

# i - contact

The Internal Newsletter of IONATEchnologies

## Where's Our Party? Demand Staff

As the light at the end of the CORBA 2 tunnel approaches, staff are reminded of Chris' promise to hold an 'almighty party' to celebrate its completion. Chris made the promise in a moment of madness at the wine and cheese two months ago, but little did he realise that due to the efforts of company staff, he would be put on the spot so early in the Quarter.

Said Paul O'Neill, C++ Mapping expert, "I've even gone so far as to demonstrate the mapping to staff. As far as I'm concerned we're almost there". Meanwhile, as Orbix 2.0 goes through it's Qas, and the second batch of Betas leave today, clamour is growing for a free drink. And crisps. Says Laura Dillon, Beta expert, "the software's out there, let's party".

However, the response from the top was described as 'cool'. A spokesman said "let's wait for GA. Then we can celebrate. Anyway, Orbix 2.1 is the important release". Ever sensible, Ann Barry, herself busy re-writing documentation, put a favourable spin on the decision. "Party or not, the real winner with Orbix 2.0 is IONA Technologies", she said.

## What I Did On My Holidays (er....Trip To Finland) By Ken Knox

Well, I should have known that it wasn't going to be a smooth ride judging from the taxi to the airport. The driver looked as if his left ear had been savaged by a **Pterodactyl** & he drove as if the attack was on-going. As we headed towards the Bray by-pass he muttered something about looking for a Skip in Shankill, **Chris** lives there I thought to myself but thought nothing more of it. As he weaved through the traffic heading towards Donnybrook with an obvious obsession to break the world record for pointless lane changes he informed me that he used to be a brick-layer, but a serious car accident put his back out so he took up taxi-driving instead! When we reached **Donnybrook** he swerved in to the path muttering "I knew I'd find one", got out of the car, took a refuse sack out of the boot & threw it into a skip on the footpath. Next as we came towards **Pearse Street** station he pulled over to the wrong side of the road, again stopped the car, and ran into the Blue-Cabs office, leaving me to face the oncoming traffic and strange looks from drivers I hoped I didn't know. By a strange co-incidence 100 yards down the road there was a car upside-down in the middle of the road and guards everywhere; "**Looks like there's been an accident**", he ventured observantly and proceeded to take the next corner looking backwards with his head out the side window.

After all that I was looking forward to **7 hours of travelling by plane** with 2 connections, Unfortunately however the flight to London was delayed by 15 minutes, no-one was at the checkin desk for a certain Scandanavian airline in Terminal 1, the bus from Terminal 1 to Terminal 3 in Heathrow was a bit slow and that same airline insisted on checking in 25 before takeoff, all of which added up to a missed flight and a **slightly upset IONA employee**, who, incidently, made it to the Terminal 3 checkin 20 minutes before takeoff.

to be continued.....

Don't forget, **i-contact** is an internal newsletter. And it's not funny anymore. All news, ideas, letters, submissions etc. can be sent to [tfarrell@iona.ie](mailto:tfarrell@iona.ie). **i-contact** should be published again on 10/11/1995.

## Marketing News

In Colin's own words, "**The Juice is Loose**", and plenty of other things have been happening in Marketing. In the last month, whilst engineering have written **Orbix 2.0**, Marketing have decided what kind of box to put it in. Who says they do nothing?

- Hit of the month has to be the **CORBA seminar** series. A new venture for Marketing, reports are filtering back that the San Jose seminar was the greatest West Coast event since the Monterey Festival, with scuffles breaking out over who would go on last, and **Barry Morris** setting fire to his slides to whip the crowd into a frenzy.
- Much talk and conjecture has been focused on how to package and market Orbix 2.0, with marketing again proving to be \*the\* rock'n'roll department after choosing CD as the format of choice. With all the fuss over CDs being a rip-off at £15, will we get away with \$5000?
- PR and Tradeshows are running successfully. After a good week at ObjectExpo Europe in London, we are moving on to **COMDEX** and **DB/EXPO** in November / December - to be fishes of indeterminate size in larger ponds than ever before (lakes even). Magazine coverage of late has been excellent, as PR winds up for the COMDEX / CORBA 2 blitz.
- The WEB is being updated and reformed, **OrbixWise** and the **OrbixAwards** are soon to come on line, and there is much muttering about new documentation in various forms.

