

# FILM WEST



SPRING 1990  
PRICE £1.00

## *INSIDE*

Filming "Fool's Gold"  
The Welsh Answer to Teillifis  
Canada's Global Pillage  
Pobal i mBoston  
Film & Book Reviews  
Letters Column - and more!

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## Editorial

If as a result of Ruan O Bric's £500,000 announcement last year you are still holding your breath for Hollywood na Gaeltachta, you can fill your lungs again. The omens are bad. Charlie's girl from Conamara Maire Geoghegan Quinn ( Maire Thatcher?) is pushing for more Irish programmes on RTE, between which lines the experts are reading : no Teilifis na Gaeltachta. This despite the Boss's twice repeated preference for same.

The scenario is as follows; The Century radio debacle has frightened the Government, i.e. its Thatcherite illusions are in trouble, i.e. a commercial Radio and TV network to combat the regrettable public ethos of RTE may not be viable. But if RTE can be forced to make and broadcast more programmes in Irish it may drive the viewer and the advertisers into the arms of the proposed 3rd channel, TV3 (while giving the same channel a slice of RTE's licence fee). Obviously if the Gaeligeoiri are getting more Irish programmes on RTE (probably on Network 2 after midnight) they don't need a Teilifis na Gaeltachta. The people of the Gaeltacht? Who dem? You may not have to do that crash course in Irish after all.

FILM WEST is the quarterly magazine of the Film Resource Centre in Galway. The FRC was founded for emerging film makers in the West of Ireland. The Centre is funded through membership, grants from FAS, RTE, the Arts Council, the Ireland Fund, Galway County Council, Galway Corporation and private sponsors. The Centre is administered by Pat Comer. Directors of FRC: Aisling Prior, Barra de Bhaldraithe, Miriam Allen, Tadhg Fleming, Pat Comer, Joe McMahon, Steve Woods, Fergus Tighe.

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# FILM WEST

Spring 1990

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# INSERTS

## 1990 FILM PRODUCTIONS

Seven feature films are to be made in Ireland this year, in addition to two mini-series, one with Joan Collins (who she?) and TV plays. The WW2 film "The Brylcream Boys" is slated for June exteriors in the West and Wicklow, under producer Paul Madigan of New Zealand. Neil Jordan, indulges his 60s seaside religious obsession further in the "The Miracle", with friend Beverly d'Angelo ("High Spirits") and Donal Mc Cann (no stranger to this office) which rolls in April. Like a true Irishman Neil has taken Behan's dictum to heart - "fuck the begrudgers" - and has set up a new production office in Ireland. In a busy year for our lad from Sligo, he's adapting Brian Friel's acclaimed play "Translations" for the screen and intends to film "Stardust" straight after. Watch this space. ● Tim McDonnell's one-man theatrical success of last year at An Taibhdhearc, "Diary of a Madman", turns over at Ardmore in April by the same Company who brought us fragments of Isabella, Vattington Prods. Meanwhile "Isabella" hits the RTE screen this Easter.

## SONS OF FAMOUS SONS

Following Film WEST's exclusive on-set report from "The Field" last issue, we hear that Dickie Harris' son Damien has completed "The Rachel Papers" (starring Jonathan Pryce) in the UK. The film charts the sexual conquests (wha' dat?) of a London rake, and is based on the book of one who should know, Martin ("London Fields") Amis, son of the big daddy of Oxbridge satire novels, Kingsley ("Lucky Jim") Amis.

## S.C.R.I.P.T. AWARDS

Of the 68 who applied from Ireland for the recent EC Media 92 Script Awards, nine received development money. The Fund prefers team projects, rather than individual applications from writers. Winners: Gerry Gregg's "Patriot Game" (a Civil War feature) for Iscra Prods. Ted Sheehy's "The School Bus" (on rural emigration) is now editing at Film Base, Dublin. Alan Gilson's "Lies Sylphides" (classical ballet set to African music) for Yellow Asylum. Tom and John McArdle's "Angela Mooney dies Again". Bob Quinn's "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere". Evelyn Conlon's "Fire in a Concrete Box" (a film for children), directed by Pat Murphy for eon. Miriam Gallagher's "Girls in Silk Kimonos" (a Countess Markievicz biog). Fergus Tighe's "Johnnie Culchie" (his follow-up to "Clash of the Ash") which he is working on at Film Base. Dermot Bolger's "Last of the Galway Hurlers".

## WILD, WILD, WILD

Not many people know that Michael Viney, who writes the famous 'Another Life' column for the Irish Times, is also a film director. Based at Killadoon, Co Mayo, he and producer David Cabot - calling themselves Wild Goose Films - have just completed "Wild Islands", a 16mm 52 minute documentary, which is the award shortlist for April's Celtic Film Festival. David himself made his mark several years back with "Valley of the Geese" which was seen on TV around the world. (It was made on a 16 mm Bolex.) He trained at the BBC, became an assistant editor there, before legging it to Ireland to make Government films. David is no stranger to Galway and has lectured at UCG. His first film, "Northern Edge of Light" (filmed in Greenland) won an Italian prize. In 1987 his second, "The Corner of the Eye" (a 52 min documentary on the poet Michael Longley) was shown on RTE.

## STILL FRAMES

Spring exhibitions at the Joe Geoghegan Gallery, Quay Street, Galway: March 19-31 Niall Foley (Chairman, Cork Arts Society). April 16-18 'Group Photographic Intent', Tucson, Arizona. Meanwhile, March 1-17 Joe's own work is on display.

## OBITUARY

Steve Donoghue, Hollywood stuntman and double, worked with Mitchum, Guinness, Cagney (among other stars), and acted in many classic films and TV shows. Died 29 January in Galway, where he was born. Steve attended the launch of the Film Resource Centre December '88 and acted in the FRC's first training film "Bootee Boy", possibly his last film. Steve was working on his own film project (on the Claddagh) before he died, and it's to be hoped some enterprising film maker may soon carry on his work.

