



SCROOGE IS ALIVE AND WELL



CHRISTMAS, the Season of Goodwill and Charity, is also the season of Exploitation and Grasping Opportunism.

Low income households, desperate for the money to get through the winter, see family members being taken on by employers who pay miserly wages.

Employers who expect people to work for £1 an hour have been condemned by Michael Condon, President of Limerick Trades Council.

"Anyone who pays such miserable wages is nothing more than a money grubbing Scrooge," Michael told Hatch 33.

The worst offenders are the fast food chains, some hotels and people involved in the catering and cleaning services.

These are areas in which, traditionally, women have been badly paid and exploited.

Many women whose husbands are unemployed get work in these jobs to bring extra money into the house.

However, they are reluctant to seek higher wages because if they earn over £50 a week their husbands' dole is cut by the Department of Social Welfare.

Michael told Hatch 33 that this policy gives employers the green light to pay women a pittance.

"The government must take some responsibility for the situation which has been allowed to develop", he said.

"It's a terribly unjust society where a spouse whose partner is receiving benefits of some kind can only go out and accept less than £50 a week."

Because of this it's impossible to break out of the poverty that many families suffer as a result of unemployment.



Contd From Page 1

What's the solution? For those on the receiving end, there is none at this time. They are forced by economic necessity to accept the situation and are afraid to protest against it for fear of losing what little they have.

The solution is to see to it that a basic living wage is made available to all. People should not be forced into the situation where they have to accept such treatment.

Meanwhile, over this Christmas the Scrooges of Limerick will be fondling their money while their employees make do with a very thin purse.

VIOLENCE OVER CHRISTMAS

Christmas generally brings out the best in people. However for some families Christmas can be hell.

Violent husbands who take too much to drink are even more likely to beat up their wives and abuse the children.

Women who have come to the end of their tether are desperate to escape from the violence but often don't know what to do.

Adapt House in Rosbrien (Tel. 061-42354) offers a temporary refuge and help to victims of family violence.

The best way to keep a violent husband away from the family is to obtain a Barring Order from the Courts.

But this procedure can take a number of weeks to go through the legal system.

In the meantime women can get a Protection Order which states that the man shall not threaten or molest his wife or children.

This Protection Order is enforced by the gardai who have the authority to prevent any further violence.

Anyone requiring such protection should immediately contact the District Court Clerk at the Civic Hall on Merchants Quay (Tel. 44300).

A sworn oath is all that is needed to obtain a Protection Order.

The next step is to apply to the district court for a Barring Order.

To speed up the legal process, it is strongly advised that the applicant should go to the Free Legal Aid Service and obtain the help of a solicitor.

The Free Legal Aid office is located on Lower Mallow Street, Limerick (Tel. 314599 or 314223).

New deal for lone parents

The Minister for Social Welfare introduced a new Lone Parent's Allowance for men and women who, for a variety of reasons, are bringing up children on their own.

The Lone Parent's Allowance brings together, under one umbrella, those schemes which cater for lone parents:

- Unmarried Mother's Allowance
- Deserted Wife's Allowance
- Widow's (Non-Contributory) Pension

- Widower's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Prisoner's Wife's Allowance
- Deserted Husband's Allowance

If you receive any of the above you are automatically on the new scheme and don't have to apply.

For the first time, separated people, unmarried fathers and husbands of prisoners are eligible for the allowance under the new scheme.

To get the allowance you have to have at least one dependent child and not be living with someone as husband or wife.

Applicants have also to satisfy a means test.

Separated people are eligible if they:

- have been separated for over three months
- make efforts to get maintenance from the spouse
- do not have adequate maintenance from the spouse

The amount of the weekly Lone Parent's Allowance depends on your

WHEN YOU'RE BOTH
MOTHER AND FATHER
BROUGHT INTO ONE



THE NEW
LONE PARENT'S
ALLOWANCE
COULD HELP

means but the payment can be £66.50 for yourself and one child.

Extra payments are provided for each additional child.

The Allowance is paid by a book of payable orders which will be sent to the Post Office or your choice.

For further details and information about claim forms contact the Social Welfare advisors at the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed. Phone 46056 or 45090.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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

HATCH 33 and the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed wish all our readers and friends a



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The Centre will close on Friday 21st December
and will re-open Monday 7th January.



FREE CLASSES

INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS

This course will provide a general introduction to the microcomputer, covering simple programming and general computing concepts. It will also look at general computer applications in the office.

ART

If you have an interest in art, the Art class will give a foundation in the principles of drawing, picture construction, perspective, and drawing from life.

PHOTOGRAPHY (+ An Introduction to Video)

Black and white photography, framing your subject, darkroom techniques and developing. For anyone with an interest in taking more than snapshots. The course also hopes to cover some elements of video making.

