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DIT : Students' Union

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DIT turns its back on fees protests

By Darragh Clifford

The Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union (DITSU) has dramatically withdrawn their support from the Union of Students in Ireland’s (USI) campaign on third level fees.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

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

Paul Malone, President of DIT Aungier Street, stated that “It was an executive decision not to support USI in their protest against fees.” However, Malone, President of USI stated that while he respects DITSU’s decision, participating in protests is not going to win students’ education at risk. “Having a registration fee of €1,000, which was suggested in the Budget would jeopardise the education of students far more than going out and protesting for an hour,” he said.

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

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

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

DITSU’s decision not to support USI’s campaign comes at a time when almost every other college and university in the country are getting bodies out on the street to protest. Students in Athlone, Galway, Mayo, UCC, UCD, UCD, Trinity, DIT, and Limerick have been protesting. But the country’s largest third level institution’s decision to go it alone will hurt the campaign.

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

The students who demonstrate during this year’s Budget Day protest will be lucky if they can secure a registration fee of €1,000 per year.

DIT honours Quinn and Finucane

Former Republic of Ireland soccer star Niall Quinn swapped his jersey for a graduation robe when DIT awarded him with an honorary Doctorate of Philosophy for his exceptional contribution to Irish life and for the enjoyment he has given to the public during his long career as a professional footballer.

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

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

“At the moment, I am just catching up on things I should have done a long time ago. Generally just enjoying myself. I'm winding down. Trying to get the right balance. We're moving home shortly, so I'm looking forward to going to a few hurling and Gaelic football matches.” While proposing the honour on these protests, Quinn said that “it is a great honour and I am very proud. It is wonderful to be here.

Speaking at the event, Dr Brendan Goldsmith, President of DIT said: “We’re all extremely proud of the three individuals we honour today. They have made an outstanding contribution in their respective disciplines and have each had a significant impact on the lives of others. They reflect three diverse areas, all of which play a huge part in our society today.”

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DIT Aungier Street
18 DEC

WEDNESDAY

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FEAT. 24 LIVE DANCERS | FLAME THROWERS | EXHIBITIONISTS | STUNNING VISUALS & MUCH MORE!!

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DOORS OPEN 10.30 SHARP

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**Grangegorman finally kicks off**

By Michael Delaney

IT has been a long time coming but Grangegorman is finally open to DIT students. Those planning to turn up to lectures will have to wait some time yet though, as the site is merely DIT’s new home grounds.

As part of the Institution’s plans to move to Grangegorman, DIT’s sports teams will be housed in Brendan’s Gaelic Football team’s pitches, which are situated on grounds, as their new base.

This move marks the first time DIT’s teams have had their own home ground. In the past, they have had to rent pitches inside the VEC/Tamore in order to play and train.

The absence of a home ground has often left DIT teams’ poor performances in major sports. It is hoped that the stability a home pitch will provide will help DIT teams compete on a higher level in third level sports.

DIT Aungier St. Sport’s officer, Herry McLellan, described the site with, “on behalf of the sports officers in DIT, it’s great to finally have our own home ground.”

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

Hugh O’Reilly told the DIT Independent how funding for the canteen was mismanaged. “The design and layout of the canteen was all wrong from the beginning. They had never been to a refitting of the old library which had been turned down. They had put forward another submission and are awaiting a departmental decision which may not be submitted until the new year. March is now supposed to be the opening date but that does not seem real at the moment,” he said.

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

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

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

**Hospitality management set for face-lift**

HOUSPITALITY management in Irland is set to move to a new level following a study launched by DIT, which has not got its cards back please do so as soon as possible.

Finally just to inform you that the students union will have held the DITSU Council meeting on the Grangegorman site on Friday. It is an historic occasion for the union to hold an official meeting on the site and may it be the first of many for the future. Also may I wish the sports clubs every success on their new home ground. The sports pitches at Aungier St were hosted the DIT soccer club’s first home matches last week on the site.

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

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

He added that incorporating demographic considerations, the impact of technology on learning, access to research funding and growing competition abroad, the hospitality management area itself is facing its own particular demands which educators must reflect in curricula.

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

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

**Four week wait to see GP**

By Aisling Casey

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

“The move marks the first time DIT’s teams have had their own home ground. In the past, they have had to rent pitches inside the VEC/Tamore in order to play and train.”

Aisling Casey reported that the DIT Independent how funding for the canteen was mismanaged. “The design and layout of the canteen was all wrong from the beginning. They had never been to a refitting of the old library which had been turned down. They had put forward another submission and are awaiting a departmental decision which may not be submitted until the new year. March is now supposed to be the opening date but that does not seem real at the moment,” he said.

Mary Hanafin, Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Tourism, Culture, Science, and Sport, said, “In addition to the many deadlines, higher education is facing over the coming decade.”

She added that incorporating demographic considerations, the impact of technology on learning, access to research funding and growing competition abroad, the hospitality management area itself is facing its own particular demands which educators must reflect in curricula.

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Colleges cash crisis

By Barry J. Whyte

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

The Chairman of the Council, Professor Clarrain O’Carraite said that the level of student fees currently being provided would be reduced in the coming year.

The Institutes of Technology may be forced to borrow heavily to keep going next year. The shortfall is expected to be in the region of €60 million.

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

The Institute is still waiting on a decision from the government on services next year.

