2013


DIT News Society

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DITSU could need bailout without shops on GG campus

Low reserve funds in SU accounts could mean a loan would be needed for winding up of shops, according to president Glenn Fitzpatrick

Legacy of shops’ debt continues its hold over DITSU finances

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DIT Societies in a Christmas fund-raising effort, including money for Student Assistance Fund

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Survey aims to clear the smoke

DITSU to survey students on whether to implement a wider ban on cigarettes in DIT

Conor Campbell

A student survey will take place this week or next over a possible smoking ban across DIT, according to Fiachra Duffy, VP for welfare for DITSU. The survey will ask students separately whether they would support a smoking ban on current DIT campuses and whether they would like a smoking ban to be imposed on the future Grangeegorman campus as of its opening.

Smoking, of course, already banned inside all public buildings in Ireland, but the proposed ban would mean that smoking would be disallowed on any DIT owned property, inside or out.

As of the last general meeting, DIT-SU was evenly split on whether to disallow smoking entirely or to maintain the current policy of designated smoking areas.

Based on evidence from other third tier institutions around Dublin, however, the results of a student survey could be very different. “We have the results from Trinity and UCD,” Duffy told The Edition, adding that both colleges voted in favour of a smoking ban opposed to designated smoking areas.

As such, Duffy is confident that he will be able to “guide policy and guide decisions better from the results of a survey”.

While the survey will be primarily focused on whether a smoking ban should be implemented across DIT campuses, it will also ask about other aspects of smoking culture.

“One of the questions we are going to be asking students is ‘Are you a smoker? How often do you smoke? Would you like to quit?’” said Duffy, adding that “if a student is thinking of quitting, we should be encouraging them in that direction”.

Regardless of how the survey pans out, there may be problems in implementation. The current policy of designated smoking areas is often flouted around the DIT campuses, with smokers often congregating outside the front of Aungier street’s campus, as well as on other campuses, despite clear warning signs.

Additionally, the proposed new ban on using electronic cigarettes indoors, as highlighted in The Edition (Issue Three, the 6th of November), has yet to be ratified following the deferral of a health and safety sub-committee meeting, and its implementation remains unclear.

Glenn Fitzpatrick is still finalising the dates of the smoking questionnaire, but the survey will most likely take place this week and possibly continue into next week if needed.

Drinking can lead to break-ups

After USI ended its relationship with DrinkAware.ie, DITSU will ask the Student Council whether they should follow the same route

Al McConnell

Following USI’s decision to end its relationship with industry-funded responsible drinking body DrinkAware.ie, DITSU will be putting it to the students in semester two on whether to maintain dealings with the organisation.

The decision was made at USI National Council earlier this month, based on the widespread criticism of DrinkAware.ie’s effectiveness as an industry self-regulator. The group is funded by the drinks industry, including major corporation Diageo, owners of Guinness and the body behind Arthur’s Day.

DITSU remains free to link with DrinkAware.ie for the moment, though signals from sabbatical officers suggest it is very open to a re-evaluation of that position, if the Student Council decides so.

According to president Glenn Fitzpatrick: “Make no bones about it, DrinkAware.ie is Diageo.”

Fitzpatrick also pointed to the questionable influence of the group over SU activities in the past, including pressure put on past welfare officers, including himself, to organise DrinkAware.ie presence on campus.

“There’s never a payment for these events as they’re a registered charity,” Fitzpatrick continued. “But Diageo’s main ambition is to recruit new drinkers, and you can’t get around that fact.”

He went on to highlight the “paltry” award money given out as part of the Dare2BDrinkAware campaign, which provides campaign footage in a number of ways that the organisation can then use.

Ultimately, Fitzpatrick argued: “You wouldn’t run a responsible finance campaign in association with Anglo Irish Bank – borrow at your own pace – and this is the alcohol awareness equivalent.”

Any decision on the relationship between DITSU and DrinkAware.ie will rest with VP for welfare Fiachra Duffy, who made his openness to a rethink early in second semester clear to The Edition, as well as questioning a decision by the drinks body not to come onto DIT campuses as part of the ‘Welfare November Vote Week’, which cited a lack of resources as the key factor.

DrinkAware.ie has defended its position, and told The Edition that it would be happy to engage with DITSU and Student Council over the USI decision and future cooperation.

DIT's a circus

Rebecca Brannigan

Circus and Juggling Soc

The National Circus Festival of Ireland was held in Tralee from November 15 to 17. The three day event happens around the same time every year and was once called the Tralee Circus Festival but has only been the National Circus Festival of Ireland for the past two years.

The festival is jam-packed with things for all the family to enjoy, from workshops in the convention hall to shows in the local theatre; there is something to entertain everyone. DIT itself had over 50 students representing The DIT Circus and Juggling Society along with several members of the DIT Samba Society.

The festival is the first trip away of the year for the Circus and Juggling Society, as there are a few different festivals and conventions on throughout the year around the country, including the European Juggling Convention which will take place in Cork in summer 2014.

The circus acts performing were of a high caliber and from all over the world, which brought many different cultures and themes together. These artists not only performed but most also taught a workshop at one time or another in the convention hall during the three-day event.

The highlights of the Festival this year were when the entire main street of Tralee was closed for a few hours so that a show could take place in the street, and when the chairman for the Circus and Juggling Society got up on stage and had his chest waxed for DIT’s chosen charity Barrettstown. He raised over €300 in a few hours.

The atmosphere at the festival was lively and energetic from the convention hall to the street performance and open stage. All in all the weekend was well worth the trip.

DIT's circus and juggling soc at the National Circus Festival Credit: Catherine O’Toole

DIT’s smoking policy has faced implementation problems Credit: Piaras Ó Laoide, Photo Editor

Dare2BDrinkAware competition has been heavily criticised by DITSU president Glenn Fitzpatrick Credit: DrinkAware.ie

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No consensus yet on Academic Calendar

Discussions continue over whether to hold exams before Christmas, after, or a week either side

Al McConnell
Editor

The future structure of DIT’s academic calendar, including when exams take place, remains in doubt as discussions between students, DITSU and the college seem to have reached an impasse.

No date has been set for a final decision on next year’s calendar, with three options currently on the table.

One includes exams before Christmas, another after the holidays, and a more recent plan from the college over reorganising the calendar, and has been presented to the college’s Academic Calendar Implementation Committee. Several members of the committee are still in the process of compiling a report, but the Engineering & Built Environment, Science & Health, and Conservatory of Music & Drama reports demonstrate the same split in opinion.

A change to the current calendar has been proposed by DITSU since 2011, in the hope of improving retention rates. DITSU is now surveying student opinion on the calendars, but if no majority of desires can be found through these processes, it is likely that the status quo will remain. The

Legacy of debt

The lack of funds available to cover these costs is due to the Union currently possessing significantly depleted reserve funds, which were reduced by €100,000s to cover the debt of the shops in the mid- to late-2000s. Although the debt was repaid to DIT, who provided the original loan to the shops with DITSU as guarantor, the Union forgave €200,000 worth of book debt due to it from DITSU Trading Ltd in its accounts last year.

This move allowed the shops to continue operating, reducing their balance sheet deficit from €372k to €160k, but with a view to the money being recouped by DITSU Ltd (the company behind the Union) over a longer period of time.

The emergence of a legal requirement for DIT to publicly tender the Grangegorman campus shop site, which was raised by the Union at a Student Council meeting in October and has been lobbied against since, has, however, put these past financial decisions back in the spotlight.

DITSU Ltd is now without significant reserve funds, a situation Fitzpatrick admits is not ideal: “You always need a rainy day fund, as was the case those years ago”.

Lack of reserves in future

If there were to be no SU shop at Grangegorman, it would also mean DITSU’s reserve funds could not be replenished by the shops, which originally drew upon them.

In the mid-2000s, when DITSU Trading Ltd’s debt ran to over €400,000, DITSU’s reserve enabled it to act as guarantor for the company, and holding adequate reserves is clearly acknowledged as good business practice. A significant portion of the original loan to Trading Ltd, drawn from non-capsulation reserve funds at the time, could be unrecoupable if the shops were to be wound up, which would force DITSU to recover reserve cash from elsewhere, placing a question mark over their financial health.

Were an SU shop to be present at Grangegorman, however, the Union will hopefully recoup funds from it over the coming years.

It is understood that a potential scenario has been forwarded to have both a private shops and a Union shops at Grangegorman, if DITSU cannot obtain the tender to be the sole shop on campus, which would mirror the present situation at UCD.

It is expected that in the next few weeks an answer will be obtained on the Grangegorman shops, and this year’s accounts for both DITSU Ltd and DITSU Trading Ltd will also be published within the next month.

Drama Soc Xmas plays

Drama Society will be putting on two productions this semester, including one by the society’s own Ciaran Dooley. Set in Dublin, the play manages to portray a view on life that is both funny and poignant, which co-director Oisin McCarten describes as “an honest and accurate look of the internal struggles of a group of friends and the dangers of losing control”. Tickets are €5 for performances on the 9th and 10th of December.

The second production is musical ‘Dr Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog’, telling the story of an aspiring villain and the superhero who usually foils his plans. After Horrible falls in love, he must learn to overcome his incompetence, kill the hero, and get the girl. Directed by Katie Dougall, performances will take place on the 11th and 12th of December.

Corrections

In the last issue (Edition 20/11/2013), we inadvertently placed the Senior Football team into the semi-final of the Sigerson Cup. While we have ultimate faith in the team, this was a mistake, as the tournament has not started yet. The team is into the semi-final of the league. We wish them all the best in the Sigerson.

In the last issue, a news bulletin – ‘Funding from On High’ – attributed a statement to a Grangegorman Development Agency Spokesperson. This was in fact a comment made by the Irish Catholic Magazine.

In the last issue, a name was incorrectly given as Kevin Hanly under ‘Edition in Boston’. The individual pictured is Mark Fisher.

Dublin TU update

DIT are continuing their plan to become part of Ireland’s first “Technological Universities”, which will see DIT, Tallaght Institute of Technology and Blanchardstown Institute of Technology amalgamated into one large university.

Legislation regarding the proposed UT’s is still in its early stages according to a spokesperson for DIT.

DIT as well as the other colleges involved is in the, “early stage of consultation” with the government on how the new system will be brought in and how it will operate.

DIT hope to have their proposal ready for the end of January of next year which will then be submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Speaking on behalf of the college, Paul Jackson stated that, “we hope to involve the teaching staff as well as the students of the college in the process”.

The proposal had been met with some criticism when announced by Minister Ruairi Quinn last year.

News Bulletin

Wednesday, December 4th, 2013
www.edition.ie

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One includes exams before Christmas, another after the holidays, and a more recent plan from the President’s office suggests that a week either side be made available for exams.

The latter system would see courses and colleges make their own decision on when to sit exams.

So far, an even split has been observed at each stage of discussion. At the Student Council meeting on November 20, a long discussion ended in a stalemate between those on the ‘more time to revise over holidays’ and ‘get them out of the way to enjoy Christmas’ sides of the debate.

Colleges have also been split on the issue in reports recently submitted to the Academic Calendar Implementation Committee. Several are still in the process of compiling a report, but the Engineering & Built Environment, Science & Health, and Conservatory of Music & Drama reports demonstrate the same split in opinion.

A change to the current calendar has been proposed by DITSU since 2011, in the hope of improving retention rates. DITSU is now surveying student opinion on the calendars, but if no majority of desires can be found through these processes, it is likely that the status quo will remain. The
The weekend included workshops and discussions, including how to promote support for LGBT awareness and equality. Duffy highlighted the importance of this approach, in the context of the stigmatisation and taboos that continue to constrain the lives of people with a certain sexual orientation.

Over 350 third-level students attended the weekend – the 21st event of its kind.

The weekend included workshops on certain LGBT issues, which attendees can choose between, including sexual empowerment, discussion around bi-sexuality and the stereotypes surrounding this, and the importance of LGBT ‘allies’.

This concept is designed to promote support for LGBT awareness and equality from those who do not necessarily identify within that community. LGBT Ally wristbands were included, as a public signal of support, which Duffy feels is of huge importance to the cause.

