fringe hanging out. These One Direction fashion followers achieve this look down with ease, as most of the high street have caught on to the trend. May the walls of your favourite shops be shelved high with wine and bottle green chinos and v-neck jumpers because apparently that what makes you beautiful!

Another type of man in the big bad world is the "I'm trying really hard to make it look like I didn't try at all" man. In other words, he is indie. This type of man spends hours touching his hair trying to get it into the right kind of careless tousled look. The bigger the better when it comes to his omnipresent reading glasses – which are never taken off though he rarely reads. There is an obscure band name on his t-shirt or else a really old marvel comic hero. This type of 'too cool for chino' man angers women the most, in my opinion. For though the conversation of Japanese cartoons can irritate, it is more the fact that while most of us women struggle to heave our double chocolate muffin tops into our winter boyfriend jeans, these men usually wear the extra small skinnies. From the women's department. Not the boyfriend jeans I'd be thinking of!

Do not fret, there is still hope! Because good old-fashioned men do exist! They can be found in the depths of Clare and Mayo and all other counties that aren't as pretentious as having their big city the same name as their county. These men are not crying into their scented tissues because their size is gone from 'TopMan'. They've never even heard of 'Captain America'. They wear whatever their mother lays out or indeed the good old O'Neill's...with their county jersey of course!



Individuality In Fashion

Emily Maree

WITH the successful rise of Nicki Minaj, Lady Gaga and Katy Perry in the fashion stakes, it seems that no longer wearing your LBD or painting your nails wacky colours is putting you on the cusp of fashion. Apparently it takes a whole lot more than that.

With the likes of these celebrities making the headlines for dressing like an alien or a large candy cane, us ordinary folk are put under pressure to start getting creative with our outfits. Is it really worth the hassle though?

These celebs may be making the papers for thinking 'outside the box' but heading out in Limerick in a meat suit may kill your pulling chances for the night. What's wrong with LBDs or fun lipstick colours? Trying to compete with these ladies can be time consuming and shame-inducing if it goes wrong, and chances are it will.

Christina Aguilera has bounced back into the public eye but definitely not in a good way. It appears that Christina is trying desperately to join the outrageously dressed celebrities' hall of fame but is failing all the time. While Lady Gaga may be able to pull off the universes' most weird and sometimes scary outfits with a high degree of grace and decorum, Aguilera ends up looking like a

50-year-old hooker trying desperately to out-shine the others on the street corner.

This is the perfect example of how dressing outside the box can be detrimental to one's social status. But this trend is no longer confined to celebrities trying to make a name for themselves, as fashion designers have also sat up and took notice of the growing popularity of Lady Gaga and Katy Perry's wonderful weirdness. Crazy dresses with equally crazy accessories have made their way onto runways world-wide and there seems to be no signs that there are any boundaries as to how far is just too far. Right now, there are two sides of the fence to be sitting on when it comes to modern day fashion, the classy, plain LBD look or the colourful, flamboyant look.

So, is it a good thing that fashion has evolved into a crazy, colourful trend of weird? For entertainment purposes: yes. Who doesn't want to watch a giant lollipop walk up the red carpet? But as fashion icons that you want to look like? It's a big no from me. Unless you're famous, you're never going to rock the 'out of this world' look simply because it has no place in the real world. You don't see Lady Gaga nipping down to Spar in her meat suit, because even she knows, there's a time and a place and the real world is not it.



Cooking Corner: Blondies

Amy Grimes

There's a chill in the air and winter is settling in for the long haul, it's about the time of year when everyone craves comfort food. And what's more comforting than a slice of home-baked sweetness in the form of some blondies?

If you've never heard of a blondie before, they're basically brownies without the chocolate. Don't be alarmed by this cocoa-powder-less creation, rather, think of them as the brownie's exotic cousin from out of town. This particular recipe adds white chocolate chips, among the other things you could add for some individual flair are dried cranberries, apricots or cherries, cashews, pecans, a swirl of peanut butter or chocolate spread, or you could top them with some icing if you really miss your dentist. You could also swap light brown sugar for dark and omit any chocolate to have simple, deep flavour.

This recipe will fill one 20cm x 20cm square pan. That's six rather formidable slices or 16 bite-size treats, depending on how you slice it.



Ingredients

- 115g butter, melted
- 220g light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence

- Pinch of salt
- 125g plain flour
- 100g white chocolate chips
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda

Method

Grease the pan and preheat the oven to 160°C.
In a large bowl, beat the melted butter and sugar until smooth.

Beat in the egg and vanilla.
Sieve in flour, baking powder and baking soda. Add salt.
Mix in the chocolate chips or any other additions you want to make.
Pour into greased pan and bake for 10-15 minutes or until a toothpick

comes out clean. This could take longer depending on your oven.
Sit back with a nice cup of tea and a bit of gooey goodness and enjoy your sudden popularity with your housemates.
(Original source: smittenkitchen.com)

How To Survive On A Shoestring Budget

Amy Grimes

Surviving as a student on a student's budget is difficult. The lifestyle and the funds don't exactly add up well. Forget about scrounging and doing your best to survive on the bare minimum, you don't have to fear the overdraft; the following hints and tips should help you on your way to living well.

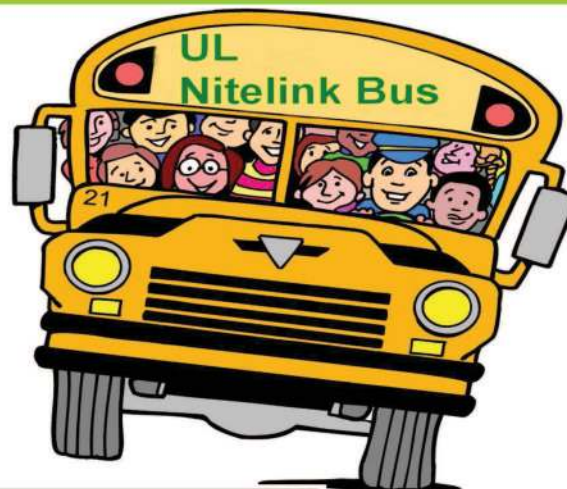
It's important to look after yourself in college so that you don't get run down or stressed, and eating properly is a major part of this. The best way to eat well is to budget. Plan what you want to eat before you go shopping and write a list on your smartphone. The internet is a great resource for meal planning and should inspire you with all kinds of ideas too. There's a plethora of blogs out there on how to make meals that will fit your budget. We're all familiar with Google Scholar, but the less used Google Recipes is just as much of a lifesaver. When you have a mish-mash of leftovers, simply list your ingredients in Google Recipes and be presented with ideas you hadn't even thought of. A final note: if your housemates are willing, you could draw up a schedule for who will cook a main meal each night and you all could contribute to the grocery fund for these dinner staples.

That's your fridge sorted, what about your wardrobe? Don't worry, I'm not going to tell you to go to Penney's. Actually, I'm going to tell you to avoid Penney's. We all love the thrill of a €15 dress but it's a downer when a seam is

loose and holes are starting to form a fortnight later. If you're pressed for cash but you love looking good, there are three guidelines you should stick to: quality over quantity (this applies especially to winter coats, shoes and interview outfits), buy pieces you love rather than trends that might not suit you and hone your sale shopping skills. There are bargains everywhere and it's definitely better to get a drastically reduced quality piece than something for the same price that's likely to be dated in a month. Think about it, do you really need those floral harem pants?

Now, what about when you need a little break from college work? You've realised that student nights are cheaper and you've set aside some money for drinks but you want to do something different. One word: Groupon. If you haven't already, sign up for this site and others like it. Pamper packages, lunch in the city, paintballing, go-karting and cocktail-making classes are some of the things that are regularly on offer. You could treat yourself to a Shellac manicure for €10 when that deal comes around, or have a sophisticated night out with a friend on the cheap by buying a voucher for a meal for two in advance. You have to keep an eye out for these deals via email but they provide a nice break from routine. A degree of foresight will allow you to lead an enviable life and that's certainly worth a little self-restraint, isn't it?

Student Nitelink Bus



●	Cappavilla Village	19.00	20.00	21.00	22.00	23.00
↓	Thomond Village	19.05	20.05	21.05	22.05	23.05
↓	Dromroe Village	19.10	20.10	21.10	22.10	23.10
↓	Stables Arch	19.15	20.15	21.15	22.15	23.15
↓	Kilmurry Lodge	19.25	20.25	21.25	22.25	23.25
↓	Brookfield / Groody	19.30	20.30	21.30	22.30	23.30
↓	City Centre –Arthurs Quay	19.40	20.40	21.40	22.40	23.40

Introducing a new hourly bus service for students going from UL's north campus and Students centre to the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Groody, Brookfield and Limerick City Centre 7pm to 11pm [EX-Cappavilla] every Mon, Tue, Wed and Thurs nights (Semester weeks).



Mike Hynan Coaches

Mes Que Un Dub

Andrew Cunneen

The glamour of satellite television is highlighted when the likes of Lionel Messi and Andres Iniesta dribble across your plasma screens as you admire the footballing giant that is FC Barcelona. While most can never claim to have had a hand in that, a hidden gem, forged on the northside of Dublin city saved the club from going out of business. I assure you this is no wives' tale.

Born and reared next to the river Tolka, Patrick O'Connell probably didn't realise how broadened his horizons would ever get. Signing for Dublin side Frankfort, who would go on to be one of the founding members of the League of Ireland, O'Connell's playing career went from strength to strength. Making the journey across the Irish Sea, the young Dublin native signed for Sheffield Wednesday before signing for Hull City, where he played most of his football. Notably, Manchester United was O'Connell's next port of call. This spell also handed the wing-half six Ireland caps.

While his footballing ability could not be doubted, it was in management that Patrick made his name. Spanish shores called to O'Connell and he set sail for Santander, where he won various regional titles and then guided Racing into La Liga as a founding member. The next stop was Real Betis; winning the Segunda Division and subsequently winning La Liga with them put O'Connell into Betis folklore.

It was from here that Barcelona brought O'Connell on board. In the middle of the Spanish Civil War, General Franco had established



Barcelona's hall of fame at the Nou Camp commemorates O'Connell (centre) for his role in helping the club get through the Spanish Civil War.

a rather large fascist state. Given that Barcelona was in Catalana, and therefore linked to Republican causes, the club came under massive pressure from the existing overlords. O'Connell's vision helped Barcelona financially as he organised a tour

of North America. From this quick initiative, FC Barcelona raised \$15,000 which enabled the club to progress.

While the fortunes of Barcelona minus O'Connell are impossible to predict, one can only ponder the

fate of the Catalonian club had the Drumcondra-born star not arrived on the scene. Barcelona's hall of fame at the Nou Camp commemorates O'Connell for his role in helping the club get through the Spanish Civil War. "Paddy Don Patricio" will

always be remembered by the club he saved from falling victim to a national conflict. There's something to think about the next time you see Xavi ping a forty yard cross-field ball to the feet of Alexis Sanchez.

Rory's Choice

Eoghan Wallace

"Maybe it was the way I was brought up, I don't know but I've always felt more of a connection with the UK than with Ireland." – Rory McIlroy's comments, which came after his win at the BMW Championship, caused quite a stir among golf fans south of the border. The biggest question being how could someone who was raised a Catholic, who went to a Catholic primary school and whose great-uncle was killed by Loyalists feel more British than Irish?

Perhaps this stereotype no longer exists in Northern Ireland today and is a relic of the Troubles? Maybe his identity was moulded during his secondary school days at Sullivan Upper grammar school? Who knows? Ultimately his comments have hit a nerve among those who always viewed him as Irish. Hell, his comments even fly in the face of an article I wrote for issue 1 in which I praised the golden period of success Irish golf has been enjoying of late, which included Rory's successes.

Rory has played under the tricolour of Ireland before. He and Graeme McDowell played together for Ireland at the world cup of golf in 2009 and 2011. The Golfing Union of Ireland, which

administers the sport for the whole island of Ireland, helped to aid Rory's progression when he was an amateur. While Rory possesses a natural talent which money cannot buy, it is unlikely that he would be where he is today if it were not for the funding and support he received from the GUI and the Irish Sports Council.

