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INSIDE Crisis Centre in Crisis

Jobsearch Goes On . and on ... and on

Limerick Unemployed Centre, 33 Thomas Street.

No. 6. April 1988

HUNDREDS OWED £100'S

Married couples drawing Social Welfare may be losing out on their constitutional entitlements. It seems that a couple who live together and who both draw the dole could be getting between £10 and £12 more than a similar married couple. But the situation may be about to change, and if it does, you should be ready.

Mel Cousins of FLAC in Dublin told Hatch 33 that "as many as 8,000 couples could be affected by this situation. But, following the recent Hyland case in the High Court, it was ruled unconstitutional for the State to discriminate in this way against married people. The Government are currently appealing the decision, and if their appeal fails, it is possible that people who have placed their cases before the Department of Social Welfare will get their new payments back dated. That could amount to over £500, depending on how long the appeal drags on".

Mr. Cousins said that he was concerned that many couples are not fully aware of their rights following the Hyland case and the more recent case of Healy versus the Eastern Health Board, which affects couples in receipt of disability benefit. Those immediately affected are married couples living together where both spouses are in receipt of, or entitled to, a social welfare payment.

Anyone seeking information about this situation can call in to the Centre for the Unemployed in Thomas Street and talk to our Welfare Advisors. Alternatively, Mel Cousins of FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres) in 49, South William Street, Dublin 2 will answer any letters. Phone 01-794239.

WE WILL LISTEN TO YOU

In distress? Lonely? Despairing? Suicidal? Just like to take to someone? PHONE LIMERICK (061) 42111

(day or night) Call 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. or write in confidence to: PAT BROWNE, 25 UPPER CECIL STREET, LIMERICK

THE SAMARITANS 25 UPPER CECIL STREET, LIMERICK

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WRITE FOR YOUR FIGHTS

Are you annoyed, angry, want to put the boot into a Government Department? Then write a letter to "Hatch 33", and we will publish it in our letters column. We would like to hear your honest opinions about "Hatch 33", and reactions to our articles. If you feel you can contribute any material (articles, photographs etc.) to "Hatch 33" then drop in and have a chat with us.

Medical Cards

Anyone aged 16 or over can apply for a Medical Card in his or her own right. The cards are issued to people who, in the opin ion of the Chief Executive Officer of the Health Board are "unable without undue hardship to afford general practitioner services for themselves and their dependents."

If your income is below the following guidelines, you are probably entitled to a Medical Card. These are the newest

figures, issued in January.

CATEGORY	INCOME LIMITS		
	Aged Under 66	66-79	£ per week) Over 80
Single Person (living alone)	70.50	76.00	79.50
Single person (living with family)	60.50	65.50	68.50
Married Couple	101.50	112.50	118.50

Exceptions to the above guidelines are disabled people or those with high medical expenses. Application forms are available from Health Centres or the Mid-Western Health Board, 33 Catherine Street. Forms are also available at the Unemployed Centre, 33 Thomas Street.

If you need any advice, or have any queries, or if you want help filling in the form, call in to the Social Welfare Advisors at the

Centre.

CHANGES IN YOUR CENTRE

Next time you drop in to the centre, you might notice some changes. We have rearranged our offices so as to improve our ability to cope with the needs of the public.

The canteen is now in the small room on the first floor. Tea and coffee are still served, along with buns and doughnuts, but lunches are no longer being served. Our administration, education, fund raising and press officers are now in the old canteen. The Social Welfare Advisors are on the second floor, along with your friendly freesheet, Hatch 33, and our Sports and Recreation officers.

Hope you like the new look centre. After all, we did it for you.

A CHALLENGE ...

The Limerick Unemployed Centre throws down the gauntlet, challenging a team from the Social Welfare Office as part of a Table Quiz to be held on Friday May 13th. No holds barred. Entry fee is £3 per head or £12 for a team of four. Anyone interested should contact Gus Quinn or John Ryan at the Unemployed Centre. Proceeds will go towards funding the Centre.

TAKE NOTE

Signed articles in 'Hatch 33' represent the views of the writers and may not represent the views of the Limerick Unemployed Centre.

