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The DIT Examiner: the Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union, May, 1998

DIT Students' Union

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The Face of Juniper, Dodima. The DIT Examiner invaded their world for a day with a camera. p10.

This is what can happen when Sports Presentation Nights go well. p16.


The New paper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union May 1998

Good Luck to all

Biodh Samhradh

Maith Agaibh

Kevin St Caving goes DIT-Wide

Digital Media Centre hosts short film night

King of Kings

Huge success with a substantial turn out and the Islands in her speech. She made the only decision made on that issue was to defer the decision. Sile de Valera was presented with a poster of the short film "Trick or Treat" which was filmed recently at the Cork International Film Festival; unfortunately she never got to see it.

The Minister had just returned from LA where she had a meeting with top studio executives and Hollywood players (lucky her). She announced the establishment of a "think tank", a forum where those involved in the industry could point the way forward. She were swollen, courtesy of the grapevine, by club members from UCD, Crumlin, and elsewhere. There were three teenagers from Gonzaga College on hand to try and thwart this chess stalwart's abilities. Following a quick game of life-size chess with former Irish Champion, Mel O'Ginnide, where 32 ready-to-go heroes donned the assorted chess outfits, the real business of the evening commenced.

The tough going was eloquently described by Kevin St. Chess Club member, Michael Deans, who, when asked how it was going a half-hour after the start, replied "I'm playing Danny King — how do you think it's going?" Two hours was all it took for King to force resignations or worse for his opponents, the last three being comprised of twelve year old Simon Jeffares, son of Chemistry lecturer, Mark, fourteen year old Gonzagan, Daniel Lynch, and Maths lecturer, Ray Byrne, who conceded last after much soul-searching.

more p17

Tuesday 28 April saw the successful launching of Can '98 at the faculty of Applied Arts, DIT, Aungier Street. The evening was organised so that students of the 1997 Postgraduate Diploma in Film Production and the 1997 fourth year communications class could showcase their work. This special viewing of student film was the first such initiative of its kind and was a huge success, with a substantial turn out from members of the film and audio visual industry.

The five short films which were selected for screening were of an exceptionally high standard and made for a very enjoyable night's viewing. Speaking to one of our indigenous film producers (who shall remain anonymous) he said that the amount of film related wine receptions was always a good indicator of the health of the industry at large. It was his third wine reception that week. Indeed the vibrancy within Irish home produced film was referred to by The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands in her speech. She made a rushed visit as she was due back in the Dail that night to vote on Luas (the

Vegetables are your Friends

Come Back Real Soon Now
Warbled ramblings in Editorial Seclusion

Big FANX to anyone who contributed throughout the year with articles, photographs, ads, letters and suggestions — your assistance is invaluable. Can’t pay you, though. Make it through the summer and I’ll buy ice-pops for the lot uv yez in September. Ari Viderci. Up the Bad Livers.

An chuid Nach Léitear

B_WEEKAS mhóir le héirne a chabhráigh i rith na bliana an nuachtán seo a chur le chéile, idir agáilteachtaí, altanna, litreacha gránthaí, oíche agus moltai — is fiú gach gnóf gnéithe. Níl pingin rua agam dóibh, farraim. Gcéannaíocht, tacht cóighe 19p dá bhag deircéad an tSamhradh. Buocn Díos, mis amigos. Slán Abhaile.

(Cheap Editorial Trick, that.)

Cearbhall Ó Siocháin

Excercise your right to vote, May 22

The Amsterdam Treaty
The Northern Agreement

Think Peace, Neutrality and the Voice of the Individual.

The programme commenced with a film entitled Love and Death on Rapid Transit. Five passengers travel the Dart and we are slowly drawn into their private lives. There is a dog named John Wayne whose life is being threatened by a jealous wife and there is a philosophical musing on necrophilia and Audrey Hepburn.

In another vignette a jealous husband uses red underwear to make a point. This film has been shown at the Dublin Film Festival and has also been screened at the IFC as part of their ‘First Cuts’ series.

The second film entitled Fanatic is a comedy in which a young “nubile” young man accidentally finds himself living with an overly devout accountant named Anne Marie. Due to the fact that his love life is suffering, (Anne Marie insists on reading a book on celibacy by none other than a certain Eamon Casey) he is forced to take action with comic results.

This was filmed at the Dublin and Manchester Film Festival.

The third film, Harvey Roach concerns a little boy whose bizarre way of rationalising lands him in a mental institution. He is essentially amoral and the borders between right and wrong are blurred to say the least. His best friend and his little sister eventually fall foul of his thwarted sense of humour.

This film won a certificate of merit at the recent Celtic Film Festival.

The fourth Film was a documentary on a comedy club called The Cellar. The comedy club was established in the International Bar in 1988. There is live footage of the performers and interviews with the likes of Dylan Moran, Ardal O’Hanlon, Brendan Dempsey and others.

It has also been screened as part of the IFC’s ‘First Cuts’ series and at the Kilkenny Arts festival.

The final film of the night was Trick or Treat. This was filmed in the hall and canteen of Aungier Street DIT. Joe, a loner, is initiated into the weirdest society in college.

This macabre tale also involves a sweet shop lady with a weird sideline in drugged gobstoppers.

The film has won awards in the sound and editing categories at the FujiFilm Competition, which featured 22 colleges from around the British Isles.
Cavers Triumph

Dear Sir,

I note with interest the composition of the group of cavers that were rescued over the weekend (1819 Apr) from the caves in Clare. This group of students was made up of students from Queen’s, Huddersfield and Maynooth colleges, northerners and southerners. Their rescuers included cavers from Kevin Street Caving Club, University of Limerick, DUC, Dublin and the North. These rescuers acted under the umbrella of the Irish Cave Rescue Organisation and the Speleological Union of Ireland. Both bodies represent cavers throughout the island.

At a time when others are rejoicing in the possibility of North and South working together, I am saddened by the situation that was enacted over the weekend.

I also feel that the authorities in Kevin Street, Dublin VEC, DUC and Limerick Colleges are to be congratulated for providing the resources to support the college clubs. These enabled them to achieve a standard of skill where they were able to go to the assistance of other caving colleagues. I hope that these colleges will continue to support such standards of excellence in their students.

Yours sincerely,

John Kavanagh

Brothers in Arms

The following is the text of a Press Release from the Web site publication (Final Conflict) of a friendly bunch of lads who call themselves International Third Position, and who see themselves as sharing some -- but not all, of the same ideals as our Irish Comrades in Youth Defence.

Sat April 4

The recent abuse of powers given to Gardaí under the Public Order Act has hit a barbaric low today with the arrest of ten Youth Defence members in Dublin as they conducted their usual Pro-Life street information session.

The ten members -- five males, five females -- were arrested in spite of the absence of any disturbance and taken to Store Street Garda station where they were placed in individual cells for over two hours to one of the girls who suffers from serious epilepsy, which in consequence placed her life in danger.

The ten were told on release some hours later that a file would be sent to the OPP. The five girls have since been taken to hospital by Youth Defence.

At the time that the Public Order Act was introduced, Youth Defence warned of the dangers to civil liberties inherent in the new Act and also pointed out the clear purpose of the Act was to crush Pro-Life opposition to the legalisation of abortion. At that time the Government denied these allegations. The behaviour of the Gardaí in this instance, however, shows beyond doubt just what brutal methods will be applied by Gardaí under the powers given to them and that the motive in the suppression of dissent from Government policy.

There are now 1,000 young people to whom the enforcing of the Public Order Act will not sink in abusing peaceful Pro-Life demonstrations, and that there is no protection under law for the civil rights of those who find themselves unable in conscience to accept plans to legalise the murder of unborn children. We cannot doubt that it is Youth Defence today that could be anyone tomorrow.

The warnings about the Public Order Act and in particular about the authorities being subjected to outrageous treatment and an intimidatory form of arrest are being met with a follow-up bulletin refers to US Attorney General as ‘Jame’s Bully Boy Rema,’ and that they openly promote themselves as ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses,’ ‘Comrades’ (Communist Organisations), ‘Protest’ (Protestant), ‘New Right,’ ‘Bubs,’ ‘Blacks,’ ‘Beads,’ and other Germerenachen, Lovers.

While Youth Defence can be blamed for the policies of others, were anyone, right wing groups (they deny any connection with FTP), it is significant that they attract the attention of such nice people.

Busy Bee Retreat

During the week of 23-27 March a retreat known as the Busy Bee Retreat was held in Kevin St. The same retreat, though under the title ‘A Campus Retreat,’ took place in Glengarriff Briga St from 9-13 of March. Sr. Margaret McDermott, Sr. Margaret Buckley and Fr. Finbarr Neylon helped and organised the retreat in their respective centres.

The retreats were directed by Paul Horan, a Carmelite priest, and Colin Keating, a Capuchin Brother. The retreat format, used for the first time in Ireland, centred around the provision of spiritual guidance to staff and students on a one to one basis. This type of retreat has been going in American universities for the last ten to fifteen years. It addresses the difficulties people, especially third level students, have in taking time out to do a retreat.

Instead, this retreat offered staff and students the opportunity during their free time to reflect upon their lives and find peace and direction in their faith and in the context of a retreat.

As well as individual guidance, both retreats offered other activities, such as meditation, Taize prayer, Reconciliation Services and Eucharist. Paul and Colin wish to thank all the people who supported the retreats in any way. They also gratefully acknowledge the help which the chaplains in both colleges gave them during their time in DIT.

Sr. Margaret McDermott.

An Eispachthir, DIT Examiner, DITSU, Kevin St., Dublin 8.

The Editor,

DIT Examiner,

DIT St.