At work on "Zel" - see FRC Aids New Film Maker.



## NEW EQUIPMENT AT THE FRC

The FRC have just purchased, thanks to the Arts Council, a Nagra 3 professional sound recorder and rifle microphone, and a Panasonic Low Band Video (to be used for training). With help from the Ireland Fund a professional Steenbeck six-plate editing bench is on its way. [More on p9]

## THE MYSTERIOUS DR SATAN?

Not only are there film makers in the West, there's even a film collector. Tom Casey, an avid (and altruistic) collector of 16 and 35 mm films since the 60s - he originally began with 8 mm - buys and trades original works. He has an extraordinary collection of old Westerns, one and two-reel serials, comedies, old thrillers, swashbucklers and horror flicks, as well as many 'lost' films and some recent subtitled work. Tom lives in Ballinasloe and trades with fellow collectors in the UK and US, or through contacts in The Big Reel, the collectors magazine published in the US. Tom has so far amassed over 500 films (a few on old nitrate stock) which he carefully stores and projects privately in his home. One of the rare items he owns is a 1934 colour flic of Gounod's "Faust", which the National Film Archive (UK) requested from him to be copied. Among Tom's curiosities: "The Jungle Girl" serial, Kirk Douglas in the little seen 1956 version of "Ulysses", and the unforgettable 1940 film "The Mysterious Dr Satan".

## CLUAIN MUIRE SEMINAR

Dr Mike Connelly of the University of Maine is now hosting a four month extramural course for 24 US college students. Under Bob Quinn's direction the 'Ireland through Film' aspect of the course is having some illustrious guest speakers. Directors Kieran Hickey ("Criminal Conversation"), Pat Murphy ("Anne Devlin") and Margo Harkin ("Hush-A-Bye Baby") have so far visited and shown their work, and Kevin Rockett has given a sociological background. Louis Marcus, a veteran Irish documentarist [and not looking a day over 40] showed some very relevant work: "Fleadh Ceoil" (1967); "Capallology" (1968); and the much praised promo for Waterford Crystal, "Conquest of Light" (1975). "The Erotic Housewife" (1988) provoked much controversial reaction from the students for its depiction of a Tallaght housewife's weekly 'sex therapy' dance show at the local pub. Louis has just finished a series of four hour-long programmes for RTE, "Hidden Lives", to be seen in the autumn.

**SUPER-8 SHOWINGS IN THE WEST**  
DM Films kicked off the new year with a

showing (in Mick Taylor's, Dominick Street, Galway) by Dick Donaghue of their three latest productions - "PJ's Final Cut" and "Still Waters", both starring Fiona Nolan-Kelly, and "Fools on the Bog", a racy short starring a Fiat 127. Also shown was "The Fainne Spainneach", produced by the Peadar O'Donnell Centre on a FAS grant. All films were well received. ● Another acclaimed Super-8 showing January 31 was at Galway Arts Centre, when entertaining Corkman Frank Morgan of Rathcormac Films - dubbed 'the Wizard of Super-8' in the UK - showed four works. "Aolife's Day" (1980), "The OtherSide" (1981), "promised Land" (1985) and "Old Grumpy and Mary B" (1975) have won awards in London, Malta and Spain - one worth £3000. Written and directed by Frank - covering such themes as rural alcoholism, timidity, greed and loneliness - they are remarkable for their very high quality, and ought to be seen on TV. Frank overcame the difficulties of the format by shooting silent, and dubbing from wild track and dialogue later. There are no scratches on his films because he edits from projector. In recent years Frank has worked on 16mm and even [for shame!] made corporate videos. The FRC hope to have him back in Galway soon.

#### FILM SOCIETY UPDATE

Galway Film Society (UCG) ended their Spring 1990 season March 12 with Woody Allen's latest comedy "Another Woman", reportedly not as good as his box office hit "Crimes and Misdemeanors", though that shouldn't put off his many angst-laden fans seeking catharsis. Watch out for the GFS's coming season. [A full historical background to the Society is to be found on page 12, under Cutaways.]

#### DIARY DATES

The Society of Irish Playwrights' courses on screenwriting which began February 13 continue to April 3 (two hours every Tuesday) at Liberty Hall, Dublin. The whole course will be repeated May 15 and October 9. For £100 you get advice from such as Peter Sheridan ("Fair City"), James Plunkett and Bernard Farrell. Details from FRC or book direct at SIP, Dublin. ● The Celtic Film Fest at Gweedore will have its awards bash televised by RTE April 5. The Irish shortlist includes Michael Viney's "Wild Islands", BBC NI's "Beyond the Pale", Declan Recks' "Big Swinger", and episodes of "Cursa" and "Iris '89". ● The closing dates of the Arts Council's Film & Video Awards (a fund of £100,000) are April 27 and October 26. Outlines, treatments and budgets to Paul Freaney at 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Both the French and US embassies also have info on their own film scholarships. ● Cannes Film Fest May 10-21 opens with Akira Kurosawa's latest, produced by Spielberg, so book your deckchair and

Bacardi for La Croisette now. Details: 71 rue du Faubourg St-Honore, F-75008 France.

#### BANK OF IRELAND VIDEO AWARDS

Winner of the special award for a first time entry in this year's B of I All Ireland Video Awards for Schools and Colleges is "Shadows and Tall Trees". Produced by Mike Fitzpatrick and directed by our own Dick Donaghue when he was Arts Council film maker in residence at St Caimin's School, Shannon, last year.

#### GALWAY FILM FLEADH

July 18 (Wed) to 23 (Mon) are the dates, and this year's theme is Post-Colonial Cinema. Lelia Doolan and our own Miriam Allen are currently cooking up a whopper of a blitzfeast to remember. Full programme in Summer FILM WEST.