## USA News

Over the pond, telesales and support are running smoothly out of the Boston office. On the news front:

- **Catie McGarrahan** has started in an admin/reception role.
- Visits are frequent. At present Margaret is over looking to bolster the sales staff. Other visitors have included Karl, Annrai and Justin.
- In a shock announcement Colin has confirmed that the leased lines \*will\* be fully operational within the **millennium**.
- Although claiming to be a '**hive of activity**', judging by the contents of my mailbox most of the Boston staff are more busy gossiping and spreading scandal than selling Orbix. None of it is printable here, although staff can approach me directly for details.

## Training And Consultancy News

Anger in office 'A' concerning **Sean Baker's** newly found status as 'absentee landlord' is mis-placed. If we knew how hard those folk were working when away from their desks, we wouldn't be so quick to scoff. Actually, Sean is on holiday, but the rest of them are working....

- This is a record breaking month, with no fewer than 11 courses being conducted during October, including a world-first for **Karl McCabe** - the first of many Orbix + ISIS courses.
- **Killian**, the wild rover of T&C, is now helping Northern Telecom distribute their objects.
- **Alan Conway** has now left his residency in Smyths in order to 'consult' and 'be consulted' at Ericsson in Sweden.
- **Andrew Condon** has stepped into Karl McCabe's shoes, helping Orbix 'take off' (pun) with Boeing in Seattle. Careful with that grunge now.
- **SeanOS** is, as usual, engaged in top secret work of a spy-like nature, whilst **Fiona Hayes** had no sooner settled at her desk than she was off in California, then Colorado, giving Orbix courses.

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At long last and with no holds barred, **Graham Walsh** outlines his hypothetical plans for IONA in...

## If I Was The Gaffer.....

Sometimes I'm amazed at how this company is run. My **three point plan** is simple, and yet will see IONA's profit levels soar in the near future. Here's how -

- 1) After studying the accounts very closely, I've noticed that **Sales** seems to be the only department that brings any money in. Everyone else just seems to spend it! This is no way to run a business. If I was the gaffer, I'd enlarge sales, and get rid of every other department in the company. That way profits would soar, and we'd have no expenditure to speak of. This is so obvious that I'm amazed no-one has thought of it before.
- 2) Have you ever noticed how **computers** keep crashing, or they never do what you want them to, or you find it difficult to access a record in Notes? I advocate a '**paper office**', where all the facts and figures are at your fingertips. If we printed out all our records, letters and faxes we could store them all in filing cabinets and they would never get lost. What's stopping us? I believe the technology is available, and we'd never have to do the backups again.
- 3) It's no secret that the office is more crowded now than it ever has been. What I can't understand is, why do we keep taking on new staff when we're so short of space? It doesn't take a **genius** to figure out that the reason we're so crowded is that too many people are working here. If we followed point 1 above, this problem would solve itself.

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## Sales - What We Really Do All Day - With Correspondent Margaret Gallery

I was taken by our esteemed editor's musings on 'what do we do in sales?', and while reading the inspirational autobiography of **General Colin Powell** in the Sunday Times, I was inspired to write this reply.....

We in sales like to consider ourselves the **soldiers of Orbix**, sent out to the front line to translate the high command's grand stratagems into action. We take our rallying call of '**Orbix Everywhere**' and translate this to 'World Dominance and exterminate the foe'.

My brief when I took over was to gather together a crack strike force, sharpen and hone them and send them into battle. My plan, after a rigorous selection process to weed out the unfit (OK **Chris** and **Annrai** I'll employ a few blondes), was to take the new recruits and test them to the limit of human endurance. (15 consecutive nights at **Howl at the Moon**) Surviving only on two hours sleep a night and a liquid diet they then are subjected to intense indoctrination (Orbix for Idiots with Brig. Gen. O'Toole). We work with them on their persuasive powers and encourage practical demonstration and a healthy spirit of competition among our team. (How many dates was in it one night lads?)

And then for the **elite** that that graduate we give their mission:

for Mark, our ancient foe the UK\*

for Paul, Finance (get them where it hurts)

for Niamh, Telecoms (get their communication lines and you've won)

and last but not least Fiona is our brave warrior on the **frontline**.

