



Limerick Centre for the Unemployed,  
33 Thomas St. Limerick.

NOVEMBER 1990

# ROBINSON BACKS

# UNEMPLOYED

Presidential candidate Mary Robinson visited the Centre on Monday 15th October and spoke of her concern about the problem of unemployment.

"I am very conscious of the issues that face the people of Ireland", she told Hatch 33.

"For the past five months I have been travelling the length and breadth of the country and I've come face to face with the misery caused by unemployment and emigration."

Since her campaign was launched in Limerick on May 1st, Mary has made a point of visiting Unemployed Centres throughout the country.

"There are a million people in this country living in poverty and they need a President who can identify with them."

Mary believes that the office of



Mary Robinson and Joan Condon, Director of L.C.U.

President shouldn't be used to reward loyal party politicians who are up for retirement.

Because she is not a member of any political party, Mary is completely independent.

She wants the Presidency to become a resource for all the people especially the unemployed and underprivileged.

Confident that she will be the next President of Ireland, Mary outlined

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to us what she can do to help the situation.

*"I will make a point of inviting groups of unemployed people to Aras an Uachtarain and discussing their problems with them."*

*"This in itself will signal to the Dail politicians that the Irish people want to see unemployment tackled."*

*"As an elected President I can use the Office to raise the consciousness of the unemployed and help improve their self image and self esteem."*

Mary Robinson is not interested in just being a figure-head President.

She admitted that the powers of the Presidency are limited but she promised to use all her abilities to highlight the issue of unemployment.

As a lawyer Mary has used her considerable legal skills to improve social justice and civil rights in this country.

She has won in the courts many cases against discrimination and inequality.

During our interview with Mary we were very impressed with her sincerity and wish her all the best in the Presidential Election.



*Presidential candidate Mary Robinson with the President and members of the Trades Council.*

## HAVE YOU GOT YOUR MEDICAL CARD?

**In October and November most medical cards come up for renewal and if you have a card you should already have got a renewal form in the post.**

If you don't have a form or want to apply for the first time, drop into the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed and ask for Richard Shapland or Jane McDonnell, the social welfare advisors.

We asked Richard who exactly is eligible for the medical card.

*"Many people seem to assume that the upper income limit is £108 and don't bother to apply."*

*"However it is important that people should be aware that in certain situations the upper limit can be a lot higher."*

For instance the Means Test for a medical card allows £12.50 for each child under 16 years and £14.00 for any other dependent.

Therefore a family with four children earning less than £158 would be eligible for a medical card.

Also if you spend more than £12.50 a week on rent and mortgages this will be taken into account during the assessment.

Any family on a low income should call in and talk with Richard or Jane about whether they can get a medical card.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

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Please note: Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed.

## THE LIMERICK CENTRE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

33 Thomas Street, Limerick. Tel: 061-46056

**Call in for free Social Welfare advice**

**Mon - Fri 9.30 - 1, 2 - 5**

Ask for Jane or Richard

## PROFILE



## BERNIE RYAN

Bernie Ryan, educational officer at the Unemployed Centre, lives in Woodview and has 7 children.

She is an active member of Gingerbread, the organisation for single parents.

Bernie has an active mind and reads a lot; "My main interests are history and biography, I also enjoy a

good novel" she told Hatch 33.

At the moment she is doing a one year course on Social Studies which looks at the problems in Irish society such as poverty, unemployment and the role of women.

When Bernie finishes her SAS scheme with the Unemployed Centre next January she hopes to do office work.

## CLASSES ... CLASSES ...

The autumn programme of educational classes at the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed got under way in the first week of October.

Classes on computers, word-processing, computerised office procedure and typing have been organised to help people to become more employable.

There are also courses on art, photography, French and German.

These days computers are becoming increasingly important in offices, warehouses and on the shop floor. If you are 'computer literate' it's going to help you get a job.

To prepare people for office work, the Computerised Office Procedures course teaches students how to use the microcomputer as an accounting tool to keep records of sales, purchases, invoices etc.

The Word Processing course is designed to develop skills in, and knowledge of, basic computing

techniques.

The Introduction to Computers class takes students through the basics and gives hands on experience.

Going out for a drink these days is an expensive business!

The Centre offers an alternative with its 'Wine Making for Beginners' class, which can save you £££'s.

Did you know that you can even make wine out of tea!

