A night on the streets: page 13

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Director appointed to tackle industrial strife

By Aoife Stokes

DIT has announced the appointment of a Human Resources Director as part of its strategy to combat major industrial relations problems highlighted in a recent report from its Labour Relations Commission (LRCC) report.

The report, which was published in May of this year, was commissioned by the DIT's management and was carried out by the Commission for Complaints Handling (CCH). The report was based on recommendations made by the Comptroller and Auditor General, Mr John Purcell, following the publication of the report, which highlighted a series of problems within the college.

The report recommended the appointment of a Human Resources Director to deal with the college's industrial relations problems, and the appointment of a Human Resources Director was announced by the college's management.

The report also recommended the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor to deal with the college's governance problems, and the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor was announced by the college's management.

The report concluded that the college had made significant progress in recent years, but that there were still problems that needed to be addressed.

The college's management has welcomed the appointment of a Human Resources Director and the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor, and has stated that it will continue to work with the college's industrial relations problems.
Your AIB Student Officers On Campus in DIT

**Paula McIntyre**
Mon/Wed/Fri
AIB Campus Bank 10 am - 12 noon
Bolton Street 1 pm - 4 pm
(Telephone: 87 40409) Tue/Thur
10 am - 1 pm

**Liz Moore**
10 am - 12.30 pm Daily
AIB Campus Bank
Kevin Street
(Telephone: 4759680)

AIB Campus Bank 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm Daily
Aungier Street
(Telephone: 4759654)

Students of DIT Cathal Brugha Street & Mountjoy Square may visit the Student Officer in Bolton Street Campus Bank or alternatively visit AIB Bank, 37/38 O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.

*Get the most out of college - Be with AIB.*
By Darragh Clifford

Third level fees have once again increased this year, this time by the above-inflation figure of seven percent.

The £321 that full time students of DIT paid this year represents an increase of £20 on last year's £292 charge. In 1996, college fees stood at just £150.

Third level students in receipt of the grant are exempt from the levy.

The non-tuition fee goes towards various student services, outlined by DITSU President, Marguerite Fitzpatrick elsewhere in this month's issue. Within DIT, this year, £70 of the total has gone to exam fees, with the remaining £242 forward to student welfare services, clubs and societies, medical fees and to DITSU's six site offices.

In an interview with the Irish Times, FITSU's John Jordan has said that it's right for students to contribute to their costs, but also that it's unfair to charge them all the same.

In the future, FITSU is hoping to see an end to the three-tier pricing system in which students have to pay for exams, fees and clubs, regardless of how much they use.

Section 40 of the Universities Act, 1997, states: "A university may determine fees for student registration, courses, fees, examinations, exhibitions or any other event, service or publication held or provided at or by the university."

DIT recently hosted the 31st European Small Business Seminar (ESBS) forum, entitled "An Enterprise Odyssey 2001" from September 12 to 14 in the CityWest Hotel, Dublin.

Tanaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mary Harney opened the three-day forum.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Rudy Berger, CEO Mediabul, Dr. Wolfe de Brouwer, CEO Starlab, Belgium, both of which are leading players within the technology sector.

By Aiding Casey

A DIT Independent investigation has illustrated the serious shortage of computers at the Institute, with 2,500 computer available for over 22,000 students.

This news followed the publication of a report disclosed by the Union of Students in Ireland, which indicates an appalling shortage of computers at Irish universities, with some operating a ratio of one Personal Computer for every three students. Although DIT's ratio is quite low by comparison, the Institute is still nowhere near meeting the target of one computer for every three students, as set out by the Department of Education five years ago.

DITSU President, Michael Martin stated that students must be catered for by every means possible to ensure a satisfactory standard of computer access was guaranteed for all. "We definitely should have more computers," she said. "In my six years at DIT, there has always been complaints about the lack of computer facilities for students."

She added that it was very important that students had access to computer facilities. "It is not fair that students have to buy their own computers when they should have access at college."

If DIT is to be granted university status, management will have to make a range of improvements to meet Government standards. Commenting on computer shortages as a critical requirement for university status, Fitzpatrick said, "We are the highest third level college in Ireland and the facilities should be there for our students."

Whilst USI figures show that none of the colleges surveyed is even near to meeting these standards, in the five years that have passed, it appears that there has been a national failure to meet the target. Students, who choose to study at third level, are being denied access to the necessary resources to achieve maximum computer literacy.

The survey shows the ratio of students to computer varies from 13:1 in Dublin City University to 32:1 in Trinity College and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

USI President Richard Hammond was disappointed by the report's findings. Ireland is one of the world's leading exporters of computer software and hardware and yet our university students are struggling with inadequate facilities," he said. "The figures are truly shocking," he added his Education Officer and former DITSU President, Colin Jordan said. "The extremely poor provision of computing is the most worrying aspect of DIT's inadequate computing facilities."

The report also states that there is a rise in the number of students who are not using the computer facilities at all. This is due to the extremely poor provision of computing facilities at DIT. The report also states that the access to computing facilities is not fair and that it is not equitable for students to have access to computing facilities.

By the end of the year, the survey found that students were using the computer facilities at an average of once a week. This is a significant decrease from the previous year, where students were using the facilities an average of three times a week.

The survey also found that the majority of students were not using the computer facilities at all. This is due to the extremely poor provision of computing facilities at DIT. The report also states that the access to computing facilities is not fair and that it is not equitable for students to have access to computing facilities.

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Vinny Dooley's Presidency of DITSU was an eventful, problematic term. Difficulties at Union HQ and a host of other problems last year ensured whoever succeeded Dooley would have a major task on their hands. New President Marguerite Fitzpatrick spoke to DIT Independent Editor Dermot Keyes about what 2001/02 holds in store.

Dermot Keyes: Firstly congratulations on winning the election for the Presidency of the Union. What exactly is the remit of the position of DITSU President?

Marguerite Fitzpatrick: As Overall President, my job is to make sure that the Sabbatical officers of the Union in each site have the resources and the training that they need to perform their tasks to the best of their abilities.

I also represent the Students' Union on a national level and act as the public voice of the Union when attending the various meetings and conferences that come with the job.

I am responsible for DITSU Council and act as the principal spokesperson of that body. The Students' Union must represent the needs of the students of DIT and I am responsible for seeing that this happens.

DK: The small turnout at last year's DITSU Election seemed to be indicative of the largely apathetic attitude that prevails among a large proportion of DIT students. Who look at the Union and believe that it doesn't really do anything. What would you say to such students?

MF: That's a fair point. A lot of people do seem to think that DITSU doesn't do anything and this sort of thing, which really isn't the case.

