



LIMERICK CENTRE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

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AATCH 33
 FREE • FREE • FREE

No. 9, September 1988.

LONDON BOUND YOUTH IN DOLE LIMBO

16-18 Year Olds At Risk In Emigration Wave

The Social Welfare system is driving teenagers out of Ireland. Because under 18s are not entitled to claim in this country, many of them have taken the boat to London in a bid to relieve their personal and family financial pressures. But, under new legislation in England, they face a much tougher and more traumatic experience than they might expect. The advisors in the **Limerick Centre for the Unemployed** warn that it is no longer possible to draw welfare immediately on arrival in London, and say that you should have **at least £500** in your pocket before you consider emigrating there.

This follows the submission of an appeal from the **Emigrant Advice** offices in Dublin to the Minister for Social Welfare to consider paying some form of allowance to school leavers aged between 16 and 18. In their appeal, they say that in 1987, three London centres reported a total of 850 under 18s arrived in the city. **Centrepoint**, a night shelter for young people in London, dealt with nearly 500 young Irish people last year, half of them 17 years old or less.

"The Irish Government must recognise the unprecedented scale of emigration currently taking place and, furthermore, must allocate the issue of emigration a political priority in accordance with the scale of the problem". That was the main statement in a report on emigration issued jointly by Tide and the Action Group for Irish Youth in London.

Councillor Frank Prendergast described the current situation as "unprecedented". He said that he would fully support any call for payments to under 18s. He described it as the duty of the state to provide for it's young people, and said that they should not be forced to emigrate for want of a basic allowance.

He said *"in the village of Doon alone, almost 100 aged*

under 20 have gone already. The same applies to other towns in this area. A train pulled into Kilmallock recently and 20 youngsters left on it for the boat. This is a massive haemorrhage in a relatively under-populated area, and it is representative of the situation nationwide. It shouldn't be allowed to continue without some sort of positive response. We must try to retain the social infrastructure of the country if we hope to survive as a nation, and we can't do that if we continue to lose our brightest and best".

"The people we are losing represent a massive investment by the state in terms of education, and are our resource people. In a recent class of Dentists in UCC, there were 22 graduates and 20 of them are now gone from the country. This is absolutely crazy".

INSIDE

Michael Woods Visits Centre



ALSO Education Supplement
Welfare Advice
Life in London

Photo.: Kevin Wallace

WE WILL LISTEN TO YOU

In distress? Lonely? Despairing? Suicidal?
Just like to talk 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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Life in London

London is the main destination for most of those leaving this country. Our advisors deal regularly with enquiries about the situation there, so here are some of the facts of life in the big city, and in England generally.

First of all, employment there is not as good as it used to be. It has been good for the past 7 or 8 years, but the impression received is that a slide is starting. The jobs are there, but, in London, the problem of accommodation can make them hard to find. Make sure you have at least £500 if you are travelling. You'll need it to put a month's deposit on your accommodation, possibly to pay an agent's fee if you get an agency to find you a base, and to tide you over until you find work. Our advisors can supply you with a list of addresses, employment agencies, hostels, and the address of the Irish Embassy. Also, we can advise you on the Health system and other services.

Employment-wise, the North of England is a bad bet. If you are going there or anywhere, make sure you have contacts, even if you're not travelling alone.

The dole situation there is currently as follows. You don't get paid for the first two weeks. You are paid in arrears, not in advance. A priority person in a priority class arriving into the exchange for the first time might hopefully get an emergency payment to tide over those first two weeks. If you are aged between 16 and 20, you must sign on for a Youth Training Scheme (YTS), which is similar to an AnCO course, but not as well paid. Dole rates are:

- ... aged between 16 to 17, you get £19.40 a week
- ... single and aged 18 to 24, you get £26.05 a week
- ... married couple or living together gets £51.45 for both per week.
- ... and a person aged over 25 will receive £33.40 per week.

Accommodation in London will cost £80 per week at a minimum, according to our information, and that means a month's rent in advance will cost £320. After that, you have to cover food, travel, and other necessities.

Kilburn, Peckham and Camden Town are the main Irish centres in London. Outside of London, the Eurotunnel is the other main destination for those seeking work abroad. There again, accommodation can be a big problem, as it's not an urban area, and the local Bed and Breakfasts can charge what they want.

The message is, if you are travelling, the grass might be a little greener but it's harder to find most of the time. Think twice, and make sure you're ready for it.

THE SAMARITANS WANT YOU

The hard-working Samaritans are badly in need of new volunteers. If you're interested, contact them at 42111. A weekend training course will be given. It could be well worth your while as The Samaritans do great work for little reward, and provide a vital lifeline for a great many people.

RENT ALLOWANCE - HOW IS IT ASSESSED?

You may be entitled to a rent allowance. If you want to check it out, the following is an example of how you will be assessed.

A married couple with no children would be entitled to a supplementary allowance of £63.00, *if both were unemployed*. Suppose they have an income of £70, and are paying £20 rent. To assess their rent allowance, you first subtract the Supplementary Welfare Allowance payable to them from their actual Earnings.

Earnings	£70.00
less S.W.A.	£63.00

£06.80

which is the "means deductible from rent".

The first £3.10 of rent is payable by the tenant before an allowance is paid. So this is added to the £6.80 giving a total of £9.90 which is payable by the tenant. Subtract that from the total rent and you have the **rent allowance**.

Rent	£20.00
Tenant's Share	£09.90

Rent Allowance £10.10

Tenant Purchase Scheme - Why Are You Waiting?

If you are a tenant in a corporation estate, and you applied for the tenant purchase scheme, you may be wondering what's happening. We contacted the housing department, and they tell us that over 1,000 applications have been received to date, and they are currently being processed. You should get a response by late September. If you have any enquiries in the meantime, call in to their offices, and they'll help as best they can.

Did You Know That.....