“There was a lot of discussion around how much it can mean to someone who sees an LGBT Ally wristband in everyday life,” said Duffy. “It’s no great effort for me to put on a band that identifies me as an ally, but it can mean so much to someone else.”

Duffy also told The Edition that the weekend will inform DITSU’s approach to this year’s SHAG week, in the second semester. DITSU is also now in favour of equal marriage, following a unanimous decision at the last Student Council, and will be along side the USI in their campaign in support of passing the 2015 referendum.

DIT’s delegation was among the largest groups present at this year’s Pink Training weekend, which took place at Queen’s University in Belfast earlier this month.

DITSU VP for welfare, Fiachra Duffy, told The Edition: “I wasn’t sure what to expect on the way down, beyond some form of training, but I was hugely impressed with the whole event.

“The creation of a safe space was a very effective approach to the training. There are people present who are either L, G, B or T and are coming from a similar background, or are ‘allies’ to the cause.”

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DIT’s student council voted last Wednesday to support the government’s proposed referendum in 2015, which will give equal marriage rights to same sex couples.

The motion was proposed by Welfare officer Fiachra Duffy who said that “There was no doubt in people’s minds that supporting it was the right thing to do.”

The proposal itself noted, the “diverse student body from which our elected officers come from” as one of the reasons the bill was of such importance.

The bill passed unanimously on the floor as not one of the council raised their hands against the proposition, “the students all backed it entirely” said Fiachra, “it was great to see the progressive change in the students, this is not something which could have been passed even ten years ago”.

When asked whether the stance taken by the union might ostracise students who would oppose the coming referendum he stated that, “no opposition came from the Christian union, the Islamic society or any other body you might believe would oppose it”.

“We published the decision both on our Facebook page and our Twitter, and most of the information can be found on the DITSU webpage”.

UCD’s student union had been met with some opposition from religious societies following a referendum held on abortion, but Fiachra was quick to draw a distinction between the two decisions. “Abortion is a very different topic, it plays on people’s emotions… There was some talk of in council last year and maybe it will be looked at over Christmas… with issues like these you have to gauge the student reaction to it first”.

Fiachra remarked that the marriage referendum would be a less contentious topic than either smoking or abortion, saying that it was his recent engagement with the LGBT society which led him to draft the proposal.

After attending Pink Training, a workshop for LGBT students Fiachra said he became more aware of the communities concerns. He highlighted transgender students as the topic for discussion which will be coming up in the next council meeting.
**Interview**

**Young Fine Gael**

**DIT student Dale McDermott has been voted the new president of Young Fine Gael**

Niamh Geoghegan

Although only newly elected, Dale McDermott is already showing the traits of an experienced politician. Whether it is his rephrasing of questions, his sweet politeness and even offering to pay for our phone call, he certainly sounds like a politician.

Speaking on the phone, he is both charismatic and friendly as he tells me how, after what he describes as an “intense campaign”, he managed to be elected as the youngest ever president of Young Fine Gael.

“I couldn’t believe it,” he says laughing, “I was only elected two weeks ago so I’m still settling in. It was a great campaign against my fellow candidates and it was such an honour to be elected. Now is the time to work hard and sell my message.”

Since winning the hard-fought election, visiting such counties as Limerick, Cork and Galway, McDermott is determined to achieve his objectives, or as he calls it, “his message”.

“In my opinion, Young Fine Gael is not reaching its full potential,” he says frankly. “The access we have to valuable sources and ministers is astonishing, and at the moment we are not utilising them. While Fine Gael may pass motions that the Young Fine Gael feel strongly about, the fact is many motions don’t go any further. During my term I hope to meet with ministers to follow up certain avenues and strive to make our opinions known.”

McDermott himself is currently a DIT undergraduate student, yet interestingly describes the relationship between Young Fine Gael and Student Unions as “occasionally divisive”.

“Well, economically we have very different views. The idea that we should have totally free education is just not sustainable,” he explains. “If the system was to continue like that, Ireland’s education system would slowly decline.”

As an alternative, McDermott feels that a graduate tax would be a more economically stable choice.

“That don’t me wrong, I don’t agree with the government just slowly increasing fees year after year,” he says in defence. “And while both sides agree on no extra fees, we think people who have benefited from a third-level education generally have higher paid jobs than those of those who don’t go to college. Therefore, I think the only fair and sustainable proposal is if graduates pay a slightly higher tax rate.”

However, McDermott was also determined to stress that Young Fine Gael generally has a good relationship with Student Unions.

“During my term, we hope to work cohesively with Student Unions on issues of mutual benefit,” he says adamantly. “In particular issues surrounding the mental health of young people. We now have a unique opportunity, seeing as our party is in government, to advocate our change and our views.”

According to the latest Sunday Independent/Millward Brown opinion poll, support for the formation of a new political party has increased significantly in the last three months, with almost 47 percent of the electorate now in favour. So how does he feel that the Reform Alliance may well find a chance of becoming a serious political force?

“Well the fact is the public are pissed off at politicians and quite rightly so,” he says. “Cynicism is rife, and they are annoyed at the situation that Fiana Fáil has put them into. But in my opinion, there is no point in creating a new party. Before Fine Gael came into office 7,000 jobs were being lost a month, now 3,000 are being created every month.”

Sensing his defensive nature, Dale himself admits that he is pro-Fine Gael. “I’m Fine Gael to the bone,” he says. “The only reason I wanted to go into politics was to represent and help people, and if in the near future the opportunity arose, I would love to represent my constituency.”

There is something truly likeable about Dale McDermott. Maybe it’s his high energy and easy manner that attracted his peers to vote for him; or rather the fact that he has acquired some great skills of persuasion. It does genuinely seem that he has the public’s best interests at heart, as he will soon be campaigning, “wholeheartedly”, for the same sex referendum.

Before we say goodbye, I ask him what he hopes the next 15 months hold?

“From speaking to the Ministers and to the Taoiseach himself, I am looking forward to the future,” he says rather cryptically. “Exciting times are most definitely ahead.”

DIT’s Maths Learning Centre has received some significant interest in its first year of operation as part of the School of Maths, though limited resources and some degree of maths hatred remain an influence, according to co-ordinator Cormac Breen.

Following a study into low rates of uptake for maths support services, published in this December’s issue of Teaching Mathematics Applications Journal, Breen told The Edition:

“‘I’m happy with the numbers so far, but I would like to increase it next year. Certainly, I’d also like to increase the number of tutors and the opening hours, but it will all be down to resources.”

The study found that a significant majority of survey respondents indicated their reason for not using maths support centres as ‘not needing help’, but a range of other factors were also highlighted.

The second most cited reason was limited opening times, at services in NUI Maynooth, UL, IT Tallaght and DCU.

Breen felt this was also an issue for DIT’s service, which had its operations moved under the aegis of the School of Maths this year, but highlighted that finding the funds to sustain the service is the limiting factor.

“We don’t have the resources to open all the time,” he said. “And, unfortunately there’s always going to be some hours that don’t suit certain students.”

The study also highlighted reasons of embarrassment and outright hatred of maths as influencing students away from the service.

“There’s a fear among students of asking for help, maybe out of shyness or being afraid of asking a silly question,” said Breen. “But our approach is that no question is too basic; everyone has something to clarify now and then.

“There’s also no reason for people to hate maths,” he continued. “I personally believe everyone is capable of a reasonable level, but a lot of people have a certain block about it. Encouraging people to overcome this can be a huge benefit to them.”

Breen will be continuing to promote the service, in his first year as co-ordinator, to all students who feel it could help them achieve their full potential, whether in terms of passing marks or moving beyond the 70 percent mark.

The Maths Learning Support Centre has bases in Kevin Street and Bolton Street, and is available for all students on a no-appointment, first-come-first-serve basis. Students can also use the centre as a study space, in order to have a helping hand available when they encounter a problem.

**Academic writing centre put on hold**

Al McConnell

The expected establishment of an Academic Writing Centre, to assist students in essay and thesis work, has been called off due to a lack of funding.

It was anticipated, following months of planning and widespread support for the idea, that the centre would be established for semester two of this year.

However, when a final proposal was submitted to the Student Finance Committee, it was felt that the €30,000 necessary for the centre could not be found by the college.

DITSU VP for education, Rebecca Dempsey, who has been involved in discussions toward establishing the centre, told The Edition this decision was “entirely unexpected” by the Union, particularly in light of the unanimous support from students, staff and Union officers.

The Student Finance Committee, a sub-committee of the Student Life Council, confirmed to The Edition that the plans were halted on November 19, but a spokesperson also stated “it is hoped the Institute can find alternative resources to develop the centre on a pilot basis for one year”.

A centre would provide assistance in structuring essays, citing and referencing, avoiding plagiarism, formatting, and in other areas.

Manager of Campus Life, Brian Gormley, also told The Edition: “There are several successful models of Academic Writing Centres nationally and internationally, and the Maths Learning Centre has proved vital for DIT students...We have identified some spaces that can be used for the writing centre, and we hope we’ll be able to get it going this academic year.”

DITSU president Glenn Fitzpatrick echoed the widespread support for the idea: “It’s very short-term thinking to feel that €30,000 isn’t available. It would improve retention, it would improve the experience for foreign students, and would be hugely valuable to those who come from a different referencing and essay-writing culture.”
Homelessness up 200% 

Ronan Morrissey

The homeless charity ‘Trust’ has warned many more homeless people will die over the coming winter months due to a lack of emergency accommodation in the capital.

The prediction follows a report issued last week by Saint Vincent De Paul which said that the number of people sleeping in a wooded area which is popular amongst the homeless.

A homeless action plan, ‘Sustaining the Pathway to Home’, is being conducted by four of Dublin’s local authorities, which will be implemented early next year.

The report states, “the demand for emergency services were utilising them for the first time.

These figures follow on from last year where over half of the 4,837 people using such emergency services were utilizing them for the first time.

The decision to move away from an ‘emergency accommodation approach’ to a ‘housing first solution’, in order to combat homelessness appears not to have aided the drastic situation.

Last year only 879 people “successfully moved away from homelessness back into independent living”.

Francois Doherty of the Peter McVerry Trust said that these figures would continue to increase as a result of rising rents in Dublin City despite the economic troubles of many Irish people.

In February the Minister of State for Housing Jan O’Sullivan announced the Government’s ambition to eliminate long-term homelessness by 2016.

Despite this, Government expenditure on social housing has been slashed from €1.3 billion in 2008 to €275 million last year, resulting in only 1,500 units being constructed annually for social housing initiatives compared to 8,000 previously.

Also Leahy of Trust Ireland said: “The Government is not accepting the fact that there is a need for emergency accommodation”, before declaring Trust cannot accommodate the high demand for places in its already fully occupied premises.

Doherty of the McVerry Trust was more optimistic, praising the new government initiative which allows people in financial trouble to receive rental allowance while working.

The next set of results, acquired two weeks ago, are expected to show another increase in people on the streets.

The report also highlights the growing issue of people living on the streets for the first time.

“The Government is not accepting the fact that there is need for emergency accommodation” — Also Leahy, of Trust Ireland

Welfare November-and-some-of-December

Al McConnell

DITSU campaign ‘Welfare November’ is now rolling into ‘Welfare November and some of December’ as events continue into this week.

After the decision was made that the campaigns were spread too thinly across DIT’s campuses, DITSU VP for welfare Flachra Duffy changed the plans so that engagement with students could be maximised.

“The original plan was to visit six sites throughout mental health week,” he told The Edition. “I realised, though, that it just wasn’t feasible to do that in such a limited space of time.”

The campaign has now become the biggest in DITSU’s history, with 19 site activities taking place over a total of 23 working days.

Its social media-based approach is unlikely to be repeated, however, after a lack of engagement online saw interest in the campaign fall away over the month.

“Social media was a trial this time around, it had never been done before,” said Duffy.

“The Government is not accepting the fact that there is need for emergency accommodation” — Also Leahy, of Trust Ireland

Islamic Soc 'United for Orphans' demonstration

Eoghan McNeill

Chief News Reporter

The alleged electrocution of a baby and use of rape as a weapon of war in the Syrian conflict was depicted in a DIT Islamic Society demonstration in DIT Aungier Street on the 9th of November.