One of the main objectives of my year as President is to improve the level of communication in DIT between the Union and the students.

We've got the officers out more often in all of the sites and we hope that our poster campaigns during the year will also serve to bolster and publicise the profile of DITSU a lot further than what has previously existed.

If students have this attitude that the officers and the Union as a whole are not doing anything, I say to them you vote at election time. They should get involved and change this if they feel so strongly about it and stand in elections and see the work that needs to be done and is done being done.

Our officers sit in several DIT committees and are committed to doing as good a job as they can do with the various projects and campaigns that they are involved in.

You can get stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to this kind of attitude.

DK: Do you aim to raise the profile of DITSU this year and if so how?

MF: Definitely. We are going to get around to all the first year classes over the next few weeks through our Sabbatical officers to establish the class reps system. This is very important because when we show those new to the college what we do and what we can do, then we have a greater chance of engaging with the students and showing what we can do.

DK: For want of a better expression, what possessed you to get involved in Students' Union activities?

MF: When I was in first year, I ran for language officer and I wasn't aware that this was a position on the executive of DITSU.

But since then I have been involved to greater and lesser degrees in some years before I decided to stand for the President's position in Bolton Street when I was in third year. Last year, I thought why not go for the Overall Presidency and try it and here I am today!

DK: A lot of students I expect are not aware of what happens to the capitation fee that they pay at the start of each academic year. What exactly is done with our money?

MF: The capitation is put towards the provision of student services. Clubs and societies, the chapel, the sport clubs and so on all receives percentages of the money we do.

The main part of the money would go towards the salaries for officers and the training of officers each year. For the first time ever this year we are going to have training for part-time officers, which the capitation is also helping to fund.

The money also goes towards the entertainments that we provide during the year and is also put towards stationary used by the Union, insurance and the other bits and pieces that need to be bought and used during the year. The capitation is very important in the running of the union and it is important that students realise that their money is helping us work for students as best we can.

DK: Last year's DITSU was plagued with difficulties and it really was a year to forget. What do you aim to do to avoid the problems of last year's Presidency?

MF: Having being on the Executive last year, it was clear that one of the big problems was communication between the Executive and the officers and as a result of that, between the officers and the students.

All decisions I am making as President are made following consultation with the Executive and one of the problems last year was that this two-way process just wasn't happening.

Communication is very important and hopefully this will make the running of the Union and its other functions a lot easier for everyone.

DK: Thanks for your time and good luck with everything this year.

MF: Thanks very much.

Q&A - Marguerite Fitzpatrick, Overall DITSU President

"One of the big problems last year was the lack of communication between the Executive and the officers... this two-way process just wasn't happening last year. Communication is very important to the running of the union."

Director appointed to tackle industrial strife

Commenting on the PAC considerations of the UUC report, DIT Students' Union President, Marguerite Fitzpatrick stated, "I think that DIT were put in front of the Public Accounts Committee recently, I do feel that they (the management) should continue to strive for university status for DIT. I believe that this status is something that is truly worth fighting for. We should all be confident that the Governing Body of DIT are aware of the serious problems that currently exist."

As Overall DITSU President, Ms Fitzpatrick sits on this Governing body of DIT. The report has since been circulated to all rates..."
On 15 November and will be a joint effort between 40 third
level institutions throughout the whole of Ireland.

Richard Hammond, President of USI, said that this year's organisations involved 'are asking each student to raise as much money as they can by getting their parents, brothers, sister, relatives, work mates and friends to fill their sponsorship card.'

Joe McGrath, a marketing lecturer in DIT Mountjoy and executive director of DIT's involvement with USI and the Chernobyl Children's Project, told the DIT Independent that the organisations 'are looking for every student and every staff member to be out on November 15th.'

Last year's event was attended by around 10,000 students and staff members in Dublin, but Mr McGrath said that organisations hope to surpass this year.

Roughly twice as many women than men took part last year, and this imbalance is set to be repeated this year.

Ms McCraith said that although the message did not seem to get across to male students, the effort put into raising sponsorship was 'a fact' and that organisers hope to surpass this year.

There have been 24 times as many cases of thyroid cancer and a 250% increase in the number of cases of children born without limbs.

If the trend of death rates exceeding birth rates continues, it is feared that there will be no inhabitants of Belarus by 2030. Treatment in the country is severely hampered by a lack of medical supplies, such as anaesthetic.

Yet for as little as IR£200 a child from the region could spend a month in Ireland, which would increase the average life expectancy of a person by two years.

TEN Irish students recently travelled to Chernobyl to see first hand what conditions are like. Although no data has been set for the vote, the referendum is due to be held before the turn of the year.

The issue has been discussed among DIT students, an internal referendum was held and this time was raised by the referendum delegates at USI National Congress last year, when DIT could not comment on its abortion policies without the consent of its students. Commenting on the decision to hold an internal referendum, DITSU President Margaret Fitzpatrick said: 'The issue has been discussed by the executive and we are now trying to put in place a structure to establish the policy of DIT students.'

However, before DITSU can continue the campaign, legal advice will have to be sought on the issue.

'We hope to hold the referendum before Christmas, so that we can get the results back before the Government announce its intention to hold a third national poll on the issue, which is scheduled for next Spring.'

To help with the cost of flights, a sponsorship card was available from students unions and in the form of a cheque, a donation can be made to the Chernobyl Children's Project. "We are looking for every student and every staff member to be out on November 15th."

Above: the students who visited the children still suffering the effects of the world's worst environmental disaster.

Young, Irish and drunk

It is disappointing but hardly surprising to learn that the Irish student possesses a greater propensity for drunkenness than any of their European counterparts. The latest figures suggest that both the 11-15 and 16-24 age groups have been targeted by drinks companies as the most easily exploited and profitable niches in today's market.

This is both alarming and worrying but since we Irish tend to drink at a younger age than the English, our obsession with alcohol is fated to end in failure. The black period of our youth will be the time when alcohol will take hold. People who arrive at college after 18 have already done enough irreversible damage to their lives. The majority of those who start drinking before 18 will give up, but the number who will progress to drinking at a younger age than the average student will be many.

The immediate problem is intended to provide students with an introduction to what college life is all about - the fun, the laughter, all of course fuelled by alcohol. It is after all, impossible to enjoy one's self without being inebriated, or so one could be led to believe by some of the posters that tend to litter our walls at election time or through television advertising campaigns. 'Join Club X for free beers,' 'play sport Y to get plastered,' these messages may evoke humour for most of us who don't give a spare thought to just how many problems alcohol can create.

