



Clubs & Societies **NEWS**

Aontas na Mac Léinn University of Limerick
Ollscoil Luimnigh Students Union

UL-1 and UL-2 Triumph at the IUSA Sailing Western Championships 2010

This last weekend saw the University of Limerick Sailing Club play host to the Irish University Sailing Association Western Championships in Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Saturday morning dawned with light fickle winds and frozen over boats. But with a bit of persuasion the boats were rigged and sailed out to the Race Area within Kilrush's unique man-made sea lake by way of a lock gate similar to a canal on the edge of the Shannon estuary. With over 20 teams from 10 different universities and only three flights of boats rather than the usual four it was shaping up to be quite a task to get all the races done in time.

The light breeze delayed racing by nearly two and a half hours thus only half the expected races were gotten off over the course of the Saturday. These unforeseen circumstances forced the organisers to go to

race win percentages to decide who made the quarter finals in the Gold and Silver fleets, finishing the Bronze league would suffice to determine a winner in that fleet. With UL-1 winning two out of their three races and UL-2 winning four out of their five races both teams were sitting comfortably at the top of the league facing into the quarters.

UL-1 overcame TCD-1 in a two-nil defeat in a best-of-three quarter final to make it into the semis against DIT-1. UL-2 had a more exciting quarter against UCC-1, winning the first race and losing the second to triumph in the third to put them through against UCD-2 in the semis. Once again UL-1's top form showed through as they easily defeated DIT-1 in another two-nil win in the semis to put them through to the final. UL-2 had a repeat of their quarters ending up with a win and a loss against UCD-2

heading into the final race of the best-of-three, but with a textbook start and well implemented team racing techniques they defeated UCD-2 and headed into a final against their greatest rivals, UL-1.

With a rather lacklustre start by UL-2 and a well timed one by UL-1 the latter went on to dominate and win the first race of a best-of-five final. The second race proved more exciting with UL-2 putting up a valiant effort and causing havoc at the first, second, third and fourth marks and ending up at the wrong end of the umpires stick leaving UL-1 with another well deserved win. Up against the ropes UL-2 stood their ground and raced a much improved race in the third and claimed a win against their opposition. Still relatively against the ropes in the fourth race UL-2 gamely gave it their all but to no avail, UL-1 gave a



fantastic example of their experience and team-work by manoeuvring themselves into a unorthodox late position on the line and fooled UL-2 into a losing position from the very start of the race.

All in all the event went off very well with UL-1 coming first in the Gold Fleet, UL-2 second and UCD-2 third in the same fleet. UCD-3 overcame the other seven teams to win the Silver Fleet and TCD-3 followed suit in the Bronze. ULSC would like to thank everyone who helped out and gave us their support, especially ULSC member Cian Gallagher who pulled an absolute blinder in organising the event and pulled more weight than anyone else and was widely appreciated by everyone involved. "Following in last seasons form ULSC has once again dominated the sailing circuit in Ireland. Beginning the college year with a 3rd place in the 4-Nations Cup in September and representing Ireland at the Student Yachting World Cup (SYWoC) in October it has gone on to place

2nd in the Gold Fleet (Division 1) of the Irish University Sailing Association (IUSA) Southern Championships in November before placing 1st and 2nd in the Gold Fleet of the IUSA Westerns in January. And recently and most importantly it has triumphed at the IUSA Intersarsity Championships by finishing 1st in the Gold Fleet and 1st in the Silver Fleet (Division 2), along with another UL sailor, Billy Clarke, winning the Irish University Sailor of the Year, following in the footsteps of previous winners, UL sailors Kevin Stallard and Rachel O'Brien. With this fantastic display of sailing ULSC has once again qualified to represent Ireland at next years 4-Nations Cup and SYWoC as well as being invited to the Scottish Intersarities in three weeks time. In the meantime the club is focusing on the Nationals in order to qualify for the ISAF Team Racing World Championships in Schull, Co. Cork 2011 and i hope everyone wishes them the best of luck!"



Welcome

From the Clubs & Societies Office and first and foremost my apologies as I had intended for this to be ready to print at least 3 weeks ago but there is a very good reason for the delay.

publication in Semester 1? Unfortunately I don't get to use An Focal as much as I would like to, with the whirlwind that is the C&S Office so I will try and bring you up to speed -



Just before Christmas the Clubs and Societies Council after several weeks of discussion gave approval for the ULSU to recruit another member of staff to the students union in the form of a Clubs & Societies Liaison Officer. Effectively that is (at last) someone to work with myself to try and deliver a higher quality service for student activities and to deliver responses and action items as and when needed. I have been worked for the ULSU-Clubs & Societies since 1998 but every summer you think you have all your preparations made and you just get swept away with the sheer volume of interaction with students keen to develop their particular interest and despite your best efforts, working back on evenings and even taking phonecalls after you have gone home or on a days leave it has become very obvious that Clubs & Societies in the University and via the Students Union has long grown beyond the capabilities of one mere mortal. So in went the advert to various web sites and the Limerick Leader and back came over 400 applications! I kid you not. This made a complete hames of the already busy semester hence the delay in this publication as we filtered and deliberated, interviewed and re-interviewed. However we have finally appointed Ms. Liz Gabbet, (Well done Liz) to the team and look forward to her arrival at the end of March. So hopefully this is the last delay in a publication and my excuse provided- a bit like Mick Mc Cathy and his derriere in a bacon slicer!

So what else to bring you up to speed on Clubs & Societies goings on since this last

there has been a trip to the USA on business last November – thought I'd never get to say that working for the Students Union! But yes the Secretary General, Tomas Costello and I, prompted by colleagues at a summer conference of the Association of Students Union Administrators (ASUA) in Maynooth, decided to go to Region 1 of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) in New England for their 60th Anniversary. We arrived on a Wednesday evening and by Thursday 9am we were being whisked away with over 30 delegates from Ireland, UK and Qatar to Boston Universities Recreation Centre, then after a few hours it was on to Curry College (A new Student Centre) and on then to the University of Connecticut for the evening. We stayed in the on-campus Hotel (did you expect anything else in the US?), the Nathan Hale. Friday, we had breakfast on the bus to maximise the day, as we travelled to Southern Connecticut (another new facility only a few years old) which sits in the shadow of Yale and then after lunch it was onto Eastern Connecticut (another relatively new student centre). We got a very useful and insightful tour of the various aspects of all these facilities and it was a credit to our hosts to pack so much in two days before the opening ceremony on Friday evening. I have to say I was wrecked by the time Fridays opening event was over and back to the Nathan Hale in UCONN that night. UCONN is a long established University in a rural settings complete with it own dairy herd and ice cream!! Very impressive facilities.All day



2008 under Pa O'Brien's term as ULSU President. Since December 09 in particular this has been a very demanding issue in terms of representations by Ruan Dillon Mc Loughlin and I, with the University and our own clubs affected by the poor standard grass facilities. At the time of writing we are still waiting for the student clubs to give thumbs up to the new plan complete with floodlighting to upgrade McGuire's to the standard of Leeds FC and even Chelsea FC's training facilities. To be

Turbulent times too pardon the pun for the Boathouse and the Sub Aqua Club. What most people won't be aware of is that despite all the fanfare surrounding the opening of the Boathouse. There are two big issues which remain unresolved which to say the least we are not best pleased about and two years since the handover of the Building. Namely the centrepiece of the Boathouse the first powered Rowing tank in Ireland –still does not work!!– That's a bizarre and bitter fact at present. The tank is not achieving the speeds initially promised or even possible from the build. Last semester despite a specific instruction from the Management Committee of the Boathouse NOT to spend the €15K required repairing the problem until we know what the ACTUAL outcomes would be of such an investment– low and behold the US specialist that built the tank returns unknown to the Management Committee and carries out "modifications". And the problem still remains! It is now 3 months since instructions were issued for an independent consultant to review the problem. The other annoying issue we still don't have for all intent purposes a detailed receipt for the €5.1million as the "client"! Patience has run out at this stage and we are currently looking for a direction from the member clubs now as to how to progress the issue as the UL route has ground to a halt.