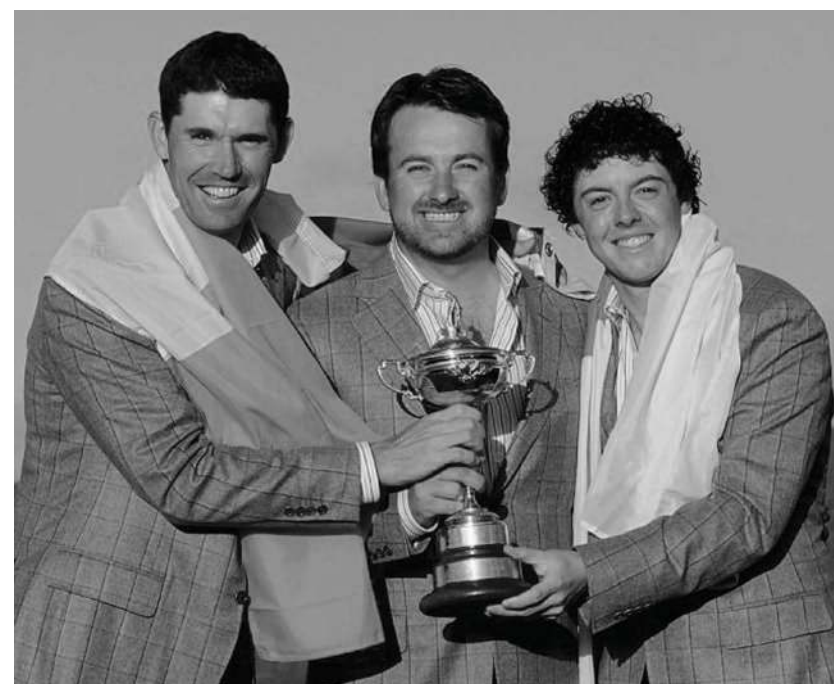
Even Rory has admitted the part that both associations had to play in his development – "The Golfing Union of Ireland and the Irish Sports Council has been very supportive to me. They've helped me tremendously and I've travelled all over the world at their expense, pretty much. It's great to have that support behind you". Surely there would be no better way of repaying the GUT's support in him than representing Ireland at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in four years' time? By declaring for Britain, Rory would be biting the hand that has fed him.

I believe there would be more people peeved off if Rory declared for Britain than if he did so for Ireland. Fundamentally what will annoy people most, myself included, is if Rory were to win a gold medal, it would be just another medal added to the Team GB haul. If he played for Ireland it could potentially be our only gold of the Games. One could understand the

benefits of declaring for Britain if it were a team sport. That said if golf at the Olympics was a team sport, which it won't be, there would be no benefit in declaring for Britain over Ireland. Is declaring for Britain financially motivated? We may never find out.

As you can probably tell, I'm of the belief that Rory should represent Ireland. Rory's nationality will continue to remain a hot topic of discussion until he formally announces who he will represent, which may not happen until 2016 just prior to the Games. That said if you were under any illusions that Rory felt remotely Irish then one need only view the video of him discarding an Irish tricolour thrown his way after his victory at the U.S. Open last year. Even after Europe's miraculous comeback at the Ryder Cup earlier this month Rory adorned himself in the Red Hand of Ulster, not the Union Jack or the tricolour.

It's possible Rory belongs to the new generation from the North, who view themselves not as British or Irish but as Northern Irish. Rory is quoted as saying – "I am a proud Ulsterman who grew up in Northern Ireland which is part of the United Kingdom." It is of course Rory's decision, and whatever his decision will be, while I and others may not wholly agree with it, we must



Rory McIlroy celebrates with Paddy Harrington and Graeme McDowell. Only one has a tricolour.

at least respect it. I do not envy the position he finds himself in. It seems to be just Northern Irish when it comes to the Olympics is impossible. If Rory wished to avoid the potential backlash he would be better off skipping the whole thing altogether. Like tennis, success in golf is measured by the number of majors won, not by an

Olympic medal. It is a question that will hound Rory for the next four years. Perhaps we need to take a look in the mirror and realise we're just getting our knickers in a twist; fundamentally the only difference there will be is which flag would be hoisted should he win a medal.

Through The Trap Door

Andrew Cunneen

Having qualified for their first major tournament in ten years, the Republic of Ireland should not have any qualms about their manager. So, why is it that Giovanni Trapattoni is so out of favour among a large section of the Irish media and fans alike?

Going back to the original decision, nobody could fault the FAI for their appointment. Trapattoni, who is one of the world's most successful football managers, has won it all and has shown his metal when times get tough repeatedly. The Italian is world renowned for making his sides tough to break down as well as tactically outclassing his counterparts, so why is it that this nation see fit to get rid of him?

For most people, the selection process is crucial to any side's path to potential glory and while the side chosen qualified for the European Championships, the displays were lacking quite a lot. With the exclusion of James McCarthy, Wes Hoolahan and James McClean, many were questioning Trap's reasoning behind his selection policy.

Exciting football and passion is one thing Ireland have prided themselves on for years. The eras of Jack Charlton, Mick McCarthy and even the rather slurred reign of Brian Kerr oversaw a level of commitment and excitement among the players. With a rather lethargic feel to them, the current Republic of Ireland team seem under-motivated, over-



Has Trap's cat escaped from the sack?

defensive and completely dull in terms of footballing entertainment.

One can argue both ways on this. If he is to go, it must be for the reasons that the football isn't good enough and the excitement factor isn't there anymore. It really boils down to how you view international football. Is it about entertainment or success? The answer to that question is directly

relative to your view on Trapattoni.

If you're of the mindframe that success is all that matters, you cannot argue with qualifying for the first European Championships in over twenty years was a major success given the limited talent on offer to the Italian. Topping this off with what might have been qualification to the World Cup in South Africa had

Thierry Henry taken a less hands-on approach, Trapattoni has without doubt been a success and has indeed fulfilled his brief.

On the contrary, if you like to watch your nation play open and attacking football, giving success a back seat, you probably won't enjoy two holding midfielders, constant passing around the back four and flick-ons to Robbie

Keane from Kevin Doyle.

For me, football is built around winning and achieving. Nobody is going to argue about the success rate of Trapattoni, and despite having very few years left in his managerial career, Ireland would probably be foolish to get rid of him.

United's Philosophy Proves Divisive

Robert McNamara
Sports Editor

I traveled to Cork City's Turners Cross to watch Manchester United's reserves take on the locals during the summer. The initial stages of the game belonged to United's young players, their first touch and control far superior to the League of Ireland outfit. However, as the first half progressed, a familiar pattern developed. Cork City dominated the centre of the park and United were knocking the ball wide or playing long searching balls to the isolated Norwegian forward Josh King.

United had some decent players in midfield. Mats Daehli, another Norwegian, is particularly talented but was restricted in what he could do in the constraints of United's system – a static 4-2-3-1 based on pace and attacking threat.

There is a major flaw in United's interpretation of this widely used formation. They cede room in the centre of the park as their two middle men drop back to collect the ball from the back four – lying low when not in possession in the hope that the opposing team won't be able to get through. Cork exploited this to the full and claimed a 2-0 victory that delighted the home fans. They were able to dictate the pace of the game and ensure that United's wide men and attack had no supply line.

It's the same way United's first team play and there seems to be no

plan B. Sir Alex Ferguson is keen to implement this philosophy at the club, yet it appears that United's backroom staff and players are unable to do so effectively.

United are fine when facing a team who fear them, but many sides are now arriving at Old Trafford safe in the knowledge that if they expose United's weakness, they have a decent chance of taking something from the game.

Tottenham Hotspur did just that in their famous 2-3 win in Manchester recently. Moussa Dembélé had all the space in the world to run at United and pick out passes into dangerous areas. Sir Alex' side were terrorized by the same player weeks before when he lined out for Fulham – as the cottagers nearly pulled off an unlikely victory at Old Trafford. No lesson was learned from that day and United were not so lucky against the north Londoners.

Paul Scholes can't go on forever and allied to huge problems in defence – Patrice Evra is horribly out of position in defence most of the time and Rio Ferdinand has lost his pace – United will struggle to compete if they ignore these problems. Footballing philosophy is built over a number of years, Barcelona's La Masia being the obvious exponent. The Catalans built from their youth system up to the first team. United are trying to do it in one fell swoop and the first team is suffering. Interesting times are ahead at Old Trafford.

The Super-Agent Vs. Los Blanco's

Darren Mulryan

We've all come to realise that the beautiful game has become more and more reliant on big spending investors and oil tycoons. But there is a force more powerful than any of these: The 'super-agent'. Did you believe players simply move from one club to another by simply transferring funds from one account to another? Not that simple, as is the case in many of the world's top leagues.

One particular super-agent has made somewhat of a storm in the usually pleasant climate of Madrid. Introducing Jorge Mendes. Night club owner turned unofficial President of Real Madrid. Jorge has a very impressive track record of clients in his little black book. Apparently he has proclaimed himself as the "world's best business man" after negotiating massive fees for the sales of Portugal's top athletes. There must be something in the water on the Iberian coast as his confident demeanour resembles one of his clients José Mourinho. Mr Mendes is renowned is the Football world for his ability to forge a strong family like relationship with his clients, which sometimes irks those who resent outside influences.

Recently, former Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon slated the Portuguese by insisting that Mendes has more pulling power than President Florentino Perez. This came after Cristiano Ronaldo displayed his



Sergio Ramos has repeatedly clashed with Mourinho over training methods and controversially wore substituted Mesut Özil's shirt in order to send out a message to the Portuguese.

"unhappiness" after Madrid's 2-0 win over Granada. The agent subsequently supported his client insisting he was going through a tough time at the club but would remain in contract. The usual media merry go round ensued which led many to believe this act of "sympathy" could be another money making scheme.

Jorge Mendes appears to have created a dressing room faction at the Bernabeu with a jaw dropping £165 million pounds in sales for Brazilian and Portuguese players including Ronaldo, Coentrao and Pepe amongst others. The majority of Iberian and South American players have developed a strong relationship with Mendes and this concerns the hierarchy at Madrid and the Spanish contingent

on the playing staff. Sergio Ramos has repeatedly clashed with Mourinho over training methods and controversially wore substituted Mesut Özil's shirt last month in a game against Deportivo La Coruña in order to send out a message to the Portuguese. Keeping wages to a minimum must be a priority for the club but with Mendes showing his cards this might not be as easy as it appears.

For now the Portuguese contingent appears to be growing. As long as Mourinho brings in the trophies to line the cabinets at the Bernabeu there will be little unrest. But be sure of one thing. If Mourinho eventually gets his second stint managing in England, expect Mendes and his client list to follow suit.

Reffing Hell: NFL Officials Go On Strike

Garry Irwin

The American Football season started well over a month ago but with one very important element missing. The regular officials had been substituted by hastily trained replacements. This time last year saw a players and owners dispute, causing a player lock-out that threatened to postpone the NFL season. Thankfully they came to an agreement and the season started on time.

At the end of last season though the league let another Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) expire, the one that existed since 2006 with the leagues referees. As this dragged on it seemed the league were prepared to enter into long drawn out negotiations to try and get what they wanted. Before the first game of the season they were training up retired refs, officials from the indoor Arena League and promoting guys who had only officiated minor college football games. Foresight? Or just a bullying tactic?

The regular officials were asking for a pay rise in line with the one they had received in the last CBA, while also pointing out that the league was increasing its profits. They did not want to see the league treat them as an easy target, as it tried to save money by biting into their payroll. But as the weeks went by into the season, no agreement between the NFL and the NFLRA was forthcoming.

Now, the replacement officials did make some mistakes. Fans and players alike were complaining of bad calls when they went against

their team. Some games had a higher number of blown calls than others. But the NFL was prepared to take this flak as the CBA rumbled on. Regular officials make mistakes too, but they also get thousands of rulings correct. The replacements were piling up the bad calls as the weeks went by and the call that broke the camel's back was given in the Monday Night Football game between Green Bay and Seattle.