LOTUS 1-2-3 (Electronic Spreadsheet)

General introduction to microcomputers. Building and using Spreadsheets. Setting up a Database - extracting and sorting data. Using graphics to illustrate spreadsheets.

In the New Year the Limerick Centre for the Unemployed is organising another series of educational classes.

Although details of the programme have yet to be finalised John O'Reagan and Bernie Ryan, educational officers at the Centre, told hatch 33 that they have a fair idea of what will be available.

"Old favourites such as Art and Photography will definitely be on, as will the Typing and Word Processor courses," John said.

"I'm also pretty certain that a number of computer related courses will be on offer including Introduction to Computers, Computerised Office Procedure and Lotus 1-2-3."

If John can find qualified tutors he hopes to provide French, Russian and German classes next year.

The wine making class run last term was such a hit that there are plans to run the course again.

Any one interested in signing on for courses at the Centre should contact John or Bernie at 33 Thomas Street, Limerick. Tel. 45056.

The Centre will be closing down on Friday 21st December and reopening on Monday 7th January.

ENGLISH IMPROVER

Improve your language skill in basic English. How to think, speak, and write more fluently.

COMPUTERISED OFFICE PROCEDURES

Using the microcomputer as an accounting tool. Computerised book keeping - Sales, Purchases, Invoices, Ledgers, Trial Balance, etc.

WORD PROCESSING

This course is designed to develop your skill and knowledge of basic operating techniques. It aims to familiarise the student with technical terms and will help to transfer word processing skills to any word processing system.

TYPING

A course in keyboard skills, which are essential as the keyboard is still the most commonly used business machine. Not only the typewriter, but also word processors, computer terminals, and accounting machines are keyboard operated. This course also covers letter layout and tabs, smooth and correct finger movement, and how to apply learned techniques to practical work.

ENGLISH IMPROVER

Improve your language skill in basic English. How to think, speak, and write more fluently.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE

... was originally introduced to Victorian England from Germany. Prints of a picture of the Royal Family were gathered around their German fir tree were very popular and was the image that made the Christmas tree an essential part of the festival.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

The old Saxon midwinter festival celebrating the rebirth of the sun - the season of Iakla-tid (Yule-tide) - lasted twelve days.

This festival was adopted by the early Christian Church along with many other pre-Christian traditions and became the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!.. You don't mean that, I am sure?"

"I do", said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come then... What right have you to be dismal?... You're rich enough."

...Dickens 'A Christmas Carol'.

HOLLY

... is among the oldest of the Christmas symbols, but was again adapted from Pagan tradition. Centuries before Christ, the holly was a sacred tree, and its branches were used as decoration during the wild Roman midwinter feast of Saturn - the Saturnalia.

DICKENS

THE MAN WHO GAVE CHRISTMAS TO THE PEOPLE

Our front page this issue features a Scrooge theme. Ebenezer Scrooge, the greatest of all misers, was created by Charles Dickens. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without Dickens. But before the television swamps us in sugar-coated pictures, let's think about what Dickens really said.

Charles Dickens created Christmas in his Christmas books. A Christmas Carol, The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth, and the Pickwick Papers all contributed to and helped create the Victorian image of Christmas which is to most people still the only "real" Christmas.

More than that Dickens' books were responsible for the growth of conscience among the wealthy classes in the mid 19th Century, even if that conscience didn't last much past the festive season.

Through his books, Dickens tried to promote social change. He was profoundly moved by the plight of the working class in his time, particularly the abominable disregard for the welfare of children. He believed that it was Ignorance and Poverty that debased and drove them to crime, contrary to the accepted view of the time that the Poor were Poor because they deserved to be Poor.

His Christmas Carol is probably the best known and loved of his books today, although most people will know it through the countless television, film and cartoon versions rather than through reading it. At the time of its publication, Lord Jeffrey wrote to Dickens, "Blessings on your kind heart... you may have done more good by this little publication, fostered more kind feelings, and promoted more positive acts of beneficence than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals in Christendom."

His books exposed the awful cruelty of the Victorian legal system and the indifference of the wealthy to the working classes. He became, in his own lifetime, 'the champion of the poor!' His books are still relevant in that they expose attitudes that are still with us. Ebenezer Scrooge's philosophy of 'political economy' when we heard of infant mortality among the poor was "if they be like to die, then they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

How many warm, well-fed households this Christmas will hear those, or similar, words while the sherry is passed and the economy is discussed.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Santa, as we know him today, was born in 1823 in a poem written by a New York professor, Dr. Clement Clarke Moore. This character was based on the much older, mythical, Dutch gift-bringer, Santa Klaus. He, in turn, was derived from the 6th century Turkish bishop, St. Nicholas who was supposed to have worked a variety of miracles in his lifetime.