The demonstration was part of the Society’s United for Orphans campaign, which raised €1,500 for Syrian orphans.

Speaking to The Edition, Mohammed Elsayed – chairman of the society – said the demonstration was held because “a lot of people don’t realise how bad things are in Syria: it’s inhumane”.

The demonstration was held in the foyer of the Aungier Street campus and featured depictions of brutal acts attributed to President Bashar Al-Assad’s forces.

One participant held a gun to the head of a fellow participant who was on his knees. Elsayed explained: “It’s what Al-Assad’s people do in Syria, anyone who speaks out about his regime is killed or tortured.”

Another scene showed two Islam Society members lying prostrate on the ground, their hands reached out to the other. A sign beside the pair read: “They broke our families apart.”

Elsayed said the scene referenced the killing of Syrian children’s mothers and fathers, and the rape of Syrian women.

The demonstration also featured two women holding a bloody teddy doll, holding a sign stating: “The government electrocuted and tortured my four month old baby to death in front of my eyes”.

The scene refers to the Alaf Mahmod Al-Sarakh who – it has been alleged by several news sources – was tortured and electrocuted to death by Syrian security officers in January 2011.

A banner reading “Silence is Betrayal” was hung behind the Islamic Society demonstrators. Elsayed explained the banner’s message: “When people see injustice, they need to speak out and make their opposition to this injustice known”.

He stressed: “Whether this injustice occurs in the West or not, it’s an attack on humanity”.

John Mc Ginley 

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Ré Scannáin Úrna ar an Bacáin

Tessa Pléamán

D'éagraigh an Cumann Gaelach DIT Tóg Amach Mé (Take Me Out) i gClub Chonradh na Gaeltachta ar an Mhúintear chuaithe. B'fheótheach an aon dara uachtar a bhí ann le haghaidh an ghaeilge, ás an t-aisling gineálach. D'éaspaigh den chuid fhorás náisiúnta Cothrom oifigíochtaí na nGael amháin, agus d'fhéadfadh aonuair a d'fhanadh roinnt scéalta agus ionad-creidmheachtaí trí spásanna móra a cheart i leith. D'éascaigh an ghaeilge creideamh an bhreith le chéile nó thuiscint a dhéanamh le linn an scála, ar a dtugtar "Bhour Sáile".
Letters to the Editor

The Edition will be printing letters to the Editor and opinion columns submitted by students throughout the year.

Send in your thoughts and feelings; whether we agree or not, we’ll give it a fair hearing and a chance at publication.

email submissions to: opinion@edition.ie

Wednesday, December 4th, 2013

Opinion: Paul Doyle
opinion@edition.ie

Four things I don't give a shit about at Christmas

Eoghan McNeill

1 Precocious children on the toy show

Why can’t RTE find some nice, well-mannered young fellas who will talk about how they like football and want to be second at Christmas? Instead we get children like John Joe talking about horology in a manner deserving of a solid slap. The rest of the Toy Show children all blur into one irritating, cheeky, only child-type. It’s a child with “surprising” interests in “kooky” topics, who has learned a few big words and will say something mildly insulting to Tubridy. I blame the parents.

2 The Coke ad is on

Every November Facebook and Twitter alight with simpletons telling us “OMG just saw the Coke ad”, or words to that effect. Even though the ad is run at the same time every year, people still get excited about seeing it. It’s the same thing as getting excited about the clocks going back. If you need a drinks company to tell you when Christmas is coming, you are more than likely a moron.

3 ‘Hilarious’ campaigns for the number one

In Ireland and the UK – countries where protests are generally met with derision from the public – you can always rely on people to get worked up about an X Factor winner taking the Christmas number one. In 2009, Rage against the Machine’s “Killing in the Name” was Christmas number one following an online campaign. A campaign conducted largely by idiots. Of all the things to get worked up about, people decided to “fight the system” by seeing to it that the middle-aged, dreadlocked Zack de la Rocha took the Christmas top-spot. Incidentally, I find white men with dreadlocks commendably more offensive than any X Factor winner.

4 Those wise men and their star

There will be a considerable chunk of people who will agree with me that Christmas is not about consumerism, global corporations’ advertisements or the Christmas number one. They reckon it is about a group of wise men following a star and finding a family in a shed with a baby. It’s a nice story, but they may as well try to tell us Christmas is all about a young boy called Jack who bought some beans at the market that turned out to be magic. Actually, that’s probably a better fairy tale. I mean, Jesus never killed a giant.

Three in the bed and the little one said: 'GET OFF FACEBOOK'

Amanda Connolly

When our parents and grand-parents met they had to make genuine efforts to see one another. They didn’t have WhatsApp or text to arrange dates. In fact, a lot of them wouldn’t have had phones at all. They had to base these arrangements on trust. If you said you would be at a certain place on a certain date at a certain time, you were there.

Back then you didn’t have the option of knowing all but your prospective partners blood type prior to meeting. Google wasn’t there to keep track of accomplishments. Facebook wasn’t there to act as a personal reality show, and there was no Twitter to express your opinion.

Everything your partner knew about you and you about them was based off what you told one another or learned through the relationship. This may all sound very “pure”, but it was. These were real relationships built through trust and effort.

People had faith in their partners and society supported this. The proof lies in the statistics – divorce rates in Ireland have been soaring for the past ten years with almost 90,000 people now declaring themselves legally divorced in Ireland and more separating every day.

There are many contributory factors to this but it is undeniable that the presence of social media and its niggling role in modern relationships is important. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Snapchat etc… All they all know you’re about to break up before you do. They know you’ve been playing away, and they know you’ve ignored those messages. It’s a scary prospect when you lay it bare.

All of these social media outlets together act as the “all seeing eye” on your life. Changes are that Facebook know more about you than any girlfriend or boyfriend you have ever had. Recent studies show that when websites such as Facebook are used in excess they can cause conflict in relationships. These websites offer temptations on a plate, and often give users a false sense of privacy.

Dr. Russell Clayton of the University of Missouri conducted a survey amongst users of social media sites ranging from 18 to 22 years old.

The results showed that overuse of Facebook led to an increase in the chance of cheating, breaking up and divorce. People who are using Facebook excessively are more likely to become jealous and troll their partner’s online activity, leading to FBI-like investigative research on their partner and frequent arguments.

Interestingly those who are using the website more than average run a greater risk of falling for the openness of Facebook in the chance to reconnect with ex-partners and this often leads to cheating emotionally and physically.

The study, published in the Journal of Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking, recommended that couples in their early days should be wary and possibly stay away from the site.

This advice was based on the fact that the findings of the study only stood for couples who had been together less than three years. This implies that Facebook is a threat for couples whose relationships aren’t fully matured. Cutting back to moderate use of Facebook could reduce the risk of conflict, giving the relationship the time it needs to grow.

Too many temptations are at the tips of your fingers these days. While there’s no denying that social media has made vast improvements on our social lives, it also seems to be taking some of the charm away.

Sir –

In your last issue, it was noted that the General Student Assistance Fund (SAF) had been exhausted by the third week of November. The fund has never been depleted so early in the year before and this has obviously caused much distress to students and the staff who support them.

I would be concerned that students who hear the fund is depleted may feel there is no point in talking to staff about their financial difficulties. One of the aims of this letter is to urge students in that situation to seek help.

The secondary aim is to cast some light on the factors which have led to the current situation, and outline the options we are pursuing to address the matter.

Five years of recession and austerity have pushed the level of need amongst the DJIT student body to a crisis point. The numbers assisted by the Financial Aid and Accommodation (FAA) Office have gone from 372 in the 2010/11 academic year to 655 in 2012/13 - a 76% increase. Obviously we have seen another increase in demand, and unfortunately the funding that we receive from the government has been reduced by €105,000 last year.

As a consequence of cuts, the great need of students, and the increased speed at which applications have been processed by the FAA office, regrettably the General SAF has been fully expended.

In response to the obvious need that still exists, we are putting in place a number of emergency measures for students in crisis. If any student is in crisis they should reach out to the student support services professionals local to their sites. Increasingly we are seeking, and receiving, support from non-government sources. Local businesses and charities have been very supportive. Already this year we have received nearly €10k in donations from the Students’ Union, staff and graduates – including one very generous donation of €5,000 from a graduate in the US.

We will be reviewing our processes for the future, with a view to supporting as many students as we can.

Before finishing, I would like to reiterate the hard work and commitment of the staff in the Financial Aid and Accommodation Office. They deal with very difficult and distressing cases, and are committed to ensuring that students in need get support as quickly as possible. These staff, the Chaplains, and the SSAs in the Students’ Union work hard to get student applications completed and processed as quickly as possible. Everybody has been disturbed that the demands on the fund have seen run out at an unprecedented early stage. However, I would again urge students who are in financial difficulty to seek help, and to do everything in our power to assist them.

Submitted by Brian Gormley, manager of Campus Life
Is Sinterklaas a racist?

Dutch Santa's black little helpers are under fire – The Edition’s Joseph Conroy investigates a controversial tradition

Let me introduce you to Sinterklaas. Saint Nicholas’s Dutch incarnation. He’s a little taller and leaner than Santa - more dashing bishop than chubby happy man. Sinterklaas has friends, lots of friends - and they happen to be black.

Every year Sinterklaas and his friends, the Zwarte Pieten (Black Pets) undertake an arduous voyage, sailing from the south of Spain (where they live) to The Netherlands, via steamboat (as you do)... Sinterklaas is paraded through the streets on a white horse. Zwarte Piet is in mischievous form, running around, playing little tricks, throwing sweets and gingerbread into the crowds of thousands that line the streets. The children laugh, everyone having a good time.

The only problem with this scene is that Zwarte Piet is a fully grown Dutchman in blackface - wearing an afro wig, bright red lipstick, large hoop gold ear rings and colorful 17th century garb.

I lived in Amsterdam for a year. Moving over in September for college I had a pretty good read of the Dutch by November, then Piet showed up. Me and rest of the Erasmus sect asked our Dutch friends what the deal was with this ‘Zwarte Piet’ thing.

They told us the origin myth, that Sinterklaas, being the patron saint of children, a colorful counter point to the slightly ecclesiastic Sinterklass.

So for years the Piet debate centered around whether Piet was Sinterklaas’ slave. Its safe to say that in the modern narrative he isn’t. He’s a happy little character, loved by children, a colorful counter point to the slightly ecclesiastic Sinterklaass. He plays the same role as Santa’s elves, or Rudolf do in our Christmas. So he’s not a slave - but there’s still lads walking around in blackface, and that seems pretty racist...

At a party during the festivities one of our Dutch friends who had been defending the tradition over heard a group of us foreigners having a “Ow my God, I can’t believe they go around in blackface, that’s so f’ing racist” conversation. She seemed really disappointed to hear us talking about lovable little Piet like that – almost to the point of being offended. Clearly we just didn’t get it.

News organisations all over the anglophone world have been wagging their fingers at the Dutch for the last few years, registering their outrage. Naughty Dutch - walking around in blackface.

A tipping point came when the UN chimed in last month, their high commissioner for human rights formally wrote to the Dutch government warning that the character is a racist stereotype and that the government was failing to engage with people opposing the tradition.

The Dutch were quick to back Piet. All major news organisations took pro-Piet stances. Pro-Piet Facebook pages propped up, some getting over 2,000,000 likes.

Mark Rutte, the Dutch Prime Minister said that the tradition could not be changed by government decree, or a ban, concluding: “Black Piet is black, we can do little to change that”.

Geert Wilders, leader of the anti-immigration, populist Party for Freedom was quick to tweet that he’d rather get rid of the UN than Zwarte Piet.

Wilders is the character lurking in the shadows of this whole debate. If you aren’t familiar with him he’s worth a search on Youtube where you’ll find documentaries like ‘Wilders: Europe’s Most Dangerous Man’, ‘Wilders: The Reality of Islam’ and ‘Wilders Warning to America’.

He has been banned from entering or speaking in the UK by homeland security after a controversial film he released online linking the Koran to modern terrorism.