Our Sub Aqua Club has fallen foul of the current financial climate. The recent renovations in the PESS building have had direct implications for their Training facility, the Diving Pit in the old Sports Building. A



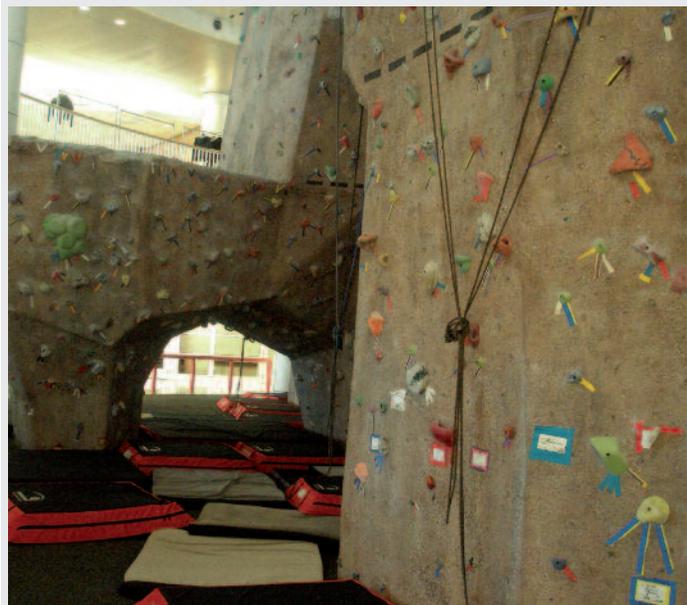
seminars and workshops on Saturday in Eastern Connecticut, Tomas and I went to as many as possible to saturate our heads full of new idea's for the return to UL. Sunday was a much quieter affair and very much orientated towards the peer mentoring with US delegates-which is just as well as our heads were fried with all the discussion about – "well how could this work at home and maybe if we...". Presentations have been delivered to the staff of the ULSU, Clubs & Societies Executive and a brief presentation to Clubs & Societies Council. All in all a very worthwhile conference and hopefully many of the idea's can be introduced in the next year or so.

The playing pitches have been a very high profile issue this year having kicked off in November

fair the University have been very pro-active on the issue despite some initial disagreements but the major "challenge" in UL speak is the €1.6MILLion price tag it now has hanging around its neck. From a ULSU and a C&S point of view it has to be overcome for the betterment and future development of student sports. Loans are being procured for the North Campus Development with no small help from profits from the UL Arena, which has student fingerprints all over it- so there already is a method for allowing infrastructural projects to go ahead. Where there was a will they found a way – now replicate it for the student's project which is a small fraction in the grand scheme. The rising Sports tide has to lift all boats and not just the commercial promotion of sport on campus.



Welcome contd...



facility that they have had free use of since 1998 is now theirs to use if they can find approx €8000 each academic year to heat that body of water. My own understanding of the issue, as the Clubs & Societies Development Officer for the Students Union although a facility in disrepair for some time, the depth of that pool at

nearly four metres provides a level of training on buoyancy which is unparalleled in this country and cannot be accomplished in the Arena Pool. Buoyancy is a very important factor in the quality of training and ergo the diver you become and with that, the all important issue of safety in such a sport. I know I have

been putting that side of the debate on advice from the Sub Aqua Club forward since at least 2004 at various meetings including the Arena Board of Directors. It is due to this on going campaign that the new extension for the Arena whenever the financial climate becomes more favourable will be able to facilitate a new training area for the Sub Aqua Club. It appears initially to be shallower than the current Diving Pit facility but deeper than the Arena 50m pool. What is worrying though, is that this is a club over its lifetime has had thousands of Euro invested in this activity as a service for the campus community from the budgets of Clubs and Societies. The club are tenants in the €5.1M boathouse. The UL Sub Aqua Club has saved €12K in the last 3 to 4 years in fundraising for the purpose of a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) approx €45K. Ulster Banks Enablement fund granted the club €25K this year to assist with the objective and still the club have to raise a loan from a bank for the final piece in their

developmental jigsaw. Contracts have been signed and a RIB is on the way. Traditionally all involved were of the view this was a Buildings & Estates issue but more recently it would appear that heat was cut off for financial reasons by Sports Dept cutbacks. What has really angered the club is that there was no consultation or notice to the Club and membership has suffered as a result. Hopefully a meeting of minds will resolve the issue in the very near future and that the club can operate in 24C instead of a mind numbing 13C.

OK I think I have the meatier issues dealt with and still there are issues on-going such as the branding of Clubs & Societies and Stephen Lowneys winning concept of the UL Bucks, the Haiti fundraiser by the students involved in clubs and societies-our thanks to Sinead O'Donnell in Jury's Inn Limerick for her kind sponsorship, the support from the Stables and Scholars Clubs also. There is the annual hustings for best club and

society of the year coming up and of course the C&S Ball on the 18th of March. Having already tasted the menu selection, the Strand Hotel have two serious operators in their chefs Tom and Len and already I cant wait for the night it promises to be very exciting as I suspect new faces on trophies this year. Congrats to the Ladies Soccer on their 3 in a row league success, the Kayak Club and Sailing Clubs as varsity champs and best of luck to Patsy Morrissey and the GAA Club with the hurlers in the Fitzgibbon weekend, savage result against UCC- I know there are other success stories but we can always cover them in the next issue. My sincere thanks to Ruan the ULSU Pres on the blinder he is playing as well on the major issues at the start of the piece.

For further info on Clubs & Societies please log onto www.clubsandsocs.ul.ie

Regards,
Paul.Lee@ul.ie
Clubs & Societies Development Officer,ULSU

Pack Up Your DoBulks – U.L TaeKwonDo Club Head To Korea!

By Michael Johnson

The University of Limerick TaeKwonDo Club are planning on heading to South Korea, birthplace of the martial art of TaeKwonDo and homeplace of some of its greatest practitioners this coming term. Over a dozen members of the club here in the University are signed on to head to the orient for the Easter Break and train with the TaeKwonDo Masters, see the origin of one of the most popular martial arts in the world and immerse ourselves in the Korean culture for a week. TaeKwonDo is a Korean martial art which has its origins in the ancient Korean form of Tae Kwon which dates back to the 4th century A.D. The modern form of TaeKwonDo was conceived and introduced in the 1950's by General Choi Hong Hi of South Korea, at the behest of the then-president President Syngman Rhee. The martial art has enjoyed almost universal growth, development and adaptation since then, becoming one of the most popular and well-known martial arts in existence today, practiced by over 70 million people in 190 countries and one of only 2 Asian martial arts recognised as events for the Olympics Games.