Late in the game, Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson was hopping around in the pocket behind his blockers, before throwing a speculative 40 yard ball into the end zone. It went up between five Packers defensive players and two Seahawks receivers. A Packers defender caught that ball in the air and as he came down the Seahawks player reached in to grab the ball as they all fell to the ground. After a few seconds of tussling the Seattle player has the ball and the officials rule it a touchdown. Every scoring play has to be reviewed by video, so after the awarding of the TD, the officials have the chance to see that the Seahawks player didn't have control of the play and that either way there was a whole load of pass interference going on! But they don't change the call, the ruling on the field stood. Green Bay loses their second game of the season and can't believe what just happened.

Not long after this an agreement is signed between the NFL and the officials. Come the Thursday night game between the Browns and the Ravens, the old team of referees were back in place. This will not put an end to missed or bad calls in the



Hands up who thinks it's a touchdown.

league. But it will see officials come out and apologise when they do make a mistakes, a practice they have done in the past. While also ensuring that games are not decided by blatantly

incorrect rulings, and restoring some faith in the league.

The difference between the two parties in penning a new CBA by the end? About a paltry (by NFL

standards) \$16 million. Or to put it another way, roughly what Mark Sanchez gets paid to throw interceptions all season. Sorry Jets fans!

MLB Playoff Picture

Garry Irwin

With the regular 162 game season now behind us, we can look to who can be crowned World Series champs at the end of this October. It was an eventful year, with a number of teams in with a shout of the playoffs, and none of the post-season match-ups were definite until the very last round of games.

Washington finished the season with the best overall record (98-64), and will look to continue this form as they bid to create some history. The Nationals are one of only two National League teams that have never been able to get to a World Series. This is only the second time they have managed to win the East Division title, the other occasion being all the way back in 1981.

If the Nationals storming into the post-season was a bit of an upset, then the other team to achieve this against the odds were the Oakland Athletics. The A's were never fancied to do much this year and started the season poorly. But an impressive second half to the year saw them pip the Texas Rangers to the American League West title by only one game, capping this run off with a three game series sweep against the Rangers in the very last three games of the season. The Rangers have to be content with a Wildcard spot for their troubles.

In that Wildcard game the Rangers will face the Orioles. Baltimore fought tooth and nail with the Yankees all year but just came up short as the season came to a close. And because the Yankees had the best overall record in the American League, the winners of the Wildcard game will have to face New York to get to AL Division Final.

The other team missing from the AL equation are the Detroit Tigers, who won the AL Central title. They won eight of their last ten games to beat the White Sox to the title, but they have the poorest record of any team going into the playoffs from the American League, in fact two teams who didn't even manage a wildcard berth have a better record than the Tigers. Detroit will face the other in form team of Oakland for a shot at the pennant.

Across the way in the National League, Washington will face the winners of the Atlanta/St. Louis Wildcard game. While the second seed Cincinnati Reds square off against third seed San Francisco Giants. The Giants will hope to emulate the team of 2010 who went all the way to win the World Series, whereas the Reds haven't been to a World Series since 1990.

As always it is tough to call which team should come out on top this year. The Rangers have lost the last two



Maybe the big hitting Yankees can take the trophy back to the American League for the first time since 2009.

World Series' and will hope to make it third time lucky this season, but the way in which they conspired to throw away the AL West title to Oakland puts major doubts on them achieving this.

So maybe the big hitting Yankees can take the trophy back to the American League for the first time since 2009. Or, as what usually happens in sport, an unlikely team with an unlikely hero

will stand up and be counted this year. Whatever might happen, it will be fascinating to watch.

FOCAL Sport

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Writing Off Kilkenny At Your Peril

Eoin Scanlon

Mark Twain once said: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated".

Those who announced the demise of Kilkenny hurling in the days and weeks after this year's Leinster Final have been proven akin to those trying to bury the great American wordsmith while he still had breath in him.

Kilkenny have been at the top of the hurling ladder for far too long to let one game and one bad result affect them. The manner in which they go about their business, year in year out, is commendable. It's professionalism personified.

Still, bouncing back from that provincial defeat wouldn't have been easy for Brian Cody's charges and to their credit they had to do it the hard way.

In the relatively unknown arena of Semple Stadium they quashed a stubborn Limerick team bent on giant killing at the All-Ireland quarter-final stage, before disassembling Tipperary's anti-hurling tactics in the semi's with real ruthlessness.

Kilkenny don't sit around licking wounds for too long.

There's a certain aura around Kilkenny hurling that strikes fear into their opponents on the field of play. For far too long they have played teams not fully convinced

in their own minds the end result can be anything other than a win for the black and amber.

They have dominated the first 12 years of the 21st century due to sheer and utter constancy in everything they do, almost teetering on boredom for those watching from the outside in.

A jersey that never changes its style, the same sponsor year in year out, the same manager spinning the same stories to the press, the same poster-player in Henry Shefflin and most importantly of all, the same ethos towards commitment and dedication. It's all very admirable, even if it pains neutrals around the country to admit it.

This current Kilkenny team is comprised of a group of players who have been around for five, six or more years; the likes of Brian Hogan, Eoin Larkin, JJ Delaney, the aforementioned Shefflin and Tommy Walsh to name but a few. These guys know what it takes to succeed at the highest level. Yet Brian Cody knows that any empire can't last without long-term continuity, and young players are routinely drafted in to give vibrancy.

Kieran Joyce has fitted in seamlessly at half back this year, Paul Murphy looks guaranteed to win his second all star at corner back in his second year at senior



level, while Walter Walsh gave a man of the match display in his debut start in front of 82,000 people.

Going toe to toe with Galway - the team that made them look

like mere mortals earlier in the summer - in a two game All-Ireland final series, and ultimately winning by a significant margin in the end, highlighted their unrivalled tenacity.

No doubt many the newspaper inch will be filled with news of Kilkenny hurling in the future, just don't expect to see any of it in the death notices.

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AN FOCAL Extra

16th October 2012

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Our Eclectic World:
Pink Floyd, the future of TV
and life in Venice

Mumford And Sons Smash US Sales Records

Rachel Dargan
Arts & Ents Editor

Mumford and Sons second studio album, 'Babel' has enjoyed the first week of its US release at the top of the Billboard 100 chart, with the biggest debut sales week of the year. The British quartet of folk-rockers sold more than 600,000 copies of the album in its first week, easily beating 2012 releases by Justin Bieber, Pink and Madonna, to name but a few.

In fact, Mumford and Sons almost doubled the unit-shifting performance of some of Pop's biggest stars. Justin Bieber's 'Believe' with opening-week sales of 374,000, falls to second place. Madonna is next with first-week sales of 359,000 for 'MDNA', followed by Pink's 'The Truth About Love' at 280,000.

'Babel' is also the first No. 1 on the Billboard 200 albums chart for both Mumford & Sons and their label, Glassnote Records. But it's also the biggest sales week for a rock album since AC/DC's 'Black Ice' sold 784,000 in its debut week, good for a No. 1 slot on the November 8, 2008 US Billboard 100 Chart. Not surprisingly, with such a good reception in the US, 'Babel' also became the fastest selling album of 2012 in the UK, selling over 158,000 copies in the first week of its release across the pond.

Mumford and Sons' music may have old-timey elements, but their sales came via modern technology.



'Babel' had the second-most digital album sales in a week ever in the US, with 420,000 copies downloaded.

Perhaps this can be seen as a move away from the Hip-Hop and Rap music that has become so popular

in the last number of years, and a suggest. move towards Rock and Folk-Rock once more, as the album sales would

Malta's Notte Bianca Cultural Festival Brings Valletta To Life

Rachel Dargan
Arts & Ents Editor

Notte Bianca is held in Valletta each year and is a spectacular, night-long celebration of culture and the arts in Malta's capital, that thousands of locals and tourists alike take to the streets to explore the history and culture of Malta. The streets and cultural venues come alive with a programme of entertainment designed to hold something of appeal for everyone.

State palaces and museums open their doors for free almost all night to delight patrons with visual art exhibitions and theatre performances, while the open-air streets and piazzas will showcase some of the finest local and international musicians and dancers. Cafes and restaurants will be open until late with further food stalls and tables occupying the streets. All of Valletta, from City Gate to Fort St. Elmo, comes alive on Notte Bianca, guaranteeing a memorable night for everyone.

Places such as the Grandmaster's Palace and the Archaeology museum open for free, allowing people to wander through the normally expensive buildings, and delight in the

things to be found there, that they may not normally have a chance to see, such as the Bronze Age exhibition on the archaeology museum that was opened especially for the night. One building of particular interest to many was Auberge de Castille, which houses the offices of the Prime minister of Malta, and is only open to the public once a year, on Notte Bianca.

The festival is in its sixth year, and this year, and was held on the 29th of September. It was a truly wonderful, and awe inspiring experience. The streets of Valletta came alive with people of all ages, as both locals and tourists came out to celebrate Malta's culture. On every corner there was something to see or experience, from the National Orchestra, to local music acts and of course, the museums.

From the architecture, tapestries and throne room to be seen in the Grandmaster's Palace, to the contents of the archaeology museum, and the chance to see the Prime Minister's office, it was a full night of exploration and culture. If anyone ever has an option to go to Notte Bianca, go, because it is a night that needs to be experienced to be fully explained.



Down And Out In Downton Abbey

Darragh Roche
Editor

“Nothing ever alters for you people, does it?” Shirley MacLaine tells Maggie Smith in the opening episode of ITV’s nostalgia laden *Downton Abbey*. MacLaine plays a rich American widow whose husband’s money has long bouyed up the unsustainable country seat of the ever so English Crawleys. Ironically, the aging widow is meant to represent the intrusive modern world (a commercialised, American world, no doubt) that threatens to destroy the family home. Now in its third season, the plot has become repetitive. In each season, a financial crisis has threatened the Crawleys’ ability to keep their country mansion and estate while the financial problems have placed strains on the relationship between Matthew (the heir to the Earldom) and Mary (the current Earl’s daughter). The episodes trundle on as different solutions present themselves and then evaporate until finally the old order is restored. Even the First World War failed to derail tradition. Yet millions of people still watch almost religiously.

What is it about *Downton Abbey* that attracts audiences? It certainly can’t be identifying with the characters. The Crawleys certainly aren’t going to end up in the poorhouse. Their concerns for the difference between black tie and white tie are of no concern to us. Are we rooting for them? Should we be? We know that the world of *Downton Abbey* doesn’t last. The days of hereditary lords presiding over grand country houses while a team of staff waits on them are long gone. Not only this, but the way *Downton* creator

Julian Fellowes presents characters is neither modern nor attractive.

If a story is only as good as its villain, then the villain in *Downton* is financial uncertainty. We can all understand that. But poor investments by the otherwise faultless Earl may see the family move to a smaller house with fewer servants. What destitution! Meanwhile, if you’re seeking human villains, look no further than below stairs. Yes, the real bad guys are the servants. They lie, they plot and sometimes they even kill. But Fellowes is certainly familiar with the Victorian stereotype of the ungrateful servant. The butler, Carson, stresses that nothing less than absolute loyalty to the family is essential. He also looks down on those above stairs who fail to observe proper protocol. Admirable indeed, Fellowes must think. And so must the millions of people who watch each week. After all, as we are constantly reminded, one of *Downton*’s chief duties is providing employment.

