DISTRO WARS
or 'Not LinuxWorld Ireland'

The LinuxWorld Ireland conference, which was scheduled for the end of November, was cancelled due to the current world situation. However, after a big discussion on the Linux Beer Hike list on LinuxWorld IE, the general consensus was that the opportunity for a good drinking session should not be missed. So it was that at the end of November, John Hearns and I found ourselves in Dublin to attend the community-based replacement event, "Distro Wars".

We spent the first day doing the tourist things in Dublin, whilst the others visited Newgrange, an important Irish prehistoric site. After a tour of Dublin's more recent historic landmarks, we then had a very welcome hot chocolate in Bewley's CafÈ on Grafton Street.

The following morning John looked a little rough – understandable, given the previous night's sampling of the Black Bush with Liam Bedford and the LBW crowd. A 10am lecture at Trinity College made for an early start, so we booked a taxi.

Great turnout

On the way we spotted two familiar figures trudging along, so the taxi screeched to a halt and Alan Cox and Telsa Gwynne were bundled in. After a long journey round the back lot of Trinity, we finally found the lecture hall where Alan was scheduled to give a talk. The talk was on Free Software, and covered a range of topics such as DMCA, DECSS, software patents and the GPL license. Around 60 people turned up to hear the talk – proof that Linux really does come from the grass roots.

After the lecture, we took a quick trip to see the Book of Kells and the superb Long Room library at Trinity (*http://www.tcd.ie/Library/kells.htm*). We then retired to the pub for some food and discussions. Liam had reserved a space in Messrs Macguire, a brew pub on the Quays beside O'Connell Bridge. The area was on the third floor and there were no lifts for my wheelchair. John soon returned with three Linux volunteers, however, and together all four carried my chair up the stairs. We sampled some of Messrs Macguire's finest beers, and even Tux was seen sampling a glass of stout (see the photograph). John also found himself leading a Birds of a Feather session on clustering and Grid computing.

That evening ILUG had arranged a booze-up in a brewery – well, we had to prove that Linux geeks

Penguins having fun at the party

could organise one! We went to the Dublin Brewing Company for a tour of the brewing process and all the beer you could drink for £20. The small drinking area of the Brewing Co. was full of Linux people sampling the brew and eating Indian takeaways. We joined up with our two Bavarian friends, Kerstin and Philip Weinbrenner. The Bavarians were a bit 'green' in the selection of Indian food, and so hadn't learned to err on the side of caution – so they got a very spicy meal.

For the next morning, ILUG organised 'Distro Wars' – a paintball match between champions of competing distributions. We plumped for the safer option and had a walk around Georgian Dublin instead. On the walk we encountered two Linux friends – Yalla and Edwin. We took them along to see the Dublin Post Office in O'Connell Street, which still has the bullet holes.

That afternoon, we went off to see a film at the Savoy cinema, which has Ireland's biggest screen. After the film we said our goodbyes, hugged and promised to meet again. Then we had to dash for the airport. On the flight home, Aer Lingus were marvellous – even though we were the last aboard and they had to call us on the Tannoy! I got to sit in business class and got a bottle of champagne for John. We arrived to a rainy city airport, and a quick cab ride took us home.

The LinuxWorld Ireland event may have been cancelled, but that didn't stop Linux users from jetting off to the Emerald Isle. Phillipa Wentworth was in attendance

Info

ILUG – Irish Linux Users Group
  http://www.linux.ie/
You can read more about 'Distro Wars' on Telsa's trip diary:
  http://www.linux.org. uk/~telsa/Trips/ dublin.html

LinuxWorld Ireland

A 'real' LinuxWorld Ireland is going ahead next year. The dates are 9-11th April 2001 – see *http://www.linuxworld.ie*. So put the date in your diaries, and come over the Irish Sea in April for three days of Linux, Guinness and good Craic!