Translated literally, TaeKwonDo means “the Art of Hand and Foot Fighting”. It is a great all-round martial art that includes hand and foot fighting techniques in an unbeatable package. The U.L. TaeKwonDo Club are part of that AImAA (Action International Martial Arts Association) worldwide association of TaeKwonDo clubs, an organisation which strives to combine the best of TaeKwonDo and many other different martial arts and sports to provide the ultimate training experience and package to its practitioners. Incorporating elements of boxing, ground fighting, take-downs, grappling and sparring (point-, continuous- and full-contact sparring) along with the more traditional elements of the art, TaeKwonDo in U.L is the complete all-inclusive martial art for all ages and types. The U.L TaeKwonDo Club is one of the longest-running martial arts clubs here on campus at present, training on campus since the early 1990s. With approximately 100 members at present and 3 training sessions a week (Monday 18:50, Wednesday 21:00 and Thursday 18:50 in

the PESS Building) the club is currently trained by a 5th degree black belt with almost a dozen black belts contributing to its yearly membership. Over the Easter break, the UL TaeKwonDo Club will travel to Seoul for a week to train, visit, witness and experience the culture, atmosphere and vibrancy of TaeKwonDo and its native environment. The proposed itinerary at present will see the members training with the TaeKwonDo Club at Yongin University in Seoul (where you can study and research in the field of TaeKwonDo, all the way up to Ph.D qualifications!), train at the Kukkiwon TaeKwonDo centre, the recognised headquarters of the art of TaeKwonDo in South Korea, as well as attend demonstrations at the same venue. The club will also spend a weekend on a temple-stay program in Gulgulsa Temple, Gyeongju where we will live and train with the Buddhist monks in the temple complex – this promises to be the highlight of the trip, and something everybody is looking forward to. In addition to all this training, there will be some time for sight-seeing, shopping, travelling around the



mega-city of 24million people that is Seoul, and experiencing South Korean culture and lifestyle first-hand. There will also be a one-day trip to Panmunjeom to visit the DMZ (De-Militarized Zone), the strip of no-man's land dividing the North Korea from South Korea.

All told now, the trip promises to be an amazing highlight for the club this coming year. Everybody is obviously looking forward to it... so roll on week 10, pack up those dobulks (training outfits/uniforms) and let's board a plane for the orient post haste!

Wijk van Zee Report CHESS

Wijk Van Zee, a small town a half hour away from Amsterdam in the Netherlands, lays virtually unknown to many people. This village would just have been a quiet empty seaside town over the Winter months, but during the month of January it became buzzing with an unlikely activity, chess. Every year since 1938, the Corus Chess Tournament is held here and this year the UL Chess Club decided to travel there to be apart of it. Despite being called after it's sponsor, the tournament feels more like a festival, where anybody is welcome to come down and learn the ropes of the game. The interest to compete here is high, even in the amateur events, and they are capped at 600 people with a lottery system deciding on those who get to play. In these amateur events it isn't limited to people from The Netherlands, people have traveled from all over the world to be part of this festival, some as far away as China. Those that weren't selected to play in these events still made their way to the tournament. Here they met up with others in pubs near the venue, playing friendly games of chess against one another, while others listen to a live commentary on moves the top players are playing. These commentary sessions are easily accessible to anyone with the concepts and strategies of the top players being explained to complete novices.

Chess is an odd one were age or disability doesn't affect anyone's ability to play the game. For example the current World Number 1 is only 20 years old, while his peers are approaching into their late 40's and 50's. Several blind people play in the main hall engaged in a tactical battle with their opponent. This was a really great learning experience for all members who went, seeing the worlds oldest and one of the most prestigious tournaments in the world. Anyone who wishes to attend any Chess Club meeting, the club meets every Monday in EG-010 from 6pm and every Thursday from 6-8pm in Student Union Room 3.



UL SOFTBALL CLUB



The clubs and societies here at UL offer many options for a broad spectrum of interests. If you're interested in a good time, meeting new people, and playing softball, then the UL softball club is the perfect club to join. Softball is a slower version of baseball, enabling any skill level to play, experience is not necessary to play for the club. We are all just there to have a fun time. Aside from training, the club enters teams into the Intervarsity competitions each semester, including one at UCD and one here at UL. Last year, the club won the UL Intervarsity Tournament and the entire Irish Intervarsity Title for the fourth year running. The first tournament of the year in Belfast saw the club bring home all of the silverware and make a great start at going for the fifth title in a row. The UCD leg of the season is set for 5th-7th of March, and the UL leg is set for 16th-18th of April. Everyone, including international students, are welcome. Many past international members have had such a good experience that they come back to play when possible! We are out on the AstroTurf behind the Arena for training, 2-4 PM on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is not necessary to be there the entire time; you may come and go as you please. If you can't make it to all training sessions, do not worry, you can still join and come play when you can fit it in your schedule. We also provide all equipment, just bring yourself! Look us up on Facebook at UL Softball, or email us at ulsoftball@gmail.com for more information.

University of Limerick Handball Club

Welcome back, hope you enjoyed the holidays! At the time of writing college handballers throughout the country are gearing up for the ICHA's showpiece event, the All-Ireland 40x20 Singles Intervarsities in Kingscourt, Co. Cavan. Action gets underway on Thursday 28th January and will conclude with the finals being played on Sunday 31st. The UL Handball Club is sending up a team consisting of 21

handballers to the event. This is the highest number from any college which highlights the sports increasing popularity in UL and beyond. The club has a good record at this event, picking up numerous medals each year, and it is hoped this trend continues over the course of the weekend. A team of seven will be representing the university at the annual United States Intercollegiate

Championships, this year to be held in Tucson, Arizona. It will be run off over the course of five days from Wednesday 15th February to Sunday 21st. Deirdre Donohoe will be leading the charge for UL in the Women's Open division. We hope she can go a step further than she did last year where she was defeated at the semi-final stage. With the likes of Jamie Geraghty, John Fitzgerald and Ian O'Dwyer also travelling

the team have high hopes of collecting some silverware over the course of the tournament in recognition of the efforts that have been put into training over the course of the year. Further information on the UL Handball Club can be found on our Facebook page or by emailing us at ulhandball@gmail.com.



Figure 1. The team which travelled to the Tralee Intervarsities last November.



Figure 2 UL's Neil Crehan watches on as David Smith of DCU attempts the return



Egyptian Windsurfing for the Intervarsities



This year's 'warm weather training' took the club to the African continent to windsurf on the Red Sea in Egypt. Dahab was our choice of destination on the Sinai peninsula. The club had a total of 16 members on the trip, including some of our long standing committee members and our latest recruits. Conditions for the trip were perfect; with strong to light winds and a shallow lagoon, it was the ideal environment for learning, what ever your level. The sun shone as we sailed along the Red Sea at great speeds. We were joined by other windsurfers from all over the globe displaying all their skills and tricks. This gave us the motivation we needed and by the end of the trip some of our own members were well on the way to nailing most of these moves. The club also had the chance to sample some of the culture that Dahab had to offer. From their fine cuisine to their breathtaking scenery a great time was had by all. The windsurfing resort had

everything we could have asked for and catered for our every need. Lessons were given by our own instructors to the intermediate and beginner members on the trip. An advanced lesson given by the resorts own instructors and was taken up by our own instructors in learning new skills and all round better technique. This was helpful to all concerned in the run up to the Windsurfing Intervarsities this March. This year UL Windsurfing Club will be hosting the Intervarsities in Castlegregory on March the 26th-28th. In the last five years UL have won the IV's four times. Being hosts and reigning champions we are eager to hold on to the title. With the interest of several organisations and the strongest committee the club has had in years this could be the biggest windsurfing IV's in Ireland yet. We hope to have as much support from the college as possible and of its students, the more support the better. So if you find yourself doing nothing that

weekend try and make down for the IV's. There will be lots of entertainment throughout the weekend and you'll arrive back mostly likely looking to join the club. To find out more about us visit our site at: www.csn.ul.ie/~winds or check us out on Facebook. Just type ULWC into the google.ie search engine and we should be one of the top links. Thanks to everyone who did their bit in organising the trip.



DevSoc – Be Inspired, Get Involved, Make a Difference!

In 2007, the United Nations estimated that around one billion people lived in a state of extreme poverty, that is, on less than \$1 a day, while another 160 million people worldwide live on less than 50c a day. This poverty affects every aspect of daily life from access to basic education and healthcare to life expectancy and overall life quality. International responses to the issues of poverty and inequality have varied extremely and often raise questions about how development has been conceptualised in economic, social and human terms and the effectiveness of foreign aid.