SAMARITANS IN NEED

The Samaritans, whose recent annual report suggests that Government policies could be the reason for increased suicides, are having a church gate collection on the 7th and 8th of May. They are extremely short of funds and if at all possible you should try to give them some support.



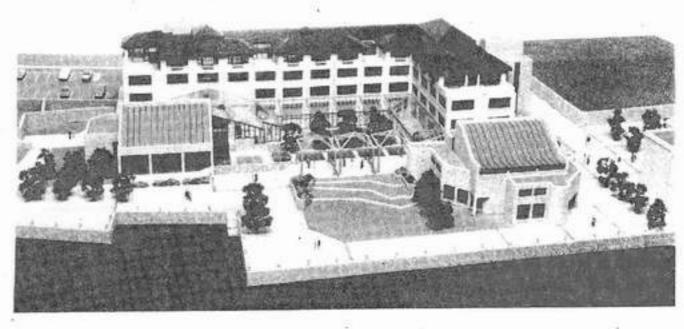
200 Jobs on the Way?

The **Urban Renewal Development Plan** is finally under way. It began with the demolition of the old debtor's prison, although some might say that that was premature, given the state of the economy.

This development has been on the cards for a long time now, along with the associated jobs. As many as 500 jobs were promised last year. That has dropped to a "more realistic" 200 jobs this year, comprised of 100 jobs in construction and a further 80 to 100 jobs in off-site operations.

A new Limerick Civic Centre is one of the principal features of the proposed development. It will be sited on Merchant's Quay and so will be adjacent to both King John's Castle and the newly refurbished Potato Market, as well as overlooking the Shannon. Large sections of the Centre will be pedestrianised, and it will eventually accommodate the Administration Headquarters of Limerick Corporation, as well as the Civic Museum and Court facilities. the designers hope it will have a major impact on the revival of the city in that area, and there's no denying a revival is badly needed.

Work on the £6m project should be starting on site by the end of May, and it's scheduled to be completed by the end of next year. A question that springs to mind is where is the skilled labour going to come from? The past few years have seen a steady exodus from this city of our carpenters, bricklayers, and skilled workers. Lets hope there are enough to fill the "200" promised jobs.



Model of the new Limerick Civil Centre.

Jim Kemmy, T.D., told Hatch 33 that he considered that mistakes had been made in the development of Limerick in the past decade. "In retrospect, it's easy to see our mistake. We built from the outside in, and we should have built from the inside out. The centre of the city has been steadily dying as a community in the past few years. It's nearly lifeless at this stage. Our planning was for houses, not for community life and as a result, both the inner city and the outlying estates are not thriving as they should. It's time an effort was made to rectify the situation".

by Ann Kenny

The People's Park

Easter has come and gone, and, with a bit of luck, we're facing into the fine weather. Fine weather means that the kids will be out and about, so a timely warning may be in order. If you're taking the family to the People's Park it may not be a very good idea to take your eyes off the toddlers and younger children. The playground facilities there fall far short of the required standards in safety terms. The surface is dangerously hard on the head of a falling child, and the concrete tunnel tends to be littered with broken glass. So be careful, and enjoy the scenery there.

Good News for Artists

There was good news this month for Unemployed Artists when Dr. Michael Woods, the Minister for Social Welfare announced a new deal for them. From now on artists will be classified as just that for unemployment assistance purposes whereas in the past they were often classified as 'Itinerant Unskilled Labour'.

Practically, this should mean that the 50 artists signing on in Limerick will no longer be in any danger of being directed towards non-artistic jobs, under the threat of a six week disqualification if they refuse to take them up.

Another initiative being undertaken is to provide special SES schemes for artists. However perhaps the best news is that from the end of April, Artists and other unemployed people will be able to take up a part time job while still receiving an allowance from the Social Welfare (£25 Unmarried, £45 married) Enquire at the dole office for details.

If anything is happening in your area that you wish to publicise, please write in.

EXHIBITION SUCCESS

The second annual Drawing On The Dole exhibition opened at the 10 + Allsorts gallery on the 24th March. Opened by Tom O'Donnell MEP the exhibition was a great success. Following a week at the gallery, the exhibition then moved on to tour Kileely, Moyross and Southill areas where it went down very well. Several of the paintings and photographs were sold at the exhibition which will be held again next year.