Professor O’Carraite also said that the institutes had been committed to certain financial arrangements by the Department of Education and the Department of Finance through the Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness (PFP) which means that they are spending money they did not anticipate having to spend.

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

This comes at a time when the nature of a reintroduction of fees in order to fund third level education has become a major issue. Student protests to the Minister for Education Noel Dempsey’s suggestion that full fees might be reintroduced indicated the strength of public feeling about free third level education, which was introduced under the Rainbow Coalition in 1995.

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

Noel Dempsey is currently in talks with the OECD on alternative means of funding third level education.

The Institutes of Technology, however, are not the only third level that will be feeling the pinch next year. Both Trinity College and University College Cork have sought a freeze on new jobs and other offers are expected to follow.

The president of UCD Dr. An Taoiseach, has said that the government can’t afford to maintain a university system that is internationally competitive.

International students angered by fees

By Aedin Donnelly

INTERNATIONAL students attending Irish universities have angrily protested about tuition fees at budget day last week.

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

Non-EU students attending DIT, who pay less than their counterparts in the State’s Universities. This college’s Admissions office told the DIT ‘‘independent’’ that international student’s fees for the academic year of 2002/03 stood at €8,000, regardless of the course, an increase of €400 on the previous year’s fees. A source within the Admissions office estimated that fees for international DIT students could be as high as €9,000 next year. This is an increase of 12.5%, which exceeds even the Irish inflation rate (4.2%).

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

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

Roughly 22,000 students, both full and part-time, attend DIT. This means that non-EU students represent less than 1% of the student body.

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has called on the Department of Education to investigate why the fees are so high. The president of the USI, Mr Colm Jordan, said: ‘‘We hope this does not affect the generosity of Ireland abroad, rather than Ireland of the future’’.

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

However, recent increases have angered the students, particularly those in DIT and Trinity Colleges.

The students have accused the colleges of charging extortionate fees and not justifying the increases.

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

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

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

Furious Cork students protest

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

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

Tommy Reddy, President, University College Cork Students Union said: ‘‘Just last week, the President of University College Cork presented Noel Dempsey with 4,000 signatures from students who are not forgetting about broken promises of fee cuts or cutbacks aimed at the poorest’’.

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

New Delhi students set to take DIT Journalism Degree

FROM next year, students from New Delhi will have the chance to take DIT’s BA in journalism following the Institute and the School of Film and Media at ILM, Mr Surya Prakash said, ‘‘I look forward to greater collaboration between our respective media schools including media impact research’’.

Speaking from New Delhi, the Head of the School of Film and Media at ILM, Mr Surya Prakash said, ‘‘I look forward to greater collaboration between our respective media schools including media impact research’’.

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

Students at the university are looking forward to the new degree

DIT join St Luke’s in venture

THE Minister of State Sile deaseiligh, TD has opened a new translational research facility at St Luke’s Hospital in Dublin, which is a strategic development between DIT’s Radiation and Environmental Science Institute and the Department of Radiation Oncology at the design of St Luke’s is designed to be a research facility focused on radiotherapy research with the aim of making radiotherapy treatments stronger and safer. This work is designed to make progress in the areas of treatment efficiency and patient care. The research hopes to minimize side effects of radiation therapy.

Lecturer publishes book

DIT lecturer Thomas Conroy has published a book on entrepreneurship, aimed at students and business professionals.

The book, entitled ‘New Venture Creation in Ireland’, is a comprehensive guide to fundamental questions and answers that must be considered when taking the plunge into business. It does this by breaking down the key stages and planning steps, and plans through its different chapters.

Trinity, UCD to remain in USI

Following recommendations by students arising in UCD and Trinity College to remain themselves from USI. Students in the respective colleges have voted to remain affiliated to USI. Trinity students voted in favour of remaining in USI to 38% to 35% to remain affiliated to USI, while UCD students voted by a margin of 73% to 27%.

DIT musician wins award

Amy O’Neill, a second year student in the School of Engineering and Energy Systems Comprehensive School and a tenor saxophonist with the DIT Wind Band, project, has been awarded a Higher Education Authority Fellowship by the Royal Irish Academy of Music for a four year period at a recent-grade two music degree. DIT musician’s career began in St. Joseph’s Secondary School where she played the recorder in a band. ‘‘Breaking the Cycle’’ was the title of the song which was so successful that the students at the school wrote it into their repertoire. The song was put in place last September in the Department of Education & Skills’ Irish World Music and Dance Conservatory of Music and Drama, and the success of the project has won the Cycle initiative.

Repercussions for DITSU protest decision

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

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

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

Although DITSU cannot take back their decision now, they will have to do all they can to regain the trust of other colleges around the country. Maybe DITSU can interact more with students clubs and groups to find out whether their students actually want to protest for their rights? For a free education?

Students full of spirit

The recent budget has improved an increase of 25c on a single measure of spirits and 35c on 'alcopops', the sugary bottled drinks, which are especially popular with underage drinkers. The minister has again attempted to reach the youth drinking culture in Ireland, i.e. the fact that we drink while understanding the problem of where the drink comes from when we do. Although commendable, this move is lacking in any imaginative ways to educate young people. Students wake up one morning and decide to drink more than any other social grouping in the country. Like any culture, the youth drinking culture has developed over time. Young people have no problem with drinking to excess on a regular basis and a 10% price increase on selected drinks will not affect this in the slightest.

