

GMIT Vision



2006 - 2007

The logo for Innovation in Business Centre (liBC) features the letters 'liBC' in a stylized font. The 'i' is orange, 'l' is white, 'B' is white, and 'C' is white. There are blue and orange squares around the letters. A yellow arc is above the letters.

Innovation in Business Centre
Ionad Nuálaíochta i nGnó



GMIT

GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EO

Innovation in Business Centre (liBC)

The Innovation in Business Centres (liBC) at GMIT Castlebar and GMIT Galway are strategic resources for new start-up companies.

The liBC supports the development of new enterprises in the region by providing incubation space and business development supports for the nurturing of new ideas and the commercialisation of applied research. It is another step in GMIT's innovative approach towards facilitating learning and economic development in the regions.

Supported by Enterprise Ireland, the Innovation in Business Centres also provide a Concept Desk facility to support entrepreneurs who have a good idea for a new business venture, which may in time develop into a project for the incubation space.

Business development supports available to new start-up companies cover such areas as Marketing, Sales, Finance, Legal, Intellectual Property, Export Development, Mentoring, Networking and access to Research competencies at the Institute.

The liBC enables companies to work in a secure, innovative, entrepreneurial environment as they progress through the various stages of a new company start-up.

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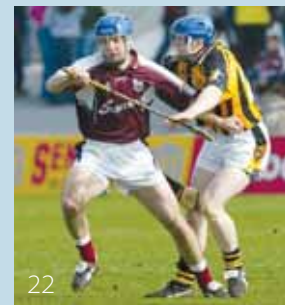
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editor's note

Welcome to the first issue of *GMIT Vision*. This publication is intended to give you a glimpse of events and activities in the college and its campuses over the past academic year.

The articles, interviews and news items we've gathered together reflect the variety and vibrancy of life in the college. We're proud of our achievements, our award-winning students and staff, and the growth in the range of our taught programmes and research activity.

GMIT is very much at the heart of the social, cultural and economic life of Mayo and Galway, with two campuses in Galway city, one each in Castlebar and Letterfrack, and links with Mountbellew Agricultural College.

The Institute is strongly committed to fostering and facilitating regional development, through all its activities and through its links with business and industry, community groups, and cultural organisations. We want to develop our network of relationships in the west, so feel free to contact us at any time.



Regina Daly
Editor

GMIT Vision is published by the GMIT Communications Office. We welcome your thoughts on this publication. Please send them by post to:
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GMIT Governing Body

The GMIT Governing Body was established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992. It comprises a Chairman and 17 ordinary members, as well as the Director of the college. Members are appointed by the Minister for Education, six of whom are drawn from the Vocational Education Committee(s), two from academic staff, one non-academic, two from the student body, one from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Ictu), and five from organisations in agriculture, business & industry,

and the professions.

The Governing Body manages and controls the affairs of the college including all its property. It performs the functions conferred on it by the Act and has all such powers as necessary to carry out those functions, subject to policies determined by the Minister for Education. The ordinary members, with the exception of the two student representatives, are appointed for a period of five years, with effect from 1st April 2005.



Back row, L-R: Jim Fennell, GMIT Financial Controller and Governing Body Secretary; Debbie Molloy, Outgoing President, GMIT Students Union; Hugh McBride, GMIT academic staff; Andrew D'Arcy, Head of Development, GMIT; Bernard O'Hara, GMIT Registrar; Dr Deirdre O'Keefe, Fáilte Ireland; Chris McLoughlin, GMIT staff; Cllr Teresa Maguire, Mayo Co Council; Brian Walsh, City of Galway VEC; Padraic Flesk, Incoming President, GMIT Students Union;

Front row, L-R: Carmel Brennan, Galway Chamber; Donagh O'Donoghue, Ibec; Maria Heneghan, Teagasc; Marion Coy, Director GMIT; Rory O'Connor, Chairman, GMIT; Dr Íde Ni Fhaoláin, GMIT academic staff; and Seosamh MacDonncha, Co Galway VEC. (Missing from photo: Brendan O'Colleran, City of Galway VEC, Joe Beirne, Institution of Engineers Ireland; Joe Cunningham, Ictu; Fidelma Healy-Eames, Co Galway VEC; and Pat McMahan, Co Clare VEC).

L-R: Mayor of Galway City Niall O'Brolcháin; Lucy Shale, UK; Isabelle Frechede, France; Christian Goethals, Belgium; Beit Finne, Norway; Darja Stihler, Slovenia; Paul Midha, UK; Acosta Garcia, Spain; Stuart Jauncey, Head of Hotel School, GMIT; Anne Brindley, Project Co-ordinator, GMIT; and Mary MacCague, Acting Head of Humanities, GMIT.



Eurocatering language training project

An important new language-training project for transnational placement trainees in the catering industry is to be developed in GMIT over the next two years, with funding of almost €400,000 from the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme.

A project team made up of personnel from GMIT and six other countries - Belgium, England, France, Norway, Slovenia and Spain, are

collaborating on devising and producing a web-based and DVD language-training package for trainee catering students.

The package will address the shortfall in the provision of language and cultural preparation for placement students, based on the needs identified through surveys submitted by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and trainees in the

catering industry, as well as promoters of transnational mobility projects and short-term placement trainees.

GMIT is the only Irish third-level college involved in the project.

The DVD/website will provide audio-communicative scenes with a variety of situations, which relate to the demands observed in service in the catering industry. .

The web-based and DVD language training package will be available to all vocational training organisations, hotel groups and SMEs in the catering industry.

GMIT project co-ordinator Anne Brindley says: "There is a strong demand for this training package as there is greater mobility now more than ever between third-level vocational training institutes and the catering industry in the EU. GMIT is delighted to be involved in this project."

GMIT first to run Building Energy Rating (BER) training

GMIT is currently rolling out its Building Energy Rating (BER) training programme for assessors across the country. The programme trains participants to analyse the energy efficiency rating of building, in line a new EU Directive.

The Institute is the first third-level college to offer the BER assessor training in Ireland, in consultation with sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI).

Its first round of training (of 60 assessors) took place in December 2006 in Dublin, Galway, and Cork. The second round is ongoing since February in Galway, Dublin and Cork. The first Dublin event in this round was launched in March in Dublin's Cultivate Centre by *About the House* and *EcoEye* Presenter Duncan Stewart.

The EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) obliges that the energy performance of dwellings be provided to the purchaser or tenant, so that owners/tenants know the exact energy efficiency and likely running costs of the dwelling. It also encourages designers to include new energy saving features in building design.

GMIT sees it as essential that experienced energy practitioners are used to train the Auditors in building energy assessment because of the nuances and complexity in the assessment of dwellings using the DEAP methodology. To this end, GMIT is employing experienced energy assessment practitioners to deliver



training nationally to ensure consistent assessments and informed advice for the customer.

The Institute has been innovative and dynamic in its rapid response to this training need by: developing the first certified programme nationally; allowing exemption to parts of the module based on certified prior experience, specifically for energy consultants; launching a registration web site www.buildingenergyauditing.com; using high-quality energy practitioners as trainers; and offering training at many distributed centres nationally to ensure an even spread of highly qualified assessors.

GMIT's Dr Thomas Roche, BER Programme Developer, says: "The high demand for our programme is very encouraging and is testament to GMIT's high-quality standards in education and its dynamic response to meeting national and regional needs.

"The Institute has a strong history in environmental and

energy research having established itself on the national and international stages in areas such as renewable energy technologies, biofuels, green building design, waste management, and design for environment. We have over twelve postgraduate researchers working in the field currently. Furthermore, the Mechanical Engineering Department has just launched a specialisation in its undergraduate B. Eng Degree in Mechanical Engineering on Energy Systems". added Dr Roche.

Duncan Stewart, launching the Dublin programme, said: "It is critical that the problems of our excessive and increasing CO² emissions and our over-dependence on imported fossil fuels be addressed. The role of the building energy assessor both as an energy auditor and as an energy efficiency advisor is critical and a first step to addressing these problems."

L-R: Duncan Stewart, Dr Tom Roche, BER Programme Developer, GMIT, and Ray Clarke, Researcher, GMIT.

Another first as GMIT offers woodwork teaching degree

A new woodwork teaching degree - the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Design & Technology Education, is now available at GMIT Letterfrack. GMIT is the first of the ITs to offer a woodwork teaching degree. Students who complete the four-year (Hons) programme will be qualified to teach Architectural

Technology and Design & Communication Graphics to Leaving Cert (Hons) standard. These subjects are replacing the existing Construction Studies and Technical Drawing subjects from 2007 and 2008. The new course, approved by the Dept of Education, the Teaching Council

and HETAC, is a major achievement for GMIT and meets a key objective of Michael Hannon, Head of Centre Letterfrack, on his appointment two years ago when he mobilised a team of experts to develop this teaching degree.



Full occupancy in Innovation Centre

Pictured outside the GMIT Innovation in Business Centre (liBC) at the Dublin Road campus: Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin, with George McCourt, Manager, liBC.



The Innovation in Business Centre (liBC) at the Dublin Road campus has had a very successful year since its official opening in January 2006. There is 100% occupancy: three High Potential Start ups (HPSUs) in 2006 - Novate Medical, EFAST and ATFM Solutions. Three research projects are also in place with incubation clients.

A total of 37 new jobs were created since the liBC opened (19

promoters and 18 employees). Three student projects are in place with incubation clients. The centre recently commenced a Midlands & West Enterprise Programme with Athlone IT. Ten new start-up businesses will participate on this programme in GMIT.

The liBC is managed by George McCourt who holds a B. Eng degree in Computer Systems and an MBA. He has 18 years experience with US and European multinationals in the computer, electronics, plastics and multimedia industries including nine years experience at senior manager and plant manager level. Prior to his appointment as Manager of liBC, GMIT, he established Midland Precision Tool & Die Ltd, from a green field situation. The company won the National Enterprise Award in 2002.

The liBC at the Dublin Road campus is one of two industry support centres established by

GMIT. The second centre is located at GMIT's Castlebar campus and is managed by Maria Staunton. The centre accommodates seven incubation units and two applied research units, which complement the research activity at the Castlebar campus.

The centre reached a milestone recently when one of its client companies, InTime Media, was awarded funding for an Innovation Partnership Programme from Enterprise Ireland.

InTime Media is an interactive media start-up focussed on delivering new functionality to the latest mobile phones so that users can interact directly, via their phones, with television.

The innovation partnership research programme, the first for GMIT Castlebar, will assist InTime Media in the development of its mobile phone technology. A post graduate researcher and a research officer will shortly be appointed to work for the research team under the supervision of GMIT.

The purpose of the Innovation Partnership Programme is to enable research projects through collaboration with third-level colleges such as GMIT Castlebar. This results in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction in new product and process development for companies such as InTime Media.

Bernard O'Hara, Acting Head of Centre, GMIT Castlebar, said it is a major development for the campus. "It links academic programmes with research, innovation and enterprise," he said.

The two liBCs are part of the GMIT Strategic Plan 2004–2009 to boost economic and cultural innovation and integrate research, teaching and regional development. The innovation centres will drive the new enterprise model of market-led and knowledge-based industrial development.

