



Clubs & Societies NEWS

Aontas na Mac Leinn
Ollscoile Luimnigh

University of Limerick
Student Union



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Karate Club Big in Japan

By Eoghan Mc Dermott UL
SKC Chairperson & Eimear
O'Sullivan, UL SKC Treasurer.

Japan – for anyone who is serious about karate, is the most significant of pilgrimages. Okinawa, one of the islands of the incredible Japanese nation, is the birthplace of Gichin Funakoshi, the father of Shotokan Karate. Soke Hirokazu Kanazawa, one of Funakoshi's most talented students, founded the Shotokan Karate International Federation (SKIF) in 1978. SKIF, who are based in Tokyo, is now affiliated with dojos in 130 countries, including the University of Limerick Shotokan Karate Club. The chance to train in the headquarter (Honbu) dojo of your organisation is one that anyone would leap at, and, for the lucky members of the UL Shotokan Karate Club, this chance arises once every two years. On the 6th of January, at some ridiculously early hour of the morning, thirteen of us arrived at Dublin airport. Thirty hours and two flights later we landed in Narita, Tokyo on a crisp and sunny morning.

They say “start as you mean to continue”. It was with this in mind that we made our way to training that first night, jet-lagged, highly caffeinated and excited. Shaking slightly, we lined up according to rank in

front of one of the head instructors in the Honbu dojo and bowed to show our respect for the dojo, our instructors and our fellow students. As the familiar count of the warm-up started we put aside all our nerves and tiredness and settled into the class with enthusiasm and renewed energy. A word of advice to anyone ever taking a long flight – karate is the best cure for jet lag that I have come across. Rarely have I slept as well as I did that first night in Tokyo.

Many karate students in Ireland only get the opportunity to train with the Grandmaster, Kancho Nobuaki Kanazawa, and the other Honbu dojo instructors, twice a year at most. Over the course of just under a fortnight, however, the thirteen members of ULSKC trained with Kancho Kanazawa, Senseis Fumatoshi Kanazawa, Suzuki and Murakami more than eight times. The only reason there weren't members of the club at the dojo every day was because there was no sensei to let us in!

From Kancho Kanazawa's insightful teaching of kihon (the basics of karate), to Suzuki Sensei's wealth of knowledge on kumite (sparring), to the physicality of Murakami Sensei's classes and their combined knowledge on kata, the “soul” of karate, we were hard pushed to absorb everything we learned in those



ten days. Between us, however, with the help of more than one training diary, we amassed an impressive knowledge reservoir, especially given that the majority of the members had started training only a year and a half previously.

Rivalling the training as an exercise in humility, the 350 metre ascent to the Tokyo Skytree observation deck really takes your breath away. The sensation we felt as we stood and watched the city lights stretch far into the distance beneath the enormity that is Mt Fuji, realising that we were just thirteen people out of 30 million in Tokyo, is something that none of us will ever forget.

While training was always our first priority, the opportunity to absorb the Japanese culture was one we couldn't pass up. Every moment not spent on the dojo floor was spent exploring the vast urban jungle of Tokyo. From the peaceful gardens surrounding Meiji shrine and to Shinjuku station, through which the population of Ireland passes daily, we explored it all.

Perhaps the proudest moment of the trip came when our newest member, Noelle Donworth, who joined us just 13 weeks before we left, was offered the chance to grade in the Honbu dojo. She impressed Kancho Kanazawa so much that she not only became the first ULSKC member to grade while on the bi-annual

trip, but also became one of only five SKIF-Ireland members ever to grade in Japan, of which she was the first to double grade.

Now with fond memories of a hugely different culture and some of the best training of our lives, we return to our own dojo to gear up for the Intervarsity in February, the 2nd annual Gasshuku training weekend in April and begin trying to prove our worth again for the eagerly anticipated Japan Trip 2016!

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Welcome



Paul Lee
Clubs and Societies
Development Manager

Greetings from the Clubs & Societies Office

I know semester 2 is well under way at this stage and as you will see from the articles included some of the Clubs & Societies have been very busy prior to the start of this term with pre-competition preparations and developmental trips for the next generation of members. Some of these have been very exciting and ambitious events with some C&S taking their regular activities for this time of the year to the UK, Lanzarote, Spain, Holland, Wales and Scotland. As always I would encourage UL students to explore some of the fabulous opportunities that your student run Clubs & Societies offer you to complement a full university experience. There is no reason any of you could not be enjoying these activities, as always check out www.ulwolves.ie and if you are in the Students Union you will find at the top of the stairs on the right hand side two touch screens with mobile and email contacts for all those running our Clubs & Societies.

Other developments have been the re-launch of the Societies of University of Limerick Week (SoUL) in association with the University of Limerick Arts Office. This was an event that lapsed quite a number of years ago and at Clubs & Society Executive meetings in the last 6 months I had raised the issue that Societies need a dedicated time on the Academic calendar to promote who and what they are, as they tend to be very different, interesting and quirky organisations in some cases that might appeal to those who are not of a club persuasion. All involved have done a very good job this year getting it off the ground and you can read more of that in the piece written by

Lorna Bogue.

This semester marks another exciting chapter in the development of the UL Wolves student brand as we team up with NIKE for the provision of an on-line store of world class high quality sports apparel. We have been working on this relationship for almost 2 years now and it is with sincere thanks to Mr. Gerry Kearns the Marketing Director of Victory Teamwear for his dedication, advice and support from his team. It is through the Clubs & Societies Council and their Executive, the senior staff of the Students Unions, and the formation of a dedicated Branding Committee this initiative has come to fruition. The project was originally intended to create a Clubs & Societies brand to amalgamate the 50 student clubs and societies of the day under one visible brand. The idea had its second coming in 2009, 10 years after the first group of University of Limerick students floated this idea. In 2011 it became a reality as the students within the Universities Clubs & Societies voted to adopt the brand through an on-line campaign run by a local company some of whom were UL graduates, "Spark Marketing" (for a full history on brand development please see the link "Wolves brand" under Useful Links section on the Wolves main web page) Clubs & Societies has increased by over 30% in the last 3 years and with it the brand has strengthened and grown. In 2013 in a further development and acknowledgement of the strength of this brand it has now been approved by the students as the corporate image and identity of their parent body the University of Limerick Students Union (ULSU). Particular thanks to my colleagues here in the Students Union, Ms. Adele O'Carroll, Facilities & Support Manager and Keith Quinlan, Events & Promotions Manager and Barry Costelloe our Financial Controller. My thanks also to our web guru and UL Alumni Keith O' Neill of Blue Chief Solutions based here as a start up company in the University of Limerick for his creativity over many years on how best to develop solutions for the promotion and development of Clubs & Societies. Please support and enjoy your brand log on to www.ulwolves.ie

Finally and importantly there is a second referendum planned for Week 9 of this Semester, the previous referendum was narrowly defeated in 2013 but there has been a more focused approach this academic year trying to learn from the concerns of those students who voted "no" and a higher

engagement level with those student who believe additional facilities are required and necessary. Probably the most controversial aspect previously was a proposal to build a new Students Centre and in the proposed new referendum the intention is not to build a new student centre but to secure funding to explore professionally with the current student body IF they want/need a new students centre. If the answer from that research is effectively "No" then case closed. However if the student body as a result of that work carried out by researchers over the next academic year 2014/2015 do feel it is required then we enter into a new process with the student body most likely in the Academic Year 2015/2016 to see how that might be brought about. That is the fundamentally different change this time around to those already suggesting it is a "Lisbon 2" approach, it is not. The other aspects of the Referendum for Week 9 involve the redevelopment of the training area known as "Maguire's" for the 1200+ members involved in student field sports promotion this is different this time around with the addition of a small "hurling wall" and the inclusion of a single synthetic pitch. From the perspective of the Arena Extension and re-development, there would be a new 25m pool (same as last time), a climbing wall and two 40 x 20 handball alleys as separate facilities adjoining the Arena area and these ideas are new; this would complement another 1300+ members involved in those student sports. More detail is to follow shortly on the big question how much would this cost the students of UL and a public meeting for all students to raise whatever questions, objections they may have will be scheduled shortly. To clarify in advance too that the new Munster Rugby training facility is not forming part of the proposed referendum it is a separate project and separately funded.

Sooooo an interesting Semester 2 on the way, eh?

Regards
Paul Lee
Clubs and Societies Development Manager
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Michelle Whyte

Hi All, Welcome back! Already this semester is looking to be just as successful and progressive as the last. Week 2 marked the reincarnation of the legendary SoUL week which provided us with entertainment in all things "Society"; from Happiness Day with the Psychology Soc (Puppies and chocolate...my favourite!) to dance-offs in the courtyard, nearly-naked

calendars & "messy twister"! While most were warming their toes by the fire over the Christmas our Outdoor Pursuits club were tackling Snowy Ben Nevis, Kayakers were testing the rapids in Wales and Sub Aqua were diving in the altogether different climes of the Canary Islands. With less than a year's experience in the student's Union I am constantly impressed with the dedication of C&S members to their relevant community. In the coming weeks we will no doubt see more of this renowned Wolfpack allegiance and commitment with a packed timetable of Hustings, C&S Ball, Charity Week, summer trips, budget

submissions and Referendum 2. As always, anyone with general C&S related queries or questions relating to the Wolves Vehicles, C&S Insurance or Finance is welcome in my office which is located on the first floor of the Student's Union Building

Is Mise Le Meas,
Michelle Whyte
Clubs and Societies Administrator
Riarthóir Clubanna agus Cumann
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Please don't stop the Music!