Wilders’ Party for Freedom are a bit like The British National Party, except people actually listen to them. The party saw its representation in the Dutch parliament double from 9 to 24 out of 150 seats in the last Dutch general election. It’s against this backdrop that the Piet debate has escalated.

The thing that I find interesting about all of this is the discrepancy between the, “Look at this racist tradition” outsider narrative, and the, “Wow, its not racist its just a folk tradition leave us alone” Dutch narrative.

I decided to get in touch with a few Dutch friends who had spent time living in Ireland, the UK or the US, who could see the issue from both the Dutch and international perspectives.

The replies I got were mostly pro-Piet. Here’s an example:

“I can totally see how the world is shocked by this tradition. But growing up, I loved Zwarte Piet. He the nice, funny guy that cheers you up. Zwarte Piet is like a different kind of species, only here Nov-Dec, and in Spain for the rest of the year, collecting presents for all children in the Netherlands. I never associated him with other, normal black people.”

People seem to be particularly annoyed by Piet being dragged into political arguments, “I guess what upsets me about this discussion is that grown-ups turn this lovely tradition for children into something political”.

This seems to be reflect of sentiments felt by a majority of the Dutch population. In a poll of a representative sample of Dutch people 91% of Dutch people said they would oppose changing the tradition.

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People seem to be particularly annoyed by Piet being dragged into political arguments, “I guess what

Sinterklaas, but not as you know him (above); A Zwarte Piet (‘black Pet’), who have been accused of racism in the past

Black Piet is black, we can do little to change that

- Mark Rutte, Dutch Prime Minister

Credit: Greater Vanssen’s Dutch Network (top): Jeremy Theil via Flickr (above)

He also says that the tradition upholds old racist ideas, and that its wrong to get children involved, “due to the nature of the Sinterklaas celebrations, children are being made complicit [...] What is behind keeping the Zwarte Piet image is fundamentally keeping down the black population of the Netherlands.”

Taking apart folk tales in any culture is a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated. Once you start digging you find yourself getting into some pretty heavy arguments - the construction of this tradition is such a tricky business, taking apart this tradition is especially complicated.

During my Christmas in Amsterdam I definitely got where the Dutch were coming from, basically they had a term for “it’s just a bit of a craic” it would be central to their defense. But’s it’s the 21st century, Piet has been politicised, and the fight against the tradition looks set to grow rather than fade in the coming years.

Features Wednesday, December 4th, 2013 www.edition.ie

Sinterklaas, but not as you know him (above); A Zwarte Piet (‘black Pet’), who have been accused of racism in the past
Illegally blonde: no 'girly girls' in the workplace

Features Editor Amanda Connolly questions whether appearance should have a bearing on your working life

Pouting her lips as she puts on a coat of red lipstick, she adjusts her pencil skirt and pumps up her tote, and her swelle arms slide into her pea coat with ease. It’s 7.45am and she is ready for the day ahead. She is your boss.

Women are seen today as supposed equals to their male counterparts in work and play but why should this be such a surprise? Why is this even something worth noting? – Because that statement is simply not representing the whole picture.

While the European Union focusses on equality as one of its fundamental principles of EU law, this gender gap still exists – and with equality has come more divisions within the female gender role itself. Are all female treated equal? Or just the ones who are seen to be more like their male counterparts and perhaps less feminine? Are women taken less seriously? Can more ‘girly’ girls be discriminated against fairly simply because while you were reading your newspaper this morning they spent an extra fifteen minutes getting ready?

The EU has introduced several pieces of legislation in an attempt to narrow this gap involving equal treatment in the job application process, equal treatment in the workplace, protection for pregnant mothers and rights to maternity leave and protection for breastfeeding mothers.

Equal pay is always a bone of contention (as it should be) but leaving that aside, more needs to be done. Violence against women, the reconciliation of work and family life and the balance of genders in positions of power are just some of the issues still in need of attention.

In Ireland the rights of women have greatly improved since joining the EEC, but full equality still remains something to be desired.

Compared to men in Ireland, Irish women work fewer hours, earn less money and are inadequately represented in business, the Oireachtas and in local and regional authorities.

Women in Ireland are facing difficulties every day in both the public and private sectors. Pay gaps exist with around a four percent difference in the public and private sectors. Pay gaps exist with around a four percent difference in the public and private sectors.

The second seems more favourable. It could go full circle. Imagine the respect these people would have for the girl they almost pity at work when she comes in and blows all her co-workers out of the water with her brain… while still carrying her Balenciaga bag.

Will expressing your femininity in a male-dominated workplace hinder your chances of being taken seriously? It certainly appears so.

Think about your own work place, be it a supermarket or an advertising agency – is there a difference between the women there who are regarded as pretty, and the women who are taken seriously?

Steve Carell articulated this divide clearly in this quote about Mindy Kaling, when he said: “Mindy is exceptionally smart, but is not afraid to talk about nail polish. And yet her love of nail polish does not take away from her smartness.”

Admittedly there is nothing inherently dim about liking both nail polish and being girly but why is it that these oppositions can so easily be drawn?

Recently in America, Politico reported that Col. Lynette Arnhart, the woman leading the Army’s study on the impact the integration of women into combat arms would have on unit readiness and morale, advised against using “pretty” women for its advertisements and communications.

To illustrate her point, Arnhart cited a photo used with an article by Gen. Robert W. Cone in Army Magazine. Cone, the TRADOC commanding general, wrote about Soldier 2020, the Army’s effort to open up all Army jobs to women. But it seems that Arnhart thinks the point of the article was lost because of the photo of an attractive female soldier that was used with the article.

“For example, the attached article shows a pretty woman, wearing make-up while on deployed duty. Such photos undermine the rest of the message (and may even make people ask if breaking a nail is considered hazardous duty),” Arnhart wrote, according to Politico.

This raises the question – will expressing your femininity in a male-dominated working world hinder your chances at being taken seriously? It certainly appears so.

There are a lot of ways to express your femininity. However, being a female doesn’t automatically attach you to this stereotype. So to clarify the wiki definition of girly appears to best represent the general consensus of its meaning:

“...slang term for a girl or woman who chooses to dress and behave in an especially feminine style, such as wearing pink, using make-up, using perfume (or) dressing in skirts, dresses and blouses.”

Everyone in a workplace wants to be taken seriously, and to be promoted based on merit alone. But there is obviously a perception that if someone wears pink, is interested in makeup, or reads a lot of magazines, she is less focused, or even less capable.

There are plenty of other interests one can express in an office that also have nothing to do with being smart or capabilities for the job like sports, fitness or travel. But nobody will write off the interesting party as shallow for expressing these interests.

It is easy to argue both sides of this camp – keep your opinions on the Kardashians or Miley and her wrecking ball to yourself, tone down the personal style and lower the heels then get taken seriously? Or wear the polka dots, red lipstick and carry Vogue in your bag to the quarterly meeting where you will knock them dead with your intelligence?

Women are dominant in health and social services, legal and private sectors. Pay gaps exist in local and regional authorities. Female representation in business, the Oireachtas and in the wholesale and retail trades as well as other service-related industries.

In Ireland women in the health and education sectors are more likely to be women than men, while the opposite is true for workers in agriculture and transport.

The workplace itself then bares its own types of discrimination on the women who have made it there.

Imagine the respect these people would have for the girl they almost pity at work when she comes in and blows all her co-workers out of the water with her brain… while still carrying her Balenciaga bag.
Question marks remain at Grangegorman

Ryan Nugent visits the new site

Thirty-nine educational buildings combined into one state-of-the-art 73-acre campus. DIT’s intention is an exciting prospect, but with construction yet to begin, many questions marks remain over the time it shall take to implement these plans and where the funding shall come from, ‘The Edition finds out.’

Less than a month ago, DIT put out to tender the contract to construct and maintain two planned quadrant buildings in the new Grangegorman campus in Cabra, Dublin 7, under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) scheme. This is a method for the college to get both quads constructed but also maintain two planned quadrant buildings in the new Grangegorman campus. DIT’s Bolton Street campus.

“The two blocks will facilitate around 10,000 students from the Cathal Brugha Street and Kevin Street campuses, while the media school, which is currently in Aungier Street, will also be relocating in 2017,” continued Horan.

The Central quadrant shall accommodate 6,400 students while the quadrant to the east, which will be home of the school of media partially, will hold 3,100 students. The plans for these 15 or so DIT schools are pretty straightforward, and with the contract up for tender already, the indications present a very viable plan.

The movement of 1,000 students from Arts and Design in Mountjoy Square and Photography in Portland Row and Temple Bar seems to be running smoothly also, as refurbishment begins on the listed buildings that were formerly home to St Brendan’s Hospital.

“All of these locations are currently leased so it’s in our interest to get out of them, but we’re moving primarily because it’s a rational approach to move all of these students in together because the similarities in their field of study indicate that they should be mingling and working on projects together,” continued Horan.

Let us not forget however, that there are approximately 22,000 students at DIT, 14,000 of which are studying on a full time basis. 22,000 is double that of which DIT will be capable of hosting come 2017, so how does that work?

The sale of property currently owned by DIT, such as Cathal Brugha, Kevin Street and the potentially lucrative Aungier Street campus may become pivotal in determining the wait for the other blocks, of which there are eight that relate directly to college education, being constructed.

“We can’t do it without the money so we’ll be patient and wait for these buildings to rise in value, so we can then fund more building at Grangegorman.” insisted Horan.

One of the Institute of Technology’s largest schools is its School of Business. However, Horan indicates that until the Aungier Street campus is no longer owned by DIT, the Business school will remain in the City Centre.

“The future value of the Aungier Street site will determine when the Business section of the college moves to Grangegorman.”

Patience is the mantra for DIT’s decision makers, and they’ve been advised to wait for a property market pick-up in order to take something substantial away from the buildings they currently occupy.

The more pressing matter, however, is that of next year and whether the 1,000 or so students will have the amenities expected of Ireland’s largest Institute of Technology. Horan’s answer is yes.

A students Union lounge with pool tables and a café serving hot food – similar to what is already in Mountjoy Square – will be ready come September, while the college’s medical centre for the northside will remain at DIT’s Bolton Street campus.

“Bolton Street is less than 12 minutes away and closer to these students than it was from their previous campuses.”

A temporary library will be located above the café at Grangegorman next year and will be a straight movement of books, journals and computer equipment from Cathal Brugha Street.

A permanent library is yet to be tendered for, but Horan hasbig plans – the idea is to have a larger library than the collective of libraries that DIT currently have, reasoning that they are not big enough in comparison to similar sized colleges. Yet we must hope that money won’t prove to be a stumbling block in this process.

“We’re looking to make up the money from Kevin Street and Cathal Brugha in order to fund the library being built. Although, as I say, we’ll be patient with the selling. DIT are exploring all options available to get the construction of a library as quickly as possible.”

“Once we get the first buildings in place, the argument for building the other blocks become stronger,” said Horan.

The non-existence of parking facilities for students may disappoint some, but a less traffic congested city is intended by the Government, according to Horan. “Bikes will be encouraged. We will be talking with Dublin City Council to bring the ‘Dublin Bikes’ initiative up here. It’s already at Bolton Street. We’d like them to extend it up here. We’re also well served with buses and the Luas will be up and running by 2017.”

“It won’t be like UCD, who have 3,000 parking spaces. Even if we had that many, there still wouldn’t be enough.

“It’ll be pay parking for staff. We don’t want to encourage people to drive. We want them to cycle or use public transport.

“It’ll be an underground carpark at a cost of €20,000. So we’d need to cover the cost of that anyway.”

An SU shop has been up for discussion, but similar to the construction of its buildings, DIT will have to put the space for a shop up on offer, indicating a franchise may be taking over instead.

“We legally have to tender these services. We can’t just say to Super Valu: ‘here you have it’,”

- Dr Paul Horan

We legally have to tender [the shop] services. We can’t just say to Super Valu: ‘Here you have it’.
Students on this year's charity list

Appeal will include SAF, adding to DITSU donations and fund-raising from Campus Life

Al McConnell
Editor

As well as the Christmas Appeal electing to donate proceeds to the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), DITSU’s four sabbatical officers and CEO Pat Kearney have donated €500 each out of their wages.