#### FILM BASE'S NEW IRISH FILM FUND

Following on Film Base Dublin's 'Action' committee, set up earlier this year to lobby for a new State funding agency, comes news that Film Base themselves have taken the initiative and set up a new Irish Film Fund of £1.1 million. The Fund will be independent, and administered by a board of nine people. Funding is anticipated from Government, the Arts Council, Local Authorities, the National Lottery, Trade Unions, TV3, the IDA, and a percentage levy on cinema seats and video rentals. The Fund's stated aim is to 'nurture film production in such areas as narrative, documentary and experimental ideas'. Fuller detail from Film Base, 6 Eustace Street, Dublin 2.

#### FRC AIDS NEW FILM MAKER

The first member of the Film resource Centre to make use of its facilities for emerging film makers in 1990 is Donal Haughey of Hawkeye Films. His 16mm ten minute short, "Zel", has just been completed on Galway's streets. Produced by Frank Monaghan, who became a member of FRC at Christmas - which shows how quickly it's possible for members to dive in at the deep end if they want. Written and directed by Donal, "Zel" is a quirky and punchy tale of intolerance and zest for life, with a sting in the tail. Stars are Little John Nee and another FRC member, Paddy O'Connor. Showings are being arranged. Donal's next project is a black comedy about the health service. [Wha' health service?]

#### NUA TEILIFIS EIREANN ?

As reported as Gaelige by Deaglan de Breadun in the *Irish Times*, a Belfast lawyer Seamus Napier has suggested that BBC and RTE should both co-fund the new Irish language TV channel (which would then be an all-Ireland affair) to the tune of £8 million. Seamus, co-founder of 'Ultach' (Ulster Language, Tradition and Cultural Heritage Trust), was inspired by recent similar events in Scotland, which also involved £8 million. Indeed Donncha O hEallaithe had

suggested this too during the Carraroe conference in December. Ultach: 17a Stuaara an Chaisleain, Beal Feirste.

#### PREMIERE OF HUSH-A-BYE BABY

Fresh from the Dublin Film Fest is Derry Film & Video Workshop's first feature, which was made under the ACTT workshop declaration [see "Landmarks" report p11]. This polished, well received controversial 72 minute work deals with pre-marital pregnancy. The script emerged from a series of community drama workshops begun in 1988. Funding: Channel 4, RTE, British Screen Finance and the Arts Council. Derry F & V also host the popular annual Foyle Film Fest. Director of the film: Margo Harkin; producer Tom Collins (who has just given an FRC Film Foundation workshop). Stars Emer McCourt and Sinead O'Connor (who composed the music). The Galway premiere, organised by FRC, is set for April - times announced in the papers closer the date.

#### A CHANCE TO CHANGE

This is a twenty minute video documentary produced by Tall Tale Films (Galway Film & Video Co-op) with Mervue Adult Training & Education Group (MATE). MATE is a community organisation run on a voluntary basis, mainly by women. Over two terms each year it runs courses (with creche facilities) for Mervue at nominal cost. In all the classes at MATE, the emphasis is on learning in workshop situations. Tall Tale ran video workshops at MATE in 1989. The classes were full, and by the end everyone had the opportunity to take a few shots, do sound recording, etc. Tall Tale asked whether anyone was interested in doing a project to follow on the course. Five women agreed, Tall Tale hauled in two of the organisers and started to plan a video documentary about MATE. The video was to be used for other groups interested in setting up similar organisations; for the crew to gain experience in an area traditionally dominated by men; for MATE to promote its work in the community and to fundraise. By December Tall Tale had raised enough money to cover costs, and had run further workshops and pre-production work throughout the autumn. A "Chance to Change" is a reference to the importance to groups like MATE to women previously confined to the home; the music is provided by a local woman. Tall Tale is satisfied that this video is a great development in their integrated practice of community-based workshops, screenings and productions.

Tall Tale and MATE in action



## TEILIFIS NA GAELTACHTA- THE WELSH VERSION

The winter '89 FILM WEST carried a report from Donncha O hEallaithe on the Carraroe conference (Dec 2) about Teilifis na Gaeltachta. Among the guest speakers was Ned Thomas from Wales, who was very active in the campaign ten years ago to set up S4C. Ned is the director of the Mercator Project, an EC funded database on media and minority languages, which is based at the University of Aberystwyth. He has produced an EC report recommending an independent news agency for minority languages throughout Europe. Ned also edits Planet, a Welsh literary magazine. Here is his Carraroe speech.

Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C), the Welsh-language TV channel, was the product of over ten years of often very hard campaigning, which involved numerous imprisonments, fines and the withholding of TV licences. It was almost certainly the threat of a hunger strike unto death by Gwynfor Evans, then president of Plaid Cymru (the nationalist party) that persuaded Mrs Thatcher's government after all to honour the pledge in the conservative party's manifesto of 1979 to establish a Welsh TV channel.

But all that relates to Welsh and British politics. More relevant here in Ireland is the debate that was conducted among ourselves. There was a view held sincerely by some friends of the Welsh language - in particular the late professor Jack L Williams - that Welsh should remain and be broadcast for an increased number of hours on the main popular channels of BBC 1 and ITV so as to keep its sound in the ears of the greatest possible number of people. But this view lost ground largely because it offered no way of substantially increasing Welsh programming at peak hours, and a consensus was reached within the Welsh-speaking community in favour of a separate channel. Since then the arguments for giving a linguistic group its own channel have grown stronger. With the proliferation of channels that is coming on satellite, and the increasing habit people have of flicking through the channels, the TV audience is fragmenting and the argument that people that will absorb a little Welsh or Irish while glued to a given English-language channel is less persuasive. Yet the need for a home station, to which you come back for your own news and to find your own environment presented and discussed in your own language, is in no way diminished. But you need to know exactly where that home is. An indeterminate slot at erratic times on one or two of ten or fifteen channels is no kind of home.

We faced a complicated situation in the Welsh TV campaign. Welsh programmes were produced by both the BBC and ITV in Wales, but at mainly off-peak hours. The range of Welsh programmes was severely limited, with news magazine and discussion programmes dominating.

