



At the launch of the Kate O'Brien Weekend at City Hall were, from left, Maire Hackett, Kate O'Brien Committee, Vivienne McKechnie, Committee, Cait Ni Cheallachain, Committee, Mayor John Gilligan, Sheila Deegan, Arts Officer, Kathleen O'Connor, Arts Officer, Jo Slade, poet, Maeve Kelly, author and poet and Derek Cahill, Kildimo (LL)

Gilligan urges City Hall to buy O'Brien house

■ Historic site could be used for new library, says mayor

Anne Sheridan

MAYOR of Limerick John Gilligan has lent his support to calls to protect Boru House – the home of the late writer Kate O'Brien – in advance of the upcoming literary festival held in her honour.

The Mulgrave Street property has been up for sale for a number of years with a price-tag of €1.4m but the mayor believes the slump in property prices may allow the Council to buy the house.

"Property prices are falling, we have to recognise that, and if we're going buying property, now is the time to do it. We will soon be short of a library in the city (due to the Opera Centre development) and there is a huge courtyard behind Boru House suitable for development which could fit in and be sympathetic to the old house," said the mayor.

He said he is "very saddened to see the condition of Kate O'Brien's house", which he described as one of the most historic



Home Boru: Kate O'Brien's house on Mulgrave Street

houses in Limerick.

"It would be absolutely dreadful if it deteriorated any further and I'd love to see it being brought back to full use, not just as a monument to Kate but to preserve one of the better buildings in the city," he said.

The massive 36,023 sq ft property on Mulgrave Street, which is being sold by de Courcy estate

agents, includes seven bedrooms and four additional rooms in the attic. The property is owned by the Lloyd family, who previously hoped to secure more than the €1.4million prior to the property slump.

Auctioneer John de Courcy said a number of people have visited the property in recent months and any offers would be

put to the family for consideration.

The annual Kate O'Brien weekend will run from February 27 to March 1 this year and will feature readings from a host of influential literary figures in the city's Circuit Court building at Merchant's Quay.

This year's theme is to celebrate Irish writing in honour of the famous Limerick author, and participating writers include John Banville, Lia Mills, Dermot Bolger and Glenn Patterson.

"This year the committee members really made a special effort to get a good calibre of writer to celebrate the weekend," said Sheila Deegan, arts officer with Limerick City Council.

A book entitled Faithful Companions, featuring the people who have celebrated the weekend over the last quarter of a century, will be published in advance of the weekend and is edited by local writer and broadcaster Mary Coll.

For an updated list of all events log on to www.kobweekend.com.

Yes we can-can: City hosts Moulin Rouge fundraiser for Bradley Foundation

Donal O'Regan

A MOULIN Rouge-themed charity ball to help people with acquired brain injury takes place on St Valentine's night at the Limerick Strand Hotel. All profits raised will go to the Dooradoyle based charity, the Peter Bradley Foundation.

The event's organiser, Gráinne Vaughan, said she planned the Limerick Valentines Soiree 2009 because of a friend who is being helped by the foundation.

"A special young woman I know is living with a brain injury and the Peter Bradley Foundation has acted as a major stepping stone for her and others with this injury to lead as normal a life as they possibly can," said Ms Vaughan, owner of Catherine Street jewellery store Joli.

Local services manager with the Peter Bradley Foundation, Alan O'Connell said he was delighted with this fundraising initiative.

"All money raised will be used to help people in the local community who have to cope with an acquired brain injury (ABI). ABI affects more than 10,000 people each year. The Peter Bradley Foundation's community services, and assisted living residences, provides valuable community outreach services in Limerick and several locations around the country.

"The Foundation helps people with ABI to gain greater independence and get more involved in their local commu-



Gráinne Vaughan: Valentines Soiree

nities," said Mr O'Connell, who thanked the organisers and the public for their support.

The night will feature magician Marc Oberon, whose cabaret show is an entertaining blend of magic, mind-reading and illusion. Burlesque dancers, a can-can troupe, fire-eaters and flame throwers will also perform on the night.

TV3's Sinead Desmond is the MC and music will be provided by Soul Drive, Size 2 Shoes and Paul Webb.

The Limerick Valentine's Soiree 2009 is sponsored by Limerick Now magazine. Tickets are priced at €150 and are available from Fun Ireland on 061 320292 or email tickets@funireland.com



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