



Is Yoga damaging your body? Turn to page 9 to find out.



Boy fashion with Mikey Griffin on page 10.

Looking back on a resounding success: Charity Week 2012



Rachel Power and Kelly O'Brien

UL students raising much need monies for charities this week.

Charity Week 2012 has, without a doubt, been one of the most successful College fundraising weeks Ireland has seen in recent years.

Events included the RAG society's Naked Mile, UL Fest, Bressie, the UV Party, the Farmer's Ball, Mountain Dew's brush surfing, the Mankini Challenge, and much more.

SU President Derek Daly says that students really seemed to enjoy the week. "People seem to have had a good time, although some are taking it to the extreme which obviously we don't condone. We've been working with the Gardaí and the only place so far we've received complaints from is College Court. The residents are mainly concerned about the amount of littering," he said. "Apart from this,

everyone's having great fun in the SU Courtyard and we're raising lots of money. You can see that the bucket in the SU reception has a lot more money in it than last year already. The highlight for me, even though residents don't like it, would have to be the Nearly Naked Mile organised by UL's RAG society. It was really creative and got people using their imaginations. It raised about €250 – 300 for charity", he added.

Students who partook in the weeks events include second year Business and HR student Triona O'Sullivan.

"It's going well, there seems to be a buzz about campus more during the day and students are giving to charity. We did the Nearly Naked Cowboys on Monday and raised over €210 in an hour and a half", she said.

Another student pleased with events is third year MMPT Turlough O'Shea.

"I'm finding it fun, although it does seem quieter around than other years for some reason. The highlight for me would have to be the five – a – side football", he said.

While final year Journalism student Jason Kennedy has also lauded the week as a great success. "I think the

ULSU ENTS team did a great job for the budget they had, and I think a lot of praise has to go to Keith Quinlan. Every time I saw him this week he was always busy but always had a smile on his face and was willing to talk to students. Everyone seemed to have a great time, I hope they raise a lot of money for charity".

Despite the Student's Union receiving complaints only from College Court residents, and despite the fact that no students were arrested for the entirety of the week, the SU did receive some unfairly negative media attention.

The Sun ran a story about one member of RAG society's Nearly Naked Mile event. The newspaper published a picture of the student who was wearing only paint and two strategically placed party hats, and failed to mention that he was only doing so in the name of charity; with "you don't look stupid fighting cancer" written on his back.

"It's clearly party time for students, as this cheeky chap shows by peeling off during Limerick's rag week," the article read. There was no mention of the fundraising event or the funds raised by the individual in question.

The article also falsely called the week 'RAG Week' instead of 'Charity Week, the correct title of the week's festivities. Online news site, Thomond Student Times, have released a petition to boycott The Sun on campus in UL.

Limerick radio station Live 95 FM reported on the damage in College Court, but failed to properly quote SU President Derek Daly.

"They rang me at 9.15 [Wednesday] morning, and I said that I was in a meeting but would contact them later. After, I heard that they misquoted me saying that I would not talk to them and was 'unavailable for comment' and had apparently 'gone to ground'. I will be lodging a complaint with the Press Ombudsman," he said. ULSU Communications Officer, Kelly O'Brien, also voiced concerns over this incident. "I think it's an absolute disgrace that the local media attempted to discredit what has been an amazingly successful week", she admonished. "It seems that they are just grasping at straws here in the hopes of capitalising on a sensational story. Any media outlet with one shred of journalistic integrity would have focused on the amount

of money raised for charities such as Pieta House and commented on the dedication of our student volunteers. But no, it seems the local media cares more about student-bashing than it does about local worthy causes." She also went on to state "I think Derek was dead right to hang up on Live 95fm. He has been the brunt of unfounded comments and I'm proud of him for sticking to his guns, what they said about him was disgraceful".

The Limerick Leader also ran a story about College Court, apparently founded on the complaints of permanent residents in the area, reporting trees being uprooted and wheelie bins being turned over in a night of "mayhem".

The money raised by this year's Charity Week will go to four charities - TLC4CF, Pieta House, The Brothers of Charity and Rape Crisis Mid-West. Last year's Charity week raised €12,000, and, though the count was still underway at time of print, it seems the ULSU has exceeded this figure for 2012.

News

UL take over DCU FM

UL students raise money to volunteer in Africa

Jason Kennedy, News Editor

A NUMBER of UL students with shows on UL FM have taken part in DCU FM's Student takeover. The takeover, which took place last Saturday 3 March, involved representatives for six student radio stations from across Ireland meeting in DCU to host a day of broadcast from the Dublin campus.

A total of ten representatives from UL travelled to DCU to take part in the weekend event, which saw teams formed between all universities. The colleges that took part were UL, DCU, Trinity College, NUI Galway and Queen's University, Belfast.

The Limerick outing was organised by Communications' Officer, Kelly

O'Brien, who said that it was a "great weekend" and that "all those that attended were very well looked after and everyone was able to take something away from the weekend."

Journalism and New Media student, Rachael Power, who was one of the participants to take part in the weekend away, said she enjoyed the weekend and is looking forward to future encounters with stations from other universities.

"I really enjoyed the weekend. It was really good meeting people from other universities and learning from their experiences," she said.

"It was really good planning a completely different kind of show, airing from a completely different studio. I really loved it."

UL FM was set up last semester and has over 120 people involved in it, both in presenter, producers, and executive roles.

Rachel Power

FIVE UL students are taking to Africa this summer with volunteer group SERVE, working with children and adults alike in orphanages and HIV/AIDS clinics.

Two of these, third year PE and Geography students Theresa Collins from Nenagh, Co Tipperary and Joanne Moore from Lusk, Dublin say they are looking forward to the experience.

"I've never been anywhere like it before, I'm very excited, but dreading the vaccinations," Joanne said.

Theresa will be heading to Beira, Mozambique from July 29 – August 24 and Joanne will be visiting Rustenberg, South Africa from July 5 – August 8.

The two girls will be travelling with a group of twelve other SERVE volunteers. The two groups of twelve have to raise around €25,000 to

support their trip, all of which will be going towards their cause.

Theresa will be working in an orphanage for girls aged 15 – 17, and also doing some agriculture skills training for young people.

"It's the norm for girls in Mozambique to get married and have children at a young age, and what this orphanage does is it teaches them life skills such as how to cook, sew, clean; it trains them for independence, so by the time they're 19 or 20 they will go and find a job instead of settling down," she said.

Joanne will be working in ARV clinics, set up to provide help and medication for people affected by HIV and AIDS, and also an orphanage for children whose parents have died of AIDS.

"We're glad we can bring our skills for example teaching to be of use to charities in Africa.

It'll be really different, I'll be out in the slums so it's supposedly quite dangerous regarding bugs and infections," she said.

The two volunteers will be fundraising in the Hurlers, who have chosen SERVE as their Charity week charity.

"All of this week there will be buckets collecting money for SERVE, and every cent that goes into them will be going towards that cause," Theresa said.

There will also be a fundraising gig for the two girls' targets of €25,000 in the Hurlers on March 15, which has yet to be confirmed.

Other ideas for fundraising include a bake sale in the UL chaplaincy in March and busking in the Crescent shopping centre on April 15.

The girls would like to say thank you to Jed from the Hurlers, Fr John Campion the UL chaplain, Sr Sarah O'Rourke and anyone who has supported and continues to support their cause.

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News

CREDITS

Editor - Kelly O'Brien
 Deputy Editor - Colm Fitzgerald.
 News Editor - Jason Kennedy
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 Clubs and Socs Editor
 - Lynda O'Donoghue
 Graphic Designer - Cassandra Fanara
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 everybody who
 contributed to
 this issue.

Contributors:

Adam Leahy
 Alana Walsh
 Aoife Coughlan
 Aubrey
 O'Connell
 Barbara Ross
 Barry Murphy
 Brige Newman
 Claire Lewis
 Dearbhaile
 Houston
 Donnchadh
 Tiernan
 Éinde Ó Fathaigh
 Emma Norris
 Eoghan Wallace
 Eric Johansson
 Fionnbarr
 Thompson
 Frank O'Grady
 Gerard Flynn
 Helen Keown

1. Contributors please note:

All submissions to An Focal are greatly valued. If you have submitted an article which has not been published in this issue, it is very likely that your piece has been retained for publication in future issues. If you are concerned that your article has not been published, please say so.

2. Editing:

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.

E: sucommunications@ul.ie
 to contact the Editor.

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Kelly O'Brien, Editor

EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to issue ten of An Focal. With only two issues left, I'm becoming increasingly melancholic in my editorials. Soon enough it will be April and I will be writing my last ever, a sad day indeed. Yet behind every dark cloud hides a star that shines bright. Change is always scary, but we need to embrace it in order to grow. If everything always stayed the same, nobody would ever get anywhere.

In the following few pages, you'll find all the regular sections plus some post Charity Week specials. All in all, the ULSU collected over €10,000 for the chosen charities – TLC4CF, Rape Crisis Midwest, Brothers of Charity and Pieta House. The full count will be released this week.

The total amount may even be closer to €20,000, but was too soon to tell at time of print. The week as a whole was undoubtedly a resounding success, with anti-social behaviour at an all-time low. I'm sure a lot of you saw and heard the negative publicity being circulated by local and national press, most of it sparked by a handful of ever-disgruntled residents, but these

reports were few, far between and, in many cases, inaccurate. A national paper published an image of a semi-nude student who was participating in the Nearly Naked Mile. They coupled this with a short article about how UL students were going mad for 'RAG' week. Apart from the wild inaccuracy with the use of this outdated term, which the ULSU got rid of due to the bad connotations associated with using it, the semi-naked student was actually undertaking an organised and sponsored fundraiser.

He was not 'going mad' and, what's more, he had not even been drinking at the event.

Another media outlet, local this time, had the audacity to badly misquote the Students' Union, insult the efficiency of the organisation, and refuse to apologise for it. All this in an effort to over-dramatize, sensationalise, and misrepresent Charity Week.

Perhaps my understanding of the media is idealistic, but I am appalled that supposedly reputable outlets such as the aforementioned would seek to report clear mistruths in a misguided effort to capitalize on the public's

view of the typical drunken student.

All ranting aside, a few thank you's are in order. Keith Quinlan, Events and Promotions Manager, was in charge of the whole week and was the driving force behind making it the success that it was.

Paddy Kerley, photographer extraordinaire, was a godsend for the week by snapping pics of almost all the events taking place. This issue certainly wouldn't be as colourful without him! Jack Brolly, serial An Focal contributor, was on hand to conduct interviews which you'll find in the second part of this paper. I couldn't have done it without you Jack! Massive thanks.

Recognition also has to go to all money collectors, volunteers, and M and M's. I hope that you didn't get too much drunken abuse – you truly don't deserve it.

So that's it from me, for the moment. Read on, reader, and enjoy!

Kelly O'Brien
 Editor



UL students taking part in last week's raft race. Image: Paddy Kerley.

Contact the Sub-Editors

Editor: Kelly O'Brien
 - editor@anfocal.ie

Deputy Editor: Colm Fitzgerald
 - colm.fitzgerald@anfocal.ie

News Editor: Jason Kennedy
 - jason.kennedy@anfocal.ie

Comment: Darragh Roche
 - darragh.roche@anfocal.ie

Sport: Robert McNamara
 - robert.mcnamara@anfocal.ie

Travel: Amy Grimes
 - amy.grimes@anfocal.ie

Lifestyle:
Karen O'Connor Desmond
 - karen.oconnordesmonds@anfocal.ie

Fashion: Emily Maree
 - emily.maree@anfocal.ie

Gaeilge: Feilim Ó Flatharta
 - feilim.oflatharta@anfocal.ie

Arts & Ents: Josh Lee
 - josh.lee@anfocal.ie

Film: Jenny Armstrong
 - jenny.armstrong@anfocal.ie

Clubs and Socs: Lynda O'Donoghue
 - lynda.odonoghue@anfocal.ie

Online Editor: David Hartery
 - david.hartery@anfocal.ie

Online Editor: Aoife Coughlan
 - aofe.coughlan@anfocal.ie

Online Editor: Adam Leahy
 - adam.leahy@anfocal.ie

Road Safety Week provides food for thought

Sophie McDermott

THE Road Safety Week campaign, '7 Deadly Sins of Driving' received positive reviews from staff and students in the university.

The campaign kicked off on Sunday with the arrival of several damaged cars, donated by the county council, which

were displayed all around the campus to show students and visitors the effects of car accidents. Paddy Rockett, ULSU Campaign and Services Officer, said of the displays that: "We didn't paint them or anything, we wanted people to see them as they were for the shock factor and more importantly, we wanted them to ask questions."

Limerick County Council also got involved in the campaign, visiting the campus to promote their own campaign to get students back on their bikes. Mr Rockett also spoke of plans to get a bike repair centre back in UL courtyard and help support the campaign.

The main attraction of the week was the 'crash scene' that involved four young men joyriding, a cyclist and pedestrians. The scene is to be used in UL Links magazine. The campaign's success was also attributed to the volunteers that participated in the week, in particular the UL RAG society. Mr Rockett expressed his gratitude to these volunteers.

"We had loads of terrific volunteers, especially the RAG society, who were a great help during the week." Specsavers were also on hand to help the campaign by offering free eye tests to students for two days in the Red

Raisin Café. Speaking of the overall campaign, Paddy Rockett encouraged students to take heed of the advice given throughout the week.

"It's all well and good us putting this campaign together but it's no good if students don't take it on board."

Before the campaign began, research was done into what students recognise as dangerous signs when on the road. Several students were asked with the most popular signs being drugs, alcohol and bad weather conditions.



A still from the SU Courtyard crash scene. Image Credit: Sophie McDermott

NUIG unofficial RAG week sees wanton hooliganism

Colm Fitzgerald, Deputy Editor

AN unofficial rag week held at NUIG saw entirely disreputable behaviour. It is believed students themselves organised the week through Facebook after NUIG SU and college authorities sought to remove the week after increasingly unacceptable behaviour year after year.

The official slogan of the Facebook page is "We dont need the college to approve us having a rag week, so lets just do it anyway, drinking all day everyday, house parties and town every night! 19th of February to the 24th! Get sharing this and make it happen!"

Videos have been posted on Youtube which depict a mass of students behaving a rowdy fashion in Supermacs, Eyre Square.

The video shows what appears to be students removing ceiling tiles, arguing with security and being generally aggressive. Whatsmore, footage has emerged of students

lighting flares and hassling members of An Garda Síochána at Eyre Square. Last year, multiple videos were published showing similar behaviour, including throwing bottles at a wheelie bin in a field and mass drinking in public.

It is as yet uncertain if any action will be taken against those visible in the videos, or against those who have posted them.

It was decided that NUIG would support a one day concert as replacement for the week. It is believed this may occur on 25 March as an event titled "The Big Session". The college also provided the SU

with an additional €60,000 for the student assistance fund, additional notice boards on campus, removal of the €5 health centre charge, and waiving the €2 fee for admission to the Kingfisher gym for Clubs and Societies members.

The majority of students agree that the week could not continue with its reputation so tarnished.

UCD SU in financial crisis

Colm Fitzgerald, Deputy Editor

UCD SU has amassed debts of €1m, An Focal has learned. It is understood the SU will now seek a bank loan to pay the debts, as opposed to seeking a bailout or having the debt written off.

An emphasis has been placed on delivering efficiencies and removing wastage as opposed to cutting services which will effect students. Sources suggest accounts for previous years have only been recently compiled, highlighting the extent of the crisis. The SU has made efforts to save money on multiple fronts this year, with at least €55,000 saved. UCD SU sabbats have spent 40 percent less, and less money is being spent on training, transport and other expenditure items. A new constitution and management structure is to be put in place which aims to aid the situation and prevent recurrences in future years. This includes the formation of UCDSU Ltd which will obligate the SU to provide audited accounts annually. The SU will be incorporated into this company.

UCD will not be approached for funding or assistance with the debt.

This news comes as ULSU recently publicised liabilities of €320,000 belonging to SU owned company, ULSU Services Ltd, which operates the Courtyard Spar Shop, and operated the now closed Dromroe and Cappavilla shops, along with Unicycle.

UCD itself recently uncovered that it may have debts of up to €20m.

The Return of These Charming Men

Leonard Swindley

FOLLOWING a sell-out show at UL Morrissey Symposium last September, Morrissey's personal favourite tribute band, "These Charming Men" return to Dolans on Friday, March 9.

Ever popular with Moz and Smiths fans on Shannonside, These Charming Men were formed in 1995 and continue to charm fans of The Smiths and Morrissey all around the globe with their finely tuned energetic and passionate live shows.

They are classed as one of the premier Smiths and Morrissey tribute bands. Some years ago, at very short notice, they were asked to deputise for Morrissey as the headline act at the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan and ended up playing to an audience of 34,000 fans.

In April, the band will once again headline at the Smiths/Morrissey Convention in Los Angeles.

These Charming Men will be followed by "Manchester So Much to Answer For".

Co Editor of Morrissey: Fandom, Representations and Identities, Eoin Devereux, will DJ at the event, playing the best of Morrissey and The Smiths.

Quiffs are desirable and Morrissey t-shirts are essential for this gladioli filled event!

Tickets €12 from Dolans.

Comment



Will London's Olympics be worth the cost?

Aoife Coughlan

A concept drawing for the upcoming Olympic Games

THIS summer will see the eyes of the world turn to two major sporting events. The London 2012 Olympics and the Euro 2012 football championship will hold many transfixed, however these spectacles are likely to be the only thing that is rose tinted this summer.

Both will cost the host countries millions in infrastructure, improvements for sports facilities and security. The large proportions of expenditure will come from the back pocket of the tax payer. Also, pressure will be put on the public to spend on tickets to the event, air fare, hotels and all the other paraphernalia associated with fan events. With that in mind we must question the legitimacy of the excitement around these sporting occasions and indeed any occasion that is a luxury in a time of economic stress. The Olympics is set to cost over £8 billion, the closing and opening ceremonies alone are said to be standing at £41 million. Of course the United Kingdom will see increased spending as tourism rates will greatly improve due to the nature of the event,

but the tax payer will still be paying long after the games have concluded. This is because, according to some sources, the Olympic parks will continue to cost upwards of £300,000 to potentially millions for yearly maintenance.

It is not just sporting occasions in the scale of the aforementioned two that require debate. Any luxury event should be brought into question in the current climate. Closer to home we saw the grandeur of Queen Elizabeth's, President Obama's and lately the Chinese vice president's, Xi Jinping, visit. All of these saw state dinners, events, and outings organised.

Out goings on security for the Royal visit and Obama are said to have cost 36 million euro with 16 million of that shouldered by the already underfunded Gardaí. In an already debt ridden country is it right to spend extortionate amounts of money on such events?

The argument in favour of that questions is that events, sporting or non-sporting, generate money as well as use it. Income from tourism greatly

increases during these occasions as does the spin off from the publicity Ireland or another country receives. One can look upon them as an exercise in advertisement and marketing, which should lead to long term benefits.

Additionally they also generate something greater than revenue, and that is pride and enthusiasm. Despite conditions of hardship the excitement of a national affair greatly lifts the mood of a nation. This is seen in the great sporting occasions and even an occurrence such as the Royal Wedding in Britain. There is no doubting the swell in good feeling sounding such things. Nonetheless I must take issue. The mood of a nation is certainly a factor in success and revival but when facts and figures outweigh this I would argue for the lessening of luxury expenditure. When international publicity and occasions become internal, propaganda deceit is the only winner. Economic and national recovery and is a marathon and not a sprint.

Ireland still needs an embassy to the Vatican

Darragh Roche, Comment Editor

THE recent closure of the Irish embassy to the Holy See has become an issue of some contention, mainly on the floor of the Dáil and in the letters pages of the Irish Times. Some commentators, less wise than sneering, have suggested that the main opponents of the closure are those conservative Catholic groups who consider it an insult to the Pope.

Such groups certainly exist but there are many more very good reasons to re-open our embassy to the Vatican.

It is wholly disingenuous for the coalition government to claim that the embassy produced no economic good and was therefore merely a cost to the state. As anyone with even the barest understanding of diplomacy will know, embassies do not exist primarily as instruments of exporters.

On the contrary, maintaining good relations with other nations is about much more than commerce, though diplomacy is also a key part of opening up the avenues of commerce.