By Fionn Phelan,
Treasurer, UL Music Society

WOAH! You still here? Me too! Happy New Semester (Exams are over)! UL Music Soc. will return this semester like a wrecking ball, with more events, more gatherings and much, much more noise, so for those of you in the cheap seats clap your hands, and the rest of you just rattle your jewellery. Last semester we rekindled the fire within UL for an exciting music society, amid a merging of our society with the Traditional Music, DJ and Choral society. As a result, all members of the Music Society are now members of these societies. So you can go falsetto on Monday, play a reel Tuesday, drop a beat Wednesday, and battle a band on Thursday! During Week 11, we held the merger party for all 4 societies in the Stables, with a performance from Glasgowbury and Indiependance band, Aces Wild. Along with Monday Open Mic Night we also hosted 2 battle of the bands competitions, our regular Stable competition and added a new Crafty Fox competition. This marks the start of a partnership with the venue, which will be hosting a number of battle of the bands and DJ battles over the next semester. Music are open for anyone to join, and we really are a motley

crew, please check out our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ulmusicoc> next semester we are planning to start setting up lessons as this was requested by a number of members, and we will look to increase the use of the music room, which we have cleaned and had the broken equipment replaced. Last semester some people we taught some people how to DJ and we sent them out to gigs, while we also sent one of our own to the DIT spinoffs in the Twisted Pepper, Dublin. We also provided DJ's for the merger party and hosted Monday night deck sessions.

For this Semester, we plan on getting all the people who would like to learn how to DJ or improve their skills trained up and sent out to gigs, as soon as the word go. We plan on having the deck sessions/lessons on a Monday night and on the Tuesday we will have a DJ Soc Spin Sessions at the Crafty Fox. Whether you're an aspiring DJ or Avicii's dad. Come in and have a gawk.

For those of you with a more traditional aspect, this semester UL go trad mad! Whether you're the next Sharon Shannon ready to conquer the world, or you're just after dusting off that old fiddle in the attic; we welcome you to join the Trad Soc. We have a weekly Tuesday

session in Scholars from 9:30, so come on down, play a few tunes and enjoy some FREE PIZZA! What's not to love about Tuesday trad night?? We had an eventful first semester to say the least, kicking off with a 'Trad for Trócaire' parade across the living bridge and a session to raise funds for the charity.

Concerts featured bands such as 'Jean & Dora', 'Seán's Walk' and 'Niamh & Hajime'. The highlight was our Halloween fancy-dress party with 'Evening Report', followed by a mad trad disco! This semester we have bigger, better plans including a battle of the bands, trad concerts and more tuuuuunes!!

That's it from us, we hope to see you hoping around the Stables and finger-bopping in the Crafty Fox, and wish you all the best in the coming semester, both musically and academically!



Hitting the right note at the Crafty Fox Battle of the Bands.

A Semester of International Banter and Craic



Welcome to the International Society, winner of the C&S award for the best society in UL in the academic year of 2012/2013 as well as the best individual of the year which was awarded to one of our committee members. We are a society dedicated to international students here at the University of Limerick. Our main mission is to help them with the integration in the University and to make sure that they enjoy every second of their stay in Limerick. Although the international students are the main focus of the society, the membership is open to absolutely anybody! This is something worth mentioning as it is a common misunderstanding amongst the student population that you need to be an international student in order

to join. It is a great opportunity to make friends with people all over the world, and to practice foreign languages. As a member, you can enjoy a wide range of activities that we have to offer. In the autumn semester of 2013/2014, we organised a trip to Cork and the Blarney Castle and a weekend trip to Belfast to mention but a few. The trip to Northern Ireland has been hugely popular with our members, with over 100 lucky students travelling with us, and quite a long waiting list. Due to such high demand, we will also be running another trip to Belfast this semester. Seeing as last year was the year of 'The Gathering', we had our very own version of the event. We invited members of the ESN Dundalk for a weekend in Limerick, as well as past international students who came from all over the world to relive their

Irish adventure and to be reunited with their friends. There are also many clubs within the International Society to suit all tastes. If you want to try food from all over the world as well as to promote your own national cuisine, you can sign up to our Mentor Dinners group. For those with an interest in sports, we run sports classes where you can learn how to play traditional Irish sports. If you prefer some quiet time with a cup of tea and a good book, come to our book club where one of our committee members will be there to discuss it with you. For those rock n' roll souls out there, don't miss the opportunity to join our music club. And last but not least is our radio show on ULFM called 'The Power Hour', with the best international music in town! Our EGM was held in Week 2, but if you ever wish to join at any other time, please don't hesitate in contacting any member of the society committee - we are constantly looking for new and energetic members to help us expand and improve even more so than we already have done! We are looking forward to seeing you this semester, Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ulinternationalsociety?fref=ts> E-mail us on: ulinternationalsociety@gmail.com Monika Gaciarz, International Society PRO officer

Literary Society: Creative Writing Competition and Enactment Opportunity

David Tierney,
Public Relations Officer

With festivals, guest speakers, book shopping, Lock-ins, creative writing and more Literary society was fantastic last semester. We had a BRILLIANT 'Harry Potter Table Quiz' and the place was packed.

There were trick questions, pictures rounds and brilliant food including owl decorated buns. Sharon Moriarty from 'Pillar International' gave us a fantastic talk on the publishing industry. g games, eating junk food, writing and reading all night. We got to go to the Dublin Book Festival to meet the authors

of books we've read. We got to attend workshops and hear experts talk about publishing, writing, gender dynamics, character creation and much more. There was time to go book shopping of course, we found art exhibitions and we even lucked out by passing a science promotion event where we got to shoot rockets and learned how to skewer balloons without deflating them. This semester we're continuing our weekly book banter and creative writing nights. Book Banter night will now be on 19:00- 20:00 on Wednesdays. Previous discussion topics we've had include death, romance, comedy (and we got to watch some wonderful samples online), fantasy and much more. Afterwards we head to town to venture into

the 'White House Poetry Pub' for drinks, free finger food and of course poetry. Some of our members even get up on stage to show off their stuff. As usual, the society will pay for taxis home. Creative writing (my personal favourite) is still on at the usual 18:00 to 21:00. Keep an eye out for posters advertising events and venue locations. We're having a Creative Writing competition this semester so get those poems and short stories ready. Look out for posters with more information. We're also working together with the Psychology Society for a really interesting project. They give us information about mental health issues and we use these as writing prompts. We can create performance pieces which

will actually be performed by drama groups. Not only does this mean that we as authors will get to see our creations come to life but it also helps to spread awareness about important issues ranging from Turrets Syndrome and suicide to ADHD and obsessive compulsive disorder. Getting our stuff performed will also look great on a CV. For regular updates join the society and our mailing list or visit our Facebook group: <http://tinyurl.com/pwtlwo9> For anyone who wants to see writing samples check out our blog: <http://ullitsocreview.wordpress.com/> We're a friendly group and the atmosphere is always warm and welcoming so make sure to contact us if you're interested: ullitsoc@hotmail.com

THE UL LAW SOCIETY

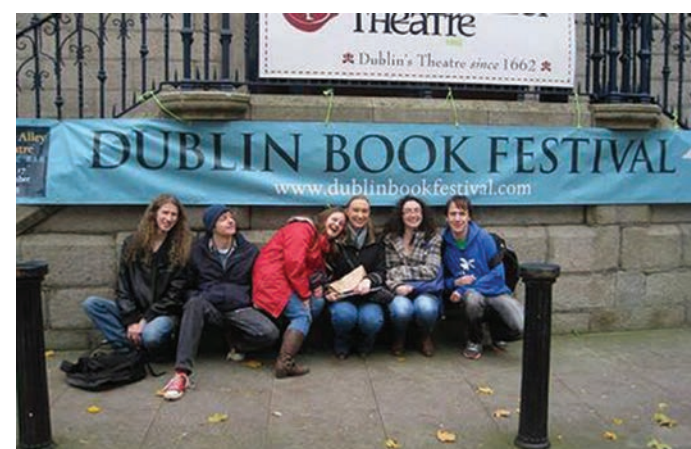
Our society caters to over 500 law students has developed its activity base this year in the form of hosting an Academic conference, welcoming numerous guest speakers and launching our inaugural moot competition. Our first large scale event was held in November and the theme for the event was 'Women's Rights' at the Pavilion in UL. The full day conference addressed issues such as domestic violence, the work-life balance, the pay-gap between men and

women, reform of rape law in Ireland and the international struggle for women's rights. The event was attended by Donal Creaton, Partner and head of family law unit at Holmes O'Malley Sexton who gave the welcoming address and speakers included Professor Eileen Drew (Trinity College Dublin), Dr Susan Leahy (University of Limerick), Orla O'Connor (National Women's Council of Ireland), Ellen O'Malley Dunlop (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre), Majella Foley Friel (ADAPT Services) and Dermot

P O'Connor (Garda Síochana). Last semester, we also welcomed individual guest speakers from Doras Luimni, Saint Vincent de Paul and the Bedford Row Project. We will continue to welcome speakers to the society such as guest lecturers. In conjunction with the School of Law, UL will host Gerry Conlon and Paddy Hill this semester. These men, who were respectively part of the 'Guilford Four' and 'Birmingham Six', were wrongly convicted for crimes that were carried

out by the IRA. It is a great honour to welcome them to UL. They will be in attendance between week 4 and week 5. Finalised details will be released further to the time. Our biggest annual event, the UL Law Ball will take place on Thursday February 20th (Week 4). This year, the venue will be in the Pavilion in the North campus of UL. Tickets will be on sale from Wednesday of Week 3 in the Millstream Common room at 2pm. Free lunch will be available to those who

attend the ticket sales launch in week 3. This semester will be the launch of our inaugural moot competition. Mooting is the competitive form of hosting mock trials. There will be eight teams competing over the semester. The winning and runner up teams will receive prize money. We hope to see you at our events over the coming weeks. This year has been one of our most active and we hope to see your continued support this semester. ullawsociety@gmail.com



THE ROAD TO CHELTENHAM BEGINS IN UL

Sharon Burke, Secretary UL Horse Racing Society.

This February will see the Irish horse racing fraternity converge in Limerick where the UL Horse Racing Society will host the second annual Cheltenham Preview Night on Thursday 27th. The event will be held at the Castletroy Park Hotel, with an 8pm start. The stellar panel consists of jockeys Patrick Mullins and Bryan Cooper, Irish Field Journalist Kevin Blake and MC Kevin O’Ryan from At the Races.