If you are an unmarried mother, and you become insurably employed or receive an occupational pension, you do not have to pay your share of the PRSI contribution or Youth Employment Levy from the date your allowance is awarded. Details of the award should be given to whoever pays your salary or pension.

The Fuel Scheme will be starting from the 17th of October. The Dept. of Social Welfare tell us that changes have been made in its administration this year and that it has been rationalised. This may alter your eligibility to claim, but details of the new system will not be available until the 16th of September. Any enquiries should be made either at the dole offices or the Mid-Western Health Board clinics.

Or, for information on any of the above, call in to the **Limerick Centre for the Unemployed**, 33 Thomas Street, Limerick, and talk to our advisors. Phone 46056.

TAKE NOTE

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

ANOTHER WINTER OF DISCONTENT

The Wintertime tends to be the most difficult time of the year for the people on Social Welfare. In addition to your usual year-round expenses you are faced with the extra burden of fuel bills, ever-mounting education costs and, of course, that economic nightmare for dole-claimers that is Christmas time. **HATCH 33** spoke to several people outside the Labour Exchange about their feeling about spending the approaching winter signing on. They do not paint a pretty picture.

Anne, from Pineview told us "the Winter is the worst. The cost of the ESB is up because of the extra lighting and heating, there's the price of coal which you'd go through two bags in a week easily, there's new shoes and clothes for the weather, and there's Christmas. You're supposed to enjoy Christmas but I really hate to think about it. It leaves us broke. Every year we have to spend more."

Michael, 48, living in Southill, said "I've five kids. They're all going to school, and the oldest two are in secondary. The cost of the books really hits us every year. There should be some sort of subsidy or grant for people on the dole sending kids through school. I spent £5.00 on one book which I bought second-hand for one of my lads. And that's only for starters. There's the clothes, and shoes. And there's always money for something in school. It's humiliating sometimes."

"Christmas breaks my heart," says Helen from Garryowen. "We've only the one child at the moment. He's five years old, and every Christmas it's getting more expensive. Between the food and drink and presents and all the rest, you try to enjoy it because you're supposed to, but all the time at the back of your mind you're thinking what it'll cost. I think business has really killed Christmas for people like me."

No Surprises when Woods came down for the Day

Dr. Michael Woods, Minister for Social Welfare, visited the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed on September the 7th. Although his visit was fairly brief, Hatch 33 managed to get a few words with him and he clarified a few issues for us. Probably one of the most important items for many people will be the news that the recent rumours about taxation of Disability Benefit may not be as serious a problem as they seem.

Overall, the Minister was impressed by the standard of the services provided by the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed. He described it as a "model centre" and praised the work being done by our advisors and education officers. "If all Centres functioned like the Limerick Centre, they would be a major point of contact with the unemployed".

Hatch 33 asked him what was currently being done to relieve the problems of emigration and unemployment. The general thrust of his answer was that the government was working to increase employment rather than to reduce unemployment. "We feel that our main aim should be job creation. I have a deep confidence in Irish industry, and we have created an environment in which there is a growing confidence among the business community. It is necessary to attract foreign industry from countries like Japan and Australia from whom we have attracted very little investment to date. But we are creating jobs at the moment, although unemployment is still at an unacceptably high level".

And emigration? "There are many facets to this problem. One of the main ways in which it is being tackled is through centres like this where people who are considering emigrating can come for advice and information. Obviously, it is a major problem, and the other way in which it is being tackled is through job creation".

"We now have the financial situation in the country under control. More job creation is still needed from our home industries and we do continue to have sizeable problems".

What about the recent stories in the press to the effect that Disability Benefit is going to be taxed. "Those stories arise out of speculation about what will be in the next budget. If disability benefit is subject to taxation, the corresponding tax free allowances will ensure that those with no other source of income will fall outside of the tax net. It is certainly under consideration, but only in order to amend a major distortion in the system where some people on disability benefit are better off than if they were working. But let me assure you that people whose sole source of income is disability benefit will not be affected because their tax-free allowance will exceed their payments and put them outside the net".



Director seeks Ministerial funds (in Ministerial pocket) while Willie O'Dea looks on.

Photo by Gus Quin.

EEC FOOD - LESS THIS YEAR

The EEC food scheme will be run again this year. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul will be administering the distribution, and it will more than likely start in October. However, the Vincent de Paul tell us that the quotas this year won't be as generous as last year, and the distribution will be more strictly monitored. All those eligible to benefit under the scheme will be notified by a letter, and this letter will have to be produced before any food will be handed over. This should, they say, ensure that only those entitled to receive the food will get it, and hopefully avoid a lot of the problems and criticisms of last year's scheme.

WRITE FOR YOUR FIGHTS OUR LETTERS COLUMN

POVERTY ON TRIAL

Dear Editor,

October 1 this year is going to be some day! For the first time in recent history, women from all over the country who are directly affected by poverty will come together to speak for themselves about their lives, their problems and the causes of those problems.

October 1 is the day that has been set for the **National Tribunal on Women's Poverty in Ireland**. It is aimed at bringing women together to give evidence on the existence, extent, nature, cause and consequences for women, of growing poverty in Ireland today.

The Irish Tribunal is only one of many events which will be happening in every EEC country in preparation for a **European Tribunal on Women's Poverty**, due to be held this coming November in Brussels. The European Tribunal is being organised by the European Network of Women, the Irish branch of which is the *Council for the Status of Women*, the organisation promoting the idea of the Tribunal in Ireland.

It is essential to the ideal of the Tribunal that women who are directly affected by poverty are the ones who participate in the event, so that it is their voices, and not the voices of those who claim to speak on their behalf, which are heard on the day.