It is commonly held that Ireland "punches above its weight" in international affairs. On its face, this is a fair statement and the many historical and cultural reasons for that are worthy of more in depth study than can be given here.

However, a large part of this disproportionate ability to influence other nations is due to that ever so Irish activity: networking. The Irish embassy in London is famous for its raucous parties, while Irish diplomacy is notable for its emphasis on Irish hospitality. Why, though, does this have any bearing on our embassy to the Vatican?

The Vatican has long been the very pulsing centre of diplomatic activity in Europe and indeed the world.

Almost every country has an embassy there, forming a close-knit community of diplomats who are able to deal with each other at close quarters under the guise of official and semi-official

duties to the Holy See. It is in these sorts of settings that countries are able to exchange information, discuss important matters and even coordinate international policies outside of the pressures of the international conference.

The Vatican is, in many ways, neutral ground. The Irish embassy, also, was disproportionately influential within Vatican diplomatic circles, an influence which has now been suspended, though hopefully not lost.

Equally important is Ireland's relationship to the Papacy itself. Granted, Ireland is no longer the quintessentially Catholic nation it once was. This does not mean that it is time to break off relations with the Holy See, which is what closing the embassy amounts to.

As Ireland has issues with the Church and those issues continue to be of great importance to Irish politicians and the ordinary public, it seems bizarre that we should remove our ability to deal directly and authoritatively with the Papacy.

It is childish and short-sighted to close the embassy to the Vatican. It harms relations between Ireland and the Pope and makes them harder to mend, it reduces Ireland's diplomatic influence, it isolates Ireland in the international community and for those true Catholic believers, it is deeply worrying.

The Sun rises on Sunday

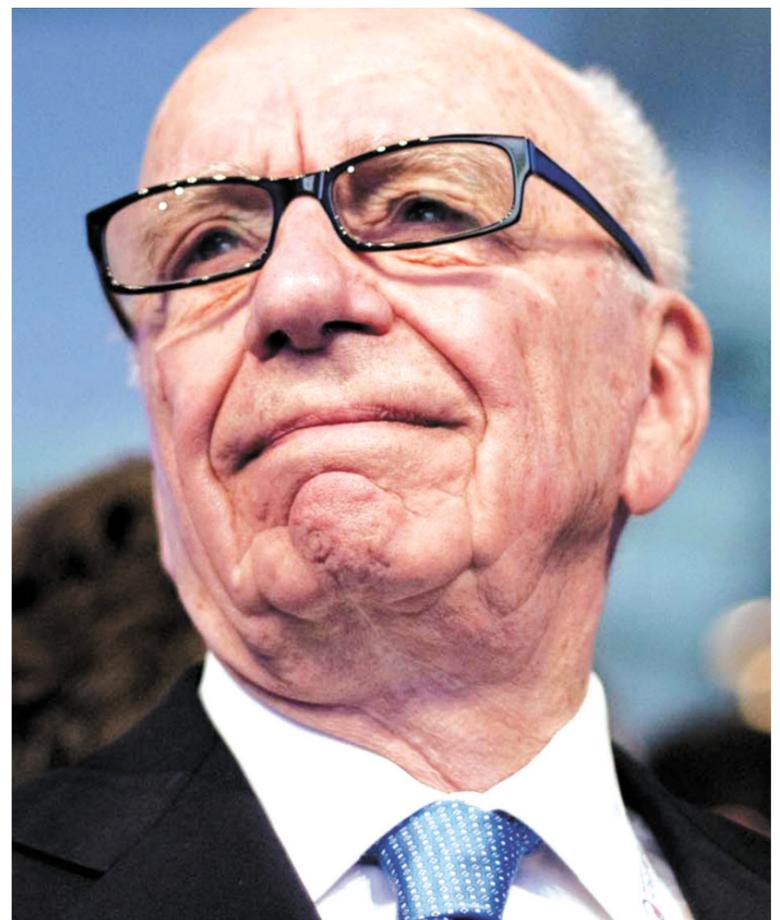
James Bradshaw

THE recent launch of The Sun on Sunday had all the hallmarks of a successful Rupert Murdoch venture. It was slick, brash and most important of all, a huge success commercially. On the evening of publication, the Australian born media magnate took to Twitter to announce sales figures of over three million. But no matter how successful the launch was, the phone hacking scandal continues to cast a dark shadow over Murdoch and News International.

No man has ever had as much influence on journalism as Rupert Murdoch has had. Not the fictional Charles Foster Kane, and not the real life William Randolph Hearst either. No, Murdoch is in a league of his own. Fox News has long ago become the most watched cable news station in America, and in so doing it has emboldened American conservatism like never before. The Sun is widely credited with winning the 1992 General Election for the Tories, and in securing public support for Tony Blair's "New Labour" project. Sky has revolutionised

broadcasting on this side of the Atlantic. Murdoch is both respected and feared by the world's political leaders, who know very well the influence he and his subordinates can, and do, wield. Yet power corrupts said Lord Acton, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Every day the Leveson Inquiry's investigations yield more damaging information about the disreputable practices within British journalism, and in particular the sordid activities that went on inside Murdoch's publications. The invasion of the privacy of celebrities was distasteful, but nothing could compare to the public revulsion when it became known that News of the World journalists had hacked into the phones of missing schoolgirl Milly Dowler, as well as the relatives of fallen British soldiers and victims of the 7/7 terrorist attacks. It quickly became clear that for News International to survive, one of its most-prized assets would have to be sacrificed. The boss wasn't going to yield the precious Sunday slot to his rivals however, and in the News of the World's

sister publication, he had a ready-made replacement. Murdoch will always be controversial. Some hate his right-wing politics, but it's important to remember that his media outlets have supported left-wing politicians, as has Murdoch himself. Most of the direct political influence comes from his employees and editors; Kelvin MacKenzie's role in destroying Neil Kinnock being the best example of this. And the main reason why Murdoch's publications lean to the right is to counter the perceived liberal bias within other media outlets like CNN or the BBC, a strategy that has reaped rich rewards commercially. The phone-hacking scandal has damaged News International greatly. But no organisation within the world's media has been entirely free from scandal; RTE committed an appalling libel against one Fr. Reynolds last year and calls for it to be wound up entirely haven't been heard. The Sun on Sunday will likely be a huge success, and Murdoch, love him or hate him, is going nowhere.



Media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

Comment

Religious hypocrisy fosters a corrupt mind

Colm Fitzgerald, Deputy Editor

WE'VE all heard of the renowned "One Day Catholic". They turn up at a church on Christmas Day and attend a service for no reason generally other than appearances. They won't enter a church again for 12 months.

The same group of people will get married under Catholic service, foster children and have them baptised, communed and confirmed. Yet, these people nurture absolutely no religious belief whatsoever. They will throw grand parties and get royally drunk to mark the occasions. Absolutely nothing wrong with that, but you can bet your bottom dollar it won't be in the name of religion. Sadly, this mentality, which I can only compare to utter lunacy, has been perpetrated

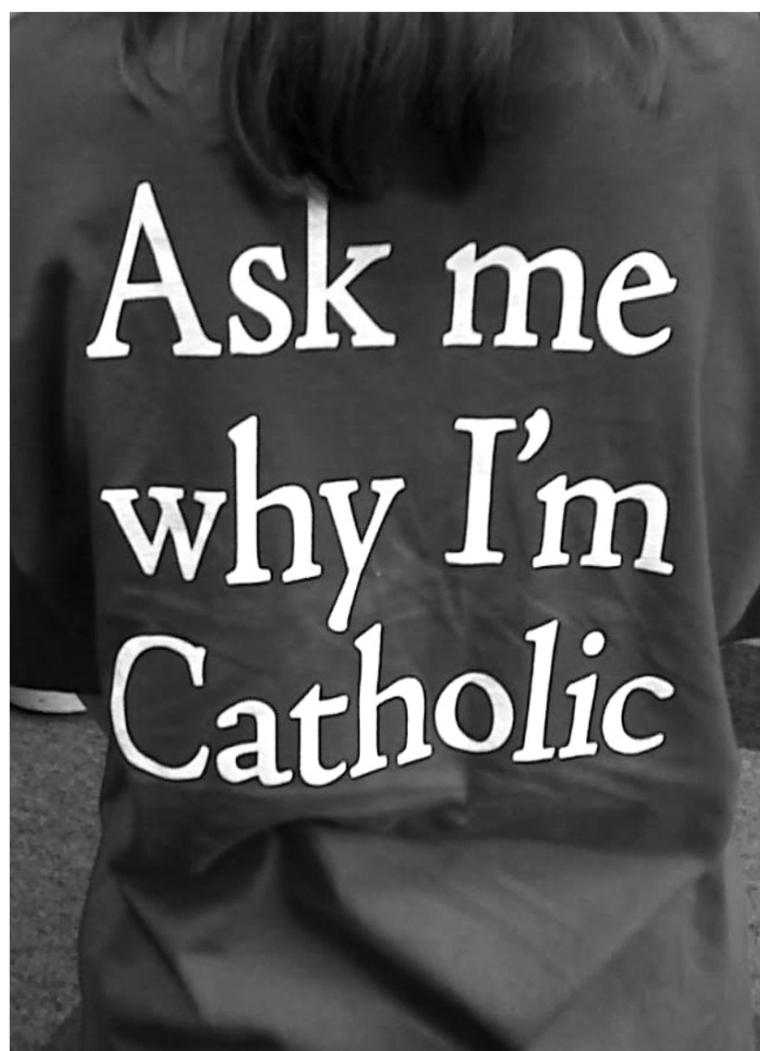
in Ireland with alarming regularity. There are a number of reasons why. The cycle of raising children through a useless, antiquated and inappropriate religious system will eventually end. But this will only happen if people stand up to it. Church separation from schools will deliver massive choice in terms of a non religious primary and secondary education. Current Educate Together schools, which deliver a liberal non religious educational experience, are massively oversubscribed. It's not difficult to see why. If were to ever father children I would consider it a dereliction of my duty as a parent to follow the aged and dilapidated method of educational brainwashing. Affairs aren't aided by recent abuse scandals, either. It is of immeasurable logic that an individual would instead make any decisions regarding religious participation when they reach a mature age. Should they then wish to enter any church of their choosing, I'll be in full support. I fear ignorance towards alternatives is a

difficulty. Just because this has been the done thing for years, and even though people disagree with it, they still continue to ignore the path less followed. A wedding minus religion does not rule out an aesthetically pleasing venue, nor does it mean a registry office.

If a society continues to quietly corroborate with the way things are for fear of questioning it, then it is nothing but unacceptably infuriating.

If I want a steak and a pint on a day called "Good Friday", I have a problem. I can buy a steak, though it might be served with dirty looks, while I won't be able to buy a pint at all! If we are to continue with such laws, we will have to be inclusive and consider the Muslims, Jews etc. too.

The most hypocritical thing of all is that when Easter time comes around, I'll eat my weight in chocolate eggs and live a long happy life with no religion at all.



If a society continues to quietly corroborate with the way things are for fear of questioning it, then it is nothing but unacceptably infuriating.

Racist cowards in cars

Eric Johansson

Welcome to Limerick, we don't want you here. This is the paradoxical message given to international students as they arrive to the famous "stab city of Ireland".

At the same time as the people at the university greet us with open arms and friendly smiles, some ignorant turds make it glass shattering clear that they, the turds, don't want us in their town or their country.

Last week, a Taiwanese student had eggs thrown at him from a passing car as he walked home from the Stables, leaving him with dairy product splattered jeans. The drive by egging was not the first one. In November, An Focal reported that some Chinese students were faced with a similar attack, having "chinks" screamed at

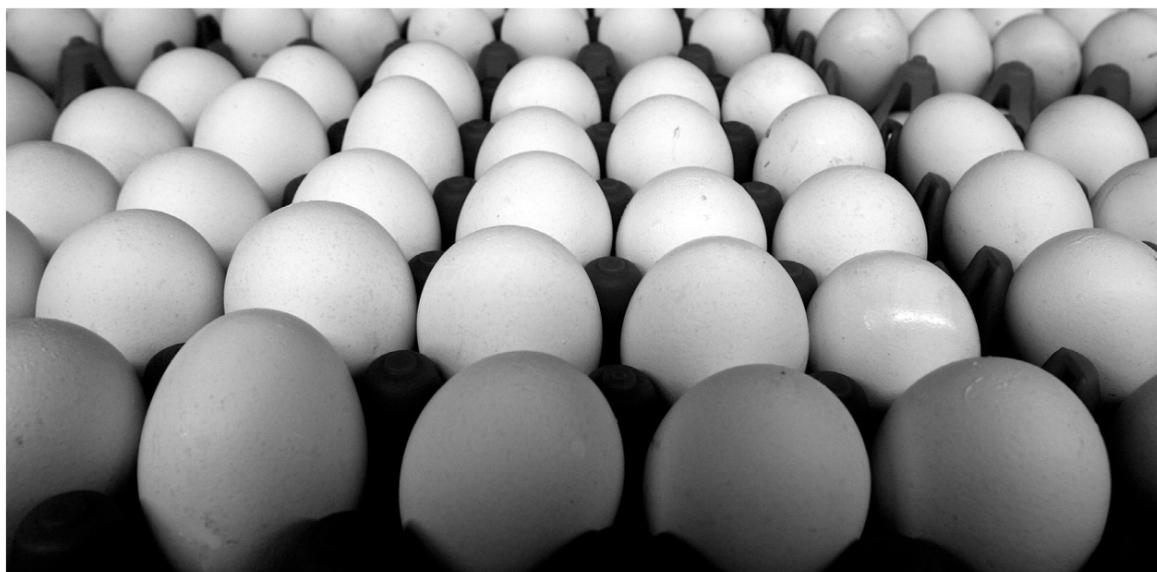
them from a passing car full of students and having one of them hit by eggs thrown from a second car. During the last weeks I have heard similar stories of everyday xenophobia and racism. One of my friends had "American twat" screamed at him, which is kind of odd since he is Swedish. In 2010, the EU organisation The Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) stated that 26 per cent of all sub Saharan immigrants in Ireland considered themselves to be victims of "racially motivated assault, threat or serious harassment" in the last 12 months. That is one of the highest numbers in Europe and it also says something about some of the attitude towards immigrants in Ireland. Imagine that happening to you if you were going abroad. How would you react as you looked down, saw the splashed egg on your pants and heard the laughter from the immature cowards as they drove away?

I was angry but had no idea of how to address the subject since the little

cowards had disappeared laughing at me. When I addressed the matter with my Irish friends I was informed that the throwers probably were first years students having a laugh. Am I the only one who has a hard time seeing the punch line?

I did not report the matter to the International office since I couldn't see what they could do about it. The little cowards would remain unidentified and would be able to proceed with their hate crimes. That was a mistake since UL cannot address the problem if they do not know about it. I urge all students that have similar experiences to step forward so that the university can have the possibility to address these things.

At the moment I do find comfort in the fact that most Irish people I have met are friendly, welcoming and always a craic to hang around. It is sad that some racist cowards in cars should ruin an otherwise wonderful experience.



Egg Pelting. How would you react?

Diplomacy must take precedence over violence

Éinde Ó Fathaigh

RECENT media reports have alleged that Israeli military officials are in advanced stages of preparing an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The reports have emerged amidst growing concern that the Iranian regime is developing nuclear weapons. Both the United States and the European Union have introduced a number of sanctions on Iran in an effort to stifle its nuclear ambitions.

Although most countries agree that preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons is indispensable, a resort to violence can only be justified when all other means have been exhausted.

A United Nations report in November 2011 provided substantive evidence that 'Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear device'. Despite this, the Iranian regime has been adamant from the outset that its nuclear aspirations are strictly peaceful. Of course Iran, like all states, ought to have the right to produce nuclear power, but not nuclear weapons.

An Israeli attack on Iran would merely exacerbate the present situation and undermine any efforts that have been made so far. During his State of the Union, President Obama stated that, in relation to preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, he 'will take no options off the table to achieve that goal'. The aggressive tone emanating from Western countries merely increases support for an Iranian regime that relies heavily on hostility towards the United States. The sanctions imposed on Iran have thus far proven successful in terms of weakening the

Iranian economy. Indeed the country's currency has suffered a substantial devaluation and credit has been cut off from any reputable international bank.

The European Union has pledged to introduce an embargo on Iranian oil from July onwards, which would have detrimental consequences on the Iran's exports. China and Russia have called on the major international players, including Israel, to engage in diplomatic efforts. Furthermore, Iran now seems more open to negotiations, which is partially due to the sanctions that have been imposed by the West.

Some commentators regard Iran's failure to engage in any meaningful discussions as a strategy to buy more time to advance its nuclear program, but the European Union embargo that is looming could be very influential in pressuring the regime into negotiations.

Diplomacy has proved successful in the past. During the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, a period in which the outbreak of nuclear war was quite possible, both sides came together behind the scenes and ultimately averted what could have been the most devastating war in history.

Diplomatic endeavours must be explored in order to avoid a calamitous outbreak of war. Given the turbulent period that the region is currently experiencing, the case for diplomacy is all the more evident.

FOCAL Sport

8th March 2012

Volume XX
Issue 10 FREE

He's six foot four, 16 stone and only 19 years old. Turn the page to read about rugby's newest superstar, George North.



Do you want to be a fighter? No problem. Turn to page 32.

UL come close to Silverware in Harding Cup



The Harding Cup squad were unlucky not to claim a trophy at the tournament in Cork.

"The squad was put together from months of endless work where 150 players were pitted against each other in a super league system and the best picked out to take their place in the team."

Robert McNamara, Sports Editor

UL's Harding Cup soccer squad put in a valiant effort but came up just short of silverware in the competition held at UCC.

The strong UL squad featuring players of several nationalities and with several counties represented fell to a 1-3 quarter-final defeat at the hands of TCD.

Darren Nolan was on the score sheet for the Limerick men as the loss saw them knocked out of the cup and fall into the Harding Plate.

Lochlan Carney, Marty Owens, Shane Harrington netted for UL as they overcame Dublin City University with a 3-1 win. This scoreline meant UL were pitted against NUIG in the Plate final.

Playing three games in three days took its toll on the young, talented UL side and they lost by the narrowest of margins when Eamon O'Donnell of NUIG put an end to their trophy hopes with the winner for the Galway men.

Despite ending the tournament empty handed, Manager Eoin Killackey believes there is plenty of potential for his young team to develop.

"Our on the field work is up on last year. We're training two or three times a week and each week we don't have a match we organise a friendly match because we've got such a good set of players here. We just have to keep the momentum going."

"I believe that within four years we can win the Collingwood Cup with this side. If we take the best of what's here and add to it we can teach them the way the club is run we are putting the club in good stead."

The squad was put together from months of endless work where 150 players were pitted against each other in a super league system and the best picked out to take their place in the team.

"The days of not working hard and not doing fund-raising and just getting into the team because you are a good player is something that I've tried to change since the first day I came in. We became a good team because of the team spirit we got from the fund-raising we were doing. Everything we've done, we've done as a group."

"We're open to Erasmus students as well, we know that there are a lot of technically good players out there and all we need to do is provide a welcome environment for them."

Glory for UL Boxing Club

Fionnbarr Thompson

HISTORY was made by the UL Amateur Boxers at its first ever IATBA National Championship.

A squad of five boxers from UL entered the fray against the very best Irish colleges. The journey to this point for the UL Boxing Club had not been easy, but thanks to the professionalism of head coach Mario Feliciello and the drive of Peter Tully, great strides had

been made over the course of the past six months to take the club from relative obscurity to battling out for the possibility of five Irish Titles.

The first two boxers to compete under the UL banner were first year student Fionnbarr Thompson and third year Peter McCabe. Both athletes could boast previous Kickboxing experience, but for both, this was a new kind of

adventure. In a contrast of styles, Thompson's all action and McCabe's controlled, methodical display made for exciting fights. Unfortunately, for both Thompson and McCabe, debatable decisions didn't go their way. Competing in the semi finals were first year Business student David Lewis and the experienced James McDowell. Lewis engaged in a tough blow for

blow battle with his LIT Tipp opponent in what was one of the duels of the day but resulted in a disappointing decision in favour of the LIT student.

Next up was McDowell. The Leitrim native provided the crowd with an assured performance and an easy passage into the finals, joining fellow UL boxer John King who had progressed the previous day. With two fighters in the finals it was all very much still to play for.

King stepped up to the -75KG Intermediate section and once again displayed flair and skill. In another tough contest, the decision once again went against UL.