But the reality of having one too many all too often is something that many students really don't want to face up to because of the severity of the alcohol problem in third level life. While this paper does not wish to come over all preachy, it is hoped that any inaccuracies as soon as they occur. An corrections will be printed in the next edition of the newspaper.

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For the future, it is essential that students are forewarned of the dangers of the evil drug. It is a problem that will continue to become worse as long as alcohol is sold and people are allowed to drink it.

By Jon Lee

DIT and the USI hope that this year's 10-kilometre walk in aid of the sick children in Chernobyl will receive even greater support than the same event last year.

The event will take place on 15 November and will be a joint effort between 40 third level institutions throughout the whole of Ireland.

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Irish students drinking above EU average

By Colin McCann

A CONFERENCE, entitled ‘Alcohol in Young People’, has been told that the number of Irish students who get drunk regularly is well above the EU average.

Dr Bruce Ritson of the Alcohol Problem Service at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital delivered the address at a conference organised by the Irish College of General Practitioners. He cited a ris e in the level of alcohol intake in girls between 1995 and 1999, with beer remaining the most popular drink among students.

Dr Ritson told delegates that “there is clear evidence that the alcohol industry has two target groups, younger groups between 11-15 years and established drinkers aged 16-24. Both of these areas are large enough to provide the industry with a sustainable return on investment.”

The Republic of Ireland currently sits on top of the international league of binge drinkers but is only middle of the league of general alcohol consumption. Measures to aid Irish improvement in this area between 11-15 years have been minimal, and the Government’s new timetable.

The Beacon was able to get used to your frequent it.

The Beacon was able to facilitate the hundreds of DIT students that braved the almost monsoon rain and the horri ble two hour journey in a dank bus to cel ebrate their birth into third level education.

Aungier St Welfare Officer, Noel Renahan, said the time had come to act on the issue at all levels of student life. ‘Alcohol in Young People’, that drinking and alcohol related events should be cancelled out and finding alternative sources of funding to alcohol sponsorship. “Going to university is a wonderful experience and for some students, particularly in their first year, a stressful and difficult experience,” said Minister Martin.

“Making the best of college years is greatly complicated by high risk drinking and dependence on alcohol.”

The place was packed and not even the attitude of the moody bouncer could ruin the atmosphere for hundreds of drunk and happy teenagers (and the odd twenty-something guest). Through the use of heat lamps and many load shirts, an atmosphere that Magnum would have been proud of was created. “What is your beef with Freshers’ Week?” I hear our readers cry. Well I tell you, my beef lies in the shameless advertising and promotion of a certain city nightclub, not a million miles away from our south side sites.

In a dubious tie, Clarke and company headed by a mellifluous Simon Clarke. In a dubious tie, Clarke and company headed for a night in Dicey Reilly’s. The place was packed and not even the attitude of the moody bouncer could ruin the atmosphere for hundreds of drunk and happy teenagers (and the odd twenty-something guest). Through the use of heat lamps and many load shirts, an atmosphere that Magnum would have been proud of was created. “What is your beef with Freshers’ Week?” I hear our readers cry. Well I tell you, my beef lies in the shameless advertising and promotion of a certain city nightclub, not a million miles away from our south side sites.

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As the closely fought contest came down to two teams, one involving yours truly and the other headed by a mellifluous Simon Clarke. In a dubious tie, Clarke and company won, inciting a parts-down protest from an angry member of the opposition (no names please). To be fair to the union, a task, like organising Freshers’ Week is not easy and I doubt that any one would relish it. Do not be swayed by the portraits of Podge and Rodge that adorn Aungier Street pool room: life exists beyond the confines of our socialising surroundings.
## Reads of Nassau Street

### UNBEATABLE

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Harvard supports Ireland's leading e-programme

America's prestigious Harvard University, (HMI), is partnering with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) to provide special medical training over the Internet, for medical professionals.

With high demands on the medical profession, online programmes allow medical trainees to remain in the hospital where they are posted instead of travelling long distances to lectures.

The new Dublin-based IntuMed, will develop e-learning programs online in the postgraduate medical specialties and in some allied health care professions, such as nursing and pharmacy.

Together the colleges will develop interactive and fully personalized educational programs available to medical students 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

The new partnership will significantly strengthen the expertise of both colleges.

RCSI's 200-strong faculty members will have the opportunity to learn from HMI's 7,500 faculty members in the States.

The RCSI e-learning programme, BeST, - the world's only on-line tutoring system for trainee surgeons - acted as the springboard for the latest development.

Harvard approached the RCSI, having come across the BeST programme in the Middle and Far East, where they engage in similar work.

The new partnership is breaking new ground to study the understanding and exposure to advanced medical training globally, said Michael Horgan, Deputy Chief Executive of the RCSI.

Our partnership with UCD and RCSI continues Harvard Medical International's tradition of pursuing excellence in medical education as one key factor in advancing health care globally," says Robert K Crone, MD, President & CEO of Harvard Medical International.

UCD wins centre in honour of Clinton

UCD will house the new £2.5 million William Jefferson Clinton Centre for American Studies, as a mark of honouring the former US president, Mr Bill Clinton, and his work for the peace process and his interests in Irish affairs in general.

UCD beat off competition from four other universities to gain the centre, because it is seen as most attractive in the third-level sector.

While the money involved is small, the centre will raise the profile of the university in the US and among US corporate donors.

The president of UCD, Dr Art Coogan, last week offered UCD's site for a centre, but the HEA argued all universities should be allowed to bid.

As such, a panel was established, headed by former US education secretary Mr Richard Riley, with assistance from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Department of Education.

The centre will bring together scholars and students from all aspects of American life, literature, history and culture and will further strengthen the bonds between Ireland and the United States.

During the Clinton presidency, the study of Ireland and the Irish in American universities reached new levels, with over 40 major programmes currently in place.

There is however no comparable American Studies programme in this country. Previous efforts to broaden and deepen the connection between Irish universities and our US counterparts gave rise to the Mitchell Scholarship Programme.

UCD introduces online Driver Theory Testing Programme

The Smart Media Institute at University College Dublin have come up with an innovative personalised free web-based training application that helps students study for the recently-introduced Driving Test.

The main selling point of "My Driving Test" (MDTT) is that it poses different questions to each student, depending on his or her personal abilities and knowledge.

MDTT uses information retrieval technology to automatically determine which questions a student will find difficult. By exploiting statistical regularities in students' answers, the programme is able to predict any particular student's answer to any given question.

My Driving Test then focuses the student on the challenging questions, helping them to study more effectively.

"Our skills and abilities in any given subject tend to be correlated with some of our fellow students. My Driving Test notices these correlations and uses them to help people study more effectively," said designer Clodagh Moriarty.