In our campaign we pressed for certain fundamental things, and did not enter into the institutional wrangling over who should run the channel. Our two main demands were: (A) a full service, that is to say, enough hours and expenditure to permit a full range of programmes to be made for children and young people,

news, drama, religious programmes, current affairs, etc. (B) a channel with priority for Welsh and a controlling body with sufficient autonomy to control the scheduling - thus enabling Welsh to be shown at peak hours.

Both the above aims were achieved when the British government, bringing in the fourth channel, created a separate TV authority in Wales with control of that channel and priority for Welsh. It is funded by a levy on all UK commercial TV companies and this money is used to buy Welsh programmes from HTV, the large commercial TV company in Wales, and from thirty or more independent film producers. The BBC additionally contributes around ten hours as part of its public service function paid for by the licence fee. In all, S4C currently broadcasts 26 hours a week, mainly in peak hours, across a whole range of programme categories, of material made at cost levels and to technical standards that are equal to those of most programmes in Britain.



Photo of Ned Thomas, courtesy Connacht Tribune

You will note that S4C is not a production company. It is a commissioning authority. In some ways this has made it harder to stamp the kind of distinctive character on the channel that occurs when a group of people work together, day in, day out, as is the case on Radio Cymru, the BBC's Welsh radio operation. On the other hand, the commissioning of work from small independent film producers has led to an extension of the media industry into those areas where most Welsh speakers live. While the BBC and ITV have concentrated resources in Cardiff, the independents are very strongly present in Gwynedd and increasingly in Dyfed.

A recent study concluded that 3,000 jobs (direct employment) have been created by the coming of the Welsh TV channel and many others indirectly. While

many of these are in Cardiff, very substantial numbers are in those areas where Welsh is a community language. In a village or small town an independent film producer employing five or ten people has a very substantial impact on the employment situation.

How has the channel turned out? What has it done for the Welsh language and culture?

The nature of Welsh culture before the days of TV was mainly defined by a largely literary intelligentsia. Though elements of that culture as in the televising of Eisteddfod and poetry competitions, it is also true that much of what appears on television is part of international culture. The highest ratings go to one of our two Welsh soap-operas, to quiz shows, to special sports events and to Welsh hymn-singing. Because Welsh TV has to watch the ratings it has to concentrate on popular programming. Serious programmes and films of artistic merit are made but they are fairly marginal in a diet of popular programming. On the other hand, we can claim that it really is the Welsh version of international Media culture. Very little is dubbed and subtitled into Welsh. Indeed S4C must be one of the most home produced channels in existence.

It is important to stress the necessity of production in one's own language both for the reproduction of one's own culture and for the local media economy. Dubbing and subtitling are useful additional techniques, but a Channel that uses them excessively would be using the Irish language yet scarcely developing the culture of the communities speaking that language.

The Welsh Office commissioned a report on how the new channel was affecting the language itself but this has not been published, and in its absence I can only give my own impressions. It would be generally agreed that it has helped the status of the language immensely, among Welsh speakers and English speakers alike. Much of the influence is indirect. For example most people and voluntary bodies, pressure groups and political parties now give a higher priority to Welsh and employ bilingual spokespeople and press officers, because of the media exposure in Welsh that is available. Another indirect benefit to the language is through the patronage of Welsh language events by TV.

A word about the internal language of television. Before the days of the Channel, Welsh TV was made very

largely by non-welsh speaking technical support staff, an unhappy situation which tended subtly to undermine programme-making from within. The situation has gradually improved within the BBC and ITV, but the expansion of programme-making that came with the Channel and a doubling of the hours produced could have set things back disastrously, had not the independent producers' association set up a training programme for TV technicians with European Social Fund assistance. As a result they were able to recruit likely young Welsh speakers and then train them.

S4C's autonomy has been very beneficial in the international field where

it can forge contacts directly as a Welsh language institution instead of working through some larger mainly English-language institution with its own international interests and priorities. Where previously it was extremely rare for Welsh language programmes to be shown outside Britain, S4C has sold its products to more than 70 countries. The international news service is provided by the BBC. Though this assures a high quality service from around the world, this single service does unfortunately mean that one often has the impression of seeing and hearing the English news in Welsh. A small service cannot expect to afford its own worldwide news service

but subscription to multiple news services would give flexibility. Further than that, it is time the smaller language groups in Europe circulated news among themselves to complement the large-nation services.

To conclude: it is very difficult, perhaps impossible except in great isolation, for small languages to survive today without access to the media. But it is a very delicate matter to get the balance right. It seems to me very important that Irish television be thought of not simply as the product that appears on the screen, but as a whole economic and cultural process at every stage of which it is important to insert the language.

## POBAL I mBOSTON

Bob Quinn was tempted to call his new series on Gaeltacht people abroad 'The Vanishing Species'. He feels that if ecologists paid as much attention to human as to animal and plant species there would be an invasion by GREENPEACE protesting at the devastation through neglect of the unique human resources of Conamara.

'There are more Gaeltacht people in Boston and London than at home, he says. 'The State is relieved that these awkward cultural reminders of its origins are disappearing, along with the rest of the youthful resources of the country.' Bob has been in Conamara for twenty years and finds it hard to dig himself out of it, to use his craft (art?) on anything other than

highlighting what he refers to as the fatal haemorrhaging of this island. He quotes a concept Joe Comerford introduced to him: 'If it's not propaganda, it's not art.' Two years ago he followed his neighbours to London. This time he went to Boston and has spent the last few months forging the material he gathered into a series of pictures of life and attitudes there. They will be shown on RTE this summer.



### FILM MAKERS IRELAND

Film Makers Ireland was set up as a body to represent a broad spectrum of Irish film makers and producers. This spectrum includes the commercial and cultural aspects of film and TV production. They aim to create a healthy environment in which commercial and cultural films, and the many cross-over productions, will flourish - creating a successful film industry. The committee includes Donald T Black, Alan Gilsonan, Jane Gogan, Gerry Gregg, James Hickey, Trish McAdam, Niall McCarthy and Kevin Moriarty.