The University of Limerick Development Society (DevSoc) was formed late in Semester One. DevSoc aims to raise awareness of development, global justice and human rights issues such as those outlined above by creating an objective forum for their exploration and debate. In addition the society hopes to encourage students to actively contribute to the local and global community by volunteering. We are achieving these aims through:

- Debate and discussion of key global justice and global inequality issues
- Providing opportunities to volunteer on campus and in the community
- A guest lecture series from people experienced in development work
- Film nights on various development related issues – activism, human rights etc.
- Running our own Global Issues Workshop for both members and others to learn about development

DevSoc are currently building links with groups who support development and human rights projects around the world such as microfinance charity Kiva and human rights organisation Amnesty International. In addition, we are in the process of planning events in support of Fairtrade Fortnight which runs from February 22nd to March 8th. Last semester DevSoc members attended a conference in Dublin on NGOs and Human Rights, the highlight of which was meeting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In light of the recent earthquake in Haiti, Week 1 saw several DevSoc members helping with the Student Union bucket collection on Wednesday for the Gena Heraty Appeal. Donations to this fund are being used for emergency relief in the Nos Petit Frères et Sœurs orphanage and other projects in Haiti. Student donations were very generous with €1,500 being raised by the Student Union for this appeal.

What are you interested in?
DevSoc is only as strong as its members. Come tell us what your interests are! Meetings every Monday at 6pm in the Students Union. If you are interested in finding out more about the Development Society, please email us at uldevsoc@gmail.com or find us on Facebook at 'DevSoc University of Limerick'. Follow us on Twitter : [uldevsoc](https://twitter.com/uldevsoc).



Five Reasons to take up Capoeira

Capoeira is much more than fancy kicks and back flips – it's an amalgam of every great element of Brazilian culture. From acrobatics to samba, capoeira guarantees to entertain. Here are five solid reasons to turn off 'Deal or no Deal' and get down to the Pess Building every Tuesday and Wednesday night.

First of all, Capoeira is a great work out and excellent for overall flexibility. Personally, I discovered muscles I never knew I had after my first class. Also, the ability to put your leg behind your head tends to come in handy for...erm...a variety of reasons.

Secondly, for all you language students, capoeira is an excellent chance to brush up on your Portuguese. All the moves, customs and tricks are a series of somewhat unpronounceable syllables. If anything, your attempt at pronouncing something like 'Queixada' correctly is, frankly, worth turning up for. Personally, it took me two weeks to stop saying Cappavilla instead of capoeira.

For all you budding dancers, your professor will often toss a salsa or samba lesson into class. You'll have to put 'Big Fish, Little Fish, Cardboard Box' to the back of your dance move repertoire because when you're out with fellow capoeirists, only serious hip shaking and head spinning handstands will do.

If music is your forté you get the opportunity to learn traditional Brazilian instruments such as the Berimbau and Pandero. And don't worry if you're lacking in the rhythm department. No one expects a Michael Jackson type performance. Frankly, it's just as well, I'm generally renowned for throwing everyone off beat during a music class.

Maybe most importantly, by joining the Capoeira Club you're initiated into the capoeira family. You get the opportunity to travel all around the country to various capoeira events. I attended my first event last November in Cork. I found myself thrown into the roda with some of the best capoeira professors in Europe, unceremoniously flinging my limbs around in an, albeit desperate, attempt to impress. Suffice to say I didn't. Still, the weekend was packed full of everything capoeira is all about: workshops with some of the world's top mestres, acrobatic classes, Brazilian parties and samba.

Don't worry, contrary to the above, capoeira isn't just stretching and limb flinging. Frankly it's become somewhat of a vocation and often a personal highlight of the week. You get to delve into the heart of Brazilian culture and tradition while keeping fit and learning boatloads of new skills. Also, the fact that you get to move with some seriously fit Brazilians is really just an added bonus.



MOUNTAIN BIKING UL

Mountain Biking UL was founded twelve years ago to cater for the needs of the growing community of mountain bikers in UL and the surrounding area. Our aims are to promote mountain biking as a fun recreational activity as well as supporting the more competitive aspect of mountain biking. Club membership has grown in the past few years and has expanded to include both cross-country and downhill mountain bikers of all levels of fitness and skills.

We run both beginner and intermediate cycles on Sunday mornings and on weekday evenings during the semester. These cycles often take place in the Ballyhouras Mountains trail centre or in the more local Cratloe Woods and Ballycuggaran Forest. In addition, we also have weekend trips away to Wicklow, Cahir and Carlingford to experience the challenging trails in other parts of Ireland.

In June, club members often have the thrilling experience of mountain biking on world class cross-country and downhill trails in the French and Swiss Alps. The ski-lifts in the Alpine ski resorts also run during the summer months allowing mountain bikers more time of the trails and less time pedalling uphill!

In recent years, the club has moved to focus more on the racing aspect of mountain biking with many members participating in the Munster Cross-Country Winter League and the Irish Downhill Winter League. In the coming months, several club members hope to race in the Cross-Country Development Series as well as the MBUL National Points Series Race in Ballycuggaran Forest.

This coming semester the club hopes to finalize and start development on training

facilities right here on campus. These facilities will hopefully allow members to develop their skills without the need to travel off campus. It is also hoped that one of these facilities, a pump track, will help the club branch into the newly established 4-Cross discipline in Ireland.

The club currently owns several men's and women's bikes and helmets which are available to beginners who do not own their own equipment. If you are interested in joining us, please email us at mtbclub@skynet.ie or find us online at <http://www.skynet.ie/~mtbclub> where you can find information about weekly events.



Ultimate Frisbee

UL (Ninjas) Ultimate Frisbee Team would like to welcome everyone back this semester, and say a fond farewell to all the Erasmus students who joined us last semester and a big welcome to all the new guys joining us this semester.

Overall we had a successful end of 2009 even though it was plagued with bad weather, making it difficult to train and even causing tournaments to be cancelled. The most notable tournaments were:

DCU Indoor beginners – In October, UL Ultimate won it's first ever title. Our beginner team won the annual beginner tournament Whacking Day hosted in DCU. This is the first trophy the club has won in its short history and it was a remarkable achievement by the young players and an excellent way to introduce the new players to the sport and to the UL team.

Cork Open – In November, UCC Ultimate hosted the first major tournament of the season. 24 teams representing clubs and universities from all over Ireland and Europe descended on Cork for a huge weekend of ultimate and partying alike. UL Ultimate took a semi experienced development team of 15 players to Cork with only 5 of the squad ever having represented the university. The team ended up 16th out of the 24 but the experience gained was invaluable for the development of the team.

There is a very busy semester ahead with 7 or more tournaments to prepare for.

Tournament Calendar for Semester 2:

UCD Beginners – 30th – 31st January
 Inter Varsity League Round 2 – 6th – 7th February
 The Siege of Limerick – 20th -21st February
 Development Inter Varsity – 6th – 7th March
 Women's Inter Varsity – 6th – 7th March
 Open Outdoor Inter Varsity – 27th – 28th March
 Windmill Windup, Amsterdam – 11th – 13th June
 Inter Varsity League Round 2 – A very important weekend in Dublin, where if we finish in the top 2 we

will qualify to compete in the UK student national's competition.

Siege – This is our very own tournament, been running for a couple of years and this is gearing up to be the biggest yet. In association with Cultimate one of the biggest tournament organisers in the U.S we have attracted some of the biggest teams from around Europe and Ireland and we are hoping for it to be the biggest Irish tournament of the year.

Windmill Windup; hosted in Amsterdam, is a great tournament to go on tour and play some high level ultimate against some of the best in Europe. It is also some craic!! So come along and get involved, all are welcome.

The team at Windmill Windup 2009

N.B If you would like to know more about Ultimate Frisbee or join the U.L team visit: <http://ul-ultimate.110mb.com/main.php> (linked through the clubs and socs webpage), or come see us at the clubs and societies fair on Wednesday 3rd February in the Red Raisin canteen.