When a surfer logs on, they are immediately faced with a "Stages of the Road" multiple-choice question. Thereafter, the surfer predetermines the level of the subsequent question by selecting a "random", "harder" or "easiest" option.

"View your Result" shows the surfer how many they got right, detailing the question, the correct answer, your answer and the result.

The Smart Media Institute also conducts advanced research in artificial intelligence, information retrieval, multimedia and advanced Internet technologies.

Check out the website on: www.ucl.ucl.ac/MDTT

Students inventing the future

Over €1m is being made available by the Government for further collaborative research between Irish third-level institutions and MedialabEurope (MLE) - Ireland's most well-known Media Lab in Boston.

This brings the total amount provided since the programme began last year.

The innovative institution aims at exploring new approaches to the way in which new technology can impact on people's lives and environments.

Research generally brings together areas that can be tied into technology, including music, cinema, psychology, video, and linguistics.

Last year some 11 projects by six third-level institutions were funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). NESC is currently supporting MLE to examine the potential role of a sensor chair as a car safety device for older drivers.

The chair uses electricity creating a microscopic body to create music. NESC researchers realised that they could apply some principles to build a safety device to control the position and presence of a car in front seat or in the back seat. This information could be used to control or limit the deployment of an air bag during a collision, preventing injuries from being smothered.

Some of the other projects, focusing on new design ideas for buildings, new frontiers in multimedia, and third-level institutions' research in related fields, the research laboratory is at the centre of a multi-million-euro investment area in the Teagasc Innovation and Commercialisation Centre.

In time, the entire area around James Street is set to develop into a digital media district - Digital Hub.

International Student News: Arab students leave US fearing backlash

Middle Eastern states are leaving US universities because of fear of a backlash against Islam and Muslims.

Middle Easterners by angry Americans in the wake of terrorist attacks on Washington and New York. Up to 40,000 college students from Arab nations' study in the USA.

Asafo American State University students continue to return to their home- lands weeks after Sept. 11, the Arizona Republic reports. Islamic leaders had warned Arizona Muslim students to stay home, fearing that some Americans might compound the tragedy by seeking scapegoats.

The proportion of Arab students leaving US colleges has been high in Washington State University, which has some 18,000 students, because the Arab students who are leaving are largely from the United Arab Emirates, where television coverage of the attacks has been intense, administrations and Arab students have reported.

And Arab students have reported the University of Missouri, the University of Colorado at Denver, and California State University at Long Beach have lost some 20 Arab students. Scores of other campuses have reported smaller numbers.
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Officers happy with election despite low turnout

By Colin McGann

THE elections for part-time officers in DIT went off without a hitch on October 17, as did the count, which was held at The Vatican nightclub in Harcourt Street the following day. While the turnout was low, which seems to have become a regular occurrence come election time in this Institute, but all the candidates seem to be satisfied with their appointments.

The lack of students willing to apply for positions in DIT Mountjoy Square, namely none provided DITSU with the surprise of this year's campaign. Brian Whitney, studying in DIT Rathmines, set a new record receiving 124 'yes' votes and 0 'no' votes. Whitney, a second year student of Social Care and Practice, was elected Entertainment Officer without official opposition. 'The inequality between Rathmines and the rest of the DIT centres provided my incentive to run for election,' he said. He believes that his election will pave the way for him to start sorting out the discrimination, injustices and lack of facilities that Rathmines has to put up with. This year I will be focused on making the students of Rathmines feel more involved in DIT, as a whole.' The Entertainment position was the only DITSU part-time office to be filled in DIT Rathmines for the forthcoming year.

DIT Kevin Street was by far the scene of the most intense electioneering across the sites on both sides of the city.

Fergal Connolly, who was elected as Equality Officer, wants to inform all the students in Kevin Street about the validity and importance of DITSU.

"People are being informed of their rights if they happen to hang out around the Students Union," Connolly told The DIT Independent. "The students in the rest of the college only get the information when they really need it," he said.

Connolly, who works in a popular city night spot, said he is aware of the abuses that students are being exposed to on several fronts. "All people should be aware of their rights of law, lectures and landlords," he said. "I know I can't change people's minds but this year I can inform them," added Connolly.

Other students elected to office in DIT Kevin Street were: Geena Daly (Irish Language Officer), Mark Murphy (Participation's Officer), James Carroll (PRO) and Cathal Gallagher (Entertainments Officer). James Carroll, an Applied Science and Computers student, complimented the outgoing officers saying that all previous incumbents had done a very good job.

This year, Carroll aims to provide an even better service. 'Students still aren't aware of all of the Union facilities. Everyone knows we can organise great social events but some students don't even know they can get their USAIT cards in the Students Union,' he said.

In co-operation with Mark Murphy he hopes to get students involved even more, get them thinking about the student union, after all they are part of it.

DIT Cathal Brugha Street will be served this year by the elected Barry McLoughlin (Entertainments Officer), Orla Con-grove ( Clubs and Societies Officer), Corrie Soden (PRO) and Donna O'Sullivan (Employment Officer).

While DIT Aungier Street appointed Steven Hickey (Entertainments Officer), Ian Murphy (Equality Officer), Deborah Flood (PRO) and Cathal Brugha Street are serving their second year in their posts, the rest of the newly elected officers are part of it.

Fitzgerald (Irish Language Officer), Conor McDermott ( Clubs and Societies Officer) and Iseult Fitzgerald (Irish Language Officer), Orla Cosgrove (Secretary), Cathal Brugha Street are serving their second year in their posts, the rest of the newly elected officers are part of it.

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Features

The Independent, October 2001
Almost Famous... Not!

A s I slouched onto the sofa in my abode in Dublin on a wet October evening, I unlinked my shoes, let my feet breathe and said to myself 'sheesh, what a day.' My quest was to come face to face with the superstar of the Irish pop world had ended as abruptly as it had begun.

No, that's a lie. There is nothing abrupt about queuing in a hotel car park for virtually the whole of the day of rest. Having arrived at Jury's Tara Towers Hotel in Booterstown shortly after ten o'clock that morning, yours truly was immediately struck by the mini-skirted, tank-topped trove that were already forming a massive line at the rear of the hotel. The male masses were also doing their bit in the vanity fair stakes, some boasting hairstyles reminiscent of something that last saw light in the 1930s. This was truly a day when, rather disturbingly, once again only branded real-life Barbies and just as many boys were fitting the Ken shoe. Dressed in make-up, collateral mascara damage was all the rage, anathema for those who would not get the nod from Louis Walsh or Linda Martin later that day.