FREE CLASSES

Are you interested in studying German? We still have places available in our classes for beginners. The classes are held on Mondays between 7.30 and 9.00pm.

We also offer classes in European Studies and Basic Maths. Our maths teacher will deal with any problems you may have, or cover areas of special interest to students. Finally, we have English courses. We cover Basic English on Wednesday between 10.30am and 12.15. Then on Friday at the same time we hold a class in Advanced English which is suitable for those familiar with the basics and interested in learning more.

For more information, contact Aileen or Gabrielle at the Centre, or phone 46056.



BARRINGTONS HOSPITAL R.I.P.

Barrington's Hospital has closed it's doors. There is talk of a group of consultants buying and reopening it as a private hospital, but even if they do, the bad smell generated in Limerick by the Governments callous disregard for the wishes of the people and for democratic process will

linger for a very long time.

Limerick is a city that can ill afford to lose any hospital. A visit to the casualty department in the Regional is a nightmare of waiting for any one with a "minor" problem, and sometimes even for the not-so-minor problems. A more sane approach to the Health Services is needed, an approach that will cut the queues in hospitals and doctor's waiting rooms, and improve the quality of treatment being given. The fault is not with the doctors an nurses, but with the insane and inhuman book balancing efforts of beaurocrats who can afford private and proper medical care and are out of touch with the realities of the public health service.

Crisis Centre in Crisis

Limerick's Rape Crisis Centre is being shortchanged by the government. The centre, which serves a vital and increasing need in the Mid-Western area, was allocated a mere £500 this year. Their submitted estimate of funds needed for the coming year was £17,000, and that was their minimum estimate. This means that, if their service is to be maintained at it's current standard, the Centre will have to raise the remaining £16,500 themselves.

Trish Long, outgoing co-ordinator of the centre, said that the allocation was no big surprise. "When we started up in June 1985, we got £5,000, and since then we have received between four and five hundred a year. Cork is in the same boat—they also got £500. Galway and Dublin were luckier, they got eight and ten thousand pounds respectively. I don't begrudge them that, because they will need every penny and a lot more. But I can't understand why we diden't receive a similar amount. Our centre is longer established than Galway and we cover a greater area. Some of our counsellors have to travel around North Kerry. Surely it would have made more sense if they had only £19,00 for the government to split it four ways equally, instead of leaving us and Cork in the lurch to such an extent".

The service provided by the centre is not a luxury to be casually cut. Their help and counselling are absolutely essential to a great many people. In their first year of official operation, they dealt with 77 cases. Many of those cases were the victims of multiple assaults, so that they actually dealt with over 160 assaults in that year. In the months from July 1987 to February 1988, they gave counselling to 82 individuals, representing over 190 cases of sexual assault.

The counsellors, who freely give of their time, cope with the problems of rape, incest, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and harassment on a daily basis. The only payment they receive is travelling expenses when a case is at a distance from the centr, e as they very often are. The funds are needed by the centre to pay rent, electricity and phone bills, fuel bills, and the ages of at least one full time worker.

Taking over from Trish Long are Dorothy Morrissey and Helen Johnston, who will be Co-Administrators of the centre on a job-sharing basis. Helen told us that they are trying to organise a group of voluntary fund raisers to be known as Friends Of The Rape Crisis Centre, who will undertake the task of raising the funds for the centre. Anyone interested should contact Dorothy or Helen at 061-311511. All help is welcome.

JOBSEARCH - WHY IS IT STILL WITH US?

Thomas Thompson's Story

Some of you might think that Jobsearch has ended. It hasn't. Like a bad smell, you have just got used to it. But the scandal continues. Thomas Thompson's story is a case in point.



STOP PRESS: A Solicitor has taken on Thomas Thompson's case free of charge. The case is now being put together and should soon see the courts.

The Age of Equality???

The Limerick Unemployed Centre is very concerned that widowers and single parent men are still receiving unfair treatment. Even though the E.E.C. have issued a Social Welfare Quality directive, men on their own with families are still not treated on an equal basis with women in similar situations.