Another course that is always a favourite is the Guitar class.

Participants learn how to read chord diagrams and tune a guitar; the tutor, Ingo Mamzack, also teaches strumming techniques and the basic chords.

The present series of courses will end in December and another educational programme will be organised for the New Year.

So if you have missed out on this year's classes you'll have another opportunity in 1991.

### SPANISH CLASSES

A short series of Spanish classes will be starting soon.

A native speaker will teach the basics of the language and students will be able to practice simple conversations.

It is hoped that these classes will begin before the end of October and anybody interested should contact John O'Regan or Bernie Ryan at the Centre immediately.

There will be a nominal charge per person of £1 for each class.

### LEARNING TO BE A JOURNALIST

One of the most exciting educational classes taking place at the Centre is a 10 week course on journalism.

John O'Regan, who is running the course, told Hatch 33 that the class "is a comprehensive introduction to the media".

"It's for people interested in working in the world of newspaper, magazine or broadcast journalism".

John teaches students how to go about researching stories and writing them up.

Professional Limerick journalists will conduct informal seminars during the term to pass on their expertise to the class.

Visits to the local newspaper office, the RTE studios at Bank House and the C.B.S. media workshop will be arranged.

John will also organise a conducted tour of Radio Limerick One.

Presently living in Garryowen, John O'Regan writes for 'Night Times', Limerick's only music paper, and also does broadcasting work with RLO.

He likes all kinds of music - except what's in the Top 20! "I especially like acoustic, roots music and good old-fashioned rock and roll." John told Hatch 33.

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# LIMERICK UNEMPLOYED SPEAK

There are lots of well paid 'experts' who make a living out of studying unemployment and poverty but it's not often that the unemployed themselves get to write about their experiences.

The Limerick Centre for the Unemployed has produced a report, soon to be published, in which the unemployed finally have their say.

Eight people, men and women who have lived with unemployment and poverty themselves, write about life on the dole.

One man writes:-

"When you're on social welfare it inevitably leads to poverty. Poverty leads to stress and tension; stress and tension can lead to ill health, both mental and physical; it inevitably gives people a feeling of hopelessness".

A common feature among all the writers is this feeling of powerlessness, a feeling that they are treated like second class citizens by a bureaucratic system that doesn't care.

They feel they are trapped in an endless vicious circle of poverty and unemployment.

The report has been compiled by Charles Forrester, who has been working on the project for the past year.

He told us that it was the first time in Limerick that such a project had been carried out.

The document focuses on four main topics; Powerlessness, Poverty, Health & Social Welfare and Consumer Society.

Let's hope this is only a beginning and that more and more opportunities are made available for the unemployed to have a voice.

"The government bring out green papers and white papers trying to define 'poverty' but you don't have to wait for someone to tell you that you are poor for you to be poor".

You hear people, women in particular, saying things like: "Oh, my God, I came out from the Welfare Officer and I just felt like throwing myself in the river".

"If the father of the family is unemployed or a low-paid worker then the children are disadvantaged right from the start. Education and health care for the poor are really a far cry from that experienced by the well-heeled."

"Give people in work a good basic wage; streamline social welfare; introduce a fairer tax system. Share the wealth; give all our children the same advantages! It is, after all, in our Constitution. It is time to cherish them all equally."



"You have to have a 'cap in hand' mentality. You have to go through a lot of degrading rituals just to get enough to SURVIVE - let alone get something extra. You can't fight back. You just have to go in and grovel."

"Ministers who decide what people can live on are completely out of touch with the reality of life on the dole or very low pay. How can they determine what a family can live on, when they have all the advantages".

"I thought everything in the garden was rosy - until one night my husband came home and said he no longer had a job. Trying to exist from the money my husband was getting on the labour was just a nightmare".