They believe that to create an

industry which is purely commercial, ie. using tried and tested ideas with guaranteed profit, would be detrimental to the long term potential of the industry. It would not exploit the employment or export potential and would give false and limited expression to Irish culture. To create a purely non-commercial environment would give work within the industry. What these two aspects have in common in the present climate is lack of recognition from a Government which has failed to grasp the importance of the audio-visual medium as a potential growth industry and a contemporary medium of expression for the arts.

The following is an initial draft of Film Makers Ireland's proposal for State intervention to assist the Irish film industry:

(1) The creation of a substantial development and production fund within the Arts Council, with an annual budget allocated in grant form. It would specifically aid emerging film makers, and established film makers who chose to work with non-commercial material.

(2) Continued expanded assistance through CTT for Irish film export.

(3) A policy within the IDA to support the development of film and television companies.

(4) The creation of a tax incentive scheme that works, to replace Section 35.

(5) The creation of an Irish film school.

(6) State representation at festivals and markets abroad, including cultural representation.

(7) The creation of a production fund for commercial film, on a loan basis.

Details on FMI, 6 Eustace Street, Dublin 2.

# COVER FEATURE: WEST AWARE, THE FRC AND FOOL'S GOLD

## A 'SHORT' STORY

The West's Film Resource Centre have just completed their first film production for 1990. "Fool's Gold", based on the song by Pdraig Stevens, is a topical mining-awareness film made with the West Aware group, who have been active in the region for the past year. The 16mm short runs for five minutes and is an entertaining view of West Aware's philosophy on the new Irish 'gold rush'. Both cast and crew rendered their services free of charge.

Originally scripted by Ger Sweeney, Pat Bracken and Gabi Froese, "Fool's Gold" was produced by Aisling Prior. Directors are Pat Bracken and Ger Sweeney. Locations chosen include some of Ireland's most famous and beautiful scenery in Connemara and Mayo - where over nineteen mining licences have been issued by the Department of Energy; Doolough, Louisburgh and Westport. With a location crew of twelve and a cast of seven, shooting started 8.30 on Thursday February 15, and continued over four days. The crew were mainly based at Lough Inagh and Killary Harbour (used extensively in Neil Jordan's "High Spirits"), and locatiuon catering was provided by expert local chef, Trish Connolly, at the Little Killary Adventure Centre.

"Fool's Gold" features well known Galway actor Little John Nee, and musicians 'Mouse' McHugh and Pdraig Stevens himself. Pdraig's spirited song comprises the full soundtrack. Irish and English versions of the film will be made. The film avoids any heavy moralising or direct finger-pointing, through a visually stunning, musically entertaining and subtle satire of people's attitudes to the prospecting controversy in Ireland.

The Film Resource Centre are proud to be associated with the West Aware group in the production of this topical project. (The mining-awareness lobby in the West receives, understandably, the support of the majority of the population.) FRC also further matured its considerable film making skills, and a professional and efficient approach to the shooting was demanded at all times. When the editing is complete it is intended to broadcast the film on TV and enter it in festivals.



Six miners, set against the Yukon-style backdrop near Lough Inagh.

'Mouse' McHugh acting the Fool.

### Credits - "Fool's Gold"

<u>Supervisor</u>	Donal Gilligan
<u>Director</u>	Ger Sweeney
<u>Producer</u>	Aisling Prior
<u>Assistant Producer</u>	Celine Curtin
<u>Camera</u>	Tim Fleming
<u>Clapper Loader</u>	Dick Donoghue
<u>Sound</u>	Trish Mannion
<u>Continuity</u>	Donal Haughey
<u>Video Operator</u>	Paddy O'Connor
<u>Costumes, Props</u>	Gabi Froese
<u>Music</u>	Pdraig Stevens
<u>Editing Superv.</u>	Bernadette Moloney
<u>Editors</u>	Barra de Bhaldrathe, Frank Monaghan
<u>Film Titles</u>	Ger Coughlan
<u>Location Catering</u>	Trish Connolly
<u>Format</u>	16mm, colour, sound, for transfer to video
<u>Cast</u>	'Mouse' McHugh, Little John Nee, Paddy O'Neill, Brendan Savage, Pdraig Stevens, Dominic Lyons, Shay Rooney.







Shay Rooney, haggard from pen-handling (?), tries digging in.



#### WEST AWARE

West Aware are a voluntary committee whose main objective is the collation and dissemination of information on the gold prospecting (and proposed gold mining) in the West of Ireland. The group is actively concerned about our environment - especially in a year when Charles Haughey is touting Ireland's 'green' presidency of the EC. West Aware vigorously promote an awareness of the hazardous effects of gold mining, and have successfully organised slide -shows, benefit gigs (such as the recent one in Galway at CJ's Nightclub) and most impressively, a major art exhibition to which many of Ireland's leading artists contributed, and which toured the whole country to much acclaim.

#### Addresses for further information:

Barbara Callan, Cloon, Cleggan, Co Galway. Telephone contact - Ness Porter (095-41015). Donations to Marianne Lavelle, Treasurer, Main Street, Clifden, Co Galway; or anonymously to Account 89976068 Bank of Ireland, Clifden. GOLD EIA will accept donations at Account 89981473 Bank of Ireland, Clifden.



Little John Nee improvises between shots.



#### Film Resource Centre Funding

There were whoops of joy heard echoing around 4 New Docks last December when the Arts Council granted the Film Resource Centre £7500 from the National Lottery funds towards capital purchase. Already the Centre purchased a Nagra 3 sound recorder, microphone and a Panasonic Camcorder (which will be used for training purposes). In the near future we hope to purchase another 16mm camera and extra lighting.

#### The Ireland Fund

No sooner had the whoops become subdued than word came in January that the Ireland Fund had granted the FRC £3000 towards the purchase of a Steenbeck six-plate editing bench. Many thanks to Judy Hayes, Des Kenny and the helpful staff of the Ireland Fund for their assistance.