If the government wishes to really confront the problem, they must address that the youth drinking culture is a product of this country and did not appear overnight. Alcohol is everywhere. Pat Kenny recently gave away free bottles of champagne on the Toy Show. Milo Corcoran, the host of the second vehicular organisation in the country, suggested that these were Sky Digital's way to get in the second success of the 'magic on Monday'. Impressive foreign leader comes to Ireland. Bertie Ahern takes him down the pub for a pint.

This example does not go to any appreciable or out of place. This is the point that the government seems to be missing. The only way the drinking culture is a product of the nation's drinking culture and one will not be remedied without the other. If we look at the government's report it shows that the government wants to stop young people from drinking. But also shows that they have no idea how to do it. The first step politicians should take is to discuss their eyes and recognise that this problem didn't simply appear overnight.

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NEWS

Dempsey considering ‘learn now, pay later’ scheme

By Barry Whyte

The Department of Education is currently considering a “learn now, pay later” scheme to fund third level education.

The scheme would work on the premise that a student would have to pay all the tuition fees while in college, but would not have to pay a single contribution from their wage after graduation once they have reached a certain income threshold.

This system is, the Minister is at pains to point out, just a suggestion. He is currently examining a number of other countries’ systems in order to find the best manner of funding third level education.

Other options to fund third level include: a full return of fees, which were abolished in 1995; the involvement of banks in providing low-cost loans to students and an increase in the annual registration charge by 10%.

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

The Committee said that this would not be unreasonable given the cost to the exchequer of tuition fees.

In Australia, where the “learn now, pay later” scheme is in operation, it is believed to be the fairest system available. It has also widened the access to third level education by students from lower income backgrounds.

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

The USI have opposed the “learn now, pay later system” and the re-introduction of full fees, which could be as much as €1,200.

They also protested against the increase in the annual registration fee last year.

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

What the Budget means to students

By Darragh Clifford

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

Documentation released with the Budget shows the Independent Estimates Review Committee proposing a 10% increase in the student registration fee for 2003/2004.

The budget might have far-reaching effects for students; in addition tovrease the overall cost of registering places at third level, the committee believes this (charge) is a reasonable proposal”.

But apart from fees, what does Budget 2003 mean for students? A single measure of spirits will now be 25c and 35c on ‘alcopops’, the sugary bottled drinks, which are especially popular with underage drinkers. The Government is attempting to curb the youth drinking culture and one will not be remedied without the other. This move shows that the Government wants to stop young people from drinking. But also shows that they have no idea how to do it.

It is a plan to stop young people from drinking. But also shows that they have no idea how to do it. The first step politicians should take is to discuss their eyes and recognise that this problem didn’t simply appear overnight.

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The Colombia Three: bring them home?

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

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

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

Those in South Armagh would ask if we can trust Colombia, a country in a state of emergency at the moment, to try these men. There is plenty to support this argument. Their case has already been prejudiced by public comments made by senior political and judicial figures in Colombia and by David Trimble over here. They will also be tried under the old judge and no jury. On the 1st of December, the trial was suspended, to resume in February of next year.

The case was suspended as the two key witnesses for the prosecution, defectors from FARC, were due to give evidence. No reason was given why they couldn't travel by plane. The witness, Mr Edwin Giovanni Rodriguez, was described as a former FARC guerrilla, currently in detention for unspecified reasons. The second man, John Alexander Rodriguez, not related, was in a state witness protection programme and could not be found in time for this week's hearing. Both witnesses are in State-controlled programmes but they fail to show. One can only guess at the agenda of the Colombian government. Is this the country to which we are entrusting these men?

Although Colombia has the oldest formal democracy in South America, it is a country torn apart by civil war. The war pitches the guerrillas - consisting of the main FARC movement with 20,000 members or sympathizers - and the smaller ELN against the government and 6,000 paramilitaries.

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

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

The fumigation has affected the poor peasant farmers who have had to move off their land because of fears that it will damage their health. Meanwhile, FARC can simply move to another part of the area and start up again. Thus the size of Switzerland and they use it to produce drugs using the local peasants.

The other branch of the American solution to the current war is to provide arms for the government forces. If indeed these men were acting under orders from the IRA, then those who gave the orders were acting well outside of any remit they might claim to have.

Their cause is not served by training FARC guerrillas. FARC have caused news of recent events to come up with a totally new title for their particular brand of terrorism: narco-terrorism. I.e. half left-wing terrorist group, half drug-manufacturing industrial corporation. Although they have a human rights agenda and intent to address issues of injustice and inequality, fighting for so-called justice, whatever the crimes they have committed, the international court where they are supposed to be discommissions and leaving the war behind.

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

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

September 11th, as we are constantly reminded, has changed the world for everyone. Terrorism is now the number one crime in America and Irish-Americans are now placing the emphasis on their Americanness rather than their Irishness. Sinn Fein must be very careful of how they deal with this situation.

They've always been quite good at manipulating their own image in the media and among their followers. But the United States has experienced an upsurge in hyper-nationalist feeling that has impacted on their cultural support among the Irish-American community.

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

The trial collapsed because of the Civil War in Colombia and the emergency situation that this has brought about. This situation will not have changed significantly by February. Therefore, whatever crimes they have allegedly committed, the three men cannot be assured of a fair trial. This trial must not take place in Colombia.

