

McEnroe joins the festivities

From Richard Evans
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If Dublin experiences a happier day in the summer of its millennium, the luck of the Irish will be in full flood. The after-glow of the Republic's victory over England was burnished by a day of glorious sunshine and the arrival, for only the second time, of John McEnroe.

All things considered, his first feel of a grass court since the Australian Open two and a half years ago went well. Playing for Ireland against Sweden in the GOAL Challenge — a Third World relief charity which is expected to raise more than £60,000 from the event — McEnroe beat Mats Wilander over three delightfully played sets on a court laid over the croquet lawn of New Square at Trinity College.

A crowd of 2,400 enjoyed the humour as much as the tennis. McEnroe tried to kick a ball back up court to a ball boy and succeeded only in slicing it into the stands. "That looked like England's shots yesterday," he said.

Although McEnroe was more garrulous than usual, words were superfluous in the face of the wizardry that sprung from his racket. In fact, the only quote he needed was one he could have borrowed from one of Trinity's old boys, Oscar Wilde: "I have nothing to declare but my genius."