MUSIC SOC RISING

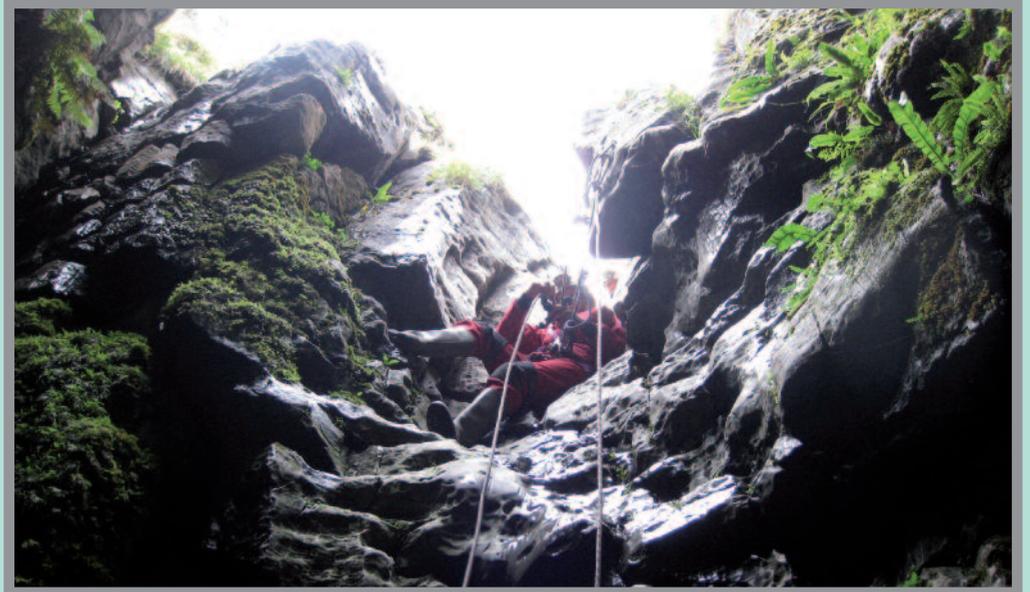
Last semester was pretty much the best semester yet for UL Music Society...and we're crackin' on for semester two!

But first, what have we been up to? Well we've seen a flurry of new UL bands rise up and play some storming sets in Baker's and Stables – trust me if you want to start a band Music Soc is the place to be! We've been also running Open Mic nights in The Stables every Monday, open to everybody to belt out a few tunes on a guitar in front of friends, we've brightened up the odd Wednesday with our sessions in the Courtyard, bringing music to the masses and of course there was the first every Music Soc trip in January, when we brought 20 odd nutcases out to Glasgow for three days and somehow managed to lose not one of them!

This semester is gonna be even better. There'll be another Battle of the Bands running on the 11th of February in The Stables, with Ladydoll headlining – bands are often pretty chronic, but when there's prizes involved, they get good! . Check it out for some quality live music! Another planned gig in Stables will be an Air Band Night: if you can't actually play an instrument, why not pretend for the night? No date set yet, but it promises to be a hilarious night. The Open Mics are still running every Monday in The Stables, so if you have one or two

tunes that you want to belt out...or even just play something cheesy so that bird at the bar thinks you're hot, we want to hear it! If you know Music Soc, you'll know Bakers and don't worry, we'll be hitting that spot a few times this semester! So far just a Metallica Night in April is pencilled in, but we'll be bringing in some quality unsigned bands and running more theme nights over the coming months – Stay tuned! And since we managed not to lose half of our society in Glasgow in January, we're planning on another trip. Something even more epic this time; we're thinking of going continental. Bring a little bit of UL to Europe and see if they can handle us! Suggestions appreciated! As always, there's a fully kitted out music room at our disposal for you to practice by yourself or with your band, and don't forget we also have a few virtuosos offering lessons if you want to learn to play an instrument. We're hoping to expand our ever-growing society, so if you wanna join up at anytime, you can. Want more information about everything Music Soc, just email ulmusicsoc@gmail.com or you can also follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/ulmusicsoc> Hope to see you guys this semester!

Outdoor Pursuits



Welcome back to semester two in UL, Irelands sporting campus. Clubs and societies are the best way to meet people from all over the country and getA to do new fun activities that will help you make your friends for life and the days in UL some of the best of your life too.

Our club is the Outdoor Pursuits Club or OPC to all our friends. We are one of the largest and most active clubs on campus and have been having a very busy year so far with loads of activities and events planned for the semester ahead.

We are not a one trick club but actually offer 5 fun outdoor activities at different times to suit all our members. We offer Hill walking, Climbing, Caving, Mountaineering and Orienteering. And throughout the year beginners and all other levels are more than welcome to join one of the biggest and best clubs on campus.

To give you a brief insight into our club on campus the PESS building is our home where our climbing wall is located. Here is where you can come for three hours every Monday Tuesday and

Thursday from 7pm to 10pm and climb as much as you want and get good information about all things OPC.

We also store all our Caving gear in the brand new UL boathouse which is just a five minute walk from the foundation building. If you join us on any of our great mid-week caving trips to the Burren you will be meeting outside the building at 5.50 on a Wednesday for a fun night of potholing.

In terms of our main activities off campus every weekend we have a trip going on for OPC members. These are often wide and varied (just like our members). They can be Sunday trips to the beautiful mountains of Kerry and the south.(a full day out on the rugged hills for less than €10), or days up in the Burren climbing on the fantastic Clare rock (punctuated with some caving possibilities too). We also have our legendary weekends away two or three days with a bus load of OPC'ers doing what we do best enjoying the craic while out and about in Co Galway and Kerry and beyond.

We have expeditions

abroad every year, we had our traditional winter mountaineering training expedition to Scotland in January and conquered the mighty Ben Nevis. This Easter we have two great trips planned to the UK trad climbing in wales and our Caving training expedition to the Yorkshire dales.

We are one of the most active clubs on and off campus, we have a great time doing what we do and always welcome new members so 'When you have seen the rest join one of the best ULOPC you know you want to'. Its five euro to join our club for students, we offer five activities so it's only a euro an activity, now that's the best euro saver menu I know. As always UL Staff and post-grads are always welcome to join the club too

Keep up to date with OPC activities by visiting www.ulopc.com. Or call down to our home in the Climbing Wall at the PESS building any Monday Tuesday or Thursday from 7 to 10 pm. All levels catered for and all are always welcome. Cillian Burke



Skydive UL Trip to Skydive Empuriabrava

To start off the new year we decided to make a trip to Skydive Empuriabrava, Spain for our experienced members. Skydive Empuriabrava is the biggest dropzone in Europe and has great facilities. Each January we try and bring our licensed skydivers on a training camp.

For the week, our members worked on their formation skydiving skills, while others did freely jumps. We jumped with many skydivers from all over the world, from a King Air and Pilatus Porter. We got loads of footage in the process! We also gained the club record of a 6-way during the trip. It took a few practice runs but we got it eventually!

On Friday most of the members on the trip took part in a Canopy Course with Brian Vacher. Brian is a canopy piloting instructor, and he holds UK and world championships in the sport. During the training

we increased our knowledge and skills in canopy flying. The course consists of classroom training and practical use on hop n pop skydives from 7,000ft. We explored our canopies stall points, rear riser flares, the influences that can help fly the canopy and lots more.

With the weather being so good, all of our members reached their goals on the trip. For the rest of the semester we hope to train up new members, and continue skydiving at Skydive Ireland, 20 minutes away from UL. After exams in May we'll bring them to Gap-Tallard, France; with this trip our members can become licensed skydivers. After this, I hope that there will be more new experienced skydivers to bring to Spain in January of next year!

Contact: info@skydiveul.org
Website: www.skydiveul.org



Train in Spain for Club of the Year

"I see PIZZA!" I shouted into the night.

"Quick! Run! I'll go get everyone!"

I ran, mind dizzy, stomach empty, nerves thrilling with the excitement of finally being here, and hope soaring at the sight of the promising glow of a neon pizza kebabs cerveza at 1:00am in the dark, deserted seaside drag of Javea, Spain.