Previous attempts by members of staff to move on have vanished. The lone exception is former chauffeur Branson, who makes a passable Irish revolutionary. Branson still exists outside the *Downton* world, however, and his influence is disruptive. The Earl’s American mother-in-law, Mrs Levinson, has a similar effect. She upsets the *Downton* dynamic with her ideas about social mobility and willingness to talk openly about money. The Crawleys’ obsession with skirting around issues has become tiresome. While once it was a charming upper class quirk, now the impulse to hide serious issues from the family smacks of stupidity. All this makes for a stodgy, out of touch atmosphere. Yet



most critics are still giving *Downton* the benefit of a doubt, knowing its popularity is unlikely to wain much. We know from history that houses like *Downton* are relics from a bygone age. Even in 1920, the world was moving rapidly away from British class sensibilities. But surely this is where Fellowes’ sense of dramatic irony comes into play. Like an audience watching *Othello*, we know Iago is plotting against him. At *Downton*, Iago is the outside world. The audience knows that what lies in the Crawleys’ future is the collapse of their world. The serving classes will disappear, while the lower orders find their voice in the Labour Party and national strikes in the 1920s. Irish nationalist

Branson turns out to be on the right side of history, as Ireland slips away from British rule in 1922. And if their financial worries are serious now, they have quite the fall coming in 1929, when even Mrs Levinson’s solvency will be suspect. If we are supposed to see *Downton*’s woes as a tragedy with an inevitable cataclysmic ending, then Fellowes seems to be doing his job. But a cataclysm for whom? The death of *Downton* signals the end of a rotten system. The world of lives spent in the service of your betters, with no prospect of improvement, is not one any of us should miss. Certainly, it can be read as a disaster for the people at the top, but why should we be so concerned about them? Matthew

and Mary won’t starve (they won’t even have to live without servants). The Earl of Grantham’s arcane sense of duty doesn’t stand up to modern scrutiny. Most people couldn’t care less whether the old estate is maintained or not and more than a few might feel uncomfortable with the high born vouchsafing to provide menial jobs for the lower orders. And in all probability, Maggie Smith’s redoubtable old dame will be dead before Hitler marches into Poland. So *Downton* provides us with a nostalgic time warp, where values are radically different from our own progressive society. People are still watching, though. I await the next scandal.



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Marvelling At The Road To Wigan Pier

James Bradshaw

By 1936, Eric Arthur Blair (better known by his pen name George Orwell) had established himself as one of the finest writers in Britain. Though the product of a middle-class home, his leftist political beliefs had led him to consider the fate of the British working-class at a time when the Great Depression was ravaging the industrial heartland, leaving chronic unemployment and abject poverty in its wake.

At the invitation of his publisher friend, Victor Gollanz, Orwell decided to leave the relative comfort of his London suburb to spend some months living amongst the poor of Northern England. From these experiences came 'The Road to Wigan Pier'.

The book is divided into two parts, the first of which is an investigative account of the conditions Orwell found as he moved through Yorkshire, Lancashire and the West Midlands. In the second part Orwell focuses on his own upbringing, and shows just how starkly class divided British society is, and because of this blocked the necessary reforms.

From the image of grown men sharing beds in their rented lodging to the smell of the un-emptied chamber pot left under the breakfast table by the landlord, Orwell goes far in detailing the sordid living conditions of those whom society

had abandoned. A trip down into the mine gives an insight into the harsh working conditions such men endured while they were still useful to their employers. They faced great discomfort in the cramped shafts, not to mention the enormous physical strains of constant digging. Such a job carried enormous risks, and fatal accidents were a regular occurrence.

Orwell's genius lies not only in his wonderfully clear and descriptive writing, but is also found in his minute attention to detail. From a breakdown of the average household budget, to the lamentation on the woeful physical condition of the average Briton caused by a poverty of diet and medical attention, we get a real sense of how hard life was in the 1930s.

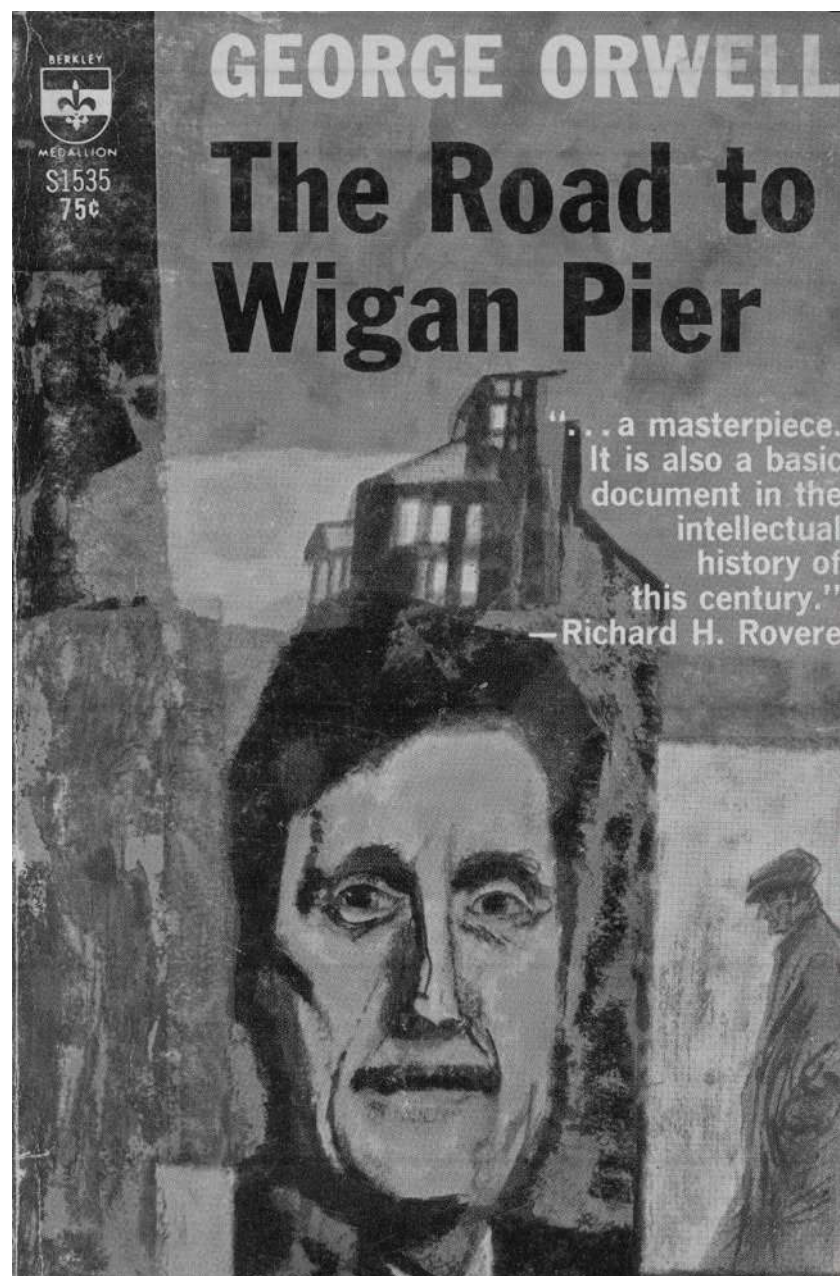
While his reporting was shocking, in the latter part of the book the reader gets a much greater insight into Orwell the man, as well as his theory as to why such conditions were allowed to persist for so long. In early 20th century Britain, class prejudice set well-spoken and privately-educated individuals like Orwell-he described how such people pronounced their 'aitches'-apart from the working-class.

Orwell also believed that ultra-orthodox leftists did a great deal of harm. Abstract theories about dialectical materialism filled the

average miner or factory worker with more confusion than passion, and pointless arguments prevented the creation of a united front. Orwell's criticisms of the communists also reveal his strong antipathy towards left-wing extremism, which would be shown even more clearly in his most famous works; 'Animal Farm' and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'.

Like all of Orwell's works, 'The Road to Wigan Pier' achieved far greater praise in the aftermath of his death than it did during his life. Major social and economic reforms were enacted by the post-WW2 Labour Government however, and the shocking conditions that Orwell described eventually faded into the history pages. The results were not as Orwell would have hoped. Capitalist greed was replaced by union greed, and by the time Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister Britain had become the sick man of Europe. Even today, the North of England lags behind the rest of the country economically.

It is still far removed from the 1930s however, and by reading this book one can marvel at how far society has evolved, as well as marvelling at the quality of thought exhibited by a middle-class Englishman called Eric Arthur Blair.



What Now For The Rabbit's Ears?

Colm Fitzgerald
Comment Editor

This shall not be a note concerning the somewhat sick and perverse notion of rabbit slaughter or anything similar. Do you remember the rabbit's ears? It was generally a somewhat cursed and pesky device that would be perched atop your television. Don't even breath upon it, or your crystal clear signal will give way to white noise and rolling black bars.

This October brings the end for traditional analogue broadcasting in Ireland. The decades of rabbit's ears and clothes hangers for aerials, fuzzy white noise and the other hallmarks of owning and operating a television are at an end.

The much mooted and anticipated Saorview service has been operational for quite some time, but will become the primary method for receiving television come the end of this month. It broadcasts in a somewhat similar manner however the signal is digital, meaning HD quality for all. Thankfully, details of the new service and how to receive it have been widely available for at least a year. Many have commented it is nothing but a money racket when well over half the TV watching population must now buy a Saorview receiving box. Perhaps they have right to complain when some retailers have exploited the opportunity and charged well in excess of €120 for a basic box

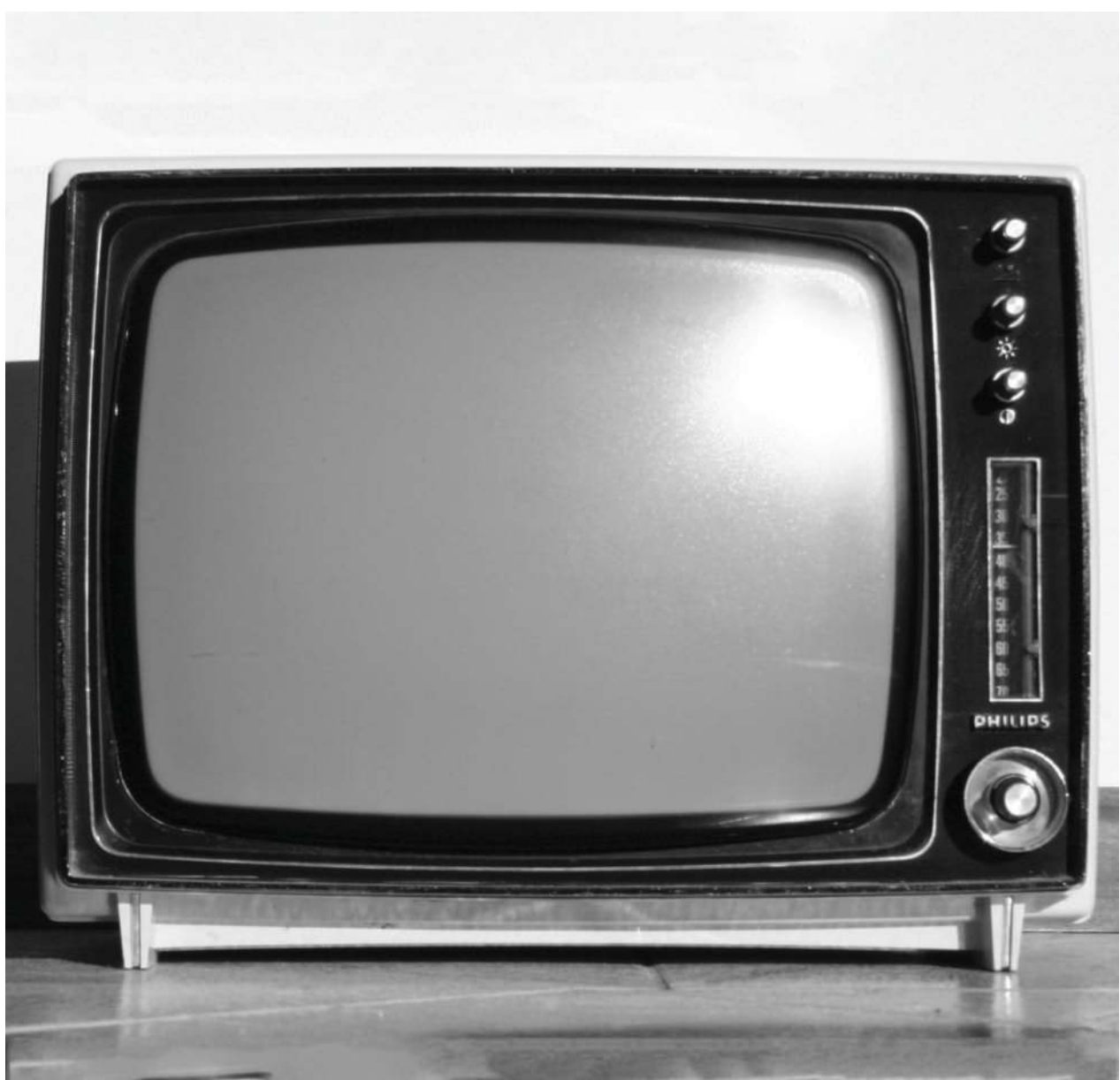
when similar ones are available on the internet for €40.