Facing the prospect of returning to Limerick with only a solitary silver

medal thanks to King's efforts, James McDowell held the opportunity to go one better and notify the country of the prowess of UL Boxing Club in the -64KG Senior division. McDowell weaved, bobbed and countered his way to an historic victory and the first ever IATBA Gold medal for UL. "It was special for me to win an Irish Title", said McDowell.

He also acknowledged the time put in by the coaching team in UL. "Thanks to Mario for improving me so much in such a short space of time, and to Peter Tully who is the main reason the club has started." Bright times lay ahead for the UL Amateur Boxing Club.

Sport

SPORTS
QUIZ

Kieran Lee

1. In poker what is a hand containing the 2 black aces and the 2 black 8's called?
2. In which year was the first FIFA World Cup held?
3. An Eskimo roll would be seen in which sport?
4. In which country was tennis player John McEnroe born?
5. Whose autobiography is entitled Zero to Hero?
6. By what name was world champion boxer Walker Smith better known?
7. Which American horse race is run at Churchill Downs?
8. Which tennis player was stabbed while playing against Steffi Graf in Hamburg in 1993?
9. How many Grand Prix had Jordan competed in before they won their first race?
10. How many laps are there in a normal speedway race - 3, 4 or 5?

Answers
 1. The Dead Man's Hand - Wild Bill
 2. 1930 (in Uruguay - Uruguay beat Argentina 4-2)
 3. Kayaking
 4. Germany
 5. Frank Bruno
 6. Sugar Ray
 7. Kentucky Derby
 8. Monica Selles
 9. 127
 10. 4

Hickock was shot and killed whilst playing poker and his hand contained these cards!

Is George North the new Jonah Lomu?

Eoghan Wallace

HE'S six foot four, 16 stone, only 19 years old and he's rugby's newest superstar.

His name is George North. As Ireland found out to their cost against Wales in their Six Nations opener, North is a breed apart from your average winger.

Despite being as tall and as heavy as a second row, North is as fast on foot as even the nimblest of wingers. Despite the fact he earned only his 17th cap against Ireland, he scored his tenth try in a Welsh jersey.

This is after a recent barren patch where at one stage he had eleven caps and eight tries. In doing so he broke a previous record held by Jonah Lomu.

Ironically Lomu is the player that North is being frequently compared with in the media. Considered a hot prospect heading into the World Cup in New Zealand, he caught the rugby world's attention when he became the youngest player to score in the competition and featured in many pundits' best fifteen of the tournament as a result. Immediately the comparisons with Lomu started to intensify. Both were mere boys when they announced themselves on the world stage, North blitzed Namibia with a brace of tries at 19, while Lomu was only a year older when he



As Ireland found out to their cost against Wales in their Six Nations opener, North is a breed apart from your average winger.

bulldozed through Will Carling and co. back in 1995. We can only hope that North's career is not prematurely ended as Lomu's was effectively at 27.

However like any young player, sometimes the hype can be damaging to their potential, just like Gavin Henson.

The 2001 IRB Young Player of the Year's star faded just as quickly as it had risen. At nineteen North still has a lot to learn. His young age and inexperience showed against Australia in the third-place place-off. Battered and bruised, he perhaps should have left the field

but he kept on running at the Wallabies, playing on nothing more than courage. That said, in a Welsh team brimming with young vibrant talent, North is the brightest star of the lot. As he showed against Ireland in the Six Nations, he can bulldoze through a defence just as brutally and efficiently as Jonah Lomu. While there is a lot of hype around the young Welshman one thing is certain, if North fulfils his potential he will be entertaining (and terrorising) us for many more years to come.

Emerging sports star 2012:
Ciarán Ó Lionáird

Robert McNamara, Sports Editor

IN the first of a series of profiles of Irish Olympic London 2012 athletes, we look at the prospects of an Irish runner making considerable tracks on the international circuit.

Ciarán Ó Lionáird is a 1500 metres finalist from Macroom, Co. Cork.

Originally from the Leevale AC stable, Ó Lionáird was picked up by the Nike Oregon Project Elite group after finishing tenth in the World Championships in Daegu, South Korea last year. In this elite and highly successful group of runners, Ó Lionáird is under the guidance of the legendary marathon runner Alberto Salazar. The Cuban won the New York marathon for three years in a row in the eighties and the Boston Marathon in 1982.

The Nike Oregon Project Elite group was originally set up to improve the fortunes of American distance running, but British athlete Mo Farah got the nod to join the group that helps athletes with various expenses, alongside any government grants that they may get.

It was in Daegu that Salazar was convinced to take on Ó Lionáird also.

Ó Lionáird is in good company in Beaverton, Oregon. He trains beside four other elite athletes deemed good enough, including Farah of Great Britain

who is world champion over 5000m, world 1500m bronze medallist Matt Centrowitz and also Dathan Ritzenhein and Galen Rupp.

They have privileged access to world class facilities and equipment. For example, Ó Lionáird has used some of his Nike contract money to completely seal his apartment to mimic high altitude conditions. The Macroom runner was deemed by the Sports Council of Ireland as ineligible for a podium grant last year because of his tenth place finish at the World Championships. He gets only the regular athletes grant and a place with the Nike stable is essential to his development as a runner, who at 23, will soon be coming into his prime.

Getting into the Nike stable was primarily down to his very respectable 1500 metres outdoor best of 3:34.46 in Oordegem, Belgium in August last year. Ó Lionáird has an outside chance of success in London, but his times would have to improve dramatically for a medal finish in a very strong field.

The mullet haired Corkman is definitely a strong contender for future success in the 1500. Keeping company with the world's best in the United States could push him that extra mile to becoming a truly outstanding world class athlete.



Ó Lionáird has an outside chance of medal success at the London 2012, Olympics.

Sport

The stabilisation of Tyneside circus

Michael Ramsay

THE screech of the final whistle pierced their hearts, echoing around the arena, like a siren call of misery.

Whilst it may have seemingly ended the previous 9 months of torment, the end result only realised their most vivid nightmare: relegation to the second tier of English football.

The setting was Villa Park, where Newcastle United needed just a point to stay up.

It seemed fitting that an own goal sealed their fate, summing up a farcical season which included four managers, riots and a string of woeful performances.

Newcastle United is a club steeped in history and grandeur, known for playing a sumptuously attractive style of football, if often portrayed as a 'national circus' by the media.

But that full time whistle on 24 May 2009 truly plunged the Tyneside club toward their darkest hour.

Fast forward three years, and Newcastle United are sitting in the top six of the Premier League.

Gone are the money grabbing mercenaries of that humiliating season of discontent, and instead have been replaced by passionate, hungry players eager to prove themselves in the top flight. The rewards have been

magnificent. Ever since that lowest ebb in Geordie folklore, Newcastle have served a fine example in pursuing the right approach upon relegation.

The wage bill has been slashed, with the cash sapping leeches tossed out and a new wave of exciting talent blooded in for very little.

The star trio of Cheik Tiote, Yohann Cabaye and Demba Ba only cost a combined total of £8.5 million and have lit up the Premier League with ravishing performances.

Of course, there have been controversial decisions along the way, such as the farcical renaming of the stadium, the seemingly bizarre sacking of Chris Hughton, and of course, offloading 'local hero' Andy Carroll three months after he penned a five year contract.

There have been disgraceful results, such as cup exits at Brighton and Stevenage, but all in all, the Geordies will be pinching themselves with glee.

Let us not forget that Newcastle United are supposed to be suffering from 'second season syndrome', which has enveloped Reading, Birmingham and Hull City in the past upon promotion. However, as mercurial talisman Demba Ba crashed in a sumptuous strike against Man United in January, the message was clear: Newcastle United are a club to model yourselves on upon relegation from the top flight.

Now who would have ever thought that about the circus of Newcastle.

Editorial

Robert McNamara, Sport Editor

UNDER the table payments, dodging the taxman, misleading the public and making excuses. Sounds familiar doesn't it?

In the same week that it was revealed that political parties were able spend taxpayers money like it was their own hard earned grade, the GAA were getting all sorrowful about having to put managers payments through the revenue system.

Unsolicited payments have long been the norm. The only reason we are hearing about it now is the same reason we all suddenly decided we should get angry about our wasteful government, no one cared when the mythical Celtic Tiger was excreting money all over the front lawns of those who could actually be heard.

The players have, in practice, already gone professional. They train, eat and behave like professionals. They give most of their spare time in pursuit of success and entertainment of the public. The commitment needed to sustain a sporting career in GAA circles no longer meets the rewards.

Lar Corbett is staying largely silent on his motivation for leaving the Tipperary hurling panel. A text he sent to his

teammates said more than any sports column inch could impart.

"Well lads, I'm sorry to say that I have withdrawn from the Tipp panel. I know this may come as a shock but, after careful consideration, I know that I cannot give the 100% commitment that is required"

In order to sustain his home life he had to dispense with the folly of hurling. Hurling was not going to provide him with an income and financial security, nor will it any other player. If he were a top level soccer, rugby or Aussie rules sportsman he would never have come close to this decision.

The GAA has reached a pinnacle point in its evolution. The appetite from those willing to give their all for our indigenous sport is there. The public hunger for the sport also remains.

The merits of plucky amateurism can no longer be used as an excuse. Professionalism wouldn't see the GAA sell its soul and it might just stop the exodus of players heading for Australia and premature retirement.



Once, there were three pillars of Irish society. The church and Fianna Fail have already been shamed and moved to change by the public. The GAA needs to look at financially rewarding those who embody the organisation or it may face the same indignity. You can't expect managers and players to be busy fools when what is being demanded of them impacts on their home and work life.

Spare McClean from the hype machine

Liam Togher

THE major talking point from the Ireland squad announced in February was the omission of Sunderland midfielder James McClean, the 22-year old Derry native who has been in fantastic form over the winter months.

His late addition for the friendly against the Czech Republic was a very welcome u-turn by Giovanni Trapattoni.

Although it was Steve Bruce who signed him last summer, McClean didn't get a game for the Black Cats until Martin O'Neill took over as manager in December and since then the winger has made up for lost time with some barnstorming performances. He made such an impression that there were many pundits asking for him to be given an Ireland call up.

Some feared that if the Republic doesn't give McClean his chance, he may have remained with Northern Ireland, with whom he has caps at under 21 level.

The player has made it clear, though, that he only wants to turn out for the Republic, going as far as pulling out of a Northern Ireland squad last August in the hope of receiving a future call up from south of the border.

His progress in such a short space of time at Sunderland has been remarkable but Irish fans and media need to be careful not to overdo the adulations. We have been in this situation before where a young talent suddenly bursts onto the English or Scottish scene and becomes flavour of the month, only to be hyped up to the eyeballs and subsequently fade into obscurity.



Some fear that if the Republic don't give James McClean his chance he may stick with Northern Ireland.

Take Liam Miller, for instance. The Corkman had a fantastic season at Celtic in 2003/4 before moving to Manchester United, where he made no real impression and he then found himself trying to resurrect his career.

He is now 30 and lining out for Australian club Perth Glory.

Miller is not the only example of a player from whom too much was expected too soon. Richie Partridge, the ex Liverpool midfielder, was touted as the next big thing a decade

ago but his career became that of the archetypal journeyman. And what of other great white hopes like Stephen McPhail, Sean Thornton, Stephen Elliott, Willo Flood and Darren Potter? Granted, none of them made the same impact upon their introduction to English football as James McClean, but the case studies are there. Let's give McClean time to develop even further rather than buying into the hysteria.



Demba Ba (left) signed from West Ham United on a free transfer and has lit up the Premier League with ravishing performances.

Sports



Andy van der Meyde is known to most Premier League fans for getting a straight red card in his first Merseyside derby.

Forgotten Footballer: Andy van der Meyde

Gerard Flynn

USUALLY in this column we take a look at a player who was once at the very peak of his career and over time gradually faded into the background due to reasons such as injury, lack of form or personal problems.

In Andy van der Meyde's case however, it's hard to point out a moment where he lived up to the hype that was afforded to him in his teens as part of Ajax's great youth setup of the nineties. Native Dutchmen like Sneijder and Van der Vaart as well as imports such as Ibrahimovic and Pienaar always outshone Van der Meyde, with his record goal scoring tally for a season of eleven coming in the 2002/03 season with the Dutch club. Van der Meyde would never eclipse this season for the rest of his career. He made the move to Inter Milan in 2003 where he stayed for two seasons, playing thirty two league games and scoring just once against Arsenal in the Champions League.

Lack of form and injury took its toll on Van der Meyde, forcing him into a move

to Everton in 2005 where he stayed for four years, failing to score a competitive goal for the club. Personal issues were also to blame for his poor performances with disciplinary problems hampering a consistent run in the team. He's known to most Premier League fans for getting a straight red card in his first Merseyside derby for a reckless aerial challenge on Liverpool's Xabi Alonso. Not one to shy away from controversy in his career, Van der Meyde regularly made the headlines for missing training sessions and refuting claims that he was an alcoholic. In what was a miserable four year spell in England, Van der Meyde had to deal with the burglary of his house and dog, admittance to hospital due to a spiked drink as well as dealing with his daughter's medical problems. He eventually made the move back to Holland to play for PSV but many believe that this was only due to his remarkable resemblance to former PSV centre back Alex and mass confusion on behalf of the PSV scouts.

Failing to make a competitive start for his new club saw Van der Meyde make the decision to retire from football. This didn't last long however as he came out of retirement in 2011 to play for Emmen based club, WKE, in the Topklasse, the Dutch third division. "Top Klasse" indeed.

So you wanna be a fighter?

Fionbarr Thompson

NO problem. Grunt, curse, spit and bad mouth people.

Enrol in an MMA club and buy all the gear. Walk through crowds of people sporting your brand new 'TapouT' hoodie whilst thinking about how much of a bad ass you are for watching UFC, and how this makes you an expert on every miniscule detail, and every fighter which has ever graced the famed corporation's hallowed fighting grounds.

You might also feel the need to express your opinions on every forum site that becomes available, pursuing a part time career as a key board ninja. It sounds quite simple doesn't it?

That's the problem Martial Arts now finds itself in. The arrival of MMA has heralded a new breed of sports fan and fighter. Let me say, I am a massive UFC

fan, but what has become apparent to me and many other traditional Martial Artists is the striking level of disrespect displayed by certain individuals.

Having attended numerous karate, kick boxing and Jiu Jitsu competitions over the past few years, I am always humbled to witness the high regard others hold their opponents in, bowing and shaking hands after giving their all. This is a spill over from Oriental culture, in which respect is the word, the complete opposite to the reaction to the average triumph in the cage, in which we may see fighters scaling the Octagon, throwing their gum shield to the crowd (inexplicably), and further taunting of the opponent they have just overcome.

In any traditional competition, these acts could possibly result in permanent exile for you and your club in the future. Gone are the days when you can hope that your opponent will be in any less than 100 percent in shape. Things have

been improved and that is thanks to the wider UFC audience. The issue being raised here is that fighters are being rewarded for being distasteful towards each other. 90 percent of the fighters want to kill each other or "beat down" opponents.

How does this affect aspiring Martial Artists? It turns the UFC into a circus once more like the old days of being televised from the Nevada Desert. Suddenly it becomes two guys beating on each other.

The problem is that we as a crowd love it. MMA is, and always will be, a spectator sport. We bear witness to the heart, soul and body of the individuals involved being put on the line to be held up as iconic. After all, we all want to be remembered.



The arrival of MMA has heralded a new breed of sports fan and fighter.

The death of the Champion's League

Robert McNamara, Sports Editor

THE European Club Association (ECA) can see over the horizon and a new age beckons.

UEFA may not be so far reaching in their vision. The considerable cash cow for UEFA that is the Champion's League, is in severe danger.

There is now a real possibility that clubs may form their own competition and leave Michel Platini and Sepp Blatter to mull over an inflated international calendar, without the co operation of Europe's most powerful clubs. A memorandum of understanding between the ECA and UEFA was signed to protect the Champion's League and UEFA's position as the governing body of European football in January 2008, it

runs out in 2014. The ECA's main gripe is the amount of dates that are set aside for meaningless international friendlies, and remuneration for clubs releasing their players to national teams.

Bayern Munich legend and president of the ECA Karl Heinz Rummenigge, believes that an agreement is unlikely and the ECA are discussing alternatives to dealing with to UEFA's governance.

"I feel FIFA and UEFA are underestimating the clubs. They need us more than we need them", he told World Soccer magazine. "Without the players, our employees, the governing bodies could do nothing. We could run the Champion's League without them." A European super league is not a new concept. It has been planned before and any future competition would surely feature only the financial elite of European football, therefore killing the chances of a club like Apoel Nicosia,

for example, from breaking through into the tournament. Michel Platini has already warned that any clubs partaking in tournaments not under UEFA delegation will be banned from their domestic leagues. This may be the case but the club's are more marketable and therefore hold the trump card.

A radical reform of international football is needed if club football is to remain under the stewardship of UEFA. Greed and corruption have too long been the driving force of football's governing bodies and international friendlies do nothing but swell their coffers. "Corruption rumours persist. We need to re-start FIFA or whatever. FIFA must recognise that without clubs nothing would run. We need quick answers from Platini and Blatter to show that they are serious about transparency, democracy and governance involving all of football's

stakeholders," said Rummenigge. With the ECA representing the interests of nearly 200 clubs it might be time for Platini and Blatter to start taking the clubs seriously.



Karl-Heinz Rummenigge: "I feel FIFA and UEFA are underestimating the clubs. They need us more than we need them."

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The weird and the not so wonderful

"I'd much rather talk to some nice sales lady than anybody that uses breast milk soap."

Roisin Curran, Beauty Columnist

TO my knowledge, the only reason people would partake in extremely weird beauty treatments would be due to a slight lack of excitement in their lives and a total lack of sanity.

People who want to stick snails on their faces, snakes on their backs and lather up in someone else's breast milk.

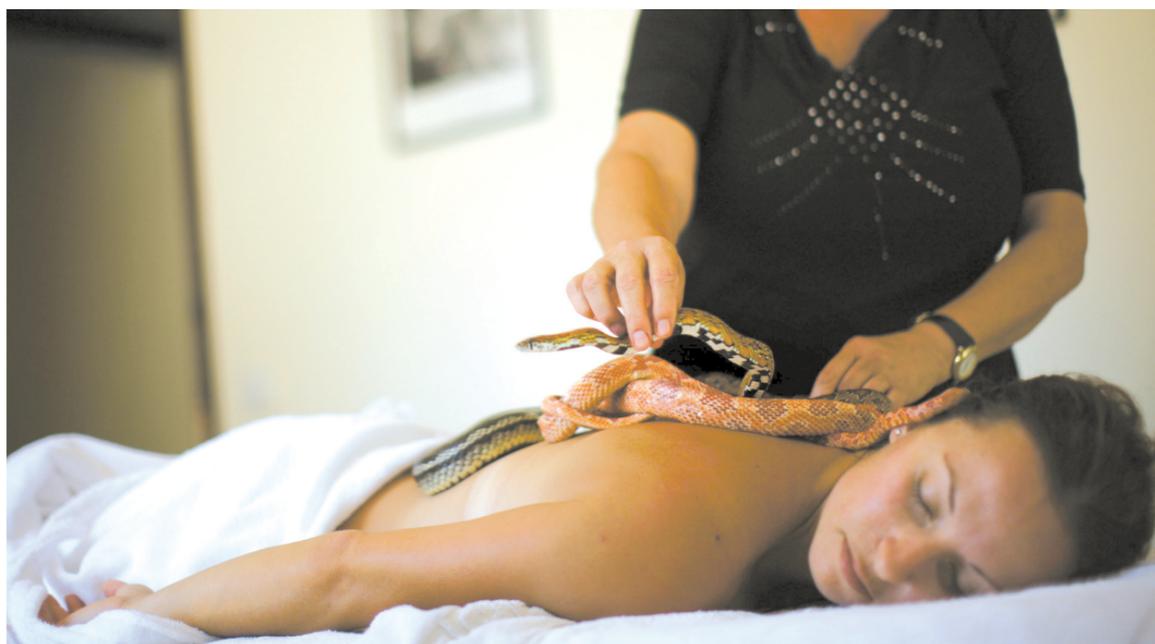
Ok, so the snail bit first. There is a whole line of snail serum products on offer to get rid of acne, stretch marks and dull complexions. Just let them slide around on your face or use a line of cosmetic products made from their ooze and you'll have your €70's money worth. I'll take a bottle of Clearasil instead thanks.

