Local history

Leader Memories
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Region reeling after crash
A DAY OF MOURNING IN SHANNON AS 83 PEOPLE PLUNGE TO THEIR DEATHS - A RAIL LINE TO WRECKAGE IS BUILT

The Air Disaster: Day of Mourning at Shannon

NOW LAYING RAIL LINE TO WRECKAGE

Woman relates moment of horror
It was a day of mourning at Shannon to-day as relatives of the 83 people who were plunged to their

Air crash in Shannon
These pictures of the air crash at Shannon on September 10, 1961, shows the
devastation at the crash site and the efforts of Limerick and Clare rescuers to recover the vital engines and other key pieces of wreckage. The top picture shows the plane stuck on the mud flats. The second
shot shows the narrow gauge railway which was built from the landfill to the stricken aircraft. The third picture shows local Garda search for bodies while the fourth picture shows rescuers preparing to disembark after a night of searching

IN THE early hours of Sunday, September 10, 1961, all 77 passengers and a crew of six were killed when their President Airlines aircraft plunged into the Estuary just after take-off. In the days before television and when radio would sign off for the afternoon, the Limerick Leader sent unnumbered journalists to the crash site. This is their gripping story.

It was a day of mourning at Shannon today as relatives of the 83 people who were plunged to their deaths early on Sunday morning were arriving at the airport to identify the remains.

In the Shannon Estuary, at the Rinanna south side, over 200 workmen attached to the Board of Works were sifting a narrow gauge railway line out to the wreckage of the plane, which is embedded in the mud midway between Leigh Castle, on the Limerick side, and Rinanna South on the Clare front.

The Limerick Leader reporter, "The Curragower," which was moored along side late this afternoon, witnessed the damage being done today to recover the remains of the 83 people who were killed. Meanwhile sightseers were wide awake from the scene of the disaster, reckoned over half-a-mile offshore. Among those who heard the throb of the engines of the plane deep down and above were a honeymoon couple from Donegal.

This afternoon, Mrs. Sara Donlon, Rinanna South, was still recounting the moment of terror when she heard the noise and saw five others flying over her yellow whitewashed thatched cottage which, with the house of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Donlon, is in line with the flight path of aircraft leaving the runway not far away.

Among those who flew into Shannon today was the president of President Air Lines, owners of the crashed aircraft. As I made my way along the bank where workers were engaged erecting the rail line of the wreckage, wrote a Limerick Leader reporter, I saw that a number of the remains of the aircraft were scattered on the ground. There had been a lot of fire damage and the wreckage was scattered in the mud. A worker, however, said: "I don't think we'll have the line out to the plane by Wednesday. You see we have to work between the high tides." Fears and

As her mind ventured away from the tragedy to the location of her own house in direct line of the runway, she said: "I won't tell the Minister three times and here is one of the reporters." In that portion of the letter the Department is stated: "I am to inform you that while it is regretted that there is nothing further to add to the views already expressed in this Department's letter of
**Women relates moment of horror**

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In the Shannon Estuary, at the Rinneanna south side, 20 workmen attached to the Board of Works were laying a narrow gauge rail line out to the weedgrass of the plane, which is embedded in the mud midway between Rough Castle, on the Limerick side, and Rinneanna South on the Clare front. The Limerick Harbour Board Dog, “the Curragower”, which is moored alongside the remains of the plane, was being used today to recover the remains.

Meanwhile neighbours were wading into the water from the danger Beck section and to the deaths of another crash victim. Among those who had the task of the deceased were, from the left, Mr. and Mrs. Donlon and Mrs. Donlon South, who were on the same flight as Mr. Donlon.

These were bodies which were engaged in the weedgrass of the plane, which is embeded in the mud midway between Rough Castle, on the Limerick side, and Rinneanna South on the Clare front.

This afternoon, Mrs. Donlon, Rinneanna South, was still mourning the moment of terror when she heard the ill-fated flight take off. Her neighbour, a passenger on the flight, was let on the boat of the ill-fated flight and her flight.

Among those who flew into Shannon today was the president of President Air Line, owners of the crashed plane. He made his way along the road where the bodies and to the deaths of another crash victim. Among those who had the task of the deceased were, from the left, Mr. and Mrs. Donlon and Mrs. Donlon South, who were on the same flight as Mr. Donlon.

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**Air crash in Shannon**

These pictures of the air crash at Shannon on September 13, 1961, shows the devastation at the crash site and the efforts of Limerick and Clare rescuers to recover the bodies of the 83 persons who were killed.

**What Neighbour Heard and Saw**

While the men were putting down the line, there was a steady stream of people boarding the strands to the wreckage. Among them was a young couple from Overshoes, Co. Down, Mr. and Mrs. C. Owen. "We were happy as they returned from this unusual and enjoyable experience." Mr. Owen said that they had been impressed by the efficiency and friendliness of the staff at the airport.

As her mind ventured away from the tragedy to the location of her own house in the immediate vicinity of the runway, she said: "I am here to show you that this region is one of the most beautiful in the country." The plane had been brought down by the force of the crash and the debris scattered over a wide area.

A team of investigators under Mr. M. O’Byrne, a chief aeromedical officer, Department of Transport and Power, was on the scene. They were making every effort to determine the cause of the accident.

The bodies recovered yesterday are in the airport fire station which has been turned into an emergency hospital. The bodies will be flown home for identification.

Mr. Frank Thompson, engineer undertaker, Limerick, begins the task of preparing the remains for burial. Most of the bodies will be flown home for identification.

Engineers and airport workers today built an emergency roadway from the crash site which separates the airport from the road. The roadway was a vital link for the emergency services.

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