The event which is the highlight of the society’s calendar was well attended last year and is anticipated to be one of the largest Munster Cheltenham Preview Nights of 2014. The well-chosen panel will give their expert analysis on the key Irish and English contenders, and will provide some useful insights. After conquering Prestbury Park last year and recently being named Gigginstown’s retained rider, panellist Bryan Cooper is set to be especially popular amongst the punters. Likewise, Patrick Mullins will provide an equally useful

insight to the strong Willie Mullins contingent, the Closutton trainer bidding to retain his 2013 title of Top Festival Trainer. Sponsors Paddy Power Bookmakers will give each panellist a €100 Charity bet for a selection of their choice, with any winnings going to the society’s chosen charity the Injured Jockeys Fund. Society Chairperson Niamh McNamara has commented “last year was a great success with over 200 attending on the night. We have a great panel lined up this year, so really looking forward to it”. This year has been particularly busy for the up and coming society, who was involved in the Charity Fundraising for Limerick jockey JT McNamara, attending the race day and the gala ball. A corporate box set the scene at the Munster National, where society members availed of a complimentary lunch and a meet and greet with National Hunt Ambassador Davy Russell. A virtual race-night and social in the stables club at the end of November wrapped up a busy

semester, with special guests jockey Danny Mullins and MC Ger Hannon overseeing proceedings, although it was Cheltenham winning jockey Adrian Heskin, who took home the big prize on the night. Tickets for the Cheltenham preview night are priced at €20 and include a €5 free bet, drinks reception and finger food. A student discount is available and tickets will be on sale before the event or by contacting any committee member.



Members of the UL Horse Racing Society pictured with jockey Davy Russell at the Munster National at Limerick Racecourse last October. Photo: UL Photographic Society.

Take to the stage with UL Drama

By Vanessa O’Brien
PRO

Here at the UL Drama Society there’s always something going on! At our home in the Jonathan Swift theatre we aim to make everyone feel welcome, introducing you to whatever aspect of theatre that appeals to you most. People assume that you have to act if you’re in Drama, which certainly isn’t the case! Whether you’re interested in acting, directing, writing, stage management, lighting or costume design we have something for everyone! Last semester saw the production of a stage version of the popular film ‘Monty Python and the Holy Grail’. It tells the tale of King Arthur and his Knights on their quest for the Holy Grail. There was a twist on the script, with new characters added in and an updated dance routine for the ‘Knights of the Round Table’ song.

We had a large cast of 27 people and it was a show that everyone got involved in, whether it is helping with sets, costumes or lighting. We had three incredibly successful nights and everyone taking part in the show really enjoyed it. This semester we have more exciting productions coming up. The first is Hercules, a musical stage version of the Disney film. Slight changes have been made, with new songs added in and overall it promises to be an excellent production! The second production that will be happening this semester is a stage version of the popular film ‘Anchorman’. Everyone knows the story of Ron Burgundy and his news team so it will be interesting to see it brought to life on stage! Dates haven’t been confirmed

for either of these productions yet so stay tuned to our Facebook page for more information regarding those! As well as all this we also do weekly Drama workshops. These workshops cover everything from Comedy “Improv” to Stage Fighting. We also like to focus on the backstage aspect of productions and this

semester we plan on doing Stage Management, Lighting and Directorial workshops to really give people an opportunity to experience a different side of theatre. Our workshops are held in the Jonathan Swift theatre every Wednesday and there’s really something for everyone, whether it be that you would like to improve

your confidence or learning how to throw a fake punch. So come along to one of our workshops with €5 and we’ll sign you up! For more information you can visit our Facebook page: HYPERLINK “http://www.facebook.com/ulldrama”www.facebook.com/ulldrama or our website!



Raise a cup to Tea Appreciation

The first semester of the 2013 - 2014 year has proved to be an eventful and enjoyable period of the Tea Appreciation Society. Beginning with an encouraging level of interest at the first recruitment drive and leading through to a range of successful events, the first semester of this year has been one of development and good fortune for this fledgling society. Last semester, we collaborated with a number of other societies in organising joint events to great effect. One such

was that between us and DebU, where the crucially important and controversial matter of Tea Vs Coffee was debated. It was by the stalwart effort of the involved committees and the admirable reserve of the participants and spectating audience that discussion on such a charged subject was conducted with a level of civility which stands as a shining example of tolerance and intellectual honesty. Another event was that of the Tea Appreciation - Fan Forum Table Quiz. The quiz was a roaring

success, allowing members of radically different societies to engage in fields of pursuit hitherto unexplored by them. The same can be said of the Anime and Manga - Game Society - Tea Appreciation Sleepover held in the SU building. Attendees were offered a medley of traditional Japanese teas to be enjoyed whilst viewing anime and console gaming. Underpinning these outings was our weekly tea drinking sessions. These meet ups brought together Tea Appreciation’s diverse membership

under their mutual love of Camellia Sinensis steeped in boiled water. And while these people came to satisfy their common predilection, they surely stayed for the wholesome and rounded discourse fostered by a mixture of persons of varied academic background, and tea. And therein lies the appeal of Tea Soc; having an informal venue to chat with people and drink tea. Tea forms an integral and definitive part of Irish culture. Tea Appreciation exists to promote the practice of tea drinking,

and the spirit to which it is conducive. Looking to the future, Tea Soc will continue in its endeavour to introduce its members to all aspects of global tea culture, all the while maintaining an amicable and inclusive space for talk over tea. Membership is €3. For more information, we can be contacted through our Facebook page; www.facebook.com/groups/579788868706417/?fref=ts Micheál Ó hÓgáin, President

By Sarah Guerin, Auditor : auditor.uldebu@gmail.com

UL Debating Union

Going to 3rd Level has a lot of solid benefits- but one of the biggest is that you don't have to spend your entire day in one small classroom filled with people you have nothing in common with. University's a chance for you to find common ground with brand new people, develop your interests, and explore the world that you're suddenly a part of. And nothing's going to help you to do that much better than UL Deb U. UL Deb U teaches confidence, interpersonal skills, and gives you a better perspective on how the world works. One of the most varied and interactive societies in UL, you'll be given the option to take part in complex motions on the running of nation states, or to sit back and enjoy the social aspect by taking part in events such as UL's own annual Simpsons Intervarsity. Experienced debaters who've competed on the world stage will give weekly classes, every

Monday at 7pm in SU3, on topics like feminism, international relations, public speaking and speech preparation. Better still, they will teach you how to sway the minds of judges on these issues, binding their will to your eloquence. No need to resort to all that messiness with rings of power. Thursdays are also debating nights, and events range from panel discussions to guest speakers to public debates. Just look at the Lifeboat debate in week 2 where we invite our peer societies to argue why they should be allowed to escape from a desert island on the lifeboat, and the Ciarán Treacy- an annual competition at the end of semester two dedicated to allowing individual debaters from Limerick to compete against each other for the chance to sit at the top of Limerick debating. With the choice to play a role in so many different competitions, not just in Ireland but around the

world, debating gives you the information, skills and company to help you become a more informed person who is aware of the world we live in. This semester alone, there'll be competitions in Galway, Dublin, and trials for the European Universities Debating Championship in Zagreb. While transport is still problematic regarding the Mordor IV- we've been assured we can't simply walk there- there are plenty of opportunities to compete and get involved. So if you want to learn to speak to crowds, to captivate hearts and minds, to truly maximize your potential at playing Game of Thrones- Come learn how to debate with UL Deb U. For more information on Debating Union events email uldebu@gmail.com or visit facebook.com/uldebating .

Bouncing Back into a New Semester

By UL Trampoline and Gymnastics Club PRO Rachel Cahalane

Welcome back wolves! This semester promises to be a great one for the University of Limerick Trampoline and Gymnastics Club. We have two of the biggest competitions of the year coming up, the Scottish Student Trampoline Open and the Irish Student Trampoline Open. There's also the clubs and societies ball and we have some more great fundraising events organised. Here's a few of the things we got up to last semester: We started the year off strong by hosting the annual Munster Open 2013. All our competitors did themselves proud, especially our first years who competed in their first competition ever! We held the prize giving ceremony in the Stables Club where UL won the Munster Open Cup back from our rivals UCC! We celebrated our success that night with all the other clubs in the Orchard followed by Crush. We teamed up with UL Swim Club to host a Cheerios Childline Charity Event in week 8 last semester. We held a pyjama breakfast party in the Stables Club on campus. A huge thanks to all the Stables staff for helping us host such a successful event. There was free face painting and a free bowl of Cheerios for all those who attended

the event. UL DJ Society also kindly provided some epic tunes throughout the night. We would also like to thank all those who donated prizes for our raffle which included Limerick phone shop, Supermacs, Powercut Hair Nails and Beauty, La Cucina, Delish Café, Castletroy Pharmacy. We managed to raise almost €1000 for the charity which was a great achievement. Varsities this year took place in Queen's University, Belfast. We travelled up for the weekend to take part in the competition and had brilliant success winning a gold in elite men, a silver in elite ladies, a silver in intermediate ladies and a bronze in sychro. The Belfast team were great hosts for the weekend, taking us out on the town and showing us how it's done up north! We ended the semester with our annual Christmas dinner and sadly had to say goodbye to last semester's Erasmus students - but we look forward to meeting this semester's ones! If you enjoy pushing yourself to do new and exciting things then this is the club for you! We have two trampolines, a DMT and an airtrack, with coaches to show you the ropes and help to improve your skills, or help you start off

with the basics! We cater for all levels so don't worry about your ability. Check out our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/287470261328757/> for the latest updates. Keep an eye out for our stand at the clubs and societies recruitment drive on Monday of week 2. Feel free to ask us any questions that you like and we'll show you some footage of us being us.



Young Fine Gael – shaking hands and kissing babies



Young Fine Gael had a very successful first semester this year and our plan is to make second semester even better (if that is possible!). We have had weekly committee meetings to organize events for UL YFG members and also to organize national events such as the Fine Gael National Conference, which we attended in October and the YFG National Conference, which we attended in November. We held some great events such as debates, public meetings and a table quiz during the semester and we attend to do even more of these this semester.

We kicked off in Septem-

ber with a uni-golf trip, which was great fun and also proved that some of us should never golf again. In early October the branch met with Deputy Helen McEntee TD, for a questions and answers session that was very successful and informative. It was attended not only by our branch members but also by local councillors. Young Fine Gael met with An Taoiseach Enda Kenny during his visit to University of Limerick in October.