On behalf of the Organising Group, I would like to invite all interested women to take part in the Tribunal in whatever way they would like. They are welcome to contribute ideas, time, resources, money; to interview women they may know; to write or speak onto tape their own stories for inclusion as evidence at the Tribunal; or to attend the Tribunal themselves and to give evidence based on their own personal experience. It is important to say that names and addresses can of course be kept secret, if this is wanted.

Any woman or group who would like to be involved should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible at the address below. The power of this Tribunal really depends on the participation of every woman who has something to say about her experience of poverty. Everybody's contribution is needed if we are to succeed in making this event as significant and as influential as it can be.

Your etc.,

Chris Mulvey, Coordinator., c/o 8 Charlemont St, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 - 783355

Dear Editor,

We've all heard about *Dreamland* and *Disneyland*. Well, have you ever heard about *Yuppieland*. It's there, but anyone on the dole will never visit it, because public transport is so expensive. It's bad enough for city service, but if you want to go up the country it costs nearly 50% of a single man's weekly dole for a return ticket to our famous Capital. But then, I'm rooted here as I must always be available for work, even though there is none. So the next time you see someone hitching, give them a lift. Remember, they may not have the money for the bus fare.

Brendan

GAY? LESBIAN? BI-SEXUAL?

Do you need information, or just need to talk?
PHONE (061) 310101
Mondays and Wednesdays 7p.m. to 8.30p.m. only

SWITCHBOARD

The Limerick Gay/Lesbian switchboard is a non-funded voluntary-run service which has been in existence for the last two years. Run by a group of gay men and women, it aims to provide advice, counselling and support to other gays and lesbians, the service being 100% confidential.

Any Old Fossils II The Update

In our last issue, we broadcast an appeal for old documents, photographs, person memories or mementoes. The appeal was on behalf of the Labour History Research Group which was set up in July this year by Fas. We repeat the appeal this issue, so if you have any of the above you might contact **Dave Lee** or **Kieran Danagher** in their offices at the second floor, 4, Mallow Street, or phone 312026.

The group is a Fas Community Response Project and is backed by the Limerick Trades Council. Currently, it consists of 14 trainees aged between 18 and 24 who are working in groups of three or four on different aspects of the Labour History of Limerick. According to **Niamh Hehir**, P.R.O. for the group, the idea behind the projects is to bring young people into contact in a real way with the hidden history of Limerick. "There is no Labour History in the secondary curriculum at the moment, with the exception of the events of 1913 and that's only dealt with because of it's relevance to 1916. Other than that, the history of the Trade Unions and Labour in Ireland has been written out of the history books."

Dave Lee who heads the project says that the responsibility lies to a certain extent with labour historians, who have tended to concentrate on a very academic and, to young people, uninteresting approach to the subject. "They have no concept of popular history. There has tended to be a gap between the labour historian and young people. Our project is an attempt to bridge that gap. We aim to do this by giving the members in the group a grounding in basic research skills and then letting them, on their own initiative, research aspects of Limerick's history. Later, we plan to bring out an Educational Package for the schools which will be entirely the work of our group. Also, we plan a seminar for the public on January the 16th next when individual members will talk about their findings and conclusions."



The Labour History Researchers. Left to Right: Dave Lee, Co-ordinator, Niamh Hehir, P.R.O. Simone McNamara and John King. Photo by Gus Quin.

The members of the group are enthusiastic about the project. They have already been on a research trip to Dublin, where they visited the National Library of Ireland, the ITGWU Library, and a number of other institutions. They feel that they are coming to the job with a much fresher approach than an older generation would, having very few preconceived notions or fixed ideas. Their conclusions, they say, will be their own and not a reworked version of somebody else's. Several of them who came out of their Leaving Certs in June undecided about their futures have been spurred on by the course to apply for places in College.

If you feel you could help, or might be interested in working in the next group, contact them at the above address or phone number.

ADVERTISE in our next issue
Phone (061) 46056

EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

Last year, the **Limerick Centre for the Unemployed** ran a number of very successful classes for the unemployed in Limerick. A similar range will be organised this year, although there will be some changes to the list. This supplement should give you some idea of the kind of classes we offer. We asked people who had attended classes to give us their feelings about the classes, and their opinions are in here as well. The idea is to provide something for everyone, and the classes are free.

RETURN TO STUDY

One of the most popular courses on offer at the Unemployed Centre is the **RETURN TO STUDY** course. It is designed for people who have been out of education for some time and who are anxious to get back into the swing of things.

Our course is not like school as you knew it. It avoids the situation where the teacher just forces useless knowledge into pupils, because we believe that adults should have control over what they learn and how they learn it. The main elements of the course are confidence building, study skills and improving communication skills.

If you're interested in a course which runs in an interesting and relaxed atmosphere, then this is the course for you. Many past participants of this course speak of how it has helped them make the transition back into a variety of new learning situations.

Can You Do Your Sums?

Many people have problems with sums. The Centre runs a Basic Maths class. This class is designed for those who may have difficulty with addition and subtraction. Students work at their own pace, and at their own level. Multiplication, division, and more advanced subjects can be tackled as the student progresses. If you feel you need help in this area, contact our education officers.

Remember, you are not alone.

ART ATTACK

The course intends to make the students visually aware of their surroundings and environment and to give them a little understanding of Art in general. This will be achieved through drawing and painting which will involve still life, life drawing and various slide shows. Former students of the art class have had their work illustrated at **Drawing on the Dole** exhibitions and it is hoped that another exhibition will take place in 1989. The course will run for 10 weeks.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- 1) USE OF CAMERA
- 2) DARKROOM TECHNIQUES

The course consists of various projects in which the student shall get an understanding of their camera and use of the darkroom. Duration again is 10 weeks.



Mike Edwards, Advisor, demonstrates our computers for Dr. Wood's and John Ryan, Director of Limerick Centre for the Unemployed. Photo by Kevin Wallace.

BASIC ENGLISH & ADVANCED ENGLISH

Do you want to improve your English?

Well here's the class for you.