Under these circumstances, the only option was to seek to escape together your left, over loose change from the night before, and pay someone to cook it for you. But this would only be less than a dodgy fry on top of an even dodgier shopper. Purely in the name of research, the DIT Independent selected hangovers upon us to find the best hangover fry in Dublin.

The "under no circumstances" fry. Bewley's, Westmoreland Street.

Oh dear. Oh dear, oh dear. The term rip-off doesn't come close to describing this one. Only God knows how far in advance it's cooked, but it's long enough to be as solid as a rock by the time it hits the plate. And then there's the fact that by the time you get your little pot of teaing of coffee, and queue up to pay £6.95 for this misery on a plate, whatever slight chance there was of eating hot is long gone. Leave this one for the tourists.

The "grand, if unremarkable" fry. Yum Yum's, Aungier Street.

Not a bad fry at all, though it can be inconsistent. Good sausages and bacon, good coffee and great range juice. Not sure about the beans, though the fried potato is a welcome addition. The offputting feature of the fry is the fact that the egg is fried in a suspiciously perfect round shape, immediately calling the horror that is McGee to mind. Otherwise, thumbs up.

Plus, the cafe is always full of builders, and if anyone knows their frybreakfast roll, it's these guys. £5.95. The price ranges from £3.95 to £4.50. The 'very close second' fry. Lemon, South William Street.

Strictly speaking, this isn't really a fry, it's a pancake filled with stuff you might get in a fry. It's one of the nicest things you can possibly eat with a hangover, to mention one of the most filling. If you're not feeling up to the challenge of pork products or egg, there's numerous sweet and savoury alternatives. The coffee is good, and if you think you can face daylight without dissolving, you can sit outside. As if that wasn't enough, it's a bargain, ranging between £2.65 and £2.85.

The 'hangover?' What hangover? I'm brand new' fry. Probe, Georges Street Arcade.

The kind of fry that makes you believe that there really is a God and that he's smiling down upon you. No less than seven different types of stuffing are available, including a vegetarian and vegan option, but we hearty folk recommend the deluxe fry. It's £3.85 for more food on a plate than most students see in a week, but if you're feeling a little delicate, there's smaller versions, from £3.85. Featuring hash browns, Cronyckly pudding, mushrooms, sausages, and great bacon, among other things. And the staff is friendly, which is exactly what you need the morning after the night before.
Come rain or shine, the Dublin Simon community volunteers visit homeless people throughout the city 365 nights a year, doling out soup and sandwiches and in many cases, just having a chat. Janice Gaffey spent a night with the group to see what a night as a community volunteer entails

It's half past seven on a Wednesday evening when I meet Dynahsa Dolan, a Simon Community volunteer at the group's building on Usher's Island. I find her to accompany her and her colleagues on the nightly soup run around the streets of Dublin.

My guide for the night is Frank, who tells me that since it's a rainy night, there are more of us than usual. Frank doesn't have a car, so we have to walk. We load up the car with sandwiches and thermos flasks of tea and oxtail soup. We've also got some fruit, ten cigarettes and a sleeping bag. With the car sufficiently laden, we head for Dublin's most affluent shopping district.

I've never done this before and I'm not sure what to expect. Frank tells me that he rarely sees any trouble, although he's "occasionally been ripped off, and has had tea thrown over him because I didn't have any soup left. But aggro is rare". There's nobody around Clarendon Street or South King Street, so we head for St. Stephen's Green. There's a man standing in the doorway of the Unitarian Church, but we can't decide if he's homeless or just shielding from the rain. While we're deciding whether or not to approach him, he solves the dilemma for us and walks over to the car. He tells us that there was a group of homeless people around but they've moved on. Frank asks if we would like a sandwich, to which he replies that he would. We get out of the car, hand him a sandwich and a couple of sandwiches. His name is Liam and he's from Galway. I'm struck by how shy and soft-spoken he is. He's on the street for the night in the rain, and everything he owns is in a small plastic bag in his hand. After a brief chat about Galway's GAA performance, we move on.

Further along the Green, we find our next port of call. There's two lads sitting down and we go over and ask if they want something to eat. They're not too impressed with the offer of oxtail soup, but they do take it anyway. Frank asks if they want a cup of tea, which Jim refuses, but he'll 'take that because I'm so well off to go to the pub'.

A third person joins the group, and asks for a corned beef sandwich. He's quite indignant that we can't find one in the box, and decides to have a look for himself. Eventually he settles for ham, and then he and Jim ask for a cigarette.

Jim is most upset around ration of one person, telling Frank to 'get two'. He asks us to ring around for a hostel for him for the night, which Frank does. Jim then launches into the difficulties he has getting a hostel bed, primarily because he freely admits to having a drug problem. He needs a doctor's letter to say he's "has clean urine" before he can get a bed. He tells the group of the problem of finding a doctor. Having done as much as we realistically can for Jim and company, we move on towards Dawson Street.

Driving down Dawson Street, we spot a body in a doorway on South Anne Street. It looks like the person is asleep, but when Frank calls out, a head is raised. This is Tommy. He's not fussy about what he eats, once it's not messy. We have a chat about the weather, gathering colder and how the door: man is doing, since he's not sheltered of spots. He tells me that he's seen much worse. We give him a sleeping bag to Tommy, and then prepare to head further up South Anne Street. Tommy tells us to be careful, because "there's a lot of scumbags around there". He says he thinks he's in a cast, and he can't walk. Frank calls out, and Shane lifts his head, without opening his eyes. His head drops, and we call out again. The same thing happens, and it's like watching the living dead. But he's breathing regularly, and Frank has sufficient experience to know that this is not unusual. We start driving out of the alley, and encounter Patrick's friend, who has had a rethink about babysitting. We tell him what we've seen, to which he replies, "If he lifted his head his head's probably all right. It's only a mild OD".

We say that we'll wait for him to check and start reversing back down the alley, losing a wing mirror in the process. The babysitter calls from the bottom of the alley to say that everything is ok. So we check the opposite alley, and as we drive back out onto Ely Place, we witness a Lazarus-style miracle. There's Shane Shané, he's up around Ely Place, I kind of carried him to bed. But I left him there, cos I didn't wanna fight and that's what he was tryin' to do.

So off we go to Ely Place, and it's entirely deserted. There's three of the darkest alleys I've ever seen, and we drive slowly into the first one. It's pitch black and I'm scared witless. The alley opens into a car park and in the far corner there's a tiny shed, with a couple of мат­ tresses. It seems empty, then. We look him. We're pretty sure that it's Shane, lying on his back at a strange angle and in bad shape. Frank calls out, and we're back on a cold step in Dublin on a rainy Wednesday night.

