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HATCH

33

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LIMERICK CENTRE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED
33 Thomas Street, Limerick.

No. 10 December 1988

Bumper Christmas Issue

ARE YOU BEING SCROOGED?

Moneylenders Christmas Bonus Leaves Many in the Lurch

Hundreds, and possibly thousands of Limerick poor are getting ever deeper in debt as Christmas approaches. The seasonal spending spree is putting ever greater financial pressures on those least able to afford them and is driving them into the clutches of moneylenders all too eager to take advantage of the situation.

The Government have finally acknowledged the existence of this problem, but not the real extent of it. Their hundred thousand pounds from the National Lottery is only a drop in the ocean, even when it is added to the banks seasonal nod to popular opinion. We have heard nothing about how this relief money is to be distributed, or what conditions it may involve. As a move in the right direction, it is welcome, but the real roots of the problem lie in the inadequate social welfare payments many families receive. "When's the election?" was the response of one Southill resident when asked for his opinion of the government's gesture.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul told Hatch 33 that Christmas time is directly linked to an increase in calls upon them for help, and that the months of January, February and even March are times of real hardship as people try to cope with the debts accumulated over the holiday. A spokesman said that "the winter months are hard enough to get through with fuel bills and extra use of electricity. But when people get into debt, many families try to struggle through those months with hardly any money. Small children, the sick and the elderly in particular can suffer, and family life can become unbearable under the pressure. Lack of heat and a basic balanced diet means that people are more prone to illness and medical expenses just add to the problem."

"We will certainly see the effects over the coming months. People are ripe for the loan sharks in these circumstances. We are advising people as much as we can to join credit unions, where they will be properly advised about the rates of repayment. Having money pushed at you by an unscrupulous loan shark who won't give you time to think before you commit yourself is no way to obtain a loan."

Credit unions tell us that there is always an increased call on them coming up to Christmas for loans. "Judging from the number of applications we get, I would estimate that the moneylenders have at least the same amount of business and

probably a great deal more," said one credit union official. "The Credit Union movement is there as a community project to help people in communities. If people are in need of financial help and are members of a credit union, they can be certain of a sympathetic hearing." These sentiments were echoed by the Meitheal Cois Sionna Credit Union who told us that, while they did not believe that loan-sharking was a problem in country areas, there was certainly an increased demand for loans approaching Christmas. "We always try to accommodate any loan application from a member, and unless they are very overdrawn, the loan will be granted. In particular at this time of the year we try to stretch a point."

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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TAKE NOTE

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

Identity Card

Do you want to get into soccer and rugby matches at reduced prices? The Limerick Centre For The Unemployed at 33, Thomas Street can supply you with an Identity Card. This will get you reduced rates for swimming pools, gyms, sports facilities, etc. as well as discounts in many local clothes shops, chemists and camera shops. The card is not evidence of age and will not be accepted as such. If you are unemployed, call into us with a passport photograph and your signing-on card and we'll supply you with an ID. It costs 30p initially, and 15p on renewal, which is quarterly.

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.

Curtain Calls

The year is drawing to an end, and the current staff of the Centre are facing the end of their terms on Social Employment and Teamwork schemes. Some are already gone from us, notably two of the Hatch 33 staff who have found billets elsewhere. Roving Ace Reporter, Kevin Barry of the late breakfasts and Diet Pepsi has been discovered by Limerick's newest tabloid, and is now their youth affairs and music correspondent. We will follow his future (undoubtedly meteoric) career with interest. Clodagh Buckley, who's stay was brief, has joined the staff of Aer Lingus and recently won the Graduate of the Year award. Their success is due in a large part to the intensive and progressive training they received with Hatch 33.

Because of the fact that the staff of the Centre will be finishing up in the next few months, the publication date for the next issue of Hatch 33 is uncertain. It's been an interesting and educational year for all of us. The best of luck to those who'll be taking over.

Health Service?

The health service for medical card patients is getting worse. We have been inundated with stories and complaints from people in the past few months, some of which appear later in this issue.

One man had a number of experiences of the shoddy treatment being meted out to the unemployed under the current cutbacks.

On one occasion, he was left in a small room in casualty with his wife and a two week old baby for an hour. In the same room were two lockers filled with bottles of medical liquids and bandages, and a trolley loaded with bandages, phials of drugs, and syringes. This hardly constitutes either safe practise or good security. Had there been a drug addict in that room, or a dealer, it would have been child's play to take what he wanted.

On another occasion, the mother and child had a ten o' clock appointment with a surgeon. The surgeon did not make an appearance until 2.00. Another 10.00 appointment was not attended to until 12.45. Finally, our informant had a 9.00 appointment with a neurosurgeon. The neurosurgeon arrived at 11.00, went for a cup of coffee, tested the patient's reflexes and gave him another appointment for three months time.