It must take place in an international court where, whatever the outcome, can be seen to be done.
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HE Luas system was to be making its way to Dublin a sensible solution to problems relating to public transport. It was to be operational by 2003. It was to consist of three functioning lines, initially. Now, the earliest date for Luas to be in operation will be some time in 2004. Even then, the opening of the lines will be staggered. After the Talbot road line is opened, there will be a delay before work on the next line is complete.

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

Both Dublin and Montpellier decided in 1998 that they would develop a light rail transport service for their respective citizens, Dublin set itself the target of 2003 and Montpellier set itself the deadline of 2004. The delay in Ireland can be learned from Montpellier.

Of course the comparison between the two projects is not an equal one, after all. Dublin is a European capital and, as such, has had to deal with an effective in population. But this is also true of Montpellier, which has, over the course of the last twenty-five years, moved up from the twenty-fifth to eighth largest town in France in terms of population size.

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

The decision was allocated to the development of the required railways for les Hirondelles by the French government. Has this been the difference in how the matter of development has been handled, both by the French and Irish authorities?

Hardly, as the Department of Transport’s estimates for most projects were passed to the Railway Procurement Agency but also stated that the RPA will borrow the requisite amount of 90 million in 2003.

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

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

Vahid Gheziri, a spokesperson for the Islamic Students Association said, "We are not looking for a revolution. We are looking for freedom of expression and freedom after expression".

The death sentence is punishing Mr Aghajari for his opinion, which is certainly against international human rights standards. Just for a moment, pause and put yourself in the shoes of the student Provosts. For the RPA has had to deal with the construction of Luas, but this process has taken longer than expected. The project was finished three months before deadline and within budget, but the Luas system may be a major contribution to alleviate pressure on the existing forms of public transport. The cost of the carriages is now a drain on public funding. This is the same funding that will not cover the development of the lines in time for the planned opening.

The longer the time these trams are kept in storage, the more opportunity for the service to recoup the initial investment is lost. More than 25 million in public funds will be spent on the trams. It is impossible to predict what level of income is being lost by the delay to the service's completion.

This situation is like someone buying a television before they had access to any electricity source or procuring a fishing rod while in the Sahara desert. The trams currently have no use without the tracks and power lines they need to run on.

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

The situation, though, is not without precedent. The Islamic Republic's judiciary to review the verdict.

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

How many Irish student activists would put their lives on the line for the sake of freedom of expression? While Iran is in the midst of communist and religious terrorism, the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ordered the judiciary to review the verdict.

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Croatia: something different

By Ian Mannix, DIT Cathal Brugha St

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

We left in late August, which is probably the best time of year to go. The weather is still hot and the crowds weren’t too bad. Our plans were simple: fly into Zagreb, the capital, and then tour the coast. After a few days had passed, we caught another ferry to Korcula, a neighbouring island. When we got there we were luck enough to find another great campsite again beside the beach, with its own pool and other amenities. At this stage, it was early September, and we were able to get good value from the low season rates, which cater into effect in many places at the end of August. Again, we enjoyed the beaches and cheap restaurants at night. That’s one of the great things about Croatia, eating out is actually affordable, not like in Ireland. In good road Croatian restaurants, a big pizza and a pint will only set you back about 5 Euros. After a few days in Korcula, we headed back to the Croatian mainland to Dubrovnik, which we were both keen to see. This beautiful old city had been heavily shielded during the 1991 - 1992 conflict. Up to 2000 shells severely damaged many of the city’s historic buildings, palaces and old tiled roofs, for which the city is famous. I remembered seeing this on the news at the time, and was interested to see how the city had recovered.

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

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

I ended up snooping around an old hotel or the centre of the city that had been shelled and then deserted after the war. It was a surreal experience, walking around some of the 600 empty bedrooms and seeing the crater holes in the outdoor swimming pool.

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

Look, beyond Croatia’s past troubles, and take the plunge. Your friends will think you are mad, but those scarey nudists lurking around the beach will just laugh. It’s one of the most interesting countries that you can visit in Europe, and it’s one place you really must see. It’s well worth spending a few days there.

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

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

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

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

Having escaped from Frongoch Prison, he re-organised the Brotherhood and trained the IRA.

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

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

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

His ruthless intelligence network paralleled the British spymaster.

From Belfast to Cork, British agents could not operate.

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

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

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

2. SEAN LEMASS

It was Lemass’ fate to spend almost his entire political life under the shadow of the famous war of independence.

Born in Woodfield, Co. Sligo in 1890, he was a mature man by the time a republic was declared in 1916, but this cannot hide his remarkable man.

Michael Collins’ ‘Squad’ had a right to self-rule. Parnell was a remarkable man.

But it was as Taoiseach that Lemass showed his true greatness and this is why he deserves his place in this list.

3. CHARLES STUART PARNELL

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

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

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

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

He succeeded in uniting all national and anti-Catholic factions to make a Nationalist Party that could compete with the Liberals and the Conservativ in the House of Commons.

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

As Yeats said; ‘I turned my back on foreign themes and decided that Irish was more important than the individual’.

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

4. EAMON DE VALERA

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

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

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

Such was his success in this area that by the time a republic was declared in 1949, it almost didn’t matter.

It is in his achievements that the 1938 Constitution is a more significant historical date than the 1949 declaration.

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

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

5. WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Yeats was born in Dublin in 1865 but lived in London until 1880. He spent his holidays with his grandparents in Ireland and developed a love of the countryside that never left him.

He played as vital a role as the Generals and the Scottish League in asserting the nation’s claim that the Irish were different from the British.