There are two English classes at Limerick Unemployed Centre. One is a **Basic English** class where we study spelling, writing letters, and paragraphs. We all devote quite some time to dictionary work and a little poetry and reading.

In the **Advanced English** class we continue our dictionary work at a more intense level. We also take up the study of grammar, paying close attention to all the parts of speech. We also study the lives and work of various poets and writers, e.g. Blake, T.S. Eliot, Frost, Chesterton, Wordsworth, and we study a few of Shakespear's more famous speeches.

This Autumn the English students of BOTH classes are fortunate in that we intend to make a special study of a local, but as yet quite unknown, poet. More about him when we meet.

I want everyone to enjoy the English class. I want to emphasize that in neither class is there any pressure to learn off by heart.

Why not give it a try?

SOCIAL STUDIES

So what is *Social Studies*? Well we could give a whole list of definitions but basically our course is intended to give you the understanding of how society is organised and how this becomes part of our everyday experience of life. If this sounds a bit heavy for you, don't worry. The classes are run on a very enjoyable discussion basis. The methods used will involve small group work and large group discussion and believe us it's great fun.

Topics to be covered during the course will include Education, Class and Gender, The Media, Unemployment and many other issues. So why not get out of the house for a morning during the week and do this very enjoyable course.

The centre also offer a variety of other classes, including German and an introduction to computers. To find out about the full range of courses, drop in and chat to our Education Officers.

EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

The students who attended the classes penned a few words on their experiences. Their response to the classes has been unanimously positive. So, here are their comments. They might just encourage you to come in and have a go.

From The Man Who Did Everything ...

One man attended a number of the classes run by the centre last year. He was very loud in his praises of the classes, and gave us the following report.

"I attended the Adult Education Classes run by the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed last Autumn. I was unemployed at the time and found that boredom was a real risk, and contributed to the sense of depression and rejection that goes with drawing the dole. The obvious remedy is to fill your time up as much as possible, and my classes at the Centre helped me enormously, not least because they were free and placed no added strain on my pocket.

- On Mondays I attended computer classes in word processing on Amstrad. The classes were run at N.I.H.E. by Dan Ressler, and were a very intensive and informative course. 18 people were on the course with me.

- Tuesday afternoons at the Centre saw between six and seven people in the darkroom learning to develop, process, and print their own black and white films. J.J. Hegarty of the School of Art and Design was the tutor. We ran an exhibition of our photographs at the end of term, and it toured the city.

- On Wednesday mornings, the "Writing for the Media" workshop was run by Anne Hamilton and had 12 people learning how to prepare articles for publication. We also learned how to interview people and to understand media techniques.

- The Philosophy class run by Terry Devlin was fairly intensive and absorbing. There were eight students and we dealt with the process of thinking, logical reasoning, and the ideas of the classical philosophers.

- Tutor Dave Lee ran a European History class from October to December, and U.S. History from Jan to March. We covered the Russian Revolution, the Rise of Nazism, Vietnam and the Korean War, the American Civil War and the 2nd World War. A most interesting course.

- The Drama Workshop was held in a room off the Belltable, and it was attended by 18 people aged between 18 and 60. Emphasis was put on projecting oneself, interacting with the group, and reading out a chosen speech from Shakespeare. We were also given a run down on stage lighting by the Belltable lights man - this aspect was very interesting.

- Social Studies by Jenny Carroll was attended by between 12 and 18 people on wet Friday mornings. (Friday was always wet). Group discussions, debate on social issues, the family, and our society involved everyone. There were usually two groups, older and younger, and we would split up, discuss, and then compare notes about each groups views.

- I attended Art classes at the Centre learning to sketch from life. Later, the Art Summer School at the School of Art and Design in July had 12 to 15 people, young and old, doing clay modelling, sculpture, and painting, fibreglass work and photography. This was perhaps my main interest along with photography. I intend to pursue drawing as a hobby through the proposed Art Workspace which will be set up by the people from the Art Summer School wishing to continue working into the Winter.

I cannot quantify the benefit I derived from these courses. I attended them in order to fill up my otherwise empty week whilst unemployed, and to gain an education in areas I knew little or nothing about. The Winter certainly flew. I met lots of interesting people. I had been out of Limerick for a number of years and was virtually a stranger on returning to the city.

Certificates were presented at the end of each 10 week course at a night out, disco and a few jars with everyone having a good time. Nicely rounded off the Unemployed Centre Open University semester.

Gus Quin



When I first joined the Art classes at the Centre I really didn't know what to expect. When I started art they usually think only of the painting. The classes opened my mind and I imagined things such as sculpture and Film Production. I started to do things that I never thought I would do, so that I have successfully applied for the School of Art. All thanks to the good Unemployed Centre.

For me, the Art Course was really stimulating. It gave a totally new perspective on art in general, and a new awareness of the artist and his work. It is also possible that, through these classes, you could discover a talent for art that you never suspected you had. I found it an interesting pass-time.

Helen John



I was a student at the Limerick Centre for several months. During that time I took part in the classes there. The first day I was very nervous and unknown; but the people, not just the people in the class but everybody in the Centre, made me feel at home. I have made a number of friends. We share our experiences over a cup of tea in the Centre almost every day now to develop friendships and to meet friends.

On photography, I think there is nothing like it. You get seeing a photograph you have to wait for the chemicals before your very eyes. I think that when you have done photography it feels the same way. I can't thank the people who run the centre, in particular the Art classes, and all the class immensely. Thank you for a good work.

"I was on the dole for a long time and I was getting very bored. So I decided to go to the Unemployed Centre and see about something to do. They told me about an American History course and the first thing I thought was "how boring". However I went along and found it was nothing like school or anything like that. The course was great and I met some people who were in the same boat as I was, so I no longer felt as isolated as I used to. Also, I had something to do for a half day during the week and something to look forward to. The History itself was presented in an interesting witty way. It wasn't just facts we talked about - we ended up discussing everything that was all bloody marvelous".