Dear Sir,

This is my first letter to the Examiner. I was interested in the article written by Brian Keating, a Capuchin Brother. The retreats were directed by Paul Horan, a Carmelite priest, and Colin Keating, a Capuchin Brother. The retreat format, used for the first time in Ireland, centred around the provision of spiritual guidance to staff and students on a one to one basis. This type of retreat has been going in American universities for the last ten to fifteen years. It addresses the difficulties people, especially third level students, have in taking time out to do a retreat.

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Sr. Margaret McDermott.
The Multinational Threat

Brendan Walsh

Social File

It has been called a threat to our very democracy. It has been characterised as an attempt by the rich and wonderful to ride roughshod over the rights of the poor and marginalised. Yet when the Multilateral Agreement on Investment is mentioned to people the most common response is: "The what?"

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) has been under negotiation in Paris since 1995 by governments from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These are 29 of the wealthiest nations in the world, along with the European Commission and the US they are hoping to ratify the agreement by October.

Simply put, the MAI is an investment treaty designed to do away with many of the regulations currently in place to control foreign investment in countries. The whole basis of the treaty is that a country will have to treat foreign firms exactly the same as they do domestic ones.

So far, so boring. However, the MAI goes further. Opponents of the Agreement have pointed to the fact that it gives rights to multilateral companies without putting any obligations on them. It even allows these companies to sue governments if they feel that laws in a country interfere with their profits.

Although the MAI is quite forceful about the investor's right to sue, there is no corresponding right for governments, communities or citizens to curb harm caused by the investor. Oxfam, the Third World agency, have issued a position paper on the agreement in which they say:

"In effect this gives the investor a status not just equal but superior to governments and the people they are supposed to represent. Laws and policies validly established by legally accountable governments will be overridden by the rights created by the MAI."

Unlike the GATT the MAI does not contain a general exemption from MAI rules for national laws to protect human and animal health and the environment. Perhaps this seems far-fetched, even fantastic. But it is already happening. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), seen as a blueprint for the MAI, provides telling indications of what to expect from the latter.

In one case, using an MAI-like provision of the NAFTA, a US-based company, the Ethyl Corporation, sued the Canadian government for $251 million in damages because they forced them to comply with a health and safety law.

The law banned a gasoline additive (MTM) which had already been banned in many US states because it was found to harm cars' pollution control systems and was thought to be toxic. Under NAFTA the Ethyl Corporation had a right to be compensated because it claimed that the Canadian law hurt its future profits and harmed its reputation.

Governments will no longer be able to impose economic sanctions against multinationals to force them to comply with human rights, labour and environmental standards if these are judged to interfere with their profits. Even if they have a direct relationship with countries involved in blatant human rights abuses, governments are powerless to intervene.

The example of the economic sanctions which helped to end apartheid in South Africa are precisely the type of thing which could fall foul of the MAI, which values free movement of capital over freedom of people.

Other provisions of the MAI may prevent governments from prioritising the needs of economically deprived areas through a range of incentives and tax breaks which could be deemed to be putting foreign firms at a disadvantage. The MAI could also prevent countries from applying controls on foreign investors even if their activities conflict with national development objectives, or may be ecologically, socially or culturally damaging. Local health and environmental laws could also be questioned if they were considered discriminatory by foreign investors," according to the Oxfam report.

Performance requirements, designed to prevent multinationals from setting up in an area to avail of tax breaks without making any real contribution to the local economy, may be another casualty of the MAI. Requirements of equal pay for equal work and laws requiring that a certain per cent of employees be women run contrary to the MAI as it now stands, though this section may be reviewed.

Perhaps the biggest losers will be developing countries, who will be forced to compete with their industrialised neighbours without any protection. This is something which the Irish government has been deathly quiet about, although they have expressed a preference for the negotiations to be carried out in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where developing countries have a stronger mandate. The Tanaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mary Harney, said last month that, "Ireland's own experience demonstrates how an open foreign investment regime can be a key factor in economic development."

Ms Harney does not seem to take account of the fact that our own economy benefited from a high level of state intervention in many key industries, while it was developing, a policy which the MAI would preclude other developing countries from adopting.

Oxfam argue that the MAI would exacerbate the downward pressure on labour and environmental standards in both richer and poorer countries. Increased mobility for multinationals will allow them to set up wherever conditions are most favourable and will be a huge disincentive for governments to enact new environmental legislation which may stop investors, or even allow them to sue the government.

Examples already abound under the NAFTA but Oxfam point in particular to what is happening on the Mexican border. This is home to over 2,900 manufacturing plants on the Mexican side. They import components freely and then re-export to the US. More than a quarter of the plants cited environmental costs and more stringent US environmental laws as the reason for their setting up here.

More than half produce hazardous waste with only a third complying with Mexican toxic waste laws. Inevitably this has exacted a heavy toll on the local environment and people.

Toxic discharges associated with birth defects and brain damage were routinely emptied into open ditches. As a result one of the towns in the area, Matamoros, have an incidence of anencephalic brainless baby births running at 30 times the national average.

Despite the possible consequences of the MAI if it is ratified as it stands, the debate in Ireland has been minimal. It has only been raised by two TD's, John Gormley from the Green Party and Independent Tony Gregory, in the Dail. Student debate has been equally abysmal with the honourable exception of the Trinity College One World Society.

Although the MAI allows exemptions from some of its provisions these will be temporary. Roll back measures will ensure that governments reduce and eventually eliminate existing regulations which do not conform with the agreement.

Meanwhile standstill measures stop governments from introducing any new non-conforming law. Inevitably the MAI has a withdrawal clause which locks a country into the agreement for 20 years once it is ratified.

Although the agreement has not yet been finalised it must be remembered that this is only the first round of the negotiations. The multinational agenda will stay the same, it only remains to be seen to what degree they will get their way.

"If the MAI negotiations at the OECD break down, the US and other OECD countries are likely to make every effort to get as many provisions as possible into other forums such as GATT, IMF or bilateral and multilateral agreements," according to Renato Ruggerio, the Director General of WTO.

At present the world is witnessing a backlash as Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) representing labour standards, the environment and human rights join together to oppose the MAI. There have been repeated calls to suspend negotiations until there has been a meaningful public debate about its consequences.

It has also been suggested that the rights granted to multinationals should be balanced by obligations. Environmental, labour, health and safety and human rights standards should be absolute and not dependent on profit margins.

Perhaps the best summary of what the MAI so currently drafted will mean is provided by an American Ad Hoc Working Group on the MAI:

"The MAI would benefit investors over workers, corporations over nations, the North over the South, the well-to-do over the poor, men over women, short-term profit and efficiency over long-term social and environmental sustainability, and free markets over free people."

Brendan Walsh is a freelance journalist. He has written for The DIT Examiner before.
Kosovo: Sarajevo 1914 revisited?

Máirtín Breathnach

Kosovo is more than an “internal” problem for Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. Many Serbs regard it as the cradle of their civilization and a reminder of the glory days of the Serbian medieval kingdom.

The central plain of Kosovo is the site of the ‘decisive’ defeat of the Serbs by the Turkish Muslims in the 1389, and the spot chosen by Milosevic to deliver his speech in 1989 on his way to power. An estimated 100,000 ethnic Albanians have been killed since World War II in an attempt to make Kosovo ‘Albanian-free’. The late Mother Teresa, an Albanian, was driven from Kosovo by the Serbs. Kosovo is a province Slobodan Milosevic will not give up too easily.

Kosovo has remained a relatively minor spectator in Balkan affairs since 1945, choosing the democratic route towards autonomy, no doubt prompted by the atrocities of Bosnia and a huge Serb military and police presence. Kosovars have their own legitimately-elected government, suspended illegally by the Serbs in 1992.

This struggle threatens to go beyond the borders of the former Yugoslavia and cause a diplomatic breakdown, equivalent to that heralded by Ferdinand in Sarajevo, three quarters of a century ago. If the Balkan conflict heats up with Greek support for Milosevic, Turkey will accuse them of contravening NATO rules and annex the islands in the oil rich Aegean sea.

Kosovars have complained of nightly raids on Serbian installations by Albanian nationalists intent on provoking an all out war in the area. Without an immediate solution to the crisis by the European Community, it will be too late to prevent a conflict.

Moscow’s stance is not a secret. The addressal of Russia’s stance in the conflict has not been fully appraised. The addressal of Russia’s stance in the conflict has not been fully appraised.

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Irish Referendum on The Agreement and The Amsterdam Treaty

In order to get a better idea of what the different arguments on the up-coming referendum are, The DIT Examiner sent a series of questions to political parties and other organisations. We also welcomed short articles from them. Here are the responses of the groups which replied.

Fianna Fáil Press Office

Q1. Should the government have opted to hold both Referenda (Articles 2, 3 & 29; Amsterdam Treaty) on the same day? Why?
A. Yes. Both referenda are crucial to the future development of this island and we have sufficient faith in the intelligence of the electorate to distinguish between all the different strands involved.

Q2. Should the various constitutional articles have been contained on three separate ballots? Why?
A. The proposed changes to Articles 2, 3 & 29 will be contained on a single ballot paper. These changes are part of an overall package and part of an agreed balanced constitutional settlement. The electorate must, therefore, decide whether to accept or reject this package in full; there can be no half measures.

Q3. Are you in favour of a Yes vote on Articles 2, 3 & 29, is that they be changed? Why?
A. Yes. The proposed changes to Articles 2, 3 & 29 are a key component of the package. The two articles in their current form reflect the language and attitude of the 1920s. The proposed new wording reflects a more modern, post-colonial Ireland, which does not feel the need for territorial claims to express itself. Important safeguards are built in to guarantee Irish citizenship for anyone in Northern Ireland who chooses it.