In a statement to the centre, Jimmy Prior, widowed since 1985, said that he must "go to the Labour Exchange and sign on as available for work". Then, and only then, would he be paid £47.10 Unemployment Assistance. "It is totally unacceptable that I am only getting the basic dole for an adult with one child dependent, whereas a widow with one child on a non-contributory pension receives £58.70, and an unmarried mother with one child receives £57.80".

"The so-called equality directive did absolutely nothing to bring my payments up to the same level as those for lone-parent women. It is absolutely crazy that lone-parent men are treated so badly by the state, when there is so much talk about equal treatment for women and men".

"Surely it can't be that hard for the government to bring into line the payments made to lone-parents, so that the system treats all people equally?"

Gingerbread, the association for lone-parents, which does treat men and women equally, meets every Thursday night at the Centre, 33 Thomas St., at 8.30 p.m. All are welcome.

Thomas Thompson, 50, of O'Malley Park, was disqualified twice from receiving his payments of Social Welfare on the grounds that he was notactively seeking employment. He appealed the decision, and gave evidence in the form of letters which proved that he hade been seeking employment. His appeal was rejected. To add insult to injury, he was called for a Jobsearch interview. He refused to attend, as he rightly felt that "the course would be of very little use to me. And if I did attend, the cost of bus fares and other expenses would have left me £14.00 worse off every week".

Predictably, he was disqualified for a third time. He decided to do something about it. He went to a solicitor with the intention of taking the case to court. After a nine week wait, the solicitor told him he had no case.

Thomas has not given up. He is now looking for another solicitor and is still very angry about the whole affair. "This country is like a dictatorship for the unemployed. Surely it's wrong to force a man to take a course that will do him no good, lose money for him and his family, and threaten him with total disallowance from his weekly payments".

Centres from all over the country travelled to Dublin last month to picket the Jobsearch Offices. Representatives from our Centre and from the Limerick branch of the National Organisation of the Unemployed were there, but the picketers got little satisfaction. No one from the offices bothered to talk to them, which says something for their attitude to the unemployed.

Reg Turner of the Limerick INOU said "Jobsearch is just another humiliation added to the other humiliations of life on the dole. In many ways it is the worst evil so far pushed on the backs of those who depend on social welfare to survive. We will not be happy until it is discontinued, or at least fundamentally changed. As it stands, it is totally unacceptable".

Jobsearch will not be discontinued or revised unless the protests continue. Thomas Thompson is not an isolated case, and he should not have to fight alone. The pickets and petitions and protests have to continue until someone takes notice.



CAN WE HELP YOU? YOU CAN HELP US

Limerick Unemployed Association have met with the Department of Social Welfare in Dublin to look at the problem of changes in welfare payment days. You can help us by calling in to the Centre for the Unemployed and letting us know how the changes are affecting you. Is your family suffering because of them? Tell us about it.

The Unemployed Association meet on the first Tuesday of every month in the centre at 3.45 p.m. Ask for Reg Turner, Larry Duggan or John Collins. You can help change things.

A Rational Move ...

"In line with our policy of rationalisation of the health service and increased economies, the government this year are bunching a campaign to extend their community care progmme. We now intend to take minor surgical procedure out the hospital and back into the home. to this end, we are issuing to each home in the country a complete set of tools, left over from the now defunct building industry. We will supply each family with saw, hammer, chisel, screw drivers, nails, screws, pins and needles, and five miles of thread, along with the newly issued government handbook "Basic Transplants and Amputations Made Simple". We anticipate that this bold and innovative action on our part should save the exchequer eight point five million in the first year of it's operation. Naturally, those who can afford to pay for private surgical treatment will be permitted to continue doing so, and will in fact be offered tax relief on their operations so as to encourage their use of the medical profession, who would otherwise be in danger of redundancy".

Is It True That

... Limerick's new bridge might be called Barrington's Bridge? Surely that will guarantee it's closure in the first six months.

... Social Welfare memos are written on the tanned hides off the backs of people skinned by the system?