Michael O'Donnell

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Yvonne Brennan.



Maureen Sparling

I was a little nervous at my first English class, but **Maureen Sparling**, the teacher, soon put me at my ease. I looked at my fellow pupils, men and women, some young, some not so young. To say that Maureen was a good teacher would be an understatement. She has a lifetime of knowledge to pass on to anyone who wants it. My English improved more than I hoped. The more I learned, the more I wanted to learn.

Doing the course made me think of my lost school days. The fear of not knowing what most people take for granted. the course is only two hours once a week. I was never under pressure. I learned at my own pace. I was given a little homework each week. If anyone has done a course at the Adult Education Centre in Sommerville Avenue, for illiteracy, I strongly recommend that they try the English course. It will be of great help in understanding how to express themselves as they would like to.

The course at the Centre for the Unemployed is FREE. It is only two hours a week. The effort is minimum and the rewards are great. The satisfaction is **fantastic**. *There are too many people who, through no fault of their own, have time on their hands. We must learn how to use that time to better ourselves. Doing the courses offered by the Centre for the Unemployed is one way of doing just that.*

Michael Twomey

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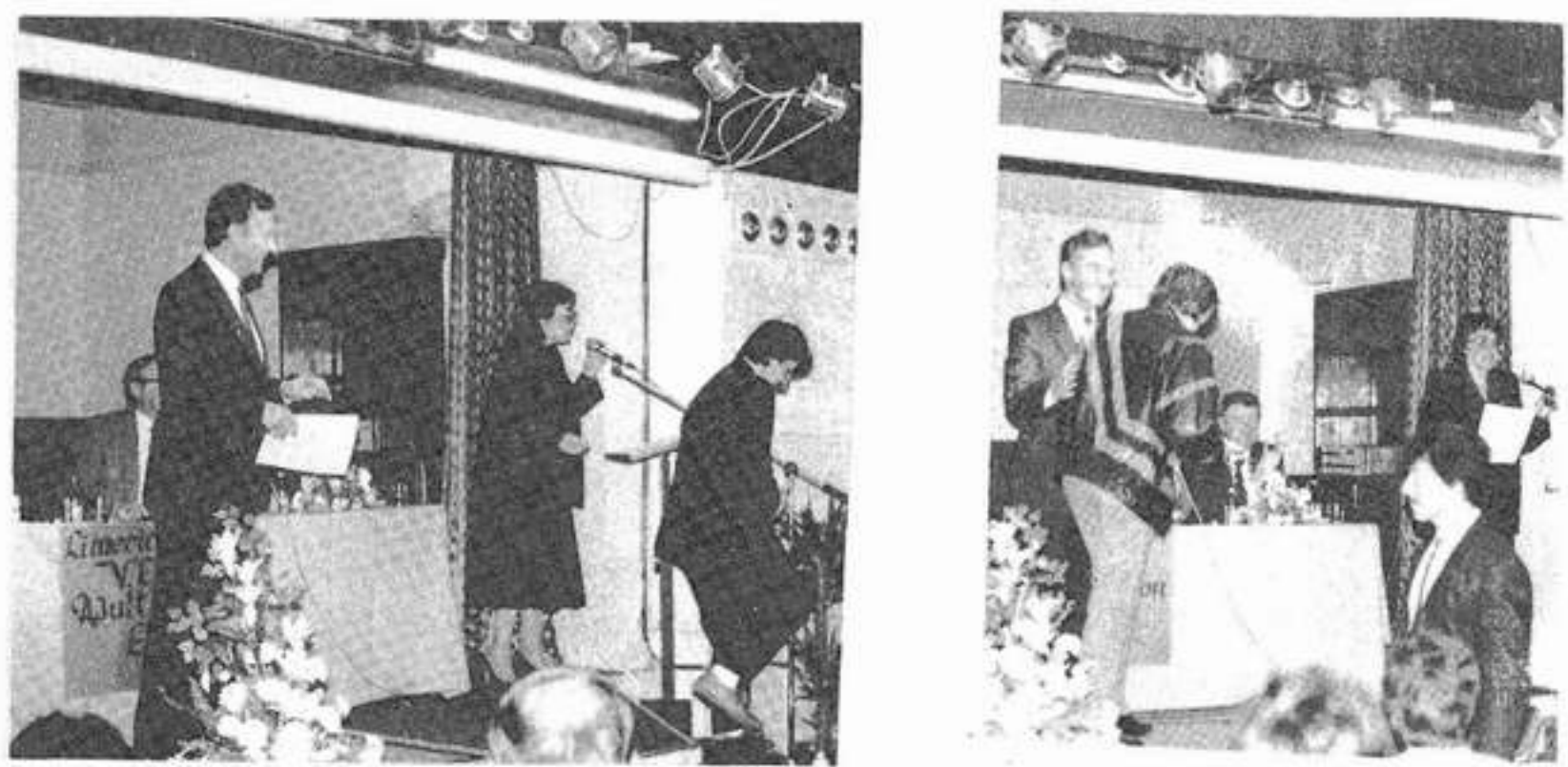
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Scenes at the recent Educational Opportunities Scheme Awards at the Glentworth Hotel.

Educational Opportunities Scheme

(Second chance education for unemployed people). No fees.

This Scheme offers adults who are over 23 years and one year unemployed (and signing on) the opportunity to return to education on a full-time basis (day-time). The Programme is run by the City of Limerick V.E.C. and full Social Welfare Benefits are paid to each participant. Subjects include: English, History, Geography, Economics, Accountancy, Business Organisation, Home Economics, Social Studies, Typing, Computing, Workshop skills, e.g. Woodwork, etc. (Subjects followed are chosen by students). Students can start at whatever level they wish (from the bottom up) and may work towards doing examinations when they feel ready.