Back up to the Green again and we pull in to a spot near Kildare Street. The guy we've stopped for turns out to be one of Jim's friends from earlier, but he points us towards another person across the road. It's Canadian Patrick* and he ambles over to the car. All he really wants is fruit, so we give him the last of what we have, and some soup. A friend of Patrick's joins the gathering and they have a marvellous conversation, from which I gather that Patrick wants his mate to check on somebody. His friend says I don't have time to baby-sit and wanders off. We ask Patrick if he knows of anybody else around. Yeah, my friend and the babysitter walking past us, right as rain and hav­ ing an argument. Shane is telling the babysitter to "stop wrecking me buzz" and off they go into the night.

Our next patrol region is Camden Street, where we meet Peter*, Ciaran* and Mary*. A fair amount of alcohol and there's a fair amount of glue and Mary is verging on hysterical. She wants us to find her a hostel, but is very specific about where she's will­ing to go, and it can't be anywhere "full of prostitutes and junkies". And she seems to think that this description applies to most places. She and Ciaran are a couple, and it takes very little to start a row between them. Ciaran tells me she's been on the streets all his life and in and out of prison. He asks us to look after Peter, "he's an old man, take care of him". I'm really impressed until Peter pulls me down and whispers that Ciaran is responsible for the glue and that he's been getting all over Peter's face. He asks me to call an ambulance, because he's fallen and hurt his arm and back. His leg is already in a cast, and he can't walk. He tells me that he wants to get away from Ciaran and Mary, and then, changing the subject entirely, recites a poem he wrote for his moth­ er. After a quick consultation with Frank, we decide to take Peter to hospital. It's easier said than done, since Peter needs to be carried and is not co-operat­ ing because we've dropped his cider and he's going nowhere without it. Ciaran and Mary try to help with the lifting, which at first glance seems to be quite noble of them. Then I realise that they're going through Peter's pockets in search of his vodka. It all has the potential to turn nasty, but we persuade Peter to hand over the vodka. He does so grudgingly and without taking a healthy swig from the bottle.

The safest bet seems to be to head for St. James's Hospital. As we drive past the offices outside the night clubs on Camden Street, Peter tells us a little about himself. "That pair use me. Just because I've been a broken leg and can't get away from them. They rob everyone. I drink, I'm an alcoholic but the one thing I don't do is insult people." As an ambulance passes the car, and Peter blesses himself. He does this every time he sees an ambu­ lance, he says.

"because you don't know who's in it. It might be some­ one worse off". He claims that he paid for the vodka he gave to Mary, and I feel like I've betrayed him for asking him to hand it over. As we drive into the hospital grounds, Peter tells us that he will be 58 this year, and then starts playing air guitar, and singing Ed Sheeran songs.

Checking him into the hospital is far from easy, given that Peter is in an oral bed, and there's further upset when hospital security places a guard in his bed. His car­ er request to be brought to hospital seems to have been forgotten, and he's running out of operating with the staff. It turns out that he was here the previous night with some head injuries, but there's nowhere else to bring him. "So he's ours for the night again then", the nurse says warily. We leave them to it and head back to town.

Our final stop is at the AIB Banklink on Dame Street, where we hand out the last of the food. We drop the flanks back to the shelter and head home.

I spend a while wondering what will happen to Peter. If he's discharged from hospi­ tal, where will he go? How will he get there? The follow­ ing morning, I see Peter in the same spot we found him in the night before. Ciaran and Mary are with him. They're laughing and drink­ ing.

*Names have been changed to protect identities.
The Force is strong with this one

At last, at long last, Star Wars has been given the DVD treatment. Dermot Keyes takes a look at what the double-disc 'Episode One - The Phantom Menace' has to offer. And no, there isn't a 'delete Jar Jar' option, not that you will even care...

The biggest DVD release of recent times promises to be the most impressive movie release on the format to date, even allowing for the computer-generated jiving of the one called Jar Jar Binks. 'Star Wars: Episode One - The Phantom Menace' looks a pretty safe bet to become the biggest unit shifter in DVD history during the run-in to Christmas, boasting an extra six hours of footage detailing the first installment of the Sky-walker saga.

It's taken Lucasfilm eight months to put this baby together and if online reviews is a barometer of how good 'TPM' is on disc, then this promises to be truly something special. The movie itself boasts several new sequences, including a taxi ride around the urban beauty of Coruscant, new introductions to the pod race and a whole new section of the second lap in the race around Boonta Eve. The movie itself is divided into 50 chapters, a lofty number never before attained in a DVD production. This allows the viewer to shoot straight to the scene of particular interest, be it the Jedi battling droidekas, the introduction of Anakin and Obi Wan or the climactic lightsaber battle between Obi Wan, Qui Gon and Darth Maul. All the menus on 'TPM' are fully animated and reflect the various worlds visited during the movie.

So what of the extras, those scenes and other tidbits retrieved from the cutting room floor by Lucas and his cohorts for the gold-damned interested movie buff or plain old X-wing spotter such as yours truly? George Lucas, producer Rick McCallum, sound designer Ben Burtt as well as a host of the special effects boffins from Industrial Light and Magic all offer lively and insightful insider info on what it took to put TPM together. One of the major highlights of the DVD is the one-hour documentary entitled 'The Beg to Fady' which is exclusively for the DVD, the documentary provides viewers with a taste of what it was like on the set and just how much thought, time, sweat and tears goes into making a Star Wars film. This may well become the selling point of this version of the movie as this is the only place where one can watch a Star Wars production of this kind.

There are seven cut scenes from the original movie included in the set, ranging from Sebulba's flamethrowing of rival podracers around the sands of Tatoonie, to Jar Jar and the Jedi's escape from a waterfall upon entering Theed. These are Star Wars scenes never before viewed anywhere. Cinemgo, people, if you aren't getting excited now, you're a Sith.

The usual theatrical and tv trailers are included, as are the mini-documentaries that now viewstars can first post-ed in the production stages of 'The Phantom Menace' back in pre-1999 Israel. The superbly composed 'The Force of the Fans' by composer John Williams is included with its video, while white information is provided in relation to a DVD-ROM link that Lucasfilm has yet to divulge all relevant data on. In all in all, this DVD is likely to be the benchmark for all future movies on this format and certainly makes the future releases of Episodes, Four, Five and Six all the more enticing. It's all so brilliant...I've almost forgotten about some movie that opens in cinemas next July. I'm sure the name will come back to me!