These stories are not unique. They are not even particularly bad compared with others. But they are a good example of the service being received by our readership in particular, and the medical card patients of the country in general. The fault does not lie with the staff of the hospitals. It lies with the penny-pinching two-nations mentality of the current administration.

WELFARE NOTES

Are You Entitled To:- FAMILY INCOME SUPPLEMENT

To qualify for FIS you must

- .work full-time (at least 24 hours) for an employer and
- .be in receipt of Child Benefit for at least one child and
- .your average weekly income must be below a fixed amount.

If you have	and your family income	you could
is less than	claim(weekly) up to	
one child	100 per week	10.00
2 children	120 " "	14.00
3 " "	140 " "	18.00
4 " "	160 " "	22.00
5 or more	180 " "	26.00

If both you and your husband/wife are working, and your total income is below the fixed amounts, you may still get FIS.

Did You Know.....

Unmarried Mothers can receive Unemployment Benefit and their full Unmarried Mothers Allowance. Maintenance from the father for the child can not be means tested regardless of the amount as long as it is stated that it is only for the upkeep of the child.

You can also give the child it's father's surname if you wish to.

Remember you can appeal any Dept. of Social Welfare decision.

If you are unsure about anything, call in to our advisors at the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed, 33 Thomas Street, or phone 46056.

RED LETTER DAY

January 16th, 1989 will be a day worth noting down for those concerned with unemployment or the labour movement in Limerick. The Limerick Centre for the Unemployed and the Labour History Research Group are both organising events which will come to a head on that day.

Awards for Achievements in 1988

Last January saw the launch of the Hatch 33 Awards for Achievement, and the event was such a great success that it has been decided to make it an annual occasion. We know that awards are presented daily for everything from biscuit making to banana splitting, but they are mainly organised by large private and public organisations, and tend to emphasise success in the business and professional world. The ordinary people of Limerick, particularly the unemployed rarely get a look in.

The Hatch 33 Award for Achievement is different. We aim to acknowledge success in more human terms. The accomplishments of unemployed people and the disadvantaged are as worthy as any others, and should be recognised as such. We also want to acknowledge the contribution made by non-profit making and voluntary organisations to the quality of life in Limerick city.

Our Award for 1988 will be presented next January in the Granary, on Monday the 16th. We are now seeking nominations for the Award, and ask our readers to send us their nominees. We are looking for:

(a) *Unemployed individuals who have made achievements in the fields of sport, art, education etc., and unemployed groups that are working for the interests of unemployed people.*

(b) *Individuals and non-profit making organisations that have helped the unemployed in the area of education, sport, etc.*

(c) *Groups who have established democratically controlled Workers' Co-operatives.*

(d) *Non-profit making and voluntary bodies that are actively working to deal with social problems.*

(e) *Persons who have written articles or books about the history of the working class people in Limerick.*

The closing date for nominations is Friday, 16th of December. For further information contact Des Langford or Sheila Cullinane at the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed. Telephone: 061-46056. And remember, all are welcome to come along to the Awards in the Granary Complex, Michael Street, Monday evening, January 16th.



The Labour History Research Group

Labour History Seminar

On the same day as the Awards for Achievement, the Limerick Labour History Research Group will hold a seminar in Jury's Hotel. This will be the culmination of their six month course, and will give the trainees an opportunity to present and discuss their findings with the general public and with some established Labour historians. The group hope to make the session more than just a dry presentation of accumulated facts, and intend to establish a dialogue between themselves, Trade Union figures, Labour historians, the unemployed, and all others attending. As well as the history of labour in Limerick, the actual process of teaching labour history will come under discussion, and hopefully all those attending will come out with a fresh outlook on the subject. As well as the members of the Project, there will be several guest speakers.

Educational Package

Later that day, the Labour History Research Group will be launching their Schools Educational Package. This production is entirely the work of those on the Project, and is an information package aimed at 4th and 5th year students in Secondary Schools. It will provide an easy introduction to the history of the Labour Movement in Limerick City and County from 1916 to 1921. It will consist of a booklet relating the facts with illustrations and quotations from contemporary sources, as well as a number of pull-outs, fliers, facsimiles of historical documents, radical Labour papers and pull-out maps of city and county, placing the events in a geographical context.

Anyone interested in finding out more, or wishing to attend the seminar should contact Dave Lee or Kieran Danaher at the Labour History Research Project, Second Floor (above Family Planning Clinic), 4, Mallow Street., telephone 312026. The project would also be grateful for any historical material, photographs, mementoes, personal anecdotes, etc.

Return of the Wild Geese

Christmas is now a time for many families when they see the return of husbands, sons and daughters for the Christmas holidays with money and presents from places that were once only names on a map to the children. And, after the Christmas holidays, these families face the heartbreak of losing these people to the emigrant trail again as they return to their foreign employers. For the emigrants, they are facing a lonely journey back to flats, boarding houses and a different culture in the capitals of Europe.

These are the lucky ones. They can at least return for holidays. For the 120,000 illegals in America, this is not an easy option. President Reagan's Immigration Amendment Bill will not be effective for this Christmas.