So while we cannot all be called to such a glorious destiny as we till and water the fields of Orbix, I ask you all to raise your glasses, spare a thought for our brave warriors battling in Boston and on the furthest frontier (Timbuktu - PTH is going) and proudly shout your rally call:

Orbix Everywhere

\*i-contact wish to make it clear that we have absolutely nothing against the English. In fact they're quite the friendliest people we've ever met.

**Yes! It's The Ciaran McHale Page!**

Believe it or not, everything you see below is the work of one Ciaran McHale. Perhaps he should read his job description more carefully.....

**IONA scoops Top Oscars in Awards Ceremony Shock**

Newcomer to the movie industry, IONA Technologies, caused a stir last night when they scooped 6 awards in the annual Oscar ceremonies. This came as a great surprise to industry pundits who were not even aware that IONA was in the movie-making business. A reliable source inside IONA said "We've expanded a great deal over the last year, probably due to consuming too much wine & cheese, so we decided to diversify a bit. This year we are taking on the movie industry. Next year it might be ice-cream manufacturing or the sale of juggling balls. Who knows?"

The awards IONA won were as follows. Best performance for the non-stop action movie "5000 remote invocations per second". Best special effects for the spy thriller "The Xwin demo". Best foreign language feature for "Orbix for Smalltalk". Best adaptation for the surreal "Orbix/OLE integration". Best supporting role went to IONA's technical support staff. There was stiff competition for the award of best director. Sean Baker's nomination suffered a drawback when he was accused of engaging in a discriminatory "you'll only work here if you have red hair" hiring policy. When asked to comment on these accusations, Mr Baker declined on the grounds that the reporter was blond. Annrai O'Toole's nomination was doomed when it was discovered that he was a Northsider. This, however, did not shake his good humour: "At my age I'm just happy to be alive. Have you seen my zimmerframe?" With the other nominations out of the way, the coast was clear for Chris Horn to scoop the best director award. In his acceptance speech, Chris paid tribute to his roots: "People often get the mistaken idea that I come from a Computer Science background. In actual fact, that was just a temporary job I once had. I was originally brought up an Engineer and now I am one again."

The only major award which IONA failed to secure was that of best comedy. IONA employee Hugh Grant's comedy "Life sucks when she's down on your luck" was narrowly beaten by OJ Simpson who won the award for his farce "A killer walks free".

**IONA Expands into New Area**

Having conquered the CORBA marketplace, IONA is set to diversify its business interests. Annrai O'Toole explained "With widespread awareness of ecological issues, the recycling of old fads is becoming big business. So with the aid of our marketing expertise and today's horoscope, we have decided that the time is ripe for a comeback of the Rubix Cube."

IONA will have to extensively revise and improve upon Rubix's original design if they hope to achieve good market penetration. Colin Newman says "We have some prototype models for experimenting with various design issues. Already we have determined that our cube should be spherical in order to maintain consistency with our existing product line. Furthermore, we will paint it orange to resemble a fruit since studies have shown that people impulse-buy when hungry."

Paula McGrath from the development group was eager to discuss the technical details of this new product. She claims it is fully integrated with important computer technologies. "The OLE integration makes it ideal for bringing along to football matches, and the Smalltalk support enables it to hold conversations about the weather." She added that this latter capability makes it suitable for deployment in satellite systems. "Supercomputers won't be needed any more to forecast the weather. Instead, this product will be able to send radio signals back to Earth with messages such as `Sunshine and mild breezes in Dublin this afternoon but Limerick looks miserable.'"

With so many built-in capabilities, one might be surprised to learn that it is to be a lightweight product. "It's certainly lightweight enough for juggling," said Oisín Hurley, "and it's blindingly fast. Just yesterday I threw one at someone and nearly knocked his eye out."

**IONA Fails to Leave its Mark**

Over the past several days the corporation has been laying down concrete to repair the pavements at Baggot Street Bridge, near IONA's headquarters. Rumour has it that the folks in Marketing held a secret meeting to discuss the possibility of writing something in the wet concrete. One suggestion was to scrawl "IONA Technologies was here" so that when the company relocates to larger premises it could truthfully claim that to have left its mark on the area. A competing proposal was to bury a copy of the just-to-be released Orbix 2.0 in the pavement as part of the "Orbix everywhere" campaign. However the idea with by far the most support was to emboss the Orbix logo in the wet concrete and come back when the design had dried to enamel it in the official blue and green colours. Unfortunately, since the marketing folks could not agree upon a new logo for Orbix 2.0, the proposal was eventually dropped. Colin Newman hotly denied the entire rumour, saying "Of course we have been able to agree upon a new logo!"