8 Just before we went to press, yours truly got a peek at what the DVD in its beautiful entirety. It is truly magnificent, the blue ribbon release on the format is timed and is a must see for absolutely anybody that wants to get a peek at what digital technology is going to treat filmgoers to both in the cinema and at home in the years to come. The hour-long documentary is a fascinating look at the five year process that went into making 'Episode One' a reality and the slightly concerned looks on the faces of Lucas and his cohorts at the end of the first rough cut of the picture is pure theatre. The movie may not have been everybody's liking, but this edition and all its extra dressing make it a must-buy. Absolute magic!

By Bryan Collins

Napster lives on

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By Bryan Collins

If IT's cheap or if it's free there's a student to be found. Perhaps explains why students made up the bulk of the users of the world's leading free music website, the one and only Napster. For months, students everywhere were downloading mp3's from the site at www.napster.com, onto minidiscs, portable mp3 players or burned CDs. For those not up to speed on tech jargon, an mp3 is a technological feature which can compress a song into a very small file hence making it attractive to download.

The music industry didn't sit idly by however. Last March the major record labels won a lengthy court battle against the site. The result was a restricted version of Napster, which was forced to filter or block copyrighted songs. The music industry is still worried and they have every reason to be. Napster's demise didn't mean the end of free downloadable music.

Within weeks of the court order, dozens of sites had sprung up, fighting to take Napster's place. These sites proved much harder to fight to make sure based outside of the United States.

One of the more popular music swapping sites can be found at www.audiogalaxy.com. One registered you have access to a worldwide selection of high quality, and often rare, mp3's. It also boasts an ability to resume downloads that have been interrupted from where you left off, so unlike Napster, you never need to attempt a download more than once.

Another highly proper file sharing programme can be found at www.wirewax.com. Once installed, it allows you to download music, pictures, movies and documents. In other words you can get your hands on anything from U2 to Steptoe King and of course in true Napster style it's all free.

In an effort to combat piracy, the music industry has announced it will ship CD's with software which will prevent a computer from reading the CD. However game manufacturers have used similar software for years with relatively little success. Games can be recorded with ease after a simple download from sites like www.game copyworld.com.

It's not only the music industry that's worried. Hollywood looks set to go a round or two with file swappers. Currently, downloading entertainments is impractical. Today's unreliable dial-up modems mean downloading one would require the patience of Buddha. This is all set to change over the next few years. Eircom recently announced the launch of their high-speed, or ADSL, Internet connection. This is up to an hundred times faster than a standard dial up modem.

At the moment the service is affordable only to those with a fat bank balance. However as prices drop and access increases, the ability to download entire movies should become a reality. Google in with the arrival of DVD burners, and you can see why Hollywood is breaking in with a cat of file swappers.

One thing is clear. The battle over file swapping is far from over.
Kitt sings another love song

By Debbie Flood

When his current album The Big Romance riding high in the charts, an appearance at the DIT Independent, DITSU, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Judging by the mixed audience that night Kitts music has begun to reach a much larger, more varied crowd set.

Kitt's dreamy music loses none of its warmth and charm for the live treatment. If anything, his voice reaches tender new levels on songs such as Step Outside in the Morning Light and Strange Light in the Evening. He uses all the typical ways of drawing in the crowd to good effect, chatting easily with the audience and taking sips from his pint of Guinness between songs.

The most consistent feature of Kitts concerts is the appearance of his younger brother Robbie, who on Friday sang with him on a moving performance of Another Love Song, adding a touch of familiarity and intimacy to the night's proceedings.

Standing for two hours proved draining for my weary limbs, so I sneaked upstairs to feel the vibe from the balcony. Unbeknownst to my aching limbs, there was not a law against gentle, prove draining for my weary limbs, so I sneaked upstairs to feel the vibe from the balcony. Unbeknownst to me, I had stumbled into Kitt clan territory. Sitting next to me, a middle-aged couple, not quite fitting the type for the Kitt fan club, watched the singer silently. Who I later found out was their son. I looked around at his friends and relatives and realised that these people knew Kittser as he is fondly called by friends, whereas I knew only his music.

Judging by the mixed audience that night Kitts music has begun to reach a much larger, more varied crowd. The low ebb of the evening became, but all this is forgotten when your stomach is hurting from laughing so hard at him falling off a stool while singing an Irish ballad. It's when your in bed thinking about it that you start to feel a little guilty. Then again, maybe it's all an act. Maybe, he's not really a drunk, it's just a stage persona. If so, he's the best method actor I've ever seen. And one of the best comedians to boot.

All man: Johnny Vegas does his funny thing at his recent show in the Shelter
The Watcher - don’t bother

Video reviews with Eoin Murphy

The Gift

Over the past year we have been bombarded with a seance load of supernatural thrillers, ranging from the chilling to the greatly defrocked.

Sir of Echoes opened the doors of Dustin Hoffman and then Lost Souls slammed it shut in your face.

Sam Raimi’s The Gift offers another perspective on things that go bump in the night.

In the heartland of America also known as Bricktown Georgia, Cat Blanchett plays a fortuneteller who tries to keep her family alive by helping locals with all their supernatural needs.

But unlike most under-stated horror flicks some of the towns folk take offence towards her unusual career choice and threaten her and her children.

One such Cletus wannabe is Donnie Barksdale (Keanu Reeves) who takes personal offence to Annie (Blanchette) telling his wife to leave him, by branding her a witch and threatening her life and that of her kids.

When the daughter (Katie Holmes) of the town’s most promising businessman goes missing and Annie senses something is not right, the gift is well worth a viewing.

while you are always left guessing as to whom the real murderer is, (partly because Hoffman has slept with half the town) it is almost obvious who it actually is.

So if you are looking for a night in without the demons (well drink anyway) and really want to just sit down and be entertained, the Gift is well worth a viewing.

Hannibal

Hopkins is as always excellent in his portrayal of the macabre Lector and Moore picks where Foster left off with a very competent performance.

Hannibal

Well he’s back and this time he’s even hungrier. Hollywood’s most loved cannibal is back as the eponymous villain in the film version of Thomas Harris’ novel Hannibal!

The much-awaited sequel to The Silence of the Lambs was destined for criticism but, (partly because Hoffman has slept with half the town) it is almost obvious who it actually is.

The Watcher

The Watcher: Director Joe Charbanics’ picture fails to capture any level of suspense or drama and always leaves you searching for a point

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By Fiachra Rocca-Goveny

Oh you lucky things you! Legion of the great unwashed rejoice! There is a divinity among you! Having noticed that the majority of ye poor students, although having a plethora of useless qualifications and pieces of paper, you are missing something vital. Style. Sadly, the je ne sais quoi, which I have in abundance, is not on the curriculum in college, so it is up to me to spread the love and show you how to live! Oh, the enormity of the task. Now I know how Mother Theresa felt when he first entered Calcutta.