It is estimated that there are 600 people leaving Ireland every week, leaving gaps in communities and parishes all over the country. This is a haemorrhage that cannot be sustained without leaving this country crippled and deprived of its enthusiasm and vitality. At a recent conference held in London on Alternatives to Irish Emigration the message that emerged strongly was "Irish people must get angry, get informed, and get organised." The conference was organised by the Irish In

terest Group in Britain. At the conference, it was claimed that successive Irish governments had, through their respective economic policies proven to be incapable of governing Ireland for the good of the people. The main concern of the present government seems to be the securing of Visas in America for more emigrants, while ensuring that the environment here at home is "good for the business community."

The number of jobs available in this country has dropped by 12% since 1980 and by 3% since 1987. There is a vast jobs potential which is not being realised because of bureaucratic bungling and the discouragement of personal initiative.

The recent announcement of 800 new jobs in the banking industry will not do much to alleviate the situation. After all, living on 6,750 per annum is hardly possible, when the managers needed a 7,000 per annum increase to get by.

Let's hope that 1989 will be the year when government policy will start to tackle some of "the real issues" that politicians are so fond of talking about but never tackle.

Ann Kenny

Join the SWT Set

Social Welfare Travel are proud to announce their Winter Schedule of great getaway breaks. Our horizons are now broader than ever before, and thousands and thousands of people are joining the SWT Set. Here are just some of this year's super offers.....

Why not try the cotton fields of ol' Alabama where, for just 16 hours hard labour a day, you will receive free room and board (literally). Sound good? You ain't heard nothin' yet. Any takers of this offer will be given a free record entitled "12 Cotton Pickin Favourites", which includes "Old Man River", that all-time favourite "Old Man River", and a special extended play version of that all-time favourite "Old Man River". Just to get y'all into the swing of things, y'understand.

Don't fancy Alabama. Well, why not let SWT Travel take you on an intimate tour of Van Dieman's Land. Here you can have the opportunity to work on an authentic chain gang splitting authentic rocks for the benefit of real, 100% genuine Capitalist Oppressors. Bet you're lickin' your lips. And so you should be. With great sunshine, plenty of wildlife, a healthy outdoors lifestyle, and real get-ahead and grind-em-down bosses, this is a great place to emigra... sorry, holiday.

And there's more. How about goat-farming in the Tibetan Alps, or monkey-skinning in the Congo, or, well, golly, there's just too many great emig.. sorry, holiday trails to mention. And, of course, there are still the old reliables. You could go on a "Dodge the Emigration Officials" tour of the U.S.A., see Skid Row in London, or hunt kangaroos and go walkabout in

Crocodile Dungdee country (g'day). So why not give us a call here at SWT and let us solve your holiday problems as well as the Unemployment figures.

"Join the SWT Set"

The Hatchetman



ISOLATION, DESPAIR AND LONELINESS

A GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS!

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Awards for Achievement don't take place until January but we have decided to make some early presentations on behalf of the unemployed of Limerick. Here are the alternative awards for 1988:

1. The "Worst News of '87 becoming the Worst News of '88 Award" goes to the closing of Barrington's Hospital ('87) and the plans to turn it into a Private Hospital for the wealthy ('88).
2. The "Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics Award" for '88 goes to the Dept. of Social Welfare for the figures given as to the success of Jobsearch.
3. The "Lies of '87 which were found out in '88 Award" ... The Single European Act will not put VAT on food and clothing (lies of '87) ... VAT will be introduced on Food and Clothing ('88 announcement).
4. The "Gift of the Year Award" ... Charlie's Kidney Stones presented to the nation in lieu of Maureen's diamonds.
5. The "Most Ineffective Solution to a Major Problem Award" ... must surely go to the Lottery money allocated to solve the money-lending problem.
6. The "Scandal of '88 Award" .. nothing, nothing, nothing being done to help stop emigration.
7. The "I turned it off, we turned it on again Award" ... goes to the Limerick Corporation and the Anti-Water Tax Committee.
8. The "Good News of the Year Award" for 1988 ... (no news is good news! - especially from the Dept. of Cutbacks).
9. The "We all knew it would happen, never mind the promises Award" ... the postponing of the building of the new dole office.
10. The "Export Achievement Award" ... goes to the last four successive Governments for boosting our exports of talent, skill, and intelligence.

The brisk days of winter have set in again, and the magical promise of the Christmas season - parties, puddings and presents - lurks around every corner! Family and friends gather together to indulge, not just in the Christmas treats, but in the feelings of warmth and love which are ever-present at this time of year.

But there are those for whom the festive period merely acts as a catalyst, intensifying feelings of isolation and despair. Throughout the Christmas season, the Samaritans receive a steady stream of calls from many lonely people who feel there is simply nothing to celebrate.