Q4. What effect would a Yes vote on the Amsterdam Treaty have? Why?
A. We would be wrong to take all the combined benefits of the European Union membership for granted, if we fail to vote an emphatic Yes to the Amsterdam Treaty. During our 25 year membership we have prospered more than all the other entrants. The development of the European Union deserves our continued support.

Q5. Are you in favour of a Yes vote on The Good Friday Agreement? Why?
A. Yes. The Good Friday Agreement is an historic breakthrough. For the first time ever we have negotiated a comprehensive and inclusive Agreement capable of winning support across a wide spectrum from all the traditions on this island. The whole basis of the settlement is a recognition that everyone who shares this island can live together in peace, stability and reconciliation. In short, our message is Yes for peace.

Q6. What effect would a No vote on the Articles question have on the Peace Process? Why?
A. No. Because what is being voted on is a package that was the result of exhaustive negotiations involving the two governments and most of the parties in Northern Ireland. We don't have the luxury of picking and choosing.

Q7. How important is the link between mandate and turnout? Why?
A. We are hopeful that the electorate will turn out in large numbers and give these referenda the support they deserve. We urge every citizen to play their part in making history and help embrace a new and peaceful future for this island in Europe.

Q8. What effect would a Yes vote on the Amsterdam Treaty have? Why?
A. We are hopeful that the electorate will turn out in large numbers and give these referenda the support they deserve. We urge every citizen to play their part in making history and help facilitate those who live away from home.

The Good Friday Agreement provides the opportunity to bring an end to one of the darkest chapters in our history and truly make a new beginning. Let us never forget that 3,250 people died because of ancient quarrels that locked us in the past, freezing Northern Ireland in bitterness and hatred.

The Agreement was not a victory for anyone side: it is a victory for reason and common sense. Everyone fave a stake and everyone got something.

We have agreed to amend Articles 2 & 3 of the Constitution: it is a small price to pay for a balanced political settlement in Northern Ireland which provides the opportunity for lasting peace.

It is a good and fair agreement and deserves support.

While we have a number of reservations about the Amsterdam Treaty — relating mainly to what it does not contain — we regard it as an advance which provides a social dimension to counterbalance the neo-liberal direction of Maastricht. The explicit inclusion of the first time ever of the principles on which the EU should develop, such as liberty, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, move the union beyond a mere marketplace. These principles, together with the commitment to a high level of employment and social protection are all measures long sought by the Left across Europe.

Labour Party Press Office

Q1. Should the government have opted to hold both Referenda (Articles 2, 3 & 29; Amsterdam Treaty) on the same day? Why?
A. Holding both referendums on the same day is likely to result in a higher turnout than if Amsterdam was held on its own. There is no reason why this should be seen as an improper or irrelevant consideration. The Government is quite entitled to make arrangements which will be designed to improve turnout; holding the poll on a Friday is welcome for much the same reason. There is no question of any sleight of hand being involved. There

All other political parties are campaigning for a Yes vote on the Amsterdam Treaty.
A. We endorse the Amsterdam Treaty as the product of changes to the proposed wording and social foreign existing treaties. Its subject matter extends from citizens' rights, common circumstances which would have even a remote chance of contributing to the death because the gap between nationalist and loyalist will become too narrow to bridge. The Amsterdam Treaty is about. A sophisticated constitutional question be put to the people in a fresh referendum.

Q6. What effect would a Yes vote on The Amsterdam Treaty have? A. A Yes vote would delay or prevent ratification by any member state, since changes to the existing treaties can only be made unanimously. The specific issues, if any, which resulted in the treaty being voted down would have to be identified and an effort at renegotiation made or an opt out for Ireland secured. A No vote would probably be defined as resulting from a mixture of voter confusion, ignorance and apathy and signalling a failure on the part of proponents of European integration to outline their position and the issues involved.

Q7. How important is the link between mandate and turnout? A. The turnout figures by themselves do not tell the whole story. For example, surveys generally indicate a favourable attitude in Ireland to the European project yet the Amsterdam Treaty referendum will probably attract very little voter interest. A genuinely controversial referendum would result in a higher turnout but questions of institutional European reform seem to attract passive acceptance rather than enthusiastic endorsement. This is hardly surprising and not necessarily unhealthy.

Q8. What effect would a Yes vote on The Articles question have on the Peace Process? A. A Yes vote could only be interpreted as meaning that the citizens of this jurisdiction were unwilling to incorporate the principle of consent - which has been accepted by successive Governments since Sunningdale as determining the policy of this State to future changes in the status of Northern Ireland - into our Constitution. It is difficult, if not impossible, to envisage a policy that could be adopted by a Dublin Government in such circumstances which would have even a remote chance of contributing to the peace process, or any other process.

Q5. Are you in favour of a Yes vote on The Amsterdam Treaty? Why? A. We endorse the Amsterdam Treaty as a relatively modest package of incremental improvements to the existing treaties. Its subject matter extends from citizens' rights, common foreign and security policy, employment and social policy to free movement of people and institutional reform. In particular, we are satisfied that, on foot of changes to the proposed wording which we received, there is no risk to Ireland's existing neutrality status and that, should such a question arise in the future, it would have to be put to the people in a fresh referendum.

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Progressive Unionist Party

between mandate and polling turnout? A. Again because of the nature of politics in Northern Ireland we cannot allow the No campaigners any scope to put a negative spin on the result. We cannot afford to give ammunition to the No campaigners who in turn by their words can encourage the men of violence to continue and escalate their reign of terror.

The Progressive Unionist Party welcomes the agreement reached on Friday 10 April 1998. We, like all the participants, are extremely happy with all aspects of this agreement and the contents but we feel that at least it presents an opportunity for politicians here to play an accountable, constructive role in the governance and administration of our own affairs. Controversies you may already have heard about it giving the Republic of Ireland a greater input into N Ireland affairs we feel this agreement would actually have the effect of reducing this influence. Since 1985, the Republic of Ireland, through the Maryfield secretariat, has had a greater influence than any of our elected representatives. With the removal of the Maryfield secretariat and the setting up of cross-border bodies answerable to a Northern Ireland Assembly this will bring in a spirit of co-operation in matters of mutual interest and redress the democratic deficit that has existed in Northern Ireland.

We are living in a period of change. The lessons we have learned from resisting change in the past, has been that change will occur anyway and is likely to go in the direction of those driving the agenda rather than those opposing it. We need to be influencing the agenda if we are not setting it, to ensure our interests are recognised, respected and achievable. The world is changing and so must we.

This is just one step on a journey that will hopefully lead us to peace between two opposing cultures and let us recognise and respect the diversity of the people of this island North and South.

We must give direction and leadership and we have an opportunity to develop an equitable, pluralist society. Let us not squander this opportunity.

The following is a list of the organisations and people who were sent:

The DIT Examiner Questionnaires:
Fianna Fail - replied
Progressive Unionist Party
PUP - replied
National Unionists - replied
Democratic Left - 1 copy
Green Party - n/a
SDLP - silence
Sinn Fein - local unit ignored
UDP - silence
UPU - silence
UP - n/a
DUP - not an inch (No copy)
UK Unionists - Bob's not your uncle
Sinn Fein Policing - silence
Women's Coalition - n/a

Before the "Northern Settlement" was concluded in Stormont on 10 April - Good Friday - the Sunday Business Post carried out a poll which asked: "If a referendum were held tomorrow which proposed to alter Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution so that partition were formally recognised, would you vote 'yes' or 'no'?" There were 432 votes recorded, of which 94% were 'yes'. Other polls have produced the same overall result, but with smaller majorities.

On May 22, voters in the South will be formally asked - as part of the settlement - to authorise proposed amendments to Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Constitution in order to renounce the Republic's territorial claim over the Six Counties and to replace this with an affirmation that the Republic will aspire - in an unspecified way - to unite all the people of the island of Ireland.

At present, Article 2 reads: "The national territory consists of the whole of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas." This, and Article 3, would be replaced with an affirmation that: "... the right to belong to the Irish nation and membership of it...is the entitlement of every person born on this island..." and that: "It is the firm will of the Irish nation to unite all the people of the island of Ireland...recognising that a United Ireland can only be brought about with the consent of a majority of the people democratically expressed in each of the jurisdictions of the island."

It is ironic that, after years of debate about Articles 2 and 3, amendments to these should be proposed by Fianna Fail, the (32-county) "Republic Party". The Taoiseach was in Toronto, Canada, prior to St. Patrick's Day, when he confirmed the Government's intention to hold a referendum. When asked how he thought nationalists in Northern Ireland would react to an amendment, he said that what concerned them was not that the Irish Constitution should regard them as living on Irish soil, but rather questions about policing in Northern Ireland, parliamentary prisoners and equality of treatment with the Unionist population. Others would disagree.

During a debate on US television, before the settlement in Stormont, Paul Hill, of the "Guildford Four", said that it is "naive" to suggest that Northern nationalists would not feel aggrieved at being told that, for example, they are no longer eligible for Irish passports. Although the Government pressed repeatedly - before finalising its wording of the proposed amendments - that the "Irishness" of Northern nationalists would be "protected", the "right to belong to the Irish nation" is not the same as actually belonging. A Belfast solicitor, Barra McGrory, has said that Northern nationalists are greatly concerned about any proposed alteration to the Constitution and has suggested that any amendment could be challenged in the Irish courts.

Unlike those who took part in its poll, The Sunday Business Post has been unequivocal in its opposition to the proposed amendments. The editorial of 8 March said: "What is being planned represents an act of quite enormous stupidity". On 15 March, it said: "The planned changes represent the most stupid handing-away of national legal rights".

On 8 March, the paper also compared the proposed amendments with the following: "Before the creation of the Irish Free State, the whole island was Ireland, albeit a British sovereign territory."

Refendum 98

Even a Yes vote on the Agreement doesn't guarantee peace, so what will a No vote achieve?