On the topic of naming the new bridge, it seems to us at the Hatch that there's an obvious solution. Venice has it's Bridge of Sighs. Why can't Limerick have the Bridge of Howls or the Bridge of Moans? In view of the noise it sets up in the slightest breeze, and given the state of Limerick anyway, it seems an appropriate solution to a very tense and worrying question.

The Hatchet Man

WRITE FOR YOUR FIGHTS OUR LETTERS COLUMN

UNDER 25s IN LIMBO

The treatment of the young people in this country is growing steadily more cynical. If you are aged between 16 and 25, you are living in a sort of no-man's-land, a strange and uncared for territory. I've been looking at this recently, and a few items stand out.

- Teamwork schemes are employment schemes for the 16 to 25's.
 Unlike the Social Employment Schemes, workers on Teamwork work a 35 hour week, nearly a full industrial week, but they receive as little as £49 per week after tax.
- Until January 1984, over 16's were considered adults with regard to the health services. this meant that all students qualified for medical cards, as they were assessed on their own and not their parents income. Changes introduced in January 1984 curtailed the entitlements of dependants aged 16 to 25. The regulation in question does not define dependants, and no guidelines have been issued to the health boards on the interpretation of 'dependants', so it is left to the individual Health Boards. This means that there will be variations between regions in terms of treatment of the question.
- We still have the problem of high cost motor insurance for the under 25's. What is so magical about being 25. Does an irresponsible lout suddenly become a keen attentive driver on his 25th birthday? Surely each individual should be considered on his or her merits.

Seán No-Dough

Are you shy? Nervous about meeting people?

A Personal Development course will commence shortly. If you are interested, contact the Education Officers at The Unemployed Centre.

ALL DRESSED UP AND NOWHERE TO GO?

With the closure of the Savoy Complex, Limerick's music lovers are currently in a state of Limbo. However, despite the fact that one of the finest music venues in the country has been taken from us, Hatch 33 has found that all has not been lost. We investigated some of the alternatives and here's what we found:

THE PARKWAY

Many of the gigs that took place in the Pitz have been moved to Friday nights in the Parkway. Most of the top local bands have played there so far as well as bands from around the country like Cypress Mine! and Dancing Back To Scratch. Admission is £4 and, to be honest, I've seen worse venues. However it's far from perfect especially from a technical point of view, with the

sound leaving something to be desired. The main problem with the venue, though, is it's inconvenience. It's a good two miles from the city centre and thus unsuitable as a main local venue. That said, it is a pleasant enough place for a gig and don't overlook it if you're twiddling your thumbs on a Friday night.



THE GRANARY

The Granary provides live music on several nights of the week, free of charge. As such it's a very attractive venue, although you may not always find the offerings to your taste. Sunday is the best day with the music getting under way with a jazz session at 12.30 p.m. Going on until 2, the jazz session is a fine way of livening up an otherwise dreary Sabbath in Confraternity city. Later in the day, from 4.30 'til 7, a country session gets into swing. Yessir, if you're a C + W sonofabitch, who likes listening to songs 'bout trains and coyotes, there ain't nothing for it but to mosey along and say howdy to the **Durty Dogs** and friends on Sunday afternoon. **Mick McCarthy** completes Sundays line up with everything from pop to folk beginning at 8 p.m.

Monday nights offer the dubious delights of Divine Dickie's comedy singalong while on Tuesday and Wednesday the popular pop/rock band Eclipse take the stage. Graduates from the "guitar-as-phallic symbol" school of Rock 'n Roll, Eclipse are unlikely to shatter the foundations of modern music but there are worse ways of dispelling those midweek blues. Thursday nights are more or less floating with various people performing while Fridays and Saturdays are usually given over to Disco's.



THE CARTWHEEL

The Highway Restaurant, just off William Street should, by the time you read this, have been transformed into a music venue. They plan to hold gigs on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights with prices ranging from £3 to £5. Some undercover work by your intrepid investigator has revealed that the Cartwheel may well turn out to be a fine venue. The owners are

hoping to attract many of the patrons from the Pitz and we wish them well as the city badly needs a good mid-sized venue in the centre of town. The bands they hope to put on include the usual local names like **Tuesday Blue** and **Touchndance** and they also hope to go outside of Limerick in an attempt to attract some of the big name acts. The Cartwheel should be open by the end of April.