With Novembers YFG National Conference looming we got to work on the campaigns of our candidates Pdraig O'Sullivan for National

Panel and Luke Hogg for Munster Regional Organizer. Pdraig and Luke held their campaign launches in which they introduced their manifestos to Young Fine Gael members. A Table Quiz in The Pavilion followed the launch; Young Fine Gael members from around the country and local councillors attended the quiz.

We departed UL on a Friday afternoon for National Conference in Waterford. On the Friday evening we took part in 'The Great Debate' in which we debated on topics such as the federalization of the European Union and the use of Nuclear Power. This

was followed by a mystery social event that turned out to be a very entertaining episode of 'Tonight with Vincent Browne' preformed comedian Oliver Callan. On the Saturday morning we had resolutions and motions put forward by various branches of YFG and members voted on these, the candidates' debate followed this. During the evening prime session began with speeches by various TDs, the YEEP President and the YFG President, while polls were also opened for voting.

On the Saturday night we attended the Shane McEntee Memorial Banquet, during which there was a speech from An Taoiseach Enda Kenny and a presentation of awards for the winners of 'The Great Debate', winner of 'Best Speaker' and member of the year award. UL's Evie Sammon won the 'Best Speaker' award. The next morning brought with it another win for a UL student when Pdraig O'Sullivan was not only elected to Na-

tional Panel but topped the polls thus securing a place on the Fine Gael National Executive. All in all it was a fantastic weekend for Young Fine Gael national and for our branch and was enjoyed by all.

We have some very exciting events lined up for semester two, these include the Fine Gael Ard Fheis that takes place in February and has always proved to be a brilliant weekend. A trip to Leinster House is also planned for the coming semester, which will include a tour of Leinster House and a meet and greet with many of our politicians. There will be a trip aboard later in the year also, it is currently being organised.

Second semester is set up to be a fantastic few months so if you wish to join us, you can contact us on Facebook by searching UL Young Fine Gael, tweet using: @ULYFG or email us at: ulyoungfinegael@gmail.com new members are always welcome.

Psychological Society: Lady Gaga, Mental Health and Bananas

David Tierney, Public Relations Officer



Last semester was a blast. We had raffles, bands, bake sales, bands, social nights and a mental health boost and bananas to chemically boost your mood. And there's much more free chocolate and bananas on their way (we have a fondue set). This semester we've the annual Psychology Ball along with

motivational, altruism and nostalgia boosting events. Keep an eye out for posters advertising future events. We're also working together with the Literary Society and drama groups for a new innovative project. We're providing the Literary society with information about various mental health topics to act as writing prompts, everything from depression and eating disorders to telephobia (a chronic fear of telephones) and anxiety problems. These can be used to create performance pieces which can then be acted out at various locations. It's a great way to spread awareness so let us know if you want to get involved. If there are any mental health topics you think we should include then tell us at: psychsocul@gmail.com Another thing we're

setting up this semester is an informal 'Interactive Research Discussion Group' for students. We meet up once a month to discuss an unusual or bizarre research paper. We've already found published papers where psychologists have put dead fish into brain scanners or where researchers have examined the creative eccentricities of Lady Gaga and Van Gogh. There's even a paper about writers block... which is only a paragraph long. Not only was it published in an esteemed journal it's even been successfully replicated. I also recommend that anyone who ever needs to write an essay should read the paper entitled: "Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: Problems with Using Long Words Needlessly". Reading it might help boost your

grades. The psychology society is for everyone no matter what discipline you're studying. However, my favourite part of the society is how we help each other out. If someone has a problem with their course or general question about human nature we can give each other advice. You can also check out our Facebook page by searching 'UL Psychology Society' or use the following

link: <http://tinyurl.com/p38d2k5> Members regularly post information about charity events, interesting psychology facts or helping each other out with by answering academic questions.

If you want to learn more about things like exploding head syndrome feel free to check out our blog: <http://ulpsychsoc.wordpress.com/>



Yum, chemically boost your happiness

The Life of a Windsurfer

By Natalia Dutt



The University of Limerick's Windsurfing Club has had an extremely eventful first semester. The club welcomed a group of new members varying from Erasmus students to other Irish students. The new members also varied in skill. The club went on many weekend trips to brush up on their expertise. Over the course of the semester the windsurfing club went on various weekend trips down to Castlegregory to perfect their skills in time for Intervarsities this upcoming March. Whilst in Castlegregory, the club members took lessons from famed windsurfer Jamie Knox to help them improve their windsurfing abilities. During the trips the club members had to deal with various types of weather. The windy conditions that occurred over the course of the last few months truly pushed the members to become more advanced

windsurfers.

Though the club's main focus is on improving its member's windsurfing abilities, they also emphasized on growing close as a club. Every week they hosted a club social night. They consisted of various pizza and movie nights over the course of the semester or attending those unforgettable international nights in The Stables.

Along with the social nights, the club took part in quite a few charity nights and fundraisers such as the Thrift Shop party, hosted with the SU and the UV paint party where all the members contributed to good causes.

As the semester came to an end the club planned their annual pre-intervarsity training which takes place overseas due to the more favorable warm water conditions. This allows for much more

training time and progression as opposed to the frigid waters of the Irish coast in January. Normally this would take place in the Mecca that is the Red Sea for all water based activities but due to recent political unrest for the second year running this has not been possible.

This year the club



decided to go to Tarifa, Spain to spend two weeks in January training for the Intervarsities which are coming up in March and this will give UL Windsurfers a competitive edge to retain our title.

As the second semester commences the windsurfing club is busy preparing for their

annual competition. As the competition comes closer the club continues to train and work hard to improve their skills.

Check us out through www.ulwolves.ie or through the ULWolves FB page

Anime & Manga Society



Hello all! Last semester has been quite a hectic but a very enjoyable. The biggest highlight was of course our trip to Dublin for Eirtakon. It was an amazing weekend for all, full to the brim of all things anime and Manga. We all had a chance to unwind and have a great time doing what we love most. We are also planning on going to another convention sometime in the coming semester so plenty of excitement all 'round.

Besides this wonderful trip we have held three all-nighters in which we

raised money for charity. The nights were spent in the Common Room and were jam packed full of anime screenings, drawing classes and fun games that the entire group could play. The last of these nights we invited Game and Tea Societies to join in the fun and we had an utterly amazing night. We look forward to holding more in the coming semester.

Throughout the semester we also held our weekly activities. Our screenings night where we could all sit back and relax to watch some awesome anime picked out by our equally awesome screenings officer.

Alongside our screenings nights we held creative workshops which was run very well by our talented creative officer. At the creative workshops we were able to express our more creative sides but if we needed an extra push or some help we could always turn to our creative officer. Aside from drawing we could chill out to some Manga from our library. We ran a Japanese class last semester also but we felt that a social night would be a lot more fun so for that reason we decided that we would hold a social night alongside Forum Society.

All of us here at Anime and Manga Society had a great time last semester but now we are looking to the future and how we can become even closer as a group. We hope to add more to our family this semester so feel free to either contact us by email at ulanimesoc@gmail.com or by coming along to one of our three weekly events, Tuesdays at 6 p.m. for Creative Workshops in the Student's Union room 3, Wednesday at 6 pm. for the meet ups with Forum Society at Red Raisins. Hope to see you there.

Robert O'Shea
PRO

UL Equestrian

we don't just horse around!

Written by:
Caoimhe Roche, Chairperson

UL Equestrian Club has gone from strength to strength in the last few years. Immediately after the recruitment drive in September, training began for Tetrathlon, an annual event in our calendar. The Tetrathlon was held by WIT Equestrian and spanned over a weekend, including 4 events - Show Jumping, Swimming, Running and Shooting. Our teams and individuals were very successful over

the weekend with Patrick Duggan placing first in the Shooting section, second in Running, third in Swimming and in Show Jumping. Our Events Officer Paul McDermott placed 6th in Show Jumping, and member Ciara Corkery placed sixth in Running - a great weekend! Teams and individuals have been chosen to compete at the annual Intervarsities competition run by

Trinity college in February, and training has begun. We wish all those competing and supporting a great weekend and the best of luck. Weekly horse riding lessons continue as usual, and any interested members should email ul.equestrian@hotmail.com for information. Weekly horse riding lessons continue as usual,

SoUL arts week

2014

From the 3rd to the 8th of February 2014 ULWolves societies organised and ran SoUL (Societies of UL) week. This was a jam packed week of society activities designed to show off what societies can do, and they sure stepped up to the mark. Monday saw Brown Thomas get a makeover, with UL Thread society banding together to knit him a debonair new jumper to Launch SoUL week. The jumper was recovered afterwards and is currently being added to every Monday in Red Raisins at 6pm; it looks like he'll have a full body suit and cape next time! Following on

from that UL history society hosted a clash of the UL history titans, with speakers covering, and arguing, about the events of the last 100 years. Monday ended with more heated debate from UL Debating society, this time answering that all important question, 'which society is best and why?' Tuesday saw UL tea society host a Japanese tea ceremony in conjunction with UL Anime and Manga society in the SU Common room. From Japanese tea to Mrs. Doyle the action then moved to UL Forum's event, the TED talk, featuring Ben Keaton

AKA Fr. Purcell, and included a read through of his appearance in Fr. Ted. ULFM wrapped up Tuesday with their "Not your ordinary table quiz" game show! Wednesday morning and the Stables Courtyard was taken over by craft workers for the 'Crafty SoULs' arts event. With basketwork, metalwork, spinning and weaving, this event, kindly supported by the UL arts office, this event brought a little slice of electric picnic to UL campus. At 'Crafty SoULs' UL students also made ribbons for the RAG tree, which was our take on the old Irish tradition of



UL Thread

tying rags to trees as a way of remembering those who have passed away. The night then belonged to Comedy society, who started off an evening in Scholars bar with stand-up comedian Ding Dong Denny O' Reilly. There were some rising stars in his support acts though, which was made up entirely of UL comedy soc. members. The "straight outta Cormor" hip hop karaoke event came after and went on all night, MC'd expertly by Ewerton Fortunato and Ras Mikey C. This event, kindly supported by Scholars bar, was in aid of Special Olympics Ireland, and at the time of writing has managed to raise over €280 for a good cause. Thursday was the first dry day of the week, which was good because Conor O' Brien from Dance club danced in the SU courtyard for a solid hour. This fit in perfectly with UL Psychology society's "Happiness day" which saw hundreds of students go through the SU common room to avail of free chocolate, banana's and cute

dogs! Out in UL then stunned us all with their discussion event, which took the form of a live version of the Jeremy Kyle show. We all learned a valuable lesson from this; namely, if in doubt 'put something on the end of it!' Comedy and UL Drama collaborated on a series of sketches and plays in the Jonathan swift, which were very well received. Game Society ran their Console tournament day on Thursday and Computer Society had an open server for Minecraft open all week to UL students. Finally, on Friday, UL international society held their SoUL week TGIF event in stables. The theme was 'country colours' and by all accounts was fantastic. Here's to SoUL week 2015 which will be week six of Semester one 2015. What will you do for it?