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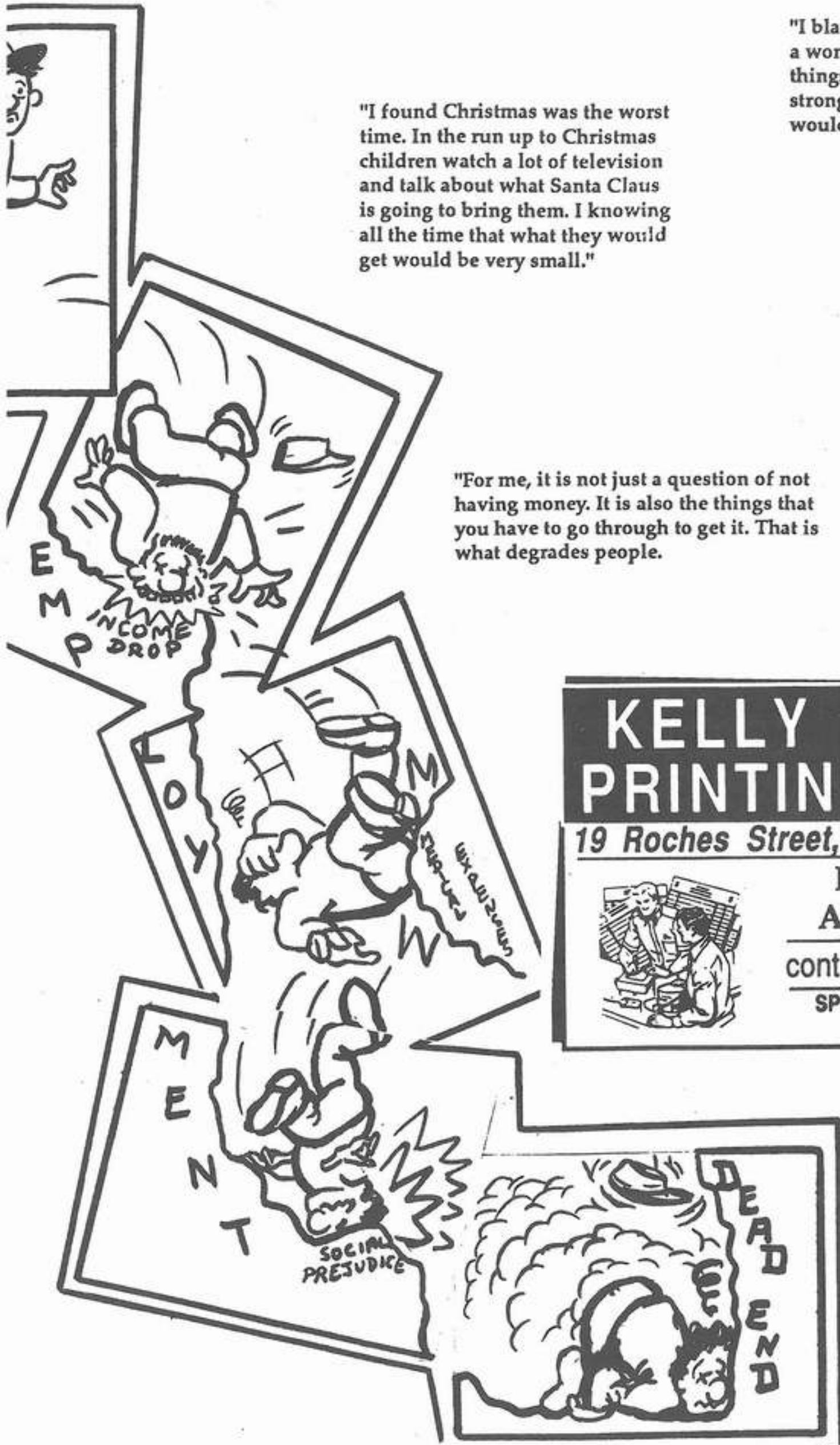
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# OUT AGAINST POVERTY



"I found Christmas was the worst time. In the run up to Christmas children watch a lot of television and talk about what Santa Claus is going to bring them. I knowing all the time that what they would get would be very small."

"I blamed my husband for not having a job ... it is a wonder he has any confidence now, with the things I used to say t him. Luckily we had a strong marriage - otherwise I do not think we would be together today."

"No one who has not had to experience poverty knows what it is really like."

"For me, it is not just a question of not having money. It is also the things that you have to go through to get it. That is what degrades people."

"We have a very good health system in this country but it is only the likes of the Minister of Health and his wealthy colleagues that can afford it. Those of us on a low income just have to keep on queueing and waiting. In the meantime, if your illness becomes more serious and you should happen to die, their attitude will be: "that's your tough LUCK."

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# POITIN PETE FOR PRESIDENT



A surprise new candidate for the Presidential elections has launched his campaign in Limerick.

This would-be President of our great nation calls himself Peter O'Malley and his campaign is based around a single theme. Drink!