At the opening of the Innovation in Business Centre (liBC) at the Castlebar campus, L-R: Enterprise Ireland's Seamus Bree, Director Marion Coy, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin, and the former Head of Centre, GMIT Castlebar, now CEO of County Mayo VEC, Dr Katie Sweeney





Excellent prospects for graduates - survey

Over 90% of GMIT graduates are in further studies or employed, according to the latest GMIT Graduate Survey. The report, compiled by the Institute's Careers Office, surveyed 2,142 graduates, of which there was a 74% response rate. 69% were engaged in further study and 25% were in full-time employment. Starting salaries are shifting upwards with 47% earning in excess of €24,000. 66% are working in counties Galway, Leitrim, Mayo and Sligo while 15% of graduates are working in counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Kilkenny, Wicklow and Carlow.

Student completion rates higher than national average

A national study on completion rates for students taking courses in IOTs shows the GMIT completion rate is the highest of all the IOTs, rising from 58.6% to 81.3% in six years, 6% higher than the national average of 75%.

The report, prepared by the Circa Group for the IOT Council of Directors and DIT, looks at completion rates for students taking full time IOT programmes between 1999 and 2004. GMIT certificate and diploma completions have risen 24 percentage points above previously reported OECD sector figures to 74%, and degree-level completion in the Institute jumped to 89.6% in 2004, 13 percentage points above the OECD sector mean.

IOT Library Strategy

The first ever Institutes of Technology Libraries Strategy Statement was formally launched in GMIT in 2006, by GMIT Director Marion Coy. The five-year guiding strategy, drawn up by librarians in the State's IOTs, consists of an agreed mission statement, set of values, objectives and specific goals. Libraries play a vital role in Learning in the IOTs.

In the past 35 years IOT libraries have responded to the constant change in learning methodologies, technology and in higher education provision generally. The scale and level of cooperation has resulted in important collaborative initiatives such as the An Chéim project, which saw the Millennium library management system installed in all IOT libraries and the Partners Agreement, which allows



At the launch of the IOT Libraries Strategy Statement in GMIT, L-R: Marion Coy, Director, GMIT, Margaret Waldron, Acting Institute Librarian, GMIT, and Jim Foran, Institute Librarian, IT Sligo.

for inter-lending of stock.

A new IOT Libraries Partner Reader Card was also unveiled. The card is given to the student by their home institute and is accepted by any IOT for accessing an agreed range of services.

GMIT also launched its own Library Strategy Plan 2006-2011 in September 2006. It outlines the main focus for the library and is closely aligned to the GMIT Strategic Plan: student centred, staff centred, research-lead and regionally focused.

Science4Summer

GMIT ran its first summer school for children "Science4Summer" last year. The pilot programme was a great success and will run again this year for three weeks from Monday 9th July. The programme is supported by the Marine Institute's Explorers Programme, which promotes marine awareness in primary schools in Galway and surrounding areas.

The week-long course runs from Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm in GMIT's Dublin Road campus. The programme includes classes and practical experiments and fieldtrips on zoology and marine biology and is pitched at three levels: eight to 12 year olds (beginners), eight to 12 year olds (advanced) and



12 to 14 year olds (advanced).

GMIT Science4Summer was set up by GMIT Commercial Fisheries researcher Nóirín Burke. Brochures have been distributed to schools in the Galway area and are also available from local libraries, as well as Leisureland and Atlantaquaria in Galway city. For further information tel. 087-1301974 (m) or science4summer@gmit.ie or noirin.burke@gmit.ie





Líonra and FÁS promote entrepreneurship



At the launch of the Lionra programme: Minister Micheal Martin, Marion Coy, Director, GMIT and Paul Hannigan, Director of Letterkenny IT.

A unique programme to promote the conditions for an enterprise culture in the Border Midland and

Western (BMW) Region, by training potential entrepreneurs to set up successful businesses and for existing entrepreneurs to raise their skills levels, was launched in GMIT last year by the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment, Micheál Martin.

The programme, the Higher Certificate in Business in Enterprise Development, is a blend of practical learning, hands-on experience and one-to-one mentoring by established business people, giving learners

the know-how to run or improve a business based in the BMW region, and capable of thriving in national and global markets. At the same time successful participants can secure a recognised academic qualification.

Completion of the programme secures participants a recognised academic qualification. The two-year programme is funded by FÁS and is designed by Líonra, a collaborative higher-education network of all the third-level colleges in the BMW region.

GMIT takes enterprise programme to communities

The School of Business, GMIT, has successfully rolled out the new enterprise development programme in Galway, Ballinasloe, Tuam and the off-shore islands.

The Higher Certificate in Business in Enterprise Development is a two-year part-time programme for mature applicants including owners and managers of small businesses, those with a business idea, the farming community and people working full-time or part-time in existing enterprise.

The programme is being supported by the FÁS Training in Employment programme, which aims to increase the knowledge, skills and competencies of the Irish workforce.

The programme in Galway has 28 participants. The programme in Ballinasloe, delivered in conjunction with Athlone IT, has 22 registered. The Tuam programme, supported by the Western Traveller and Inter-cultural Development, Tuam and Tuam Chamber of Commerce, has 35 registered participants.

Martin Ward, Manager, The Western Traveller and Inter-cultural Development said the organisation is delighted to be associated with this initiative. "A lot can be gained for Tuam in relation to integration in our community from running the Higher Certificate in Business in Enterprise Development here in our centre in Tuam."

Ivan Mc Phillips, Programme Co-

ordinator, and Maureen Melvin, School of Business, GMIT, recently ran a series of short courses on enterprise development for islanders in conjunction with Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann/The Irish Islands Federation. The organisation represents islanders on 33 islands, with populations ranging from just one person to under 800.

Thirty-three islanders participated in the weekend courses which took place in Galway, Bantry and Gweedore. Discussions are ongoing between the School of Business and Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann regarding the provision of more enterprise programmes.

Allergan graduates



Back row, L-R: Jeffery Moran, Conor O'Neill, Rita Chambers, Walter Cox, Catherine Munnely, Michael Goggins, Martin O'Grady, Anthony Canning. Front row, L-R: Noirin Holland, Stella O'Malley, Nicola Harcourt, Margaret Reilly, Lena McManus, Margaret Sweeney

As part of GMIT's strategy to support regional development, a unique science course was delivered to employees of Allergan Pharmaceuticals. The Higher Certificate in Science (Good Manufacturing Practice & Technology) was delivered at the GMIT Castlebar campus over two years at times that suited the employees; Friday afternoons with some Saturdays. Modules included the core science subjects and pharmaceutical science. Students also completed a project. Many of the graduates of this course are now studying for a Bachelor degree in Pharmaceutical Technology, which is also being delivered part time at GMIT-Castlebar. Further information: Seamus Lennon, Science Dept, GMIT, Dublin Road, Galway. Tel: 091 742081.

Higher Education Authority

Science lecturer Kathleen Lough has been appointed to the HEA for a five-year term. The Statutory Authority is responsible for planning and developing higher education and research in Ireland. As well as its core role in allocating funding to the various institutions, the HEA's brief covers a very broad canvas: it is responsible for policy, strategic planning, equality of opportunity, and quality assurance in higher education.



Kathleen Lough

The Teaching Council

Assistant Registrar Michael Hannon has been appointed to the Assessment Panel of the Teaching Council, a statutory independent body replacing the Teacher Registration Council. His role is to review all programme submissions for teacher-recognition status that have a technology bias. The TC provides an important forum for presenting the views of the teaching profession on all aspects of teaching.



Michael Hannon

IRCSET

Senior lecturer in the School of Science, Dr Pauline King, has been appointed to the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET), which strives to stimulate internationally recognisable excellence in research.

Dr King's appointment is for four years. Membership includes senior academic and industry figures.



Dr Pauline King



Dr Teresa Hanley, Schools Liaison Officer, GMIT

GMIT Schools Liaison Officer

Dr Teresa Hanley was appointed GMIT Schools Liaison Officer in January 2005. Her role is to further develop GMIT's relationship with second-level students, career guidance counsellors and teachers in schools in the region. Dr Hanley visits schools, giving presentations on GMIT programmes and activities in all its campuses. She also co-ordinates visits to the Institute from schools and Career Guidance

Counsellors, attends national and regional conferences and fairs, and co-ordinates 'GMIT Taster Programmes' which give secondary-level students a chance to sample GMIT programmes in areas such as: Engineering, Maths & Computing, Business & Technology, Humanities, Science, and Hotel & Catering Management Studies. email: teresa.hanley@gmit.ie tel. (091) 742186/(087) 9162932.



Mary Healy, Hotel School Placement Officer, GMIT

GMIT Hotel School Placement Officer

GMIT graduate and lecturer Mary Healy has been appointed Placement Officer to the GMIT School of Hotel & Catering Management Studies. The School has long recognised the value of practical learning through work experience. Students can now get placements throughout Ireland, the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and the US. Further opportunities are currently being sourced in countries such as Dubai & Canada. The work placements

are in prestigious establishments in well-known worldwide hotel groups. All courses now have compulsory work placements and are fully quality assured. By investigating best practice across the globe, the Hotel School has developed flexible methods of assessing placements. The Placement Officer also organises the popular annual Graduate Recruitment Fair. email: mary.healy@gmit.ie or telephone the Hotel School: (091) 742343/22209.



Shaping the future

An interview with the Director - Marion Coy

by Lorna Siggins, *The Irish Times*

If Marion Coy's office at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) can boast the best balcony in any Irish third-level institution, the incumbent also has a vision to match. "We're living longer, getting more confident, but our timelines are shorter," she says. "Yet in an organisation like this, people have to be able to think together, and to think much further ahead."

One recent development facilitating this has been the Institutes of Technology Act 2006. Under the new legislation, a range of responsibilities relating to the governance, funding and operations of the State's 14 institutes of technology have been transferred from the Department of Education and Science to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The HEA already holds responsibility for the seven universities.

"In the US they are fascinated at the idea that we [GMIT] can have apprentices studying at one end and PhDs at another."

The legislation aims to extend significant new managerial and academic autonomy to the institutes - as in the 13 originally established as regional technical colleges, along with Dublin Institute of Technology. The background to the Act was a belief

that control by the Department of Education did not allow for full potential to be achieved. The recent OECD report on Irish third-level education supported this in recommending greater autonomy.

Marking publication of the legislation in early 2006, Minister for Education Mary Hanafin said it would allow for a "cohesive" approach to the strategic development of higher education, "drawing on the diverse strengths of all of our universities and institutes." Marion Coy hopes it will create a better environment, but regrets that "regional" was omitted from the legislation's title.

"We're too small a country, and we're not going to get anywhere unless we view the region as a entity," she explains. "Nothing will happen immediately as a result of this, but it will create the conditions for a more flexible response to the challenges coming our way. It will create a coherence, it will facilitate decision-making, and will enable us to work towards meeting our national objectives."

The GMIT Director is committed to diversity in education. As a

mother of three, she believes "one pot" does not "fit all" in terms of individual needs - and in terms of educational models. She also believes one should study subjects one feels a passion for. Originally from Glenamaddy, Co Galway, she took History and English at NUI, Galway (then UCG), and thought about teaching and journalism before opting for the former.

People are not holding their hands out for grants here. What they want, and are entitled to, is better infrastructure, like roads, broadband, and general access which can provide a counterbalance to Dublin.