Written by:
Lorna Bogue



Crafty Souls



UL Psych



Comedy Society



Scholars hip hop

#LaochraOllscoilLuimní #LOL



i seomra na Gaeilge chomh maith. Bhí rath ar na maideanna tae agus caife a chuireamar ar siúl. Lá fluich fhuar agus uair agat le caitheamh áit éigean?? Easpa airgid agus tá tú ag mothú duit fhéin?? Tar chuig an gcéad maidin eile a bheidh ar siúl againn. Má tá suim ag duine ar bith a bheith gníomhach leis an gCumann scríobh chugainn leis an seoladh ríomhphoist gaeilgeul@gmail.com nó bígí i dteagmháil linn ar Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/>

Sa téarma seo chugainn bhí an Chumann Gaelach an-ghníomhach ar fad. Bhí imeachtaí ar siúl beag ná mór gach seachtain. Ba é An t-Oireachtas ceann dós na príomh imeachtaí a bhí ar siúl againn nuair a chaitheamar deireadh seachtaine i gCill Áirne le slua ollmhór timpeall na tíre. Bhí sé ar siúl sa chéad deireadh seachtaine i mí na Samhna agus bíonn i gconáí cóisír gléasta suas ar siúl an chéad oíche. Bíonn comórtas ar siúl le linn na deireadh seachtaine chomh maith agus bíonn cumainn Gaelaigh eile ó coláistí éagsúla i láthair chomh maith. I mbliana rinne an chumann Gaelach "Féile Gaelach" le ceol ó Trad Soc. Bhí sé ar

siúl i Scholars agus bhí craic den scoth agus atmaisféar glórach ann don oíche ar fad. Bhí troid damhsa idir rince Gaelach agus rince ar an sean-nós. Chomh maith le sin bhí sessiún ceoil bríomhar. Bhí go leor duaiseanna againn go gach éinne a raibh i láthair mar roinnt samplaí bhí dlúthdhioscaí, greamaitheoirí agus go leor pinn. Tar éis an oíche i Scholars bhí céilí neamh-oifigiúla againn sa phlasóg taobh amuigh an teach tairbhne. I mbliana bhí an chéad Lá Gan Béarla ar siúl san ollscoil. Séard atá i gceist le lá gan Béarla ná nuair a bhaillíonn mac léinn urraíocht chun fiche ceathar uair a chloig a chaitheamh gan focail amháin Bhéarla

a labhairt le duine ar bith. I mbliana rinne an Chumann an Lá Gan Béarla ar son Pieta House. Fuair eamar urraíocht den scoth ón Aonad na Gaeilge chun t-léintí a cheannach do gach éinne a raibh chun páirt a ghlacadh.

Ba mhaith leis an gCumann buíochas mór a ghabháil leo as an gcabhair ar fad a bhfuil siad tar éis a thabhairt dúinn agus bhaist eamar Laochra Ollscoil Luimní orainn fhéin. Bhí cúpla imeacht ar siúl ag an gCumann



ULLR TO DEFEND ALL-IRELAND LEAGUE AND INTERVARSITY

By: Mollie O'Donnell, PRO mollie.odonnell@hotmail.com

On behalf of UL Ladies Rugby I would like to welcome our new head coach, Mike McCarthy and also wish Gillian Bourke, our departing coach, the best of luck in her future endeavors and many thanks for her years of hard work and dedication with the club. The introduction of a new coach for ULLR accurately reflects the transition phase that the club is experiencing presently. Over ten first team players graduated at the end of last season, leaving a large gap to be filled. Successful recruitment early in semester one saw many new girls joining the club and getting their first taste of ladies rugby. The first semester is usually the quieter of the two for ULLR,

with a 10-a-side blitz in CIT and three league games to be contested. The blitz in CIT was a great opportunity for our new players to get a taste of the action, with large squad rotation UL finished top of the table on the day, only conceding one game. The early league games proved testing for our young team but there has been a huge improvement over the course of the semester.

First up was an away game to Carlow IT, a close game contested well by both teams. Unfortunately an intercept try from the home team, late in the second half proved to be the difference between the two sides. Next up was NUIG at home, a huge game for

ULLR considering the last fixture between the two was a scintillating affair in last years league final, with UL just edging out the victory. Great attacking play and determination from the home team saw UL defend their unbeaten home record. The last outing of the semester was away to UCC, a team also experiencing a phase of transition. A wobbly first half performance from UL meant the score was too close for comfort at half-time; however a solid second half performance allowed UL to pull away and earn an important bonus point - setting the stage for the second semester.

The second semester is

usually seen as the business end of the season, with league final and intervarsities to be contested. ULLR will be defending both titles and are back training hard as ever ready for the tough season ahead.

The first game of the semester is home to Carlow IT on Wednesday 29th; all support would be greatly appreciated.



UL Hockey Club...GO BLUE!

Written by: Ciara O'Sullivan, PRO

It is no secret that UL hockey club has been struggling to compete at Munster level this season. Although the league tables do not reflect the improvement in the team

there certainly has been especially considering the circumstances. Considering the departure of many team members this year we have certainly been hit hard. We have

had many successes throughout the past 4 years as a team, most recently to in the 2013 inter-varsities competition where we won the plate competition. This

undoubtedly has been one of the highlights of the year for us.

About UL Hockey club: We play in the Munster division 1 league. Training takes place on Monday and Thursday evenings from approximately 6:15-8:00.

Why join UL hockey club?

It is a great way of maintaining your fitness and while it is competitive, our enjoyment is also very important. It is a great way of getting to know people and we organise many different events and nights out during the course of the semester. We are a close knit team and we love having new people come along. Whether you are an experienced player or someone who has not played much at all you are welcome to come and join in. We hope to recruit players that will

play in matches but it is not a requirement to join. It is a very exciting time for the club with a brand new coaching team comprised of Catholic Institute hockey players Simon Brickenden and Ed Gleeson in place as of this month. We are starting the New Year fresh and hoping to see some positive results both in training and the league tables. We would love to see new members some along as we strive to achieve this!

Who can join?

Although much of the club is comprised of UL students the club is open to everyone. We have students from other colleges around Limerick, au pairs to name a few. You do not have to be a UL student in order to join the club. Erasmus and study abroad students are also more than welcome to come along.



UL Ladies Hockey Team after winning the plate in the Intervarsities competition held in Dublin in October 2013. UL beat IT Tallaght 3-1 in the final

Getting Wet in Wales

By Gavin Sheehan, Eoin Farrell and Mícheál Howard.

The 2014 second semester got off to an early and exciting start for the University of Limerick Kayak Club with our annual trip to Wales taking place. On Friday the 17th of January Members departed on the ferry with a van full of kayaks to experience the white-water and adventure that the Welsh landscape had to offer.

The group arrived into the fabled "Jesse James Bunkhouse" (referred to as "The Crunkhouse" for the remainder of the trip) early on Friday afternoon. Lack of daylight meant they had to wait until Saturday to get on the water. So what better way to spend the evening, than to sit around a fire and tell embarrassing stories. From kicking nuns because they robbed your crayons, to throwing scissors at school teachers, it seems the members of ULKC have had all too many run ins with those in authority...

For the first time in years we were blessed with good water levels and a whole range of different difficulties of rivers that suited every standard of paddler. We paddled the usual runs such as the Dee and Tryweryn

but the purchase of a map and a river guidebook resulted in us finding some real gems such as the Ceirw, Llugwy and the highlight of the trip, Aberglasyn Gorge. We tried our best to make the most of every day. This meant leaving the bunkhouse some days even before sunrise in order to run 2 rivers in the same day and staying up until all hours listening to guitar and harmonica sessions from our talented musicians. The level of progression of the members' skills was immense over the trip. Safety, leadership and paddling skills improved massively over the week without having to sacrifice even an ounce of the fun that ULKC trips are famed for.

Again for the second semester we have another jam-packed schedule. Kicking off we will be preparing and training for the Kayak Inter-varsities competition taking place in Dublin. UL Kayak club will be fighting for a fifth victory in a row. The Intervarsities competition pits college clubs from all over Ireland against each other in many different categories of kayaking including White-



water racing, Long Distance racing, Kayak Polo and Freestyle kayaking. This is always a great weekend to meet, party and compete with cool people from all over Ireland. During the second semester there are plenty of weekly river trips and weekends away for sea kayaking or white water. The Alps trip is UL Kayak clubs flagship trip and it happens every summer. Just after your summer exams are over and you're looking for something to de-stress, ULKC head away

for a three-week trip to Italy and Slovenia. We head way up to the beautiful Alps and take in the sweet rivers and white-water paddling that is on offer. Sunshine, cool alpine water and great friends, what more could you want on a top class adventure. It has always been a "trip to remember" for all our members that decide to go!

If you are interested in trying any discipline of kayaking for yourself, drop down to the UL Arena Pool

from 9:45- 10:45 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; or contact us at ulkayak@gmail.com. All skill levels catered for from complete beginner to the more advanced. Membership fee for UL students is €5 and this covers use of the equipment, insurance and most day river trips.

For more information and all our latest news please visit our website at <http://kayak.csn.ul.ie/> Or follow us on twitter; <https://twitter.com/ulkayak> and Facebook; <https://www.facebook.com/>



History of Krav Maga



Krav Maga derived from a Hebrew word for contact combat and it is a self-defense system developed by Imi Lichtenfeld for the Israeli army and later adapted within the wide public. Recently all the members of IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) are trained in Krav Maga. Encompassing the most effective elements from various martial arts and with a strong emphasis on natural body movements, Krav Maga is suitable for both genders and all levels of fitness and ability. Krav Maga training addresses the need for one to be able to defend from both a standing attack and a ground attack, taking into account use of weapons and multiple attackers.