Peter is obsessed with the stuff, and to emphasise the fact, he's just released a single called "Poitin" to get his campaign up and staggering.

"Mine will be a Poitin Presidency", predicted pickled Pete yesterday at his first press conference.

Before giving a drunken rendition of "Poitin", O'Malley laid out the changes he will introduce if elected President. These include:

- \* Pub opening times to be extended to 23 hours a day.
- \* The introduction of "small industry" grants to Poitin makers.
- \* The setting up of self-help groups for Pioneers.
- \* A blanket ban on all non-alcoholic lagers.
- \* The compulsory purchase of all Peter O'Malley records by every member of the public.

So, just who is this Peter O'Malley? He is, in fact, a former mainstay of The O'Malleys, a wild bunch of Limerick musicians who the nation grew to know and love.

The O'Malleys, sadly, have now passed away, (acute cirrhosis of the liver, you understand) but hardy Pete has survived and fully intends to pursue his musical career while simultaneously taking up residence in Aras An Uachtarain.

Familiar to the nation from The O'Malley's multiple TV appearances, Peter's solo single is sure to give him the highest profile of any of the presidential candidates.

"Poitin" was thrown together (literally) in Limerick's Xeric Studios and musicians on board included former Tuesday Blue merchants Dave Keary and Ray Fean (now in No Sweat), Private World's James Hanly and banjo player extraordinaire Brian Mulcahy.

As you might have guessed "Poitin" is a loving pastiche of J.J. Cale's "Cocaine" which was also a monster hit in this country for Eric Clapton. Long established as a live favourite it seemed like the perfect

choice to launch Peter's solo career and has already led to yer' man being interviewed live from his illicit still on the Galtee mountains by Gerry Ryan!

Apart from the 2FM airplay, "Poitin" is being serviced to all of the new commercial radio stations and has been playlisted by, among others, Radio Limerick One and Clare FM.

The O'Malley's, who decided to go their own separate ways shortly after Christmas, were renowned for their offbeat sense of humour and Peter has decided to develop this side of the act without in any way compromising the music.

Peter is particularly proud of The O'Malley's last vinyl appearance, "We're All Green" on the "Reindeer Age" compilation, which is still a highlight of his live set. He'll be playing selected dates around the country throughout the winter and plans to release a follow-up to "Poitin" before Christmas.

*Peter O'Malley's "Poitin" is on the Xeric Label and is available at all good record shops. Buy it!*

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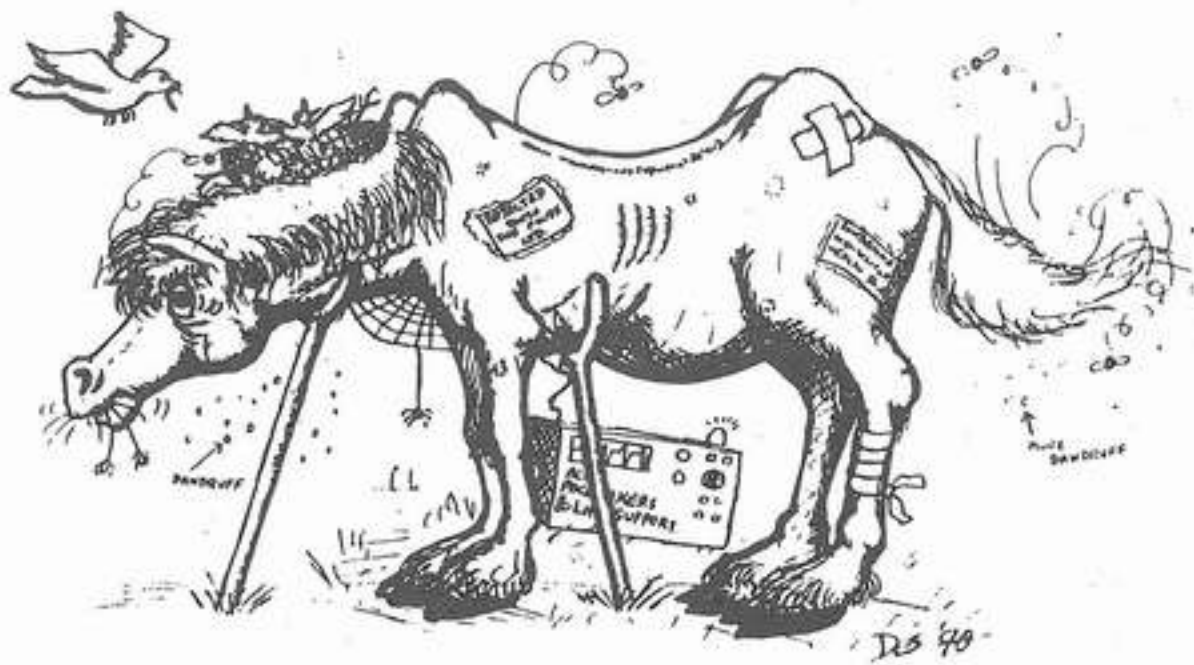
The Foundry, Edward St., Limerick.