Enquiries to:

Deirdre Frawley, City of Limerick V.E.C.,
30 Upper Cecil Street (next door to Limerick
Employment Exchange). Telephone (061) 47688.



Larry Duggan receives his Leaving Cert from Deirdre Frawley, V.E.C., at the Educational Opportunities Ceremony on Sept. 7th. Photo by Gus Quin.

ENROL NOW FOR FREE CLASSES

Classes will be commencing shortly. If you wish to enrol, or would like to know more, contact Aileen Maguire or Gabrielle Danaher at the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed, 33, Thomas Street, Limerick. Tel. 46056.

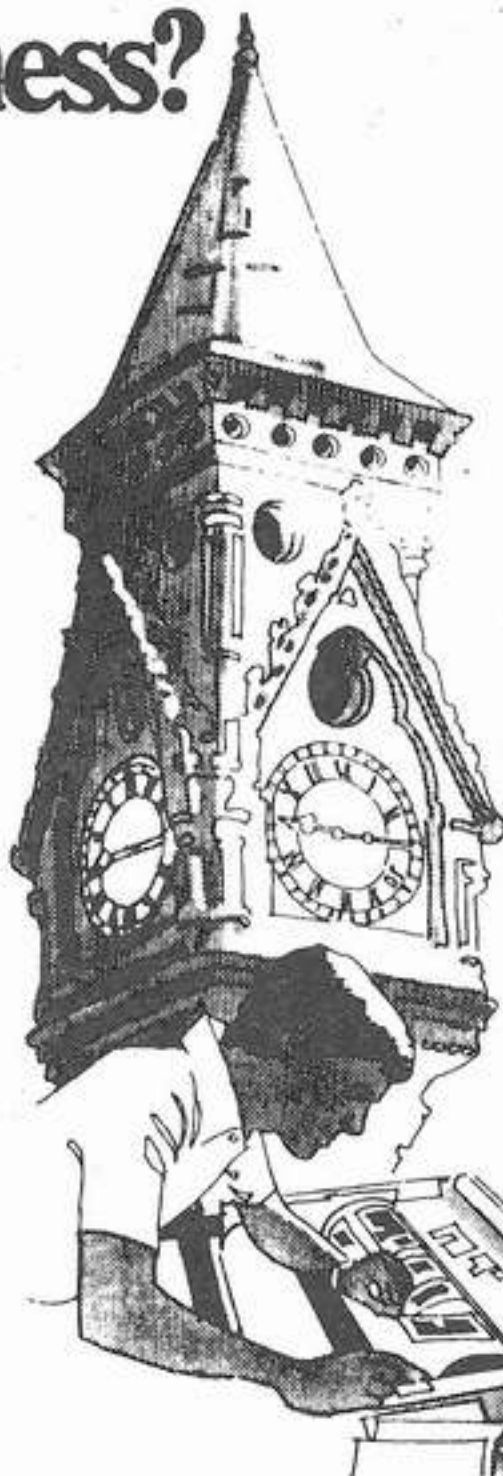
All our classes are FREE. No qualifications are required.

THE CRECHE

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Equal Rights For Men

In a strongly worded statement, the Limerick branch of **Gingerbread** have again lashed out at the apparent prejudice against male single parents in the Social Welfare system. As things stand, women on their own with children have access to payments such as *Unmarried Mothers Allowance, Deserted Wives, and Widows Pensions*. Men in the same position can only claim Unemployed Assistance.

This means that men suffer from *two* distinct disadvantages. Firstly, in order to qualify for Unemployed Assistance you must be *available for, capable of and genuinely seeking work*. So who takes care of the children while the father seeks work? Secondly, this type of payment is paid at a vastly lower rate than that paid to a woman receiving one of the other forms of assistance.

A woman on one of the single parent payments can receive as much as £11.60 more than a man on short term unemployed assistance, if both have one child. As the number of children increases, so does the difference in payments. With two children the man is getting £14.60 less than the women, and with three children, the difference is £21.10.

If equality of payment is to be achieved, all forms of discrimination should be abandoned in favour of a single welfare payment covering all single parents. This would mean that such titles as *Unmarried Mothers and Deserted Wife* could no longer be used to stigmatise women, and that men would receive equal payment. Surely, this is only common sense in a fair-minded society.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

The government has initiated a new approach to the nutritional problems of the unemployed. The recently published book, *"The Kitchen on your Doorstep"* was the inspiration for this new scheme. In the book a number of under-utilised sources of nourishment are listed, among them a variety of different caterpillars, the hedgehog (served roasted with dockleaves - very tasty), and a whole catalogue of what are commonly called "weeds". A spokesman for the department announced the new scheme and described it as *"an inspired and innovative approach"*. This new plan will serve a number of purposes. Firstly, it will provide a cheap and easily available food source for the unemployed. Secondly, it should reduce the need for spraying of crops against pests, as the unemployed will be eating them. Also, weed control and the removal of hedgehogs from the highways will no longer be a problem. This also goes for the control of the seagull and pigeon populations, which are two other recommended dishes. Finally, the basic rates of payment for the unemployed can be reduced as the cost of food will no longer be a factor.

"On the plus side, we envisage that the problem of what to do with their time will no longer be a problem for those on Social Welfare. They will be busy foraging. We do expect some casualties initially, as people may make mistakes with the unfamiliar style of cooking. But this should also reduce the figures for unemployment, leaving more food for everyone, and reducing the infighting for rich weed crops".

Water Tax Protesters Flood Corpo Meeting

An angry protest took place at a meeting of Limerick Corporation when almost 80 residents made their feelings known about the Corpo's latest methods in the Water Tax war. It seems that the corporation have enlisted the services of a private company from Cork to disconnect water supplies in the Limerick region. It has also been alleged that this company have in turn hired a private security firm for protection and that the security firm have been using heavy-handed tactics. There was a great deal of public indignation at the meeting, with constant heckling from the public gallery.