In 2002, she succeeded Dr Gay Corr, then retiring, as Director of GMIT. She is responsible for the education and welfare of 9,000 students on four campuses in Galway, Letterfrack and Castlebar, and the direction that GMIT takes during her ten-year tenure.



"In the US they are fascinated at the idea that we can have apprentices studying at one end and PhDs at another," she says. "Their system is so boxed in and they have huge problems with social cohesion as a result."

She has been watching the progress of US senator Barack Obama, one of the Democratic Party's "possibles" for presidential nomination. Obama, the son of a Kenyan and US mixed marriage, was raised in Indonesia and Hawaii, studied political science and worked for a non-profit organisation in Chicago, before pursuing law at Harvard. He lectured in constitutional law at the University of Chicago from 1993 until his federal election.

"I've been monitoring his path since 2003, and it is the nearest thing to watching a rising star," Marion Coy says. "It doesn't matter if he doesn't become US president, but he has created the climate for someone like him to run for that office."

"Similarly, if you come here to GMIT to take a two-year certificate and you then discover the confidence, passion and sense of your own capacity, there are places you can go, and things you can do here that you might never have thought of before," she says.

"When one looks at social cohesion and economic development, underlying all that is the business of individual development - and creating the opportunities for that."

The Director's holistic approach to education extends to GMIT's place within the city environment. She would like to see the institute working with Galway City and Galway County Councils to develop community facilities in what she describes as something of a cultural "black hole" on the east side.

In terms of the region, she is firmly committed to bridging the east-west economic divide, and has delivered numerous papers at conferences on same. "We are very good at planning and not very

good at implementing, and yet the way we deal with the west coast is going to be very significant for the future of the island," she says.

GMIT's student completion rate is now six per cent higher than the national average, rising from 58.6 per cent to 81.3 per cent in six years.

"People are not holding their hands out for grants here. What they want, and are entitled to, is better infrastructure, like roads, broadband, and general access which can provide a counterbalance to Dublin. This is not just about the western rail corridor. When you look at the pressure on Dublin airport, for instance, you can see the enormous potential of Shannon as a base for developing hubs."

GMIT's student completion rate is now six per cent higher than the national average, rising from 58.6 per cent to 81.3 per cent in six years. Marion Coy believes the

Institutes of Technology Act will allow for the operational freedom to develop new courses, which may push this figure even higher. She would like to see establishment of a new centre for studying digital and social networking and the impact of same. "We need to create an opportunity to look beyond the gadgets, if you like."

"You take the iPod - what a brilliant name - which is all-pervasive and which creates a cocoon from reality. One can imagine some difficulties arising if people think that a digital world would be preferable to that reality. At the same time, the digital world also provides spaces for people to re-engage with others."

Institutes of Technology (or RTCs) created a new landscape in education 20 to 30 years ago, she notes. Their "three pillars" involved promoting the economic development of the country, developing the regions in which they were located, and dealing with issues of socio-economic disadvantage. Marion Coy believes the institutes will continue to reshape that landscape, and she intends to remain true to that remit.

Director of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) since 2002, Marion Coy cut her educational teeth teaching at second-level in Dublin before joining GMIT as a lecturer in Communications in the early 1980s. The Institute was then known as the Regional Technical College or 'RTC'.

In 1993 she set up a new Department of Humanities and successfully lobbied for the establishment of an arts-based campus in the city, Cluain Mhuire. Under her guidance RTC Galway became one of the first Irish colleges to offer theology courses. She was appointed Head

of Business Studies & Humanities in 1998 and succeeded Dr Gay Corr as Director in 2002.

As Director of GMIT, Marion oversees a community of almost 9,000 students and 1,000 staff in five schools - Business, Engineering, Hotel & Catering Management, Humanities, and Science & Computing, spread over four campuses - two in Galway, one in Castlebar and Letterfrack, and a link with Mountbellew College.

She has three children and lives near Tuam with her husband Joe, who teaches second-level English in Glenamaddy, her hometown.



Business students win Newstalk competition

L - R: Denis O'Brien;
Cathal Flanagan,
team captain,
Headford;
Eoin Tighe, Tuam;
Conor Moran,
Salthill;
Dermot Healy,
Renmore



A team from the School of Business won the inaugural Newstalk 106-108 fm Student Enterprise Competition, seeing off 259 teams and some 1,000 students from all over Ireland. The competition, run in association with *The Irish Times* and campus.ie,

was set up to foster a spirit of enterprise in IT colleges.

The winning team are all final-year students on the Bachelor of Business (Hons) programme in GMIT's Dublin road campus, Galway. For their prize, the GMIT team and their mentor Shane

Moran and coach Carmel Brennan will travel to the Caribbean where they will shadow 'real time' decision makers in the Digicel Group. The prize includes a three-month internship for each of the four winners from GMIT.

President presents awards to Letterfrack students



The President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, officially opened the new Furniture Gallery in Letterfrack in 2006 and presented six delighted students with their Student of the Year awards. The students got top marks in their

respective programmes - Furniture Production and Furniture Design & Manufacture. The President addressed a large gathering and paid tribute to students and staff in the Letterfrack campus. She unveiled a wooden plaque to

Pictured after the presentation of the Student of the Year awards, L-R: Director Marion Coy, Martin McAleese and President Mary McAleese with students Noel Whelan, Ennis; David Duffy, Kells; Nigel Paxton, Cartron Hill, Sligo; and Alan Flannery, Castlebar.

mark the opening of the new gallery, and was presented with a specially made cake from the School of Hotel & Catering Management to mark her birthday on the day.

GMIT Scholarships



Recipients of the GMIT Sports & Cultural Scholarships 2006, from counties Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Clare, Donegal and Offaly.

Back row, L-R: Ada Farrar, SU President, Castlebar campus; Mark Bevans, Birr, Co. Offaly (Hurling); Mark Regan, Co. Clare (Hurling), Castlebar campus; Eoin Concannon, Renmore, Galway City (Gaelic Football); Padraic Flesk, SU Vice-President, Galway; Donal Shine, Drum, Co. Roscommon (Gaelic Football); Gearoid O Leidhinn, Salthill, Galway (Soccer); Wayne Murphy, Cultural Award, Castlebar campus; Debbie Molloy, SU President, Galway; Paul Conroy, Renmore, Galway City (Soccer); and Aidan Campbell, Swinford, Co. Mayo (Gaelic Football). Front row, L-R: Lorraine O' Connor, Co Clare, (Gaelic Football), Castlebar campus; Dara Reid, Castlebar campus (Handball); Marion Coy, Director GMIT; Martina Conroy, Killimor, Co. Galway (Camogie); and Paul McGinley, Killybegs, Co. Donegal (Gaelic Football).



Recipients of the GMIT Academic Scholarships 2006, from counties Galway, Mayo, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny and Longford.

Back row, L-R: Jamie Wilson, Castlecomer, Kilkenny; Teresa Nolan, Clarinbridge, Co Galway; Michelle Finnegan, Ballycostello, Dunmore, Co. Galway; Iarla Fitzpatrick, Convent Road, Claremorris, Co Mayo; Grainne Feeney, Killarainy, Moycullen, Co Galway; Laura Cunningham, Clareview Park, Ballybane, Galway. Front row, L-R: Brian Kelliher, Killarney, Co. Kerry; Lorna Halligan, Loughill, Ardagh, Co Longford; Marion Coy, Director GMIT; Katherine Egerton, Duntaheen, Fermoy, Co Cork; and Patrick Moore, Ballyshannon, Carbury, Co Kildare.



Top award for Hotel Management students



L-R: Student Robert Spillane, Killarney; Gerry O'Neill, GMIT Tutor; student Tara Kennedy, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary; Gregory Alken, Febvre & Co; Douglas Jordan, Chairman of IHI, presenting the trophy to Deirdre Bourke, GMIT Captain, Caherdavin Park, Co. Limerick; student Helen Cormack, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary; Seán O'Malley, Fáilte Ireland; and student Mark McNamara from Westport, Co. Mayo.

Hotel & Catering Management students scored top marks in the Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI) Business Management Game 2007, in association with Champagne Taittinger and Fáilte Ireland. The overall prize was a three-day tutored trip for the team and its tutor to Champagne Taittinger's

historic Château de la Marquetterie and Vineyards in Reims, North East France, courtesy of wine importers Febvre.

Ten teams in total spent two days devising a strategy, planning and managing a fictitious hospitality business operated in a simulated dynamic business

environment and created by HOTS, company leader in hospitality business management simulation software. Each team's business dealt with real-life issues including interaction with competitors and the wider business environment, while managing a number of internal business issues put to them.

Údarás scholarships



Grúpa macléinn Gaeltachta, atá sa chéad bhliain den cúrsa céime BA (Gnó & Cumarsáid) i GMIT. Bhronn an An t-Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, Éamon Ó Cuív scoláireachtaí, urraithe ag Údarás na Gaeltachta, ar na micléinn de bharr a dtorthaí Ardteiste. Is tré Ghaeilge a

dhéantar an cúrsa. Taobh leis an Aire, ag seasamh sa lár ar chlé, tá Rónán Mac Gearailt (Comhordanóir an Chúrsa) agus ar dheis tá Stiúrthóir an GMIT, Marion Coy agus Príomhfheidhmeannach Údarás na Gaeltachta, Pádraig Ó hAoláin.

Engineering students win national challenge

Fourth-year construction students won the National Finals of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)



Student Challenge 2007, seeing off LIT, DIT, WIT, IT Carlow and IT Tralee. The GMIT team, who are studying towards the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management, and other finalists were presented with a realistic construction scenario on the morning of the final and given four hours to prepare a report and make a presentation to a panel of industry and academic experts.

L-R: Students Ronald Regan, Moygownagh, Ballina, Co. Mayo; James Mannion, Kilconnell, Ballinasloe; Seamus McWilliams, Athenry; and Brian Holmes, Murranny, Co. Mayo, talking to Limerick City Cllr and competition judge John Ryan .



Best in electronics

David Maher from Renmore, Galway City, winner of the Dept of Education medal in the National Skills Competition (Electronics category). David is pictured receiving his medal from the Minister for Education and Science Mary Hanafin, with Frank McCurry, Head of Dept of Electronic Engineering, GMIT. David is a third-year student in the B. Eng in Computer and Electronic Engineering programme at GMIT. Last year, he won first prize in the Intel Excellence in Electronics competition.



Graduate is top chef at National Skills competition

A graduate of the Professional Cookery course Cian Mulholland has won Top Chef in the National Skills Competition. Cian competed against the most talented students from Irish catering colleges. Cian is employed in Ross Lewis' Chapter One award-winning restaurant. Martin Clancy represented the college as a judge for the week-long competition.



L-R: GMIT Head of Dept of Hotel & Catering Operations Robert Dagger, Cian Mulholland, (winner), Ciaran Gantly and Peter Laffey, both lecturers and GMIT graduates.

Artists lauded at opening of City museum

Three Fine Art graduates of GMIT and a GMIT Ceramics Lecturer were presented with Bank of Ireland Awards totalling €10,000 at the official opening of the New Galway City Museum in June.