He founded the Irish National Theatre with Lady Gregory.

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6. BOB GELFORD

Bob Geldof was born in Dublin and died in 1956. A highly intelligent man, he did poorly in his Leaving Certificate and left the country. After a brief sojourn in Canada as a journalist, he formed the Boomtown Rats and moved to London.

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

7. BONO

Bono is politically aware of world troubles.

8. MARY ROBINSON

Mary Robinson, a woman of great courage and independence.

9. GEORGIE BEST

It is often overlooked that Mary Robinson was famously contemptuous of the US Treasury Secretary. Many rock stars preach about world issues but only Bono is taken seriously by those in power. This only happens when you know your stuff and can do damage if not taken seriously.

8. JAMES JOYCE

Joyce’s magnum opus, Ulysses, which regarded as the greatest work of fiction ever. Which really should be enough reason to be in this list. The fact that he continued to write was almost challenging to consistently interesting prose in English certainly guarantees his position.

The stream of consciousness style was first established in his final work, Finnegans Wake, which is a circular narrative with no beginning or end. Although he wrote plays and poetry he is more famous for his prose, including the semi-autobiographical “Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man” and his collection of short stories, “Dubliners”.

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

9. MARY ROBINSON

Mary Robinson, a woman of great courage and independence.

10. GEORGE BEST

It is accepted that the three most naturally talented footballers to ever pull on a shirt were Pelé, Diego Maradona and a Belfast boy, son of a Harland and Wolff shipyard worker.

Born in 1946, George Best was only 17 when he made his debut for Man Utd. He was only 19 when he destroyed the legendary Switzerland team, scoring twice in a 5-1 victory. It was this match which made him a star.

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

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

In the end, he was consumed by the swings of the world. His talent was as great as any but every time you see a footballer driving a flash car or wearing an Armani suit, remember that George started it all.
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Coca-Cola invented Santa Claus. Right? Christmas is therefore a corporate event, far removed from the feelings of love for your fellow man and Christian charity. Right? Coca-Cola, being a large multinational corporation, have high-jacked a religious festival and made money more important than the birth of Christ. Right? Therefore, as the cynics would have us believe, Christmas is not worth celebrating at all because of its crass commercialism. Right? Wrong. The belief that Coca-Cola invented Christmas is entirely erroneous and based on a tissue of lies which the DIT Independent will now expose a large hole through.

Santa has always been an essential part of the Christmas celebration, but the modern image of Santa didn’t develop until well into the 19th century. He was an American society of the early 19th century. But they didn’t settle on one size for his Santa figures (they ranged from elf-like to man-sized), his poem describes a miniature sleigh “with a little old driver,” Nicholas was still a small figure, however — the poem describes a miniature sleigh “with a little old driver.”

Meanwhile, in parts of Europe such as Germany, Nicholas the gift-giver had been superseded by a representation of the infant Jesus (the Christ child, or “Christkindlein”). The modern Santa Claus derived from these two images: St. Nicholas the elf-like gift-bringer described by Moore, and a friend’s “Kris Kringle,” from Christkindlein. In 1863, a woodcut of the traditional Nicholas figure (tall, with long robes) accompanied by a Dutch rhyme about “Sante Claus.” On Christmas Eve of 1822, another New Yorker, Clement Clarke Moore, wrote down and read to his children a series of verses; his poem was published a year later as “An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas” (more commonly known today by its opening line, “Twas the night before Christmas . . .”).

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

Although Nast never settled on one size for his Santa figures (they ranged from elf-like to man-sized), his 1881 “Merry Old Santa Claus” drawing is quite close to the modern-day image. The Santa Claus figure, although not yet standardized, was ubiquitous by the late 19th century. Santa was portrayed as both large and small; he was usually round but sometimes of normal or slight build and he dressed in fur or cloth suits of red, blue, green, or purple.

A Boston printer named Louis Prang introduced the English custom of Christmas cards to America, and in 1885 he issued a card featuring a red-suited Santa. The chubby Santa with a red suit (like an “overweight superhero”) began to replace the fur-dressed, multicolo red Santa Claus.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the burgeoning Coca-Cola company was still looking for ways to increase sales of their product during winter, then a slow time of year for the soft drink market. They created a series of drawings that associated the new present-image of Santa as a red suited fat man with Coca-Cola and their colors.

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

The jolly, ruddy, sack-carrying Santa with a red suit and flowing white whiskers had become the standard image of Santa Claus by the 1920s, several years Coca-Cola used their first Santa drawings that associated the Coca-Cola and their colors. Coca-Cola certainly helped cementing that image of Santa Claus in the public consciousness. The Santa image may have been standardized before Coca-Cola adopted it for their advertisements, but Coca-Cola had a great deal to do with establishing Santa Claus as a ubiquitous Christmas figure in America at a time when the holiday was still taking the transition from a religious observance to a largely secular and highly commercial celebration.

Contrary to popular knowledge, Coca-Cola did not invent Santa Claus. Santa Claus was a figure derived from the gift-bringers, Christmas-time characters of a number of different cultures and diffused through the American society of the early 19th century. Coca-Cola certainly helped make Santa Claus one of the most popular men in America, but they didn’t invent him.
Exiled Culchies must have justice

Thirty years ago, a great civil rights activist, in whose name a symphonic shadow still exists today, delivered the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. and had a dream speech. This momentous decree came as a beacon of light to thousands of culchies in Dublin who had been living in the flames of withering prejudices and mockery. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of inferiority.