The post-storm ocean pummeled the beach as my fellow food-hunter rushed to the rental homes to retrieve our twelve other travel-weary, near-starved diving instructors and trainees. I flung open the door, "¿Quiere dinero?" Four men in aprons hanging around the bar stared at me. "Catorce personas..." I gestured back at the door, my secondary school Spanish failing me. Silence. Then one of the men focused

on something behind me and grinned. I turned to see my companions rushing up; eyes over-bright and laughing. It was going to be okay.

Of all the fond memories from our UL Sub Aqua Club week-long dive excursion to Javea, Spain, this past January, the overarching theme is of an incredible sense of camaraderie such as that which we felt that first night. Sitting in two long lines spanning the width of the restaurant, exhausted and exhilarated, we chatted, joked, had the first (of many) speeches, and raised our cervesas to a promising vacation.

This was ULSAC's second trip to Javea, following a wildly successful trip last winter. This year, dicey weather and post-storm silt delayed our diving for the first several days. With

underwater visibility between ½ to 1.5 m. and water temps of around 13°C, our five trainees still managed to get even more training in than last year. However frustrating, their early experience in conditions such as those will prove a major asset down the line, making future diving in the Irish and Scottish waters a cinch!

On this trip, the quality of instruction was unbeatable. We had seven ScotSAC instructors (five UL instructors and Graeme and Amber Forsyth, friends from a Scottish ScotSAC branch) for five trainees and three cross-overs (divers with qualifications PADI earning ScotSAC equivalent qualification). With our ScotSAC friends Rab and Ali Ronaldson, Scottish expats living in Javea, providing local knowledge and air-fills, we

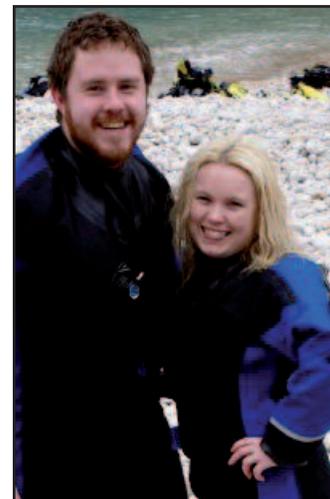
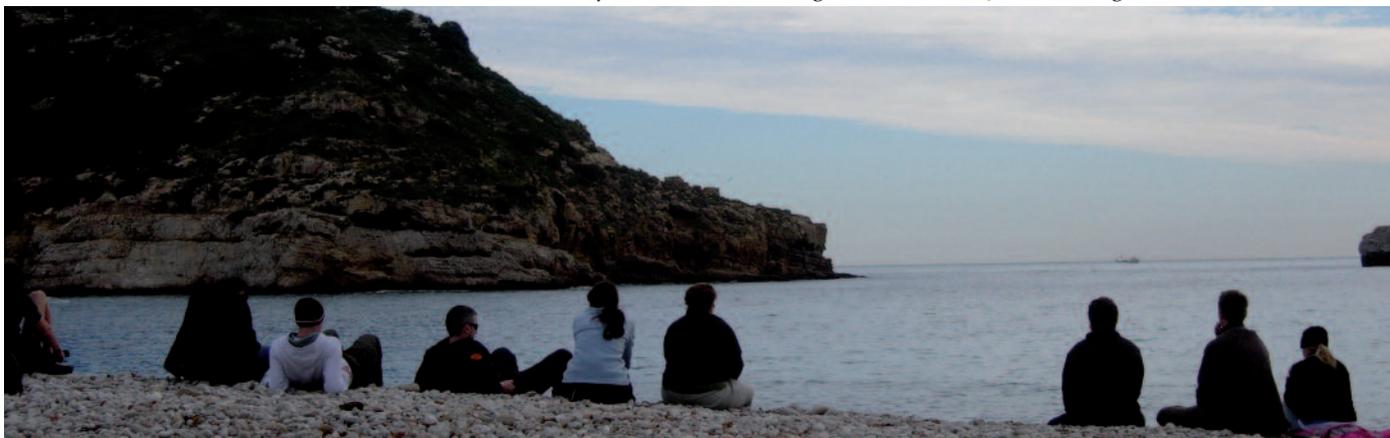
dove the bays of Grendalla and La Baracca.

The organization of this trip was flawless, thanks to our newly-appointed treasurer Adrian Thomas, and with the cheerful cooperation and participation of every member, from cooking and cleaning to trainee pool diving and right-hand driving, the trip was a logistical dream.

Of those who went to Spain, about half of us were new members of ULSAC, and over the course of the week, something of a club family was forged. This was especially apparent when one of our divers had his non-EU passport stolen. The club rallied and everyone eventually made it home safe and sound (if albeit a few days later than expected) Many new friendships were forged and older ones

strengthened, making the social aspect of the trip a resounding success.

With the award of Club of the Year 2008/2009, an upcoming trip to Oban, Scotland this month, another trip to the Red Sea slated for August 2010, the purchase of a custom RHIB (ridged-hull inflatable boat) with enablement help from the Bank of Ulster, more active members than ever before, four newly-qualified instructors, and formal recognition from ScotSAC for exceptional contribution, ULSAC is enjoying unprecedented club success. See you at the Dive Pit!
Leah O'Brien Bernini
leah.obrien.bernini@gmail.com



Trampoline and Gymnastics Club

UNIVERSITY of limerick Trampoline and Gymnastics Club look forward to 2010, as another year of social and competitive success.

After 2008/09 a bit of a competitive disappointment for the UL Tramps with only one bed to train on and the club bigger than ever but a turnaround was to come with the entry of Claudia, our sexy new German, Trampoline. (We've all had a go!)

The 2009 Autumn semester saw ULTC jump back into the medal game. In the newly introduced Munster regional, UL took victory over the UCC Trampoline Club representatives to their disappointment.

The new competition, organised and hosted for the first time ever in UL, was an initiative taken to not only encourage competitiveness but also to introduce newer members to competition in a less daunting environment than the larger competitions and hope that it is going to be a fixture in our calendars for year to come.

The Intervarsity Competition between eight Irish Universities was feared to be a total wash out after the club learned of its severe flooding from a very emotional UCC Captain the Friday morning of the pre-competition training.

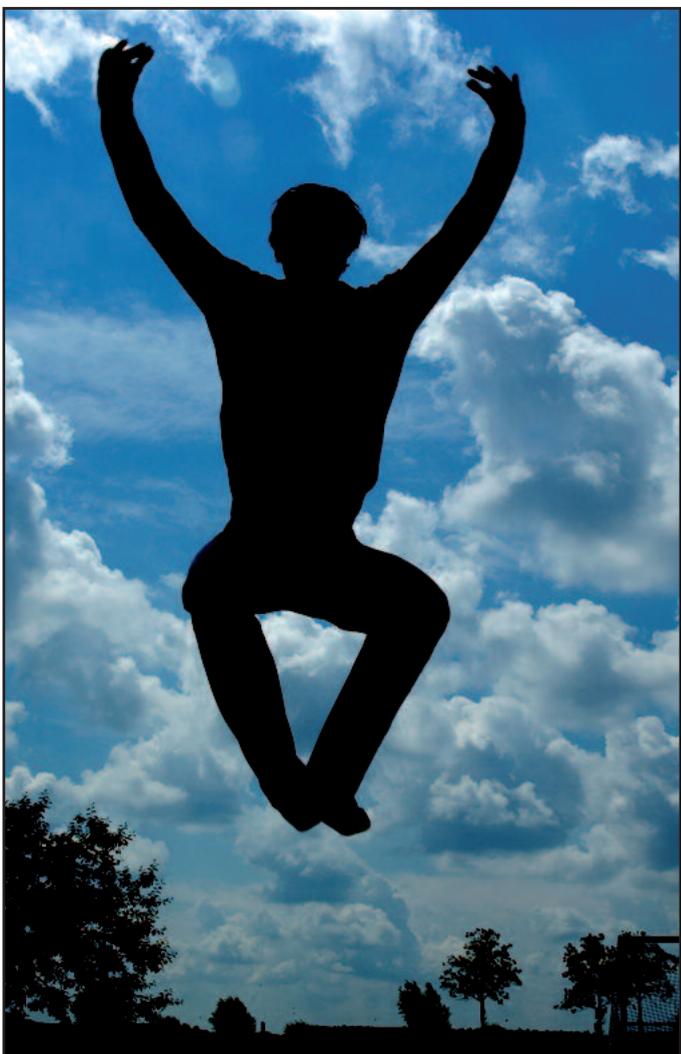
The competition was then moved to Trinity College Dublin where the Limerick team won medals across the demographic.