# THE SPEAKEASY

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November

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## THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

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At odds like that you'd get a moth-eaten bag of bones who hadn't a hope of finishing, let alone winning.

But these are exactly the odds you are playing against with the Lotto jackpot.

Just thought you might like to know.

## ARE IRISH EMPLOYERS GOING TO SELL THE COUNTRY OUT?

Mary Kehelly, Secretary of Limerick's Trades Council, has expressed concern that Irish companies will not reinvest their profits in this country when the Single European Market becomes fully operational in 1992.

If Irish entrepreneurs don't show more practical patriotism the future looks grim with unemployment and emigration continuing to rise.

Mary told Hatch 33 that Irish employers should not contribute any further to the Black Hole of our economy:

*"Unless our own entrepreneurs invest here in Ireland, we will be faced with the double problem of foreign firms exporting their profits out of the country and our own firms investing elsewhere,"* she explained.

*"Unless our native firms are very short sighted, and have no commitment whatsoever to their Country, they won't continue to add to the winding down of our Economy."*

If present trends continue Irish industries and workforce will disappear and it will be very difficult to restore them again.

Mary fears the Ireland of the 1990's will resemble the fifties, with the country, "becoming a land for the very young or very old."

An increasing number of people are relying on social welfare she told Hatch 33.

*"The Poverty Trap is worsening and is now entrapping more people in its mesh."*

The biggest challenge facing the Irish people, especially the trade union movement, is the creation of proper jobs with proper pay and conditions.

Mary also feels that basic rights such as access to education, to health facilities and to our courts are being denied to the ordinary people.

*"Are these rights going to be left again more and more to market forces?"*

## SCARRIFF ADVISORY CENTRE

In September a social welfare advisory centre was opened in Scarriff to cater for unemployed people in East Clare who can't afford to travel to Limerick.

Staffed by two volunteers, the centre is open between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the last Thursday of every month.

To help the Scarriff service get off the ground, social welfare advisors from the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed are attending the clinics to assist the volunteers and provide training.

The Scarriff office is situated at the Coolenbridge Community Co-operative on Main Street.

## IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH

Having a good grasp of the English language can be the passport to a job and promotion.

If you can't express your thoughts clearly and find difficulty in writing it can be a hindrance in your search for work.

You may be the most intelligent guy in the world but if your English is bad people will tend to think that you're dim.

To help you improve your English the Centre is putting on an English Improve course that will assist students to think, speak and write more fluently.

If you want to find out more about improving your English contact John or Bernie at 33 Thomas Street.

## GINGERBREAD

Gingerbread, the organisation for parents who have to bring up children on their own, has changed its address to the Bishops House in Nicholas Street, Limerick.

Meetings for new members are held every Tuesday night between 8-9 p.m. and all are welcome.

### PAUL SURVEY

A lot of unemployed people turn up their nose when offered a place on a social employment scheme.

They think that Job Search and SES schemes are of no use to them and just a complete waste of time.

To find out what puts people off doing social employment schemes the 'People Against Unemployment in Limerick' organisation has done a survey.

Over 350 unemployed people have been interviewed and asked for their opinion of such schemes.

The survey, which was carried out by researchers from the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed survey, will help PAUL assess the value of social employment schemes.

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## GIG GUIDE

NOVEMBER

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Friday 9th

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Saturday 10th

Local Rock Showcase featuring A

Touch of Oliver and the

Cranberry Saw Us

Sunday 11th

The Bogus Brothers

Thursday 15th

Poacher (English C & W)

Friday 16th

T.B.C.

Saturday 17th

T.B.C.

Friday 23rd

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