But, thirty years on, we must face the fact that the culchie is not seen as equal. Thirty years later, the massacre of segregation and discrimination still sorely cripple the life of the culchie. Thirty years later, the culchie is still living in the political corners of Dublin society and finds himself an outlaw in his adopted city. Today, we demand justice. When architects of the Republic wrote the Proclamation, they dreamt of a society where jackenets and culchies lived side by side. It

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

The fact is that the culchie is not seen as equal

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

I have a dream that our children will be able to live in a city where they will not be judged by their culchiness but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that the City of Dublin, where jackenets' lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and multifaction, will be transformed into a situation where little culchies boys and culchie girls will be able to join hands with little jackenets boys and girls, walk, together, as equals.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that every jackenets will learn the value of filling the land, of drinking Murphy's, of experiencing the Puck Fair, of inhaling clean air. This is our hope.

This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith, we will be able to teach the jackenets that they do not hold a monopoly on this city, that the culchie who live in inner-city flats know as much if not more about this city than the jackenets who live in nice suburbs, but do not have the same roots as their parents. And, if Dublin is to be a great city, this must become true.

So, let freedom ring from the prodigious hills of Donegal. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of Kerry. Let freedom ring from the small farms of Louth.

Let freedom ring from the fields of Fermanagh. But not only that. Let freedom ring from Antrim, from Down, from Armagh, from Tyrone.

Let freedom ring from Limerick.

Let freedom ring from every hill and every mountain. From every culchie town, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we are free from prejudice and toadling, from every county, we will be able to speed up the day when all Dublin's children, culchie and jackenets, will be able to join hands and say, "free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"
Shortt stretches Vicar St stint

By Nicky Griffin

PAT Shortt extended his run in Vicar Street, adding an extra night due to the popular demand for his unique style of comedy.

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

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

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

Maurice Hickey, a local political candidate was a real crowd-pleaser as he kicked-started the show sharing ‘Redables’ concerns over the plastic bags! Shortt moulded the audience in a very interactive show in which he picked random unsuspecting punters out for a laugh.

At one point, Shortt had a step-ladder up on the Vicar Street balcony to stick up Maurice Hickey’s election posters and, as he said himself, ‘to clean out the gutter’.

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

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

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

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

Supporting Pat on his nationwide tour was comic Darrell O’Kane. A former actress and best remembered for her appearances on ‘Fergus’s Wedding’ and ‘The Fitz’ (BBC), O’Kane started on the comedy circuit in 1986.

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

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

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

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

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

Creme de la Femme

By Eoin Murphy

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

They sold out arenas was walking with baited and slightly beer drenched breath for a special show and what a show they received.

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

They provided a healthy mix of both old and newly arrived to whip the crowd into a frenzy. It seems that even to today’s popular and rival rock market there is still room for the old reliables.

One of the more impressive aspects of the concert was the international appeal that was created by this eclectic band. Aside from two crazy Italian women, twirling beer and moshing at the feet of the crowd, there were notable country-dwelling Americans, New Zealanders, English and a hearty collection of Americans.

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

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

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

Black Magic in the Olympia

By Clara Cunnane

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

The DJ sets creates a blissful audience that gently sways us into anticipates the performance. They create an unusual visual spectacle: just two guitarists, a drum machine and amps embellished with leads. Lead guitarist, the hugely adored Ryan, told me afterwards that there is also a bassist and drummer, but they could not afford to fly from Philadelphia.

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

After ‘Teeth’, the DJ reappears to lead us into the main act. BRMC arrive to a euphoric reaction—controversially, they open with new song, ‘6 Barrel Shotgun’, but it is well received. The set is a superb blend of crowd pleasers from the eponymous debut, and brilliant new tunes from a new LP the band expect to have out by April.

The difference between BRMC and other bands is that they create such an amazing atmosphere, not by stage tricks, but by genuine songwriting. Their ability to change the show earlies or offstage, although they are polite with it. The songs begin to merge into a spellbinding mesh as I relinquish myself to the music.

Deafening guitars, pounding drums, fluid lights and swirling red smoke transcend the room to another level. "What Ever Happened to My Rock ‘n Roll [punk song]" is the highlight, as the crowd connect with the band in a perfect unity of understanding.

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

A truly religious experience.

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club

The Olympia

By Clara Cunnane

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A truly religious experience.
Anarchy from the UK

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

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

Defining the Alabama 3 is a task which any writer would relish. It would not be impossible to write an academic thesis on this lot, although their non-palpable demarcation would not welcome it. Let me throw in a few my own suggestions on their budding pot style. Cross Deep South, NWA advocates with Morrisey reading, hard-core socialists and you’re still not even close.

Their countrified gospel junk from Nashville via Brixton has made the muses something of a mysterious cult. The band’s sound is as strange as their physical presence, which itself is reminiscent of the wizened characters of an Irvine Welsh novel.

I had never seen the group live before but having experienced their unique take on Cool, I can say I was suitably impressed. Their ferocious inner heat of performance is infectious, yet this passion never concedes to sloppiness and each number is performed to perfection.

The thin and gaunt silhouette of the band’s frontman, the Very Reverend Dr D Wayne Love, is indicative of his postmodern, post-brat-chic, narcotic ravaged insatiable persona.