Just before Christmas, members of the club took part in the South-West Regional Qualifier competition with one member of the club qualifying while the others prepare for the future qualifiers to gain a spot in the Irish Gymnastics (IG) National competition.

Another new competition has been set up by some veterans called the National University Trampoline League (Ireland). The competition is set to increase the standard of Trampolining among university students across Ireland, mirroring the system in the UK. The club are looking forward to and preparing to the regional qualifiers.

The club heads to Scotland in the coming weeks for the largest student trampoline competition in the world, SSTO. We also are preparing for a weekend in Belfast for the Irish student Trampoline Open and hope to maintain our medal success!

Despite the list of competitions above we are above all a social club and provide a very relaxed atmosphere where people meet friends and get fit without even knowing it. All new members are welcome to our training on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the PESS building. Find us on facebook or google our website for more details.



An Outstanding Weekend

by Michael Curtin

The weekend before the Spring Semester started saw UL Archery hit the road again, this time with Galway as the destination. With an Intervarsity on Saturday and the National Barebow Championships on Sunday it was set to be a busy weekend of shooting. A great days shooting was had by all on Saturday. The team finished second overall, a result not seen by the club since 2006! Craig Tyner finished first in Advanced Barebow category, while Fergus Conway brought home the gold in Beginner Barebow. Fergus also set a new personal best on the day with a fantastic score of 447 out of a possible 600. Rory Thornburgh came second in Advanced Male Recurve, and Tom Sheppard finished in third place in the same category.

The National Barebow

Championships held during Sundays shoot was another day of great archery. Craig Tyner again won his category, beating off some stiff competition in the knockout stages, to come home as the National Barebow Male Champion. Fergus Conway also did amazingly well, knocking out the reigning champion before he was knocked out in the next round. This is a huge achievement for someone who only took up archery last October. In the Recurve section of the competition the club did very well also. Our own coach Emmanuel O'Dea finished in first place in Advanced Recurve. Rory Thornburgh came third in the same category. Margaret Carey won silver in Female Recurve. In Junior Male Recurve the club brought home all 3 medals, with

Steffan Ashe coming first, Phil Ryan finishing second and Michael Curtin coming in for third place. Personal bests were being broken all day yet again, with Rory Thornburgh setting a new high of 524 out of 600. Steffan Ashe achieved a feat not accomplished by many by scoring 504, a new Personal Best, after shooting for only 3 months. Michael Curtin also set a new personal best of 461. The UL team cleaned up over the entire weekend and 16 medals came back to Limerick after a fantastic two days of shooting.

Beginner courses will be beginning from the 3rd of February and running until week 6. With three more Intervarsity's to go before the end of the semester, and a number of National shoots, its certain to be a busy semester for the club.



UL Basketball Club

by Spidey and Virginia



The UL basketball club is back in action and would like to welcome all new and present members back for the second half of the season. Our men's and women's teams are back in full training and are looking forward continuing their successful league campaign. Last year our women's team overcame UCC in a thrilling final to capture the league title, while our men's team reached the league final and are looking to go one step further this season. Both teams will also be competing in this year's national tournament, the varsities which will be hosted by NUIG. Our ladies team will be looking to win the varsities for a record 14th time, while our men's team is looking to win the varsities for a phenomenal first time under coach Neil Campbell who is

resuming his position as head coach for a second year. The club is pleased to announce that we had a record number of fresher's turn up for both the men's and women's teams who competed in the Fresher tournament hosted by UL in October. We would like to thank the fresher's dedication for turning up promptly for their training sessions at 7.15am; it was all worth it!! This years club trip saw both the men's and women's teams travel to Kaiserslautern (Germany) where they played a local German team in a highly competitive game, which both teams lost narrowly. The players also got a chance to experience a professional game which was highly entertaining, and afterwards we got the chance to meet the players in the VIP room. Which was only

the tip of the iceberg, UN-real!!! It was also a great opportunity for our newer members to get to know each other on our social outing, the trip proved to be another huge success and we are looking forward to next years adventure abroad already. On behalf of the club we would like to thank everyone who made the trip possible, it was one we certainly will not forget. Over the coming weeks both men and women's teams will have a number of league games which you can keep up to date with via our website www.ulbasketball.skynet.ie. We encourage all our members and fellow students to come and show your support at our games that are held in the UL Sports Arena, which would be greatly appreciated.

€3000 raised by Clubs & Societies for Haiti Earthquake Appeal

Members of Clubs & Societies in Association with Patricia Moriarty of the UL Arts Office recently lent their support to the Haiti Appeal in the aftermath of the recent earthquake. This is motivated not least because in the past we have had UL student Clubs & Society members work with Aids Orphanages and the deprived in Haiti. Current Alumni and member of our Outdoor Pursuits Club, Paul Lowdnes worked there last summer also and our Rowing Club member Sean Duffy has a personal motivation in that a

relative of his is in Haiti too at the present time assisting in the relief. At the time of going to print we have exceeded the €3000.

Thanks to the Clubs & Societies who participated, you are a credit to the campus.

1. Music Society
2. DJ Society
3. Traditional Music Society
4. Anime & Manga Society
5. G.Soc
6. Outdoor Pursuits Club
7. Trampoline Club
8. Tae Kwon Do Club

9. Archery Club
10. Rowing Club
11. Mens Rugby
12. UL Boarders

Our thanks also to the Declan Collins (Mgr) of the Stables Club, Pat O'Neil - UL Grounds Superintendent, Tony Canning, Adam Moursy, Paul Lowdnes and Daniel Reid, Sinead O'Donnell of Jury's Inn for their kind sponsorship of prizes. The money will be donated to Susan Finucane, UL Alumni and Concern representative.



One Year On, UL Anime & Manga Society is Blasting Off Again

We've most certainly come a long way as a society as we approach our first anniversary. In the last semester, our membership has doubled and our events, both weekly and otherwise, have had great success, so to start with, I'd like to thank all our members, promoters, and Clubs and Soc's for helping in our first year to get to where we are now.

Our goal as a society is to introduce people to Japanese media and culture through our events, catering to those new and unfamiliar, as well as existing enthusiasts of this niche interest. Every Tuesday evening in the Kemmy Business School, we screen various Japanese anime movies and TV series, both old and new material for a range of audiences. On Wednesday evenings in the Student Union Building we hold workshops teaching Japanese art styles and drawing to those interested. On these evenings we also open our ever-growing library of manga books and anime DVDs to be borrowed by those looking to sample the material on offer from this genre. Thursday evenings in the SU Building are dedicated to workshops which teach the Japanese language to anyone curious to learn the basics. These weekly events are used also as a way of meeting those with a common interest, or just having fun with friends. As well as our weekly events, we also hold multiple large events throughout the semester. In the last semester these ranged from various on-campus fundraising activities, quizzes and themed evenings, to collaborating with various international media organi-



sations to run film festivals on campus and in cinemas. Our main event this past semester was a weekend trip to Dublin for Eirtakon, DCU's annual anime convention, in November. We brought a group of over thirty members for the trip and the weekend was great, enjoyed by all who went. As well as enjoying the various tournaments, market stalls, costume competitions and all-round laugh the convention had to offer, we also did our own thing in Dublin in general, as well as eating out in the gorgeous Japanese restaurant, Yamamori's. We intend to attend this event this year as well, aside from our other events planned.