"When the shops are full of Christmas gifts and diaries are packed full of social engagements, it is not hard to lose sight of the fact that there are many people who will spend Christmas alone. For someone who is already unhappy, Christmas festivities and the air of merriment only serve to heighten their feelings of depression and isolation", says John Dolan, Director of Limerick Samaritans.

"It is not just people who are physically isolated who experience feelings of despair but also those who may be surrounded by friends and family but still feel empty, and that there is nobody to turn to. That is why the Samaritans are available, at the end of the line 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, including Christmas Day for those for whom life may be getting too much to bear."

The Samaritans is a charity, and has fifteen Branches with 2,000 carefully prepared volunteers throughout the Republic of Ireland. Demands on the Samaritans continue to increase steadily, and last year the movement received well over two million contacts from the despairing and potentially suicidal. To meet these needs, the movement has an ongoing need for resources of funds and volunteers. Local Samaritan Branches are listed in the telephone directory under 'S'.

EC FOOD SCHEME SCAM

The EC food scheme which was started last year is being run again this year. If there were some teething problems last year, there is complete outrage this time around. The Vincent de Paul Society who have been handed the job of administering the scheme say they are "being used by the government" and are frustrated with the situation they have been put in.

Michael O'Mahony of the Society said that this year, the Department of Social Welfare made up a list of people who were considered eligible. The Dept of Agriculture then gave the equivalent of twelve pounds worth of bgef per family on the list, and that was the full extent of food available. "Those on the list are long term unemployed with large families who get a fuel allowance, Supplementary welfare families who get a fuel allowance, and some FAS trainees with a fuel allowance. We feel that the list is very restricted. In our work, we have encountered a great many people who genuinely need this kind of help, but aren't getting it. We could have identified far more people for the list had we been consulted."

"A SHAMBLES"

"This year's scheme is a shambles, and we will be reporting that to the government. We have been taken advantage of. People who we have worked with and who are in real need are furious that they are not eligible, and we are getting the stick. We have no option but to administer the scheme under the guidelines we have been given," said Mr. O'Mahony.

It would be expected that, in the wake of last year's complaints, something would have been learned by the powers that be. Unfortunately, things appear to have gone from bad to worse. Now, instead of the problem of those who didn't really need it getting some of the food, many of those who do really need it are being left out.

Des Langford

WAITING FOR JUSTICE

A young unmarried mother has been on the receiving end of bureaucratic delaying tactics and departmental penny-pinching. The story is not unique. In fact, it's probably commonplace at this stage of our "economic recovery programme", but it is a good example of how the system goes about treating those without a voice.

Her child was born in June this year. At the time, the mother was living with her family, being unable to take a job and obviously not in a condition to look after herself without some support. As soon as the baby was born, she applied for her Unmarried Mother's Allowance. While waiting to receive it, she continued to live at home, and as a consequence the payment of her allowance was delayed and delayed again. A baby eats, must be clothed, and requires nappies, toys and attention. In short, they cost money and she incurred several debts while waiting for what was her due. Eventually, after ten weeks, she was given her book, and started to get her allowance.

This did not mean that she was paid for the ten weeks of waiting. She was owed six hundred pounds by the Department of Social Welfare for those missing weeks. As this goes to press, over four hundred pounds is still outstanding. While she is glad to be receiving the Allowance, there are still the debts incurred during the waiting period to be paid. And she feels bitter that she should have had to fight so hard and so long to receive what she is entitled to by law.

Not The Only One

Other women in a similar position, that is, receiving an Unmarried Mother's Allowance or Deserted Wife's Allowance are afraid to take up FAS schemes because of the red tape tangles involved. Several women have said that they would be interested in taking on one of the 10 week training courses offered by FAS, except that for the duration of the course they have to surrender their books. This is alright for the duration of the course while they are being paid by FAS, but they say it can take up to ten weeks after the course finished before they get their books back. It is inexcusable that those in a position of vulnerability like this should be horsed around by bureaucrats. The unemployed should surely be encouraged to attend these courses, and every effort made to make transition easy, if current Government statements are to be believed.

Medical Card Service ???

Shortly after the birth of her baby, the mother had a severe attack of asthma, a complaint she has had for a long time. Her family phoned their local doctor who normally dealt with them. As it happens, the girl is the only member of the family on a Medical Card, the rest being on private medical insurance. The attack happened at 1.00 a.m., and the doctor, on hearing who the patient was, expressed annoyance at being called out and refused to attend, telling the family to take her to the Regional Hospital. The same doctor had made an unsolicited house call to another member of the household

shortly before. The attack was a very severe one, and she urgently required an adrenalin injection and medical attention. Eventually she was taken to another local doctor and was treated.

The health cuts are severe and hit everyone hard. But it seems that when you're at the bottom of the "political priority" heap, everything hits you that much harder.

MORE OF THE SAME

We heard recently about the following case. One individual on a basic wage of sixty pounds a week living at home with his widowed mother applied for and was granted a medical card. Another person who was a full-time student with no income and also lived at home was refused a card because of her mother's pension of fifty seven pounds a week.

