

# DCU aims to be top of class in war on plastic

By Mollie Cahillane

DUBLIN City University has become the first Irish university to go 'plastic-free' and plans to phase out single-use plastics completely by 2020.

Takeaway coffee cups, single-use takeaway containers, takeaway cutlery, and single-use plastic straws will be eliminated by September 2018, the university said.

Plastic drink bottles will be phased out by 2020.

The Irish Daily Mail has been running a 'Turn The Tide On Plastic' campaign to inform people about the dangers of plastic to the environment.

A survey by scientists at NUI



Galway earlier this year revealed 73% of deep-water fish in the northwest Atlantic have ingested microplastics.

This was among the highest levels found among fish in the world. Each year, eight million tonnes of plastic are dumped into Irish waters

DCU launched the initiative as part of Green Campus week. 'Our prioritisation of sustainability as a key theme reflects DCU's commitment to address a very real challenge, both at local and global levels,' said DCU president Brian MacCraith in a statement.

Other universities are also taking steps to reduce plastic waste. Last year, UCC banned disposable coffee cups in the library and removed 140 small bins, each with a plastic bag.

The DCU initiative comes as campaigners announced April 21 as a 'Shop and Drop' day in which shoppers are asked to leave excess plastic packaging at supermarket tills.

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# When Doddy met Hawking... and they set the world to rights

**A**T a time and place unknown to mortals, two lately deceased Englishmen sit together. One is a beloved comedian, the other a world-famous astrophysicist. They immediately recognise each other, for their faces are unmistakably distinct.

'I think we've kicked the bucket,' says the comedian through his buck teeth. 'It's been a long time since I've kicked anything,' retorts the wheelchair-bound astrophysicist. The comedian howls with laughter, before saying: 'I'm supposed to be the comic!'

'I'm Professor Stephen Hawking,' says the astrophysicist. 'And you must be Sir Ken Dodd.'

'That's right, but did you know that I also used to be a professor? Oh yes, when I started out in show-business I was known as "Professor Yaffle Chuckabuttly, Operatic Tenor and Sausage Knotter"!'

Professor Hawking smiles and asks Sir Ken how he got his famous teeth. 'When I was seven, my friends dared me to ride my bike with my eyes shut. I accepted the dare, crashed the bike and ended up with these teeth. It was the best career move I ever made!'

'Anyway,' says Sir Ken, 'bet you never thought you'd end up here?' 'I don't know where "here" is yet,' says the bemused genius.

'It doesn't matter where "here" is,' chuckles Sir Ken. 'The fact is, you're in it!'

'I suppose you're right, but it's too late to change any of my theories! I took thinking to the frontiers of the universe, but here I am one step beyond it and I seem to be in a black hole of my own making!'

Tears of laughter flow from Sir Ken's eyes as he exclaims: 'You're funnier than I am! Life, as I always used to say, would be tragic if it weren't funny.'

'You see,' says Sir Ken while waving two feather dusters - 'tickle sticks' - in the air, 'we died within a day of each other and the world is mourning us for different reasons. But the truth is that we did pretty much the same thing.'

'And what was that?' asks a curious Professor Hawking.

'We made people happy. Didn't you once say, "People won't have time for you if you are always angry or complaining"?''

'Come to think of it, I did say that,' responds Professor Hawking. Sir Ken replies: 'That was my philosophy too: we're put on Earth to make people happy and, as far as I can tell, we both did well.'

At which point, Sir Ken leaps out of his chair, ruffles his hair, protrudes his teeth and shouts: 'What a beautiful day to meet Stephen Hawking in paradise! When I asked him what he intends to do next, he said, "I plan to write An Endless History of Timelessness"!''

'I never said there was no creator,' replies Hawking, 'but only that science can explain the universe without the need for a creator. In fact, I always believed that, not only does God play dice, but he sometimes throws them where they cannot be seen.'

Sir Ken, pointing at his crazy hair, says: 'Oh, that's a bit over my head!' When Professor Hawking stops laughing, Sir Ken suddenly becomes very serious: 'I had a simple rule: no jokes about religion. As I never tired of saying, "My God has been very good to me".'

'You were also a singer?' enquires Professor Hawking.

Sir Ken replies: 'Oh yes, I loved to sing. I even managed a No. 1 hit with Tears! But the song I was most known for was Happiness. Do you know it?'

'I don't think so,' says Professor Hawking. Sir Ken responds by standing on his chair and, with a wave of his sticks, begins to sing:

*Happiness to me is an ocean tide  
Or a sunset fading on a mountain side*

*Or maybe a big old heaven full of stars up above*

*When I'm in the arms of the one I love*

*Oh, happiness, happiness, the greatest gift that I possess*

*I thank the Lord I've been blessed  
With more than my share of happiness.*

Professor Hawking, a tear trickling down his face, says: 'You're right, in life we had a lot in common. What made me happiest was marvelling at the same things - sunsets and ocean tides, the big old heaven full of stars above and being in the arms of those I love. It was this joy and happiness that I tried to share with the world through science.'

Sir Ken smiles a knowing smile and says: 'What a beautiful day, even when they think you're dead!'

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