So come along if you're already a fan or if you just have a passing curiosity, we're always up for getting new faces and having a good time overall. With four weekly events, multiple large events during the year and a wide range of other shenanigans on offer, there's something for everyone who's interested. Hope to see you there. Gearoid Harrahill, Public Relations Officer, UL Anime and Manga Society
For more info contact ulanimesoc@gmail.com, or visit www.anime.skynet.ie



UL Ladies Rugby set to raise the bar higher than before

Niamh Lonergan and Fiona Reidy.

UL ladies rugby team are looking confident after an impressive start to their League campaign last semester with emphatic wins over DCU and UCC with final scores of 31-0 and 26-5 respectively. The team are busy preparing for the remaining league games which are: away to DCU Wednesday of week 3, at home to arch rivals UCC on Wednesday of week 5 and finally away to NUIG in week 7. The league finals are due to take place on March 31st with UL's sights firmly set on silverware. After UL's success in the league and varsities last year the girls are hungry for victory in both once again.

UL aims to set the standard for college rugby even higher than before this year. The league and varsities have become more competitive in recent years with many close games creating a good spectacle for those few who turn out to watch. UL Ladies rugby team is driven by the natural talent, commitment and pride that the squad has; and with such great recruitment this year the team is looking very strong for their coming games. As always UL Ladies Rugby are keen to mention that new players are always more than welcome to come along and give this challenging but enjoyable sport a go!

Another exciting development is the fact that UL is set to host 2010 CUSAI Women's Rugby Intersvarsity's. The committee has been working very hard organising the varsities. UL plans to host the best ladies rugby varsities yet, with talks off marquees, mini golftournaments, karaoke nights and a banquet. This is truly going to raise the bar for other future hosts and hence raise the level of professionalism and other standards in the tournament and the Ladies Rugby College game in Ireland. There is the prospect of the final of the Intersvarsities being held in the prestigious Thomand Park which would also hugely promote the intersvarsities and women's rugby in general. This really would be a dream come true for UL Ladies Rugby

The girls have also been busy fundraising for the club; the team did a bag packing session in Dunnes Stores recently. The Kilmurray Lodge has also agreed to sponsor the team. This year has been the strongest in years in terms of administration and also numbers. UL Ladies Rugby has increasingly improved in the past few years and is now proud to say that they have the strong structures in place both on and off the pitch for this team to continue winning competitions for years to come as has happened in the past decade.

The team is very excited about the coming months, and would urge everyone interested in Rugby to come and support the Ladies as they aim for their 11th Varsity title in 12 years and their 8th All Ireland League title. Check out ulladiesrugby.com for updates on fixtures and results.



UL Athletics set to impress away from home this semester

By Rory Moloney.

With all of the clubs fine athletes packing their bags and setting off on tour this semester to challenge themselves and their rivals (DCU), this will prove for an exciting semester. Firstly the club set off for Nenagh to compete in the indoor IV championship on the 13th of February. The sprints squad get to strut their stuff off the blocks for the first time this

year it will provide a spectacle for all spectators at the championships. The middle distance squad are also in fighting form with the 800m, 1500m and the 3000m in their sights. The middle distance group will be heading for the People's Republic of Cork to compete in the IV cross-country championships at CIT on the 6th of March. For anyone

unfamiliar with this style of running it is a course that runs through fields (the cows have usually only been removed the morning before!) and everyone gets really mucky and someone usually collapses with fatigue after it, sounds fun right? It actually is, at the finish line everyone is smiling because they are just looking forward to the shower after. UL normally

perform very well at these championships the men's team came second overall last year, this year we want gold. The ladies performed admirably last year and unfortunately for them they were one person short for a team, they would have taken the podium if they had one more body running. This year we have full teams in the men and ladies section, we will have silverware coming back in early March.

types of athletics on display. There will be throwing of all sorts, sprinting, jumping, pole vaulting, running and a bit of walking. It has everything so it is exciting for the spectators and the athletes. Distances range from 100m to 10,000m in the running. Throwing of spears and balls and even a ball and chain will be seen up in the big smoke of Dublin that weekend in April.

As you can see we have a very full card of athletics ahead of us. If anyone wants to join us on these occasions either to compete or as a spectator contact our committee at ulac01@gmail.com we will be glad to answer any questions you may have. The club will also be at the recruitment drive on Wednesday week 2 so come down if you want to join.

In our last championship it is off to Trinity (ooh) to compete in the IV Track & Field meet. As this is the last competition there is a banquet after the second day of the meet this is always a well attended event and it is always a good night. But the competition comes first and it is two days long and is full of excitement with all the



UL Shotokan Karate Club

Welcome to UL Karate Club! This year has seen many exciting events for the club, but none other than our recent trip to Japan. We flew out on the 9th of January for what was to be the trip of a lifetime. We spent 8 days in Tokyo and didn't waste one. The main reason we went was for the Karate and we'll get to that but it's worth mentioning the sights we saw and experiences we had.

We took a guided bus tour around the whole city and it's a pretty big place. There are many traditional Japanese gardens within the concrete jungle that is Tokyo and there are also many shrines and temples to see. We ascended Tokyo Tower and the view from the top observatory is breath-taking. The tour we took also included a visit to the Imperial Palace, home of the Japanese Royal Family. The gardens built by the Emperor for his wife were lovely and the nearby fountains light up at night and cascade with beautiful colours. Then we caught a little archery and made a visit to the Samurai Sword Museum.

We took a trip to Mt. Fuji as well. We took a bus to this small town at the foot of the mountain and it was covered in snow. The local scenery was gorgeous, frozen over ponds, temples, snowy gardens all a little less touristy, more authentic. Then we took a cable car up the side of a large hill which revealed an amazing view of the valley with Mt. Fuji in the background. Here we stripped down and put on our Karate Suits for our first training session of the trip. We trained on the mountain in the snow and took some great photos. The sightseeing and nightlife was brilliant but nothing in comparison to real reason we were in Japan. . . The Karate.

5.00am local time we set off to the Headquarters and home training place of one of the largest Karate Federations in the world. At 6.00am we were out on a run in our Karate suits around Tokyo City. 50 or more of us were out running, the World Karate Champion in the front, his brother in the back shouting instructions in Japanese and keeping the pace. After 40 minutes of running we reach a set of steps and this seemed in true Rocky style to be the last test of our endurance until a triumphant finish to our run but we were wrong, 20 minutes of sprints in the cool crisp morning air were to follow. Mt. Fuji in the background 60 miles from us clearly visible,



inspiring us to keep going and then we jogged 40 minutes back to the Dojo. There we trained with the Kancho (Grandmaster) Kanazawa a 10th Degree Black Belt, the highest ranked living Black Belt in the world. The session lasted 40 more minutes and then one of our members, William English, received a certificate for passing his Black Belt examination, it is a great honour to be presented in the Hombu Dojo (where we trained) and a rare event for a Westerner. Also our instructors received official teaching qualifications as Sensei by Japanese standard. After that and a shower we received an invitation to stay on and celebrate the success of the 1st Karate Session of the year (Kangeiko party), a really big deal in

Japan. We sat around with the Japanese, eating food with chopsticks, chatting and drinking beer. It was an amazing insight into authentic Japanese culture and we were treated like family, like one of them, an experience I'll never forget.

We received priceless tuition from the World Champion and Global Chief Instructor, knowledge which we have brought back to the club and many training techniques we learned in Japan have been incorporated into our training at home. The standard of teaching in our club has really improved as a result and we have greatly enhanced the Ireland-Japan relationship paving the way for future travellers from the club.

