



Crack the code: Simon Murphy with his children Sinn, Fia, Filip and Oscar at the Cork CoderDojo in the National Software Centre. Photo by Michael MacSweeney/Provision

There are so many options for postgraduate study

Last week's column referred to some opportunities for postgraduates, and more news of postgraduate opportunities came our way in the following days.

AHEAD, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability, announced a specific postgraduate opportunity in its WAM programme.

WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) is an initiative of AHEAD and its objective is to promote a more inclusive labour market for graduates with disabilities. Over the last number of years, WAM has developed a new and innovative mechanism for assisting graduates with disabilities to bridge the gap between college and work.

AHEAD's latest WAM Programme offers 12 work placement opportunities for graduates with disabilities, one in Deloitte and 11 in the Civil Service. The placements are for a full-time working week, and are paid and mentored for a period of six months. The closing date for applications for the placement in Deloitte was 5pm last Friday. The closing date for applications for the 11 placements in the Civil Service is 5pm on Friday, February 24.

Further information is available on AHEAD's website: ahead.ie or by email at wam@ahead.ie

Meanwhile, NUI Galway has announced details of a new scholarships scheme for postgraduate students, through which 100 new

GOING TO COLLEGE
 MARY O'DONNELL



scholarships of €2,000 will be awarded per student.

The scholarships are open to postgraduate students who fulfill the criteria as outlined by the university and are applying for fulltime Taught Masters programmes which are due to start in autumn 2012. For more information, log on to www.nuigalway.ie/postgraduate/scholarships or phone 091-492844 or email postgrad@nuigalway.ie

In more scholarship news,

by their CAO points. All CAO applicants will be automatically included in the selection process, so there is no need to apply. (Students who receive another bursary or scholarship from UL will not be eligible.)

The scholarships are on offer across all disciplines, including nine scholarships each in Science and Engineering, the Kemmy Business School, Education and Health Sciences, and Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. There will also be two scholarships each for the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, and for Inter-faculty programmes such as BA Law and Accounting and BA International Insurance and European Studies.

Open days:

- This evening, Griffith College Dublin hosts an information evening 5.30pm-8pm covering its postgraduate courses.
- Also today, UCD's Smurfit Business School holds an information evening in its Blackrock campus from 4pm-7pm on its postgraduate and masters programmes.
- Saturday next, February 25, HPAT Ireland, (the health professional admissions test for applicants to undergraduate medicine), will be held in centres in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Sligo and Waterford.
- Monday next, February 27, sees the start of Engineers Week, a week-long programme held throughout Ireland, which allows people to look at the world from the eyes of an engineer. The emphasis of Engineers Week is to promote Engineering, Technology, Maths and Science throughout Ireland with the aid of the variety of activities and events. Log on to engineersweek.ie to find out more.

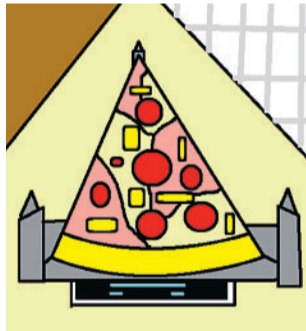
40

The University of Limerick celebrates its 40th anniversary this year

The University of Limerick is celebrating the 40th anniversary of its foundation this year, and is marking the occasion by offering entrance scholarships worth €2,000 to 40 incoming students beginning their undergraduate studies in the autumn semester of the academic year 2012/13.

The 'UL40 Scholarships' will be awarded to students based on their performance in the Leaving Cert determined

MEET HARRY – THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST APP DEVELOPER



Bitesized: Harry's Pizzabot app

Harry Moran (12) is in sixth class, but he knows more about computers than all his pals.

That's because the Cobh-based youngster honed his skills and appetite for knowledge at Cork's fledgling CoderDojo sessions when they started last July.

Now his profile is heading for the stratosphere. Last November, just four months after joining the weekly classes, he became the world's youngest app developer with a game based on a pizza shooting red sauce at slices of salami.

Pizzabot was developed in just one month, quickly racing to the top of the app charts, with Harry, originally from Westport, Co Mayo, pocketing more than half the proceeds of each 79c sale.

A hugely successful future is certain. But like many other youngsters who pack into Ireland's burgeoning CoderDojo gatherings, Harry went out of his own initiative and insatiable desire to learn.

His mother Elaine said: "I do not know anything about computers. This is all Harry on his own."

Mr Clayton, who's also a councillor in Kinsale, added: "It bodes very well for the future, because there is a global shortage of people with these kinds of programming skills and the school system here isn't adapting to help. If you look at the educational system, the

limit of what kids are being taught is the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) in transition year, which is inadequate. That's failing the children and that's why it's very hard to find people who can write computer code. There are plenty of jobs available for peo-

ple who can do this, but very few Irish people can.

"But when you look at the enthusiasm and the knowledge being shared and passed on at these meetings, the future looks very bright."

For more information, see coderdojo.com.

burgers

postgrad MBA (if they have it) because the colleges market the course by telling them it'll make them more employable and statistically the over-55s in Ireland have been the least affected by the recession, so the colleges will know they're on to a good thing here.

Of course, it's not just the snake-oil solutions promised by that particular course but a whole raft of others too.

And my commandment reads: Educate people for jobs this time round, not for the education industry.



- E GRADE Punk philosophy: Jean-Jacques Burnel of The Stranglers

Time for fee-charging schools to take another look at their policies

The fee-charging schools debate is a complex, multi-faceted one. History is important. Many schools, particularly those founded in the 19th Century, originated in more obviously socially stratified times. For Catherine McAuley, Edmund Rice and Nano Nagle, their focus in starting the Presentation Sisters, the Christian Brothers and the Mercy Sisters was on schools for poor children.

In contrast, the Jesuits, the Spiritans (formerly the Holy Ghost Fathers) and the Loreto Sisters became associated with an upper-middle-class clientele.

Linked to these trends were widespread disparaging attitudes to manual and practical education, while so called 'academic' education carried prestige. Thus, the initial development of the Vocational Education system was seen primarily as preparing young people for employment in trades, manufacturing or agriculture.

Arguably, the introduction of 'free' education in 1967 changed all that. Effectively, that policy decision indicated that the State was acknowledg-

IN MY OPINION
 GERRY JEFFERS



ing each young person's right to post-primary schooling and attempting to provide a fairer framework for all children, irrespective of social background.

The decisions by a small number of schools not to enter the 'free-education' scheme is an important context. Especially relevant was the policy decision to provide separate funding arrangements to ensure that children from Protestant families could attend schools that respected their religious ethos. The majority of Catholic schools opted to join the 'free' scheme, with less than 10pc continuing to charge fees.

Geography is also important. Fee-charging schools are concentrated in Dublin, where 18pc of young people attend such schools. But if you differentiate between northside and southside, the southside enrolment figure jumps to 27pc. Many are clustered in Dublin's south-eastern region.

Thus, fee-charging schooling tends to be 'normalised' in a way that is different to anywhere else in the country.

Within Dublin, Catholic religious congregations are strongly identified with the fee-charging sector. This reality sits uncomfortably with a view of a church committed to advancing social justice.

Perhaps the time has come for those schools to revisit their 1967 decisions.

The wisdom of having the children of so many significant policy and opinion-makers attend elite institutions has consequences for all of society; for example, such families are sheltered from the realities of how an under-funded system impacts on learning.

Decisions within the Catholic Church in Dublin, and within individual congregations, to alter the status of fee-charging schools would not only be more consistent with the church's own teachings, but has the potential to contribute to fairer and better education for all.

Dr Gerry Jeffers is a lecturer in the Education Department, NUI Maynooth