WRITE FOR YOUR FIGHTS OUR LETTERS COLUMN

Bitterness over Medical Cards

The unemployed have been accused of freeloading in respect of free medical treatment, i.e. Medical Cards, while those that are employed and have PRSI deducted from wages and pay tax have to pay for medical services for themselves and their dependents when they need them. This is a source of grievance between the employed and the unemployed. However, I feel that this grievance is totally unfounded as it is a result of the system which has engaged in health cuts in an attempt to balance the national books.

The unemployed are treated like lepers at any medical level, put at the end of the line, as if they didn't feel bad enough already because of not having enough to exist on through no fault of their own. Of course, there are a few people milking the system, but they are in a minority. Most cases are entitled to this anyway, having worked for years before their downfall in these recessionary times. The whole system is devised by bureaucrats to keep the working classes divided.

Mary

*Merry Christmas
to all our Customers
from*

Liam Mulqueen

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37, Thomas Street,

Limerick.

Tel.: 061-40772

FA-SHOCKWAVES IN LIMERICK

A strange new beast reared its head in Limerick in November. The state of the art in genetic engineering, many said it couldn't be done, that it was impossible, or just plain crazy. Undaunted, the Fundraisers and Education Officers of the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed pooled their talents, and with no more equipment than a few whiskey glasses, bottles of cider, and barrels of home brew managed to produce the hybrid beast the called "The Fashauc".

The idea was to combine an Auction with a Fashion Show in the same evening, and round off the whole event with a disco. To this end, they contacted celebrities all over Ireland to ask them to donate items for auction. U2, Hothouse Flowers, Clannad, and Mary Black were among the music industry people who responded generously with signed photographs, 11 albums and memorabilia. Don Conroy and Martin Turner sent original artwork, and Liam O'Brien got the Irish World Cup team to sign a jersey and sent it on. An anonymous member of the public donated the jersey worn by Don Givens when he scored his hat trick in the European cup in 1974. These were just some of the pieces up for grabs in the Granary on November the 23rd.

The Auction went well, the fashion show swung. With models supplied by the Hilary Thompson Model Agency, Faces, and clothes by Greta Gibbs, A.Wear, O'Connors, Noels Menswear, young designer Mary Maher, students of the College of Art, and many, many more, the evening was filled with variety and colour. Contributing in no small way to the excitement were the two male models, those stalwart volunteers from the Centre, Brian and Declan (or Bri and Dec as they are now called by their colleagues in the fashion world). They showed a natural aptitude for the ramp and practically had to be dragged off.

The Centre would like to express their thanks to Noel O'Gorman of Murphy's who sponsored the evening, the Granary, and Mr. Corrie Ward who lent his services for the Auction. Also, thanks to all those who attended and supported the Centre. A great evening was had by all and the frontiers of social eventing have been pushed to new limits.

More Gratitude - Barry McGuigan eat your heart out.

The Limerick Centre for the Unemployed want to thank all those who supported their 48 Hour Fast to Feed Ten Families For Christmas. The fast was held over the 7th and 8th of December and was a great success, thanks as usual to the generosity of the public.

Limerick City Gallery of Art

Pery Square.

Tel.: 061-310633

The Prints and Drawings of the Weimar Republic
to the 23rd December

"Oceans & Islands" - Paintings by Tony O'Malley

Jan 3rd to Jan 21st 1989

G.P.A. Emerging Artists 1988

26th Jan to 18th Feb

Open Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Monday to Friday 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Thursday 2 p.m. - 7 p.m.

COMPETITION TIME!

The Limerick Centre for the Unemployed are running a **Photographic Competition**. The competition is open to everyone except the staff of the Centre or their families. The closing date is the 14th of January, and there is an entry fee of one pound per photograph.

First prize is a 35mm Camera.

Second Prize is twenty pounds worth of 35mm Developing and Printing.

Third Prize is fifteen pounds worth of 35mm film.

So pick your subject, get out there with your camera, and send your entries with the coupon to *The Photography Competition, Limerick Centre for the Unemployed, 33, Thomas Street, Limerick.*

And remember, it's a pound per photo entered.

Hatch 33 Photographic Competition

Name:.....

Address:.....

No. of Photos enclosed:.....

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For all your Christmas Gifts at the same silly price £1.00

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9, Catherine Street, Limerick.

52, William Street, Limerick.

* For that Special Gift, visit our STAR VALUE Shop *

* at 35, O'Connell Street *

Phone: 061-42141

Women's Action Group

Limerick Branch Established

October first last was hopefully a watershed in the history of the unemployed, and particularly for unemployed women in Ireland. The occasion was the **National Tribunal on Women's Poverty** held in Dublin. Working class women from all over the country took part in discussions and workshops on Social Welfare, Education, Health and the legal profession, women on low pay, exploitation of women at work, travelling women and all other aspects of life in Ireland today which affect the status of women. All of this activity culminated in a list of reports and demands which will be presented to the European Tribunal on Women's Poverty which is to be held in Brussels in November.