REDEFINING IRELAND

Kevin O'Brady examines the issues behind the Northern Agreement in light of the up-coming referendum here on proposed changes to Articles 2 & 3 of the Irish Constitution.
Each year, thousands of European students come to Irish Universities and Colleges to study, learn English, and hopefully to experience life in a new country. In many European countries there are long waiting lists to go on placements: some students may have finished their degrees by the time their name comes up.

When they do come, often it is the Students' Union who are the first smiling Irish eyes they meet. Very often Students' Unions can give assistance with finding accommodation and settling in. Many students are surprised at the level of service and efficiency of Students' Unions, as some are not familiar with such systems of formal students representation.

Who represents European students on academic councils? Who organises their rag weeks? Who do European students turn to for help with exam appeals? DIT Examiner journalist and former part-time DITSU Officer, Thomas Felle reports from Tilburg, where he discovers how Students' Unions operate in the Netherlands.

There are many differences between the system of student representation in Ireland and the Netherlands. Students' Unions in Ireland do not exist. Instead, Dutch students have a two-fold system of representation.

The Frat

Firstly, many students join fraternities. These fraternities usually are long standing, and many of the present students are the third generations of their families to be in them. The fraternities own their own houses, and are usually divided by course subject: most business students are in the same fraternity, as are most science students. I live in a house owned by an economics fraternity. The house has thirty bedrooms, its own laundry rooms, internet connections, and comes fully furnished with a bar.

Fraternities are similar in appearance to clubs and societies, but are much more active. All of the fraternities are represented by one member at an overall fraternity, called St Olaf in Tilburg. This group elects a president, however, it is not a full-time position. The president's role is one of a figurehead more than anything else. Each fraternity looks after its own entertainment, however, they do come together for special occasions. Most fraternities are sponsored by breweries for entertainment and receive corporate sponsorship for events such as business breakfasts, or science days. For the most part they are wholly independent of the University authorities, some of them are limited companies.

Initiation

There has been some concern in recent years, however, about initiation ceremonies at some fraternities. It can take anything from one week to one year to complete initiation, depending on the fraternity. Last year, a seventeen year old youth was killed while taking part in a survival endurance camping weekend with an arts fraternity. In January of this year, two young women died in Eindhoven from alcohol poisoning after drinking six bottles of whiskey in an initiation ceremony.

The government in the Netherlands is investigating ways of controlling fraternities and initiation ceremonies, however, the Netherlands is a very liberal country, and any intervention by government authorities is never welcomed, no matter what the reason.

State Intervention

In a statement issued by the national student organisation (Nederland Studentenkorps) after the latest deaths, President Matrean Den Hoken said (translated) "...while we regret accidental deaths in student fraternities,...the people who died chose to drink the whiskey...others should not be punished for their carelessness." (The Cost of Colman Byrne doesn't compare, does it?) Diederick Van Gelden is nineteen. He recently completed a six month initiation to join Kongshi, part of Tilburg Studentenkorps. Kongshi celebrated its fiftieth birthday last year. It has one of the most difficult initiations in Tilburg. It includes fasting for four days, wearing a Chinese dress for a week, one weekend a month on survival training in the worst conditions imaginable. During his initiation period, Diederick had to clean the house regularly, answer the phones, do the gardening, deliver the post, paper, and breakfast to the Tao-Keh (the leader of the house who represents the fraternity on all issues) among other things.

"I'm glad its over," he disclosed. "My father was also a member of Kongshi when he was in University. He suggested to me that I should also join. It opens lots of doors, many people in big business have gone through Kongshi. Moreover, though, its the camaraderie in the group. I know we will still be friends in forty years time. For me, that's important. The difficult initiation just makes it all the better when you do become a member."

Recognition

Tao-Keh for Kongshi, Menno De Regt, says being part of Kongshi is a must if you want to work in business in Tilburg. "All past members are part of the Kongshi Alumni association which meets each year in April. It is an annual reunion for former members and is organised by the student members. It is a chance to meet many important people in business, and perhaps get a summer job in some company. These businessmen realise the determination and character building that being part of a fraternity gives you is great training for young executives. It makes them motivated, proves they work as part of a team."

Student senators run the academic side of things. Senators work much like the class representative and council system in DITSU. They are responsible for disputes between students and lecturers, for ensuring the coffee in the canteen does not double in price, for all types of student activities, except Exts: they are an academic organisation and nothing more. There are no sabbatical officers. Normally there is one part-time officer for every 100 students. Students elect these officers to represent them much like we do in DITSU. However, it is the part-time officers who assign portfolios to themselves and elect the president and the deputy. It is the responsibility of the president and the deputy to work with the college in deciding matters of policy and curriculum. There are no welfare officers, no campaigns officers, no education officers.

Bias

The universities consult the senate in matters of importance. It is not, however, an any way successful. In many ways, the real power is with the fraternities. Many lecturers were themselves part of the fraternities, so members often get preferential treatment with course work and exams. Lecturers also support the business breakfasts and other events that are held and will facilitate classes around these schedules. It is the responsibility of student senators to ensure lecturing standards and general life is adequate for students. It is the case, however, that the nod and wink politics of fraternities still lives and wields real power in the Netherlands.
Following quickly in the footsteps of Jill Furmanovsky (Oasis photographer for Was There Then, on show in the Gallery of Photography during Green Energy weekend), DIT School of Photography student, the ubiquitous Brian O'Sullivan, spent a day with Juniper as they prepared for a gig in the Olympia Theatre.

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There's a revealing passage in Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity* in which the narrator, a jilted and frustrated male, declares that he can understand what feminists are on about - most of the time.

When I ask the 40-year-old best-selling author if this reflects his own opinion, he hesitates. Not because he has any difficulty in framing a reply but because, despite his remarkable popular and critical success, Nick Hornby has a terrible and permanent fear of being misunderstood.

He is one of the few serious novelists today with an instantly recognisable name. He is the writer who is frequently said to have had the best success in capturing the state of the male psyche in the 1990s. He has recently sold the film rights of his new novel *About A Boy* for the best part of £2 million. But he has also been cited as the unwitting originator of the "new lad" generation and the notorious *Loaded* phenomenon. And Hornby hates the idea.

In fact the softly spoken Londoner is greatly distressed by any allegations that his books are even remotely sexist. So when invited to talk about feminism he chooses his words carefully.

"I think a lot of what people term 'new ladness' has come about partly because there's a generation of young men now who are very confused about what feminism is. I come from a generation when it was very clear what it was. And because you could clearly see that the status of women was unequal, it was easy to respond. But now the feminist movement has become incredibly factionalised and in some cases quite whimsy. And I think that's given men the excuse to forget about it. They can say I don't understand what it's all about any more so I'm off down the pub. I think that's quite a worrying trend and a bit depressing."

But if you've spent two decades listening to the term 'white middle-class male' as an insult then you're going to react against it. There's a perception that somehow everything's easy for us. And it's true that a small number of men run the world. But there are huge numbers of men who feel just as disenfranchised from the centres of power as anyone else. They're the kind of people I tend to write about.

Until 1992 Nick Hornby had led, by his own admission, a pretty dreary existence. The product of a broken London home, he became a football fanatic when his father started bringing him to Highbury on Saturday afternoons. But after graduating from Cambridge he drifted and became an aspiring screenplay writer who had accumulated nothing but a pile of rejection slips. In the late 80's, frustrated and feeling like a failure, he began to visit a therapist.

It was she who encouraged him to talk about his football obsession, how it had served as an outlet for his frustrations and his need for a sense of community. It became clear to him that his love affair with Arsenal football club had not only affected all of his human relationships, it had formed his whole outlook on life. Eventually he realised that there was a book to be written about all this.

The result was the confessional memoir *Fever Pitch* which is commonly said to be the best football book ever written. In fact, as anyone who's read it can testify, it actually has very little to do with football. It established Hornby as an acute observer of young men's obsessions, foibles and insanities, and people bought it in their droves.

*Fever Pitch* was published just as the image of football was radically changing, with the arrival of Rupert Murdoch and Sky TV, and the post-Hillsborough reorganisation of stadiums. The book has frequently been credited with helping to restore football's self-image. But the most famous Arsenal fan in the world has a dilemma about all this. Put simply, he does not believe his own position. But I don't believe it. I think what *Fever Pitch* has been mainly responsible for has been a million articles about what *Fever Pitch* has been responsible for.

And what else?

"No, that's it."

But he's being unduly modest. What Hornby pinpointed and analysed so brilliantly in the book was the importance in men's lives of the things they did when they were children.

"Well, when I first went to watch Arsenal I was excited because I realised that this was something which could last me my whole life. On the terraces you're standing in a community of people who will be there forever. It's not like going to rock concerts where you eventually get the sense that you shouldn't be doing it any more. And I was grateful to have something constant in my life when everything else was always changing."

"I think that the big difference between the sexes is the maturing process. If you look at young girls playing, it's often in imitation of being adults - playing house and all that. Whereas men spend a lot of their leisure time doing what they did as children and getting away with it. I mean, you wouldn't want to speak to a woman who still collected Barbie dolls."

It was themes such as this which Hornby went on to develop in his subsequent first novel *High Fidelity*, the story of a record shop owner who has a problem maintaining relationships. In his own words he doesn't know whether he listens to music because he's unhappy or whether he's unhappy because he listens to music.

"I actually think that book may have been more original, where I really had the sense that this was something which hadn't been done before. The original idea was to write a romantic novel from the male perspective. There hadn't been a recent tradition of doing that, it had been a preserve of women's fiction."

"But I think we're in a much more confessional culture anyway, partly brought about by people like Woody Allen. The idea that men would go to therapists is much more socially acceptable now."