Or why don't you travel to Israel, where the lazy massage therapists let seven snakes do their job for them. Don't worry; their non venomous and

I'm guessing they probably have years' worth of training under their belt. Without expertise or a pungent playing snake charmer next to you, I can't see the appeal or the reasoning for this one. And then there's the breast milk soap, women who wake up one day and say, hey, my baby isn't enough of a reminder of my pregnancy so I'll make a bar of soap with my leftover milk.

And for the people that use it, when it has no proven results better than normal soap, please go get your fetish kicks somewhere else and leave the poor sentimental mothers and their milk alone. Shame on all of you.

I don't care what kind of flawless skin or muscle loosening these treatments bring. For a lot less money, disgust and weirdness, I'm sure they stock something with the same results in Brown Thomas. I'd much rather talk to some nice sales lady than anybody that uses breast milk soap.



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Lifestyle

How many friends do you have?

Barbara Ross

DAVID Beckham confessed recently that he can happily count his true friends on one hand.

"I've got three really good friends. It's all you need. I'd rather have three really good friends than 20 good friends."

So when most of us might boast friends into the triple figures on Facebook, an army more on LinkedIn and still others following us on Twitter, how many pals do we actually need?

According to Professor Robin Dunbar, head of Oxford University's Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology and author of *How Many Friends Does One Person Need?*, the maximum number of people we can realistically have personal relationships is 150, a limit set "by the size of our brains". This number includes relatives

and casual acquaintances putting the number of intimate friends most of us will have at only five. According to the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, friendship is a "distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern on the part of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other's sake, and that involves some degree of intimacy".

The reality is that most of us have successive "circles" of friends. The inner circle of people we can call on day or night, then friends we socialise fairly regularly with, then colleagues and casual pals and on the outer fringes, acquaintances and people we stay in occasional contact with.

Our number of friendships peak at the age of 21 with 13 "best" friends, 17 "close" friends and 70 acquaintances.

Plus the average 22 year old claims to have as many as 1,000 friends on social

networking sites. As we get older we tend to become more selective about the people we let in to our inner circle. Often friends slip by the wayside simply because lives diverge and the demands of work and family life mean less time to maintain all our relationships.

That doesn't mean that friendship gets less important as we get older. Research suggests that the less time elderly people spend engaged in social activity the faster their physical decline.

The moral of the story is to spend time nurturing the relationships with people you can really confide in rather than adding every acquaintance on Facebook.

Real friends will only stick around as long as they know that they are being appreciated.



Popularity isn't all it's made out to be...



GINGERGIRL'S FOOD UL LOVE...

Helen Keown, Food Columnist

I try to eat meat-free dinners a few evenings a week, mainly for nutritional reasons.

One way to make vegetables a little more "interesting" is to add a little spice. The paste of chilli, ginger and garlic is something of an old reliable and is one that I use as a base for many spice dishes. Finally, it is important not overcook the cauliflower; soggy vegetable curry will never leave you wanting more!

Vegetable Madras
(serves 6)

- Sunflower oil
- 1 onion, roughly diced
- 1 red chilli (remove seeds if you don't want the curry too hot)
- 2 thumb sized pieces of ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 4 cloves of peeled garlic
- 1 tablespoon of madras curry
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric
- 1 teaspoon of black onion seeds
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and diced into 2cm
- 4 tablespoons of ground almonds
- A handful of sultanas
- ½ a cauliflower head, broken into florets
- 1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
- 200g frozen peas
- a handful of fresh coriander, roughly chopped

In a large saucepan, heat two tablespoons of sunflower oil and gently fry the onion for 10-15 minutes. Using a stick blender or processor, blitz the chilli, garlic and ginger to a paste.

Stir the paste into the onions along with the turmeric, onions seeds and curry powder. Cook for 5 minutes then add the sweet potato, almonds and season with a generous pinch of salt. Mix well so that everything is coated.

Turn the heat up to medium and add 500ml of water and the sultanas. Allow to simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cauliflower florets, the peas and the coconut milk and simmer for a further 15 to 20 minutes with the lid on. Check that the potato and cauliflower are tender then turn off the heat. Stir in the coriander, check the seasoning and serve.

Experiment a little! Try using spinach, courgettes, butternut squash, peppers, green beans, aubergine... the list goes on! Helen's produce is available nationwide from independent food emporiums and at UL Farmer's Market where you can also purchase her range of breads and chocolate brownies. Helen also writes a weekly food column for the Limerick Leader and the Limerick Chronicle and is Spin Southwest's resident "foodie".

Want some cooking advice and tips? Email helen@gingergirl.ie

For a chance to win some delicious gingergirl produce and avail of special offers, follow gingergirl on Twitter ([gingergirlfood](#)) or on facebook ([gingergirl](#)).

Yoga: the calming killer?

Sophie McDermott

THESE days, most of us resort to yoga to deal with our stressful day to day lives and to tone our bodies to perfection. So really we can look to yoga to make us healthier inside and out.

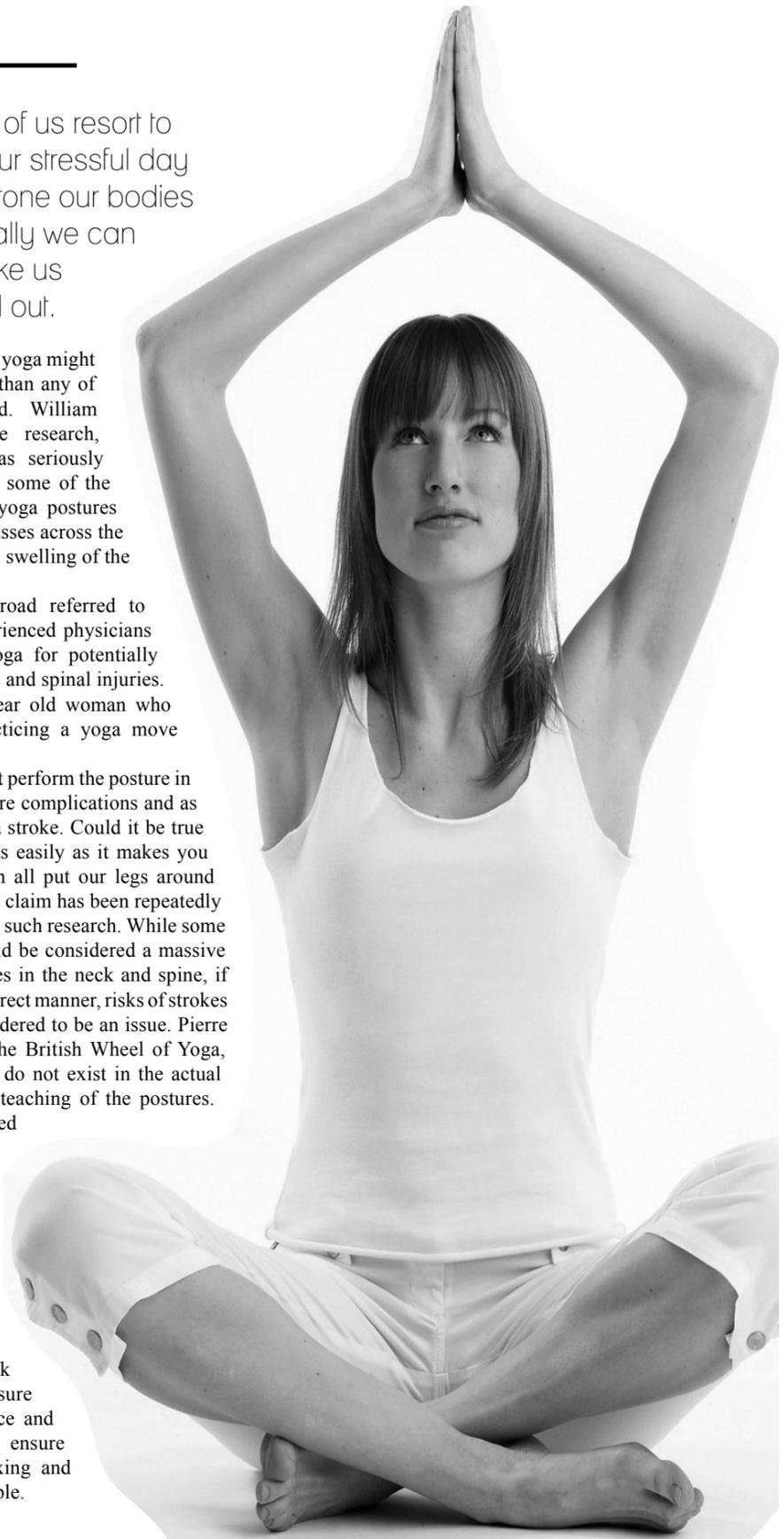
According to a recent study, yoga might actually be more dangerous than any of us could have ever imagined. William Broad, who undertook the research, practised yoga until he was seriously injured in 2007, claims that some of the advanced and intermediate yoga postures commonly taught in yoga classes across the globe can lead to blood clots, swelling of the brain and strokes.

To support his claims, Broad referred to several cases in which experienced physicians blamed badly performed yoga for potentially fatal illnesses such as strokes and spinal injuries.

One case involved a 28 year old woman who suffered a stroke after practicing a yoga move known as "the wheel".

However, the woman did not perform the posture in the correct way causing severe complications and as a direct result, she suffered a stroke. Could it be true that yoga can kill you just as easily as it makes you healthy? Fortunately, we can all put our legs around our head in peace, as Broad's claim has been repeatedly rejected by leading experts in such research. While some advanced yoga postures could be considered a massive strain on arteries and muscles in the neck and spine, if taught and practised in the correct manner, risks of strokes and blood clots are not considered to be an issue. Pierre Bibby, Chief Executive of the British Wheel of Yoga, argued that the real dangers do not exist in the actual practice of yoga but in the teaching of the postures.

If a teacher is inexperienced or poorly qualified, then there is a high risk that postures are not taught in the correct manner which could inevitable lead to the serious complications spoken of by Mr. Broad. If you're concerned about any health complications associated with yoga, speak to your teacher and make sure that they have the experience and qualifications necessary to ensure that you get the most relaxing and safest yoga experience possible.



Fashion

Would you dance with him tonight?

Emma Norris

MY old housemate once described Olly Murs as “hateful” but I’ll be honest, I’m all over that cheeky grin and the glint in those Essex eyes.

When Murs walked onto the X Factor stage back in 2009, his smile and affinity for a trilby were an immediate selling point.

From that point on, he was rarely seen without his trademark hat and a pair of bang on trend chinos.

However, in October of last year, Murs revealed he was ditching the head wear for good, following the “grief” he received from people on the street. “You’re the one with the hat!”

It’s not very conducive to super stardom. The now hatless Murs has swapped the chinos and Topman style

tees in favour of granddad knits and tweed suits but remains true to the Mod style. The ‘80s inspired looks seen on the likes of Agyness Deyn, and Amy Winehouse in her heyday, promote a style subculture with an edge.

Characterised by Fred Perry polo shirts, Ben Sherman checked shirts, Baracuta Harrington jackets and Dr Marten boots, the androgynous subculture style works for both males and females.

This style makes Olly Murs stand out from the countless other manufactured singers perpetuated by X Factor and now, goodness forbid, the Voice of Ireland. The Essex boy definitely takes his inspiration from the mods.

The cover for his debut single “Please Don’t Let Me Go” in 2010 saw him sporting a Baracuta Harrington jacket, desert boots, and his trademark trilby.

The style combined the Mod and skinhead subcultures with a modern twist. Olly describes himself as laid back and down to earth and his choice of attire attests to this, but he scrubs

up well at glitzy celeb events like the Brits where he’s spotted in crisp grey suits, with casual short neck shirts underneath, or monochrome maroon suit jacket and turtle neck maroon top.

His eccentric style is miles away from the boy-band look that’s everywhere these days. Olly is certainly miles ahead of the likes of urban JLS in the style stakes.

Last month he told online arts and entertainment site ‘The List’ that he wants to make a style statement at this year’s Brit Awards.

Olly will be performing at the ceremony and says he hopes to don an outfit that people will remember forever. He said, “I haven’t even discussed what I’m going to wear yet but I want to wear something pretty amazing on stage. Hopefully it’ll be something quite iconic”.



Olly Murs, style icon and boy-next-door.

The Fashionable Five

Dearbhaile Houston

WITH St. Patrick’s Day coming up soon, what better way to get patriotic than with fashion. For such a small island, we seem to be swimming in fashion elite.

We’ve got household names like Paul Costello, Louise Kennedy and John Rocha. But beyond that, we also have a new generation of talented designers.

Many of them have worked in New York or London but like every good emigrant, have come back to the home country to start a fashion label. It is truly a story of our times.

All joking aside, here’s a small sample of our home-grown fashion designers.

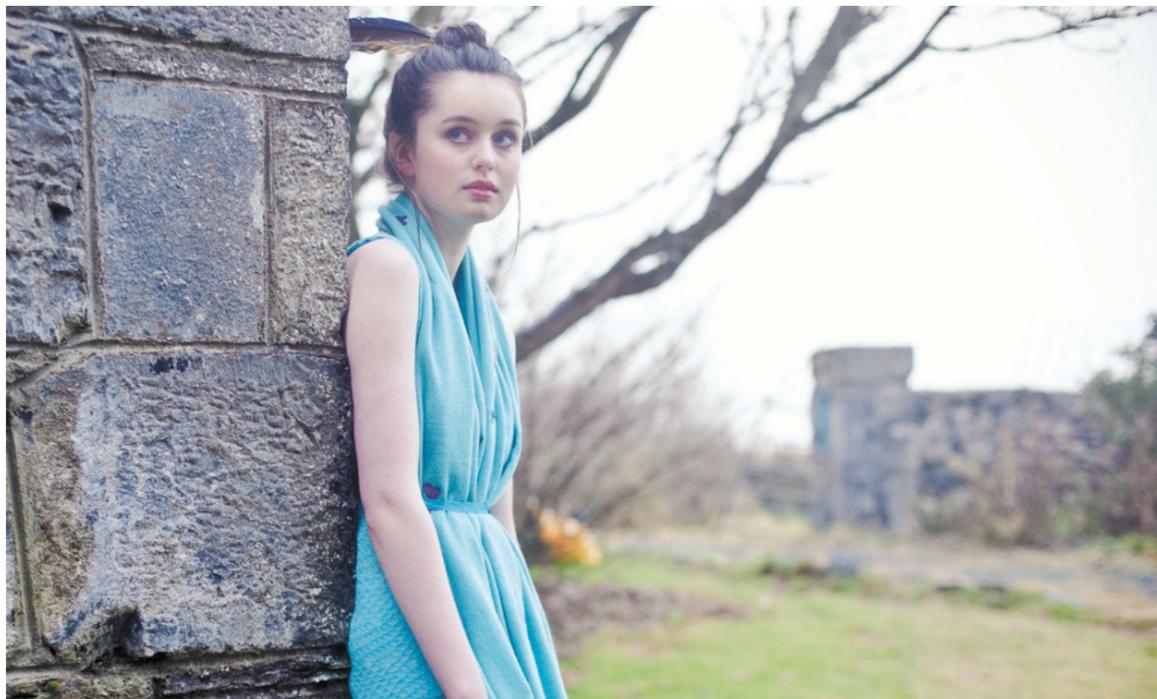
Emma Manley, a Dublin native who studied in the Grafton Academy, Manley interned with sportswear label VPL in New York and worked for Alexander McQueen in London. She set up her eponymous label, Manley, in 2010. Manley works on a perfect mix of masculine and feminine. The shapes

are sporty with a girly twist and the use of unusual fabrics such as pig skin and chiffon makes for some edgy but very wearable clothes.

Sinead Doyle, a graduate from just down the road in the Limerick School of Art and Design, Doyle also studied tailoring in the London College of Fashion. This training has served her well as her label has won many awards and fans since its launch in 2008. With a simple and clean palette, Doyle does a new take on urban sportswear with deconstructed tailoring that shows off not only Doyle’s talent but her business savvy as well. Simone Rocha: The daughter of the aforementioned John Rocha and a graduate of NCAD and Central St. Martins, Rocha began her career designing for Topshop. She has since moved on to doing catwalk shows with her own label and judging by her latest collection (a futuristic update of 1960’s tailoring) she may be overtaking

her father in the fashion stakes. Matt Doody, born in the wilds of County Kerry, he has been a favourite of many Irish fashion editors since his graduation from the Grafton Academy. He seems to have cornered the market on elegant but quirky evening wear and last year opened his own boutique/studio in the Powerscourt Townhouse in Dublin.

Heather Finn may design knitwear but this is not your granny’s jumper we’re talking about. Another graduate of NCAD, Finn worked as an accessories buyer before starting her own label. Her designs are an offbeat mash of bright colours and different knitting techniques with unusual accents such as sequins and ruffles. While on paper this sounds like the last thing you’d want to wear, the end results are easy separates and cute dresses that would brighten anyone’s mood on a rainy March day.



Quirky knitwear from NCAD graduate Heather Finn.

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Fashion

FASHION is constantly changing, or so I'm told

Mikey Griffin

Before I begin, let me say I don't intend to create any fashion faux pas, because I'm no fashion expert.

I'd merely like to think I know what I like and I call it as I see it. So, these next few hundred words are going to be my own musings and no more.

The mantra of this article will be to try something different.

I've enjoyed going outside my comfort zone recently. Let's start with the torso area which I believe is where

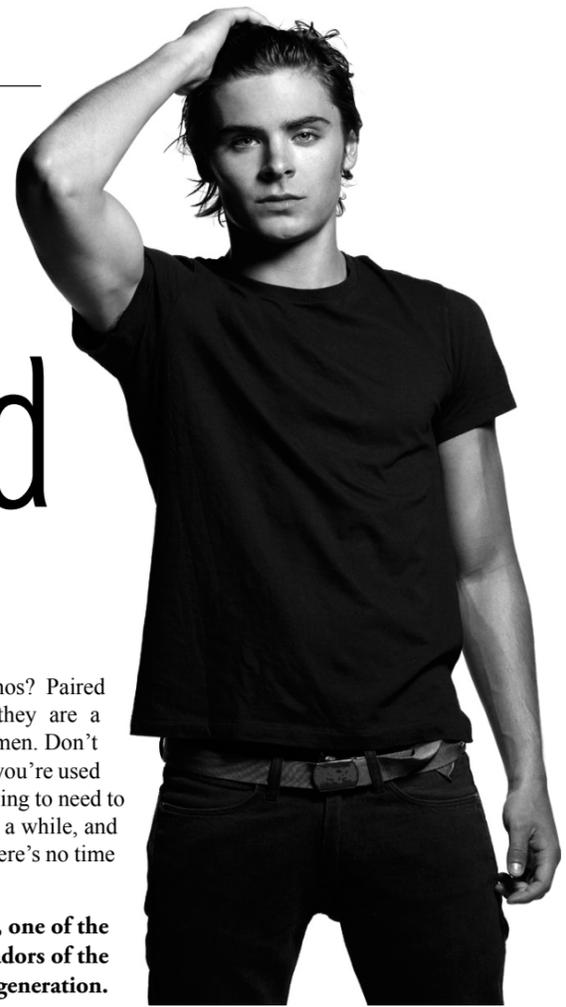
a person really shows their own style and individuality. Go for what you like but be different and put your own twist on it. I recently bought a waistcoat and mixed and matched with different t-shirts and it looks pretty good.

Contrast the colour of the tee and a waistcoat and you're on to a winner. Low v cut shape is best, but experiment with other varieties. Another idea is going for different shapes and prints you wouldn't usually go for and you

could be pleasantly surprised. Then move onto the legs. Now as a guy, and not a fashionable one at that, you may think there isn't much you can do. Until recently I was a straight boot cut jean type of lad. Now, I wear different cuts like drop crotch, skinny, twisted carrots (jeans with elasticated heels) and it is a welcome change that if you are like me, I suggest you try. Also, I'm seeing a lot of men with different colour jeans and I have to say I like the look, try

it. Why not try chinos? Paired with a good shirt, they are a really good look for men. Don't always stick to what you're used to because you are going to need to change every once in a while, and as the saying goes, there's no time like the present.

Zac Efron, one of the ambassadors of the skinny jean generation.