There were a number of other gift-bringers scattered around Europe. These gradually lost out to the St. Nick of Moore's poem, now known largely as Santa Claus. His red and white outfit came from a Coca Cola advertising campaign showing Santa drinking the real thing.



"There's a great deal of nonsense talked about Want.. ha! ha! ha! - and I intend to Put It Down. There's a certain amount of cant in vogue about Starvation, and I mean to Put It Down!.. you may Put Down anything among this sort of people, if you only know the way to set about it!"

...Dickens "The Chimes"

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

At winter solstice, the very dark time of the year, lights played a part in pagan celebrations. Candles were burned in ancient Rome to symbolize the rebirth of the sun, which followed the solstice. These midwinter candles were adopted by the church and in more modern times have been replaced to a large extent by fairy lights and electric candles in household decoration.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

With the advent of a reliable and fast postal system, the sending of Christmas cards became more and more popular. The first card probably appeared around 1843, and they were sent in steadily increasing numbers, until nowadays the postal system is swamped every year with the Christmas Post - probably their largest single source of revenue.

MISTLETOE

The Druids of ancient Britain held mistletoe sacred as a symbol of everlasting love. They believed its berries stored the seminal fluid of trees through the winter darkness, ready to give them new life in the spring.

The Christian Church has never formally adopted the symbol of the mistletoe, the tradition had too much popularity to disappear from the midwinter feast.



Life Beyond The Long Mile Road

- A Review of Limerick Music in 1990 -

Looking back, 1990 was an important year for music in Limerick.

Two new venues, The Savoy and Arthur's Warehouse, opened their doors for live music. The bad news filtered through of TUESDAY BLUE being dropped from EMI America on the eve of their second album.

Their break up was a sad affair but the outcome was positive with Ray Fean going on to NO SWEAT, Mike Ryan pursuing solo work and Dave Keary turning to session playing.

There was still a lot happening down by the Shannon and it's safe to say Limerick is far from dead where music is concerned. The thriving local scene puts paid to the adage that life ends on the Long Mile Road.

The continuing growth of the Xeric label is a case in point. Operating out of Xeric studios in the Shannon foundry, the label put out its debut single from PRIVATE WORLD, "THE BLUE GEM SEA", in September '89. 1990 saw the release of Limerick's first ever compilation album "THE REINDEER AGE".

Since then the label has flourished with releases of THE HITCHERS (winners of the 1990 S'kool bands competition), TOO MUCH FOR THE WHITE MAN, and, at last, local heroes TOUCANDANCE.

The TOUCANS single "GREEN EYES" sees them getting their live sound down on vinyl for the first time. Cassette releases are forthcoming from THE CRANBERRY SAW US and JOE BROWNE and the DIRTY DOG REVIEW.

They also put out a full cassette album of the legendary MICKO RUSSEL thus showing the boundaries they wish to explore and make available.

The 24 track Xeric Studios has had a busy year with PHILIP DONNELLY cutting an album and



all the Xeric Label acts recording there. Run by Pierce Gilmore and James Hanly, it has answered a vital need for young bands and established artists. Recording facilities of its type are now not just the property of Dublin alone.

The demo tape scene is getting some serious attention from Limerick Muses. A TOUCH OF OLIVER have put out four tapes so far, each one of seeing them broaden their experience. They are also gaining their own sound.

THE COUP, a fine piece whose influences border 70's punk and late 60's psychedelia, have produced a fine collection of original songs on their present 4 track demo. The same can be said for THE CRANBERRY SAW US who have an excellent female singer in their ranks.



What about the bands that have not yet recorded, not yet put their own plans for World domination in action. This year some new names have come my way including metallers DRIVESHAFT and the Cult-influenced BLUE FLAMES. Add to those solo act PATRICK DOODY and the Bauhausean STEMPLE SCHNEIDER BLACK.

All of these show the determination of people to create music and use it for their own individual statements. Plainly, the scene is alive and very much kicking.

THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS spent much of the year in Dublin with college commitments. However the gigs they did play and their 2nd demo tape show them coming on to a more mature and confident phase.

For a long time it looked as if TOUCANDANCE would never get anything released. Losing one of their original members, they plugged on to eventually get Tony Brennan into the lineup. Just one month ago they finally got "GREEN EYES", their debut single, into the shops.

Eamon Hehir qualifies for being the most articulate songwriter I've laid ears on and it's great that at last the Toucans have a product to show the general market. Quality in their work was never in doubt. This year has been a revitalisation period for them.

John O'Regan



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UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMIGRATION:

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THE ELECTION of Mary Robinson has opened up a new era in Irish politics and change is in the air.

Within weeks of the Robinson victory all the political parties are talking about the necessity of dealing with the issue of divorce.

It's a remarkable turnout, given that only four years have elapsed since the 1986 Divorce Referendum.

Everybody thought that the pro-divorce lobby had been so heavily defeated that the possibility of having another referendum wouldn't be raised for many a long day.