UL Krav Maga is now running for sixth year since its founding in 2008 by Darren Simring, who is recently one of the co-trainers. The club is always growing in its popularity, not only within students from UL and other universities, but also wide public from Limerick city. The club has recently about fifty active members. Our aim as a club is for each person to enjoy the trainings, learn new ways how to defend themselves and their loved ones and to give them confidence never experienced before. One will improve their cardio, flexibility and strength. The ULKM club has organizing its first Regional Grading in November 2013. Grading was

conducted by Eddie Gavin, an Expert level Krav Maga Instructor from Dublin. Also Eddie is a Director of IKMF (International Krav Maga Federation) in Ireland, and we as affiliates of IKMF were proud to have him down in Limerick grading all of the club members. All of the IKMF clubs and affiliates in Munster region such as UL Krav Maga Club, Response KM and Krav Maga Cork were attending the grading. We accommodated more than 40 students grading that day with a 100% pass grade, which means the high standard of preparation from all the above mentioned clubs, since each grading is taken very seriously.

Training session in progress. We are preparing another regional grading in UL for March 2014 which will be joined with a seminar with a high ranked Krav Maga representative from Israel. This will be a memorable event, such as every big event attended by an Instructor from Israel. Another event we would like to organize is a Women Self Defence Seminar, which will be focused on the ladies defence techniques and awareness. We will specify the dates later on during the semester and will be posting all the news on our Facebook page. Trainings The training venue is a PESS building (Old Sports Building),

on UL Campus. If you wish to train with us, please pre-register on www.ulwolves.ie website first.

Training Times:

Mondays
8:15pm – 10:00pm

Wednesdays
7:00pm – 9:00pm

Please join us at:
<https://www.facebook.com/ul.k.maga>
Or email us at:
ulkravmaga@gmail.com

Mountain Biking...Fox Hunt Style!!

By Alan Rochford
Health & Safety Officer

Looking back after an excellent trip to the new Downhill trails at Rostrevor over the Christmas break, it's been an action packed first half to the year for MBUL.

The semester's first dose of the adrenalin-fuelled weekend excitement was hosted once again by the Cooley and Mourne Mountains back in October. The large variation in trail types there meant there really was something for everyone to get stuck into. We loaded the bikes and gear into the Sprinter and left UL late on Friday afternoon and travelled straight on to Carlingford.

Saturday morning dawned fresh and crisp; the van was reloaded with the bikes and gear and we set off to the first trails. We drove 14km west of Carlingford to the broadcast masts atop Black Mountain, approximately 440 metres above sea level. From here we began the days spin, with the route

returning to Carlingford by traversing across the Cooley's.

There were plenty of heart pumping descents mixed with lung emptying climbs over technical single track, mountain top trails and even the occasional bog and stream. The final glorious sweeping descent that brought the group back into Carlingford town was played out in a fox hunt style, with the hunter (Daniel Kedney) starting last and catching everyone on the way down. With 28km covered on the bikes and 850 metres of climbing beneath us, some well-earned spaghetti bolognese was the order of the evening.

On Sunday morning we drove to Castletwellan, north of the Mourne. The trail centre there offered us a wide variety of rocky delights with numerous drop-offs and jumps to shred into. The slightly shorter spin was concluded with a session on the superb

purpose built pump track of the trail centre.

Thankfully, the weather remained remarkably dry and pleasant for the entire weekend. We arrived back in UL on Sunday evening tired, but the smiles all round were a good mark of the over whelming success of the weekend on the trails. Our following trip to the Wicklow Mountains and the steep technical and flowing descents of Djouce and Balinastoe was such good fun that we'll be returning there this semester in mid-March! We also have a number of Uplift days planned for this semester where we'll be working on improving our Downhill skills in advance of our summer training trip to Les Gets in the French Alps!

To join in the fun, head on over to our forum at mbul.skynet.ie and check out the "Cycles" board for the latest info on our activities.



A good 2013 for Handball Club AND MORE TO COME IN 2014

Looking back on the start of the academic year, the later months of 2013 brought vast amounts of success to the handball club. Established members and also our new members carved a pathway to success through their terrific performances in both courts and is a sure sign of the clubs strength and development.

On the 18th -20th of October U.L. handball players descended on Kilkenny's 60x30 courts to take part in the annual singles and team Intervarsities event. It was uplifting to hear the news of good results coming in from all grades, both beginner and experienced.

UL were runners up in

both the A and B team events while there was also a strong showing on an individual basis players were successful in these competitions or at least progressed to the later stages. Marcus Nolte took the Men's C singles crown while John Fitzgerald was runner up in the Men's A singles final. Mairéad Conlon was also a runner up in the Women's B singles final. Mary Immaculate College student Pdraig Quish was beaten in the Men's Open semi final. Therefore it was a weekend of brilliant performances from both our experienced and new members.

November saw our players head to Wexford to take part in the All Ireland

Intervarsities team event in the 40x20 court. For the first time in the tournaments history, UL secured the top honors and in doing so proved why they came into the tournament as hot favorites. With well known names such as Paudi Quish (Limerick), Barry McMahon (Clare) and Pa Herlihy (Cork) finding themselves on the UL second team, the playing level, and depth of talent that UL currently possess was evident. They eased past U.C.D. in the semi's and secured their open title by defeating UL's second team in the final. The first team, which comprised of Shane Hayes, Colm O'Luining, Colin Corbett, and Cork ace Killian Carol, they were in impec-

cable form as they disposed of the competition. The B event played out in a similar fashion to the open grade, with UL's first team having to overcome their second, to attain the number one spot. This time around however, it was in a round robin scenario. UL's first team was overall winners and on their path to victory they dispatched of both UCC and UL's second team. This team comprised of John Fitzgerald, Catriona Casey, Martina McMahon and Jacob Loughnane. UCC secured the runner up spot.

As our players return refreshed from the Christmas break, they will return to action on the 31st -2nd of February at the All Ire-

land Intervarsities singles tournament which will take place in Kingscourt in Co. Cavan. Shortly after returning from Cavan, our players will travel to Colorado to take part in the U.S. Collegiate competition which will definitely act as a learning curve for many of our players while providing a stern challenge for our strong players.

The annual U.L One Wall tournament will take place on the 5th and 6th of April and will see players from various parts of the country travel to the campus to try and capture the crown of tournament champion.

Kick Back with UL Taekwondo!



By Cliona Whitelaw, PRO

Have you ever felt like you could do more with your body than just your average everyday activities? At the UL Taekwondo Club, we're dedicated to learning just how to do that. Taekwondo is a Korean Martial Art that combines kick-boxing, power techniques (such as board breaking) and special techniques (such as flying kicks) to turn anyone into a force to be reckoned with. Our club includes members of all ages and skill levels, from beginners to

people who would give Chuck Norris a run for his money! The club is one of the longest running martial arts clubs in UL and we hope to continue for many years to come! Over the years, we have built a strong bond with other Taekwondo clubs and have joint training sessions with them regularly. Such clubs include local Limerick clubs and NUIG here in Ireland and clubs in Scotland and the Jersey Islands, giving members the opportunity to train with other clubs and even to travel a bit! Several of our members progressed

to their next belt this year and will continue to do so in the future, hopefully even becoming active competitors in the Taekwondo world! In order to encourage this we plan to compete in the Intervarsities held in Cork this year. This promises be a great individual and club experience for all of our members! While this all sounds like serious business, we do like to have a bit of craic every now and again too, with nights out organised regularly for our members and a laid back atmosphere in

our training sessions! These will no doubt continue into next semester and will mean that Taekwondo isn't just a great way to stay in shape, but also a fantastic social outlet for anyone! If you've been feeling a little lazy over the Christmas break, then maybe Taekwondo is just what you need to help you get back to being fighting fit! Through training we promote fitness, flexibility, discipline and confidence in an environment that is suitable for all grades. We welcome new and old members alike with

open arms, regardless of discipline or experience. We train 3 times a week, and anyone interested in joining is always welcome to come along and see just what it is that we do! Training times are Monday at 18:00, Wednesday at 21:00 and Thursday at 18:50. We are also accessible through the UL Wolves website, by email at <mailto:ul.taekwondo@gmail.com> or by visiting www.facebook.com/ul.taekwondo. We look forward to getting to meet any new members soon! Taekwon.



Skydive UL - Legally High

by Darragh Copley, PRO



Following the summer successes of becoming the first third-level skydiving club to participate in the Irish National 4-Way competition as well as the club's annual trip to Gap in the south of France, it was once again time for Skydive UL to bring a group of new skydivers into the fold. It is an exciting time when we get the opportunity to bring in new members. Whilst many in the club have progressed in the sport, it's easy to remember the feeling of doing your first skydive when you see a batch of first-timers getting ready to do their jump. The feelings of apprehension are ones which

are never forgotten. What's more memorable though, is the sense of accomplishment upon overcoming those feelings. Therefore, it came as no surprise that great enthusiasm was found in the club's newest members with roughly fifty people having the fantastic experience of completing their first ever skydive. Many of our new members had never given any thought towards skydiving until they came across Skydive UL and of those, there have certainly been a few who have stumbled upon a new passion. An affordable means to take part in a sport many wouldn't give much thought

to is what Skydive UL offers. This, in conjunction with an affable environment whereby new friends are easy to come by, have made the club very popular.

All of our skydiving activities take place at the Irish Parachute Club in County Offaly which has an excellent reputation as being a great place to learn how to skydive. We travel there every weekend and take to the skies (Irish weather permitting!). Also on a weekly basis, we hold parachute packing classes which present the opportunity to understand how a parachute works which is a valuable asset. Apart from skydiving-related activities, we held several nights out last semester which proved to be almost as enjoyable as the skydiving. This provided both the new and the old members the opportunity to make new friends to share the sport with.

We aim to repeat past successes again and those cannot be achieved without eager new additions. As such, whether you have skydived before or it has never crossed your mind until now, don't be afraid to contact us. We can be reached via message at www.facebook.com/SkydiveUL or email at skydiveu@gmail.com.