Nowhere more powerful than Madison Avenue

Barbara Ross

THERE is nothing sexier than a man in a suit.

The power suit of the 50s has been given a new lease of life thanks to the hit show "Mad Men" and its main character, Don Draper.

Men's fashion in 1950's Hollywood movies is a stereotype of the everyday man, a businessman husband. The 1950's costumes for these roles were always designed around the husband in a dark and drab business suit and hat, with lots of fabric in the pant legs.

Popular materials at this time were cotton, silk, and wools. After work, Don Draper relaxes in looser clothing, loose pants, and a shirt without a tie. For work and meetings, business suits are always worn along with social occasions. During the 1950's man made fibres are introduced, nylon, rayon, and

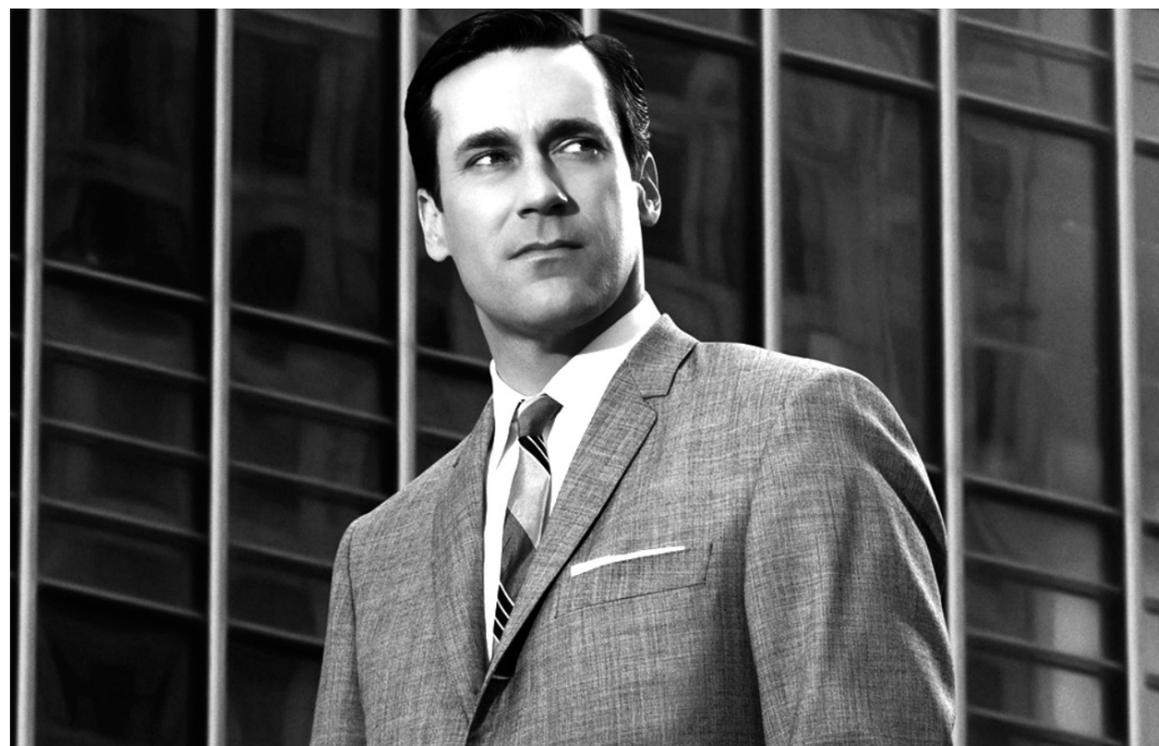
blends. The styles stay similar but the cloth material is lighter in weight, also colour began to be used in the fabrics.

If you look at any movies and TV shows of the era, what you mostly see is the businessman look: the gray flannel suit.

Dark blue, dark brown and charcoal were the colors of a man's office suit, whether he was a lowly office minion or head of the company. For much of the 1950s, conformity was the order of the day. The postwar years were exciting and booming, but the Cold War and the fears wrought by nuclear weapons drove a conservative movement in clothing. Everyone wanted to look like a good American, which meant they all looked alike. Men's clothes were simpler than the suits of the 1940s. Gone were shoulder pads and most double breasted suits. Jackets and trousers were shorter, although there

was still a lot of fabric in the trouser legs. Ties were slightly slimmer and shirt collars less pronounced. Everyone still wore a hat, of course, but the brims were considerably narrower than the fedoras sported from the 1920s on.

The clean cut and conservative style of the 1950s remains an influence on fashion today. From subtle touches on modern pieces to retro vintage fashions, men can be seen sporting elements of the past and using them in their existing wardrobes. The 1950s power suit has never really gone out of fashion but it has recently been given a new lease of life. A suit is instantly glamour in the modern world and true style never goes out of fashion.



Jon Hamm stars as Don Draper in the hit TV series 'Mad Men'.

Do girls know best?

Sophie McDermott

LET'S face it. Men these days sure know how to make an impression.

Whether you're creeping in the library or hitting up the local nightclub on a Saturday night, the Irish boys are looking good enough to eat.

I don't know if it's a new phase of metro sexuality or if lads just have more options to wear these days, but designer labels and high street fashion is definitely becoming more important to our male counterparts.

Gone are the days where lads took five minutes to get ready for a night out or woke up 10 minutes before class, now they can actually take longer than the girls to ready themselves.

Tommy Hilfiger and Jack and Jones are now looked at and matched up to ensure the perfect "pulling" outfit is created.

But has this new interest in their appearance paid off?

For the vast majority it has, however, for others, mammy might be better off making her bimonthly trips to Penney's for them. While I'm a firm believer that lads can pull off any style they want as long as they have that confidence about them, there are just some things that any lad should never try to get away with, even if they're Colin Farrell's doppelganger.

It's just not happening.

I'll start with skinny jeans for boys. They look great on girls but horrific on men.

There are just certain things that men need to leave to the girls and skinny jeans are most definitely one of them.

College lads seem to have discovered a great liking for them to highlight their (ahem) features but for the love of God, boys, leave them in the women's section.

While lads may be paying more attention to their clothes, shoes seem to have been forgotten in this new evolution of men's styling.

I have witnessed time after time the devastating mix of black pants and



Russell Brand sports his signature horrendously tight skinny jeans.

brown shoes. It's not just around UL; it's all over the country.

It seems the men really don't think that anyone can see their feet.

But asides from a few mistakes, boys seem to be catching up fast with the girls and developing their own sense of style and fashion. Thanks to Hollister and Abercrombie and Fitch, guys have definitely realised that they have to work harder to look good.

Do I think improvements still need to be desperately made? Surprisingly not.

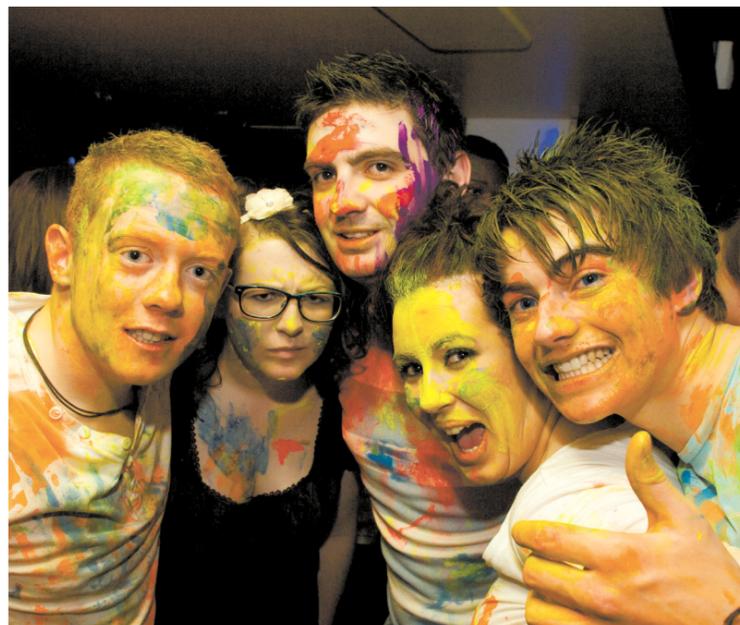
The boys have really sorted themselves out and dare I say it, actually seem to be enjoying this new sense of style. Girls everywhere should be proud that their male counterparts are finally doing it for themselves.

In Focus



Students making merry at last week's UV Party.

Images: Paddy Kerley.



Aubrey O'Connell asks, 'When an artist dies, why do we suddenly buy their records more than ever before?' Turn to page 19 to read more.

8th March 2012



Issue 10 FREE
Volume XX

Local acts stand out at UL Fest



Storyfold frontman Paddy McKenna. Image: Paddy Kerley.

Kelly O'Brien

Expectations ran high for one of the main highlights of last week's Charity Week, UL Fest. Held in four venues across UL, almost all the main genres of music were covered. Being band orientated as usual, I headed straight for the SU Courtyard.

First up was local singer/songwriter Hannah O'Brien. Though it was early on in the day, and the crowd was sparse, those present commented on the soulful timbre of Hannah's voice and her creative use of lyrics. She also got a great response for those listening live on ULFM.

Up next were four-piece Petri Chor. Despite the fact that they only started gigging two weeks ago, Petri Chor have a surprisingly tight sound and managed to wow the crowd with intensely catchy songs.

'Doll Parts' for example, was a particular favourite of those gathered. Many present commented on the fact that the band incorporated a Cellist into the mix. "I was really surprised to see the guy with the Cello come on stage", commented one audience member. "At first I was a little sceptical, but it really worked. They were savage." Again, the turnout was a little disappointing, but more is surely to come from this up-and-coming UL band with the members planning more UL gigs in the coming weeks.

Having spent the majority of the event in the SU Courtyard, I decided to take a jaunt into the other three venues hosting acts. The Scholars had a consistent enough crowd, with the music focusing more on traditional Irish music. The Stables Club was jam packed with punters enduring DJ Ber busting out the usual caustic mix of generic pop songs and cringe-inducing 80's tracks.

One really has to question a student who pays into a four venue festival and spends the entire event listening to drivel such as this. I suspect some students were more interested in the contents of their pint glasses than in the talent of those performing original music a short distance away in the SU Courtyard... disappointing to say the least. A quick scout around the Stables Courtyard confirmed that the dance music was not to my taste so it was back out to the SU Courtyard where I caught the tail end of Sum Yung Wans Band. Having mentally admonished those in The Stables mere moments ago for missing out on 'original' music, I immediately regretted my words. What I was greeted with on stage was neither original nor unique.

The title of 'Sum Yung Wans Band' is not the only sickening thing about them as their stage conduct and indeed, music, shows. The band, being mostly a cover band, played all the usual cover band tracks. A selection of Chili's songs were a must, of course, which they coupled with an overly cocky stage presence. Fears that the evening was going downhill, however, were soon alleviated as Kerry based band

Sparkle Motion took the stage. After a few technical hiccups, the three-piece quickly launched into their first song, 'What do you mean you can't dance'. From the crowds reaction, it was clear that the majority of those present were fans already, with some even singing along to the attractively catchy chorus. A special treat was also in store as, toward the end of the opening song, frontman Kevin O'Brien produced a violin bow and proceeded to draw it back and forth over his guitar strings. The resulting sound was surprisingly captivating with the the crowd chanting for 'more violin bow!' in the songs following. Sparkle Motion managed to draw and hold the first sizeable crowd of the night, and finished their set with their best tune, 'Hope' and even threw in a 'one more tune' to satisfy the chanting crowd.

Following on from Sparkle Motion, came cover band numero two, Atlanta. Having been burned by cover band number one, my expectations were low but, I have to say, my apprehension was unfounded.

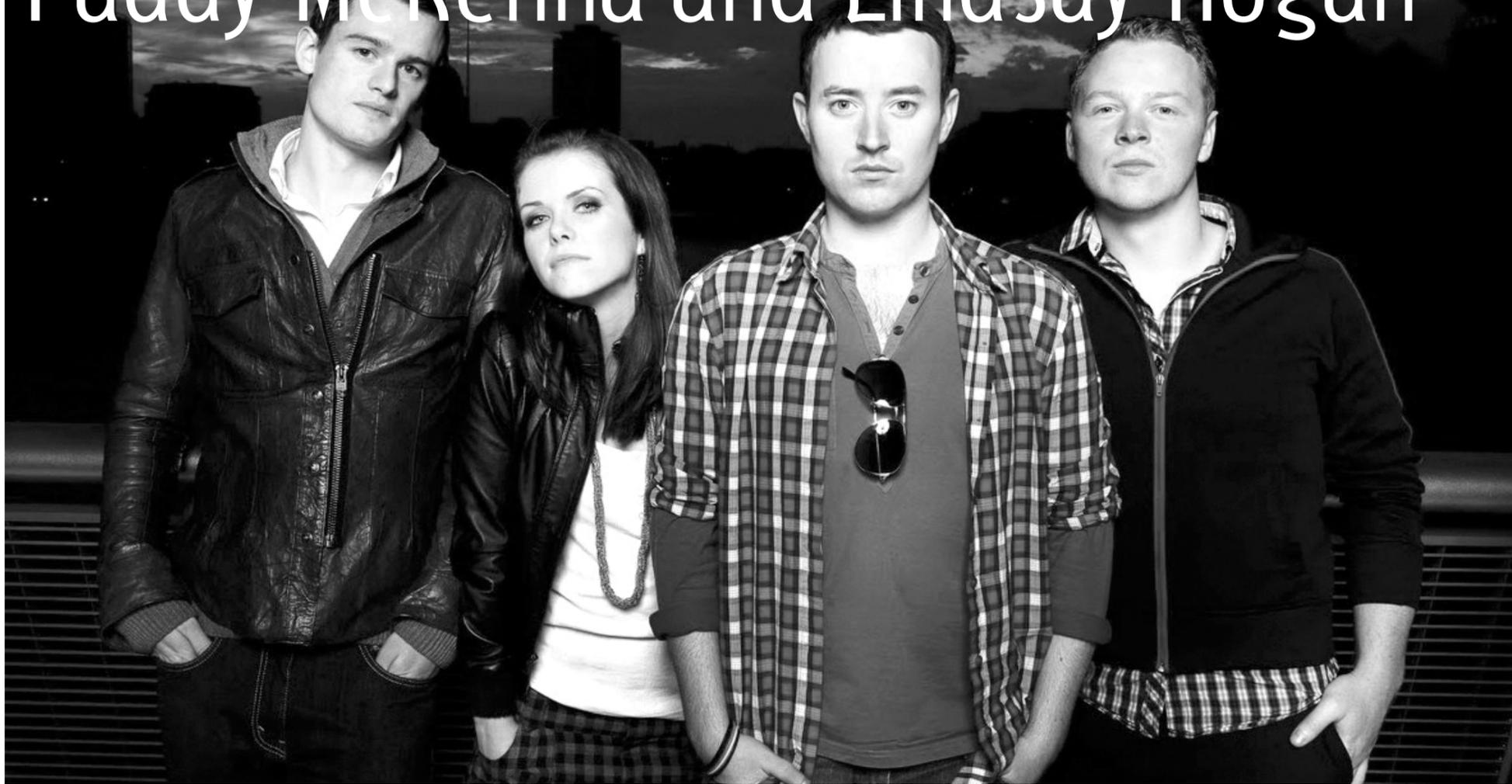
The Atlanta frontman was entertaining, crowd-pleasing, and seemed like a genuinely nice guy. His enthusiasm was commendable and impressive as he attacked the stage with all the energy and focus of a lovable labrador puppy. Not only did he keep the crowd, he wowed them aswell.

Things were definitely looking up as Soldiers Can't Dance took to the Courtyard. Though there were no catchy songs from SCD, per se, they are, without a doubt, absolutely fantastic musicians. The only way to describe the crowd reaction would be by using the words 'sheer awe'. One happy crowd member commented that they were "'intensely syncopated". He went on to comment, "Amazing talent. Loved it." Storyfold were given a similarly positive response. Frontman Paddy McKenna had great crowd interaction and was instantly recognisable as a 2fm DJ. Fellow lead singer, Carlow born Lindsey Hogan was equally impressive on both vocals and keyboard.

The main act of the night, The Kanyu Tree, was equally impressive. A rich, tight sound, they gave the crowd exactly what they came to see - a great finish to a fantastic night.

Arts & Ents

The Story un-Folds: an interview with Paddy McKenna and Lindsay Hogan



Jack Brolly

Storyfold, not to be missed.

STORYFOLD are a band who have been around for a long time but haven't been recognised until very recently.

They have a unique asset as they were started by Paddy McKenna, 2fm DJ. They blend pop and rock and let melody take the reins. An Focal caught up with them during last week's UL Fest.

An Focal reporter, and serial interviewer, met up with Paddy and Lindsay as they were preparing for

their set. The first thing he wanted to know was how Storyfold began.

"Storyfold started in 2009 so we're nearly three years as a band" said Paddy McKenna, guitars and vocal. "I was previously in another band with another Storyfold member and we were setting up a new band and Lindsay originally came in as the drummer... but we were jamming in her bedroom and we spotted a piano in her room so we suggested she played the piano. We didn't even expect to have a pianist but then we had one... and suddenly we needed a drummer!" he added.

Apparently the band went through some complications early on. "At the early stages we were actually called Run Kid but we had to change our name early on for legal reasons because there

was a band in America called Run Kid Run. What happened, was that a lot of their fans were coming onto our page and, similarly, our fans were going onto theirs... and they are a Christian rock band so it was a bit confusing", he laughed.

An Focal wondered how the process of writing a song for Storyfold worked... so we asked Lindsay while Paddy took a quick phone call upstairs in the SU Green Room. "I just started banging out a riff in practice and the lads would say, "Do that again that's pretty good." Paddy would've been the primary songwriter for the first two years, definitely. What would happen is, he'd bring an idea and the rest of us would build up around that. It's very much a collaborative process", she explained.

Storyfold manage to be accessible but still have quite an interesting sound. What are their influences and how do they blend them into their songs?

Lindsay fields this one with enthusiasm. "My favorite band are Muse and my favorite artist would be Ben Folds. I didn't know a whole lot about Muse until before Storyfold formed and people said our style was very like them... so I gave them a listen and I loved them."

Back from his call, we asked Paddy, as primary songwriter, how do you involve your influences in the process of writing lyrics? "As you go along it kind of changes", he states. "It started with The Beatles, I guess. What they did in seven years was such an incredible change. It made me realize that you can

do that. You can start with pop music but also endeavor to make something that's a bit more complicated. The bottom line is that our songs have to have a good melody, rhythm and beat. The words have to mean something and there has to be a semblance of sense to the whole thing."

What can we expect from Storyfold in the future? "We're writing new songs. We've been gigging Rocket Science for so long that we feel like we need to try some newer stuff. We're going to demo everything and then if there's an appetite or if we can finance a new album then we definitely win." Storyfold's debut album, Rocket Science, is out now.

Full house as crowds flock to the Green

Aubrey O'Connell

IT was a night of covers as Hermitage Green played The Scholars on the Tuesday of Charity Week.

"One-two, one-two" sounds out as plastic cups are dished over the bar in anticipation of Limerick's fastest rising band, Hermitage Green. "One-two, one-two", it was beginning to sound like a new tune. With a bit of Bob Dylan to kick us off, the boys bringing their energetic styling's to "Man of Constant Sorrow" as The Scholars reaches capacity once again. While the crowd may have been showing the signs of a couple of hard days of Charity Week, it was Hermitage Green's well-worked medleys that livened up the night. If you thought Séan Sabhat and the Rubberbandits couldn't ever go together, then you'd have been proven wrong as the two found themselves paired in an undeniably Limerick compilation.

A brilliant take on "Rolling in the Deep" gets cups spilling and dancing breaks out around the venue. One dedicated fan stumbles his way to the front of the crowd for the bands own "Gibson". Roaring along for the whole tune he gets himself a free pint and a shout-out for his troubles. Reader, you know what to do at the next one! Hermitage's cover of "Cosmic Love" has so far garnered over 100 thousand views on YouTube and proved one of the crowd favourites of the night. Offering up the chance for more free drink, Murphy announces that "the first ones to shift for this song get a free pint!". I got no free pint. What would Charity Week be without the lodge? The band realising this with a brief mention and a dedication - "This song is for the lodge, it has no words and we've no words for the lodge". The ensuing Spanish feel would

leave you wondering what sort of tropical lodge they had been to. The local Bart Kiely masterfully guested on drums for the night and got a chance to let loose as the set neared the end, the lads treating us to another medley. This time it was a warp to the 90's as Hermitage took their folk angle to "Rhythm is a Dancer", "Freed from Desire" and "Sweet Dreams" (I know that's 80's but it was mostly 90's!).