One wonders is the move to a new technology somewhat overdue. The move to Saorview was already delayed numerous times for various reasons, with even the UK switching off their analogue system several years ago.

Saorview coincides with developments like TV on demand, now being offered as a domestic product by UPC. It is entirely possible in years to come that traditional TV schedules as we know them will no longer exist. Watch whatever you want whenever you want, literally.

Many have said the introduction of Saorview is welcomed but is somewhat futile when RTE remains stale and desperately in need of overall reform. Not just that, but the issue of the TV license fee is due serious debate.

TV has very much become a secondary method of receiving content, therefore a broadcast license or similar should be applicable to quite a number of devices. Different tariffs for different devices would be appropriate. It is interesting to consider if devices such as smartphones etc. should be subject to license. It must be made clear that the license should not just be for receiving RTE, which is what many perceive it to be now.



Looper: A Review

Tom Horan

The best sci-Fi takes real people in a believable world, and then asks “how would we react if aliens landed, or robots became conscious?” Being among the best in sci-Fi, *Looper* asks the question; “How would we react if time travel was invented, but it’s use was limited to one really specific application?”

In 2044, time-travel hasn’t been invented yet, but by 2074, it will be. The act was outlawed soon after its invention, and so is the preserve of only top criminal gangs to dispose of their enemies. 2074 forensics are so advanced that the only way an enemy stays disposed of is sending them back in time to be shot and incinerated by a Looper.

A craggy looking Joseph Gordon Levitt is one such Looper and when we first meet him as the character of Joe Simmons, he’s doing well for himself; partying nightly, speeding through vagrant slums in his vintage sports car and getting high on the eye-drop drug of the future. Joe’s efficient narration fills us in on the future’s most interesting changes; ten percent of the population have telekinesis due to a genetic mutation, the economy has collapsed completely and a considerable portion of the population live on the streets. This is the nuts and bolts of how the future works, what’s changed and what has stayed the same is sci-Fi porn to the likes of me and the mix between the mundane and extraordinary here is just right.

The plot thickens when the time comes for Joe to “close his loop”.

When the higher-ups want to let a Looper go, they send back their future-self to be killed by their present self, along with enough gold to last the remaining thirty years of your life. Unfortunately, if your future-self is Bruce Willis, he’s going to get away and start a race to kill him before your bosses kill you instead.

Time travel was a hard enough concept to grasp in *Back to the Future*, let alone in something that takes itself as seriously as *Looper*. I’m a pedant and the rules for time travel in this film are an inconsistent mess. Avoiding spoilers, clever time-travel tricks that are utilized in some scenes are then forgotten in others, either for being too convenient or perhaps the script writer got confused too. Understandably, time travel is an infinitely complicated concept and an accurate time-travel movie would only be possible if time travel actually existed but there really are some headache-inducing plot holes here. *Looper* seems to know this as well as I do though and in the film’s best scene, Bruce Willis screams at the audience to stop asking stupid questions and roll with it.

And for the most part, it’s a very easy film to just roll with. The action’s good, the characters are better and there’s an underlying realism that gives even the most far-fetched science fiction bits added weight. Bar one exception, the action’s limited to a handful of people in confined areas. But the practically non-existent soundtrack and sleepy Kansas setting give the visceral, sparingly-used action scenes a sense of immediate



peril.

Also sparingly-used is Bruce Willis, who’s role is similar to that of Arnold Schwarzenegger in the original terminator; a relentless killing-machine from the future. Despite the henchmen (led by Jeff Daniels) chasing down both the present and future Joes, Willis is

the movie’s main antagonist and a fascinating one at that. His reasons for escaping his younger-self go beyond self-preservation, and despite him doing some unspeakable things, it’s impossible not to feel sympathy for him. He’s the future version of Gordon-Levitt’s character after all and a montage of what happens in the

thirty years between them perfectly sums up Future Joe’s motivations.

The film slumps in the middle due to an over-extended stay at Emily Blunt’s farmhouse but more importantly opens and ends well. You could hear a pin drop in the theatre when the final credits rolled.

Dark Sarcasm Indeed...

Gerard Flynn

Double albums have always scared me and I find them very hard to get through at times. Despite being a massive fan of the Clash and the Rolling Stones, *Exile on Main Street* and *London Calling* took a considerable time to properly appreciate. You can understand my trepidations when faced with dealing with Pink Floyd’s masterpiece *The Wall* for the first time.

After a couple of listens you have to admit that the album is not just one of the best concept albums ever made but one of the greatest in general. Its ability to retain its message and surround it in such original and beautiful music for eighty minutes is also nothing short of astounding.

The concept album follows a protagonist named Pink as his life plays out as a young man being antagonized by teachers in school to becoming an abusive drug addicted rock-star who is forced to close himself off from society until he is able to make contact again by knocking down the mental wall that alienates him from others.

The album flows well with mixtures of sprawling epics like “Comfortably Numb” and “The Trial” mixed in with segues and shorter songs like “Is there anybody out there” and “One of my turns.” The songs gel into each other so flawlessly that the music does not stand out for being too long or too short but part of a perfect, tragic symphony.

It’s clear that on this album Pink Floyd have honed their skills as musicians while also making sure not to veer off course with the message they are trying to convey. Other more wayward albums like *Ummagumma* are an example of this, as lyrics and musicianship were lost in self-indulgent background noises and musical experimentation.

Songs like the allegorical “Mother” echo the album’s overall message of dependency with society and how dependency on parents and political figures can leave people dead inside and without direction in life. Waters, in his snarling voice on the song, represents the anger of the masses that have been alienated from society since their upbringing, a message that is also conveyed in the opener from the second part of the album, “Hey You” as well as in “Goodbye Blue Sky.”

Hopelessness, depression and apathy is another constant theme in the double album as songs like “Comfortably Numb” show how the ordinary people need some sort of medication to deal with the pains of daily life yet they can’t see the reason themselves as to why they’re unhappy.

The album’s most well-known track, “Another Brick in the Wall” accentuates the feeling of not being seen by society as an individual but as a collective that serves the needs of governing bodies, corporations and media outlets.

The album can be very heavy at



times but if you’re feeling like the government can’t help you, human contact is overrated and you’ve got

eighty minutes to spare, give *The Wall* a listen in all its melancholic, awe inspiring entirety and experience the

best rock opera ever recorded.

The Rise Of The Alternative CV

Dearhaile Houston

I suffered a mean case of the Job Search Blues this summer. It's always been the issue. Unless I've been willing to work for free or had nepotism on my side, looking for a job the traditional way has always been fruitless. It's safe to say that I'm not alone in this. Reading all those "how-to-get-a-job" guides online, you'd think that having a good amount of experience printed clearly in anything but Comic Sans would get you a phone call, perhaps even an interview.

But instead you just get the creeping feeling that your CV is languishing in a bin somewhere. The part-time job search seems insignificant compared to the post-graduation one that I'll face in a couple of years. There are some savvy individuals out there who have recently attracted attention with their unusual take on the traditional curriculum vitae.

First there was Féilim Mac An Iomaire, the "Jobless Paddy" who rented a billboard to advertise himself. Last week Jordan McDonnell, a UCD graduate, scored a lot of headlines with his "alternative C.V.". McDonnell uploaded his non-resume to SlideShare, a website for sharing slide-shows, garnering plenty of offers and eventually a job in Twitter's Dublin offices. The idea of taking a two page CV and making it into a slide-show with interesting graphics and a touch of humour was a clever one. The only problem is the rash of copy-cat CV's that are bound to appear. How long until the alternative becomes the norm? And how "alternative" are people willing to go to get an employer's attention?

Thinking about it from the employer's perspective, having to sift through 50-plus meticulously typed CV's, extolling the virtues of quick-learning, team-playing, thinking-



outside-the-box-ing wunderkinds, would melt my brain. So if something different and new came along, certainly I would take notice. Yes, it is gimmicky but in a competitive and ever-shrinking job market, it seems necessary to do so even just to be noticed.

In reality, the notion of the traditional CV has been slowly changing over the years. Having a LinkedIn profile has become commonplace. Many people make video or visual CV's to go along with their paper ones. A professional online presence is pretty

much expected of you these days.

It is becoming more common in sectors such as design or journalism where one's blog or Twitter account acts as an online CV of talent and experience. The upside of this is that anyone with Internet access can see it. No more slogging from place to place and asking to speak to the manager who invariably will not be there. You also have a wider audience so anyone could stumble upon you and decide that they'd like to give you money in return for time and effort. In a nice change of roles, the

employer is coming to you. For now, the alternative CV seems only to be suited to finding jobs in social media and web-based sectors.

Of course, the alternative CV could just be a fad that will fade away in a couple of months. I've heard a few bitter mumbblings of these types of CV's being nothing but attention seeking. Whether we like it or not, this culture of self-promotion is becoming more prevalent in the job market. Let's hope it doesn't get too out of hand though-skywriting aircraft can be pretty expensive to

rent.

No matter how you grab a prospective employer's attention, your experience, skills and qualifications will still be what you'll be judged on. If your past experience amounts to mowing your neighbour's grass for a few euros back in 2007 then it might be time to go revisit the basics. While how we communicate information to others may change, what we communicate will remain the same.

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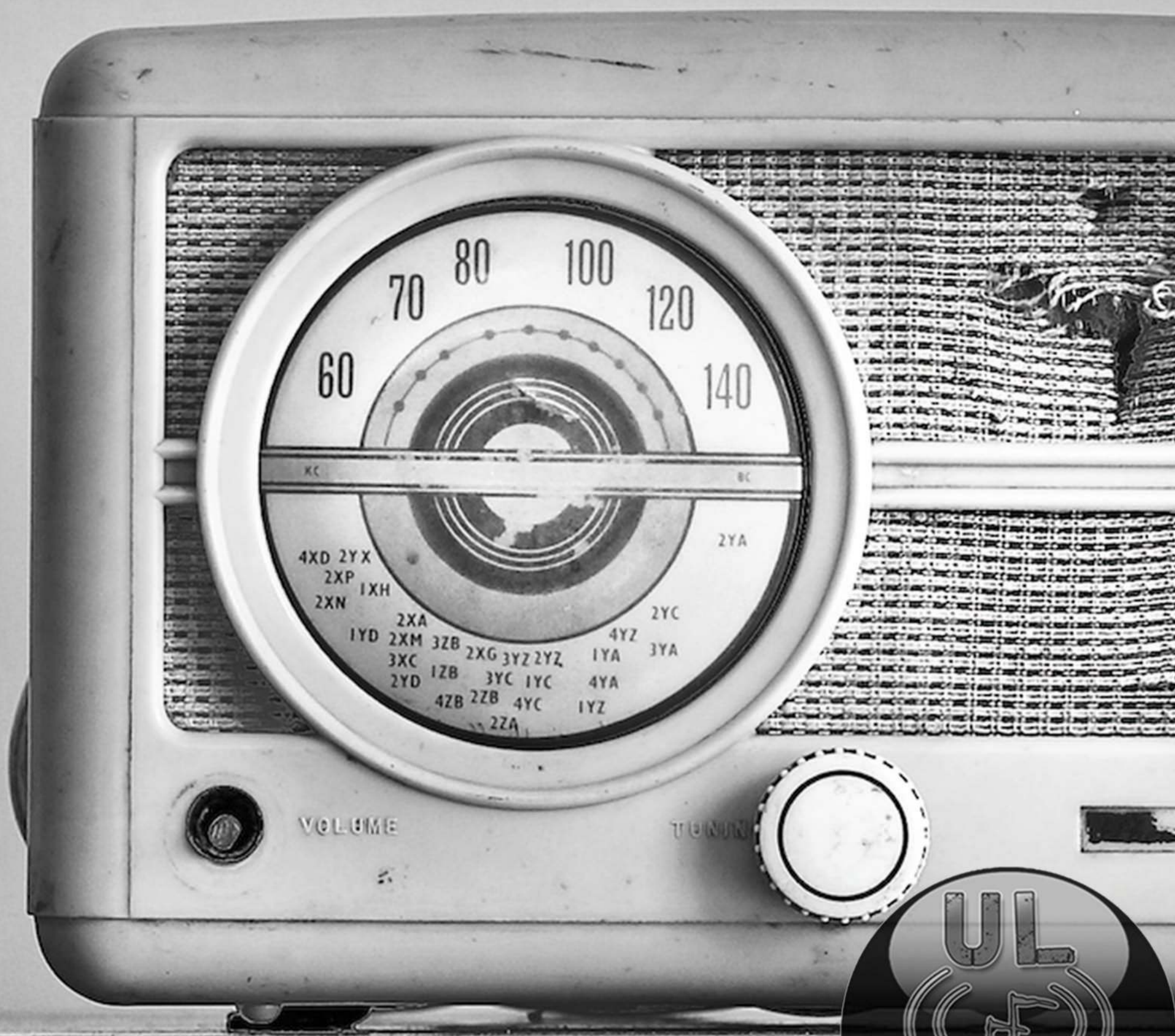
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UL Ladies Rugby Set For Kick Off