Graduate Michelle Lynch from Mounnugent, Co Cavan, won first prize of €2,500 for her sculptural installation "The Wall". Aoife Geary from Carna, Connemara, won second prize of €1,500 for her installation "Ualach Dosheachanta /Imminence '06", built from planks of wood from currachs and derelict cottages around Carna (pictured). Máiréad Harley from Bruckless, Co Donegal, won third prize of €1,000 for her work "Lace – Light & Shadow". Bank of Ireland purchased a large painting by



another GMIT student, Fiona Moore, from Ballinalsoe. GMIT also purchased a painting by Fiona. The Bank of Ireland Toradh

Award for an artist in mid-career was also presented. Katharine West, Lecturer in Ceramics, GMIT, won this award of €5,000.

L-R: Katharine West (winner of Toradh Award), Máiréad Harley, Michelle Lynch, Gerardine Quinn, Lecturer, and Aoife Geary, in front of Aoife's installation 'Ualach Dosheachanta/ Imminence '06'.



Innovation Awards 2007

L-R: Andrew D'Arcy, Head of Development; Brian Mulhern, Acting Head of Business and Technology; Damian Keane, 2nd runner-up; Jennifer McDonnell, overall award winner; John Kelly, 3rd runner-up; Maria Staunton, liBC Manager, Castlebar campus; and Bernard O'Hara, Registrar and Acting Head of Centre, Castlebar.



Fourth year Business student in Castlebar Jennifer McDonnell won the GMIT Innovation Award 2007 for her business idea of a unique child safety device. She received a cheque for €2,000 from AIB, a Dell laptop and a specially designed logo from Snap Printing, Castlebar.

Second prize went to electronics student Damian Keane, who won a NEC laptop, and third prize to GMIT graduate John Kelly, who won a mobile phone from CNC Cellular.

ISA Ireland awards for Physics students

Physics students take top awards at the annual ISA Ireland Awards, L-R: Damian Howard from Ennis Road, Limerick and Conor Fahy from Enniscrone, Co Sligo



Two Physics students won top awards at the Instrumentation, Systems and Automation Society (ISA) Ireland Awards.

Conor Fahy from Enniscrone, Co Sligo, won the top Technician Award and Damian Howard from Ennis Road, Limerick, won the Gerard Dullea Award.

Conor was nominated for the Technician award because of his achievement on the Certificate Course in Physics & Instrumentation at GMIT. He gained an average mark of 91.6% - the highest ever standard achieved for this certificate.

Damien was nominated for the Gerard Dullea award because of his outstanding achievement in the BSc Honours Degree in Physics & Instrumentation. He achieved an average mark of 80% for his theory subjects and a mark of 87% for his laboratory work. Damien also completed a highly complex project developing systems to measure stress by examining interference of light through optical fibers. He is currently pursuing a post-graduate course in Waste Power Engineering in Queen's University Belfast.

Letterfrack student is top cabinetmaker

GMIT Letterfrack students, L-R: Stephen Richardson, Patrick J. Murphy (winner) and Sean Costello



Letterfrack student Patrick J. Murphy has won the 2007 National Skills Competition in Cabinetmaking.

Patrick, from Ballindive, Ardrahan in County Galway,

took the overall prize and beat off stiff competition in a tightly fought final.

Patrick and two fellow students studying on the Furniture Design and Manufacture programme - Sean Costello, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo and Stephen Richardson, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, each obtained marks high enough in the preliminary stage of the competition to place them as one of eight finalists from all over Ireland.

The 22-hour competition entailed making a free-standing solid wood storage cabinet.

This year the National Skills Competition celebrates its 50th anniversary and every second year a WorldSkills Competition takes place with one planned for November in Shizuoka, Japan.

Patrick is now eligible for selection for an Irish team being drawn together to compete.

Students Union elections

This year's GMIT Student Union elections had an impressive turnout, with over 1700 voting, generating huge interest amongst the student body. Padraic Flesk was elected GMIT SU President. Warren McElhone, a final-year student in the School of Hotel & Catering Studies, came a close second.



Outgoing SU President Debbie Molloy

Padraig completed a BA in Theology and Business in May 2006 and has spent the last year serving as SU Vice-President. He



Incoming Students Union President Padraic Flesk

will take up office in June. During his time as a student in GMIT, he was extremely active in the GAA club as well as the SU.

Outgoing SU President Debbie Molloy, a graduate of the GMIT Business Studies Degree programme, is currently in the

final year of a BA in Personnel Management.

Four candidates ran for the position of Vice-President, all fourth year Business Studies students. The winner was Donegal's Patrick Bonner who was elected on the first count.



Final year students celebrate graduation day.



Responding to change

An interview with Jim Fennell, Financial Director

by Barbara KcKeon

When RTC graduate Jim Fennell returned to his Alma Mater in 1993 to take up the position of Secretary & Financial Director of GMIT, it felt like he was stepping back in time.

"When I walked back into the building 11 years after being a student here what struck me from the student perspective was that not a lot had changed. Even the colour of the walls was the same."

"At that time (1993) it was projected that the college would grow considerably in the coming years looking at the demographic trends. However, I don't think

anybody expected the economy would be as buoyant as it subsequently became. The direction of the college was changing but I could see from a student's perspective that things hadn't changed at all."

Fennell, from near Kilrush, Co. Clare, graduated in Business Studies in 1982. He worked in the private sector in various financial

and accountancy positions in Ireland and Portugal for over ten years. When he came back to GMIT in 1993 he took charge of function areas of Finance, IT, and Human Resources Services, as well as Buildings & Estates pending the appointment of a Head of Development.

His own student experience(s) helped shape his approach: "I recall vividly my time in class, the experience of acquiring knowledge, the interactions and the debates. All of this was facilitated by a dedicated academic staff - some of whom are my colleagues today, such as Bernard O'Hara, GMIT Registrar, and Dennis Murphy, Lecturer in Economics."

"While on many fronts I advocate changes, I wouldn't want to see that ethos of quality teaching and academic support provided by lecturers to students lost. And it won't be, as long as we maintain the same relationship between lecturers and students."

The biggest physical change in shaping the future of GMIT was the expansion of the building itself, to create a learning environment for students. The construction of a dramatic exterior of giant green copper sheets and canopy covered walkway to the new entrance on the Dublin road announced its new direction. Two major acquisitions were a new state-of-the-art library and an open-access IT centre for students to use as learning supports, reflecting the college's vision of modern education.

Another area of radical change was that of student accommodation - the lack of it, the price of it and the quality of it, according to Fennell. Two superb, purpose-built student villages were built by private developers at Glásan on Ballybane Road, and Gleann na Rí in Renmore, and a number of smaller complexes. The Castlebar campus also has similar accommodation.

"I think students living together as a community fosters a better learning environment," says Fennell, whose daughter Niamh is



following in her father's footsteps doing her first year in business studies, and her student accommodation in Glásan is, as Fennell describes it, another world from what he experienced as a student in the 80s living in a draughty flat on Prospect Hill.

"Student life is about going to college and having a good time and coming out with a qualification, but in the end it is about getting a good job," says Fennell, who not only found the desired good job but also met his wife, Siobhan MacMahon, at college. The couple live in Siobhan's home town of Kinvara in south County Galway.

His job is varied and involved. Under his wing are human resources and all that entails, recruitment, industrial relations, as well as finances, IT services and capital expenditure for purchases of equipment and such. He is also secretary to the Governing Body, and is responsible for the legal affairs. He also fulfils certain roles for the Institute in a wider context, such as being a director of An Cheim, which provides MIS services to all the institutes of technology countrywide, and on various interview boards pertaining to the college's needs.

"People can have genuine concerns regarding change but that resistance can be overcome if you can convince people of the merits of the change, and if they can see that it is for the greater good..."

"It's my job to create the environment so others can get on with their jobs. It's important for the Institute to establish its priorities and to make a strong case for these priorities as this makes the job of securing the finance much easier."

The biggest challenge facing GMIT and any organisation, according to Fennell, is the need to develop an ability to respond to change: "People can have genuine

concerns regarding change but that resistance can be overcome if you can convince people of the merits of the change, and if they can see that it is for the greater good of the students. A lot of information and consultation has to take place to reassure people", he explains. "But we also need to be flexible and adaptable for changes we haven't even anticipated," he concludes.

It costs
one million euro
a week to
run the college

Since its establishment in the early 70s, Galway Regional Technical College (RTC) has changed dramatically, and is in many ways a microcosm of the State. Today the Institute has two campuses in Galway city and one each in Castlebar, Letterfrack and Mountbellew. GMIT is run on Department of Education & Science monies (now Higher Education Authority monies) amounting to €45m per year, with another €5m from other sources. It costs one million euro a week to run the college.

Castlebar campus was opened in 1994 in response to demand from an action group in Mayo and the then-government keeping its by-election promise. Fennell and former college Director Gay Corr went to Castlebar scouting for suitable sites and were offered an army barracks or the old St Mary's hospital. St Mary's was chosen and a 50-year lease was acquired on the west wing of the hospital and all the grounds.

Within four months the building was refurbished, staff recruited and the first 100 students admitted. The Castlebar campus today offers courses in General and Psychiatric Nursing, Business Studies, IT, and Outdoor Education, and caters for almost 1,000 full and part-time students.

The Cluain Mhuire campus on Monivea Road was established in 1997 when it was bought from

Galway County Council for €1.5m (punt). The campus is now home to the Department of Art and Design, catering for creative arts, film and television. Future plans include music studies.

Back in the late 80s the Institute had formed a partnership agreement with Connemara West Plc to deliver programmes in furniture design and production at its centre in Letterfrack. The range of programmes has since been expanded along with the furniture college itself, now called GMIT Letterfrack.

Also a partnership agreement was established with the Mountbellew Agricultural College in East Galway. The first year of the Agri-business course is delivered there and research activities are also carried out in the Mountbellew centre.

Asked if GMIT is producing graduates to fill the country's economic needs at the expense of its academic and intellectual needs, Fennell disputes this. "The reality is the State invests vast amounts of money in education - education being the second biggest spender of Exchequer funds. The reason governments spend so much money on education is not only is there a social need but there is clearly an economic need that has to be sustained. And it would be foolish to ignore that.

"I hear the arguments, are we dealing with the academic needs of the individual or are we dealing with the economic needs of the country? I would love to think we are meeting the needs of both - the individual and the economic needs of the government that pays for it. I don't think they are mutually exclusive. Our range of programmes reflect this."

"You cannot provide third-level education without allowing the individual to develop, and you certainly can't deliver third-level education to the individual without having government money."

Having said that, Jim concludes with a quote from Spencer "Education has for its object the formation of character."



Lochlann Hoare with his former student international jeweller Slim Barrett, at the Cluain Mhuire Show in June.

Lochlann Hoare - an outstanding educator

Lochlann Hoare retired in 2006 and asked that there be no fuss, no gifts, no social evening, leaving his friends and colleagues in a quandary.

Gerardine Quinn, GMIT lecturer and artist, felt compelled to write a tribute to an outstanding educator.

For over thirty years, Lochlann has been an inspirational teacher. He made a major contribution to the development of the Art & Design Dept. He kept abreast of developments in art education internationally and was knowledgeable on the strengths of each third-level art institution in Ireland and many in Great Britain. He was an external examiner for the Dept of Education in the early eighties, and later was external examiner at DIT. He was a visiting lecturer at the National College of Art & Design, Dublin and a frequent visiting lecturer on the Art Teachers Diploma course at Limerick School of Art & Design. He developed a special relationship with the University of Ulster where his Foundation Course in Galway was seen as a model.