As always it's been a hectic week for Dublin's favorite funboy. On Monday my VBF FiFi and I went to the opening of a new art gallery somewhere or other. Honestly, these gallery types are so stiff, they just wanted to mope about looking at pictures and talking.

I mean, hello, we're not dead yet. So, we tried to resuscitate it with a quick dinner date at Bistro Bong. I stuck to the fillet of tofu but FiFi was positively roughing it with some chips and aioli.

But just had time to finish the Chardonnay and dash across town to Phillips, the new place to be seen. No sooner were we spotted outside then the owner had whisked us through the velvet rope and into the V.I.P rooms where cosmopolitans and a whole rookery of new VBFs awaited us.

I mean it has a non-VIP area but we had had enough poverty for one day. Well that's enough for now, I can't be giving away all my secrets. And besides dictating to my secretary is just 5000 dull. You don't know who these super-urchins are yet. I mean it has a non-VIP area but we had had enough poverty for one day.

So until next month, au Renoir.

FRG

With Laurence Macklin

I could spend the first paragraph welcoming you all back for another year and greeting first years for the first time into college, etc etc., but so, I won't, that is not my job. If you want some sycophantic drivel I suggest you read the editor's column (but it's good sycophantic drivel!) Edit. That's what he is there for.

However, our ordeal wasn't over yet. While at the counter some pesky street urchin wanted to pay by cash. Hello, are we living in the dark ages? I didn't even know they still printed those cute little £10 notes.

The day was practically a disaster so we tried to resuscitate it with a quick dinner date at Bistro Bong. I stuck to the fillet of tofu but FiFi was positively roughing it with some chips and aioli.

The day was practically a disaster so we tried to resuscitate it with a quick dinner date at Bistro Bong. I stuck to the fillet of tofu but FiFi was positively roughing it with some chips and aioli.

This isn't an excuse for me to gloat. It's to remind you what you missed so you won't make the same mistakes next year. Alright, it's just to gloat.

Dublin was awash with international acts throughout the summer. The E.S.B Jazz Festival saw some truly legendary performances even if the main attraction, Charlie Haden, couldn't make it due to the events on September 11th. The Doelands Film Festival ended on 20th of September, a novel addition to the calendar of film festivals in the Irish Film Centre. Gig-wise there were just too many to mention, but recent highlights included Spiritualized at the Ambassador, and St. Germain in the Olympia. You don't know who these people are? Then go forth and find out! You will not be disappointed.

But enough reminiscing and Wonder Years nostalgia (it was at that point I could feel my childhood slipping away...). The year is young, the bar is full and we've all got our hip cat threads on. So get up and get down and get out there.

The legendary Sparklehorse play the Ambassador on Friday 2nd November with Gemma Hayes. Their most recent release, It's a Wonderful Life is one of the most interesting pieces of rock you'll hear at the moment, and support from the up and coming Hayes will make for a really strong combination on the night.

The awesome Mogwai play the Olympia on 7th November. Anybody who was at their gig in the Red Box will know that it was one of the gigs of the year.

One of my sources back stage told me that Mogwai themselves reckoned it was the best gig they had ever played, so this is one to be missed on peril of death. Also playing the Olympia will be Ron Sexsmith on 18th November and the Cowboy Junkies on 23rd October.

The Ambassador is a welcome addition to the country's venues. Reminiscent of the Olympia in layou, the venue is split over two levels with standing on the ground floor and seating on the upper.

Although the prices at the bar are among the most expensive in the city, the Guinness is good even if it is in the dreaded plastic cup. The acoustics are excellent and the stage is impressively large but thankfully the crowd are not fenced off a huge distance from it.

Although it has being just concerts so far, the Ambassador will play host to a number of late night shindibs a la the Olympia and the Gaiety, the first of which is School Disco.com on 27th October.

So if boys and girls in school uniforms is your thing than report to your local Garda station you sick puppy. Oh, it's all good.

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A new college year and a new season for DIT Gaelic Games brings it with a pool of freshers to choose from, which compensates for the loss of last year’s graduates. After mixed performances in the past, DIT GAAs Development Officer Des O’Donnell speaks to Miguel Delaney of his expectations for the coming year.

In football, this year’s All-Ireland Football final showed that the potential is there for DIT teams. Ollie Murphy, Richie Kealy and Evan Kelly head the list of past DIT students victorious in the final. However, while DIT football has benefited from the contribution of County players before, many of them forming the backbone of teams, Des believes the problem has been that these players have never come around at the same time.

As for this year, DIT senior football manager Joe Moran has some adjustments to make, with 11 of last year’s side having graduated. Although DIT has a campus of over 15,000 students, Des claims that it is still difficult to get a squad together. “I could go around the different colleges now and get over 20 willing footballers, but this will always be whittled down as students just don’t have the time.”

The fact that DIT has centres scattered all over Dublin, combined with the distance of facilities, causes further problems. While arranging a fixture and notifying every centre is troublesome enough, potential players can be put off as the pitches are out in Terenure. “The facilities we have are adequate, but they are not central enough. If the pitches were in Belfield, only a mile away from most centres, more players might be attracted as they could travel to them. The senior football team has been forced to draw from the fresher’s team, an idea that Des dislikes but is forced to accept. “There is a big difference between coming up against an 18-year-old fresher and a 22-year-old senior. It would be nice to protect fresher’s for a year, but sometimes that’s impossible.”

However this year it might not be such a bad thing, with the emergence of some promising talent. On Wednesday October 10th two freshers’ teams were sent out to Belfield to take on two UCD teams. For the first time ever both DIT teams won, showing that progress is being made. It could be an interesting year for the First Year Side.

In hurling, the senior side has also been weakened by the loss of graduates, with many of them having formed the core of previous years’ teams. However, the squad in a dedicated bunch and is boosted by the fact that Colin Cowen, whom plays for Galway’s senior side, is still available for selection. Senior hurling manager Damien McDonald will hope to improve on last year’s performance, as the side were beaten in the first round of the Fitzgibbon Cup by NUI Maynooth. This year however got off to a bad start with DIT hurlers losing two matches to the Galway and Mayo IT teams.

As for the ladies, Des believes those playing for the football and hurling sides are just as enthusiastic. “As long as the players are happy and always, the numbers just aren’t there. In camogie it’s the same problem, as there wasn’t enough available players to get a team together. This time around, DIT will participate in the Leinster Higher Education Colleges Freshers’ Blitz in DCU on Monday 22nd October. Des expects to send out two teams, hoping that a good result at the event will put DIT camogie on the road this season.

Finally, as well as wishing all teams good luck, Des has one final request: Could all players please bring back last year’s jerseys?"
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