UL Darts Rejuvenated

Alan O'Sullivan, PRO. <mailto:Alanosullivan89@hotmail.com>
Alanosullivan89@hotmail.com

UL Darts has gone from strength to strength over the last 18 months. After originally leaving UL back in 2011, the old Darts Club left with me, but after a year with no club on campus, Darts resurfaced, and what a time we have had. Last year's 2nd place finish and the Intervarsity's was just the start for this growing club. This academic year saw a new influx of quality young 1st year players join us, and the future of the club looks to be in good hands when the elders eventually leave. The club has, for the first time,

entered 2 teams into the Limerick City League, with the A Team competing in Division 1 against teams with PDC ranked players involved and our B team sitting proudly atop of Division 3. The new semester brings with it a few trips to other colleges around the country. We hosted NUIG last year and will be travelling to Galway to play them again in the coming weeks. Last years Intervarsity hosts and champions WIT, will be arriving in Limerick soon for a rematch of epic proportions. On top of that,

a trip to Cork is also on the cards for matches with both UCC and CIT. The club will also be travelling to Dublin at the end of March for the prestigious Premier League of Darts, where the 10 of the best players on the planet will battle it out. Last year we hosted an exhibition with current World #15 Mervyn King and plans are being made to host another exhibition with another top ranked player in the coming months. Currently situated in the Kilmurry Lodge, the UL Darts Club meets on both Monday and

Wednesday nights. Monday nights are currently our league nights, but with the City League due to come to an end in mid February, we will be back to training any and all new recruits that come through our doors. Wednesdays are currently our training nights and will continue to be throughout the semester. The club currently has 20+ active members, with all those players showing a vast improvement in the time they have been with the club. We have a few Erasmus students on board too, with our first ever

Chinese student joining our ranks earlier this year. The clubs position looks stronger than ever right now and will continue to grow bigger over the next semester. We hope to bring aboard a few new faces again this term and with them prove what a force the Darts Club will become over time. Thankfully, when I next leave UL, I know it the Darts won't be coming with me, and I couldn't be more proud to have been involved. Alan O'Sullivan, PRO.

DANCE UL: THE MOST EXCITING CLUB ON CAMPUS

Barry McMahon
bmacocmills@hotmail.com
P.R.O. University of Limerick Handball Club

Set up in October 2008, Dance UL teaches a range of great classes, including our newly introduced: Zumba! The aim of the club is for students to have fun and meet new people while practicing and learning the art of dance. Dance UL currently has over 200 members and encourages both non-dancers and dancers to join. Winning "Best New Club 2009" in UL's Clubs and Societies ball, Dance UL thrives to improve on its amazing reputation.

Last semester The University of Limerick's multi-award winning dance club attended DCU's "All Ireland Dance Experiment," a chance for dance clubs from Universities all over Ireland to come together to present dance. Dance UL performed a piece that highlighted the perfect fusion of Ballet, Hip-hop, Irish Dance, and Commercial Dance. The performance exemplified the technical, choreographic, and performative talents of Dance UL with this complex routine.

With prestige and talent like theirs, Dance UL has big plans

for this upcoming semester. UL is bringing five entries to the Dance Intervarsity Competition at CIT this February. Hip-hop, Jazz, Contemporary, Irish Dance, and a Mixed squad encompassing all the aforementioned styles are currently rehearsing routines that will bring the house down and trophies home. Dance UL has high hopes this year after winning twelve trophies from five past Intervarsity competitions.

Also this semester, Dance UL plans to partner up with some other clubs, societies, and the greater Limerick community both on and off campus. Collaborating with the Drama Society for their musical, dancing in SoUL week, and working with International Society for fun events only begin to describe Dance UL's hopes for becoming more involved. Look out for performances, classes, and other fun social events throughout the semester.

Dance UL offers nine technique classes a week including two levels of Ballet, Hip-hop, and Irish Dance, as well as Contemporary, Jazz, and

Zumba for all levels. Teachers for these classes are professional dancers with expertise in their genre of dance. Dance UL welcomes new members, so feel free to check out their Facebook and Twitter pages for class schedules and updates, and their YouTube channel for videos.

"Because of Dance UL, I feel

more confident in myself and in my dancing. Everyone is so encouraging and I feel like we are all part of a big family." - Ruth Walsh, Dance UL Treasurer.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialDanceUL>
YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/OfficialDanceUL
Twitter: @DanceUL

By Nina Pongratz,
Public Relations Officer
Email: nepongatz@gmail.com



CLASS TIMETABLE

YouTube: OfficialDanceUL | Facebook: [Dance UL](http://DanceUL) | Twitter: @DanceUL



WEDNESDAY				THURSDAY			
Dromroe		Plassey		Kilmurry		Plassey	
7:15 - 8:15	Hip Hop Advanced	7:30 - 8:30	Irish Dancing Advanced	6:30 - 7:30	Ballet Beginners	8:00 - 9:00	Contemporary
8:15 - 9:15	Jazz			7:30 - 8:30	Zumba	9:00 - 10:00	Ballet Advanced
				8:30 - 9:30	Hip Hop Beginners		
				9:30 - 10:30	Irish Dancing Beginners		



Defend Your Honour and Use the Force at the Fencing Club

By Denis Murphy - Captain

Defend Your Honour and Use the Force at the Fencing Club

By Denis Murphy - Captain
From medieval knights and duelling gentlemen to French gendarmes and modern pentathletes, fencing has a history that goes back to the 12th century. It's no surprise then that fencing is one of the five sports which have featured at every one of the modern Olympic Games. Fencing also continues to feature in popular media, notable examples being Zorro, the lightsaber-wielding Jedi and Sith from Star Wars, and Inspector Javert from Les Miserables.

At the UL Fencing Club, we practice olympic fencing, in which three distinctly shaped weapons are used: the foil, the épée and the sabre. Rather than swinging from chandeliers or jumping off balconies, you spar on a long, narrow strip. The action is so frantic that it is judged electronically rather than by the eye. A bullet is the only thing faster than the moving tip of a sword (including archery) in the Olympic Games. As a result, fencers display high reaction time in judging and reacting to and with complex movements. Famous fencers include René Descartes, Benito Mussolini and Bruce Dickinson, the lead vocalist of Iron Maiden.

Throughout the year, there are many fencing competitions organised around the country that cater to everyone, from

beginners up to professional athletes. Our main annual competition is the Irish Intervarsities, which are being held by UCD in March. In November 2013, two members of the UL Fencing Club recently competed in the Schull Novice Cup held in UCC. It's open to anyone who has been fencing for less than 2 years, which makes it ideal for beginners. Out of 67 male fencers, they came 38th and 47th. Fencing is a well-rounded sport with tactical, technical and physical challenges. This means that anyone can be a good fencer with training, whether old or young, "athletic" or not. Fencing im-

proves coordination and flexibility, whilst at the same time being great fun. Don't worry; it doesn't hurt as much as you'd think being stabbed would!

Are you interested in being a knight, a gentleman, or do you look good in white? Then you can find us on the UL Wolves website (<http://ulwolves.ie/clubssocs/>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ULFencing>) and Youtube (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_Lw-VU1SQjdpoHrONbieLw). For more information about the UL Fencing Club, don't hesitate to contact us at ulfencing@gmail.com.



From left to right is Denis Murphy, Captain of the UL Fencing Club, and Fang Weiyi. Out of 67 male fencers, they came 38th and 47th respectively. Also included are Frankie Nersirky and Emer Dight, members of Blades Fencing Club, who train in Dooradoyle. Out of 25 female fencers, they came 1st and 11th respectively.

Semester of Success for UL Ninjas!

By Jamie Flynn PRO

The year so far has been a resounding success for all involved with the UL Ninjas, the University of Limerick's Ultimate Frisbee team. With both our ladies and open teams proving successful on the pitch, several of our members have also received individual accolades from the Irish Ultimate community for the standards that they have set over the previous year.

The University of Limerick hosted the first Intervarsity tournament of the year, Indoor IV's, in the Sports Arena. As well as hosting the tournament, UL also emerged victorious with their first ever Intervarsity title, defeating NUIM in a thrilling final on the first weekend of November. This was a fantastic achievement for the

club and it will hopefully set the standard for the rest of the Open Intervarsity season.

Later in November, the UL Ninjas Ladies team travelled to the Kingfisher Gym in Galway, to compete in Ladies Indoor Intervarsity. After progressing through a tough group, and a nail biting semi final, they suffered an unlucky defeat in the final to a strong and established UCC team. Despite this setback, the UL Ninjas Ladies are going from strength to strength, and are now an established force on the Intervarsity scene.

November proved to be a successful month for the UL Ninjas. At the annual IFDA Awards Ball, several members were rewarded for their contribution to the

Irish Ultimate Frisbee scene. Our captain, Barry Walsh, was voted as MVP Male, the first UL Ninja to win this award. Former UL Coach and Captain, Daragh Kelleher, retained his MSP (Most Spirited Player) award.

The UL Ninjas very own tournament, The Siege of Limerick, received the Best Tournament award in a highly contested field. To cap off a wonderful night for Limerick Ultimate, the local club team, Pelt Ultimate, which comprises primarily of both current UL players and UL alumni, received the Best Club award.

Contact Details

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/UL->



Row, Row, Row your Boat....