The tax has also come in for widespread condemnation from local politicians, Councillor Frank Prendergast said that "the Government party promised in the last election to abolish water rates. We are the only nation in Western Europe who haven't reviewed the system of financing local authorities in the last 100 years. We are living under one of the most viciously unfair taxation systems in the world".

Ald. Jim Kemmy said that the roots of the problem go back to 1987 when the Government party promised in their election manifesto to remove rates and car tax, and compensate for the lost revenue by increasing the PAYE contribution. "Since then, tax has steadily increased to the point where PAYE accounts for 90% of collected income tax. Many people regard the water rates as a form of double taxation. Considering that there are hundreds of millions of pounds in uncollected revenue in the form of VAT collected by businesses but not paid into the exchequer, you can't blame the man in the street for resenting the water rates being added to his financial burden".

"In fairness to the city manager", Mr. Kemmy went on, "he has pointed out that he has not got enough money. This measure was voted in by the council, and they have the option to remove it. There are other potential sources of revenue that could be looked at. There are a number of derelict sites around the city that are now quite valuable, and the owners of those sites are wealthy business men. The value of those sites has been increased by actions of the corporation, such as the construction of the new bridge, and the local government finances should surely be entitled to some form of revenue from them".

Ferga Grant of the Workers Party described the water rates as "outrageous". She went on to say that the PAYE sector already pay enough and that the Government would be "far better employed if they made a real effort to tax the self-employed or the farming community".

Another speaker said "the people have put themselves in this position by voting in the representatives on the council. If you don't like the situation, vote in people who will change it. If you don't, you can't really complain".

AND NOW.- THE GOOD NEWS....

Under the present government, things have improved dramatically for the nation as a whole - sorry, whole. In the months April, May and June, we had an unprecedented spell of good weather, which has never been seen under any previous government. Furthermore, under the present government, we have seen Stephen Roche, Sean Kelly and the Republic of Ireland Football team achieve resounding international success. It has indeed been a time to be proud to be Irish. Inspired by our national leaders, U2 have gone from strength to strength, Sinéad O'Connor recorded *Mandinka*, and Tuesday Blues have recorded an album. Names such as Daniel O'Donnell, Terry Wogan and Jack Charlton have brought an added lustre to the Irish Nation. In years to come, people will look back on this golden age with a lump in every eye and a tear in every throat. But we pledge unswervingly and indefatigably to continue as we have begun. You ain't seen nothing yet.

From "The Thoughts of Chairman CJ"

The Hatchetman

The Royal Performance

HATCH 33 sent it's roving ace reporter to cover the **Prince** concert at London's Wembley Arena. Here's what he found ...

The five-foot high king of sleaze from Minneapolis rises up onto the huge circular stage in a purple cadillac. For a moment there's an awe-stricken silence and then the party begins. Three hours later it's over and I've lost what remained of my adolescent innocence.

One of the prevalent themes in Prince's concerts has always been sex. These days however, it's the **only** theme. My decent Catholic upbringing prevents me from describing in detail the onstage antics but suffice to say that Prince's Lovesexy show makes a trip through Soho feel like a jaunt around the town of Lourdes.

And so to the music. With all the dance routines, set pieces and pure theatre going on, it was inevitable at times that the music would take second place. However for most of the concert the playing was immaculate and there were just too many highlights to be able to recount. Two songs must be mentioned, though. Firstly 'Alphabet Street' which featured the most tasteless dance routine imaginable and quite simply took the breath away. Then there was the magnificent 'Sign of the Times', Prince's state-of-the-nation tract which was the only number performed without any choreography and frankly it didn't need it. The crowd was held rapt in silence as he portrayed our social illnesses in his most poignant song.

There's an oft-debated topic which needs settling now for once and for all. Compared to Prince, **Michael Jackson** is merely manufactured showbiz glitz. He can't sing, he can't dance, he looks awful and it's a reflection of current shallow tastes that he's gone a long way. Prince's Lovesexy tour makes the Jackson 'Bad' shows look like the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis on a dull day.



(Actually, I think
Michael Jackson is
rather good. Ed.)

Pic by Darrin Towell.

Before the concert I was by no means fully converted to the Prince camp but after three hours in his presence one becomes totally convinced that he is the last remaining original in the travesty that has become pop music. **CROWN HIM.**

Kevin Barry

LAST NIGHT'S FUN

A Review of the Music Network Concert on Wednesday Sept. 14th at the City Gallery, Pery Square.

The Music Network, which have been so successful in the past with Classical and Jazz tastes, have embarked on their second season of traditional music tours for the Autumn period. Their first concert on Wednesday 14th September, featured four players from different areas with different styles: **Matt Cranitch** on fiddle from *Any Old Time*, and *The Lee Valley String Band*; Cork accordionist **Con O'Driscoll**; **Mary Bergin** on Spidéal on tin whistle; and **Eithne Ní Uallacháin**, singer and also playing flute.

The night opened to an appreciative audience with a set by Matt Cranitch, followed by more music from the Sliabh Luachra district by Con O'Driscoll. Both players later played a set of Polkas together later.

After an interval, during which tapes, records and cordials were available, patrons were treated to the refined whistle playing of Mary Bergin who has a personality to match. Mary enchanted all with her wonderful ceol draiochta, including a beautiful slow air.

Singer Eithne Ní Uallacháin sang a fine set in both Irish and English, including "Lough Erne's Sweet Shore" and a song about Napoleon Bonaparte. All players then joined together for a final set, and the music continued later with a session at the Shannon Arms with Donal O'Connor (fiddle), Christy Dunne (banjo), Johnny Stix, Christy O'Donovan, Mick Dundee and the writer all having a grand time.