Heather Murphy

UL ladies rugby team commenced training two weeks ago in preparation for yet another exciting and eventful year with head coach, Gillian Burke. Gillian has over 30 caps with the Irish Women's squad featuring as both hooker and prop and we are exceptionally grateful for her time and efforts as her expertise and knowledge are second to none. With plenty of new additions to the squad, UL ladies hope to continue their untarnished record and win their eleventh CUSAI Division One league title in the competitions history.

Unfortunately last year's Intersivity's title was handed over to our familiar rivals UCC after extra time and penalty kicks in a tense final. We aim to ensure this cup is only on short term loan and secure our title once again, remaining the country's most successful women's rugby team at college level. On this note we would like to congratulate the eight members of the squad now representing Munster at both senior and development level, not to forget our one Leinster panellist, as well as our two present members who made the Irish women's seven's squad this



summer.

We are kicking off our fundraising with a bake sale, one of many to come which you'll find in the courtyard at lunchtimes. This year the club

is organising our first trip abroad in seven years to compete in the Amsterdam's Sevens Tournament. As of now our match dates have yet to be finalised, however we will maintain

any updates on home games, as your support would be great.

We would like to welcome any new players interested, absolutely no

experience necessary. We usually train twice a week in UL and in Annacotty. Anyone interested please contact us through our Clubs and Societies page.

UL Ninjas Ultimate Frisbee Galway / Limerick Perpetual Cup And Beginners Blitz

The first ultimate Frisbee tournament of the college year got under way last weekend and saw Galway bringing down their new recruits for a friendly beginner blitz with our own beginners. Five teams were made up with a mixture of both Galway and UL players and so the tournament got under way.

The first game saw Team Yellow take on a strong Red team. It was hard fought and close game and saw the Red team take the game on score line of 7 to 5. An equally close final score was witnessed in the Blue team against the Green team with the game going in favor of the Blues 7 to 5. The White similarly had a good start to the day, gaining a 10 to 6 victory over the Blue team. The games continued on throughout the day with every team going from strength to strength as they gained new experience and skills.

The games soon began to get more competitive as the day progressed with spirit remaining high throughout the games. The Red and Green team's game saw it come down to a universe point. The games intensity rocketed as both teams fought hard on both offense and defense. In the end the Green team came out on top on a score line of 10 to 9. Both the Green and Yellow team saw their final game come to a universe point as well. The point was hard fought but in the end the Yellow's took the point for

the game. The White team also saw themselves lose out to the Yellow team on a universe point in their penultimate game.

In the end the Yellow team came out on top in the Beginner Blitz, after playing some great ultimate over the course of the day. Spirit was close contest but in the end it went to the Blue team but all teams were highly spirited throughout the day.

The Sunday morning saw the annual Galway/Limerick Perpetual Cup take place on the North Campus pitches. UL were out for vengeance after Galway took it home with them last year. The sun was shining and a strong wind was present but the UL Ninjas were pumped for the game ahead. Galway were coming into the game on the back of some injuries from the previous day but arrived ready to give it their all. The game soon got under way and saw the UL Ninjas take control and gain an early lead through some great passing and great grabs for the disc in the end zone. As UL slowly built up their lead, they kept their cool even with Galway playing their tactical zone defense and continued with some great plays that resulted in the Ninja's gaining a Callahan in the endzone through the work of Andrew Meade and Eoghan Lalor.

Galway started to come into their own though and through some great



defense turned the disc over to gain their first point. Soon after they got their second point of the game. But UL kept control of the score and

finished the game out to a final score of 15 to 2 to take back the cup to UL. A great weekend was had by all and I would just like to give a big thank

you to Galway for coming down with all their beginners and for the hard fought game the Sunday.

UL Athletics: Ladies Retain Munster Crown

Kevin Moore
PRO

The first Saturday in October saw UL Athletics make advances to CIT for the now annual Munster Road Relays to compliment the nationals that will take place in Maynooth next month.

It was great to see so many UL Athletics rookies make their way down to Cork and it turned out to be a great day for the ladies with a trio of Maeve Culhane, Ceara Rice and Becky Hand retaining the title they won last year in Waterford. The ladies never looked in doubt and held a great lead all the way to the line. Splits for the record were 1k 4:40, 2k 8:45, 1k 4:51 respectively. Well done girls.

In the men's race we had two teams on the start line. Niall Tuohy and David Killen better known for his exploits over a shorter distance got UL Athletics off to a great start. The race started with a 1k leg followed by a 2k, then 3k, 2k and finish with a 1k. The actual lap was 1.145km, for the record and for those looking at the times might be wondering! The men's A team had Men's captain Niall Tuohy, Shawn McCormack, yours truly, George Fischer and Pat Foley, the latter two making their UL debuts with very impressive performances. Times for the record were 3:13, 8:14, 10:55, 7:24 and 3:19. The lads combined to finish 4th only 6 seconds off third. The B team of David, Eoin Lees, Brian Campion, Aodghan Tuohy and Kieran Casey combined well to finish 5th. Their splits 3:48, 8:20, 12:06, 8:30 and 4:02. Well done to all involved.

The next race for UL Athletics will be the national road relays taking place in Maynooth next month.

National Champs in Our Ranks

The Woodies DIY AAI National 20k Walk took place in Raheny on the 29th of September with UL Athletics Cian Mc Manamon of Westport A.C. winning the men's senior title in 1.37.37 convincingly ahead of David Kidd of St Laurence O Toole A.C. and Niall Prenderville of Farranfore Maine Valley A.C.

Maeve Curley of Craughwell A.C. and UL Athletics won the senior women's title in an impressive 1.52.23 for her debut over the 20k distance. Well done to both Cian and Maeve, let's hope it's the start of a great year



for UL Athletics walkers.

Body Wax

On Wednesday 24th October members of the University of Limerick Athletics Club will be

testing their pain threshold by submitting various parts of their body to a full waxing. This is a great social event for the club and one of the main fundraising adventures for it. It will take place in the Arena sports bar at 8pm. All are welcome to come along

and pull a strip or two. Free finger food provided and promotions on the night. Most athletics clubs lose a few pounds after a "session", we're more likely to lose our families! Funding is a fundamental part of any clubs success so all donations are welcome.

Check out ULAthletics.webs.com and facebook.com/ULAthletics for more updates, photos and results.

Ladies Hockey Season Preview

Alan Good
Southern Fried Hockey

Limerick's promotion is bad news for UL, as it possibly stymies the flow of players who moved to the university side to play Division One hockey in recent years.

While the club are still hopeful of bringing in a couple of new faces, they are certainly weaker on paper with

defensive totem Laura Davis moving on while Eadaoin Moore and Elaine Breen won't be available until January due to Erasmus commitments.

On the upside, Munster Junior starlet Elaine O'Flynn returns to don the goalkeeper's smock after spending most of 2012 in France and she will no doubt be looking forward to pitting her wits against hometown club Fermoy for the first time.

UL had a very progressive season last time out, showing all the signs of progress and improved organisation under George Blackwell's tutelage.

The stunning first-day win over Quins in Cork was a highlight and Sorcha Carey, scorer of both goals in that 2-1 success, dons the captain's armband this term. Irish Universities representatives Laura and Steph Peters will again be the creative and goalscoring fulcrums respectively, with

Jean Devoy causing more havoc in opposition 25s while Rachele Nyhan provides defensive solidity and a useful corner option.

Whether UL have the depth across their squad to be as competitive this term is the big question.

The club would like to thank everyone who supported us during our most recent fundraiser at the lodge and hope everyone had a great night.

Training times:

Tuesdays and Thursdays:

Division 1: train at 6:15-8:00

Division 4: 6:15-7:30

Contact us on our facebook page or else e-mail: ulladieshockeyclub@gmail.com

UL Kayak Club In Lahinch

Patrick Bergin
ULWC

Like Will Smith's rap career and RTE's Olympic Beach Volleyball commentary, there are some things in life that hold a unique charm; for members of the Kayak Club, the annual Lahinch trip is one of those special things. With this in mind it was no surprise that the trip was fully booked days in advance (sadly, our Hostel's capacity had limited numbers). So, on Friday last, over fifty paddlers set off from UL in search of sea, surf, and a valid excuse to procrastinate upcoming college assignments.

Though we arrived after dusk on Friday, everyone got in two solid days' surfing on Saturday and Sunday. On top of the surfing, we also organised a trip to the Cliffs of Moher for the study-abroad students in our club. Everyone who made it to Lahinch had a fantastic time and to those who didn't secure a spot, worry not; our next weekend trip will be in a few short weeks.

If you're not already a member of the Kayak Club, why not drop down to the Arena Pool Tuesday to Thursday from 9:45 to 10:45 p.m.



Record Numbers Join Ógra FF

With the Government and its Ministers under renewed pressure for the recent controversies in the Department of Health and Education in particular, the youth of the country grows frustrated.

With many of those who served in the last Government now departed from politics and with Fianna Fáil's Leader Micheal Martin's call for an era of new politics many people have found room for hope and belief in the new constructive approach Fianna Fáil is trying to bring to the Irish Political sphere. After learning the lessons most strongly from recent elections, its desire to bring about reform and change is stronger than ever. Its calls for a more transparent and accountable Government has resonated with many people fed up of the continued "back door" and "stroke" politics being continued by Fine Gael and Labour in government instead of using this opportunity to eradicate it from Irish politics once and for all.

Ógra Fianna Fáil has been attempting to lead the charge of renewal in Fianna Fáil but also trying to pursue a reform program in the larger Government agenda.

With that in mind, Ógra started out in September behind the theme "Be Part of The Comeback". With new Cumainn (units) being set up in LYIT, Sligo IT, Athlone IT, DIT, LIT, Carlow IT, GMTI and huge increases in numbers across all the universities. Micheal Martin addressed the huge uptake in Ógra's recruitment campaign at the recent Fianna Fáil Cárde



Fáil dinner; "In the last month we recruited 1500 new Ógra members. We've extended Ógra into new colleges and today we are once again the largest political party in 3rd level colleges".

Uachtaran of Ógra Fianna Fáil, Eamon Quinlan; an ex-Chairperson of UL Ógra has said "with record new membership figures and a high level of media interest in the "Comeback" we saw Ógra members interviewed

across 6 radio stations and our recruitment posters feature in 4 national newspapers. There is a real feeling of energy and action in Ógra at present"

That positivity has also reached Limerick Colleges with the University of Limerick Ógra Cumann (unit) growing by almost 100%. Speaking after the UL Recruitment Drive, the Chairperson of UL Ógra, Enda Costello said "The great spirit and

optimism in Ógra at the moment is very encouraging for members as they see their campaigns and policies resonate with their peers". LIT also saw Ógra recruitment, as they rebuild in the college. The Limerick units are looking forward to playing a strong part supporting the upcoming referendum on Children's Rights.