Lochlann took a genuine interest in each individual student. He encouraged them to see the potential for creative expression in their own lives and backgrounds.

He taught with passion and conviction and led stimulating seminars. Students greatly valued his tutorials; these were energising, challenging and motivating. He was respected by students through the decades, and his insights were always relevant. He encouraged debate and questioning and always managed to get shy students involved. Seeing their developing confidence heartened him. He frequently enlivened discussions by recalling his own days at Art College in London in the heady sixties, and relayed many anecdotes.

He cared not for praise, and remained faithful to his deeply held convictions concerning art education. He held that art practice had intrinsic academic and educational value. He was not shy about being critical of some current approaches to visual art education and voiced his criticisms with gusto! Though he lamented the devaluing of traditional skills of

representation in drawing and painting, he nevertheless embraced experimentation. He believed some academic and modernist teaching methodologies could be successfully employed alongside postmodernist approaches. His teaching methods provided a thorough foundation and a clear path for ongoing creative development.

Lochlann encouraged students to critically examine the works valued by our culture, and made no secret of his disdain for pretentious, derivative or contrived work. When he taught Foundation Studies, he emphasised the importance of analytical drawing in developing the students' powers of observation. He also emphasised the importance of gaining an understanding of the underlying structure of objects, both natural and manufactured, and would discuss perspective and anatomy as happily as he would contemporary issues.

He set up the Sculpture programme 17 years ago. His dynamism ensured it would thrive, and today it is a vital, exciting programme ranging from object making to installations and live art performances. Lochlann exhibited his own installations throughout the eighties – the Galway Arts Festival (1981 and 1983), UCG Gallery (1984), Spanish Arch Gallery (1988) and EV+A Limerick (1989).

It is probably just as well that he is leaving as the modular mode of teaching and learning is introduced. Lochlann's unique form of student and tutor interaction, which was not book-ended by any particular framework, would undoubtedly be compromised.

Many of you will want to send him a good-will message; I recommend you address it to Cluain Mhuire, c/o Reception. My colleagues and I will miss that big personality; I will miss him as a colleague and friend with whom I worked closely and shared an office for many years. All at the Art & Design Dept wish him a happy retirement with his family.

Peadar O'Dowd

a great ambassador for GMIT

Peadar O'Dowd, who retired on 31 August 2006, came to the Regional Technical College Galway in December 1973. During his career, he was an outstanding lecturer, who prepared his material meticulously, and delivered his lectures with ease, clarity and a great sense of excitement. **Bernard O'Hara** pays this tribute to his old friend.

All Peadar O'Dowd's lectures were enjoyable learning experiences for students. All his students over the years held him in high regard. In the early years, Peadar held a post of responsibility as Clubs and Societies Officer. In that role, he gravitated towards the Archaeological, Historical and Folklore Society, which organised a programme of lectures and outings under the leadership of the late Eddie Fox. Peadar became hooked on all aspects of heritage, especially his native place, Galway City, and in effect developed a parallel career in that field. He made an enormous contribution to fostering an appreciation of the heritage of Galway in its many and varied forms as well as promoting it as a major tourist attraction.

Peadar is a gifted communicator with the ability to convey his encyclopaedic knowledge of Galway's heritage with clarity, precision, and language which the ordinary citizen can enjoy.

In addition to a weekly column on the heritage of Galway in *The Connacht Sentinel* for years. His other publications include, *O Ghaillimh, Go Ceann Boirne – Introduction to Burrenology (with*



Peadar O'Dowd attending one of many GMIT launches.

Edward Fox and Michael Leonard, 1978), Galway City Waterways: A Walking Guide (1985), Old and New Galway (1985), Vanishing Galway (1987), Galway: Heart of the West (with photographs by Brendan Lawlor, 1991), Touring Galway: A Guide to County Galway, Ireland (1993), Down by the Claddagh (1993), Galway in Old Photographs (2003), A History of County Galway (2004) and Galway Lawn Tennis Club: A History (2005).

He has given numerous public lectures on various aspects of the Heritage of Galway, conducted tours on a regular basis, broadcast on radio and television, as well as serving 13 years as honorary secretary of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society and five years as its President. He was also a member of the Old Galway Society, a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, and a director of Galway Civic Trust.

One of the people Peadar impressed on one of his numerous tours of Galway city was the wife of Richard Daley, Mayor of Chicago. This led Peadar and his wife, Mary, being invited to Chicago as the Irish representatives at a big celebration in the Windy City on 31

December 1999/1 January 2000 to inaugurate the new millennium. There were two representatives from every nation in the world.

It was Peadar who suggested that GMIT should start a programme in Heritage Studies. He was always a great ambassador for GMIT and made an enormous contribution to forging links between town and gown.

He regularly publicised GMIT activities in his columns in *The Connacht Sentinel*, in his yearly review in *The Connacht Tribune* and in his monthly column in *Galway Now*. In fact, in retirement from GMIT, he is still promoting the Institute, with a fine article on the GMIT Letterfrack furniture exhibition at Farmleigh for the November 2006 issue and in this publication. While Peadar has retired from GMIT, his other interests will continue and expand. Long may they continue!

Nár laga Dia a lámh.



Clubs and Societies in the early years

by Peadar O'Dowd, former lecturer

When the Regional Technical College Galway opened on 18 September, 1972, sporting and cultural activities initially found rather bumpy berths on this ship we call the GMIT today. At first, this rather plain-looking educational vessel ploughed somewhat aimlessly in the winds of change with no playing field to test the sporting mettle of its students. Worse still there was no captain at the helm to drive extra-curricular activities.

Destiny always has a date however, and 15 November, 1974 was the day a Post of Responsibility for Clubs and Societies landed on my desk. I took command with some trepidation. The pitch problem was first to be tackled and duly solved when, quite by accident you understand, young ornamental trees were somehow harvested with the acre or so of hay in front of the building, and a space for a playing pitch miraculously appeared.

Although the student population initially only numbered in the low hundreds, fierce warriors with hurley sticks or rugby caps already vied with leathered-toed Gaelic footballers or soccer players for possession of that rather sacred sward. Pitch time co-ordination

was not just the problem, however, because it was not possible for me to manage all four teams while at the same time lecture in the normal way.

The answer, as usual, was rather simple. Delegation. So it came to pass that Donnadhá Ó hEallaithe became manager to the hurlers, Peter Clarke controlled the rugby team, Bernard O'Hara managed the Gaelic footballers, while dapper Liam Hanratty ensured his soccer contingent did not let the side down. A whisper in a manager's ear noting the success of another worked miracles, of course, and trophies in all four codes decorated Gay Corr's office resulting from this dreadful subterfuge.

Indoor sports also demanded attention, especially when the Higher Education Sports Federation came into being and table tennis, basketball, volleyball, badminton were initially farmed out to various outside halls, before our own sportshall finally opened in 1978. Many successes were recorded in these sports also not least because we were the largest regional college at the time, while losing offered the option of walking home from away fixtures in order to get fitter still.

Somehow, the Olympic spirit never quite agreed with me!

On the cultural front, the original college theatre was a Mecca for various cultural societies not least those in the drama side of things, while the Archaeological, Historical & Folklore Society, founded by Eddie Fox, as well as the Speakers' Club initiated by Michael Lally hosted internationally renowned conferences there. Other societies in my time included Cumann Gaelach founded in 1973, while one of the strangest was the Equestrian Society under Chef d'Equip Fintan Coogan at the wheel of car and horse box, with students hanging out of each!

Staff, too, were catered for in my time, with the Bridge Club formed in 1974 keeping heads down, while the Golf Club singularly (for some and myself in particular) failed to do so, founded as it was after a 'lacklustre' outing to Roscommon in 1973.

With the appointment of Jennifer Foley and later Frank Ryan as physical education teachers at the end of the seventies, my post of responsibility disappeared in the wake of this great ship and I was consigned to the joys of a deck chair in its various lecture halls with memories to burn.

Clubs and Societies 2007

by Ruth Merrigan, SU Administrator

In my nine years working in GMIT I never knew that the very first manager of Clubs, Societies and Activities was the one and only Mr. Peadar O'Dowd. Peadar, on behalf of our students past and present, the Students Union extends a sincere thank you.

Extra-curricular activities at GMIT have progressed nicely since 1972. Over the years, GMIT students, whilst not always as successful in competition as we might have hoped, have been renowned for their extraordinary dedication to our clubs and societies. We are proud of all students who have participated in any club or society during their time at the Institute.

We must bear in mind that securing a trophy will not alone ensure a successful club or society; it is the camaraderie that is most important. Many a romance blossomed thanks to the GMIT Clubs and Societies. I have yet to buy a hat, but I am hopeful!

In September 1997, we secured a GAA Development Officer, the superb Damian Curley. Since Damian's arrival the organisation and development of Gaelic Games on campus has improved significantly. In September 2006 the IRFU provided us with a full-time Rugby Development Officer on campus – James Wakley. James, a Welshman, is currently working on improving the standards of our

Rugby Team, promoting Women's Rugby on campus and preparing for the first ever GMIT Tag Rugby League.

In recent times the profile of our Clubs, Societies and Activities has changed. This is due to the changing demographics of our students and also in having to 'keep up with the times'. Along with the traditional activities such as GAA, Soccer and Rugby, we now offer Cricket, Juggling, Kickboxing, Sub-Aqua, Yoga, and Dodgeball – don't ask! On the cultural side we have Debating, Film, Heritage, International & Excursion and Modern Dance to mention but a few.

In January 2000 the SU, with financial support from the Institute,

opened an ultra-modern Fitness Centre. The fitness centre has gone from strength to strength thanks to the excellent fully trained staff, the Manager Eimear Glennon and Instructor Ray O' Neill. With over 550 members currently, it is a facility that we are very proud of and we are committed to maintaining the existing high standards.

Whilst the facilities available for sporting activity are not fulfilling our needs at present, we know that the Institute, through the purchase of land at Murrough, is striving to improve these inadequacies. We look forward to having first-class facilities in the very near future.

GMIT Cricket Club

GMIT Cricket Club was set up three years ago and has really taken off in the last year.

Club captain Farhan Afzal says: "After a good bit of training we got a team together and decided to go and play in the Cricket intersarsity competition in Cork last June. Our first game was against Queens Belfast and they have a very good side with a lot of their players playing in the top league in Northern Ireland. This was compared to our guys who were very inexperienced, but we did well and put up a good show and just lost out."

After the Queens game, the team went into their crunch tie with UCD to see who would progress to the Shield Final. After setting a target of 224 runs GMIT seemed set for victory but an amazing comeback from the men from Dublin secured an unlikely draw and unfortunately due to their superior run rate GMIT progressed out of the group. For their first competitive outing it was a remarkable performance for GMIT and this year the club has gained momentum.

Cricket is a slave to the weather and Galway's traditional monsoon season between September and May means that the club gets

limited time playing on proper cricket fields and have had to compensate by playing indoor cricket. Although not ideal, indoor cricket has provided some exciting times for both the colleges in Galway and in February the two clubs jointly held an Indoor Cricket intersarsity attended by third-level institutions from all around the country. GMIT reached the semi-final despite missing three top players.