Gus Quin

AN FEAR MOORE

Of course, all of us know that the place to be last month was Tralee, with lots of booze, music, and free cars (so said the sponsors) Nice one, I hear you say, if only I could afford to go and stick out a week of crack and debauchery. Personally, I only managed one day, and it was enough. I couldn't handle the Guinness flowing through the streets.

Christy Moore was performing that evening in the Dome. (The Dome, by the way, is a large marquee that can hold 3,000 people and has a bar which runs nearly the full length of this gigantic waterproof tent. Heaven?) Christy's support act were the O'Malley's from Limerick, and they gave their usual good performance spiced with plenty of humour. They were well received, but time was a wastin' and the crowd wanted Christy.

I have to say, whether you love or hate his style of music, the guy is a true professional. There is no one else in Ireland who could hold **3,000 people** in rapt attention just by singing with an acoustic guitar. They loved him, and he held them in the palm of his hand throughout. His songs ranged from pure "crack" to beautifully melodic ballads, and the mood of the audience was under his control at all times. And in all, a great gig. *Pity I couldn't have stayed for the week.*

Siobhán Folan

LABOUR HISTORY

10 Days That Shook Limerick

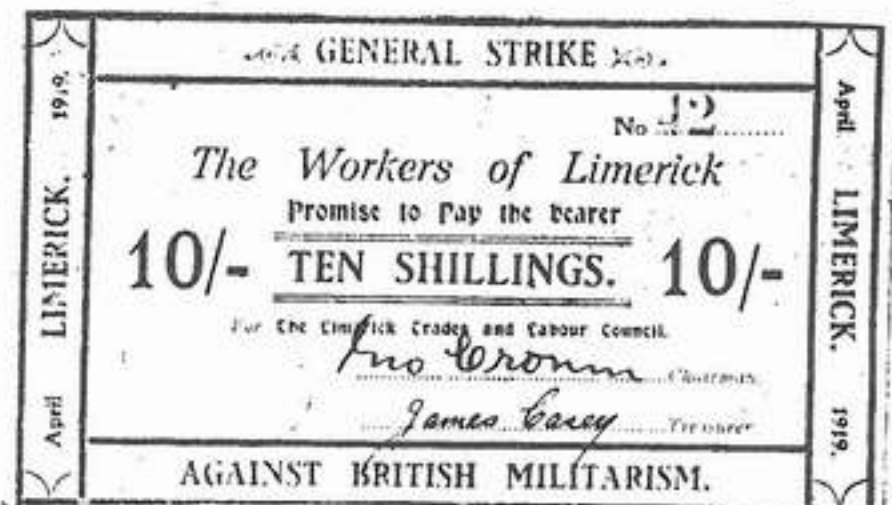
Probably the single most dramatic event in Limerick history occurred in April 1919. For 10 days the workers of Limerick governed, controlled and ran Limerick for themselves. They organised the distribution of food, the printing and circulation of money and the control of crime. Limerick became, in effect, a Soviet. Even though it was short-lived, the spirit of solidarity and the organisational ability shown makes this an outstanding and remarkable period of local history.

THE STRIKE BEGINS

On February 1st, 1919, a local Sinn Fein activist, **Bobby Byrnes**, was imprisoned for possessing fire arms. In Limerick prison Byrnes led a campaign of disobedience to demand better treatment. This campaign eventually developed into a hunger strike with Byrnes being removed to the **Limerick Union Hospital** (now the City Home). On April 6th, a rescue attempt culminated in the death of Byrnes and a policeman. Tension ran high at his funeral with an estimated 15,000 attending and a strong military presence.

Three days later, Martial Law was proclaimed in Limerick. Workers were obliged to furnish permits to leave and enter the main city area. People living in the city had to pass through permit check points on Sarsfield and Thomond bridges on their way to and from work in **Cleeves factory** (now Golden Vale) and a distillery in Thomondgate. Strong resentment quickly manifested itself among the workers of the city and on April 14th, the Trades Council declared a general strike against "*British Militarism*". Depots were set up to supply food, and a citizen's police force was provided. Special labour was supplied to essential services such as the bakeries and gas. The strik-

ers even issued their own newspaper entitled "*The Workers Bulletin*". When the strike ran into financial difficulties the workers issued their own money. Thus, in controlling the means of production and distribution the strike was not only "*against militarism*", but was also a Soviet.



Example of money printed by the strikers.

WHY?

There are as many conflicting opinions as to what caused this Soviet as elements that contributed to it. One primary cause, or catalyst, was the death of Bobby Byrne, and the consequent permits gave rise to much opposition amongst the people. The seeming infringement of the worker's freedom by the British fired a growing nationalist spirit in the city. Without a doubt, nationalism was a very strong motive, but by no means the only one, behind the Soviet.

After the example of the 1917 Russian Revolution, workers all over the world were beginning to recognise their power. They began to see themselves as an entity, and in Limerick they defended this new-found strength by opposing the permits. The fact that the chosen mode of protest was a Soviet does not necessarily imply that all the strikers were socialist. However, some members of the governing council were. They used the method Russian workers had used because of the effectiveness of the Soviet and of the all-out strike, but they did not have the same motives as their Russian counter-parts. The Limerick Soviet was an effort to defend civil liberties and human rights rather than to promote a socialist revolution.

COMPROMISE ACHIEVED

With decaying morale and the absence of financial support from the TUC the strike committee began to shift ground. Meetings between **General Griffin** and the Chamber of Commerce, and also between the Bishop of Limerick, **Dr Hanrahan**, and the Mayor of Limerick, **Alphonsus O'Mara**, put pressure on the strike committee to end the Soviet. On April 24th it was wound down. One week later martial law was lifted – the Soviet had achieved its objective. (1989 will be the 70th anniversary of the soviet)

Co-written by: *Niamh Hehir, Brenda Ryan, Christine Frawley, and Joe Morrissey.*

I.T.G.W.U.

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