Arising out of all of this, the **Limerick Women's Action Group** has been formed, and represented Limerick in Dublin. The group consists mainly of women from working class backgrounds who know what they are talking about through direct experience and can present a true and accurate picture of life in a welfare state today.

A spokeswoman for the group said *"For far too long, women have been putting forward their case for various reforms. Traditionally, women are the copers. They bear the burdens of family and social life, and nowadays they also carry the financial burden in many families. Added to that, we have the nightmare situation of living on Social Welfare, high taxation, health cuts, the cost of education, and poorly paid jobs. Forty one politicians were invited to the Tribunal - forty declined. One male politician attended. The powers that be are not interested in the problems of Irish women."*

The Limerick Women's Action Group hope to change that. It is time for those who share a common burden to show solidarity, and to agitate for real change. On your own, you're just another voice in the crowd. But by presenting a united front politicians can be made to listen."

If you are interested in joining the Limerick Women's Action Group, you are invited to come along to any of their meetings. They are held in the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed every second Wednesday. For further information contact **Anne Higgins** at **061-87325**.



RADAR STORES PRACTICAL GIFT IDEAS

Single knit gloves 1.99
 Knit caps (3 colours) 1.99
 Re-Hab grey socks 1.50
 White grandad shirts 4.99
 Check shirts - heavy 6.99
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 Sleeping Bags from 9.95
 Canvas School Bags 1.99
 Heavy Irish-made Jeans 9.95
 Fancy colour socks 2.75
 Full range of socks from 99p
 Handkerchiefs 5 for one pound
 Torches, lamps, and Batteries
 Double knit & loop knit gloves,
 Football gloves, fingerless mitts,
 Wax cotton jackets - youths & adults
 Rucksacks & day-packs.

**Full display of Irish-Made Gifts to
choose from.**

**7 Fox's Bow,
Limerick.
Phone: 061-47262**

*We wish you all a peaceful and fun-filled
Christmas Season*

BRENDAN LOUGHNANE THE MASTER BUTCHER

Christmas Offers
3lbs Streaky Rashers 1.99
Liver 39p per pound

47, Upper William Street,
Limerick.

Phone: 061-44213



LIMERICK BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

ATTENTION: BLOOD DONORS
Blood Donor Clinics Arranged At:

The Social Service Centre,
Limerick.

Thursday, 15th December, 1988
 Monday, 19th December, 1988
 Wednesday, 28th December, 1988
 Wednesday, 4th January, 1989

Time: 7 to 9 p.m. each night

*By donating blood you are truly
giving the "Gift of Life"*

CO-OPS - THE WAY FORWARD?

On the face of the inability of private enterprise or the government to provide full employment, whether we like it or not it has increasingly become the responsibility of communities to attempt to generate their own employment.

Since Co-operative ventures are the form of business best able to cope with the problems associated with unemployment, the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed recently hosted a Co-operative Course.

Though the form that individual Co-operatives take differs according to their needs and the nature of their business, the most fundamental and distinguishing principles of a Workers' Co-operative are that control of the enterprise is derived from working in it and that all workers are entitled to become members.

While there has been a history of Co-operatives in Ireland, their limited success has led to a high level of pessimism.

However, the success of Co-operatives on the Continent (especially in Spain, Italy and to some extent France), where government and community attitudes are much more favourable to their growth, has shown that Co-operatives can be an effective community response to unemployment.

At the present time in Ireland, given the recent establishment of a Co-operative Development Unit in FAS, it would appear that conditions are now much more favourable to the growth of Co-operatives.

With this in mind St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, with funding from the C.S. Mott foundation in the U.S.A., are employing a fieldworker to facilitate Co-operative Development in the Limerick area.

The fieldworker, **David McCormack**, is based in the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed and is available to talk to anyone with any interest in Co-operatives. Drop in, or ring the Centre at 061- 46056.

DANDELION PUPPETS - A CO-OP IN ACTION

Two years ago the members of **Dandelion Puppets** were all unemployed, and although skilled in various ways, held little hope of getting a job in the area. The idea of a travelling puppet theatre developed from a fund raising effort for a small parent-run school at Cooleenbridge near Scariff. A script was written with a story about fish trying to do something about the rubbish which was polluting their river. Not a likely theme for a children's story you might think, but all the members of the group, being environmentally concerned, felt it was important to produce a show with some meaning rather than just pure "entertainment". So **'The Magic Wave'** was born/hatched/created with humour, music, songs and spectacle.

A significant help in getting together the materials to make the show was the winning of a **European environmental award** in 1987. This gave us five hundred pounds which was a good start. However the cost of setting up the puppet theatre, sound and light systems, trailer for transport, puppets and backdrops was kept to a minimum by using other people's rubbish. For example, the loudspeaker cabinets were fashioned from an old fruit machine, the trailer from a wrecked Renault 4 and a discarded space invaders machine, which happened to be made from high quality plywood. All the artwork, puppet making etc. was done by members of the group, who had had no previous experience with puppetry.