Limerick will also see the next national Ógra event as the Jack Lynch Cup comes to the City.

It's an annual Gaelic Football competition and Ógra units across the country compete. There will also be a Seminar focused on the Education System with a special emphasis on Maths and Irish. The event is an opportunity for members from different home and college units to form friendships for life.

A newspaper can be many things



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From Limerick to Kolkata

Ailsa Seoighe

Adventurous, life changing, Delhi Belly, sweaty, eye-opening, exhausting, mighty craic and hectic are just some of the words that spring to mind when I think of the summer just past. No, it was not the typical student summer! I volunteered as a teaching assistant with Suas Educational Programme this summer in Kolkata, India. Suas is an organization that recognizes education as the most powerful tool. They believe education is the key to social transformation.

Volunteering with Suas gave me a ticket to Kolkata that I would not have received as a tourist. I was given the opportunity to connect with a community where I was greeted with open arms every day, visited homes of the pupils I taught, mingled with the teachers and locals and absorbed the culture.

One of the first inspirational figures I met once I arrived in Kolkata was the director of the Suas partner I worked with, Ansuman Das. On a rainy monsoon evening he told a poignant story about a seven year old boy called Ayub who approached him at a train station years previous. The little boy had offered to sell him drugs. Ayub's vulnerability led Ansuman to help set up the National Child Labour School that I volunteered in this summer that facilitates the mainstreaming of child laborers in formal schools. The reality of Ansuman's story struck a chord with me as a volunteer. It gave me a sense of responsibility to deliver the education to children like Ayub that they deserve.

The children in the school were quite simply Legends. My teaching partner and I could hear them shouting for

their "Auntie" and "Uncle" as soon as we got off the train in Champahati and their affectionate eyes, cheeky smiles from ear to ear and heartfelt hugs kept smiles on our faces all day long. They poured all their energy into our morning rhymes, showed incredible creativity for arts and crafts and an inspiring motivation to be the best they could at Maths and English.

Their laughter and excitement was so contagious in school at times that I would forget the lives the children lived outside of school. They physically worked harder than any of us students do in our weekend jobs and they do not complain because they know no different. Seeing the poverty that these children are growing up was undoubtedly heartbreaking at times but to be part of an organization that brings energy and enthusiasm into a trackside slum, an under sourced school and a child's heart is ultimately rejuvenating. Moments of epiphany included my star pupil learning to "carry the one" in addition, witnessing my little shy Sonia blossom with confidence and having a conversation in English with my little diva, Monomita that constituted of much more than just the few words she had when I met her.

In addition to the work carried out in the schools, development issues are a core aspect of the Volunteer Programme. It involves workshops and training before departing for Kolkata as well as meeting people from other NGOs and partaking in fieldtrips whilst overseas. This aspect of the Volunteer Programme put what I saw at a local level into a broader context and I realized that the small and simple changes I was making in



school were significant changes to the lives of children.

Kolkata is a world away from anywhere in Ireland. It is noisy, chaotic, crowded and hot! Yet, despite the challenging environment in Kolkata and the constant exposure to poverty and inequality I established lifelong friendships with my team mates, recognized my own strengths and abilities and most importantly I have learned the role I now play in the world. Suas is a unique creation

that witnesses the empowerment of the youth in Ireland through the Volunteer Programme. Being part of their journey has brought about a change in me. It is an indescribable change but a positive one nonetheless.

Last summer was life changing. Excitement and happiness starts bubbling when I think back to the memories of the Suas Volunteer Programme. As leaders of our future, we are the agents to social change and it is organizations such as Suas

that provide the opportunity to make change happen. To sum it up, it was the summer of a lifetime and if I could, I would go back in a shot.

Applications for the Volunteer Programme 2013 open here: <http://suas.ie/volunteer-programme.html> On the 8th of October until the 19th of November. There will be a launch in UL soon so come along for further information.

Galway Grassroots Gathering

Martin Mroue

I value Ireland for its rich culture and tradition, for its beautiful green rolling hills, but most importantly I value it for its proud, yet humble and friendly people. For these reasons I embraced the opportunity to move to Limerick this year. However, I found that the impressions that one acquires when visiting any country are profoundly different from the ones gained (or perhaps lost) when living in that very same place. That difference arises from the crisis in which the current system that governs us is facing.

The crisis is being felt globally and many people are suffering as a result. If economic growth does not always trickle down to those that need it most, then an economic recession certainly manages to incapacitate those that are most vulnerable (including graduates). It is not fair to ignore the reality as if it were a distant and disconnected issue which you, as a student, hope will subside by the time you graduate and hit the wall running. Although the effect of austerity measures, increasing tertiary education fees, and god-knows-what taxes may not be directly felt by much of the current student population, it is today's student's obligation to negotiate fairer economic, social and environmental conditions. For example, the future

student's access to tertiary education is directly dependant on the extent to which today's students demand that fair access. This only one reason why I would encourage as many students as possible to become aware of, if not get involved in, the various issues which hundreds of millions worldwide face, but few actively oppose.

I am not Irish and the only thing I know is that I do not know anything about Irish politics but you do not need to be into politics to notice that the system in which we all currently find ourselves is failing in Ireland, as it is globally. In fact, this is not a call for political involvement, but rather a call for a rise in consciousness and awareness. A call for standing up for what you believe is right or wrong.

Next weekends Galway Gathering (October 12-14) is a perfect platform for getting in touch with a network of people who are already active, but who also need larger support to voice growing concerns. Issues ranging from the household tax to fracking and from the insolvency bill to community gardening will be discussed and campaign strategies devised. Remember, this is a one-off completely apolitical gathering, which does not stand up for the views of a particular political party, but it stands up for the people who want to remember Ireland for its tradition,



hills, and people and not for its loss of culture, damage to the environment, and increasingly marginalized population. I strongly hope that you do too!

The gathering also includes art and music programmes. Entrance is free and food for the duration of the gathering is EUR20/EUR15 for wagers/non-wagers. For more

information visit <http://grassroots.pageabode.com/>

Confusion And Exploration In Malta

Rachel Dargan
Arts & Ents Editor

Most people would think that because we've been here for almost three weeks and are now in our second week of lectures, that we would have settled in and have found our rhythm now. If you do thing that, you're sadly mistaken.

After an orientation session for the Erasmus students, we hoped that finding our way around campus in the ten minutes between lectures would be fine. I was in for a shock, as the lectures don't actually finish until the hour, and I had to race around a very unfamiliar campus (half of which is blocked off for building works) to try and find my next class, and be somewhat on time.

The first time that it happened, one lecturer stayed talking for longer than he should have, and I had to tear out of the room to make it to my next lecture. I skidded into class at seven minutes past the hour, after taking two or three wrong turns, and found it to be so full, that the lecturer had to give me the chair from behind his desk at the top of the room! Since then though, I have become more accustomed to the layout of the campus, and can find my way around a bit more easily thanks to my trusty campus map, which stays in my handbag at all times.

A major difference that I have noticed between UL and the University of Malta is that the Maltese girls really dress up for



college. By 'dress up' I don't mean wearing jeans and a top instead of tracksuits and hoodies. I have sat in the quadrangle near the Student's Union, and seen them arrive into college wearing anything from jeans and formal tops, to 'going out dresses' and killer heels in the middle of the day, and I've hardly been able to believe my eyes!

Aside from college, everything else has been amazing, and we have done lots of exploring. Last weekend we went to Mdina, which used to be the capital city of Malta, before

Valletta. The city is located inside its medieval walls, and has a population of only 300, and there are a limited number of vehicles allowed inside the walls (including wedding cars, hearses and the cars of residents), it also just .1km larger than the UL campus. The trip to Mdina was worth it, if only for the views from the raised platform inside the walls, but the trip back home was somewhat difficult, as we waited over an hour for a bus to go back to the University bus stop, even though the right bus was scheduled to pass

the stop four times while we waited.

The only thing that I will say about the buses is that they are generally on time, except for the two buses an hour that pass the top of the road to the University that are so late that they seem early most of the time (it's a good thing we can walk!), and for the buses on Sundays, as a lot of the Maltese use them to have family days out and they tend to get very full very quickly. This happened on the way home from Mdina, so instead we went to Valletta and went home from there, but that took us an

extra hour between getting the bus and the waiting that we had to do because it was a Sunday.

The best thing about the buses is that, one you get a saver card, you can get a 30 or 90 day student ticket on it (€21 for 30 days) and it gives a huge saving when compared to buying the €12 weekly tickets that we had been using. These saver cards make it so easy to get around that I know we'll be doing a lot more exploring during the next few months!

Erasmus In Canada

Aoife Murphy

THANKSGIVING has hit Canada. Don't worry you haven't lost a full month of your life. Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving a month earlier than Americans. This holiday seems to bring out the best in the Canadians. Not that they have a bad side. They just seem to become even more polite and friendly. I never thought it possible. Now, as you know, Thanksgiving is a big deal over here, it's all about being with loved ones and your friends. It's also all about the most important thing ever: food.

Oh the food. Food, glorious, food. Now, I've just had what can be described as a pre-Thanksgiving meal (It's not exactly Thanksgiving, it is still two days away as I write this) and I can't walk. I'm serious; I think I'm permanently stuck in my chair. The meal itself is basically a Christmas dinner: you have the turkey, the ham, potatoes (I'm missing them a lot), veggies and all that. My main fear is that when Christmas dinner actually does roll around I'll be so sick of turkey that I won't eat it. Maybe I'll turn vegetarian for the day.

Thanksgiving decorations have been in the shops since August (see, it is a big deal). It's all very autumnal here right now. No blizzards yet, although they are to be expected or so I'm told. The autumnal weather and seeing

the pumpkins on the porches creates a very homey ambience in Sackville. Also, since the town and University itself is so small you feel very welcomed and blessed to be able to celebrate such a special holiday with such lovely people. They even have apple picking and apple pie baking! Oh! And the corn maze, all the things you could ever want to do on Thanksgiving.

I had some plans to go shopping this weekend but since it is Thanksgiving I decided to postpone it. I'm lucky enough to be living near one of the biggest malls in Canada. It is seriously every shopaholics dream, any shop you want they have it! Hours have been spent there and so far, I haven't seen the whole place yet. Yes, it is THAT big. I've also had my first trip to Walmart, which is attached to the mall. Not a big deal, I know. But, it is Walmart and you hear about all the crazy people that go there. Sadly, I have seen no crazy people. But it is huge. It is like a super Tesco. Surprisingly, I found the cost of clothes reasonable enough, although, my purse would argue that point. But a girl needs to stock up for winter since it is promised to be a chilly one.

Next time I write I'll be talking about Thanksgiving in full because I will have experienced it and hopefully, will not have overdosed on turkey or food in general.



Erasmus In Venice

Aoife Murphy

I COULD begin this with the statement “the holiday is over” but that would have connotations of an untrue nature. The reality of this phrase is probably correct for me in a literal way but Venice is so bewitching that the whole experience is passing before me with that carefree air of an extended vacation. Alas there is the small matter of college to attend to as well as canal hopping, but I must happily admit that this is turning out to be a pleasant surprise.

Having not been to formal college lectures last semester due to Co-op experience I was apprehensive of my return to normal university life. University life in another college and country was even more daunting.

Choosing modules some time ago when writing out my learning agreement seemed so very far away. I had forgotten what my choices were and indeed what was on offer. However a quick search on the Holy Grail of information, the Ca Foscari website and I was able to select something that should hold my interest if not, at least hold off boredom. Simple you may think, and so did I, but on turning up to my first lecture and hearing not my mother tongue being spoken but a foreign language made me reconsider my choice. The problem here is that undergraduate modules are taught in Italian even if it is an English Literature course. My only option was therefore to take Masters modules which was a slightly unnerving prospect to say the least. However I am thrilled to say that despite my initial worry it has turned out very well indeed!