#### Script Competition

The closing date of the FRC Script Competition, announced in our last issue was February 28. The winner will be announced in the Press, and it is hoped to start filming in April.

#### RTE

Throughout the years the Centre has been much indebted to RTE and Fintá Ryan for the tremendous help they have shown us in our quest for film equipment and their great encouragement to emerging film makers in the West.

# CANADA'S GLOBAL PILLAGE

Christy King's thoughts on the Toronto Film Festival.

Toronto, Canada, September 1989.

hosted its 14th Annual Film Festival billed as the 'Festival of Festivals' and not without good reason. 321 Films were screened over ten days with fifteen screens at twelve theatres. There were many world premieres and mostly Canadian premieres together with an international four day trade seminar under the wonderful title of 'Global Pillage' (which had Canada worrying about the impact in audio-visual terms not just the proposed strengthening of the European Industry because Media 92 programme etc.....) I attended the trade forum (as part of an Irish delegation with assistance from CCT) to see how the industry operated in Canada and to seek partners in respect of co-productions or twinning of films under the terms of the Irish Canadian Co-Production Treaty; also to attempt to sell some of Cinegae's existing completed films and documentaries. As often happens in cases like this, it also proved somewhat easier to meet key English people from the trade who were also attending as speakers for the various trade sessions, than would have been the case at home or in the UK.

It helped the Irish delegation (which

included luminaries from Windmill, Ardmore, EmDee, Promedia and Frontier Films) that the keynote speaker at the trade Forum was one Sir Bob Geldof who gave a wonderful, instructive and incisive view of world communications and managed to plug his proposed round-the-world live link-up in 1992 on matters ecological. He spent the rest of the day fielding potential buyers. CCT did a marvellous job too in arranging two major events which enabled us to 'meet the right people'. One was a lunch hosted by the Irish ambassador and the other was a reception prior to the Canadian premiere of "My Left Foot", and after that it was up to ourselves.

To all you aspiring producers, directors and film makers the answer: yes, Canada seems like a dream. Telefilm Canada will take up to 49% equity in a film (or by way of a repayable grant), and there are some top-up monies also available from regional development authorities. The major TV stations will pay up to one third of the budget for the licence to show the finished product. Some other time we'll discuss in detail the fine print, the necessary qualifying requirements even domestically for Canadians and the further co-production treaty requirements for other countries. In our own case we are still in active

discussion with several of the contacts made, and while we haven't yet hit the 'pot of gold' formula we are learning all the time and hope springs eternal.

Highlights (or otherwise) of the Festival for me were: how well organised the Festival was. Shop windows competed in a competition for Festival displays. Season tickets for all films were Can \$125 (or \$300 if you wanted to attend all the gala openings!). The pride of the reaction to "My Left Foot" on the first night showing. Queues for the theatres at 10am on Sunday morning. Finding the Festival club after five days and nights! Amazement that the party after the premiere of "Jesus of Montreal" finished at 1am sharp. Surprise at Walter Hill and Elizabeth Montgomery being booed at the end of Hill's most recent film, "Johnny Handsome" - not undeservedly, despite a magic Ry Cooder score, but possibly because of Mickey Rourke in the lead role. Finding "Queen of Hearts" by chance, a magic low budget film, see it when you can. Meeting Joe McAnthony who now resides in Toronto as a successful writer - four novels published worldwide to date. Enjoying the French feel to the city of Toronto, bookshops and overheard conversations, etc...and of course the film selections.



**Joe Geoghegan**  
**PHOTOGRAPHER**

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# LANDMARKS EXHIBITION

'Landmarks', a fascinating exhibition of independent film and video from the British workshop movement opens in Galway March 14-18, Arts Centre Dominick Street, Galway, 8pm nightly. Gallway's Tall Tale Films host this exhibition (which is touring Ireland) to show the great potential of the workshop approach to film and video production. Workshop members from Britain will discuss the ins and outs, and will answer questions on how community groups can get involved in the film process. Although the film and video workshop network in the UK is a fairly recent phenomenon, its origins date to the 'alternative culture' film collectives of the 60s. These groups sought to work outside the political, aesthetic and economic constraints of mainstream film and TV by favouring co-operative structures, by raising funds

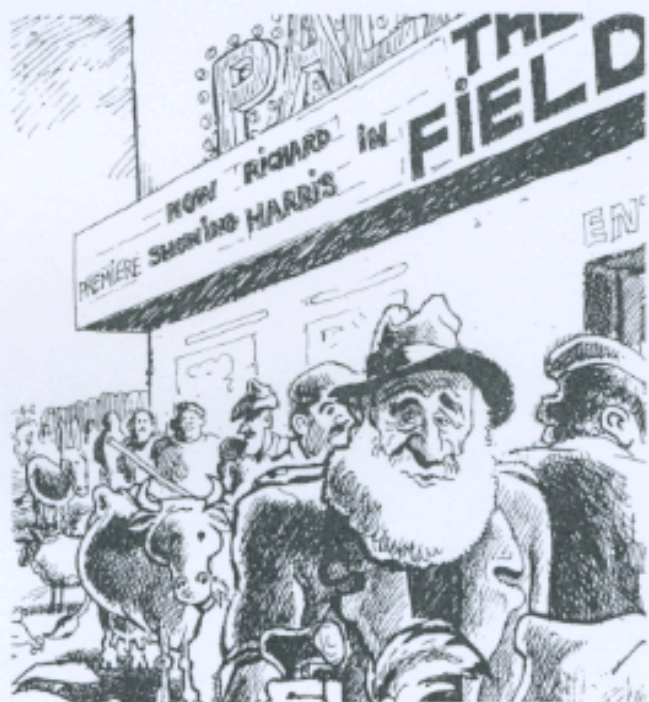
through non-market mechanisms (eg. arts grants), by a commitment to local communities, by offering equipment and facilities to community groups and also by stressing the importance of integrating production with distribution, non-theatrical exhibition and education.