This joint venture between GMIT and NUIG demonstrated a huge bond between the two teams but Afzal states this alliance stays purely off the field.

"The rivalry is big time. We have played them a number of times indoors. Unfortunately they have had the upper hand on us but last year we beat them when it really mattered. That was when we played each other for the only time outdoors at the Galway Club in Claregalway so that was great."

It is wins like this that have given the team great confidence as they look forward to this year's outdoor intersarsity to be held in Belfast this June.. Afzal has aimed for at least a semi-final berth, which for a team with limited facilities would be an amazing achievement.

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Members of the GMIT Cricket Club at the 2006 Student Achievement Awards, with outgoing GMIT SU President Debbie Molloy.



David Collins

GMIT graduate and Captain of the Galway Senior Hurling team talks to **Stephen Glennon, Connacht Tribune.**

For GMIT graduate David Collins, being named captain of the Galway senior hurling team for 2007 is nothing less than a dream come true. Like every young aspiring underage hurler, Collins had dreamed of one day leading his county out onto the field of battle, and perhaps taking them to the hallowed turf of Croke Park and later, with the maroon and white flags flying proudly from the four corners of Ireland's modern day coliseum, up the celestial steps of the Hogan Stand.

On Sunday, February 18 of this year, at the tender age of 23, Collins became one of the youngest Galwaymen ever to captain his county's senior hurlers. On any other occasion, a league

opener against Antrim would be a low-key affair, but given this was also former Clare supremo Ger Loughnane's first game in charge, there was plenty of significance attached to the contest.

Indeed, over 5,000 hardy souls braved the elements on that Sunday afternoon to bear witness. It was a far cry from two years previously, when less than 1,000 die-hards turned out in the summer climes of July for an important All-Ireland qualifier clash between the same two sides.

That league opener against Antrim in February proved a successful outing for Galway, with Collins leading the Tribesmen to a facile 3-25 to 0-12 victory. A win to his credit, it was a beautiful way for

Collins to open his account as Galway's newly appointed captain. While Collins always hoped of one day being handed the mantle of captain, he still must have been surprised to have been chosen by Loughnane and the management team, given that he is only a young man of 23 years of age.

"I was shocked really," says Collins. "He (Loughnane) came to me at training one evening and said would I be captain. Of course, I accepted and later in the training session he informed the rest of squad. It was fantastic to get it. Now hopefully, I can lead Galway to the Liam McCarthy.

"I had always hoped that some day I would get the captaincy, but because of my age, I didn't think it would be this soon. I suppose though by getting it, I must have shown that I had leadership qualities. So it's great."

That said, Collins has always been recognised as a player who takes the initiative. Having established himself in the Galway senior side in 2005, the Liam Mellows wing-back played an intricate part in guiding the Tribesmen to an All-Ireland appearance against Cork. Unfortunately, the day ended in defeat, and one of the abiding memories of the aftermath was a dejected Collins ambling slowly down the semi-lit tunnel underneath Croke Park. A silhouette, head bowed.

"I'm absolutely heartbroken," said Collins, as he hugged the cold wall outside the losers dressing-room at the time. "But I have the U-21 (All-





Ireland final) next week to look forward to, so hopefully we can bring a Cup home in that." Even in All-Ireland defeat, Collins was looking for the next challenge. That statement alone summed up David Collins and the maturity of the Liam Mellows man. The Westerners subsequently claimed that U-21 accolade, defeating a highly rated Kilkenny outfit by 1-15 to 1-14. Collins played his part, as he had done with the seniors all year, and was later named as the 2005 Young Player of the Year.

A natural leader, Collins though believes his five years at GMIT, where he studied Digital and Software Systems, was the ideal place for him to hone his talents, and nurture those leadership skills.

"I have to say GMIT was great for that," states Collins. "In college, you are not only working with a group, but you also have to stand up and make presentations throughout the year. That is one of the great advantages of going to an IT college like GMIT. You would be on a bit of a high after giving a presentation, it is actually a fantastic feeling.

"That is something you wouldn't always get to do in a university, where you maybe just attend lectures for 14 hours a week. In GMIT, we would have about 39 to 40 hours a week, and then you would be hurling on top of that. It meant there were a lot of 7 o'clock starts," chuckles the Hewlett Packard software technician. "It could be pretty intensive."

That aside, the Galway city native enjoyed his time immensely at the college. "It was good craic and the hurling kept me going. The college brings you on so much in your hurling. When you are a young lad, you are getting to play some of the top hurlers in the country, through such competitions as the Fitzgibbon Cup.

"You would be going out and marking Eoin Kelly (Tipperary) and Henry Shefflin (Kilkenny), and you had to raise the standard of your play. So your hurling had to improve. It also helped to build



David Collins presented with a GMIT Student Achievement Award 2006, following his selection as "Senior Hurler of the Year". L-R: Debbie Molloy, GMIT Outgoing Students Union President, Marian Byrnes, AIB, and Marion Coy, Director GMIT.

leadership qualities, without a shadow of a doubt. The set-up in GMIT was very good, and it was an ideal place to prove that you did have leadership qualities."

Unfortunately, Collins and GMIT were never to taste success in his time there.

I had always hoped that some day I would get the captaincy, but because of my age, I didn't think it would be this soon.

In his first year, 2001, Collins captained GMIT to the fresher's semi-final, but cruelly lost by two points to UCD. Collins continues: "I suppose we were unlucky not to have won a Fitzgibbon the second year I was there. We had a good team, with Eugene Cloonan (Athenry and Galway), Damien Hayes (Portumna and Galway), Brian Duff from Tipperary, and Kilkenny's James Ryall, who now has three All-Ireland medals to his name.

"We reached the quarter-final that year and were beaten by Waterford IT. We lost by four points. We were up by four points at half-time and ended up losing by four. I was playing half-back and I was marking Shefflin in the first half. He then moved into full-forward and he ended up scoring something like 1-5."

While success eluded GMIT during Collins' tenure, he says he couldn't imagine going to any other college bar GMIT. "I made great friends there and I would say I am still in touch with 80 to 90 percent of the lads on the teams I played with at GMIT.

"They are either ringing you or texting you, wishing you well or sometimes even slagging you, hoping you get beaten by Tipperary or someone else," laughs Collins. "I think though that was one of the best thing about being in college in GMIT. You felt like you belonged there, and that was all down to the friends you made.

"Then you had Damien Curley, who is the main man there. Damien is the GAA Development Officer. He has been the one keeping things going, and only for him, it wouldn't have been the same."

No doubt, Collins' GMIT epoch served him well. He talks about the importance of a good work ethic, be it at hurling, college or career, noting it is only through hard work that you achieve your goals. "My goal for the year is to hopefully captain Galway to an All-Ireland. If you have a dream, you have to work at it. The Galway lads are working very hard at that at the moment, and I think we will. I think we will bring Liam McCarthy back to Galway."

If they do, GMIT will certainly have played its part.



Egyptians complete training at Mountbellew

L-R: Brendan Heneghan, CAO, Teagasc; Senator Michael Kitt, Mohamed Rashad Abdelgayed Ali Mohamed, Agricultural Engineer, CA 17 International, France; and Tom Burke, Head of Centre, Mountbellew Agricultural College.



Thirteen Egyptian agricultural engineers completed a four-week intensive study programme at GMIT Mountbellew delivered by the Agricultural College, GMIT and Teagasc. The programme was arranged through the French agency CA17. Mountbellew Principle Tom Burke said the visit was an important step in the advancement of partnership delivery of training for international groups.

Mahidol University, Bangkok

The Director of GMIT and the Dean of the Mahidol University International College (MUIC) signed a collaborative agreement during the NAFSA conference in Montreal last year.

Mahidol is the oldest university in Thailand and the Dean visited GMIT in October to discuss the nature of the exchanges in more detail.

Wuxi South Ocean College

GMIT has signed an agreement with WSOC whereby students will be recruited for a joint programme leading to the Bachelor of Business in Hotel & Catering Management.

The Chinese students will spend two years in WSOC developing their English language skills and studying other modules before transferring to Galway for semester three onwards.

The programme has commenced and the first students will arrive in Galway in August 2008.

New exchange agreement with Ohio College

A new educational exchange agreement has been established to allow students at the Castlebar campus to study in Ohio and Cleveland students to study in Castlebar for one semester, from January 2007.

Baldwin-Wallace College is a private liberal arts Methodist-related college with over 4,700 enrolled students. GMIT Castlebar also has an exchange agreement with Western Carolina University.



GMIT Director Marion Coy with the President of Nanchang University, Professor Dr Zhou Wenbin.

Nanchang University

GMIT has signed a major educational exchange agreement with China's Nanchang University. It is the third largest university in China in terms of student numbers, with some 85,000 registered students. The college was founded in 1940 and offers a range of liberal arts, sciences and engineering programmes.

The agreement between the two educational institutions is a very positive step for GMIT. It fulfils a key element in the GMIT Strategic Plan 2004-2009, to develop and support international student mobility.

Lesotho



L-R: GMIT Director Marion Coy, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Mannete Malethole Ramaili, and Des Foley, Head of School of Science.

GMIT received a visit from the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Mannete Malethole Ramaili. Mrs Ramaili had an informal meeting with the Institute Director Marion Coy and senior management.

They discussed the economic development of Lesotho and potential ties with GMIT. The ambassador also attended one of the many induction sessions delivered to the Institute's 1700 first year students.

Taoiseach. During the visit the Saudi Government agreed with the Minister for Education & Science Mary Hanafin that the King Abdullah scholarship scheme would be extended to include the IT sector in Ireland. Four institutes have submitted a list of suitable programmes to the Saudi Government.

Norway



The Norwegian Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Mr Truls Hanevold, with GMIT Director Marion Coy

The Norwegian Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Mr Truls Hanevold, met with the Director of GMIT, Marion Coy, and senior management in February to learn about the Institute's remit and in particular its research and innovation activities. Mr Hanevold spoke with Dr Martin Robinson about GMIT's commercial fisheries development project (ARE SHELLTEC) and with George McCourt, liBC Manager, about activity in the Innovation in Business Centres. While in Galway he also visited the Marine Institute.

The Ambassador hopes that the information and experiences shared in the areas of innovation, commercialisation, and technology transfer supported by targeted R&D, will act to encourage similar activity within Norway and, significantly, in strengthening cross-country collaboration. Mr Hanevold strongly believes that Norway and Ireland could benefit greatly from a sharing of innovation knowledge.

Saudi Arabia



A seven-man delegation (above) from the General Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT) in Saudi Arabia visited GMIT in December to discuss possible links with GMIT and other Institutes of Technology. The delegation was led by His Highness, Dr. Ali Ghafis (centre-

right), Governor of GOTEVOT. The heads of a possible co-operation agreement were initialled. The delegation also visited DIT, WIT and AIT.

In January, the Director took part in the Enterprise Ireland trade mission to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates led by An

GMIT contributes to Graduate Researcher Education Programmes

GMIT is collaborating on two new national initiatives to build improved education programmes for postgraduate researchers in the near future.