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## Benson 'Livid' At Porting Lab Money Snatcher

IONA Mac specialist **Paddy Benson** has made a moving plea to **i-contact** and the public to come forward with any information as to the whereabouts of **£15 sterling** last seen lying around his keyboard two months ago.

Said a tearful Paddy, 56, "I just can't believe this could happen. I'm not a rich man, and to think that one of my colleagues could stoop so low is upsetting."

The theft, discovered when an anonymous employee travelling to **England** to watch **football** looked for the money to find it had gone, has come hot on the heels of last month's disappearance of a CD player from the porting lab. Following an **i-contact** investigation, **Ken Walsh** confessed to taking the CD player for an 'installation', and has pledged to return it. Nice one Ken. However, Ken has been cleared of all blame in the money case, and so, in another tired old re-hash of the 'Who shot JR / Who shot Mr Burns' thing, we present:

### Who Took Paddy's Money?

The suspects :

- 1 **Miriam Thomas** left for England, a good place to spend English money, at around the time the money disappeared.
  - 2 Inspired by the indoor bowls on telly, **Lisa Daly** may have played bowls with the rotund coins, until they all fell down a drain, or something.
  - 3 **Mark Dunleavy** may have swallowed the coins, believing they were chocolate money, as English coins look a bit like gold.
  - 4 **Justin Mason** may have stolen the money to raise funds for fringe religious organisations.
  - 5 **Paddy Benson** himself may have spent the money on a bottle of whiskey, and then been too scared to tell the missus.
- So who was it, why did they do it, and where is the money now? Tune in next week to discover that Paddy has mislaid the money behind his monitor and it never got stolen at all.

## IONA Plans Office In Space!

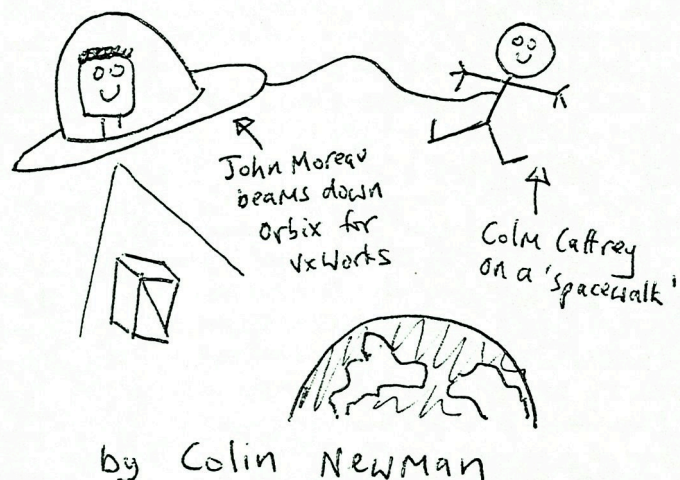
Leaked documents suggest that the solution to IONA's location worries could be in the last place you'd look (unless you are an astronomer) - **outer space!**

The plan, inevitably the brainchild of one **Colin Newman**, involves the construction of a state of the art office in geo-stationary orbit around the planet. Says Newman, "there's no better way of underlining our commitment to leading edge technology than to be based in space". "Think of the advantages", he continues, "no time difference, we can 'beam' Orbix down to anyone who wants it, and we can spy on Expersoft and Post-Modern with 'space' cameras."

Others are less optimistic. **Sean Baker** claims that "Colin must have gone to see **Apollo 13** at the cinema and got a bit carried away". **John Moreau**, ever the pragmatist and damned clever to boot, is also sceptical, "if you look at the structure of the industry, no-one else has an office in space. Except **Novell**. I think".

Meanwhile, in a further twist in the 'office space' wars, **finance** today announced plans for a small arable farm in their department. Said **Marie Connolly**, "we have all this spare room, we may as well do something productive with it".

### Our Space Base



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Global News-Watch.....