The Independent Film Makers Association was formed in 1974 to provide an organised national voice in the face of unsatisfactory financial conditions, and to lobby for minimising further ITV companies (after C4) and in favour of establishing experimental community workshops. Subsequently, the British Broadcasting Act's directive for C4 to 'encourage innovation and experiment' and show a distinctive character of its own, coupled with the ACTT '81 workshop declaration, finally allowed for

workshops to be legitimately established. Fuller details on the ACTT declaration and background can be had at the 'Landmarks' exhibition, along with workshop franchising ideas and contact addresses. A full programme of showings is available from Tall Tale, 58 Dominick Street (64937) or the Arts Centre. The works to be shown range in theme from media distortion in Ulster; the everyday sexual harassment of women in the UK; racial discrimination; and the Welsh mother archetype. By no means are these works all sober affairs - state-of-the-art video technology and film are employed to their best to yield a genuinely entertaining and colourful exhibition. One example of a highly successful workshop production is Derry's 'Hush-A-Bye-Baby'.



## TALL TALE

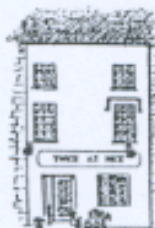


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## CUTAWAYS

### Film Foundation Course

The Film Resource Centre's third film foundation course began on Feb. 24 with all 16 places booked. The five weekend workshops are designed to give participants a general introduction to all aspects of film making, and enrollment is for the whole series. The workshops, given by experienced experts, finish on March 25 and are both practical and theoretical in content: Scriptwriting & Direction given by Dick Donoghue; Film Production given by Tommy Collins; Sound by Liam Saurin; Camera/Lighting by Donal Gilligan; Editing by Bernadette Moloney.

The Course is designed to give participants a solid base from which to begin making films or videos.

The Course costs £85 (£65 unwaged) for the five weekends, after membership of the Film Resource Centre. Contact Celine Curtin for full details. It is hoped to have another course in the summer, and autumn.

### Christmas Party at FRC

The FRC had its second Christmas party on December 16 in Arus na Gael. Margaret Joyce prepared and presented the food; smoked salmon courtesy of Galway Bay Seafoods. Murphy and Guinness provided two free barrels, and Irish Distillers - crackers filled with a little Xmas spirit. Thanks to the Arts Centre for glasses, O'Shea's, Neachtains and the Oasis for the wine.

Whooping it up at the Centre's Xmas party.



### Galway Film Society

Thereason for the Society is its exhibition of quality films on a regular basis to Galway audiences. GFS has served Galway for almost 40 yrs. Its chairman Yann Gu iomard can trace his association back to the '50s, but it's present structure is probably traceable to the early '70s when a new group took over and the Federation of Irish Film Societies began. GFS have two main seasons (Autumn and Winter) which show contemporary cinema at reasonable cost. It also contributes greatly to the Galway Arts Festival. The present highly successful Galway Film Fleadh has its roots in the GFS. The coming of cable TV and video temporarily affected membership but there has been a resurgence. The GFS's most pressing concern is to secure 35mm projection facilities. For further information: Yann Guiomard (62452), or any of the other members of GFS.

## BACKWIND

In the last issue Aisling Prior referred to Assistant Directors thus: 'If you are under the erroneous impression that being an A.D. is a step towards directing think again... the level of creative input is less than zero.' Robert Quinn, now a 3rd Assistant Director has worked on a number of recent Irish films including "My Left Foot", and feels the urge to respond.

For over two years, I have been trying to give a precise and interesting description of my job but after impressions such as Aisling Prior's I tend now just to say, absolutely straightfaced ... 'I'm a Binman'. This can be a great conversation stopper, causing people to fidget uncomfortably, or launch you into a fresh, open minded discussion which usually ends up with a pause, and 'But seriously what do you do?'

It isn't that the job of trainee Assistant Director is not interesting; it is very much the opposite, but it is very hard to describe. I was delighted to see Aisling Prior's attempt to do so but I feel she missed a few things.

By the nature of large films where money and schedules are always floating above the production like dark clouds, the work can be extremely hard and long, often longer than the average thirteen hours quoted by Aisling, especially for the 'early birds', in Hair, Make-up, Wardrobe and A.D.s.

As an A.D. one has to be on the ball all day, even after your body is calling for its bed. The work is two or three months of concentrated effort. But it is not all running after the needs of Artists and Crew alike. I wish that Aisling could have worked slightly longer on "The Field" to appreciate the creative input you can make, which is often a lot more than zero. For example, a day with the Extras represents to me a fun day, where you can take part in creating a live background with bundles of local people who are excited at the prospect of being in a film, no matter how out of focus they'll be in the finished product. You may not be the Director, but at this level your opinion is taken into account.

There are possibly two sides to the argument that being an A.D. is step towards directing. Certainly a working day is gruelling, and in the lower grades one does jobs that leave you some way from the camera (especially in period films, where holding traffic is a regular assignment; '89 'G' cars don't look or sound good in nineteenth century Ireland). But, we're also there to learn, and by observing and asking questions from people with much experience, you pick up a lot very quickly. On a film set everyone is in the one area, so asking everyone from Gaffer to Focus-Puller, about their jobs is ought of the question. Knowing the potential that every

department has, couldn't hinder a director.

From an aspiring film makers point of view, the opportunity is there to make contacts, not just on the set but also in supplying companies who could help you with your first film. Keeping that in mind, I think it's very possible to use assistant direction in steps towards directing.

Thank you to Aisling for her article which almost solved my problem: if anyone asks me 'What do you do for a living?' I will tell them to go and read FILM WEST winter and spring editions.



## FLASHBACK

**Hard Shoulder** is the debut film from Mirror Films production Company set up in 1987 by Jane Gogan, Mark Kilroy and Trish McAdam.