But all that has changed since Mary Robinson, who symbolises modern progressive politics in Ireland, took over Aras an Uachtarain.

First John Bruton, the new leader of Fine Gael, started talking about divorce and now the younger members of Fianna Fail want Haughey to do something about it.

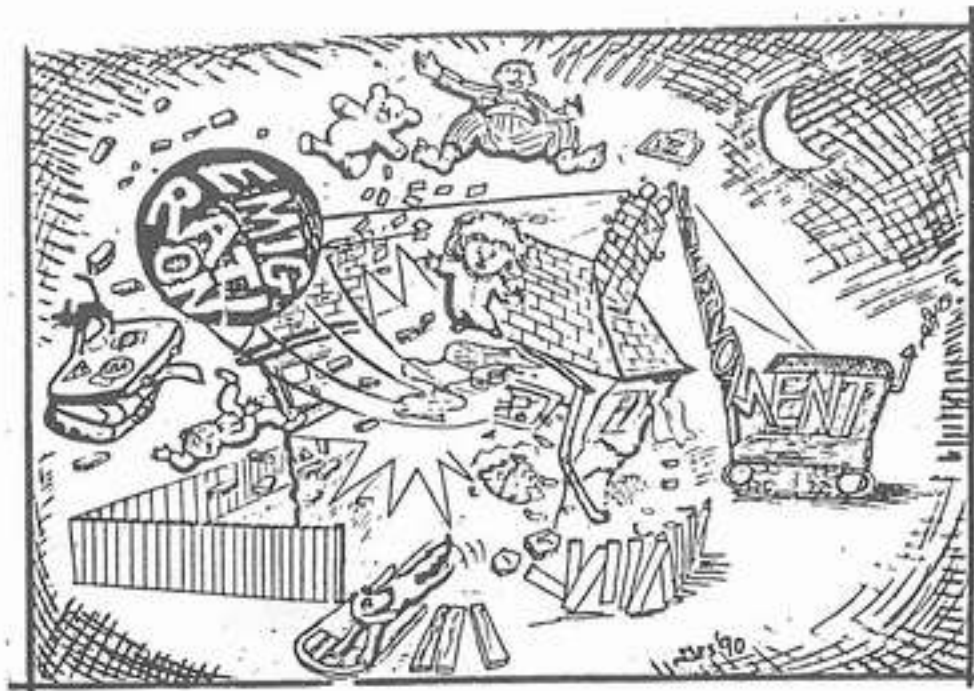
Which is all very fine and dandy.

It is true there is an obvious need for legislation to allow people to escape from the misery of broken marriages.

However when it comes to unemployment there is a deafening silence from the 'New Liberals'.

None of them are putting forward positive proposals on how to provide jobs for Irish people.

All we get is platitudes about creating the right conditions for private enterprise to make profits and hopefully (only hopefully mind you) everyone will benefit.



Granted, social welfare payments are keeping people alive but Man doesn't live by bread alone; dignity and self respect are every bit as necessary.

These 'new liberals' who claim that they are ever so trendy and progressive when they talk about divorce are pulling the wool over our eyes.

They only want to tinker about with the system and change a few laws here and there.

But that is not going to improve the lives of those of us who will still have to queue, week in, week out for social welfare handouts.

We are now in a situation where we have second-generation unemployment; as children of unemployed parents leave school they face the bleak prospect of never having a job in Ireland.

The Mary Robinson victory has led to rising expectations of change for the better in this country.

It is time to see some results from all this for the unemployed.

Urgent action by the government is required now to end the curse of unemployment.

Unemployment, not divorce, is the biggest social problem facing this country.

David Lee

PEACE ON EARTH DEATH TO IRAQ

In the background this Christmas looms the prospect of war in the Middle East.

Although war is not inevitable the signs are not looking hopeful for a peaceful settlement.

President Bush has initiated talks with Baghdad but only time will tell whether or not they are just a publicity stunt to cover American's preparations for war.

The militarists in Washington and London are predicting a short sharp conflict in which the Iraq army and

airforce will be crushed in Kuwait.

More than likely America and her allies will give Iraq a bloody nose but there is no guarantee that Saddam Hussein will immediately sue for peace.

Once started, war feeds on itself and develops a momentum of its own.

Unforeseen events throw into confusion the best laid plans of generals and the conflict escalates out of control.

Given the political instability in the Middle East an American attack

on Kuwait could plunge the region into chaos. Tens of thousands of civilians and servicemen would be killed.

Surely the best way to deal with the crisis is to allow the harsh economic sanctions imposed on Iraq to do their work and force Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait.

It may take 18 months for the sanctions to achieve this objective but that's far more preferable than a bloodbath in the Middle East.

David Lee

In the frontline of the fight for jobs and higher living standards ...

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