I speak to Hornby two days after the screening of a BBC *Omnibus* profile in which such diverse figures as Roddy Doyle, Jo Brand and Blake Morrison paid tribute to the emotional resonance of Hornby's writing. But perhaps the most interesting part of the programme came from the one dissenting voice, the *infant terrible* of British fiction Will Self. He declared Hornby's work as 'wimp fiction', books about boring nonentities for the kind of people who stayed in the kitchen at parties. Hornby's reaction is a wry smile and a quiet but clinical put-down.

"Well, that's a good illustration of why people don't like Will Self very much."

If mean if you walk into a party and you see someone like Will Self it's no wonder you'd want to spend your time in the kitchen, because they're repulsive in lots of ways. What he doesn't get is that most people are wimps and that's what an enormous number of people are identifying with. His comments were enormously condescending and patronising to the people who read his books.

Hornby firmly believes that fiction has lost its way over the last 20 years and that people are finding it increasingly difficult to 'find themselves' in books. The way he sees it, they have become completely alienated from the process. His aim is to fill the gap between self-consciously literary and airport fiction. When I suggest to him that his work is essentially designed to be reader-friendly without being trite he agrees enthusiastically.

"To me that's what writing's supposed to be. I mean there are reasons why Joyce was Joyce but very few other writers have his excuse. The whole point is to communicate with people and if your prose is opaque or alienating then I think that you've done something wrong. I suppose I'm..."

Continued on page 4
Celebrity journalist turned novelist, Karen Moline, abandoned the glamour of Hollywood to complete her latest book.

Count of Monte Cristo, Moline is refreshingly upfront about this. "You know the whole plot comes from the Count of Monte Cristo and I'm happy to admit it. I'm the first one to say that!" she does however, defend what may seem like a blatant lack of originality. "Listen there are five plots in the world. The Count of Monte Cristo comes from Shakespeare which comes from the Bible which comes from God knows where. I mean every great story has a kind of plot that stayed with me. And eventually, ten years later, I turned it into a book."

In the interim, Moline was writing for publications including Vogue, Harpers Bazaar, Village Voice and Premiere, meeting celebrities and hanging out with Hollywood's finest. Why anyone would turn from a career of hobnobbing with the likes of Mel Gibson and Leonardo di Caprio seems incomprehensible, but Moline disagrees.

"The problem I found is, I was getting very bored. When you're on the circuit in America, you're interviewing the same people, at least once a year. Every time you have a new film or project come out they'll do the circuit again. It's in their contract, they have to talk to the press, much as they want to get away from it all, she clearly has no regrets. "I really really was bored and that's what inspired me to write my first book." Now that the second is complete, Moline is working on her third. "The book is called Game Over You Win," she explains, and is still very much a work in progress. "It's getting there!" she announces, "and I'm going to rent a house out in San Diego for part of the fall. Just so I can get away and hide. When I'm writing I talk to myself a lot and get ideas for my writing." If talking leads to writing for Karen Moline, then this is going to be one prolific author. After an entertaining hour-long interview, she's not finished yet. "I still have so much to say!"
Entertaining the masses

Andrew Lynch talks to Carlo Gebler, a writer who is not ashamed to give his readers a good time

Graham Greene famously divided up his books into serious works and what he liked to call 'entertainments'. But as far as the Irish writer Carlo Gebler is concerned, the latter term is the highest compliment you could pay him.

"I'd be happy to describe my books as entertainments but that doesn't mean it has to be all happiness and joy," says this well-built, opinionated man with a sharp sense of humour. "It's often used as a word to conjure up the worst kind of popular culture.

But for me it means the feeling of being completely engaged in something. The greatest novels have that effect; they cast a spell over you. I think that's a fantastic instance, was hugely popular with the masses. But capitalism has to create niches and so now we've got a books world which is split up into what critics call literary fiction and the rest - popular fiction with no intellectual judos."

Gebler has been extremely prolific of late with both a new collection of short stories #9 out and a new version of Strindberg's Dance Of Death recently opened on the London stage. But he is highly disillusioned with the way books are marketed today.

"In the last century there was no division between popular and literary successes. Dickens, for instance, was hugely popular with the masses. But capitalism has to create niches and so now we've got a books world which is split up into what critics call literary fiction and the rest - popular fiction with no intellectual judos."

He is also writer in residence at Maghaberry Prison in Co. Antrim. I ask if this has given him a greater understanding of what it is to be a criminal.

"Well above all else it's given me a steely determination never to go to prison because it's so awful in there. It's also convinced me that artists should not be in ivory towers, that we should get our hands dirty from time to time."

But most importantly, I get to work with people who are interested in telling stories. And I've found that telling a story has a profound psychological effect on the psyche. It helps people to grow up, to mature."

A grandiloquent claim? Possibly, but How To Murder A Man demonstrates that as a storyteller Gebler has few superiors and few writers would be so shameless of a mass audience.

How To Murder A Man is published by Little Brown

Another Country

by Gene Kerrigan

Gill and Macmillan

Andrew Lynch
The hand of Bibi

As people north and south of the border prepare to vote next week on the Northern Ireland peace agreement Eoin Hennigan looks at how things went wrong for that other perennial hot spot, the Middle East.

**NAME:** BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

**WHO?:** ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

**AKA:** BIBI

**LIKELY TO SAY: NO SURRENDER (TO PALESTINIANS, NOT NI NATIONALISTS)**

**ENEMIES?:** 23 ARAB STATES AND MODERATE ISRAELIS

Elected on merit, Bibi's successor, Shimon Peres, a co-winner of the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize, was seen as unelectable by many Israelis - four times he lost elections as prime minister and even the 1996 election was seen as unlosable. While Bibi is disliked by many Israelis - Peres was dis-liked even more.

Bibi is a soundbite politician - he tells hardliners what they want to hear. But in 1996 he said he would not revoice the agreements with the Palestinians if elected - a shrewd piece of cynical electioneering.

When Tony Blair attempted to kick start the peace process by inviting both sides to London for talks last week, Bibi laid down the ground rules for his participation - he would not meet Palestinian President Yasir Arafat face to face. The two haven't met for seven months.

The Middle East is at a crossroads. Israel's only real ally is the United States and even Bill Clinton is growing impatient with Bibi's stalling antics. Full autonomy for Palestine looks inevitable but Bibi has let a good chance slip by allowing more Jewish settlements to be built in Arab areas, thus stirring Palestinian anger even more. It is the settlements and army withdrawal issues which appear to have put the final nail in the coffin of the 1993 Oslo accord.

All over the region Arab anger is aroused by reports of Palestinians being killed by Israelis, namely Israeli governm ent flouting its powers over the Palestinian population with little regard for their rights - or the limited self rule they were granted under the Oslo agreement.

Last year King Hussein of Jordan (Israel's closest Arab ally) accused Bibi of abandoning the road to peace in a strongly worded letter to the Israeli Prime Minister.

Militancy never goes out of the London meetings and it is now quite possible that the peace process will not get back on track until the Labour Party returns to power, possibly after the next election in 2000. The new Labour leader Ehud Barak is similar to Bibi in that he is a former army chief and is someone who the Palestinians can be business with.

Yet the greatest irony of the whole situation is that the election process which was set up specifically to keep Bibi out of power may yet end up keeping Bibi as Prime Minister.

At the last election Israelis voted directly for prime minister for the first time and Bibi was given little chance of succeeding but in the end won by less than one percent of the vote. If he turns on the charm again and gives Israelis what they want to hear he could end up with another four year term - a frightening prospect.

Although Hornby's new novel About A Boy is set in his familiar stomping ground of north London, in other respects it is something of a departure. It concerns the relationships formed by people who don't live in model families; Will Freeman is a supercool something who doesn't have to work for a living.

He spends his time shopping, watching television and pretending he has a son in order to make himself more attractive to single mothers. In this way he meets the 12-year-old Marcus, whose hippy upbringing has made him a misfit who suffers from other children due to his lack of knowledge about popular culture. In a fashion-obsessed society, to think that Kurt Cobain plays for Manchester United is positively dangerous. The unlikely relationship which ensues makes for a hugely entertaining and well-crafted novel. But as Hornby accepts, it seems likely that it will be less popular than his first two books due to the lack of a universal male-type figure.

"In this book I really tried to write about the beginning of this month Palestinians were effectively under house arrest in the West Bank and Gaza. It could be argued that as Netanyahu attempts to achieve peace on his own terms, Israel has taken a step back over 20 years to when Likud first held power.

Netanyahu is a shrewd, sharp political operator but even his political skills didn't get him out of trouble. In the upcoming general election, signaling a backward step in the peace process.

Over the next six months we would realise that the peace process had effectively died with him. As things turned out Likud did return to power and the peace process was effectively dead on its feet.

The new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu makes Ian Paisley look like Mary Poppins. Especially with his low fans who are kind of... wistful. But I've been sent a lot of sim­ilar stuff from people and a lot of it's not very good and not published. Writing isn't as easy as people think. I find it difficult to get much done over the course of the day and it's not a very joyous process.

Aa this is the last issue of DX98, we would once again like to give special thanks to John Kenny & Cearbhall Ó Siocháin.

Letters, comments and abuse can be sent to: DX_98@hotmail.com or to the DIT Examiner Editor.
DIT CAVING CLUB

We will be taking as many new members with us as possible, teaching the art of rope access and the techniques used to enter vertical potholes. There is nothing quite like a 300+ foot abseil into a daylight shaft, put mildly the experience is literally breathtaking! To give you an idea of the type of thing you find at the bottom of an entrance like that, take a look at these photos, taken by Gavin Newman, a freelance action photographer, avid caver and cave diver. I think you’ll agree that they are not quite what you’d expect a cave to be like.