I love my choices, Shakespeare’s sonnets and the 19th Century Novel,



“Alas there is the small matter of college to attend to as well as canal hopping, but I must happily admit that this is turning out to be a pleasant surprise.”

allow me to immerse myself in a wide spectrum of literature. These being Masters classes means there are greater credits allotted for them so I can do less and put in more effort. I also love the style of teaching. It is a format where class is taught by the lecturer in a style similar to secondary school. You may say that this is a step backwards and that it is the spoon-feeding that we are trying to avoid but I say Cazzo! I love it.

There are no PowerPoint slides

written up 5 years ago and still in action and there are no tutorials where homework is given. It is a system where you are taught about the subject you signed up for and in doing so one actually learns something new. Being given a basis means you have a platform to start from when you are required to do your own research and not having set assignments every week means you have time to plan reading, note taking and research yourself. The lecturers are interesting

and are interested in their subjects and this shines through in class. Every lecture is an hour and a half long but no one falls asleep because we know this is the prime area for learning. There is no online section to consult a week before the exam and as such attendance is usually very high. I will stop before a full throttle rant on the Irish Education system goes into action but allow me to conclude with this; facilitation for learning is not enough and actual teaching needs to

be looked at as a favourable solution again.

All work and no play is not something to worry about either, excursions, exploring and excitement is all at hand. Also I will note that when I return I implore the campus bars to consider the importing of Aperol Spritz. Spritz time at the Stables is something I am sure would catch on!

Rest And Relaxation In The Canary Islands

Amy Grimes

WHEN most people go to Lanzarote, they venture to Porta del Carmen or Playa Blanca. Less often frequented by Irish tourists is Costa Teguse, home to serene beaches, glorious food and of course, the standard Canary Island sunshine. I visited Costa Teguse recently on a family holiday. This was a change of pace for me, as the last few times I had been abroad were with friends. Contrary to popular belief, a sun holiday with parents and siblings is not all torturous boredom. While it wasn’t the usual beach all day, bar all night student abroad experience, Costa Teguse was an ideal place to sit back and unwind for a week before fourth year kicked off.

There isn’t much to do in Costa Teguse beyond relaxing and enjoying the good food and sangria. Since the town was built expressly for tourism purposes, there’s not exactly a wealth of cultural landmarks to visit if that happens to be what you’re after. However there are four beaches in the area - Playa Bastian, Playa del Jabillo, Playa de los Charcos and Playa de las Cucharas - each with their own unique charm and atmosphere and unlike other resort areas, none are man-made. With clear blue waters and picture-perfect sand, what more could you want? It definitely beats Kilkee.

The food, as you may have noticed from my enthusiasm, was so good it makes me wish I’d learned Spanish in secondary school instead of French. If there was ever a chance I could manage more than a mumbled “Gracias” I would have emigrated a month ago to sit on Playa Bastian sipping some fresh sangria. One thing I will never understand is the individuals who go to a foreign country only to seek out an Irish or a British pub and eat typical pub grub for the duration of their stay. The local cuisine is always worth indulging in, no matter where in the world you visit. The Canaries have their own special blend of Spanish, African and Latin American cuisines: think lots of chorizo, goat’s cheese, spices, dulce de leche and seafood. You might want to go for a brisk swim after all that.

Costa Teguse is, in case you hadn’t guessed from the name, a coastal town. Ten minutes bus-ride away in the mountains is the village of Teguse, the original settling point and former capital of the island of Lanzarote. This quaint little town is worth a visit to see the Sunday market. There are hundreds of stalls selling the typical tourist offerings, from the usual designer knockoffs to wind chimes made from volcanic rock. There are charming tapas bars tucked underneath whitewashed walls and despite the influx of tourists



The church tower in the picturesque hillside village of Teguse, Lanzarote.

at the weekend, the place looks untouched by the passage of time, as if the cobbled streets have transported you to an era before iPhones. Of

course having a ‘Chanel’ handbag shoved in your face has the potential to ruin this illusion, but such is life. While some may prefer a night spent

clubbing, a Sunday morning stroll through the village square, authentic Spanish churros in hand, is more my kind of thing.

Ber Angley: Part Of The Woodwork Of UL

Aubrey O'Connell

With this year marking the 40th anniversary of the University of Limerick, and with UL40 celebrations well underway, An Focal caught up with a man not shy to celebration, Ber Angley.

Ber, probably best known these days for his DJ-ing on campus is nearing his own landmark, closing in on thirty years on campus. While not quite the Van Wilder character these days, a chirpy Ber armed with a large coffee sat down to share his tales of cutting his teeth in the 1980's Limerick music scene.

Possessing a strong interest in photography and music from a young age, Ber combined the two, ultimately kick-starting a long career in the music industry. "Well it was the only way I could get into concerts, by taking the photographs. I was getting into these gigs for free in the Glentworth Hotel when I met Brendan Murray, who was a promoter in the city. It was him who started me off, giving me some part time work in the old Savoy, doing stage management."

Working with acts from The Smiths to Eric Clapton, it wasn't long before his experience was being sought after. Ber soon found himself organising entertainment for all of Limerick's colleges, before being snapped up by UL's (then NIHE) entertainment's office. At a stage when the college lacked any real venues, improvisation was the key word. "We had to run discos up in Red Raisins, and even EGO10, the exam hall. We called it the EGO10 nightclub! We would even hold events up in the Hurlers, because at the time of course there was no Stables. After a while we started moving gigs to town, to the Glentworth. The only thing was I'd never really heard of tickets. It never really entered my head. Suddenly the streets would be packed and the guards would have to come because of the 2,000 people trying to

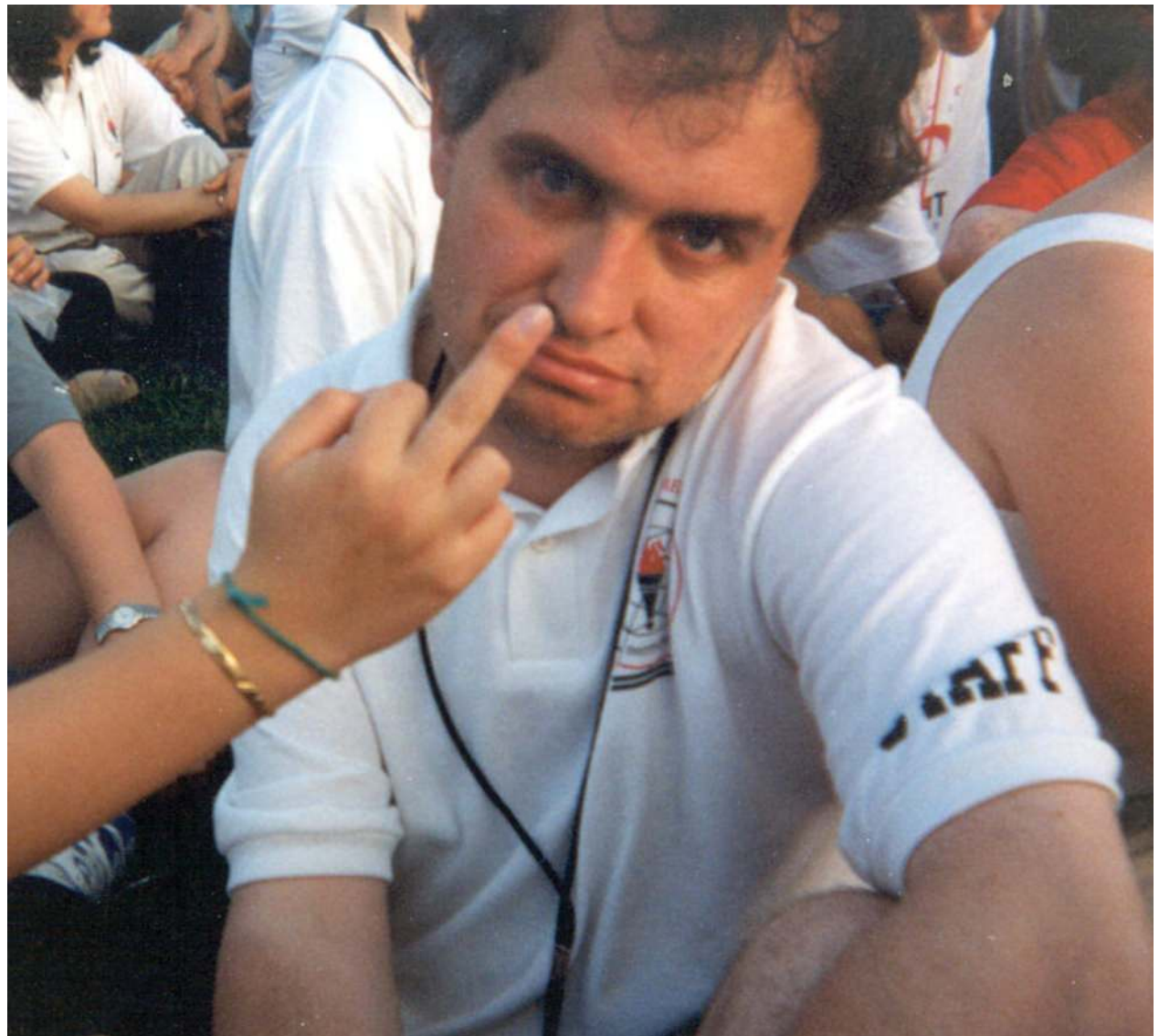
get into a 500 seater venue!"

By the mid-80's Ber was bringing acts to the city from both MCD, and another much-loved Irish promoter, Louis Walsh. "Louis was brilliant. You see, he needed to bring in acts over the weekend, meaning we could get them on the Thursday night. We were getting acts no other college was. People like the Christians were playing Wembley on Wednesday night and we had them down in the Parkway shopping centre on Thursday!"

"People would always say to me, you have interest in the music, but you never watch the bands! I really had no interest in the bands. I enjoyed them, but really the people I was interested in was the audience. That was who I was working for."

With demand running high for big acts, not only in UL but in colleges throughout the country, Ber along with promoter Ger Sheppard set up the Irish college circuit. Heading over to England to negotiate with agents, the duo's work now meant that Irish institutions would find even more acts coming their way. "The British loved us. I mean this was a time when London was being bombed by the IRA but they absolutely loved us. We became part of the British circuit. You might have someone playing in Edinburgh, for example, and they'd pay the bulk of the fee, with us getting them for half nothing!"

The students however, weren't the only ones to benefit from Ber's work. Finding them accidentally in studio, Ber offered a first rung on the ladder to Limerick's The Cranberries. "For some reason I was asked to teach a school class, and for some reason I said yes. I took the class to a local studio on a trip and found them there, unheard of. I really liked them and so got them into the Stables as a support. The response was great. Here were guys who couldn't get five people in town and suddenly were playing to 850 in the Parkway. I recommended them to the Irish college



circuit, and the British circuit. Pretty soon they were gone international."

One thing which always remained close to heart was the enjoyment of the students. Feeling that the students are often mistreated, any money made by the Ents office was given back to the students. Class trips and nights out were then subsidised by money raised from earlier acts. "That always annoyed me, the way venues would treat students. They're very happy to take your money on a Tuesday but even go near them with a student card on a weekend and you'll be turned away. I always felt that was terrible. In fact it's

illegal. I would fight them and tell them I wouldn't be using them anymore. It just isn't on."

Wishing to pursue other interests, Ber finally parted ways with the Ents office. "We were working seven days a week but I absolutely loved it. You'd have the occasional nightmare like trying to hold the singer from The Pogues up when he was completely pissed, but it was great."

When asked about the state of the current music scene the response wasn't overly positive. "I don't think Irish music is too strong right now. There isn't enough fun stuff anymore.

You had bands like The Stunning and Something Happens, but there isn't as much demand for bands right now. It'll come around again."

From starting many of the University's clubs and societies, to the early days of Ents and the Stables to propping up Shane McGowan on stage, there's a certain amount of Ber Angley in the woodwork of UL. He is currently working on the University video archives for the UL40 anniversary.

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