Friends helped with welding and music.

Since January 1988, Dandelion Puppets have been on a FAS scheme, employed by Cooleenbridge Community Co-op. The FAS scheme has given us the money and time to produce a second smaller show with the theme of caring and sharing and enabled us to tour festivals from Derry to Sligo, Cork to Corofin. Work is in progress on another environmental show which seeks to capture the magic and spirit of woods and forests.

At present the future of Dandelion Puppets is uncertain. The FAS scheme ends in January. The money we generate from performance is not enough to pay a living wage as yet but the potential is there. Arts council or other sponsorship would enable us to continue. The response we have had from children, teachers and festival organisers has been very enthusiastic so we live in hope. The change from un

employment to useful work, starting with little or no capital is not easy but we retain the energy, commitment and the will to succeed.

Dandelion Puppets have produced a children's audio cassette based on their first show, **'The Magic Wave'**. Thousands of children in the West have already seen Rubdub the Whale and her friends in their heroic struggle to rid the world of pollution. **'The Magic Wave'** tells the story of two young fish who journey from their river through the oceans of our world in search of the magic that will transform their polluted home. On their journey they meet many strange creatures and have many exciting adventures. Children of all ages will love this tape, forty four minutes of magic, music and fun. The tape is available locally from **O'Mahony's BookShop**, O'Connell Street and from **Cooleenbridge Community Co-op**.



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"Shibumi" - The Verdict

And so, with fearless abandon, your intrepid reviewer builds up the courage to sample the first album from Limerick's very own serious musos, Tuesday Blue.



After the summer's less than inspiring live gigs from the band, expectations weren't high and unfortunately I wasn't disappointed. The lads roped in "big name" producer, Dave Richards, for the job and it seems to me that that's all Mr. Richards is - a big name! The powers that be at EMI seem to have been blinded to Mr. Richards actual talents (sic) by the fact that he has worked with the likes of David Bowie. Indeed he has worked with Mr. Bowie but what has apparently been ignored is the fact that the record he was responsible for (1987's "Never Let Me Down") was the biggest heap of crap Davey Boy ever committed to vinyl. What Mr. Richards has given to Tuesday Blue's debut album is one of those famous "Wall of Sound" productions. Everything is very big, very clean, crystal clear and safe as houses. Rock and Roll however, just like sex, is meant to be dirty, raw and aggressive. "Shibumi" is about as raw and aggressive as Donnacha O'Du-laing's "Highways and Byways".

The album opens promisingly enough with the single "Tunnel Vision" and it's a decent enough song although somewhat spoilt by a rather tokenistic guitar solo. The same guitar solo appears on many of the songs on "Shibumi". We move on down "Rocks Lost Highway" (as the band themselves would probably say) with "Tell the Boys", a song which just isn't suited to the overbearing keyboard treatment it has been given. This is indeed a general complaint about the album as a whole. Keyboards (courtesy of Tom Jones, on a break from the cabaret circuit) are given far too much prominence throughout the album and this spoils what could have been a sound closer to the live feel of the band. And Tuesday Blue are essentially a live band.

The next track has always been my personal favourite from the live shows, but again "Love Me Simple" just doesn't transfer successfully to this format. It's followed by the gentle "Between Smiles and Tears" which is far too twee for my tastes and thus ends side one. Side two begins with the dreadful "Open Your Eyes". I'm sorry but I took an instant dislike to this song when I first heard it and my dislike has been nurtured by the bland version on "Shibumi".

Next on the list is "Cut and Dry" which is basically just a dirge, and it's followed by "I Believe in You", the band's traditional live rabble rouser. I hate to be constantly downbeat, but the song loses everything when taken from its live context. Next up, we have "Escape the Escape" - about the only song here which is an improvement on its previous incarnation. It has some lovely hooks and (gasp) I like it, so I'm not a completely dour ol' cynical hack, you see.

"Shibumi" closes with "Something Wrong With Your World" which is pleasant enough despite some embarrassing lyrics ("Tell it to a tree, before you hurt somebody").

And that concludes the long-awaited debut album from Tuesday Blue. In fairness, it must be said that the playing throughout the album is immaculate and indeed all members of the band are very fine musicians. But it isn't enough. It can't compensate for the horrible 'lavish' production, the dodgy 'poetic' lyrics and sheer monotony of some of the songs. One of the main disappointments on the album for me were Mike Ryan's vocals. Strong and clear live, they sound distinctly ordinary on record.

Comparisons are odious but they must be made, and they will be. At times, the band resemble no one more than Simple Minds. Marillion can be heard here and there, and yes, every so often the influence of U2 imposes itself. The album seems to be aimed roughly at an American MOR audience (lowest common denominator), but it just hasn't got that necessary spark or originality that is needed to succeed in the highly competitive rock market of 1988.