The unexpected run-out of the fund two weeks ago, compared to last year’s expiration in February, has had severe implications for a large number of students across DIT, and has been highlighted as another concrete example of the hardship facing students at the moment.

The DITSU decision was made last week, when it was also decided that one of the four Societies Christmas Appeal charities for this year would be a fund to help students who cannot receive funding through the SAF. DITSU president Glenn Fitzpatrick also told The Edition he has been in contact with TDs in an effort to increase the pressure towards another extension to the SAF, although the indications are that last year’s top-up was as a once off, due to the SUSI crisis.

Any extension to the fund would have to come in the near future, as Fitzpatrick continued: “We don’t want this to be seen as a replacement for what is a very necessary fund. It’s just a gesture of good will from ourselves to all the students who are struggling.”

It remains unclear whether a form of Student Assistance Fund will continue into the next academic year. The fund in its current guise, as funded jointly by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the European Social Fund, is due to expire in 2014, but there are indications that a similar fund will be created.

“Students have genuinely been squeezed from literally every angle,” Fitzpatrick said, before pointing to a “disconnect between the people who are making the decisions and what’s happening on the ground.”
This year’s Societies Christmas Appeal launched on Monday, as DIT students across all Socs undertake a fund-raising effort between now and the end of term.

Four charities have been elected as recipients for the money raised over the two weeks: Saint Vincent de Paul, The Irish Cancer Society, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland, and the Children’s Medical & Research Foundation.

As well as these four causes, money will also be donated to services that can help students who have been affected by the early expiration of the Student Assistance Fund.

As Kaytee Behan told The Edition, this money will be put towards food vouchers, under the umbrella of the SAF, which are distributed by the chaplaincy, so as to avoid an amount going to only a handful of students. Behan said: “The charities were chosen through a survey sent out to the Socs, which narrowed it down, and then there was a vote at Forum.

“The forum felt that as the SAF ran out so early and unexpectedly, they wanted to do something for students, so the some of the money raised will go towards food vouchers, distributed by the chaplaincy.” Behan went on to say that this week will be the busiest of the 12-day Appeal, each day including events from 9am to 8pm.

**Christmas Appeal 2013**

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<th>Wednesday Dec 4th</th>
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<td>Carol Singing 12 - 2 Aungier st</td>
<td>Guitar &amp; Clog Soc Busing 12pm Grattan st</td>
<td>Pub Quiz 8.30 Lafayette</td>
<td>Home Alone screening 7 - 9 Denzilles cinema</td>
<td>Mathllette Society event 5pm Bolton st</td>
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**Find out more and get involved**

email: volunteer@socs.dit.ie #ditxmasappeal fb/ditsocietiesoffice
The 12 Sins of Christmas

Nutrition Soc’s Meg Croinn sets a course through the treacherously unhealthy festive period

Break at those Penneys’ Christmas Jumpers and clear your December calendar for pantomimes, shopping and the 12 Pubs of Christmas – the holiday season is upon us! Finally, we college students can put away the notes, log off webcourses and put our feet up with a tin of roses to indulge in the festive season. Sure, feck it, we all deserve it!

But when the Christmas euphoria has ebbed away, the tree goes down and exams grow ever nearer, most of us find that the bathroom scales are more terrifying than the prospect of last-minute cramming.

The average person is said to gain between 1-2.5 pounds over the festive month of December. Although this may not seem like a hugely significant figure, in time, it could make a difference not just to physical appearance but to overall health. It is vital that we watch out for these sly extra pounds that “mysteriously” deposit themselves on our physique and make sure they do not become the foundation stones to further, post-festivity weight gain.

Now, we dieticians of the Nutrition Society are by no means discouraging the holiday indulgence of mince pies and mulled wine. But, acting as your Christmas guardian angels of wellbeing and positive health attitude, we are giving you a list of 12 common “Christmas Sins” that, if avoided, may avoid that extra holiday weight gain while still enjoying the festive “noms”.

### WINE

There is no doubt that if most of us missed out on the glorious post-Christmas Day turkey sandwich; we might have a Ross Geller moment! To get the optimum healthy balance while still achieving the ultimate turkey sandwich experience, why not make your sandwich with brown bread and add a salad filling to pack in more festive turkey noms?

### MINCE PIES

While it may not be everyone’s favourite festive drink, there is something about egg nog that smells Christmassy. Considering it is the only time of year suitable to enjoy such a drink, a glass or two is no harm. But in the lazy days after the 25th, it is important to be aware that the full fat cream and milk used to make this creamy treat may bump up your calorie and fat intake that little bit more.

### TIN OF ROSES

Nothing says Happy Holidays like the comforting aroma of fresh mincemeat pies with a cheeky dollop of cream. Naturally, it is easy to lose track of just how many of these festive treats we eat. Recent statistics show each person eats on average 27 mince pies over December – this amounts to over 8,500 calories! While we wouldn’t encourage you to avoid these Christmassy delights, maybe consider tucking into one a day, before realising you guzzled half a box of them!

### BEER

Nothing signals the start of Christmas quite like the arrival of the first tin of Roses to the local shops! While it’s both hard to resist reaching for yet ANOTHER strawberry cream, piling up your Roses wrappers in front of you instead of tossing them back into the box is a good way to keep an eye on just how much sweets your enjoying (and helps make the tin last longer!)

### TURKEY SANDWICHES

Christmas is a time for friends, partying and basically enjoying the craic! However, over the Christmas break, whilst having as much fun as possible, being drink aware is encouraged more than ever. Not only will opting for a “light beer” option still ensure top banter but it cuts back on half the calories beer normally provides.

### HOT CHOCOLATE

With hot chocolate consumption doubling in December alone, it is one of the best parts of getting cozy by the fire to watch Home Alone for the 5th time that week. Why not try making hot chocolate with some seductive dark chocolate and using low fat milk so as to not only cut back on calories but create and more indulgent chocolate experience?

### CREAM

Whether it’s lashing a bit of cream over Christmas pudding or dolloping a generous amount onto a mince pie, cream really finishes off any festive dessert. Over the days after Christmas, while the last sad remains of the pudding and cake are being eaten, choosing a low fat cream is the way to go to cut back on any sneaky calories in fat.

### BUMPER BOXES

Yet another festive treat dished out by aunties, uncles, Kris Kindles, grandparents and the man in red himself, leading to a Christmas Day tradition of the “selection box brekkie”. With each one of us receiving a generous 9 selection boxes each year, saving the selection box breakfast is a good idea to keep to Christmas Day so the others may be enjoyed more extensively over the holiday break.

### SOFA-SLOTH

Something so simple, yet usually undesirable after a glorious Christmas dinner. A brisk walk for an hour could burn up to 200 calories. Considering people eat on average 6000 calories on Christmas day, a quick festive stroll will certainly get the metabolism going after a day of spoiling your stomach with luxurious food.

### EXCESS

Basically, we here at the Nutrition Society want you all to have the happiest, most banter-full and healthiest Christmas possible. While Christmas is the time of just that little bit extra indulgence, it’s no harm over the days following the height of the celebrations to pay attention to just how much we’re eating in order to avoid the bathroom scales teetering up too much. But, sure, we all need a bit of naughty for Christmas to be nice!
New Year's Eve: the expectation and reality

Lilah Gaafar

It doesn’t matter where in the world you are on the 31st of December, if you’re not doing anything there’s a problem and whatever you end up doing is going to be more than likely a let-down.

In the grand scheme of things, the transition from one year to the next really isn’t that exciting. Sure there is always the excitement of looking towards the possibilities of starting with a clean slate. Yet, without the excitement created by the countdown and celebration of the “New Year” the day would come and go with little notice. It is in the suspense the elation lies.

The false optimism never fails to escape us year in, year out, as we vow this year will be “different”. All of a sudden it’s mid-February and those New Year’s resolutions are history.

Queues are longer, prices are trebled, and once you’re in town it proves difficult to escape

So why is it that New Year’s Eve is hyped up so much? The whole night more often than not is an anti-climactic, over-expensive exercise that never meets our expectations.

Going into town on New Year’s Eve and expecting to have a good time is not likely. If you have a good night, relatively cheaply, there’s a major chance you’ll be royally ripped off, again, by any taxi you're lucky enough to catch. You can’t help but wake up feeling completely defeated, only to welcome a hangover and empty pockets rather than ready kick-start those New Year’s resolutions.

We remain suckers to the night that's dubbed “conscious indulgence over the holiday period”. Such a notion, for a foodie, is sacrilegious. American Chef James Beard once said: “A gourmet who thinks of calories is like a tart who looks at her watch”. Mash without butter, turkey without stuffing and pudding without custard are a blatant antithesis of the true Christmas foodie spirit. Bin your diet conscience once a year; don’t allow nutritional Grinches to corrupt your moment of indulgent bliss.

Most New Year’s Eve, along with the end of a year, and the beginning of a new one, marks the end of the “silly season” and back to reality. The reality is a sore head on the January 1, only to discover nothing has, or probably will, really change for the coming year.

Some precautionary measures to consider for New Year’s Eve – don’t wait until last minute to make plans, make sure you have set realistic expectations, and don’t assume it’s going to be a cheap night.

Nothing exceeds like excess

Culinary columnist Ciarán Hyland challenges Nutrition Soc's sensible approach

A relatively sedate Christmas party for 1961

Credit: University of Mary-land, ‘Old Line’ Magazine

Admittedly, despite my reluctance to think about January right now, it is undeniable that the annual diet-conscious frenzy lingers just around the corner.

The 12 misconceptions of Christmas

Ann-Marie Donelan

You’ll catch up with old friends

Let’s face it, you won’t be close to sober the majority of those festive nights to know an old work colleague or classmate from one of the three wise men themselves.

You’ll stick to budget

The hope is quickly destroyed with the lure of giving the 12 pubs another bash, and the mentality of ‘ahh sure it only happens a year lad’ is quickly adopted.

Dinner will look as it should

You’ve drooled over supermarket advertisements since mid-October, but your dinner isn’t going to look like one, simple as.

The toy show will live up to the hype

You dedicated your Friday night to it, perched yourself in front of the tv following a week where no one has discussed much else. Unfortunately you came to the conclusion around 11pm that you’d wasted your night.

You’ll get on with your family

Christmas is all about rows; whether it’s over someone forgetting an essential item in the grocery shop, the lack of AA batteries in the house, or which sitcom has the best crinimo special. Each particular cattiness as the amount of roses in the tin whittles down.

You’ll get anything great

Can you remember what you got last year? Probably not. Expect last-minute grabs that you’ll struggle to find use for.

Mass will be enjoyable

It’s one of the longest hours of the year as the men want to get pint guzzling, mamas are gagging to get stuck into dinner preparations and the kids feel like you’ve played with their emotions beyond belief offering them an array of toys only to whisk them away to listen to an aul lad regurgitate the same old story with jokes so cringe-worthy you want a bottomless hole to swallow the church up.

It’ll snow

Sure there’ll be sleet; it’ll have turned to a nice dirty grey colour by the time dinner has been served. You’ll be dreaming as long as Bing Crosby though if you think you’re going to get an instagram like a snow globe on the 25th.

You’ll have the best jumper

You thought you could out-do everyone, but chances are someone else will have the same daff looking garment as yourself, even if it does light up.

Christmas ‘number 1’ will be decent

What was last years? Exactly. And this year’s won’t be much better. X-factor will dominate yet again!

It’s a time for giving

At the moment, the chances of this being everyone’s philosophy is slim.

You’ll learn from mistakes

Yes, despite knowing these misconceptions, we’ll all fall into the lure of it once again...this the season after all.

- (Happy Christmas! Ed.)
DIT Fashion: What’s covering the student body?