Their energetic performance outdid their three albums in equal measure. The audience reserved special enthusiasm for classic numbers from their first album ‘Exile on Coldharbour Lane’ such as ‘You Don’t Dance To Techno Anymore’ and the theme tune to The Simpsons, ‘Woke Up This Morning’.

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

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

If you’re not familiar with the Alabama 3, buy all three of their albums. At once. They are anarchists. They’re the Sex Pistols for the new millennium, but much, much hotter than Rancid or Viceroys, even dreamt of being. They don’t have no country, don’t fly no flag. They can no slack for the Union Jack. The Sirens and Stripes have got them jeezegged’.

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Santa Cruz is Comin’ To Town

By Alana Doogan

The Thrills

Santa Cruz (You’re Not That Far) E.P.

The Thrills released their debut single, Santa Cruz (You’re Not That Far) on 5th November. Their style is based somewhere between the Beach Boys, Ryan Adams, and Travis. Notably, they share the latter’s forness for the banjo and use of the ballad.

The title track is the most upbeat song they offer on the EP. It’s got edge to a slow start, with a honky-tonk style accompanied and slow back beat, but the tight harmonies and syncopated, varying piano in the chorus soon boosts the tempo and gives the song a bit of life.

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

The third song, Your Love Is Like Las Vegas starts with alarming similarity to Cere Penney’s Twenty-Four Hours from Tiefs but thankfully breaks free from the similarities to a Burt Bacharach love as soon as the vocals enter.

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

On this EP, they show that they are not only a group that can write songs but also have the ability to record them well.

Nothing Posh in D4

By Stephen McMillan

The D4 - Come On EP

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

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

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

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

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

If Johnny Thunders were still alive, he’d be proud to see his legacy stretching as far it has. Pure quality and the perfect stocking filler.

Memories of Mic with posthumous LP

By Nicky Griffin

Mic Christopher - Skylarkin

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

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

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

The four songs that constitute the ‘Heyday EP’ are also on Skylarkin. ‘Heyday’ is an upbeat showcase of his deep vocals, ‘Kid’s Song’ is a fragile, innocent song about segregation and ‘Listen Girl’ is a melodic, dreamy love song, ‘Looking for Fog’ is uplifting, with a chorus a little too similar to ‘Heyday’.

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

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

By Bryan Collins

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

A long time ago in a galaxy far far away, there lived a certain baker, exceedingly good, who wrote down a few simple instructions on how to make some delicious treat. They became known as the famous recipe for making the original Star Wars trilogy. Ever since, the franchise has grown to become one of the greatest enterprises of our time.

Jackson's interpretation of J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings is a hair-raisingly epic experience. Still though, I approached this special edition with a touch of scepticism. Its release is a special edition tale of Elves, Orcs and Wizards won me over. The four CD volume edition with a touch of commentary. Its release is a "hair-raising" epic experience.

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

The answer is a definite no. The extra half-hour adds greatly in what was already a film so broad in depth and scope. It was frighteningly included in the extra half-hour are scenes in the Shire, the lunch giving sequence, and a sort of action footage. This is the definitive version of the film. (Alas no Tom Hulce, though Jackson explains why in the commentary.)

If you were to ask me, Fellowship of the Ring. This special edition won't change your mind. This DVD is going to appeal to those who are not sure whether to buy the book and praised the film. The exhaustive list of extras should satisfy even the hungriest hobbit enthusiast.

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An early combative attitude from UCD's Brian O'Connell proved costly as the Dublin side lashed out against DIT in the early minutes. However, DIT's Arne O'Byrne was able to keep the ball away from his rivals and establish the early lead. Within the first half, DIT defender Kieran Dunne scored from a corner to give DIT the lead, followed by a goal from DIT's Kevin Maguire in the second half, giving DIT a 2-0 lead at half-time.

UCD's Lewis McCormick scored a late consolation goal, but it was not enough to pull back from the 2-0 deficit. DIT's performance was marked by a strong defense and efficient passing, leading to a comfortable victory in the Intermediate League final against UCD. The win cemented DIT's position as one of the top teams in the league, and they are now in good position to compete for the championship.
**Hynes takes silver as DIT come fifth in Cross Country Championships**

By Colin McGann

Since we have arrived back to college it’s been raining non-stop, or so it seems. The aquatic centre, it’s not very glamorous being a sportsperson these days under construction national aquatic centre. It’s not very glamorous being a sportsperson these days. Since we have arrived back to college it’s been raining non-stop, or so it seems. The aquatic centre, it’s not very glamorous being a sportsperson these days. 

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

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

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

With three runners to score this put DIT in contention for a high placement. Liam Dunne followed Gary home in 16th place and the DIT team was completed by Austin Coughlan putting in a maximum defensive display to hold off a late ITT surge and ensure DIT ran out 14 point winners.

**Unbeaten and hungry for success**

By Beccasine Ni Ghaluainigh

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

Playing with a strong breeze, Trinity went into a 2-01 lead before Laura Halligan expertly converted a penalty she had won herself. Trinity hit back with a goal and two points, before Halligan again slipped her marker and ran clear of the DIT defence to leave the half-time score 3-02 to 1-01 in favour of Trinity.

Playing with the breeze, Halligan started the half with a typical goal, followed by another. In front of a cheering roar from Ann Marie Buckley the keener soldiered on.