AND THE REST....

There are other establishments in town that occasionally offer live music. The Meelick bar has regular Sunday Morning jazz sessions while the O'Malleys currently have a Sunday night residency in The Brazen Head (there are rumours however that they will move to the Cartwheel). Costelloe's Tavern in Dominic Street occasionally has some live gigs as well as decent enough weekly Disco's. On the Disco front, you may as well stay at home and listen to your records as Tropics, Pharaohs, The Basement, Poldarks and the rest are all unspeakably bad. On this optimistic note I'll sign off. Yours as ever....

Kevin Barry.

THE BELLTABLE ARTS CENTRE,

 O'Connell Street, Limerick. Phone: (061) 319866

Forthcoming Attractions

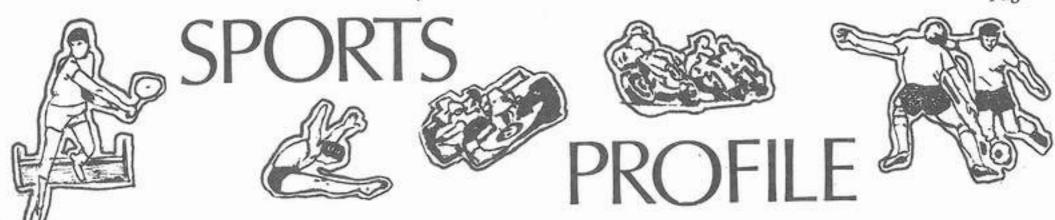
2nd-7th May: Yew Theatre Company present "Joyriders".
12th-14th May: Le Groupe – "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To the Forum".

16th-21st May: Actor's Company, Dublin, with "Lady Chatterly's Lover".

In the Gallery - Artspace from Galway.

Special rates for the unemployed.

Call or telephone the Belltable for details of the above.



Mr. Ireland is a Limerickman.

Amr. Ireland at the recent national Body Building championships held in the Mansion house in Dublin. Richard Casey, 23, represented the Southill gym in the competition on the 27th of March and walked away with the prestigious title and the millenium trophy. There were representatives from all over the country in the contest, and he was up against eight senior finalists in his class. He will now be going forward to represent Ireland in the European Championships later this year, and he hopes to do well there.

Richard had some difficulty finding a suitable gym for his training as he considers himself a 'serious' bodybuilder, while the health studios in the city cater more for the cosmetic or general fitness kind of training. He tried three gyms in the city and found them unable to cope with his requirements, until he finally settled with the **Southill Gym** which was ideal.

Training for the competition takes a good deal of dedication and will-power, as he puts in two sessions daily at the gym of two and a half hours each, as well as maintaining a fixed diet. "Diet and dedication are the most important elements in bodybuilding," he says.

Although he had no coach, Richard would like to thank Mark Murphy for his support in his training. He also feels he owes a lot to his mother, Mrs. Mary Casey, who helped him with his diet and backed him up all the way. Finally, he wants to thank all those, family and friends, who helped and supported him.

As for the future, Richard says "I hope to emigrate in the next few months to London, where I want to continue training with some people I know. Constant improvement is my main aim and I hope eventually to be European Champion. I want to promote the sport any way I can, and help and advise young people coming into it. I found it very hard to get advice myself when I was starting out, and I'd like to pass on my accumulated experience, so that some other beginner won't waste a year making the same mistakes I did."

Also representing Limerick in the Dublin competition was Richard Horan. He was competing in the Junior Class and came second for the third consecutive year.

Identity Card

Do you want to get into soccer and rugby matches at reduced prices? You can if you get an Identity Card from the Limerick Unemployment Centre. The I.D. card also entitles unemployed people to discount in many local shops and cheap rates for swimming pools, gyms, etc. The card will cost 30p initially and 15p for renewal. So if you're unemployed, and want to save money, drop into 33, Thomas Street, and ask for our Identity Card.

