

Women urged to take smear test in battle against cervical cancer

By AINE FITZGERALD

FINDING the time to have a cervical smear test in 2007 could save your life, according to the Irish Cancer Society and the director of the Irish Cervical Screening Programme.

"Seven women die a year in the Mid-West as a result of cervical cancer and the majority are aged in their forties and fifties. An aver-

age of 73 die nationwide. It can take 10 to 15 years to develop, and, therefore, there is a window of opportunity to pick-up on early changes," said Dr Marian O'Reilly, who has been directing the Irish Cervical Screening Programme for the past six years in the Mid-West from St Joseph's Hospital, Mulgrave Street.

Cervical screening prevents the development of cervical cancer because it recognises a pre-cancer

state in the cervix.

As a result, the Irish Cancer Society are reminding women aged 25 years or more, who have been or are sexually active, and who may have never had a smear test, or if it has been longer than three years since the last test, to make an appointment with their GP or local family planning clinic.

As part of the National Cervical Screening Programme, free cervical screening is being offered to

women aged 25 to 60 years in the HSE Mid-West area.

The ICSP aim to ensure that women on the register will be invited over a five-year screening period by letter to attend for a free cervical smear test.

Women who have never had a programme smear can contact one of the ICSP registered doctors and nurses to discuss having a free smear test.

Women who have registered

with the programme can wait until they are sent a letter advising when to make an appointment for a free smear test with an ICSP-registered smearer of their choice.

"The smear test is a very simple procedure taking less than five minutes. It may be slightly uncomfortable but should not be painful. The earlier a change is found, the easier it is to successfully treat," said Dr Grainne Flannelly, consul-

tant obstetrician and gynaecologist, National Maternity Hospital.

For further information on the cervical smear tests and/or cervical cancer freefone the National Cancer Helpline on 1800-200700 (week days 9am to 5pm; Tuesdays until 9pm), or contact the Irish Cervical Screening Programme, Top Floor, South West Wing, St Joseph's Hospital, Mulgrave Street, Freeport LK 407, Limerick, or CallSave: 1850-252600.

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Author's house may yet be writers centre

By ANNE SHERIDAN

HOPES are still high that the birthplace of Limerick author Kate O'Brien could be used for a writers centre.

The property has now been on the market for over three years with an initial asking price of €1.4m.

The massive 36,023 square foot property on Mulgrave Street, which is being sold by de Courcy estate agents, includes seven bedrooms and four additional rooms in the attic.

Auctioneer John de Courcy confirmed that the Lloyd family, who own the property, are hoping for considerably more than the €1.4m price tag.

"It has been advertised a lot in the past and we've had a few interested people but no keen buyers yet," he said.

However, a native Londoner who has lived in Limerick for the past 17 years, still believes that the novelist's home would be best suited to a much needed writers centre in the city.

Judith Hill successfully campaigned to have the house placed on the list of protected structures and now believes Limerick Civic Trust should acquire the building in the interests of the local community.

The property, named Boru House, also contains expansive gardens to the rear which could further entice prospective buyers with an interest in the history of the



Author Kate O'Brien's house on Mulgrave Street: hopes high that it may yet become a writers centre (LL)

O'Brien family.

"It's a typical late Victorian house, but much more elaborate than most houses of that period. Her father was a horse dealer and the reason he bought the house was because there is so much land at the back of the house, where he had stables and trained horses," said Ms Hill.

While Ms Hill noted the many attractive features of the property, she feels there is one obvious downside which may be

impeding the sale of the property.

"One of the problems with the house is that it's very middle class but isn't in a middle class residential area," said Ms Hill.

While generally regarded as being vastly underrated by many Irish literary critics, there is growing appreciation for the controversial author's work. Last year Penguin re-issued her final novel *As Music and Splendour*, which has

been out of print for decades.

And the annual Kate O'Brien weekend in the city continues to attract a large audience. This year's festival runs from Friday, February 23 to Sunday, February 25, with the theme: Being Irish: What 'ish my nation? Speakers at the festival will include Thomas Moore, Anne Maguire, Melissa Murray, Terry Lynch and Terry Corcoran.

Kate O'Brien was born

in Limerick on December 3, 1897; her mother died when she was five, and she became a boarder in Laurel Hill convent. She died in Canterbury in 1974.

Her novels, *Mary Lavelle* and *The Land of Spices*, published in 1941, were banned in Ireland, as they dealt with issues of female sexuality. The Glucksman Library at the University of Limerick holds a large collection of O'Brien's personal writings.

Ketchum if you can

Country music legend Hal Ketchum will play University Concert Hall, Limerick, on Friday March 9. Hal has been a member of the Grand Ole Opry since 1994. He has had a string of hits including, *Past the Point of Rescue* written by Limerick singer songwriter Mick Hanly.

EV+A

NEW York-based curator Klaus Ottmann is the curator for EV+A 2007, which will run from March 31 to June 24. Closing date for receipt of submissions is this Friday. They can be sent by post to EV+A Belltable Arts Centre, 69, O'Connell Street, or left at Limerick City Gallery of Art, Pery Square, between 10am and 4pm.

Fashion party

GLOBAL Fashion's first Irish Fashion TV Party, which was filmed at Trinity Rooms last December, will be viewed by 300 million viewers worldwide in the coming weeks.

Fashion TV will broadcast the event weekly on their international satellite station (channel 273 on SKY Digital) every Thursday at 11.55pm, Friday at 10.55pm and Saturday at 9.55pm until March 10.

ONE meets

THE annual general meeting of the Patrick Sarsfield Branch of the Organisation of National Ex-service men and women takes place this Sunday at 3pm at the Pery Hotel, Pery Square.