## CORBA WENT TO THE WEST COAST AND CAME BACK EXHAUSTED!

With Correspondent Jillian Godsil

Yes, you've seen the T-shirts (although they have been largely hidden), you may even have seen the conference manual - well, the good news is we now have the video! (I jest not, we will soon edit it into manageable chunks). **CORBA Madness** went to the West Coast - came, saw and conquered. We had a **tremendous response** - almost 400 people came to listen to us. Even more amazing, they paid good money to hear us talk. In particular, the San Jose venue was a sell-out with more than 200 people packed into a very large conference room (Bill Gates eat your heart out!)..

Feedback was very positive. People wanted to know more about regular training, about the company, and some even signed evaluation forms (**Margaret** - you'll be pleased to hear they were willing to pay for them!).

Our guest speakers were **Paul Murray** from Boeing, **Alan Noble** and **Matthew Menzel** from Schlumberger and **Chuck Price** from Broadvision. The audience were very pleased with these customer testimonials.

**Annrai** and **Barry** represented IONA with great gusto and were very well received (one question - does the OMG really sit around, drink beers and fart?). We had many complimentary comments made about their talks and they were in great demand in the breaks. **Fiona Mackey** was invaluable as the person who signed up everyone and elicited promises of many sales. People to thank back at the ranch include Brian, John, Tom (F+G), Darren, Siofra, Laura, Susanne, Ross, Orla, Maria, Lisa, Liz, Margaret, Cormac and anyone else who had the misfortune to come into contact with me during the CORBA crazy days before we left. (As **Susanne** was heard to whisper to anyone who would listen - don't mention you're not busy around Jillian - she'll only rope you into doing something exciting like processing **VISA** cards!).

So thank you one and all for putting up with the CORBA crisis - as you may know **Brian Comaskey** has the enviable task of carrying them forward in our crazy schedule over the coming months (East Coast in November, Mid West in December and London and Europe in the new year). **Let the wagons roll!**

## The Remains of McCabe

Overseas with Andrew Condon

It's been a month since I arrived, and the weather has adjusted nicely from scorching Indian summer to continuous rain. In fact, driving down the freeway in the morning you could almost be in the West of Ireland, if it weren't for the cars, all of which are on **steroids**.

I have inherited Karl's worldly goods. Such opulence, such extravagance: the guy had two of everything out here (two plates, two forks, two uneaten TV dinners in the fridge etc). The language barrier here is larger than you'd imagine, the dialect being a variant of NABJ (**North American Business Jargon**). I was confronted with it fairly immediately because **Karl** had been somewhat contaminated, right from the get-go when he collected me from Sea-Tac he was "**looking for closure**", he didn't seem to "**give a rip**" about the damage he was doing to himself (or his car) with this foreign talk. I mean, he wasn't burning any bridges, it was a win-win situation, but still I felt that he was **spinning wheels**. But still, I barely had time to notice this: we had thoughts to capture and there was much 'focalling' of issues to be done. The eternal quest for "**good stuff**".

Actually, the NABJ isn't the worst: much harder to understand is the Boeing love-affair with numbers, which can lead to meetings that sound like they've been encrypted. Numbers can be verbed, nouned and adjectivised: "I'll need to finish that 330 so that we can 580 the 220 and roll Skin and Spar. After that the RIP team will take it like we discussed in Triage with Site 0 yesterday. **Can you recycle Orbix for that?**" Say what?

## Engineering News

Of course you hardly need me to tell you what currently dominates the agenda in engineering. Yes, it's **CORBA 2 madness - the return of CORBA**. But did you know they do other things as well, like juggle, and surf the web? Read on.....

- **John Moreau** is now heading up a crack squad of 11 people working on Orbix 2.0. Desperate to refute allegations that he is a 'slacker' in 'the X generation', John has now worked continually for over two weeks (without sleep).
- The Objectstore adaptor is released on Alpha, after sterling work from **Margaret Irish**.
- In a blind date scenario, **Martin O'Riordan** is currently 'stepping out' with Antares, whilst **Colm Caffrey** has chosen ISIS as his ideal partner.
- **Myles** (see Limericks), is writing MUIL. The best expansion of this wins a great mystery prize.
- **Kevin McGonagle** has become IONA's number one QA person, currently turning in at least one a week. Nice one Kev.