A real tussle seemed to be going but sadly, the heavy conditions took their toll on DIT and it was the DIT girls who flitted the stronger, scoring freely in the last quarter to win by 5-06 to 1-03.

Best for DIT on the day were forward Ann Marie Buckley, midfielder Lindsay Gilmour and and defence were the DIT girls who flitted the stronger, scoring freely in the last quarter to win by 5-06 to 1-03.

**Hynes takes silver as DIT come fifth in Cross Country Championships**

By Colin McGann

The seven athletes are due to travel to Newcastle for the Inter Varsity Track and Field Championships. Gary Hynes will be competing for a medal in the 3000m, and Herbie McClelland is delighted with the display by the DIT athletes and so one athlete had to race twice. This meant that DIT could also pick up a medal in the sprint.

The most important athletics fixture takes place in Dublin. On the 15th February DCU will be hosting the Inter Varsity cross-country championships. In the New Year, Herbie is looking forward to new athletes to the club. Runners of all levels are welcome and this race would be ideal for people to come together for the coming year.

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

On the other hand, third quarter regaining their lead by only a handful of baskets. DIT however had a bad third quarter going down 13 points. The side showed their remarkable resilience in the final quarter regaining their lead within two minutes. Declan Rice and Dermot Kavanagh both worked very hard in defence to hold off the RCSI attack and hold onto a 6-point lead going into the final quarter of the game.

The Basketball Club won Club of the Year in February 2002

**DCU and St Pats interrupt winning run**

By Sarah Graham

DIT Ladies basketball team started the ICBA league in style on November 28th with a convincing 87-72 victory over DCU. The team is well in form so the DIT side had to prove to themselves once again that they can put a team to the sword.

**Halligan stars as DIT fail to trinity**

By Beccasine Ni Ghaluainigh

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The Basketball Club won Club of the Year in February 2002
Top ten sporting moments of 2002

1. Irish beat Australia
   On a unique day when all three of the Southern Hemisphere rugby powers met, Ireland finally, and with Mark O\'Brien converted six penalties. The Aussies could not cope with Ireland\'s tactics and excellent kicking game. This combined with a passionate defensive display led by captain Brian O\'Driscoll ensured a famous win for Irish rugby and a place on our top ten.

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

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

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

3. Robbie Keane v Germany
   The one moment of true drama (on that pitch) in Ireland\'s World Cup campaign. Having been much better on the other side throughout the game, McCarthy\'s side, 1-0 down to a Miroslav Klose header, found themselves within minutes of a World Cup exit.

4. Paul McGinley wins the Ryder Cup for Europe
   Tactically it was a brilliant move by European captain Sam Torrance. For Sunday\'s singles matches, he sent out his old pros, who delivered. Colin Montgomerie, Padraig Harrington, Bernhard Langer and Thomas Bjorn all recorded early wins. But the drama, fittingly, came down to the 18th green and "little McGinley.

Just like Christy O\'Connor Jr, he\'d said he\'d do it in 1999. Fellow Irishman Paul McGinley won the Ryder Cup on The Belfry\'s famous 18th. In the previous match, Paul Arriaga chipped in from the bunker to give the USA a crucial half point. Enter McGinley. He pulled his approach shot to the green, and his chip back on left him with an 11ft left-to-right putt, to halve his match, and win the Ryder Cup. Talk about pressure. But it was nothing to the Dubliner as he slotted home the toughest putt all year.

5. Media Puzzle wins the Melbourne Cup
   Not only the highlight of the year for Irish racing, but also a landmark victory in one of the world\'s greatest races. The winning horse that stops a nation Media Puzzle became the fourth Northern Hemisphere-trained horse to do so. Huge credit must go to the brave decision to send Media Puzzle to Australia, despite the loss of John and the fact he was guaranteed a place in the Melbourne Cup field. After winning victory in the Cox Plate, Media Puzzle was backed from 66/1 to 4/1 favourite for the Flemington spectacle and duly obliged with a stunning victory.

6. Galway-born Lord Clifton Wrottesley narrowly missed out on a bronze medal at the Skeleton event
   It was a long time Olympian.

7. Robbie Keane saved Ireland against Germany
   The less controversial Keane saved Ireland against Germany

8. Michael Schumacher joined the legendary Juan Manuel Fangio as a five time F1 Champion. Along the way, he amassed a record 151 points, won a record 11 races, became the first driver to escape every race on the podium, secured the title in the quickest time, and now holds the record for most wins.

9. Sergio Perez in the F1 Grand Prix of Europe
   The perfect driver in a flawless Ferrari made for a dream season and thus it makes our list.

10. Ireland\'s miracle rebirth
    When Roger Casement remembered as one of the finest talents never to fully realize his unquestionable ability.

By Jason Burke
Over Christmas and New Year, grab a can, sit back and watch the darts. Before you go digging the page, this article is in the right section of the paper. Yet it is a sport and young, darts players can be classed as sportspersons - not quite athletes though.

Over the festive season, Darts World Championships will take place. Why are there two? The former was sponsored by money and advertising and a split occurred in 1994. In 1996, the BDO, who sponsor the PDC, began an anti-doping campaign, with darts fans getting to enjoy two great tournaments each year.

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

By Miguel Delaney, Daragh Clifford, Jason Burke and Ciaran Murray

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when it suits you

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AIB, Bolton Street – 874 0409
Anne-Marie White
AIB, Kevin Street – 475 9680
and AIB, Aungier Street – 475 9654 about

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