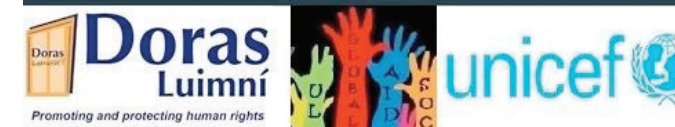
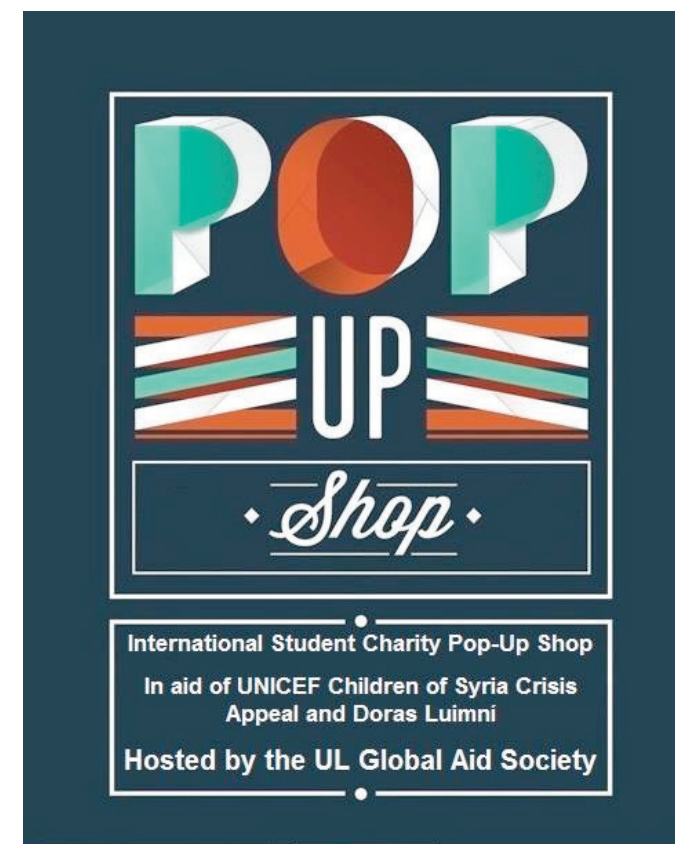
.... As fast as you can down the stream! The 2013/14 rowing season has got off to a great start with success for ULRC both outdoors and indoors. This success has been earned by all the athletes involved - from senior rower's right down to novices - through the time and effort they have dedicated to their training and preparation. Each evening since September, the UL Boathouse has been a hive of activity with rowers of all levels training together to represent ULRC to the best of their ability. A large group of men's and ladies novice rowers have taken to the sport like ducks to water, dedicating themselves to land training sessions during the week and sessions on the water on Saturday mornings. If they keep this up it will be difficult to distinguish them from the swans on the Shannon. The first race of the season was held in wet and windy conditions in Castleconnell, Co. Limerick back on the 2nd of November. The women's intermediate pair brought home a win on the day, with the men's senior quad and double finishing second and third respectively; but there were wins on many levels for the club at this event. Braving the cold on the day were the clubs novice rowers who only took up the sport in September. This being their first event representing the

club we are very proud of their achievement! They are a testament to the fact that it is never too late to take up rowing. The Irish Indoor Rowing Championships was a home event for ULRC this year, with the event being hosted in the University Arena. Athletes from rowing clubs across the country attended on the day to show what they were made of. This occasion again saw ULRC shine; placing in many events - Men's Novice 1000m (3rd), Men's Student Team 2000m (2nd), Women's LTA 1000m (2nd), Women's 500m (3rd), and Women's Student Team 2000m (3rd). ULRC has high hopes for the continued success of all its crews over the coming season. The University Championships are taking place on the 11th of April in the National Rowing Centre in Cork, and we are confident that we can bring home some silverware on the day. If you are interested in taking up the sport or renewing your interest in it, then it is never too late to join. Just drop us an email on irow@ul.ie or go to our Facebook (University of Limerick Rowing Club) or web page (www.ulrowing.net). If you just want to get fit, then keep your eyes out for the club Run Series starting at the end of February. It is a fantastic way to meet new people and work on your fitness at the same time.

Author: Michelle Lonergan
Position: Secretary



Get involved, make a difference...Enjoy some pizza!



Hey guys we hope your semester has started nearly as well as ours! If you are the kind of person who always fills up the Trocaire box before you gorge on Easter eggs then you should definitely read on. You may even get rewarded with some extra chocolate from our amazing cake sales for your effort! **What we do**

Global Aid Society aims to raise awareness of development, global justice and human rights issues by creating an objective forum for their exploration and debate. The society also acts as a hub for students interested in volunteering or campaigning; giving members the opportunity to meet up with other students who share their interests.

News. The Global Aid Society has started 2014 off with a bang; having already tripled our fundraising total for 2013. We have chosen to focus on aiding two charities for the semester; Unicef Ireland children of Syria fund and Doras Luimni. The bulk of fundraising has been through our innovative pop-up charity shop. Working alongside university authorities such as Campus Life Services and the International Office the Global Aid Society has developed an essential new service where outgoing Erasmus students can donate any unwanted items, (or those they couldn't sneak onto Ryanair!) at any of the on campus residences. Using The Hub as a base of

operations the society sold on the donated items to grateful International students providing them with essentials such as towels, bedding, warm cosy blankets, wellies, umbrellas and everything else needed to survive a semester in Ireland. The shop has been a roaring success doing a brisk trade and leaving shelves bare. We are keen to keep the ball rolling over the next few months and we have a number of great events in store including a very special valentines day event organized

in aid of Doras Luimni, open mic night nights, micro financing through Kiva and the return of the societies long running pizza nights. So do you think you could help us to help others and enjoy some pizza at the same time? Get involved - help the local community - raise awareness - gain skills - make a difference - meet new people! Weekly meetings are held on Wednesdays in the Red Raisons cafe at 6 p.m - All welcome



UL Badminton Club



By Chris Quill & Aine Lenighan

Welcome back from the Badminton Club! As we are starting 2nd Semester we will have a look at how 1st Semester went for the Club. The first competition that we participated was the Haynes Cup and Shield back in October. We had two teams representing UL. Our Cup team successfully reached the final but narrowly missed out to Lakewood (Cork). Our Shield team came third in their division. Following that, the annual Irish International Student Badminton Tournament (ISBT) took place in

UL over the October Bank Holiday. We had 27 members participating in the tournament. A total of five gold medals and six silver medals were snatched up by members of the club. With such great results we won the overall Team Cup at the event! It was great weekend for all involved and we hope to have more participants from our club next year, and hopefully retain the cup!

The Limerick Leagues began in November with UL being represented in four grades. As the semester drew to a close the teams were busy fitting in games before the holidays began. Our Grade 3 team has played one game so far and had a very convincing victory over Martinstown (6-1) in Martinstown. Our Grade 4 team has played four games, two home games and two away games. The proved strong at home with three victories over Mungret (6-1), Effin (5-2). Unfortunately they were not as successful on the road only winning one of their games against An Droichead (6-1) and losing to Trinity (5-2). Our Grade 5A team has played three games before the holidays, two at home and one away. Like the Grade 4 team the 5s were very successful on home turf with two impressive wins over Trinity (5-2) and UL Grade 5B team (6-1). They were also impressive while travelling to Effin with a 5-2 victory over a very experienced side. Finally our Grade 5B team have

only played two games and have not had luck on their side losing away to Foynes 7-0 and losing to our Grade 5A team 6-1. We hope to see all the teams playing well and hopefully will progress to the County Finals in March and further!! Over the Christmas Holidays, 17 of us travelled to Enschede (Holland) to participate in another International Student Badminton Tournament (ISBT). This was held in University Twenty which has superb facilities including twenty badminton courts. There were over 200 participants at this event from all over Europe, with players ranging from novice to national level. We had three great days badminton which was topped off with the final night being New Year's Eve. Unfortunately we were not as successful at this ISBT with only taking home three gold medals and one silver medal. We hope to return to Holland again next year for another enjoyable tournament.

A quick look ahead at what's to come this semester for the club, league will resume and finals will take place in March. We will be travelling to DCU to compete in Varsities with two teams. With hope to claim the gold!

ulbadmintonclub@gmail.com
facebook page: UL Badminton Club

Climbing Rocks in a Hard Place

Féarghal Fitzgibbon
ULOPC President



The 2nd of January dawned and for a score of individuals from the OPC, it was time to make the annual pilgrimage to the highlands of Scotland. Excitement was in the air as we loaded the minibus and sprinter in preparation for the trek ahead of us.

Every winter the OPC venture north to the heart of the Western Scottish Highlands it's the iconic club trip, one that introduces novices to the intricacies of snow and ice and gives them a taste of the wonders of winter mountaineering. It's a trip that is what you make of it and we were delighted to see our newcomers to do exactly that.

The journey is arduous but rewarding. Bedded down in the heart of Glencoe, one of the most enchanting valleys in Scotland, we looked forward to the first rays of light and the vista it would unveil.

The weather had most definitely closed in, we would be assailed by storms throughout or stay but true to form, old and new preserved in the face of

adversity. Beginners firstly learn the intricacies of using ice axe and crampons in concert while the older heads take the first couple of days as an opportunity to practice old skills.

A myriad of routes were completed this year and regardless of the conditions, there were some members active. On one such diabolical day, we even ventured east to the Cairngorms, giving our beginners a chance to experience a fresh set of routes and conditions.

My personal highlight was the Aonach Eagach traverse, part of the holy trinity of Scottish ridges with steep drops of over 900m to either side, but every member had their special day to remember. The weather was rough, precipitation heavy but I was impressed to see everyone rise to the challenge.

But the one constant we always have in Scotland is Nevis Day. It's the chance to stand at the highest point in Britain, a chance for the group to put their skills to the test with an early start and long day ahead of them. Wakeup is 0500 and its with bleary-eyes

and creaking bones that you begin in the dark hiking up the track. Dawn is meant to bring you onto the "col" and its only there that you realize you've still have half the mountain to climb. For us that meant venturing into the fogbank, the mist making it impossible to distinguish what was solid ground and a drop into space. Understandably nerve-racking, we split into teams, roped up and thanks to some skillful navigation we arrived to the summit.

Its a surreal experience, you're standing mere metres away from a sheer drop, the wind's doing it's best to flense your skin down to the bone and rime is building up on any exposed parts of your face. But the sense of elation you feel is one that for a few moments strips away any discomfort and lets you really savour the moment.

Alas, all too soon its gone away and with the cold beginning to seep into our bones, we began the long march down, right into the teeth of the wind but we were lucky to get one last great glimpse of the Highlands as the

cloud cleared for a few moments as if to tempt us back yet again for next year. We'll be there.

Check us out on www.ulopc.ie or on www.facebook.com/ULOPC

for details on how to join if you're interested. Our Climbing Wall is open thrice a week, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 1900-2200. Come along and say hello!