It’s all about accessorising this Christmas as these stylish DIT students demonstrate not only are accessories practical but can also make or break an outfit! Lilah Gaafar and Ann-Marie Donelan; Photos: Pier Paolo Lisarelli

If you would like to be part of the DIT Style page, get in contact with The Edition’s lifestyle team! E-mail: lifestyle@edition.ie
'A lot of guns, but a lot of accepting people'

Conor Campbell talks to an American-born, Tulsa-educated, pan-sexual playwright

The ins and outs of the life of a budding playwright in 21st century Dublin are not particularly common knowledge. Nico McNamee is one such playwright, but hardly typical. She was adopted at birth in America, and emigrated to Ireland last year. As we sit down in The Oarsman (Ringend, well worth a visit) she's already picking out details of how they've moved it around.

"Those chairs have moved, that table is new," she remarks. Apparently the candles have also gotten bigger. She has a couple of pints of Guinness while we talk, and our interview is occasionally interrupted by her friendly exchanges with the waiters. She comes here all the time to write a pint and scribbling in her notepad in the corner.

Nico moved to Dublin in September last year to study a Masters in playwriting at Trinity College Dublin, where she wrote her current play Party Games. She has stuck it out here ever since, obtaining Irish citizenship in this August. She is from Chicago originally (and doesn’t let you forget it), but her mother’s family is from Ireland. She was adopted when she was three days old, and apparently furnished her first apartment by ‘dumpster-diving’. But Oklahoma, where the University of Tulsa is based, offered challenges beyond massive shopping centres with too much choice of cereal.

Nico is what she describes as ‘pansexual’, meaning that "you have the capacity to like, and love, anyone, because there are so many gender terms out there now: you have queer, pan, bi, transvestite, you can be anybody." But her new university was in a "very, very conservative state" and as a result she kept her sexuality somewhat hidden. She was pleased to find out that most of her fears were unfounded.

"There are a lot of guns, but there are also a huge amount of accepting people," she tells me. Either way, she now lives happily with her boyfriend Alex and it wasn’t something she advertised in the first place.

"I don’t introduce myself as ‘Hi I’m Nico, I’m a bisexual from Chicago’," she remarks wryly. After talking to her for a while it is clear that being from Chicago would, obviously, come first. Her decision to come to Ireland was made with surprising ease, given her attachment to her hometown.

After a family holiday in Ireland in late 2011 she started saving to move here, and doesn’t regret her decision to carry on her theatrical career in Dublin. "I’m much happier here," she concludes, after extolling the virtues of Irish theatre.

She’s a happy person in general, certainly throughout the interview, and as such it’s a bit of a shock to read her play, Party Games. Focusing on the birthday celebrations of a pair of twins at their parents’ house, it is a harrowing read. By her own account the piece is hugely influenced by the absurdist movement, and she alludes to works by Beckett and The Chairs by Eugène Ionesco. The events of her play are loosely based on a tragedy that befell one of her close friends (by the interviewee’s insistence I’m setting up camp in spoiler-free territory), but the final product apparently bears little resemblance to the original subject.

Given Nico’s remarkable life, it’s interesting that the play is based on the events of someone else’s.

"I saw what it did to her family," Nico tells me of the tragedy, and she wanted to ‘make sense of it’ herself. Even though she is writing about other people, she tells that she "can relate with all of them”.

She thinks writing about difficult periods in people’s lives can be cathartic, and in many ways she is merely trying to show the audience a distorted version of themselves.

She deliberately avoids what she terms as simply "holding up a mirror" to the audience. If not a mirror, then what?

"They want to see, well, not a foil…" she ponders, and it’s hard not to imagine her holding up a giant sheet of tin foil at the front of the stage. Underneath the amusing anecdo- cotes, however, there is a serious point.

"It’s much easier to look at problems when you remove them psychologically," she concludes, after some consideration. "You can never solve your own problems. I can give as much advice as I want but I can never apply it to my own life."

She’s trying to get the play running in Dublin now, but despite some clear interest it can be hard to get a commitment. She agrees that theatre has become a bit of a niche market, so why doesn’t she try her hand at another format? "Playwriting is a writer’s medium, and film is a director’s medium," she tells me assertively, and Nico is certainly a writer.
CULTURE

CHRISTMAS FILM REVIEW SPECIAL

Gremlins
1984
Jack O'Higgins

Do you have a warm place in your heart for Christmas? Does the very smell of Christmas trees have you in festive cheer? Do you find it hard to sleep on Christmas Eve due to your anticipation for the morning? If so, Gremlins may not be your cuppa.

Directed by Joe Dante, Gremlins is gleefully violent, darkly funny and startlingly subversive, dedicated to lighting a firecracker under the arse of the festive spirit. Charting the infestation of a small town by murderous little creatures called Mogwai, it features stabbings, strangulations and microwaves being used in ways God never intended. What the master of sentimentality himself, Steven Spielberg, is doing in the executive producer credits is anyone’s guess.

Channelling the spirit of Looney Tunes, Dante orchestrates set-pieces with wild abandon. Yet there’s a hint to the film than demoted action (though there’s plenty of that). Underneath the histrionics lies a brutal attack on sentimental holiday films; Xmas suicide rates are discussed, one character recounts the mother of all traumatic Christmases and the spiteful old crank who hates the holidays receives a far worse fate than learning the true meaning of Christmas.

It’s Dante’s willingness to pervert the conventions of Christmas cinema that make Gremlins more than fun 80’s fare, though that’s not to say that it’s merely a grim bloodbath; the Mogwai’s favourite film is Snow White, it features a wonderfully zany score by Jerry Goldsmith and Gizmo remains one of the cutest characters ever committed to celluloid.

Few movies manage to attain the perfect balance between light and dark that Gremlins achieves (even its sequel doesn’t come close). More than 25 years later, it’s that quality that cements its classic status. Combining the funny and the horrific. The naughty with nice.

Home Alone
1990
Breda Graham

There’s no doubt that when people are asked what their favourite Christmas film is, Home Alone makes it into their top choices.

We delight in the antics of young Kevin McCallister as he is accidentally left behind when his family takes off for a vacation over the holiday season. He learns to fend for himself and eventually has to protect his house against two bumbling burglars who take advantage of the situation.

The major theme of the film is appreciation and importance of family. It is only when Kevin’s family is gone that he realises just how much he needs them. On Christmas Eve he goes to his local church where Marley, his neighbour, sits beside him and the pair talk.

He learns that Marley is there to watch the choir that his granddaughter is in performance as he never gets to see her because he and his son have not spoken in years after they had an argument. Kevin suggests he reconcile with his son. This scene is one of my favourites as it portrays how Kevin has learned to value family and at a young age has given mature advice.

On Christmas Day, he is disappointed to find his family is still gone until his mother enters the house followed immediately by the rest of the McCallisters. Once reunited with everyone he feels safe. Looking outside, he smiles as he sees Marley with his son and his family. I find it a great ending to the film because it is symbolic of the theme of family running through out which is summed up in this simple final scene.

It’s a Wonderful Life
1946
Katelyn Cook

The best thing about this iconic film is its obvious embrace of cheesy Christmas culture. This Christmas staple has been featured in family households since its release in 1946. The plot is fairly easy going: man questions his place in the world, queue guardian angel who stops him committing suicide, spends the film seeing what life would be like if he had never been born, ends credits after predictably happy and emotional ending.

Even if you don’t like it, no one ever complains when it is pulled out of the back of the DVD drawer or pre recorded on Film4.

All family members sit down dutifully and embrace the Christmas tradition – even if the story is a bit cliché and you have watched it once a year for your entire life. The iconic scene of George Bailey running through the snow covered streets screaming ‘Merry Christmas’ is as much a Christmas staple as the Coke ad (Everyone’s pretty sick of it but we all bubble like idiots when it hits our screens).

This is proper cheesy, selection box eating, tinsel hanging, Christmas carolling fun. Without cliché Christmas classics like this, Christmas just wouldn’t be the same. But watch it in March and you deserve a slap.

Die Hard
1988
Conor Campbell

Near the start of die hard, John McLean’s taxi driver Argyle asks his passenger if he can put on some music. After sticking the tape into the deck, Run DMC’s Christmas in Hollis comes belting through the speakers, its thick hip-hop beat coursing through the limousine.

‘Don’t you have any Christmas music?’ a grumpy John McLean asks.

‘Man, this is Christmas music’ Argyle tells him, grinning maniacally. McLean looks out the window, but can’t help cracking a smile in spite of himself.

And that, in a sense, is Die Hard summarised. It is the filthy hip-hop track of Christmas films. Die Hard shouldn’t be a Christmas film, and yet it is.

The main character spends the majority of his time covered in blood, cursing and killing European terrorists. Alan Rickman’s charismatic villain murders two civilians, and tries to kill all of his hostages by blowing them to smithereens. It’s a Wonderful Life this is not, but in its subversion of the traditional Christmas film Die Hard stands out.

In fairness, the film is littered with Christmas references. As McLean clammers around the burning building, miniature snowmen get blown to pieces and policemen sing ‘let it snow’ as bodies smash into their windscreens.

As the entire building collapses, the film makers took the time to make sure we saw a fully decorated Christmas tree collapse, jingling, into the flames.

So if someone complains when you put on Die Hard when they asked to watch a festive film, tell them it is a festive film. And if they don’t grin like John McLean, well, you shouldn’t be spending time with that person anyway.
Why I love Christmas music

By Gavin Lacey

Don’t tell me you don’t get a warm tingle in your Jingle Bells when Wham comes on the radio.

Christmas songs are also fantastic for their nostalgia factor. Don’t tell me you don’t get a warm tingle in your ‘Jingle Bells’ when Wham comes on the radio and you instantly recall that time you were a teensy bit too merry at your mates Christmas party and you tried chatting up his younger sister: “C’MONNN YOu HAVEN’T GIVEN ME A PRESIEETEETEEEEEEE”?

Or that time you fell over ice-skating while trying to do the ‘Las Ketchup Xmas Mix’ dance in front of your classmates in 6th year. A boogy a baa boogeey mah gee.

Eoghan, maybe underneath that beautifully silken and hairy Donegal chest of yours there is a piece of dark coal lodged where your Christmas heart should lie.

And if listening to ‘Fairy Tale of New York’ while sipping on a fine glass of Tesco sparkling wine doesn’t cause you’re sassy arteries to be transformed into beautiful trails of sparkling magic, then I only have two words for you - Clifff Richard.

Why I hate Christmas music

By Eoghan McNeill

What I want from a song is logic, and Christmas every day would be disastrous economically.

Nazi war criminals had the “superior orders” defence; people who like Christmas music have “ah sure it’s only a laugh”, equally inadequate excuses - for equally contemptible people. Christmas music is not a laugh. It’s senseless and encourages reckless behaviour.

If there’s one thing I want from my music, it is sense. Logical songs. Songs like Daniel O’Donnell’s “Home to Donegal”. Everyone loves going home to Donegal. Songs like “The Gambler” by Kenny Rodgers. You genuinely do need to know when to fold ‘em.

Where’s the sense in saying you “wish it could be Christmas every day”? It would be disastrous economically. Productivity would be terrible. Businesses would remain closed. Thanks to arteries clogged with brandy butter, life expectancy would plummet. You would have a fucking tree in your living room for the rest of your life. I’d sooner wish it was never Christmas.

Andy Williams tells us Christmas is “the most wonderful time of the year”. It’s not, Andy. It’s cold. It’s dark. You have the same conversation about your “Christmas plans” roughly 43 times a day. Oh, “there’ll be parties for hosting and marshmallows for toasting”? You can toast marshmallows and throw parties whenever you want. A senseless argument.

In 1971, John Lennon and that doll who broke up The Beatles told us war is over, only if we want it - ah I see. Cheers for that, John. International warfare is deceptive simple, it seems. If you want it to be over, it will be. I can’t believe the secret has been hidden in a Christmas song for years. How world leaders have missed it, I don’t know. Of course, John Lennon has form in talking this kind of muck. Imagineing there are no countries or possessions is, actually, very hard to do.

I can’t listen to Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas is You” without thinking of the senseless behaviour of both Liam Neeson and his son in “Love Actually”. Every time I see the film, I’ll be enjoying Hugh Grant being a bumbling Englishman, Alan Rickman being a bit of a bastard, and Keira Knightley being Keira Knightley. My enjoyment is always interrupted by that eejit of child who’s “in love” with an American girl at his school.