**Hard Shoulder** took five years to bring to fruition. It is written and directed by Mark Kilroy who began work on the script in 1984 and subsequently won a £20,000 film script award in 1986 from the Arts Council. It is currently showing for a limited run of three weeks at the Lighthouse Cinema in Dublin. Miriam Allen went along to see the film.

**Hard Shoulder** cost £350,000 and is the feature directorial debut of Mark Kilroy. (Previously he directed three short films). Primarily a television drama rather than a cinematic experience, as its director and the many close-ups will attest. The first twenty minutes of **Hard Shoulder** are witty and very humorous. The film centres around Henshaw (Johnny Murphy) a small time Dublin criminal who employs the naive Tony (Donal O Kelly) and the mysterious Ella (Olwen Fouere) to sell fire extinguishers of dubious origin door-to-door around Ireland. We follow the three misfits through small dreary Midland towns as they attempt to sell the fire extinguishers and escape their pasts. The trio stay in cheap hotels and visit seedy cafes and pubs giving a gloomy and downbeat view of the characters and towns

they visit. There are some marvellous character parts which are well observed. These are played by John Cowley, Agnes Bernelle, and Galway's own Molly Fogarty. The script is underdeveloped, particularly in relation to Ella. (Olwen Fouere is a very fine, intense actress, but in this situation the thinness of the script let her down.) The climax in Knock, though somewhat predictable, leaves one wondering did one miss something. **Hard Shoulder** will be screened by RTE over St Patrick's weekend.

**December Bride** is the feature directorial debut of Thaddeus O' Sullivan. Produced by Jonathan Cavendish for Little Bird Features Ltd.

**December Bride** opened the Dublin Film Festival. Sam Hanna Bell's novel skillfully adapted by David Rudkin, is set on the shore of Strangford Lough at the turn of the century. A farmer and his sons, Hamilton (Donal McCann) and Frank (Ciaran Hinds), take in a widow and her daughter Sarah (Saskia Reeves) to keep house for them. When the father dies Sarah decides to stay on against the wishes of her mother. The trio cease to attend church services and develop an easy-going *menage a trois* from which a child of uncertain paternity is born. This scandalises the local community and



Miriam Allen

they are ostracised.

Sarah is the central character in the film, her determination to resist convention and live her life according to her own conscience is the bond that unites all three. Performances by the central characters are superb, in particular Saskia Reeves in a very difficult role.

The design and costumes were magnificent, having a foreign feel to them.

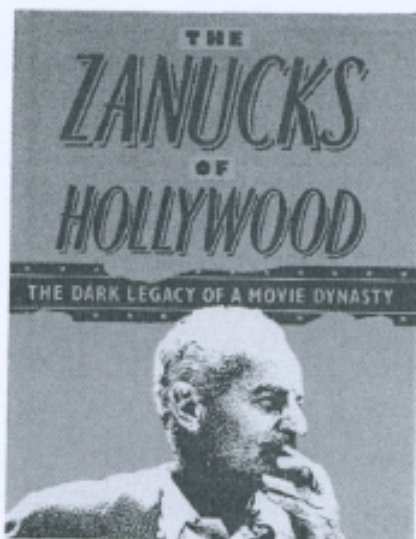
After the film I overheard the following: 'If **December Bride** was made in Sweden or anywhere else it would be nominated for the best foreign film at the Oscars.' My sentiments entirely.

Look out for this film at the Galway Film Fleadh. 18-23 July.

## BOOKSHOTS

**The Official ITV Careers Handbook** (£8.95 stg) by the ITV Association is a complete A to Z of job and entry requirements which takes account of recent changes in the structure of Independent Television in the UK, and the TV industry as a whole. Cable and satellite growth, and the progress of independent production companies (film and video) are also comprehensively dealt with. There is a section on job opportunities in other parts of the industry, and a critical guide to television and media-related courses. This well illustrated, large format paperback, is an indispensable guide for anyone contemplating a career in independent TV in the UK.

**Introducing Media Studies** is the title of a series of seven booklets (each at £2.25) produced by Hodder & Stoughton under various authors. These bright, cheerful and well researched booklets offer an introduction to the media of TV and film, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the advertising industry. With the current impetus in the US to educate young people themselves about the power of film and TV, these booklets are indeed well timed. Titles of the series: Thinking About Images; Planning the Schedules; Looking Into Advertising; Advertising In Action; Newspapers; Popular Magazines; On Your Radio.



Maryle J Harris' **The Zanucks of Hollywood** has just come out in hardback at £12.95 from Virgin / W H Allen. It's another of those hyper-detailed blockbuster biogs about a family of movie moguls, told in this case by a US financial journalist with an eye for good details, backed up lots of research. There's a certain amount of dash in the writing but no time to develop it in the cascade of incidents at film sets, boardrooms, courtrooms, bedrooms, private clinics and funeral homes. Unfortunately the book lacks a filmography, but the excellent notes, index and bibliography somewhat makes up for it; though the meagre selection of photographs is regrettable. All in all, this dramatic story of three generations of film makers (who produced hundreds of 'hit' movies) is well worth a read for its ultimate moral lesson; don't trust a suntanned producer with a cigar in his gob.

Community video is only one of the sections in **Constructing Television** (by S & W Hackman for Hodder & Stoughton, no price) which is geared toward camera-shy programme makers. Fiction, news and Advertising are other sections, which include day-long special group projects, and the book is derived from a Scottish TV series, which is also available on video from the publishers, for classroom use.

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## MEMBERSHIP Of Film Resource Centre

Become a member of the Film Resource Centre for only £10 per year (£5 for unwaged). This entitles you to the Centre's quarterly magazine Film West; priority consideration for the Centre's regular film workshops, courses and seminars; use of the Centre's film book library; support, advice and technical aid on setting up your own film project; concessionary rates to special Centre club screenings; and first access to the Centre's film equipment for hire. (Make cheques payable to the Film Resource Centre.)

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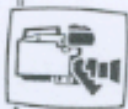
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