The first will see GMIT partner with 12 other Institutes of Technology to form an 'Institute of Technology Research Alliance' to develop jointly accredited professional qualifications in research practice for staff and students, both undergraduate and postgraduate. While each Institute of Technology currently delivers broad-based and specialist postgraduate training, this is the first time that all the Institutes have collaborated on such a sector-wide initiative. This important project will lead to improved course

content and structures for the delivery of high quality post-graduate education across the participating institutes. The alliance will provide support and training in coordination, benchmarking, training and dissemination of research best practice. This project is lead by Institute of Technology, Sligo and was funded by the Higher Education Authority under its Strategic Innovation Fund.

The second project will establish the 'Irish Marine Graduate School' to develop and deliver specialist education programmes for Marine researchers. GMIT partners with NUI Galway, UCC and TCD on this exploratory project, which was funded jointly by IRCSET and

IRCHSS under the Graduate Research Education Programme (GREP). With over 40 researchers working within its SHELLTEC Research Centre and the Marine and Freshwater Research Centre, GMIT looks forward to the Irish Marine Graduate School delivering its first education programmes in 2008. This project commenced in January and GMIT is represented on the project Steering Group by Dr. Elizabeth Gosling.

GMIT's Head of Research, Dr. John Lohan says both these initiatives will greatly increase the availability and enhance the quality of training being made available to the 150-strong research community currently active within GMIT.

GMIT research activity

GMIT recently completed an audit of its research activity which highlights rapid expansion.

Figure 1(a) highlights the rapid growth in awarded funding over the past six years, which exceeded €5 million during the last academic year, 2005/06.

Figure 1(b) highlights how these trends are also mirrored by the steady growth in the number of full-time postgraduate researchers and staff, which now exceeds 90. This excludes over 60 academic staff, which brings the active research community to over 150 researchers.

A breakdown of the research activity is presented on the Institute Research Web site. The Institute focuses on three strategic research themes:

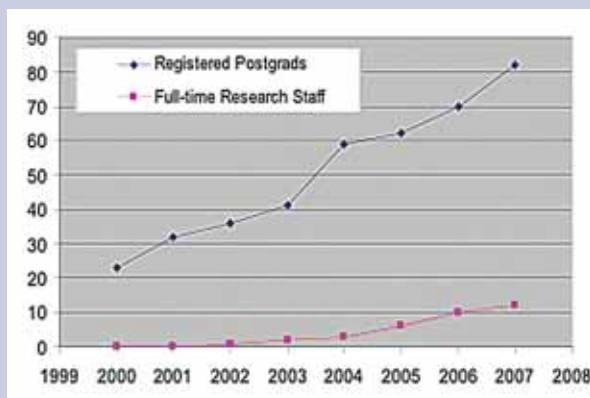
- Natural Resources and Sustainability

- Design and Innovation
- Tourism, Culture and Humanities

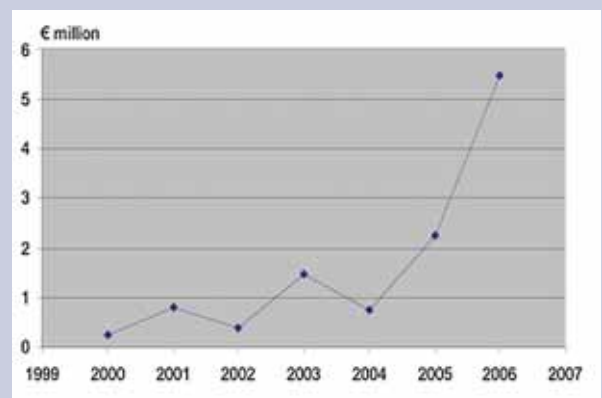
These strategic research themes reflect GMIT's research strengths and track record, have a regional relevance and impact, and complement the research activities of other higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ireland.

The Institute looks forward to extending the existing critical mass of research in the three areas identified by continuing to implement research-friendly policies and working with external collaborators and agencies to build on existing research infrastructure.

Research projects will align with regional, national and EU development policies, and deliver maximum societal impact to the region.



(Fig 1(a) Awarded research funding per academic year (99/00 - 05/06)



(Fig 1(b) Growth in the base of full-time researchers (00 - 07)

Plan to harvest compost power

by Dick Ahlstrom, The Irish Times.

Hopes are high of developing free energy by utilising heat given off by composting green waste.

Something for nothing is nice if you can get it, but particularly when it comes to a supply of energy. Researchers at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) hope to achieve this attractive financial equation by capturing unused energy given off by decomposing organic material.

Brendan Allen is a research scientist and project manager in the research section at GMIT. He and his group recently received €225,000 from the Department of Agriculture and Food to develop methods for maximising heat output from green compost and from slurry and trapping this for space heating.

"We are using compost and trying to optimise that heat at a farm-based level and at a municipal level," Allen explains. "We are coming up with technology to maximise that heat and use it in horticultural tunnels."

The large plastic and frame greenhouse tunnels are in regular use by farmers across the state. They are typically heated using electricity or gas, but are expensive to operate.

"The tunnels lose heat at a phenomenal rate. They are too expensive to heat during the winter," says Allen. Yet they only have to be kept at between 17 and 23 degrees to be useful and a heat supply taken for free from the composting process could provide the answer.

Two master's degree students are studying the composting process, how much heat is being produced and how it might be recovered. Green plant waste is being tested, with the students using standard wheelie bins to find the best mix of green materials to boost heat production. "We are also going to look at aerobic digestion of slurry," adds Allen. He knows significant heat is given off

during composting, having once measured the centre of a green compost heap at 60 degrees. "It can get that hot in the centre. There is a lot of heat there but it is being lost to the air. If you get the composting vessel right and the ingredients right we could use that heat for some useful purpose like heating a horticultural tunnel."

The result will be usable compost to improve soil and productivity, but also an extended growing season when using difficult to heat tunnels

The ingredient mix could be important, he believes. The students will assess how critical the green plant mix is and what might be added to boost heat output. He assumes that some form of heat exchanger based on piped circulating water will allow the heat at the centre of the compost to be taken out and put to productive use. "We are trying to get the maximum heat without damaging the compost making process." The result will be usable compost to improve soil and productivity, but also an extended growing season when using difficult to heat tunnels.

The initial designs for this two-year research project will be used

to set up a pilot system based on composting that can provide a low level of heating in a tunnel. Allen isn't limiting himself to this application however.

"We want to see how far we can take this," he suggests. Towns and cities produce large volumes of green waste from trees, grass and hedging. Large scale composting plants might be able to produce enough heat to partially warm an entire building.

This represents a saving even if the building gains 50 per cent of its heat from composting. "If you could tap into that heat it will save on fossil fuel costs," says Allen. The students got going on the research last month. "By the summer we will know a lot about the composting process and how to maintain heat levels." He believes that they will have a working system to test by next winter, when the cost of heating a tunnel using gas or electric becomes too high.

The research is also supported by Galway County Council and by Cáit Curran, a local organic horticulturist. Most of the composting and prototype work will take place at the Mountbellew Agricultural College, a partner college with GMIT. Any laboratory work will be conducted in GMIT's Dublin Road campus.

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The project is led by GMIT's Principal Investigator, Dr Martin Robinson, who joined the Institute from Trinity College Dublin in 2005.



GMIT Research Scientist Brendan Allen with research students Sonya Fitzgerald and Donal Chambers.



GMIT SHELLTEC Centre

The Enterprise Ireland funded Applied Research Enhancement (ARE) SHELLTEC project at GMIT is examining the responses of various shellfish species to medium to long-term storage and subsequent transport, and using the knowledge gained to develop innovative technologies that enhance the competitive ability of the Irish fishing industry.

Researchers in the GMIT SHELLTEC Centre.



“Fishing is a vital source of production, employment and revenue for most coastal communities in the region, and innovative approaches to development are required to meet the challenges of current changes in the structure of coastal societies, the Irish economy and our natural environment.” says Dr Martin Robinson, Principal Investigator and Project Manager of SHELLTEC Centre, GMIT.

The SHELLTEC research team at GMIT is operating four experimental shellfish holding units that have been imported from Canada. These provide clean and stable environments that are chilled to maintain animal health and increase survival rate over longer periods than are possible with traditional, low-technology methods. This allows industry to match the supply of shellfish to seasonal variations in market demand, rather than sending products directly to the continent at low prices, which are dictated by European buyers.

SHELLTEC has also joined forces with Bord Iascaigh Mhara to run a pilot programme to transfer a commercial one ton capacity unit to Comhar Caomhan Teo (fisherman’s co-operative), Inis Oirr, this summer and train the local

fishermen to operate the unit. Until now they have been unable to store shellfish on the island or to deliver their products to the mainland for export when poor sea conditions persist in autumn and winter months. The holding system will give the co-operative the ability to supply fresh seafood throughout the vital tourist season on the island. Training courses for industry will be developed in collaboration with NUI, Galway and delivered to other members of the industry this summer. The cost of attending training events will be support by the Accel Innovate West network being co-ordinated by GMIT.

The chilling equipment used to maintain low water temperature in the systems produces a large amount of heat as a by-product. Rather than venting this energy to the roof of GMIT for dispersal, it is being passed through a heat exchanger to remove any odour and moisture and used to heat the foyer at the old reception, near the Centre. The SHELLTEC team are adapting the design of the systems to ensure that they use the minimum amount of energy possible, thus reducing operating costs, the environmental impact of the units and maximising the economic benefit that can be passed to industry. The SHELLTEC team also has a refrigerated vehicle to conduct research into transportation that is helping industry to improve the methods and protocols used to move shellfish within Ireland and to European markets.

The project will continue for at least another one and half years, but Enterprise Ireland is currently reviewing a revised implementation plan that will see an expansion of activities well into 2009. Other sources of funding are also being pursued to ensure the sustainability of the facility and team.

Dr Martin Robinson, Principal Investigator and Project Manager, SHELLTEC Centre, GMIT.



GMIT Medical Technologies Centre (GMedTech)

GMIT recently secured over €1.2m funding, under the Enterprise Ireland Applied Research Enhancement (ARE) Programme, which has allowed it to establish a Medical Technologies Centre of Excellence, known as GMedTech.

This funding represents the largest fund awarded to a single research project in the Institute's history. The funding was provided under the National Development Plan, 2000-2006 and part-financed by the European Regional Development Plan. The ARE funding is supporting the start-up and initial running period of GMedTech.

The Centre is offering the regional and national medical device cluster an advanced product performance testing service, as well as informed product design and development support.

GMedTech is actively engaging with medical device companies; identifying their product test needs;



The GMedTec team, L-R: Dr Carine Gachon, Dr Patrick Delassus (Group Leader), Dr P.J. McAllen, Dr Magdalena Tyndyk, John Kelly (GMedTech Centre Director), Dr Liam Morris, Florentina Ene and Gerard O'Donnell.

and developing specialised test systems to meet these needs. The information gathered from the test systems is used to support device design and development decisions. The Centre is also assisting the Innovation in Business Centre (IIBC), in GMIT, to attract medical device start-ups as spin-offs from the medical device cluster in the region or arising from the GMedTech research and development.

The GMedTec Centre is located on the Dublin Road campus in Galway and employs a Centre Director, John Kelly, a post-doctoral researcher, Dr. Magdalena Tyndyk,

and four post-graduate researchers. It is intended that the Centre will employ up to ten personnel in the initial phase, including additional post-graduates researchers, research engineers as well as technical and administrative support staff.