What Neeson should have done was simple; tell the boy to cop on. Instead, he encouraged him to perform Mariah’s number with the girl, and break through airport security to say goodbye to her. Ludicrous behaviour, no doubt encouraged by the dangerous sentiment of the song.

At the same time, some of the songs have nice bells.
**DIT's death metal scene**

**Conor Campbell** meets Dead Aeon, a band with two DIT students and a big reputation on a niche scene

If you're a fan of the Dublin death metal scene, you might well have heard of Dead Aeon, the Monaghan based quartet with two members at DIT. Chris Winsryg and Jack Penders are guitar and vocals respectively, and both study Music Performance at DIT.

Darren Walsh plays bass and Evan McGuigan rounds them off on drums, and as I sit down for a chat with Evan he orders himself a rather conservative hot chocolate. They first gave music a go in Monaghan, a county with an undernourished death metal scene, to put it nicely. "Organising gigs in Monaghan, you might as well be smashing your head against a wall," Evan admits, sipping on his drink.

Originally they mainly played covers of softer stuff (the likes of Rage Against the Machine and Metallica are mentioned), but around the start of 2011 they began composing their own songs more in the style of De capitated and Behemoth. By the summer of 2012 they were in a studio in Blanchardstown recording a five track EP, released in November that year. Recording can be a stressful business, but thankfully they had the right man for the job.

"The producer was Michael Richards for it, who was amazing," Evan tells me, adding that he even managed to persuade the band to sneak some synth into their tracks. "Their EP got a warm reception in the Irish metal community, and so they were able to get themselves gigging in Dublin. Fibbers is a regular spot for them these days, but they've travelled around the country a fair bit, playing in Limerick, Belfast, and many stops in between. That, in fairness, makes them an international band, but Evan says they fancy themselves across the world. It would be "like an expensive vacation," he tells me, but the UK has a serious metal scene and they would like to get involved.

For now, they're fairly well settled in Dublin, with Evan having just finished a masters at TCD, Darren studying at DCU and Jack and Chris studying Music Performance at DIT. The latter two's studious efforts have had a knock on effect on their music outside of class as well. I ask Evan if he's been learning the course by osmosis, and he certainly concedes its effecting the band's performance.

"It has had an impact on our music in that a lot of different techniques and dynamics can be used," he says. "We're able to play stuff that about a year ago we would not have been able to play."

The variety of the course is one of its main appeals by the sound of it, and having half their band "exposed to different sorts of styles and genres" at DIT has certainly helped them grow.

The guys are playing Fibbers on the 6th of December, headlining a Christmas Bash called 'Seasons Beatings'. Their EP is available for download from deadaeon.bandcamp.com

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**Summit director talks at DIT**

**Joseph Conroy**
Culture Editor

**Spraggen playing live at Brighton Pride 2013. Credit: ultimate planet via Flickr**

Organising gigs in Monaghan, you might as well be smashing your head against a wall - Evan McGuigan

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**War Photographer**

Considered by many the greatest war photographer ever (!) James Nachtwey takes us to the front lines of the last 20 years of war, explaining the inner conflicts that witnessing the most atrocious war atrocities could create in whom wants to give a voice to the unseen.
Abbay Christmas everyone

Love/Hate's Ian Lloyd Anderson talks to Culture Editor Joseph Conroy about his role in the Abbey's Christmas production of James Plunkett's The Risen People

Almost a month after the season four finale, Love/Hate is still the talk of the town. I ask Ian how he thinks Dean will be fixed if it all kicks off next season, and he's cautiously optimistic:

"People don't realise that I've been in it now for three years, I'm always in the background. I say to Stuart [Carolan] every time he writes it – it's all about surviving so the plan for me basically is eventually if I can dodge the bullets for another three years there'll be no Tom Vaughan Lawlor or Peter Coonan [Fran] left, so I might be the leader!"

So it could be Dean's crew by series eight or nine?

"It could be 10 or 11! It's all about surviving so the plan for me is basically is eventually if I can dodge the bullets for another three years there'll be no Tom Vaughan Lawlor or Peter Coonan [Fran] left, so I might be the leader!"

Ian is currently in previews for The Abbey's adaptation of Joseph Plunkett's The Risen People, the play based on Strumpet City. Strumpet City has been a fitting selection as the featured text in Dublin's 2013 One Book One City campaign. It seems to have hit a spot with Dubliners on a deeper level than any of the campaigns previous selections. Early on in the rehearsal process the book's significance was made clear to the cast.

"We had some talks early on in the rehearsal period from some real experts on that time, historians like Padraig Yeates and Francis Devine, and something that they kept relaying to us was that The Lockout is a strange period in our history where people know more about it through the arts and through the likes of Strumpet City than they do from historical writing or any other sort of historical learning. I think it really shows the importance of the arts."

Ian talks about the significance of reexamining this period in 2013:

"I think that's really interesting and also that it's really important, and I think a production like this in 2013 – 100 years on – is of great importance."

The Abbey's promo material promises punters that the production will bring the period “vividly to life through music movement and song”, but Ian warns that this is no “hits and teeth musical” – it's a truer, grittier production.

"This play wears its heart on its sleeve, it's not trying to be anything that it's not, it's not glitz and glamour, it's very honest, we only have one or two top trained singers in the cast, I think that adds to the effect."

The Risen People opens on the 4th of December and runs until the 1st of February. Student tickets are available from €13.00.

Ex-X-Factor, now success

Michelle Dardis meets Lucy Spraggan, an unlikely star who has gone from the X-Factor to Columbia Records

A year after an illness made her leave the X-Factor live shows prematurely, Lucy Spraggan is doing better for herself than anyone could have ever imagined. As if millions of Youtube hits, a record deal with Columbia, and an album weren’t enough, Lucy has also gone and sold out the majority of her tour – her Dublin date sold out in a matter of minutes.

While Lucy may have wrote her first song when she was just five years old, as she grew up, music wasn’t the career path she was initially planning on heading down. “I wanted to be a firefighter for quite a long time,” she laughs. “I went to college and done public services to do firefighting”. She gave up on the idea though, and put her passion for music before her dreams of fighting fires.

With the success of Lucy’s debut single Lighthouse – it clocked up just over a million views on her official YouTube page - a follow up album was almost guaranteed, to which the online reaction has fantastic.

The album, Join The Club, landed in the top 20 album chart, both in Ireland and the UK, proving that all Lucy’s hard work has paid off.

“I’ve been writing some of these songs since I was about 15. They’re all from different times in my life. I get inspired by lots of different things and people so I just write whatever comes to my head."

The album has a mixture of songs, both upbeat and slow, but like every album, people will have their favourite and Lucy is no exception to this.

“For The Club is my favourite because it’s a reminder that you should be really positive. I feel you do well, if you keep really positive. That’s a reminder for me. It’s the title track on the album."

It goes without saying that The X-Factor has played a large part into Lucy’s recent success. She was one of the first people to ever play their own music live on the show, and the response was phenomenal. Her audition song, Beer Fear/Last Night was viewed by the millions of people who watched the show on TV, as well as being viewed a staggering 25 million times on the official X-Factor Youtube channel.

Lucy made sure to stay true to herself during her time on the show, and stay original even when doubts cropped up that producers may try to change her style, and make her sing regular pop songs like the rest of the contestants.

“That did happen but it’s about staying true to who you are - that’s what all my music’s about."

Very soon after leaving the X-Factor, Lucy was offered a record deal with Columbia Records, a deal and opportunity which any aspiring singer/songwriter would kill for.

“It’s amazing. They’re such a prestigious and iconic record label. They’re such a nice team too. It’s really fun.”
Irish rugby. Have faith in Joe.

Their last outing; it's a good time for get carried away just yet. A match Cardiff in 2009 but let's not outing at the Stade de France could three years yet those two draws feel no matter where he is or what he always prove interesting narrative hate relationship with Ireland will a beating after lowering our colours of scores to settle.

February and this team have plenty the 6 nation's rolls around again in pun): if that's the way we're going to get over the depressingly crushing Kiwi's last month.

It took days for most supporters to in Jo'burg and our clash with the WZRPRVWH[FLWLQJWHVWPDWFKHVWKLV to blame for not winning. It's no have and we have only ourselves RIWKHEDVLFVXQGHUH[WUHPHSUHVVXUH land team rightly went 14 from 14 stalemate would have left a vacant it at the end. It was at the scoreboard and eventually nicked it in the second half and the Kiwi's without bringing emotion into it but after being pushed to the brink by an unexpected Irish team on the day. It's difficult to analyse the game without bringing emotion into it but ultimately Ireland failed to score in the second half and the Kiwi's gradually clawed their way back on the scoreboard and eventually nicked it at the end.

A draw would have been a fair result but sport is rarely fair. A stalemate would have left a vacant feeling in the gut and this New Zealand team rightly went 14 from 14 in 2013. They are a testament to fast free-flowing rugby and the execution of the basics under extreme pressure.

There is no point blaming Nigel Owens for the late penalty awarded to the opposition either. He called the game as fairly as he could have and we have only ourselves to blame for not winning. It's no coincidence he was in charge of the two most exciting test matches this year: New Zealand-South Africa in Jo'burg and our clash with the Kiwi's last month.

It took days for most supporters to get over the depressingly crushing nature of the defeat. I never wanted to watch rugby again such was the overwhelming feeling of devastation I felt after the final whistle that sunny evening.

It wasn’t until the following morning it dawned on me (excuse the pun): if that’s the way we’re going to play under Joe Schmidt, I’m in!

The challenge for Schmidt and the rest of his management team is to get the players to replicate that level of performance every time they wear the green jersey from now on. The 6 nation’s rolls around again in February and this team have plenty of scores to settle.

Motivation will not be an issue. Italy, Scotland and England are due a beating after lowering our colours last year. Warren Gatland’s love hate relationship with Ireland will always prove interesting narrative no matter where he is or what he has been called in the past.

We haven’t lost to France in nearly three years yet those two draws feel like opportunities lost. A final day outing at the Stade de France could match Cardiff in 2009 but let’s not get carried away just yet.

Ireland blooded some new players too; lest we forget and are still awaiting the return of Simon Zebo, Keith Earls and Donnacha Ryan. If the next few years are as exciting as their last outing; it’s a good time for Irish rugby. Have faith in Joe.

SIMON MAGUIRE
Chief Sports Reporter

New Zealand eventually completed sixth as a reward at Lansdowne after being pushed to the brink by an outstanding Irish team on the day. It’s difficult to analyse the game without bringing emotion into it but ultimately Ireland failed to score in the second half and the Kiwi’s gradually clawed their way back on the scoreboard and eventually nicked it at the end. A draw would have been a fair result but sport is rarely fair. A stalemate would have left a vacant feeling in the gut and this New Zealand team rightly went 14 from 14 in 2013. They are a testament to fast free-flowing rugby and the execution of the basics under extreme pressure.

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I don’t think I have to name them anymore because I’ve shamed them plenty. I hold my own against a lot of big names here,” explained CJ Molloy, standing 6’4, with the build of a heavyweight tight. He has a confidence to match. He says “shaming” big names as “the beauty of playing in New York. You can play against the big boys, the supposed big boys, of Gaelic football.”

CJ is a New York born, New York raised, Gaelic footballer. The “big boys” include Armagh full-back, Brendan Donaghy. Playing for Kerry in the New York Senior Championship final 2012, Molloy, who played at his favoured full-forward position, was marked by Donaghy, and scored two goals.

He played in last winter’s All-Star exhibition match in the Bronx’s Gaelic Park, facing a full-back line that included both All-Star O’Shea brothers from Kerry. His name, again, decorated the score-sheet. CJ now wants to bring his “looks, charisma and excellent left foot” to Ireland. He wants to become the first American to play in the Sigerson Cup and inter-county football.

He has transferred from the Donegal New York club in the Bronx to Ardra CLG in South Donegal, and will start a Master’s degree in Ireland in January 2014. While he was coy on the subject of which university he will line out for, he confirmed interest from a number of third-level institutions, saying: “I’m talking to a couple of different schools”.