Membership of D.I.T. Caving Club is open to all staff, students and alumni of the D.I.T., all levels of caving are catered for and training and equipment is provided by the club. If you’re curious as to what it’s all about, give it a go. You can’t judge for yourself until you have tried it, you’ll find it’s not what you expect!

We are actively involved with I.C.R.O., the Irish Cave Rescue Organisation, having provided some of the key personnel at the last rescue (Easter) in Clare. We had people both above and below ground, it was a D.I.T. caver on the team that found the lost group from Queen’s University.

We run trips on average once a month, sometimes more often and we meet every Wednesday night in John Gleeson’s on Camden Street from about 9 onwards. Drop in and say hello, we are always ready to take people caving, any excuse will do.

Caving itself is great fun, always a bit of a risk and never boring. There is a great sense of satisfaction when you get to that last chamber, where nobody has been before. You are the first person EVER to see this part of the planet; you even get to name it. D.I.T. cavers have discovered and named passageways in Clare. Caves are one of the few remaining unexplored regions of the planet.

We can be contacted through D.I.T. Kevin Street’s SU or from our Website, http://www.dit.ie/diit/ and have New members are always welcome; you form the basis of the club.

Caving is different, a break from the norm. Ah go on! Give it a go.

Dave Hickey
After England’s early first try, Ireland with Scotland at Lansdowne Road consummated and quasi-professional game of the Five Nations had a single point from a draw win. Not so this year. Immediately after the game, following one of the most Championship was against England officially paid in those days) including highly effective tackling – the statistics from the game against England - seven as against eight. Maybe Galwegians and Connacht rugby clubs would agree: Gatland has had considerable coaching success with both of them. If so, the problem at national level is simply that Gatland’s players have not yet had the full benefit of his All-Black expertise. The statistics from the game against England show that Ireland enjoyed territorial advantage and that they made one handling error fewer than England - seven as against eight. But those statistics are largely meaningless if the game is not won. David Hickie’s opportunist try - and that against France - made good viewing, but Ireland should not have to rely on passing errors by the opposition for the opportunity to score.

When Warren Gatland was appointed Irish national coach, on 24 February this year, he said: “I am delighted to have been offered this opportunity. I am well familiar with the Irish rugby scene”. Despite the three defeats since Gatland’s appointment, the IRFU have shown their confidence in his ability by retaining him as coach at least until the first season of the new Six Nations Championship in 2000, in which case his tenure will also include the next World Cup. The resignation of Pat Whelan, for “personal and business” reasons, may or may not tell us something about his own views on Gatland’s position: either way, it will only have any impact on Ireland’s chances of future success according to whether Whelan had too many differences of opinion with his coaches. The will of Irish rugby teams to win may or may not be in doubt, whoever is on the field. But unless there are radical improvements to overall team attitude (perhaps akin to that of Gatland’s own country) and to the style of play - again akin to the All-Blacks: more running and less emphasis on routing possession into loose rucks would be a positive start - we can surely expect little success in the World Cup, and no better than sixth position instead of fifth - when the Italians showed what they can do in the new Six Nations Championship. There are Latin lessons ahead.

Bolton St Clubs and Societies Presentation Night

Held on Thursday 30 April in Strike Four, the second time-out for the Presentation Night went off like a firecracker with food, drink and prizes on the go as well as the salubrious presentation of the exclusive (only 75 in existence) Bolton Bears tops. Buses later took party-revellers onward to The Court in Harcourt St for the continuation of yet another extravaganza spectacular.

OUTLOOK NOT GOOD FOR IRISH INTERNATIONAL RUGBY

writes Kevin O’Brady

In 1994 - as this year - Ireland’s last game of the Five Nations Championship was against England at Twickenham. Ireland at that stage had a single point from a draw (6-6) with Scotland at Lansdowne Road. Everything suggested that England would have an easy win. Instead, following one of the most consummate and quasi-professional performances (no Irish player was officially paid in those days) produced by an Irish rugby team - including highly effective tackling - Ireland achieved an unlikely 13-12 win. Not so this year. After England’s early first try, Ireland never really looked like being able to win. Immediately after the game, Keith Wood told RTE’s Jim Sherwin that there was much to be positive about and much upon which to build for the future. Frankly, it is difficult to know what. A few moments earlier, David Corkery had sung the praises of Warren Gatland, and said: “He’s a good coach”. No doubt Galwegians and Connacht rugby clubs would agree: Gatland has had considerable coaching success with both of them. If so, the problem at national level is simply that Gatland’s players have not yet had the full benefit of his All-Black expertise. The statistics from the game against England show that Ireland enjoyed territorial advantage and that they made one handling error fewer than England - seven as against eight. But those statistics are largely meaningless if the game is not won. David Hickie’s opportunist try - and that against France - made good viewing, but Ireland should not have to rely on passing errors by the opposition for the opportunity to score.

When Warren Gatland was appointed Irish national coach, on 24 February this year, he said: “I am delighted to have been offered this opportunity... I am well familiar with the Irish rugby scene”. Despite the three defeats since Gatland’s appointment, the IRFU have shown their confidence in his ability by retaining him as coach at least until the first season of the new Six Nations Championship in 2000, in which case his tenure will also include the next World Cup. The resignation of Pat Whelan, for "personal and business" reasons, may or may not tell us something about his own views on Gatland’s position: either way, it will only have any impact on Ireland’s chances of future success according to whether Whelan had too many differences of opinion with his coaches. The will of Irish rugby teams to win may or may not be in doubt, whoever is on the field. But unless there are radical improvements to overall team attitude (perhaps akin to that of Gatland’s own country) and to the style of play - again akin to the All-Blacks: more running and less emphasis on routing possession back into loose rucks would be a positive start - we can surely expect little success in the World Cup, and no better than sixth position instead of fifth - when the Italians showed what they can do in the new Six Nations Championship. There are Latin lessons ahead.
Daniel King Interviewed

Daniel King learnt the moves when he was five, the chess board being one of the battle grounds on which he fought his older brother tooth and nail. His learning background in Britain was rooted more in weekend tournaments than in schools, and by the age of 12 he was playing international competitions. He lapped every opportunity up until, at the age of 15, he represented England in Belgium at international level, an experience he loved, and one he never looked back from.

Did it then transpire at the age of sixteen or seventeen that he was a league above the best of the rest in Britain? Not so.

"That's how I became reasonably strong! Because there is incredible competition in England. Somehow in the last fifteen to twenty years we have grown into one of the strongest chess playing nations in the world, from almost nothing."

What does he put it down to?

"Large population, concentrated, a few people really encouraging the game. Somehow, a lot of people got very good. Okay, I'm a Grandmaster, but there are 25 others, and for one country that is very good."

He has already written ten books on the subject of chess. Why so few?

"Well I have to earn a living! But the game is developing the whole time, ideas are developing, it's not something that's static, it's like a language that keeps on growing. Its interesting to study ideas."

Surely the game is hemmed in by the fact that you only have 64 squares to play with?

"Not at all, its virtually unlimited. I mean its been going since about the fourth or fifth century AD where its been traced back to somewhere in India. In the Arabic Golden Period in tenth century Arabia they were MAD on chess, they were great mathematicians and somehow it fitted. In Renaissance times in Europe it became very popular. So people studied it through the ages and YET it has not been exhausted."

Most of that development would have come from the human brain, but, having written a book on Kasparov-Deep Blue: The Ultimate Man v Machine Challenge, he is amply qualified to assess the significance of artificial intelligence on the game.

"It depends which group of players you're talking about. For professionals, computers have had a profound effect on the game. They allow you to check your analysis. They're not great for coming up with fantastic, fundamentally new ideas. In certain ways you can direct them if you know how to use them properly. It's possible to research and resource games very easily and very quickly. So you can find an idea that was played in 1888 or something."

So they dispense with time-consuming book libraries. They are more helpful as databases rather than as playing tools.

And IBM's super-computer, Deep Blue? "Deep Blue is interesting because it approaches the game in a different way — its not-human." He equates it with the bird-airplane scenario: in order to try and emulate bird-flight, man has come up with a very successful way of getting off the ground, but also a way which does not come near to capturing the nature, beauty and originality of the real thing.

With the increased globalisation of the game (the number two player in the world is an Indian, Vishni Anand, and the sleeping giant of China, which has had its own version of the board game for a long time, is awakening to its non-Chinese equivalent) and the decentralisation from former mecca, Moscow, Daniel King envisages anything but a stalemate for the progression of the game.
new releases
Page & Plant
Walking into Clarksdale
Mercury Records
If you want to know what to expect from this album, just look at the idyllic phone of the aging duo. It's your basic rock n roll diet: hard personalities sound, balancing on the timbreframe of punk glory.
The album opens with "Shining in the Light that is best described as limited, tedious and unimaginative. This is followed by "When the World Went To Sleep and Plan do Queen, while dreaming of their youth. It is at this point that Robert Plant's voice becomes a stormer of a tune!! What was it?? Sneak's a Mongoloids from Space mix of Daft Punk's "Bustin'. The real core had been heard before if the roof wasn't restricting it. As Sanchez stayed alongside his buddy, Sneak got it really wet. He continued to hold the crowd in his groove, waiting for the perfect moment to fuck it up. Sneak continued until 3 and finished the set with a Green Velvet mix of HBO's 'Satisfied'. Flanging, reverb, delays, samples - you name it, this man put it through the blender for that perfect sound, balancing on the zimmerframe. The initially sparse crowd were loving it up as Sanchez saw fit to start moving to the crowd while mixing, giving a more personal touch to his set. The night came to an end with a bin of the stuff. Winding up with the excellent clubs. All courtesy of the boys at Influx.