Before the gig, they told us that it was gonna be even crazier than the gig they played in Supermacs in Galway... while things didn't get that classy a rendition of "Who's that sexy Garda!" went down well and was a solid way to end the night. To the delight of many, after losing the direction of the after party it was only a short distance across to The Stables' Farmers Ball to drunkenly lust after some sheep.

Soldiers Can't Dance, but they can sing

Jack Brolly

SOLDIERS Can't Dance played this year's Charity Week and were a massive success. Their brand of indie rock went down a storm among the UL populace. They are comprised of Luke Fitzgerald on drums, Conor Cuffe on vocals and Guitar and James Kennedy on vocals and bass. An Focal caught up with them before they graced the stage out in the SU Courtyard and asked them some questions. Talking about the bands beginnings, drummer Luke Fitzgerald explains. "It started with me and Conor. I put an ad up on the internet and he was in a cover band and he just needed a drummer and then the other members just kind of straightened out. That's how we started; we started last June in 2010. We started writing our own music and we started gigging a

couple of months later." They have such a distinctive style that recalls bands as diverse as the Maccabees and The Cast of Cheers, indie rock with a technical twist. Talking about their influences, Luke goes on to state that "We all have different influences. They range from Biffy Clyro to Toby Kaar. All of that kind of comes together and makes us sound different." On writing songs, and commenting on their method of composition, Luke states that "Usually we just come to practice with an idea and, rather than start from scratch, we might have ideas from other songs... and we change songs... and it just kind of all falls together." The Irish music scene at the moment is going through a massive high. As a band in the middle of this high, Luke states that "I think there are lots of good bands, there's so much competition.

No matter how good you do there's always someone in Irish music to look up to. Plenty of good bands out there." And finally, what does the future hold for Soldier's Can't Dance? "Basically, we just want to play as many gigs as we can and get our name out there."

Arts & Ents

A little bit of Hope and a Meteor Shower: An Focal catches up with Sparkle Motion

Adam Leahy

KERRY based band, Sparkle Motion, hit the stage last Wednesday for UL Fest – one of the main highlights of Charity Week 2012.

Kicking off with crowd favourite ‘What do you mean you can’t dance?’ the alt-rock three-piece cemented themselves into the minds of all present with their catchy riffs and soulful lyrics. Though Sparkle Motion put forward a host of well-received tracks, the crowd favorites were, without a doubt, ‘Hope’ and ‘Meteor Shower’.

Consisting of brothers Kevin and Thomas O’Brien (guitar/vocals and drums) and bassist DD Foley, Sparkle Motion are drumming up quite a following in the college. Though their

debut gig here in UL, Sparkle Motion played the main stage in the SU Courtyard alongside top Irish bands The Kanyu Tree and Storyfold.

An Focal had the pleasure of catching up with the band beforehand. When asked about the pressure, Lead Singer/Guitarist and 2nd year MMPT Kevin O’Brien talks openly about pre-gig nerves. Fondly remembering his first Fresher’s Week in UL, Kevin comments upon a moment spent looking at the stage all lit up in the Courtyard and thinking “we’ll get the band in here. I’ll play that”. Just over a year on, it seems his determination has paid off.

Together for only two years so far, Sparkle Motion have already played a plethora of gigs countrywide, supporting many popular Irish acts including the Delorentos and pop punk act Scuba Dice. Speaking about their live set-up, Kevin modestly speaks about their diverse range of material.

“Our songs are constantly changing”, he comments. “We’re an alternative/indie-pop act, but we see our songs changing all the time, even from gig to gig”.

Sparkle Motion have, in the past, been compared to legendary acts as Morrissey due to their specific indie-alternative feel, though Kevin, who also presents a show on ULMF, lists their influences as Muse, REM, Interpol, Coldplay, the Smiths, Joy Division and Director.

Currently in the process of recording their debut demo, Sparkle Motion will be releasing their first track ‘Meteor Shower’ later on this week. ULMF will also be playing repeats of the entire gig in the coming weeks. Stay tuned to learn more about this up-and-coming Irish threesome.



Kevin O'Brien, lead singer of Sparkle Motion. Image: Paddy Kerley.

Petri Chor: the way the Earth smells

Siofra Mannion

ON Wednesday 29 April, the student band Petri Chor took to the main stage of the SU Courtyard for UL Fest to showcase their talent.

At the bands beginnings, it was just main vocalist Ciarrai Kelly, guitarist Emmett O'Donnell and drummer Liam Cialis who started playing together. Cellist Jamie Ryan joined the band at a later date. On joining Petri Chor, Jamie had this to say:

“In October of last year I was outside the music room just looking at sign-up sheets and Emmett came up to me and we started talking. He asked was I a bassist... because they had not yet got a bassist... so we went in and were jamming for a while and then I was made a member.”

When asked about their genre of music, Jamie explained that their sound is relatively hard to define. He says, “We play kind of alternative acoustic. We haven’t really explored the electric side of things so it’s kind of similar to Jeff Buckley, Bon Iver, and Radiohead. It’s mellow... but not slow, because it has a good beat.”

Jamie goes on to explain about the name, Petri Chor. He says that the origins of the name are interesting and at the beginning the band had no name. “After a while it was decided we really needed one, so we discussed names but not one really had an impact. I was looking up the dictionary one day and discovered Petri Chor which describes



UL band Petri Chor - one to watch out for. Image: Paddy Kerley.

the way the earth smells after rain... and so we decided on that.” Petri Chor have only been doing gigs together for the last two weeks, which is surprising as their live sound is as polished as if they’d been together for much longer. “Two weeks ago, we had a gig at the Hurlers and the response was brilliant. It went really well and the crowd liked it. We’re hoping to play more gigs in the coming weeks before the summer break. We did a session in the Scholars for a MMPT class party and again the response was great.”

For those readers who missed Petri Chor at last weeks UL Fest, you can listen to some of their recordings online. “We made a make shift studio out of a room in Kilmurry Student Village and used a microphone and iphone to record the song ‘Doll Parts’”. We uploaded them to Soundcloud - www.soundcloud.com/petri-chor. We hope to have more up soon.”

Hannah O’Brien, local and live

Rachael Power

IF soulful acoustic is your thing, then there’s one name you should definitely check out.

Hannah O’Brien, a 20 year old UL student from Castleconnell, took to the stage last Wednesday for UL Fest and performed a mixed set of blues and acoustic music.

Last year, the second year English and New Media student, who is currently on co-op in Thomondgate, won Live 95 FM’s Limerick Talent search, and has since been making a name for herself on the local scene.

“I play whenever I can or whenever people ask me... at birthdays and weddings for example. I support bands, I’ve played at the Office and Dolans a good few times, and I played in the Concert Hall in UL last Christmas which was amazing.”

Listing Damien Rice and Regina Spectre as some of numerous influences, she said that the crowd can expect a “big mixture” of genres on Wednesday.

“I love acoustic and jazz. I’m also a big Blondie and Rolling Stones fan. I sing some Lana Del Ray, Damien Rice and much more. I sing a lot of covers but I also write originals,” she said.

“I’d love to go into music in the future, it’s amazing and I play whenever possible. But it’s kind of on the backburner at the moment as I’m at college,” she said. Some of her original tracks include “Five”, the song that pushed her to number one out of twelve acts in the Limerick talent competition, and “Heartbeat”.

Speaking of her experience with the competition, she said:

“There was a €5000 prize which was amazing. I had entered talent competitions before but I never got a lot out of it, so winning the Live 95 talent search was brilliant.”

Despite being on coop, Hannah says that she’s enjoying Charity Week and will be taking part in other activities besides gigging.

“My employer actually gave us the week off for Charity Week. I’m really looking forward to it,” she said.



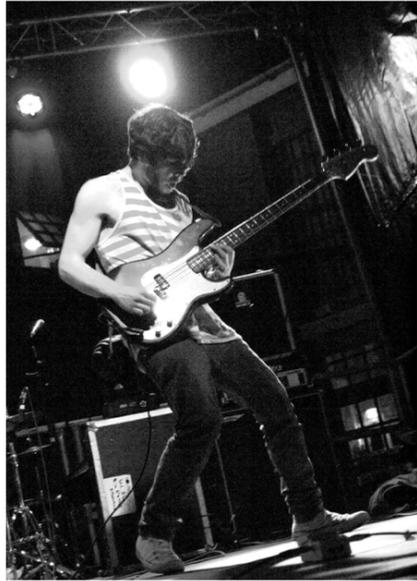
Local singer/songwriter Hannah O'Brien.

In Focus



Charity Week, In Focus

As you flitted around campus for Charity Week 2012, the An Focal camera was out and about to document everything and anything for the week that was in it. Images: Paddy Kerley, Kevin O'Brien and Colm Fitzgerald.



In Focus



Arts & Ents

Not Worth Staying Up For

Barry Murphy

CHANNEL Four's late night satire extravaganza is back. '10 O'Clock Live' returns to our screens on Wednesday nights once again.

With the previous series' big name talent returning, the show offers the same minor laughs and major groans as before.

For the uninitiated, '10 O'Clock Live' offers a gag-a-minute breakdown of the week's current events with Jimmy Carr, David Mitchell, Charlie Brooker and Lauren Laverne at the helm. On paper it sounds like a winning formula, but in execution the show is about as hit-and-miss as they come.

While the male hosts boast impressive comedic resumes, with Brooker in particular garnering a cult following for his hilarious and insightful current events show 'Newswipe' on BBC4,

something about the foursome just doesn't seem to gel. Perhaps it's the live nature of the show, or perhaps the usually solo performers simply don't have chemistry as a group, but the majority of the jokes and exchanges between the four come off as awkward and at times cringe worthy. The show thrives when the hosts, specifically Carr and Brooker, are delivering their monologues chronicling the week's events. These often hilarious diatribes showcase the talents of each host very well, as the punch-lines come thick and fast. Laverne, who at one time hosted BBC2's 'The Culture Show', sticks out like a sore thumb as out of place among some of the UK's finest comedic minds. It's not all about the laughs though. Any satire show worth watching should offer some food for thought, and this is where the show ultimately fails. Each week there is a debate segment, mediated by Mitchell and contested between special guests. Recently featured was George Galloway (British politician with a now infamous appearance in 'Celebrity

Big Brother') and 'Times' columnist Hugo Ritkind, to debate the on-going dispute over the Falkland Islands. While both guests were invested in the topic, Mitchell seemed determined to undermine the whole affair by making it either about himself and his own views, or lowest common denominator humour. By constantly speaking over his guests and making sexual innuendos about Galloway, Mitchell made it seem as though the entire "gag" here was to waste the time of the participants.

In the end, it didn't feel like a humour-focused news and debate show, but almost like a silly hidden camera show where the joke was on Galloway and Ritkind for even bothering to show up.

Couple these gripes with what feels like a hugely unbalanced political bias of the show in general, as well as some truly awful sketch comedy thrown in the mix, and '10 O'Clock Live' just doesn't seem worth it. Next Wednesday, I recommend a 9pm bedtime to save your energy for exam season.



Mitchell, Brooker, Laverne and Carr lend their hefty comedic talents to '10'Clock Live'.

Letting the Music Speak Volumes

Josh Lee,
Arts and Entertainment Editor

BURIAL'S a bit of enigma.

The London producer remained virtually anonymous until 2008, a full year after the release of his critically acclaimed, Mercury Prize nominated album 'Untrue'. While some of his peers have taken to donning literal masks (Daft Punk, deadmau5, The Bloody Beetroots, SBTRKT, to name a few) and incorporating them as part of an aesthetic, Burial's shyness smacks less of shtick, and more of a genuine desire to avoid any limelight whatsoever. "I'm a low key person and I just want to make some tunes, nothing else," he wrote in a blog post in 2008.

And some fine tunes they are. Although typically described glibly as dub step, Burial's production incorporates a variety of eerie and alien sounds that lurk in the dark nooks of the UK electronic sound scape.

For the unaccustomed, the excellent "Archangel", the second track on 'Untrue', showcases Burial's style succinctly. It's drizzly London at 2am.

Since 'Untrue' in 2007, Burial has released a series of EPs, including one in which he collaborated with Four Tet and Radiohead's Thom York.

The eponymous opening track is a dark medley of the chopped up, barely there vocals that have come to characterise Burial's music. The production is gritty; mired in the 2 step garage that runs through Burial's stylistic ancestry.

The surging bass can be down-right menacing at times, and the percussion is slightly off kilter in that wonderful



Burial's 2007 LP 'Untrue' was nominated for the Mercury Prize

way the producer has been perfecting since his self-titled debut in 2006.

"Loner" provides an intriguing turn of pace. The fluttering chord progression is urgent, panicky almost, and the creaky bass ebbs and flows under ghostly vocal samples. There's times where all the elements converge into a haunting crescendo before it all gives way to a spooky combination of spectral voices and static. For a three track EP, 'Kindred' is impressively ambitious and imposing. Not content to occupy the unique niche he has carved for himself with his two LPs, Burial is constantly refining his sound, and incorporating elements from house, ambient, 2 step and, of course, dub step to create something that little bit more transcendent. The interestingly titled "Ashtray Wasp" wraps up the album, and offers some airy, ethereal moments. The drums are less pronounced, but the track has a domineering presence.

The EP ends in the unnerving crackle of static. 30 minutes have passed at this point, not that you'd notice.

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Life after Death



Whitney Houston, who passed away on February 11.

Aubrey O'Connell

"THE Beatles were just a band. The Sex Pistols, just a band. Nirvana, just a Band".

The not so immortal words of hip hop duo Dan le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip highlight the phenomenon of musical artists gaining cult status, held as gods by some, strangely often after a death has occurred. Why is it that as soon as someone sings their last song we begin loading up our iPods with their complete back catalogue? Is it a case of you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone, or does it become temporarily fashionable to throw an uneducated ear at their work and spout off what you've learned about them the past few days?

The death of Michael Jackson in 2009 was a prime example of this type of mentality, with record companies and filmmakers only encouraging it as they scrambled to cash in on a troubled human's demise.

The recent death of Whitney Houston saw a recurrence of this spurt in popularity as record sales rocketed and hundreds of thousands of new 'fans' were created.

Ironically, at this stage in her career, it is unlikely that any amount of PR would have achieved such a rejuvenation of her status and now that it has happened accidentally, she isn't around to enjoy it. The question is: where have all of these Whitney lovers come from, and why?

Of course there are those who genuinely did love her music and for those it is a great loss but let's face it, at our age, how many of us knew much more than "I Wanna Dance with Somebody"? Not that many. Yet if you took to Facebook after the news broke it was flooded with people mourning their idol (and of course the odd bad-taste joke). Someone made the valid point to me that, if she meant so much to them, could they at least spell her name right? What the loss of these artists really shows us is the greed and commercialism that has grasped the music industry and how ruthless they are in their work. We all know artists are paraded and exploited every day and to a certain extent we've come to terms with that. It's now difficult to watch a music video on YouTube without a certain four letter company bombarding you with ads or denying you the right to watch it for geographical reasons.

We accept that, it's the way of modern music. But surely, the move made by Sony Music and iTunes to increase the price of Houston's greatest hits is the final frontier and not a whole lot better than taking the change from a corpse's pocket. Either way, as record companies continue to sink lower and lower down the moral chain we may see it becoming more and more of a regular happening. Maybe in the future, when I'm famous, and then stop being famous, I could sneak off to some secluded island all the while capitalising on my 'death', with a bottle of rum in my hand and a Sony official's nose. Well, maybe not.

Can Sony inject life back into mobile gaming?

Josh Lee,
Arts and Entertainment Editor

FOR people of a certain age, the Gameboy possesses a heady nostalgic value.

Long car trips were made bearable, although probably more for the poor folks in the front seat than yourself. I was a Pokémon fan myself and the very sight of a mass of poorly coloured pixels resembling a Pikachu still ignites a childish yearning inside me. But long gone are the days when electronic devices did one thing and one thing only.

Our desire for gaming on the go, at least for casual, point and flick users, is now being increasingly satisfied by smartphones.

Or, for the keen masochists among us, tablets. The delightfully infuriating Angry Birds, and its motley of variations, have racked up an almost unbelievable 500m downloads.

So, it's apparent that casual gamers constitute a lucrative market. But does this necessarily spell the end for successful handheld gaming devices?

Nintendo's latest portable iteration, the worryingly gimmicky, eye destroying 3DS has seen its less than stellar sales force its price to fall. The common reasoning would be: why carry around two, or even three, devices when a single one can do all you need? It's hardly worth trying to immerse yourself in Link's latest escapades while you wait for the bus.

Sony's recent launch of the PlayStation Vita (February 22 in Europe), the follow up to the 2006 PlayStation Portable and its 2009 upgrade the Go, shows that at they very least an ambition remains to generate a profit from dedicated mobile gamers. With the Vita, Sony seems to have taken a kitchen sink approach.

Not only to users get the luxury of a touchscreen, two joysticks compared to the PSP's one, a motion sensing gyroscope, WiFi and optional 3G connectivity, but the back of the device has been made touch sensitive.

It's Sony's innovative effort to avail of the advantages of a touch interface, without the annoyance of grubby fingers blocking the on-screen action.

It's a large fellow too. At 7.2 inches wide and 3.3 inches high, it doesn't exactly scream portability, although the rounded design should mitigate this somewhat.

But Sony has an odd tendency to shoot themselves in the foot sometimes. We saw it with the PS3, as OtherOS, a feature that enabled users to install fully fledged Linux operating systems on their machines, was removed, much to the chagrin of the PS3 homebrew community.

Therein lies the Vita's niggling problem; tragically not even a gaming related one.

Sony's decision to use proprietary memory cards, locking users into Sony's expensive cards is sure to leave a sour taste in customers' mouths.

Porn: art or obscenity?

Kate Stewart

IN the 1890s, Oscar Wilde caused quite a stir. From the taboo undertones of "A Picture of Dorian Gray" to his eventual arrest for homosexual behavior, Wilde had a tendency for scandal.

Nowadays, he is considered one of the greatest playwrights Ireland has produced. And still relevant is his claim that "all art is quite useless".

The question of art's "use" has been raised again amidst the lawsuit brought against nearly 1,500 Americans by Hard Drive Productions for the illegal downloading of one of their adult movies. In defence, one woman, Luixia Wong, claims that she is in no breach of copyright because only "useful art" is protected by the US Constitution. So what exactly deems a piece of work "useful art?" Must it derive a basis in education, science or higher culture? Why is the violent rape in 'The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo' art, when 'Amateur Allure Jen' is obscene? Does artistic expression have to pass the judgment of a certain committee to guarantee legal ownership to the creator? The question is: where does the offending obscenity lie, the aesthetic or the content? The subject can be broken down into two basic constituents: nudity and the nature of sex. The acceptability of nudity has come a long way from the Amish like censorship it once experienced in the media. Anything goes after the watershed hour and shows such as "Skins" and "Misfits" often show

graphic sex. It is now acceptable because times have changed, much like how the classic nudes of Renaissance artists are now considered masterpieces rather than obscenities. Perhaps our discomfort with porn comes from the inherent shame associated with sex that still pervades our society. The very nature of sex means that we keep it under wraps to all but our most intimate confidantes. Porn forces you to confirm your own desires and urges and the uneasiness associated with this makes it much easier to berate porn for its immorality than the self discovery of some unpleasant quality. The blogosphere is increasingly acknowledging change in society's attitudes towards sexuality, significantly amongst women. Between sex positive bloggers, the online diaries of escorts, and the rise in female pornographers, it is no surprise that projects such as Lady Porn Day (an amalgamation of articles, interviews and films celebrating female sexuality) sprung up in 2011. The age old notion of pornographic degradation of women is also slowly being questioned due to the formation of queer and feminist porn. When Wilde said that all art is useless, he was right; the practicality of art is essentially nil. But art was never about practicality. It is expression, provocation, sensation. People are going to watch pornography whether it is art or not, can we really deny its creators of their rights?



Jupiter and Antiope as depicted by 16th century Dutch artist Hendrik Goltzius.

Film

Are you really so amazing Spiderman?