However, despite all the good news from what Ross refers to as 'down there', one issue seems to dominate conversation. Sweets. Confection. Chocolate. Well, that's three words but you get the drift. Apparently a new system has led to **tardy engineering types** being fined a full 50p for being late for meetings, and with proceeds going toward sweets for the staff, there are fears of obesity becoming prevalent among staff. However, it seems the first batch of these sweets was 'disposed of' by a **mystery agent** obviously concerned for our staff health and the state of our teeth. Better luck next time.

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## Staff News

Some might say that too many cooks lead to broth spoilage of the first degree. But not here at IONA. We believe in squeezing as many metaphorical cooks as possible into our office. Debutante chefs this month include:

- **Niall Byrne** joins the merry band down in Sales, taking on questions of a more technical nature from confused punters. I am informed he is starting 'proper' in November, and will be based in Boston.
- **Brian Comaskey** started on October 9th in marketing as a Marketing Assistant, taking up the administration of the seminar series.
- **Laura Dillon** started full time as a Product Marketing Assistant on September 25th. She takes responsibility for the beta program.
- **Siofra Flood** is now installed as full time Legal Officer, as of September 18th.
- **Ronan Geraghty** started as an Object Technology Consultant on September 18th
- **Conor O'Grady** becomes Production Manager down in shipping, and began writing his floppies on October 3rd.

Lastly, in a bizarre move only made public today, Suzanne Brown has elected to stay on as Operations Manager (after a short holiday). Unfortunately, this means we say goodbye to Brenda, who leaves to look after Jack. Definitely a case of moving on to better (and more important) things. Good luck Brenda, and all our new staff joining us over the past month.

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## IONA Limericks:

They're here, they rhyme, get used to it.....

There once was a man from Artane,  
Who had objects and ORBs on the brain,  
Though his name was O'Toole,  
He was nobody's fool,  
Until IDL drove him insane.

There was a young fellow called Ross,  
With delusions of being the boss,  
With his shirt and his tie,  
He was sore on the eye,  
And without them he feels at a loss.

There was a young fellow called Mark,  
Who went out on the tear after dark,  
Though he's working in sales,  
He woke up drinking ales,  
With a 'female friend' in the park.

There was a young Aussie called Ryan,  
Who when inside a kart started flyin',  
But when up against Stephen,  
He couldn't get even,  
And by the last lap he was cryin'

There once was a man from Rathgar,  
Who's parents said "son you'll go far",  
But they hadn't a clue,  
He'd be in the 'who's who',  
Now their little Colin's a star

There was a young fellow called Paul,  
Who was partial to 'having a ball',  
Whilst in San Francisco,  
He was flogged in a disco,  
And now he can't sit down at all.

There was a young fellow called Myles,  
Who would cheer up the office with smiles,  
But he wouldn't behave,  
He forgot to hit save,  
And now he's lost all of his files

The boss of our big software section,  
Was driving her team to perfection,  
If excuses were lame,  
"Pay up!" she'd exclaim,  
And spend the proceeds on confection  
-Ann Barry

There will be a man named Craig,  
Whose strategy will remain vague,  
Til the next grand prix,  
With his talents unleashed,  
He'll leave Stephen and all in his wake.

There once was a man named Farrell,  
Who's work was nothing but casual,  
Between gossip and rumours,  
He attempted to be humerous,  
With the same bad taste as his apparel.  
Craig Ryan

There was an idiot from Chester,  
Who was a congenial jester,  
He drove no Lamborghini,  
And was no Seamus Heaney  
But boy could Tom sell an object broker  
requester.

Colin Newman

(er.....aren't things getting a bit personal?)

On a more cultured note, some more verse  
from Ann:

Things have changed in software  
On that we all agree  
'Cos if we're late for meetings  
It costs us 50p

I'm late again, it's five past five  
Oh woe is me, oh drats!  
From me a fine she'll extricate  
And spend it on kit kats

It doesn't matter who you are  
From grunt to president  
She's engineering manager  
And your money's good as spent

Into the wicker bin they go  
To feed us night and day  
Unless the cleaner comes along  
And throws that bin away

Then if your code is good and neat  
A biscuit you'll receive  
But if a deadline you don't meet  
Her wrath you won't believe

On that note I'll draw to close  
The end of week is near  
For if I get up Paula's nose  
T'will surely cost me dear

All Poems Dedicated To Seamus Heaney. Well Done! (if  
you're reading this).