DJ Sneak & Jan Sanches Redbox Fri 3 Apr

Rainy, wet and windy are the only words to describe the weather on the night, causing a lot of people to stay indoors and away from the Rezidua. Stupid people! Although it was pouring outside, it failed to dampen the spirits of these clubbers. Walking through the door, those Stare Chicago House beasts penetrated the chest at a level that could only be damaging to the ears. Sanchez was up first playing some eclectic tunes. Keeping it real and 100% Chicago, he played familiar tunes; DJ Sneak's "Sneak's a Freak", Da Mad Bombers 'The Star', and the hit known Sneak track, 'You Can't Hide from Your Bud'. The initially sparse crowd were loving it up at Sanchez, staying beside them and people. The mood crept up the crowd's wild from there on in. Out of the blue came a stormer of a tune! What was it?? Sneak's "Sneak's a Freak", Da Mad Bombers 'The Star', and the hit known Sneak track, 'You Can't Hide from Your Bud'.

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"competition"
The DIT Examiner and The Mean Fiddler are giving away two tickets to Girls Against Boys and Delta 72s. First correct entry wins.

Influx

Ultrafunk
PhunkCity @ the funnel bar, city quay
Fri 15 May
Spring Hill Jack
Fri 22 May
Replique Records
Dark Angelo
Cyleb / Mike
Dred/Jones and the DMX Crew
Fri 29 May
PURE
Fri 5 June
Mass D1
Fri 12 June
Andy Weatherrall
Fri 19 June
Alex Patterson

Ultrafunk @ Music Centre
May 26 Come (Domino Recs)
Jubilee Allstars
Jun 8 Shellac / Pet Lamb
Sep 19 NoMeNoB!

The mighty Mark Karmanski deserved of the prize for his Club Mix release in April.
helped everyone cool down with plenty of stew, including a bin of the stuff. Winding up with the Can-Can and Lip Up Fairly the band scooted to a half with the crowd baying for more. Definitely the best of the 80s 2-tone ska era in my opinion, Bad Manners provide a great night out for anyone who likes to dance.

James Murphy
Heineken Green Energy Weekend
Kula Faley, Dublin Castle, Sun 3 May
Clearly just another day at work for Cruppy and the boys, but they may soon find themselves seeking alternative and enjoyable if their approach and their reception in Dublin Castle on May 3 is anything to go by. A half-assed show before a half-capacity crowd who bagged a bit up front and who weren't too bothered by another way or another. Certainly not Kula Quaker evident on camera numbers. Hoy Dudes fell far short of their potential. Mind-bogglingly dull, one wonders why the Shakers bitter at all in its boring for them to even look like they enjoy it.

find of the week
Austin, Texas's finest Bluegrass Psychos', the Bad Livers, who sing about Punk Grub, Horses in the Mines, and about being High, Lonesome, Dead and Gone

hats off to influx

Winners of the Smirnoff Dance Club Award for Best Independent Promoter
Bentley Rhythm Ace are ex-PWEI who last year released an album titled 'The March'. Their latest record, 'The March', was produced by Chris Rea and features guest appearances from a range of artists, including Rankin and Roger, who were formerly associated with the band.

'I did jump out of that plane. It was incredible, really powerful. It was wicked.'

The group's latest album, 'The March', features a range of guest appearances, including Rankin and Roger. The record was produced by Chris Rea and was released in 2000. It features a range of music styles, from pop to rock and roll, and has received positive reviews from critics.

**Dublin four-piece The Mitchener**

The Mitcheners were formed in Dublin in 1997. Their self-financed debut single, 'Honolulu', released in April, has received unprecedented response from the media.

**The Mitcheners play Whelans on Sunday 7 June**

Dublin four-piece The Mitcheners released their self-financed debut single, Honolulu, at the beginning of April. Due to an unprecedented response from the media, they are now playing to sell-out audiences.

In Dublin, they decided to set their sights on the ultimate - an interview with The DJ Examiner, Chris Oak. Oak took some time out from listening to the latest in dubstep to ask the only person available to interview the band. Following a New Year's mini-tour of New York (where they played CBGB's, and recorded footage for the Honolulu vidio), Chris Oak was able to catch up with the Mitcheners.

The Mitcheners came to be known for their energetic live shows and their unique sound, which blends elements of rock, pop, and electronic music. Their recent single, 'Honolulu', has been a hit with critics and fans alike, and has received positive reviews from a range of media outlets.

The band have been praised for their catchy melodies and their ability to blend different music styles into a cohesive whole. Their latest release, 'Honolulu', is a track that is sure to be played on radio stations and in clubs across the country.

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In an exclusive interview with the DIT Examiner, Adrian Traynor, guitarist with Dublin band Sack, tells Leah Henry where it all began to see slaw areways for him.

"I think SACK have already made it as far as they're concerned. All their mates love them in Dublin anyway. I think they'll feel they've made it whenever they've made the right amount of money, and lots of it too. Yeah, whenever they get their Top of the Pops debut."

One might expect this type of statement from someone who is obviously not a fan of SACK, or from a member of a rival band in the Dublin music scene. But for this to come from SACK's guitarist, Adrian Traynor, there must be something badly wrong within the band itself. Adrian talks openly and frankly about his experiences in the band, his plans for the future, and tries to explain just where SACK have gone wrong:

"I find that the band at the minute are a very 80s type band. I wanted to bring it up to the 90s and start using the technology and equipment that is out there now that allows you to be original, and to come up with an identity that's all down to internal musical differences?"

"The thing is, I'm in a band and 'a band of people and they all have input and to come up with an identity that's all down to internal musical differences?"

Might it be time for the band to call it a day?"

"No, I think SACK will always continue to make records. I think John might find someone that he likes and he'll want to make their perfect album. Yeah, John will always keep on writing music, it's what he loves to do."

"Is it just musical differences that are causing this rift or is it down to a more personal level of disagreement?"

"We get on well, but I think it's kind of false. I get on with John and Tony (Bereton, drummer) because I know I have to for the band's sake. John wants to write his favourite David Bowie album next. He wants to use the rest of the band members as his servants basically. I feel that SACK will turn into the John Bereton Experience. I think he finds it hard to try out other people's ideas. If he doesn't think of it, then he thinks it's crap."

The Dublin based five-piece have been on the scene for the past seven years. In all this time, two albums and four singles are the sum total of their musical contribution. Might it be time for SACK to call it a day?

"Yeah, whenever they get their Top of the Pops debut."

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The nomination didn't mean in awful lot, because if you look at the other bands and the other categories there, they were just as low-key as us. To be honest I was really embarrassed to be there. Who the fuck is Nick Kelly anyway? It's a sad industry if they get the likes of SACK and Nick Kelly to win these awards. At one point, I was standing there looking around at all the people that were there and I was thinking to myself, who the fuck are you and who are you? I mean, I've never seen you before and you're all at this music thing and like, that's kind of pathetic. I also got embarrassed myself by exactly the same thing. I know that people were looking at me going, well, who's he and what does he do and why is he here."

If you do decide to go it on your own, with whom will you know you've made it?

"I think SACK have already made it as far as they're concerned. All their mates love them in Dublin anyway. I think they'll feel they've made it whenever they've made the right amount of money, and lots of it too. Yeah, whenever they get their Top of the Pops debut."

If you are so unhappy with the business and obviously so dissatisfied within the band itself, why don't you just leave and find your own way of making that bridge between the guitar orientated side of the music and the technology side?

"Well, it's opening doors for me through Shasteen and Brian from Dirt Records. It's more of a convenience at the moment."

Maybe the live band scene in Dublin just isn't providing the bands a chance to come through. "That could be true. In comparison to bands from the North for instance, I think bands up there have an awful lot more to complain about or maybe they're just harder. I think within the South, the music is a lot more bland. They don't look at issues that would you and who are you? I mean, I've never seen you before and you're all at this music thing and like, that's kind of pathetic. I also got embarrassed myself by exactly the same thing. I know that people were looking at me going, well, who's he and what does he do and why is he here."

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A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS
Andrew Lynch meets the legendary Donovan, the pop mystic who became the Pied Piper to the Flower Power generation.

Donovan Leitch, one of Ireland's most famous residents, is nothing less than a living musical and cultural icon. In the sixties, when frenzied audiences screamed at the rock and roll of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, this lone figure with a denim cap and a guitar was a sensational contrast. The quintessential flower child, he could hold huge audiences spellbound with songs which had their roots in Anglo-Celtic folklore. He became one of Britain's biggest international stars and recorded a series of albums such as Sunshine Superman and A Gift From A Flower To A Garden which deserve to be regarded as lynching recordings of the 1960s. History records that the first concept albums were not made until 1967 but Donovan was spearheading the use of philosophical lyrics in pop music as early as 1965.

Donovan was surrounded by those films people were called 'hippies', but those who listened closely to Donovan's music knew that they were listening to sad songs of leaving from the Irish side of the family and lulling songs from the Scottish side.

When he was still a small child his family relocated to St. Alban's in the Home Counties, where he first became exposed to bohemian influences. He became a fanatic of jazz and blues, people like Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez and Charlie Parker. That's where the scene was before rhythm and blues. In Britain we were on the point of merging so many different styles and a guitar was a sensational contrast. The quintessential bohemian influences.

Donovan began his career by taking pure folk music into the pop market, annoying traditionalists in the process.

"You weren't supposed to play this music to pop audiences because this music was thought to be small-minded. How was the world going to change unless the mass of youth, who usually only read cereal boxes and listened to saccharine pop music were turned on to these bohemian influences."

When Donovan first became famous he was labelled as Britain's answer to Bob Dylan, but those who listened closely to his early songs such as the haunting 'Catch the Wind' would have realised that he was less of an overt political commentator than a poetic romantic. His music was characterised by seductive, ornate arrangements which perfectly complemented his gentle, intimate vocals.