John Markham

THIS summer sees the return of Spiderman to the big screen in the reboot *The Amazing Spiderman*.

This comes only five years after the critical failure, but box office success, of Sam Raimi's *Spiderman 3*.

Spidey will once again face a battle to regain his title as box office king with this summer season being packed with comic book offerings.

The *Avengers*, *Men in Black III*, *Dredd* and of course the highly anticipated *The Dark Knight Rises* are all slated for release over the next few months.

So this begs the question. Is Spidey's return a necessary one?

Raimi's first *Spiderman* film is only ten years old, with *Spiderman 3* arriving only five years ago. In an industry where sequels are often dished out every second year, *Spiderman's* absence has

been a long one. From a business point of view, *The Amazing Spiderman* is expected to be a financial success based on name branding (merchandising etc.) and it makes financial sense for Sony to start a new film series. A sequel has already been green lighted.

Besides the financial aspect, after the third film's critical mauling and disappointingly bloated story that fell below the standards set by the previous two films, it is really quite the smart idea to reboot the comic.

Another thing that annoyed fans was the inclusion of *Venom* as a mere

secondary villain when he is one of the best villains out there and one of the greatest comic book creations ever. In reality, it makes perfect sense to re-awaken the series.

By rebooting the franchise, it will allow the series to take a new direction away from the mythology of Raimi's series (hopefully more *Venom*, less emo dancing) and can go in a variety of directions with the large amounts of source material to take from. For example, the film could be closer in spirit to those comics, the film's title being taken from the comic book series

from the 1960s. It may even follow the currently popular trend of dark and emotionally driven superhero films like Christopher Nolan's *Batman* films which followed more adult-oriented graphic novels. *Spiderman* has a long and highly popular history with such a long-standing and ever-evolving mythology and cast of characters to use since its creation in 1962 and there is no doubt Spidey will be revisited constantly on the big screen in one form or another for a long time to come.



The new spiderman flick stars Andrew Garfield and Emma Stone.

Happy Birthday to the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival

Kiera Maher

THIS year marked the 10th anniversary of the Jameson International Film Festival.

An eleven day event, it began in 2003 to mark the art of film making in Ireland and around the world.

Since then, it has fast become Ireland's premier feature festival. Just recently, the festival revealed that it has renewed the special partnership with Jameson for another three years.

Festivities kicked off with a great start, the screening of "Cloudburst" which was directed by Thom Fitzgerald and stars Brenda Fricker.

"Cloudburst" depicts the life of Stella, a foulmouthed, seventy-something lesbian who has loved Dot (Brenda Fricker) for 31 years.

However as the story unfolds Dot's granddaughter Molly tries to split the pair up in an attempt to get her hands on their house. The film focuses on how all love is the same, be it gay or straight, with plenty of laugh out loud moments throughout.

The festival has prided itself on creating a unique forum of exchange between the public and the film world. There were some screenings of other great films which included "Stella Days", "The Raid", "Wilde Salome" and "The Yellow Sea".

This year the festival hosted a special gallery exhibition, "Stargazing in Dublin" which celebrated film stars and

film-makers who have visited Dublin over the years. Speaking of celebrities, one of the more notable visitors this year to the festival included Al Pacino, in which he showcased his new film "Wilde Salome" with the lucky Dublin Audiences. The films in the festival were divided into categories.

These categories included Gala, Special presentation, Discovery, First Look, Spectrum, German, Irish, Real to Reel and Other Presentations.

However, other events took place during the festival as well. When not making the most of the jam-packed schedule of film and industry events, the Odessa Club hosted top entertainment throughout the duration of the festival.

This was an opportunity for ordinary festival goers to meet and greet with film-makers, and the JDIFF team with plenty of Jameson offers on throughout the night.

As you can see the festival does not just host the great movies that have been made and produced in the last year but it provides an atmosphere for festival goers. There were also classes and workshops being held throughout the 11 days in areas such as screenwriting and producing.

These classes were available to the public and were easily booked online at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival website. If you didn't make it this time, it's well worth it to try and hunt a ticket for next year!



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Film

Another one bites the 3D dust

Donnchadh Tiernan

WHEN it comes to depictions of George Lucas' Star Wars universe, expectations of filmmakers approaching the subject are akin to that of biopic screenwriter striving for historical accuracy.

As with the average historical subject, countless books have been written based on "A long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away". The obvious difficulty arising from this stems from the instalments shepherded in their entirety by George Lucas, when scrutiny seems as preposterous as criticising the Christian God for rewrites of the bible.

Preposterous though it may seem, Star Wars lore, like Christian doctrine, has become through years of unwavering adoration, the property and the right of fans to criticise and dispute.

As an ardent supporter of all things Star Wars, in reviewing the re-release of the much derided Phantom Menace in 3D, I must do the unthinkable and eat my words. As it transpired, the years had not been kind. Episode I is, in fact, horrific. The original films, before they blew minds globally, made a point of getting the basic components right: identifiable heroes, colossal villains, snappy dialogue and engaging story arcs. Menace feels like an obligatory trudge through a set of appendixes, such as the "just for fans" Lord of the Rings tome, The Simarillion. Notwithstanding that the fanboys themselves abhorred Episode I, the film feels more like an attempt at chronology rather than aspiration towards great cinema, a feat which the original trilogy not only achieved but managed to pay tribute to the long list of influences that brought it there in doing so. I realise that in panning Phantom and eulogising the originals my new contributions to the criticism canon are minimal today.

I've had a late realisation to what now is an undisputed fact.

This is, in ways, a painful review to write. George Lucas said of the studio re-edit of his dystopian debut, THX 1138. In watching The Phantom Menace this year I felt more akin to Angelina Jolie's character in Changeling: I did not recognise my baby in the slightest. Whose baby is this? I will, as a once devoted fan, almost certainly watch the re-releases Episodes II and III through bunched fingers, in fear of a similar experience to this one.

And while I may never watch The Phantom Menace again I will enthusiastically engorge myself in the original Trilogy with a newfound fervour I haven't known in years.

As with historical documents, the further you get from the original subject the more the influences supersede the actual events. The original articles are the only genuine ones.



Actress Natalie Portman in the original film.

Extremely loud and incredibly mediocre

Keith Beegan

FOLLOWING the 10-year anniversary of the September 11 attacks, Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close tells the story of Oskar Schnell, a nine year old boy who scours through New York City in search of information regarding a key that belonged to his father, a victim of the attacks. Based on Jonathan Safran Foer's 2005 book of the same name, the movie stars Academy Award winners Tom Hanks and Sandra Bullock who play the protagonist's parents while newcomer Thomas Horn stars as the eccentric intellectual in search of answers about his late father.

Releasing the film close to the anniversary is no coincidence but the question stands whether the film was developed as a commemoration to the national tragedy or just a way of securing mass audiences who are bound to express interest in seeing it.

There is no doubt that the film feels exploitative. The book was a postmodern masterpiece in form, with Foer incorporating unconventional dialogue, context based variations in word presentation, provocative visual aids and a truly heart wrenching plot.

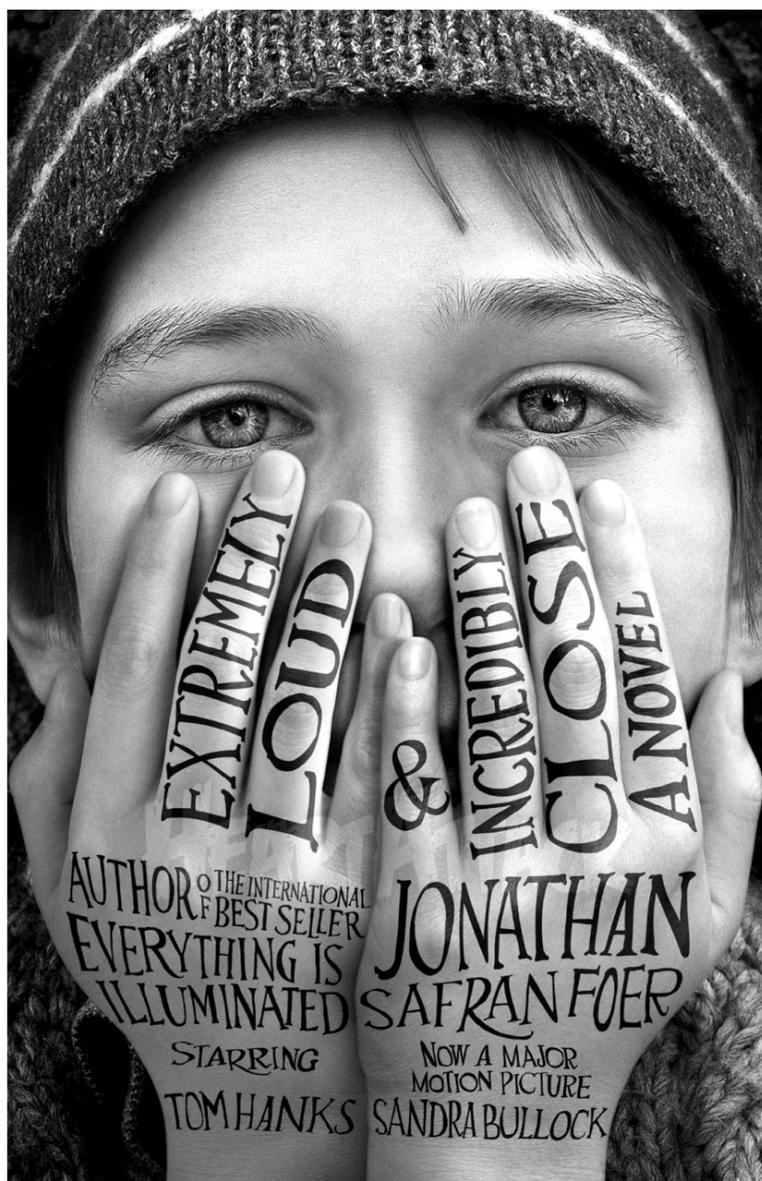
Unfortunately the film does not translate well onto the big screen.

Unlike the book, the film feels forced and is executed in such a way that it acts as Oscar bait. And surely enough the movie is nominated in the Best Picture category at the 84th Academy Awards ceremony. The screenplay was written by Eric Roth, who had previously partaken in Forrest Gump and The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, two captivating stories, and it is directed by Stephen Daldry, who was responsible for The Hours and The Reader, two moody, but still engaging pieces.

Unfortunately even a mesh of these men's talents does not salvage a film with such potential. Something is missing, or rather, too present. There is no denying that we live in a media-saturated landscape and are bombarded

on a daily basis by updates of war, recession, death and destruction; and the September 11 attacks are arguably the most discussed incident of the millennium. Consequently, in spite of admirable acting showcases and

impressive visuals, are we simply exhausted from hearing about the aftermath of this catastrophe? The film is the perfect recipe for tears but maybe we would rather be laughing in times of doom and gloom.



Don't mess with Jess!

Niamh Masterson

MURDER She Wrote was a mystery series starring the endearing Angela Lansbury who played mystery novelist and part time detective Jessica Fletcher.

The story of each episode centred on her meddling in police cases while always solving the mystery along the way.

The sheriffs of her home town Cabin Cove welcomed her influence while other detectives were not always so welcoming and surprisingly she managed to stay relatively out of trouble during all of the series while remaining well loved by everyone in Cabin Cove.

First aired in 1984, it continued for 12 seasons with Lansbury nominated for a total of ten Golden Globes and 12 Emmy Awards just for her work in the series. She also holds the record for the most Golden Globe nominations for Best Actress in a TV series.

The series itself was extremely successful. It was nominated for three Emmys in the Outstanding Drama Series Category while also being nominated in the same category six times in the Golden Globes.

It is one of the most successful and longest running television shows in history and attained 23 million views in its prime.

However the series was cancelled after its twelfth series due to the dwindling audience numbers.

Since its cancellation in 1996 a number of TV movies have been released. Lansbury's son, Anthony Shaw, was the Executive Producer of



Actress Angela Lansbury

all four TV movies. Recently these movies have been compiled into a box set for sale and they are well worth the watch.

The movies are very similar to the TV drama but longer storylines and hold more depth. As always, they keep you on the edge of your seat as Jessica tries to solve the murders.

The fourth of these movies is even set in Ireland and in my opinion is the most interesting of all four as Jessica tries to bring together a family to find a treasure. Definitely worth watching!

Fortunately, these may not be your last chance to see a 'Murder, She Wrote' film as Angela Lansbury has expressed her interest in doing another film, just as long as her son can come up with a good story!

ULLR girls do their college proud at club level

Claire Lewis

NOT only do the UL Ladies Rugby girls play rugby with the college, but many of them also play at club level.

On the weekend of 18 February we had six girls from college team playing for UL Bohemian RFC v Highfield in the Munster Cup final held at Annacotty, Limerick. It is great to see so many girls from UL playing with Bohs.

The club are currently and have been for the past few years, the best women's team in the country. With Irish internationals such as Joy Neville,

Fiona Coghlan, Gillian Bourke, Niamh Kavanagh and Niamh Briggs on the team, it is the perfect opportunity for the college girls to learn from the best at training and bring these new found skills to the college game.

There is huge dedication from the girls, being fully committed to both ULLR and Bohs, with both teams currently at the top of their game in Ireland.

The girl's devotion to the game is evident as they constantly strive to be better players. Their dedication is shown by the number of hours they put in to training week in week out. They are found in the gym from 7am, four mornings a week working on their strength and fitness while also

attending pitch training sessions three nights a week. Many of these girls are also training at provisional level which adds even more hours training to their already hectic schedules. For most girls their success on the rugby pitch starts with them first taking up rugby while at UL.

Both UL ladies and UL Bohemians are constantly looking to recruit new players. All are welcome. Come along to training sessions on the new 4g pitches on Monday at 19:30 to 21:00 or Thursday 18:00 to 19:00.



Members of the winning team with the Munster Cup. L to R - Mary-Rose Flanagan, Claire Keohane, Ashling Hutchings, Mollie O'Donnell, Claire Lewis, Lorna Barry.

The International Score

Nicola Sutton

Earlier this semester saw the International Society take over for International Week 2012. The International Society is the biggest society in UL with over seven hundred members and at least five hundred of these being active members. Events were organised for everyday of their most important week and with so many members every activity was in high demand.

The week began with a trip to Belfast on Friday Feb 3. Fifty-four students went on this trip and they were all incredibly lucky to get a spot. For just sixty euro it was the perfect chance to get to see Belfast and the surrounding areas with friends while in Ireland. Over 120 students turned up at sign ups but most had to be turned away. The trip itself was a huge success. We hit the city nightlife on Friday and Saturday while also getting a chance to see The Giants Causeway, Stormont, The Titanic ship yard and areas of the city affected by The Troubles. Everyone who went on the trip seemed to really enjoy themselves; it was great fun getting to know more members while on the bus and even when it was stressful cooking dinner for 54 hungry students in the hostel kitchen.

On the Monday they had a screening of *The Guard*, dodgy choice considering the mix between casual racism and humour but it went down a storm and it was great to see so many people turn out.

Our biggest event was held on Tuesday. This was The International Food Fair. This was open to the public and was completely free of charge. Members of The Society cooked dishes traditional to their own countries and they were served up at a buffet in The Stables. The fair attracted about 320 people and most of those got to sample foods from two countries of their choice. The atmosphere was amazing with everyone in great form. We had over thirty volunteers from countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, Germany, Spain, Ireland and many many more.

Wednesday saw the inaugural International Society Ball for charity. Tickets cost €5 and all proceeds are going to the crisis in Haiti. As with all The Society's parties this one was no different and attracted huge crowds. We raised over €600 and are delighted

that most people got into the spirit of masquerade and came with a mask. It was also fantastic to have UL Fashion Soc onboard to judge best-mask and hand out awards.

Thursday called for something a little different while still keeping our International theme. We recently discovered a fantastic little Latin American club in town so we arranged to take a bus of members to the club. Firstly we had an hour of Salsa lessons which were so much fun. Salsa dancing is so upbeat and flamboyant but it was great to see most of us lose our inhibitions and get stuck into it. After the lesson we got access to the dance club and bar downstairs which had a proper Latin American feel to it. There was a mixture of all ages and nationalities dancing to reggae and salsa music. This was one of the best night-clubs I have been to in Limerick and will definitely be returning soon. The club is free entry and craic is guaranteed, it's common policy to be asked to dance and it's rude to refuse.

Our final event of our eight day International week was back to basics with our weekly TGIF event in The Stables. The theme was Valentines party and as usual the place was packed. TGIF is quickly becoming one of the must-attend parties in UL and it's not hard to see why. With classic feel good tunes from DJ Ber (a favourite of ours) and great themes and games every night there's always something different to look forward to. It's also great to see a good mixture of Irish and International students at these Friday night events. International Week 2012 was an amazing success. We had so much fun organising it and even more fun taking part, I just hope next year we can top it but it's hard to see how.

A massive thank you goes out to all our members and anyone who took part in the weeks events.

Banana Bread Winners

Niall McCarney

RAIN and wind was promised, but never materialised. The only certainty left was that some good ultimate was destined to be played, which was withheld thanks to the twelve teams that attended Uni League on 11 of February in Santry, Dublin. With two teams entered, UL Ninjas were optimistic. UL1 made hard work of their first game against DCU, having surrendered a safe four point lead, only

to eventually win 11-10 on Universe point after a nail biting finish. UL1's second game against NUIG's second team was straight forward, having defeated their opponents 11-0.

UL1 topped their pool and went into a group comprising of UCC1, UCD and Trinity to decide the order of the four best university teams in Ireland. Meanwhile, UL2 was having an entirely different day. They battled

bravely against DIT and UCC1 in their group but, unfortunately, the score lines did them no favours, with DIT winning 11-1 and UCC1 with an 11-0 victory.

They then went into a pot with UCC2, NUIG2 and new team Ballyfermot/Marino/IT Blanchardstown. They defeated NUIG2 and B/M/ITB rather handily, 13-4 and 12-7 respectively before unfortunately losing out to an experienced Cork team 2-13.

Things were tough for UL1 later in the day. They came a cropper against a superior UCC1, where the Ninjas played some magnificent points, only to lose concentration and allow UCC1 some easy scores. Losing 13-5 was

not a true reflection of the sustained periods of dominance the Ninjas held in that game.

Nevertheless the loss stung and was still affecting the team in their next game against UCD. Trailing 4-0 after only a few minutes did nothing to help the Ninja's cause. A recovery of sorts arose, but it was a too late to salvage a victory as the damage had already been inflicted by a clinical UCD team winning 13-8.

With a place in the UK Nationals up for grabs, the Ninjas played their best Ultimate of the weekend, owning for large periods on Defence, and being calm and efficient on offence. Unfortunately, injuries were mounting

on the side line, and a lack of fresh legs resulted in a bitterly disappointing loss of 10-7. However, not all was lost. The experience has indicated precisely what the Ninjas need to do to win Intervarsities. MVP for UL2 was Captain Gay Owen Higginbottom, while MSP was Rory Burns.

On UL1 glorious Captain Daragh Kelleher took home MSP while also tying with el Presidente Barry Walsh for MVP. Also, the Ninjas kept their new found reputation as a very spirited team intact with UL1 taking home the spirit prize of delicious homemade banana bread.

Ladies Open Trophy finally makes the trip Shannon Side



UL was represented by Catriona Casey who brought the ladies open title to UL for the first time.

Mark O'Donovan

ON February 2nd last Ireland's collegiate handball players descended on Kingscourt in county Cavan for the 2012 All Ireland 40x20 singles intersites.

There were 25 enthusiastic UL contingents amongst them. This was the largest turn out from any single college present. Games got underway on Thursday afternoon and ran throughout

the weekend with the finals taking place on Sunday. In the showpiece ladies event, the ladies open final, UL was represented by Catriona Casey who was aiming to win the prestigious title in her debut at this level of handball.

Catriona put on a great display of handball and the result never looked in doubt as she beat Lorraine Havern of UUU in two games 21-11 to 21-6,

bringing the ladies open title to UL for the first time. Best of the men for UL was Cathal Hannon who was unlucky to lose out in the men's A decider. Cathal put up a tough fight against the agile Peter Hughes of DCU and in the first game lost out on a tight score of 21-18, in the second however the DCU man proved strong and won on a score of 21-6.