His aspirations to play in the All-Ireland championship, however, were articulated in a more forthright manner: “You don’t play the game to be second best. I’d like to be wearing a county jersey. It won’t be for lack of effort.”

The county jersey CJ wants to wear is that of 2012 All-Ireland winners, Donegal. CJ’s uncle, Anthony, captained Donegal to their first All-Ireland win in 1992. Connie, his father, won a county championship with Ardara in 1981 before emigrating to New York a year later. He managed CJ on the New York panel for a time.

Growing up, CJ was not without his sporting suitors. He is an accomplished basketball player. He played throughout high school, be- fore winning a scholarship to college in upstate New York.

He quit the college’s basketball team to play for a New York football panel. He accepted that the panel could not match the basketball team for organisation, commitment from players, nor the credit he would receive from his peers.

He would “get shit for being the American guy playing Gaelic football.” Why football, then?

“Why football, then? He started playing football “the same way anyone in Ireland does”

He recalls being 5 years old, his father taking him to training: “I went down there kicking and screaming, like any young kid. I didn’t want to be a footballer.”

Like most of those kids, particularly those born into footballing dynasties, he gradually stopped the kicking and screaming. Apologising for the “corny” answer, he says: “It’s in my blood. It’s the truth.”

Remnants of his basketball-playing past are to be seen on and off the football pitch. CJ boasts fielding capabilities not unlike Kieran Donaghy, another basketball play-er-turned-footballer.

He also displays self-assurance perhaps more readily-associated with basketball than football. “Talk the talk, walk the walk, that’s how I try to do it. That is basketball’s influence, in a big way.”

Those who couldn’t hold their own vocally on the court didn’t survive: “Part of growing up in New York, playing basketball, if you couldn’t talk and back it up, then you didn’t last.”

Although bragadocio is not something generally accepted from Gaelic footballers, he doesn’t worry about being perceived as arrogant. It’s not something he considers: “Nah, I’m never going to think about that. I’m just always going to be myself.”

When asked what he thinks he brings to the game, he’s happy to joke that he “puts fans in the stands”, before giving himself the more pragmatic appraisal: “I try hard, I’m big, I’m physical and I score.”

Donagel captain Michael Murphy, a big, physical full-forward known for his scoring, recently led Glenswilly to victory in the Donegal county championship. CJ laughs that if he “had been running out in MacCuaighail Park on county final day, Glenswilly wouldn’t be champions right now.”

The more outrageous the utterance on his footballing abilities, the more generous the self-deprecating laugh to soften it.

His imminent move to Ireland is not born solely from the desire to play football at the highest level. He lined out for his new club, Ardara, in a relegation play-off last month. He is excited to join Ardara’s footballing community. Reflecting on the difference between football in Ireland and New York, he said he’s “looking forward to being part of ‘the club’ in Ardara.” Playing personnel of US clubs tends to be transient, “a revolving door of players”, as CJ puts it.

“You never really establish a ‘club’”.

That is not to say New York football is not without its qualities, according to CJ.

Often derided for being an arena for mercenary-interested players to make easy money, or one where talent is too sparsely-spread, CJ thinks that “the standard of football there is a lot better than people think”. He reserves an almost-bullish pride for the championship he has grown up playing in.

He challenged any footballer in the country to go to New York for a summer to experience its quality themselves. Having been involved in several big, football in Ireland and Donegal this year, he maintains the standard in New York is higher.

Wanting to be a part of a parochial Gaelic football club and saying the sport is in his blood could easily be dismissed as characteristics of a “plastic Paddy”, a term CJ says he has been cited in the past.

His pride in both strands of his heritage is evident, however: “I’m a GAA man. That’s something I’ll always be proud of”. He can quote from Jay-Z’s oeuvre just as easily as he can from that of the Wolfe Tone’s. Maurice Fitzgerald, Kerry All-Star footballer, and New York Knicks fans’ favourite, John Starks are both considered sporting heroes.

In an effort to earn the county jersey he wants to wear, CJ will spend the next three months in the gym in New York, trying to get his fitness levels up to inter-county football standards.

He recognises his fitness as the main aspect of his game needing improvement: “It’s the way football is going”, he says, “kicking has kind of gone out of it, and that’s something I’d be very good at.”

By this time next year, CJ’s attributes, fielding, kicking, and physicality, will have been showcased in the Sigerson Cup and he hopes to win the All-Ireland Championship.

Along the way, he may still “get shit for being the American guy playing Gaelic football”

When questioned his place on the Gaelic football field, however, he responds: “I may be a Yank, but my left foot has a bounce. That’s my answer to anybody.”
Sporting gift guide: they'll market anything

Darragh Mowlds

Class victory built on solid foundations

Architects win five-a-side soccer tournament held to raise money during Welfare November

Piers Moyles
Sports Editor

DIT Soccer Club played their part in November Welfare last month as they hosted an inter-class five-a-side soccer blitz at the Digge’s pitch opposite DIT Aungier street.

The event was organized to raise money for Barretstown children’s charity, which helps children who have been diagnosed with a serious illness. All students paid an entry fee of €2 and all the proceeds raised went to the children’s charity.

Seven teams competed on the day with a total of 41 students in attendance. The Soccer club secured the services of an FAI accredited referee who officiated over a total of 24 games which included two semi-finals and a final.

The teams were made up of students from courses, including Marketing, Business & Chinese, Automotive Technology, Architectural Technology, Engineering, Leisure Management and a team of Erasmus students.

The final, which was the 24th match to take place on the day, was between Architectural Technology and Erasmus. The architects edged the clash winning by three goals to two after extra time. Aungier street.

The winning Architects team credit for bringing it all together. The DIT Soccer Club would like to thank all the students that attended on the day as well as Luke McCarthy, David Rake from the FAI and DITSU.

DIT will be back in action in the O’Byrne Cup in January, as they prepare to face Meath in the opening game. The opener will take place on the 5th of January in Navan, as DIT look to get off to a good start in the football competition early next year.

DIT has been drawn in Group C and will have to overcome Meath, Wicklow and IT Carlow if they are to advance further in the Cup.

If DIT is to be successful in the competition this year they will have to fight off some very tough opposition.

Group A includes Wexford, Laois, Offaly and either UCD or TCD.

Meanwhile, Carlow, Longford, Kildare and Athlone IT are the four sides in Group B, and Group D is comprised of Dublin, Westmeath, and Andrew McF. The semi-final between Carlow and IT Carlow will be played on January 19 and the final takes place on the 26th of that month.

- Liam Kennedy

Frisbee Plate victory

The DIT Ultimate Frisbee Club’s Women’s team was victorious in their bid for success, when they won the Plate (second) Division at the Women’s Indoor Intervarsities on Sunday 24 November in Galway.

The team started the day well with a win over UCD3, but were then beaten by Trinity before narrowly losing 7-6 against DCU.

The team beat Pick-Up in the Plate quarter-final before overcoming UL2 in the semi-final. In the final against NUI Maynooth, DIT put in a big performance to win the Plate, adding to the club’s success in the Plate Division.

The team were represented in the Open Indoor IV’s earlier in the month.

Aoife Bermingham received the team’s Most Valuable Player award for her performance, while Aoife De Laney was voted DIT’s Most Spirited Player for her knowledge of the rules and positive attitude.

- Matthew Colfer

Karting en route to win

DIT Karting took part in the SSI Karting Intervarsity Championship in Watergrasshill, Co. Cork last Wednesday

After the successful qualifying round in Kart City two weeks ago, the 15 DIT students were selected to compete in the second round, with a total of 53 drivers on the day.

There were many intense battles all day with CIT, DCU, NCI and UL, with the DIT A team coming out on top with 1st place going to Peter Campbell, 2nd to Niall Murray and 5th to James Newe. Graham Higinbotham and Andrew McCormack also scored points for the Team Championship. Peter win has moved him up is 2nd in the Driver’s Championship, James 6th and Andrew drove exceptionally well for the DIT B team and is currently in 7th place.

DIT A are currently 28 points ahead of CIT, leading 135 to 107

- Myles Redmond, DIT Karting
DIT soccer teams lay down a marker in early rounds

Soccer in DIT continues to grow and the teams are becoming some of the most feared in the country.

For the first time in the college’s history the first team, B team and Fresher’s team all qualified from their group to progress in the next round of the league.

The reorganisation of the league may have contributed to this achievement, with four teams qualifying from the group compared to only two in the last few years.

The first team continue to impress following their success last year. They needed results on the last day to go their way to get out of the group but they scraped through and they also progressed into the next round of the Umbro Cup following a comprehensive 4-1 thrashing of Dundalk IT.

A number of league of Ireland players are currently plying their trade with DIT, including Paul Malone, Bohs centre back Roberto Lopes and Shelbourne’s Ryan Mathews. DIT could have as many as six league of Ireland players amongst their ranks when the season kicks off again in February.

The form of the Fresher’s team highlights the strength in-depth running through all the sides. They were unbeaten up until last month when they went out of the Bob Eustace Cup, following a 3-2 defeat after extra-time at the hands of Moate Business College.

The B team had also been mirroring the other sides, racking up good performances and results to back them up.

The league quarter finals are on the horizon in which all the sides hope to continue the sizzling form which has seen them installed as one of the favourites for the competition.

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I may be a Yank, but my left foot has a bróg – that’s my answer to anybody

- CJ Molloy

Last minute sickener

Free kick in final seconds gives Jordanstown victory 1-11 – 1-10 against DIT in league Semi-final

Ryan Nugent
Sports Editor

DIT were defeated for the first time in 18 months and subsequently exited the league at the semi-final stage, losing by a point to UU Jordanstown.

The most anticipated match-up of the Senior football season so far enticed more neutral spectators than supporters of either side, in expectation of a high footballing standard at DKIT.

This was precisely what they got. DIT took an early lead through a Bernard Allen free and apart from a scary interchange between Kieran Hughes and Ronan Ó Neill that should have resulted in a finish from Caolan O’Boyle, only for the forward to scuff his shot, the DIT were in control.

Niall Scully proved to be the focal point for DIT in the first half, bagging a couple of points to compliment to excellent left footed free-taking of Bernard Allen and some great points by Ross Hazley.

DIT went off at the break with a 0-7 to 0-4 lead. However, this lead was decimated in a matter of minutes at the beginning of the second half, as Jordanstown, inspired by a Paul McPolin fisted goal, went 1-9 to 0-8 up.

DIT never gave up and were helped by a slice of luck as Harry Dawson lofted the ball towards goal, flying over Mark McReynolds in the Jordanstown goal and into an empty net.

With DIT being the current champions of both the Ryan Cup and the Sigerson Cup, and the Jordanstown College labelled the team to beat this season, a tight, tense affair was always to be expected, and so it proved.

As we entered the final few minutes, DIT pressed. They passed hand-to-hand, working all the way from the full back line into Michael Shields at half back to Ross Sheridan on the wing. The college were playing patiently; they’d been there before and knew it was a small margins game at this level.

‘Smart football’ was the mantra from the coaching staff of both teams.

And that is why it was surprising that DIT couldn’t convert their chances. With the sides level at 1-10 a-piece, a free from the left went wide, and Ross Hazley, who’d been terrific throughout, shot wide shortly after.

Jordanstown pushed forward, working the ball out from the back, from former DIT captain Colin Walsh, who found Niall McKeever, who ensued to loft the ball into the forward line.

Four minutes into injury time at this stage, Jordanstown won a free-kick, to the left of the post’s and about 20 yards out. The consistent Kieran Hughes had no problem converting. The referee blew the final whistle almost immediately after.

There was disappointment, of course, but it was only the league. There are bigger fish to fry after Christmas and this was certainly the view of DIT and Offaly man, Bernard Allen.

“Our priority is the Sigerson and winning it two years in a row. So we’ll put in some more hardship before Christmas and be ready come January.

“We’re not far off. We’re still a good team and one defeat won’t change that. A lot of people are tipping Jordanstown for Sigerson so we’d like to get them again and challenge ourselves.”

Bernard Allen looks on after DIT lose out to a Jordanstown free with the last kick of the game