"Nobody compared Cliff to Elvis, although that's really what he was. The Stones ripped off every black artist they could find. But I think friendly borrowing like that is OK. People who write their own material are completely self-centred. We have to be. We believe in ourselves more than anything else and therefore sometimes we look arrogant. "I'm now often asked to speak at seminars and workshops. She told me to sing what I've always sung about. It's suddenly become much more comfortable to talk about mystical ideas. Pure philosophy, like Seamus Heaney's Oxford lectures talk about the power of a poetic line to change people's views of reality. That's what I try to do."

I suggest to Donovan that his work is essentially about saying profound things simply, to be childlike without being trite.

"Well, if you look at the creative process, it is conscious that I would write something in a certain way," he muses. "Or is it automatic? I think it's a state of mind -- looking in with wonder."

That's got a lot to do with meditation -- returning to the experiencing everything without judging it. "Any writer's course will tell you that to create simple words, is very difficult. I think that's my gift. It's so important to retain sentiment in a time of such cynicism and hypocrisy and ignorance."

Throughout his career Donovan has embraced a huge variety of musical styles, classical, folk, jazz and rock. All of which made him extremely difficult to categorise.

"Critics have found it impossible to classify me," he smiles ruefully. "'It's been a curse because it's meant that people don't know what to do with me. They've called me a Dylan clone, a spiritual guru, a troubadour -- the list is endless. But I really like to think of myself as a bard, who recites old stories in new forms. Who improvises, who learns to compose in all forms and styles.""

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The Exam Appeals Procedure

Each year, the DIT's Exam Appeals Board receives, on average, 10 appeals from students regarding exam results. They can sometimes be concerned with an upgrading of a result but not always. Occasionally, there is a request to sit a supplemental exam if the usual supplemental options have exhausted.

There is an appeal procedure that should be followed and it should be available at the exams office in each DIT site. This is not always the case, however, and so we will here outline the procedure as clearly as is possible. This procedure is there to be used if you feel you have a genuine case.

Thomas Duff, the DIT's Registrar, has pointed out that the Exam Appeals Board, which is independent of individual faculties, cannot change results but can pass onto the exam board information that may not have been available at the time of the exam. This may then result in the exam board reconvening to consider the case.

An appeal may be made by a candidate on one or more of the following grounds where it is claimed that:

1. The first step is to get an Examination Appeals Form (Form A1). This should be available from the Administrative Section of the relevant college.
2. This form must be completed in block letters or typewritten and lodged with the relevant director within two weeks of the publication of the Provisional Examination Results and accompanied by the following:
3. Information as to whether:
   a) the examinations regulations of the College have not been properly implemented;
   b) the regulations do not adequately cover a candidate's case;
   c) compassionate circumstances which relate to the candidate's examination situation.

The DIT Examiner, (to be dropped into local Union office)

Name ___________________________
College ____________________________
Year ____________________________
Course ____________________________
Student No. ________________________

For Apr '98 winners see page 2

ACROSS
8 Part added to the end of a book. (8)
9 Died down, grew less. (6)
10 Gits Japanese Emperor. (6)
11 I'd bear it, the invective harangue. (8)
12 Part of the eye which receives the image. (6)
13 Sam tries to get the sweet. (8)
15 You of old. (4)
17 Medieval monarch of Castille. (7)
19 Recreants, observations. (7)
21 At what time? (4)
22 Curved or hooked, like an eagle's nose. (8)
27 Water in the form of mist. (6)
29 Cautious, tactful, circumspect. (8)
30 Said no to the beautiful man. (6)
31 Cerebral. (6)
32 Set free, let go. (8)

DOWN
1 Do this to the mainbrace and serve (4)
2 Use of soothing drugs to calm a patient. (8)
3 One who pleads for another. (8)
4 Make or become rusty. (7)
5 Type of bat, canal and country. (6)
6 Laid which imitates human speech. (6)
7 Take one at about 11am perhaps. (8)
14 Pool or lake. (4)
16 Car down, felled. (7)
18 Queries R on what he needs. (8)
20 Is Ben alive? Troubling jealousy!. (8)
21 Approximation. (8)
23 10,000 square metres. (7)
25 Room to action, urge on. (6)
26 Standards of perfection to be aimed at. (6)
28 United Nations children's fund. (6)

THE IRISH TIMES

DITSU Simplex

CROSSWORD Competition

PRIZE: First 3 correct entries drawn will each receive a £20 gift voucher for DITSU Students Union Shop.

RULES: Only open to members of the DIT colleges. Employees of DITSU and THE IRISH TIMES are not eligible to enter. No Photocopies. Entries close: Fri 29 May

SEND TO: THE IRISH TIMES / DITSU, Crossword Competition, The Dit Examiner.

THE IRISH TIMES

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Dublin Institute of Technology Students Union

STUDENTS' UNION SHOPS

COMPETITION NO. 8
Grainne Fox met Irish writer-director Damien O'Donnell of Clingfilms last month, and quizzed the man behind Thirty Five Aside about elements of our growing indigenous industry, his own interest in film making, and the trouble with writing.

"I feel as bloated as a bastard..." Damien O'Donnell is not on top form. Neither am I for that matter. Trying to get in contact with this young award winning film director is no easy task. Communications leading up to our eventual meeting are fraught with mishaps.

A copy of Thirty Five Aside, the short film which has garnered much acclaim for O'Donnell's film company, Clingfilms, was proving to be nearly impossible to get a hold of. Panic phone calls to arrange a meeting end up with me sitting in the Swan pub wondering where the hell he is and the man himself is amiable guzzling back a pint of Guinness in a separate establishment, quickly realising that he was in the wrong place...hence his feeling of general over-indulgence. But unlike me, O'Donnell is not flustered and is ready for a chat.

Thirty Five Aside is the story of a young boy's struggle to fit into a new school after moving to the south of France, the most frightening part of his existence being being bullied. It is one of the biggest shon film festival of all time and the man himself is amiably sitting in the Swan pub, trying to get in contact with me. O'Donnell is thirty one, and exudes a casual, relaxed air. He is medium built with cropped, slightly greyish hair and handsome in a boyish way. With the success of Thirty Five Aside came opportunities aplenty for this Coolock born director. About to start filming a ten minute short called Chrono Perambulator (which he also wrote) and with the option of shooting a feature film during the summer, Clingfilms is keeping busy.

The company started up in 1992 when O'Donnell and three of his classmates from the film course in Rathmines DIT decided upon graduation, to go out on their own. "We're not exactly a textbook example of how to start up your own production company, a couple of years were dark and inactive, we've been winging it for a long time." Winging it has included the obligatory dry period when O'Donnell worked for nine months balancing the scales at the Pick'n'Mix in UCI cinemas in Coolock, which he describes tactfully as time spent enjoyably, but not something he would want to have to do again. The critical success of Thirty Five Aside has opened up opportunities where other production companies have approached him to direct films. The only thing that prevented him from directing feature films until now was the dearth of good script writing. Even though he wrote Thirty Five Aside and Chrono Perambulator, O'Donnell feels he lacks the necessary discipline, "I find it very hard to write. I look for any distractions. By now I should have written a feature, if I had written a feature script, I would be making it." He is under no illusions about the unprofitability of making short films, the real money is in television or features, but as he says honestly, "I quite like making short films."

An unassuming, unpretentious chap, Damien O'Donnell has known that he wanted to get involved in the film industry since he was fourteen, although some have tried to dissuade his passion. His guidance counsellor at school — always on hand with some useful advice — tried to convince him that he should become a journalist. However, he believed that his talents lay in film making and it was the only thing he wanted to do. So he set upon a two year course in Colaiste Dhulaigh when he was about sixteen. If there is one moment which reaffirmed his determination to go into the business, it was seeing Raiders of the Lost Ark for the first time. "It made a huge impression on me, I came out of that film on a high, walking on air, I found it really fulfilling." Although there is no one isolated reason why he chose to get involved with films that entertain him. He ranks Boogie Nights as one of the best films he has seen recently "in terms of the story it was telling, the humour of the film and the direction, it was just superlative film making on every level."

When I predictably ask him about his influences he can't really pinpoint anyone in particular, "Its other people who can tell you how your work has been influenced...you can say who your heroes are...people have said that Thirty Five Aside is like Woody Allen meets Buster Keaton." He is impressed by the Coen brothers and wishes he had made all their films before they got around to one thing. One thing he shares with the makers of Fargo and The Big Lebowski, is his black sense of humour. Part of the success of Thirty Five Aside are both hilarious and unbelievably dark, there is a scene where Philip's mother stumps into school wielding a kitchen knife and a cream cake...a sinister combination. "It's one of our best films he has seen recenty..."

"I don't really want to make any more films about young boys ("God, that'll sound bad...")", none of it is intentionally autobiographical, he tries to write about what he knows.. "I don't really want to write...", none of it is honest. Although his previous short films were also all of the exploits of young boys ("God, that'll sound bad...")

"I quite like making short films." He is under no illusions that his work is not a passion, but a business, "It was seeing Woody Allen meets Buster Keaton..."

I'd love to work with Michael Caine..." he says honestly, "I'd love to work with Michael Caine..."

What struck me about Damien O'Donnell is how un-flash he is. At one stage I'm conscious of time ticking by (he has to give a talk to students in Kevin Street) and a clap from across the room. We are asking for a sheet of paper and launch into a discussion about the trials of flat-hunting. I anxiously try to fob him off and to my utter shame, Damien politely engages him in chat until he eventually returns to his seat. Finally, when I ask him if he has ever had any doubts about being successful he replies with what seems characteristic confidence, "I'm not making any sacrifices, I never had any money before now...I just go with the flow."
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