The Centre is the culmination of the research achievements of the GMIT Medical Technology Research Group over the last six years. The Group, all stemming from the Dept of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, is led by Dr Patrick Delassus.

Dolphin research

The West Coast of Ireland is home to numerous species of whales, dolphins and porpoises. GMIT scientists from the Biology and Physics/Instrumentation areas, along with The Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Trust, are working together to increase our understanding of the behaviour and habitat needs of these mammals and in particular those of the resident population of bottlenose dolphins in the Shannon Estuary.

Whales and dolphins communicate, navigate and explore through sound rather than sight. Sound travels five times faster in water than it does in air and most of their time is spent underwater where vision is often very limited.

Bottlenose dolphins use a

variety of sounds in the course of their various activities. These include: ultrasonic echolocation signals; narrow band, frequency-modulated whistles; and burst pulse clicks. They use the echolocation clicks to detect and recognise objects underwater from the returning echoes – a biological version of sonar. Whistles and burst pulse clicks are used mainly for communication.

The current research in Physics at GMIT focuses on these narrow-band, frequency-modulated whistles, particularly on the so called signature whistles, which are thought to establish dolphin identity.

The research is being conducted by lecturer John Cunningham and post graduate Sabina Clarke, in conjunction with Joanne O'Brien

of GMIT's Marine Biodiversity Research Group.

John Cunningham says: "We are extracting the whistle contours and then determining how many distinct signature whistles there are. This will provide an indication of how many dolphins were present in the area over the period. When correlated with visual observation, we can get an estimate of the dolphin population and how it varies over time.

"It should even be possible in some cases to visually match individual dolphins to their signature whistles. Abundance estimates are critical to the monitoring and protection of the resident dolphin population in the Shannon Estuary."



From Letterfrack to Farmleigh

by Peadar O'Dowd

Time marches on and in its march, progress inevitably is made. In this regard, Galway was not behind the door when the hands of time slipped into motion. Examples abound, not least that of Galway Cathedral whose lofty dome elevates today with the sound of hymn and prayer. Not so long ago, this spatial site housed the county and city jails whose singular embrace of stone and iron brought only despair, when even wood was deemed a luxury in the prison cell.

*Clockwise: Cube light Box:
Kate Dunne and
Ryan Connolly*

*Chair:
Brian Cooney*

*Cutlery Canteens
(before-after treatment):
Maurice Molloy,
Sarah O'Sullivan,
Gillian Goodbody*

*Bathroom storage cabinet:
Diarmuid Murphy*



Yet, wood plays a most important part in the rehabilitation of another building with an equally unwholesome past. Letterfrack industrial school, whose Victorian facade set amid the isolation of a Connemara wilderness instilled an even more virulent form of fear. Here, too, captivity was the norm, but of the foulest kind, involving as it did the incarceration of the young of mind.

Perhaps President Mary McAleese on visiting Letterfrack in June of this year best summed up the building's sad history:

"It stood for a kind of failure. Actually, it stood for a failure of families, it stood for a failure of institutional imagination. It stood also in some ways for a failure of humanity itself, because so many young men whose lives were already blighted in many different

ways, found their way to this place and found a place from which they couldn't escape...."

Time marches on, of course, because when President McAleese spoke these words, she was officially opening the new Furniture Gallery in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology Letterfrack campus. The transformation was complete. The house of detention had become a centre of industrial intuition and endeavour.

In fact, ever since the industrial school ceased to be, and Connemara West, the local community-owned rural development company, purchased the building in the 1970s, a furniture design educational facility was established in the old building, where the sound of nail on wood,



Castlebar's first artists



Castlebar campus celebrated the work of its first batch of students to complete the part-time BA in Art & Design. The students' work was unveiled at an exhibition in St Mary's Hall in June, attended by the artists, their families and friends, invited guests of the college and Castlebar staff. The exhibition also ran at the Linenhall Arts Centre in Castlebar in July. The graduates attended lectures one evening a week for six years.

L-R: Bernie Garvey-O'Mara, Crossmolina; Loretto Cooney, Abbeyshrule, Longford; Pauline Garavan, Castlebar; Eileen Murtagh, Swinford; Mary Flynn, Westport; Benita Stoney, Newport; Susan Quinn, Westport; Mary Smyth, Ballyhaunis; David Slack, Ballina; William Burke, Ballina; Marliese Hertfelder, Ballyhaunis; and Rosemary Gallagher, Ballaghaderreen.

International foresters meet in GMIT

GMIT forestry lecturer and conference co-ordinator Sara Wall (centre left) with Junior Agriculture Minister Mary Wallace (centre right) who addressed the 2006 Forestry Conference in GMIT



An international conference "Small-scale Forestry and Rural Development" took place in GMIT last year, attended by the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food, Mary Wallace. The event was co-ordinated by GMIT Forestry lecturer Sara Wall.

Over 50 papers were delivered during the five-day symposium by representatives from 23 countries including Europe, the US, Scandinavia, Africa and Australia. The GMIT-hosted conference was organised in collaboration with IUFRO and supported by Coford, Coillte, Teagasc, and the Western Forestry Co-op, Sligo.

Recent publications by GMIT staff

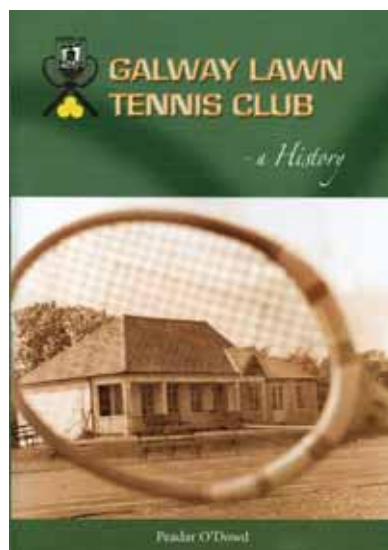
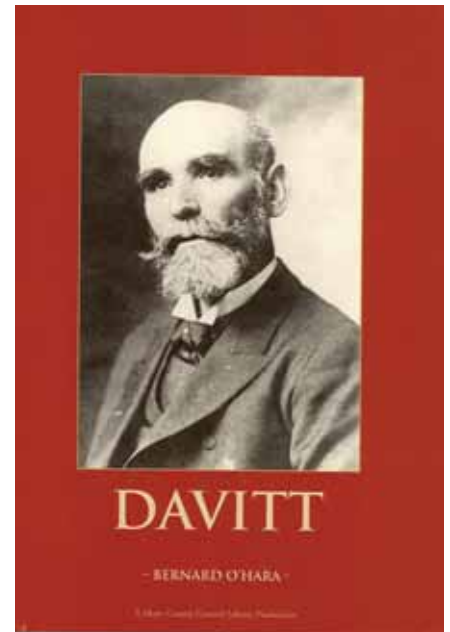
Davitt

Author: Bernard O'Hara.

Published by Mayo County Council

A concise illustrated biography of one of the most loved and respected personalities in Irish history, written in the context of his time. Immortalised as 'The Father of the Land League', Michael Davitt (1846-1906) was also a respected international journalist, an author, a supporter of Home Rule, an MP, and a pioneer of the labour movement in Britain and Ireland.

GMIT Registrar Bernard O'Hara's other publications include: *Killasser: A History (ed.)*, *The Evolution of Irish Industrial Relations Law and Practice*, *Mayo: Aspects of its Heritage (ed.)*, *Michael Davitt Remembered*, *Archeological Heritage of Killasser, County Mayo*, *Regional Technical College Galway: The First 21 Years*, and *A Guide to County Mayo*.

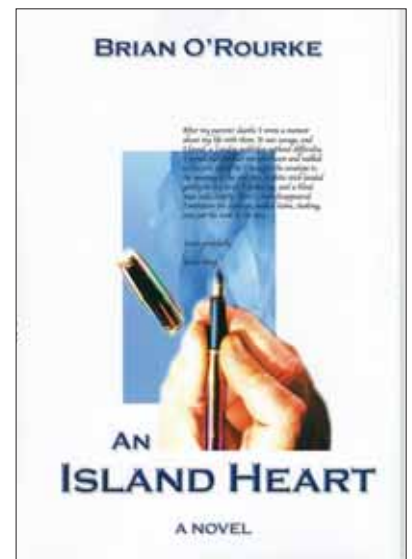


Galway Lawn Tennis Club - a History

Author: Peadar O'Dowd.

Published by Jaycee Printers, Galway.

A social history of the Galway Lawn Tennis Club and Galway city during the last century, covering the club's foundation and history to the present day through minutes and newspaper clippings as well as personal memoirs from some of the longer-serving members. Peadar O'Dowd, who retired from GMIT this year, was a senior lecturer in GMIT Business School and is the author of a number of books on heritage including *The History of County Galway* and *Galway City in Old Photograph*, both published by Gill & MacMillan.



An Island Heart

Author: Brian O'Rourke.

Published by Wynkin de Worde.

A story about a troubled individual, a man devoid of empathy and incapable of true relationships, who eventually commits a terrible deed.

Brian O'Rourke is a lecturer in Irish literature in GMIT.

His other publications include: *The Conscience of the Race (1980)*, *The Long Walk of a Queen (1985)* and *Blas Meala: A Sup from the Honey-Pot*.



Aisling Ltd

Author: Sean Harnett.

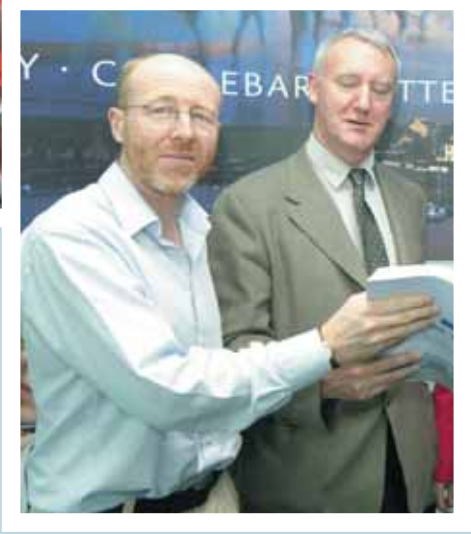
Published by Hag's Head Press.

Aisling Ltd is Seán Harnett's darkly satirical debut novel. By turns a biting exposé of the culture of corporate Ireland and a gripping psychological thriller, the book has been widely praised. Village magazine called it "entirely convincing and engaging: an exciting tale written with flair and talent", while The Irish Examiner hailed it as "the book IT workers have been waiting for".

Seán Harnett is currently writing his second novel. He works in the GMIT Computer Services Department.

More information at <http://www.aislingltd.com>







GMIT Alumni Association

We'd like to keep in touch with you in the future so please send us your contact details.

Benefits of the GMIT Alumni Association include:

- Organisation of class reunions and professional networking events.
- Preferential membership rates for GMIT Library.
- Special rates for GMIT Gym .
- Health insurance - 10% discount with VHI and Quinn Healthcare.
- 10% discount at Blacoe Jewellers Galway and Claremorris.
- 10% discount on accommodation and leisure club membership at Ardilaun Hotel, Galway.
- Two-for-one admission at 67 OPW sites throughout the country.

Contact the GMIT Alumni Association at alumni@gmit.ie, and complete the brief online application form at www.gmit.ie/alumni/



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