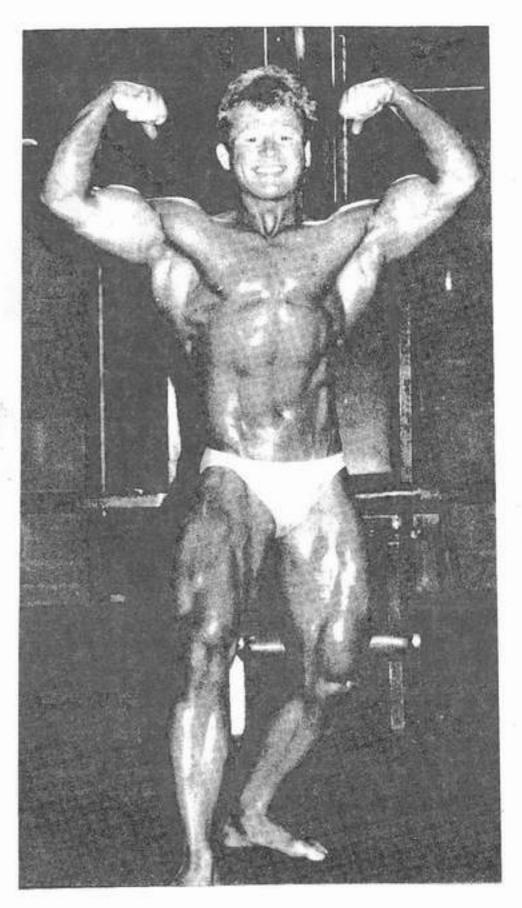
JOGGERS TAKE NOTE

If you are into jogging, you might like to remember the following dates:

Milford Hospice Fun Run – 10 Kilometers on Saturday May 21st.

Limerick City Cospoir –10 Kilometer run on Saturday May 28th.

There is also a fun run every Wednesday night at the Meelick Country Club at 7.30p.m. – 5 miles for men and 3 miles for women.



FLAGS FOR FUNDS

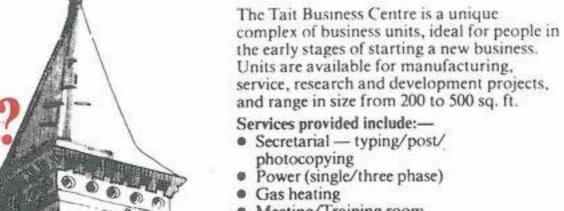
The Limerick Centre for the Unemployed will be running a flag day on Friday, May 6th. The purpose of the day is to raise funds to subsidise the activities of the centre, which are vital to so many people. The centre provides welfare advice, classes on a wide range of subjects ranging from basic literacy through return to study to German and Art classes, sports and recreation facilities, a forum for the unemployed, and publishes Hatch 33. So, if you love us, give us your spare change. We know money is tight, but we can make your pennies work like pounds.

WANT TO PLAY IN A 5-A-SIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE? LIKE TO TAKE CLASSES IN SELF DEFENCE? NEED INFORMATION ON SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN YOUR AREA?

Contact Richard or Tom on our sports and recreation desk, Phone 46056. Or just drop in.

Going into business?

Look at what THE TAIT BUSINESS CENTRE offers!



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TYPE OF BUSINESSES WELCOME Applications are invited from people wishing to start small scale manufacturing, design, high-tech service and consultancy projects. Why not discuss your project with: The Manager,

The Tait Business Centre, Dominic Street, Limerick, Tel: (061) 49477/49684.

I.T.G.W.U. IN THE FRONTLINE OF THE FIGHT FOR JOBS AND FAIR PAY

NEED ADVICE



YOUR LIMERICK REPRESENTATIVES ARE: LIMERICK NO. I Sean Buckley, PH: 315090 Hotels, Catering, Restaurants, Fast Foods, Cleaning, Security, etc-LIMERICK NO. 2 Tony Nolan, PH: 317289

Clerical & Industrial.

LIMERICK NO. 3 Tony Walshe, PH: 317431

Limerick County Branch covering all aspects of Trade Union organisation.

91, O'CONNELL STREET

ADAPT

Adapt House

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ROSBRIEN (off Edward Street) PHONE (061) 42354.



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