A number of players also made the quarter and semi-final stages of their respective grades. In the mens divisions Colm O'Luing, Andy O'Dwyer, Shane Walsh were quarterfinalists while John Hurley progressed to the semi-final of the men's contender grade. In the ladies divisions Aileen Madden made it to the C quarter final while Deirdre Donohoe and Lisa Loughnane made the A and B

semis respectively. Congratulations to all that participated. The clubs focus now turns to the Annual UL One Wall Tournament which will be held on the 13 & 14 April in the PESS Building. Anyone looking for an application form, please email ulhandball@gmail.com and we'll send one on.

Windsurfing in Dahab

Frank O'Grady

FOR this year's winter trip the Windsurfing Club went to the African continent to windsurf on the red sea in Egypt.

The club visited Dahab, not far from Mount Sinai. The club had a total of 13 people on the trip which consisted of some of our long standing committee members to our fresh recruits from the start of last semester.

Conditions for the trip were perfect: with strong to light winds and a shallow lagoon, it was the ideal environment for learning, whatever your level. The sun shun down as we sailed

along the red sea, it was certainly a big change to windsurfing in the cold waters of Castlegregory.

Other windsurfers from all parts of the world were there too displaying all their skills and tricks which was a joy to watch as they were doing all kinds of turns and flips while planning with great ease.

The club also had the chance to sample the culture that Dahab had to offer. From their food to the scenery a great time was had by all.

On one of our days off we got to experience other activities such as scuba diving, quad biking in the Desert Mountains and riding on camels.

The windsurfing resort has all the resources needed to windsurf, from wetsuits to boards and sails.

Professional lessons were given by our own instructor, Oisín Higgins, who was able to provide lessons for both our relatively inexperienced and experienced windsurfers.

These lessons proved to be very effective when it came to learning new ways to turn and getting used to using the harness. This was all helpful to everyone on the trip, especially as the Windsurfing Intersite's are just around the corner!

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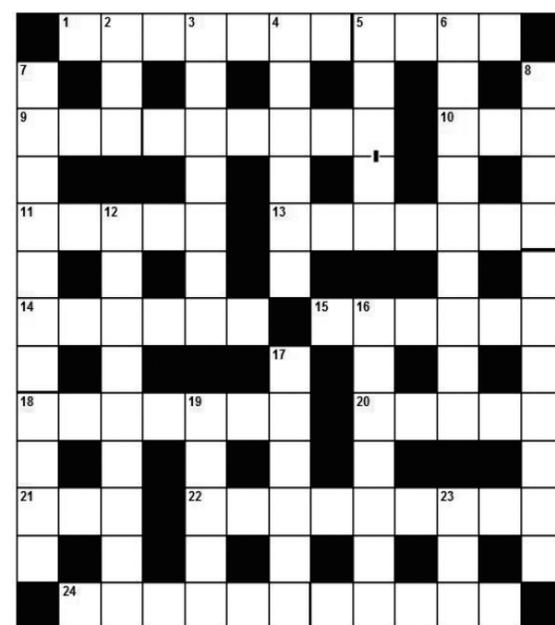
Closing date for applications is Tuesday 20 March 2012.

Puzzles

The Arrow-Focal

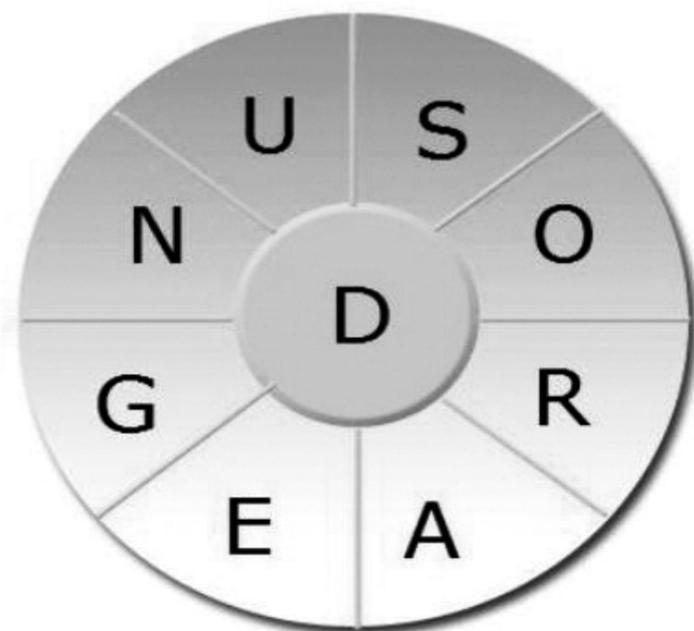
Through	Com-puter company	↕	Saintly airlet	↕	... cords, three strings	↕	Regret	↕	Causing disaster	↕	See picture	
↳	↳		Bass horn	↳					... mode, trendy (1,2)	↳		
Play too loud			Worship				Greek 'T'		Great distance			
Kind, sort						Drop down			10			
Hire a plane	Pig	Common water plants		Tiber's	Lana	Teacher						
↳	↳	↳					Collection of wives		Greek letter			
Fuming sulphuric acid							Of the lady		Raincoat			
↳			Love apple?						3			
Shelled breakfast food	Fuss	Even if	Not wet		Saudi?	Bates, actor			Animal's lead			
Row of joined houses								Peep!	Anthony, actor			
South German city	German 'Mrs'		Girl's name		Spoil	Malt and hop drink		Com-pound	Bark			
↳		Taxi					Pig enclosure		Jamaican music	Rocks in Scotland?		
Debonair							Russian ruler		Stare			
Manner of walking									Vigour, zest	A couple		
See picture									Changed	Fairy-like creature		
							Misery		Shake	Gruff, rude		
											7	
							Animal used for riding	Scottish port		Beverage	Pro-secuted	
										Tennis star, Steffi ...		Cause, source
										Edible tuber		Bleach
							Say suddenly					
										Precious metal		11
							Recipient of money		Insect killer (1,1,1)			Golf aid

The Cross-focal



- Across**
- 1 Suffolk football team (7,4)
 - 9 Aircraft propulsion unit (3,6)
 - 10 Important time (3)
 - 11 Punctuation mark - butterfly (5)
 - 13 Money saved or invested - seat of government (7)
 - 14 Lots (6)
 - 15 Single-celled form of life of ever-changing shape (6)
 - 18 Hot wind blowing from north Africa to southern Europe (7)
 - 20 Spice used in curry powder (5)
 - 21 Befitting (3)
 - 22 Couch potato? (9)
 - 24 Superior grade of black tea - no peerage, OK? (anag) (6,5)
- Down**
- 2 Cat or dog (3)
 - 3 Aspiring star? (7)
 - 4 Tight (or amorous) embrace (6)
 - 5 Association (3-2)
 - 6 Dry floury foodstuff - merge what? (anag) (9)
 - 7 Device for a pilot who wants to depart quickly! (7,4)
 - 8 Manicurist's cosmetic lacquer (4,7)
 - 12 Someone who presides over a forum or debate (9)
 - 16 Dark and disturbing (7)
 - 17 Device at the end of a hosepipe (6)
 - 19 City at the Caribbean entrance to the Panama Canal (5)
 - 23 New (prefix) (3)

Word Wheel



- 20 Words - Good
- 30 Words - Very Good
- 40 Words - Excellent



Easy Sudoku

	3			9	6			
4	9			5		6		7
		8	4			2	9	
	6	5			3		1	2
			7		1			
1	8		2			9	7	
	7	4			8	1		
8		6		2			3	4
			1	7				6

Medium Sudoku

	2		7			3	1	
			2	8			6	
3								
	4	1	3		7			8
	3						7	
9			6		1	4	5	
								4
	8			5	2			
	5	9			8		3	

Hard Sudoku

			9					1
								6
5			8	6			4	7
8				3				4
4	5							3
	2			7				1
2		7		1	8			3
	6	4						
	8				6			

Erasmus in New York



A nighttime view of Ellis Island.

Brige Newman

SO work is beginning to pile up a little bit, but why on earth would I let that curb the adventure?

Over the past two weeks, I think I have seen and done more than I have in a very, very long time. Take last weekend for example. Myself and the

ever expanding group of International students got the notion that it might be a laugh to go to New York City for the weekend. And what a weekend it was.

First off, we went and did the normal tourist stuff, ate pretzels from street vendors, pretended we were in Gossip Girl sitting on the steps of The Metropolitan Museum of art, walked through Central Park, went ice skating, scouted out Fashion week in Lincoln

Centre... you know, the usual! Then three of my friends and I decided we'd go off the beaten path while the others took a stretch hummer around the city at night for an hour (\$200 - apparently the best money they've ever spent).

We four decided to go to the Lower east side and check out a gig, which was amazing. This kid, Chris Ayer, (Google him) will be huge. Then we felt like hitting the town. Hey,

Saturday night in the Big Apple, why not? We congregated with the others who were back from their mini-road trip, and decided on a club downtown where some of our Spanish friends said they'd meet us. We got in there for free and partied until the wee hours of the morning with some guys you may have heard of, the New York Giants. If it sounds like I'm showing off it's because I am.

After kind of a rough start, it is really great to just get on so well with everyone, to enjoy being here and just do amazing things that I would never have the chance to do back home.

So, in short, if you have the chance to study abroad, go for it.

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Travel

Churches and Chocolate in Barcelona

Alana Walsh

BARCELONA is both Spain's second largest city and the capital of Catalonia. While on Erasmus in the south of Spain, I flew to Barcelona with a group of friends in early December to attend a match in the infamous Nou Camp, the largest stadium in Europe and just one of Barcelona's many tourist attractions.

I had some time to explore the city and would recommend getting a Barcelona Card which for €33.50 allows three days free travel around the city with free entrance and discounts to various attractions. The architecture of the city is undeniably amazing and Antoni Gaudi's influence is seen throughout but perhaps most famously recognised in the Sagrada Família. It is mesmerising to walk around

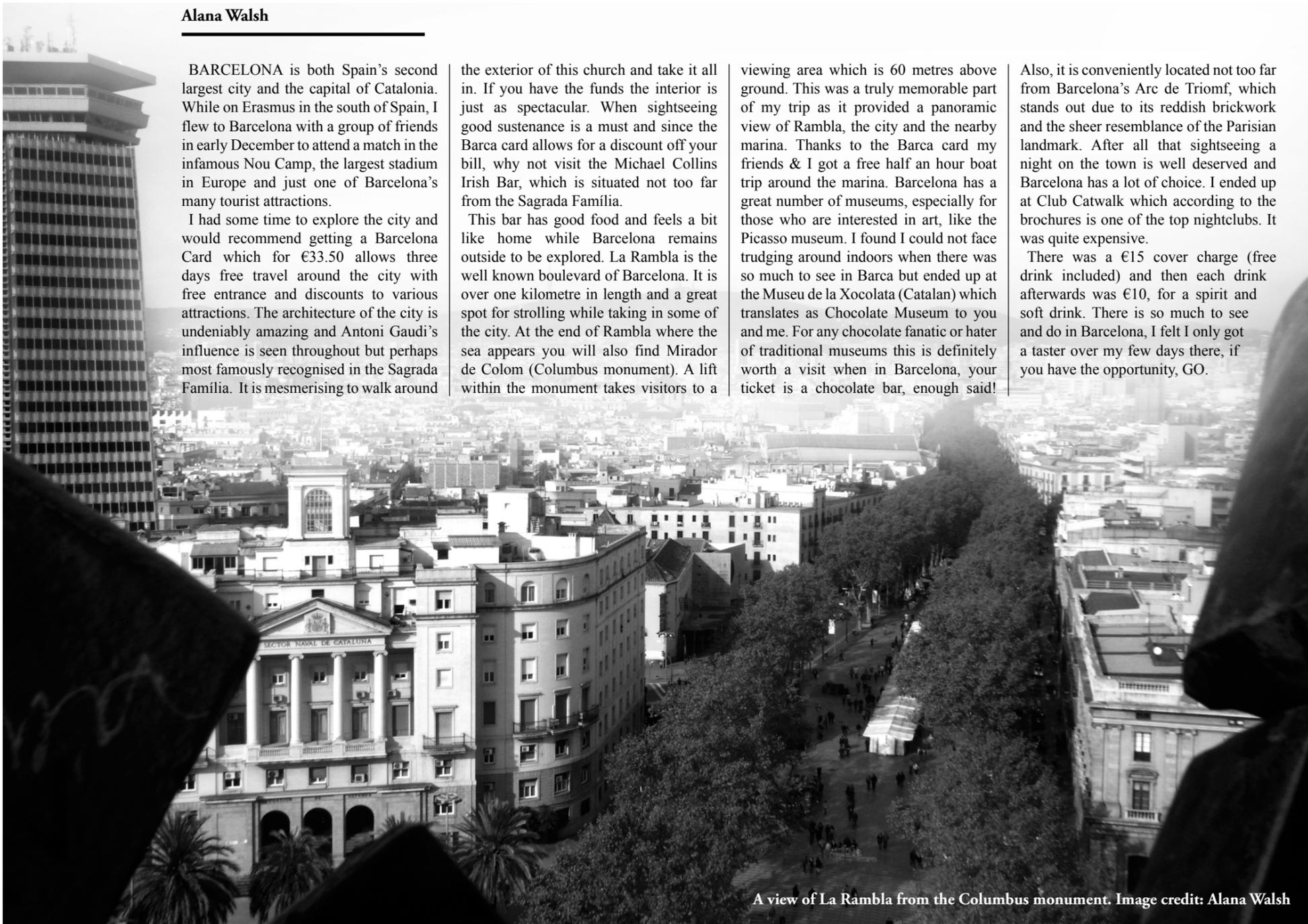
the exterior of this church and take it all in. If you have the funds the interior is just as spectacular. When sightseeing good sustenance is a must and since the Barca card allows for a discount off your bill, why not visit the Michael Collins Irish Bar, which is situated not too far from the Sagrada Família.

This bar has good food and feels a bit like home while Barcelona remains outside to be explored. La Rambla is the well known boulevard of Barcelona. It is over one kilometre in length and a great spot for strolling while taking in some of the city. At the end of Rambla where the sea appears you will also find Mirador de Colom (Columbus monument). A lift within the monument takes visitors to a

viewing area which is 60 metres above ground. This was a truly memorable part of my trip as it provided a panoramic view of Rambla, the city and the nearby marina. Thanks to the Barca card my friends & I got a free half an hour boat trip around the marina. Barcelona has a great number of museums, especially for those who are interested in art, like the Picasso museum. I found I could not face trudging around indoors when there was so much to see in Barca but ended up at the Museu de la Xocolata (Catalan) which translates as Chocolate Museum to you and me. For any chocolate fanatic or hater of traditional museums this is definitely worth a visit when in Barcelona, your ticket is a chocolate bar, enough said!

Also, it is conveniently located not too far from Barcelona's Arc de Triomf, which stands out due to its reddish brickwork and the sheer resemblance of the Parisian landmark. After all that sightseeing a night on the town is well deserved and Barcelona has a lot of choice. I ended up at Club Catwalk which according to the brochures is one of the top nightclubs. It was quite expensive.

There was a €15 cover charge (free drink included) and then each drink afterwards was €10, for a spirit and soft drink. There is so much to see and do in Barcelona, I felt I only got a taster over my few days there, if you have the opportunity, GO.



A view of La Rambla from the Columbus monument. Image credit: Alana Walsh

No time for Sleeping in Seattle

Nicole Ní Ríordáin

I WAS lucky enough to spend last summer in the Emerald City with my best friend. We, like countless other Irish students, decided to do a J1. We quickly decided on the West Coast, and Seattle seemed like the obvious choice. The first thing you notice on arrival to Seattle is "Hey! It's not raining!" I swear that must be a rumour neighbouring Oregon started to keep visitors away! The whole three months I was there it rained about five times, and it was sunny almost every day. So don't let that, or any amount of Meg Ryan movies, stop you from visiting.

Another surprise is just how friendly everyone is. Seattleites are really lovely people who will help you find your way around without you even having to ask. Having said that, the city is actually really easy to get around, on foot or using the excellent public transport (as a bonus, all buses in the downtown area are free to ride during the day). In terms of cost of living, it's cheaper than most American cities. Top of the list of places to visit is Pike Place Market, right in the middle of downtown. This is a big covered market with stalls that sell food, drink, books and crafts. The

main attractions are the first Starbucks and a fish shop where the fishmongers throw their products over the crowds (ok, that sounds lame but it's actually really cool, I promise). While you're in town make sure to hop on the monorail and zoom to Seattle Centre, home to the Space Needle, an odd looking observation tower which has somehow become Seattle's number one landmark. The 43 second elevator ride is pricey, but worth it for the views of the surrounding city and mountains, if you like that kind of thing. Also to be found in Seattle Centre is the Experience Music Project, a really interesting music museum shaped like an eardrum. It houses Nirvana and Jimi Hendrix exhibitions, as well as fun interactive music activities. Definitely a must see, along with the science fiction museum next door. If it's sunny, which it normally is during the summer, you should take the water ferry to Alki. This was the original Seattle before it migrated across the water, and is now home to the super-rich who build houses on the seafront, where you get the best views of downtown's skyscrapers. The beach is gorgeous and if you stay

until nightfall you can start a bonfire in one of the designated spots. Toasted marshmallows and ukuleles optional, but recommended.

Another neighbourhood worth a visit is Fremont. Home to a real live chocolate factory, an annual naked bicycle race and a troll under a bridge! This town embodies the "quirky" side of Seattle, and is so much fun to explore. Fans of the Heath Ledger movie "Ten Things I Hate About You" will recognise lots of sights in Fremont, including Gasworks park. Capitol Hill is the place to socialise, if you're over 21, of course. This is where Seattle University is located, and the neighbourhood is packed full of hip cafés, nice bars, thrift stores and art galleries. Hipsters can be found in abundance here. If you're visiting I would recommend stopping for a Rainier beer at Linda's Tavern, which is the last place Kurt Cobain was seen alive. In my opinion, no trip to the West Coast should be complete without a stop in Seattle. There's so much to see and do there, and the kitschy atmosphere alone makes it an experience you won't forget.



My brother and I wearing ridiculously cute matching t-shirts in front of the Space Needle. Image credit: Nicole Ní Ríordáin

Interview

Getting intimate with Kanyu Tree

Jack Brolly

THE Kanyu Tree are, without a doubt, one of Ireland's best up and coming bands. They have been getting loads of airplay lately and their song, "Radio" was recently nominated for a Meteor Song Choice Award. Already whipping up substantial Irish interest, they've been tipped by various sources to take other countries by storm with their accessible brand of indie-pop.

An Focal caught up with the band before they headlined last week's UL Fest in the SU Courtyard as part of Charity Week 2012.

The Kanyu Tree have captured our hearts of late, but how did it all start? Daniel Cluskey, Kanyu Tree guitarist, explains. "We were all in different bands when we were younger and we all came back after college we put some songs into practice."

His brother Shane Cluskey, singer, expands. "The songs came from trial and error. Just coming up with riffs and seeing what worked and what didn't. Some of them were good."

We'd use a dictaphone to record ideas. We had thousands of ideas." With other brother Oisín, bass, adding that "One of us would come up with an idea and we'd all build off of that."

Before they hit success, the three siblings agreed that recording their first album was a major milestone. "The whole process of just being in

a recording studio and not having to worry about costs was brilliant. We had a top class studio and engineer. The gigging has been a massive reward to that", states Daniel.

He went on to say that playing Electric Picnic was another brilliant moment. "We're all fans of Electric Picnic and we managed to draw a pretty big crowd despite the fact that it was raining and it was early on a Sunday."

Kanyu Tree once put together a mix tape for State.ie which included some of their more obtuse influences.

When asked how they, or do they, incorporate those influences into their sound, Shane explains that "The production of electronic songs would interest us. We experimented a lot with electronic flourishes. They don't dictate the sound of the songs they

just add to it. We don't do it so much live, though. You can hear it in the production of the album."

Talking about the future of Kanyu Tree, Daniel declares that they've gotten the album out of their system so the next thing they want to do is write more songs.

"We'd like some fresh material for the live set. Maybe we'll look abroad as well that's an option. We're just gonna start writing new material and we've gigs over in the U.K. "

The Kanyu Tree play Dolan's Warehouse on March 28th.

"Already whipping up substantial Irish interest, Kanyu Tree have been tipped by various sources to take other countries by storm with their accessible brand of indie-pop."



Galway Trio, The Kanyu Tree