For their second album (and I sincerely hope there is one) the band must move away from music industry machinations and get back to the basics of building an original sound around their obvious musical talent. Whether they will eventually succeed is anyone's guess. Best of luck to 'em.

Kevin Barry

LABOUR DAY

LIMERICK, MAY 1st, 1919

Labour Day is and has been for many years the main celebration of the Labour Movement throughout the world, which has given trade unions an opportunity for a show of strength.

1919 was an extremely important year for the Labour Movement in Ireland due to the fact that during the war years (1914 - 1918) the trade unions had conformed to an unofficial amnesty which lasted effectively until the end of 1917 when trade unionist activity was revitalised.

By 1919 the workers were feeling agitated with having little or no pay increases and having to suffer extremely long working hours. This, coupled with the fact that there was a strong solidarity with the Russian people who had recently achieved independence from the Tzarist Monarchy in the form of a Socialist Revolution. Labour Day proved to be the ideal way to show their strength and unity with "75% of workers in Ireland ceasing work for the day". The only areas not to honour Labour Day were the Limerick and Belfast City areas for contrasting reasons.

In 1917 trade unions finally arrived in Limerick headed by the I.T. & G.W.U. which sparked off a series of minor industrial disputes coming to a head with the general strike of 1919 when the Limerick Trades Council seized effective control of the city. This was the main reason for the near complete lack of involvement of Limerick in Labour Day.

The city was still in the throes of recovery from the economic and social crisis more commonly known as the Limerick Soviet. Many people on the Limerick Trades and Labour Council believed that conforming with Labour Day could be

detrimental to industry and the workers in Limerick. "We do not think it advisable in the interests of the city generally, that Limerick should hold Labour Day off this year". This effectively caused the demise of Labour Day in Limerick, the only people to cease work were the railway men: "No trains ran on the Great Southern or Western railways with the last train pulling into the city being the 1.50 a.m. mail train".

The Limerick railway men who participated in Labour Day held a joint meeting and they strongly protested against Martial Law, they also put forward a resolution stating "that we the railway workers of Limerick, in a joint meeting assembled declare our adhesion to the principle of the Irish National Labour Movement in honour of an international league of peoples as opposed to a league of governments, diplomats and rules".

Overall, however, Limerick Labour Day was not observed, and work carried on as usual.

Elsewhere in the country there was practically a complete cessation of work except in Belfast where, due to the strong loyalists feelings, support was minimal.

Michael Martin

I. T. G. W. U.

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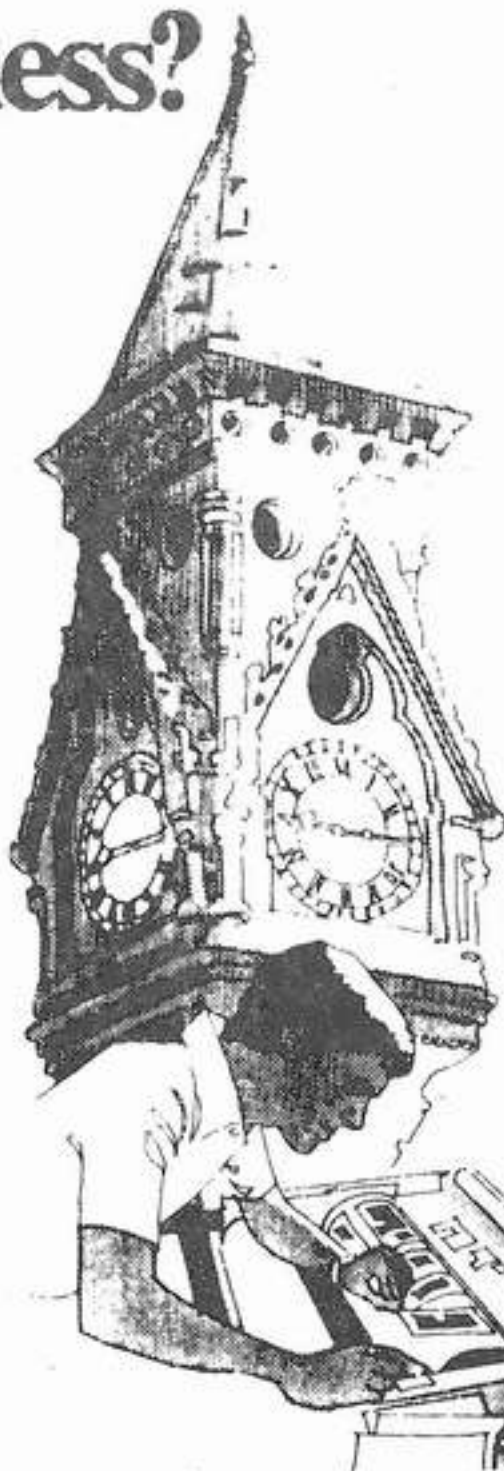
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