



➔ Ketchup with that? Lobster row publisher gets a taste of 'real Limerick' PAGE 7

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INSIDE: SPECIAL PICTURE
SUPPLEMENT FROM THE VAULTS
OF THE LIMERICK LEADER



PROUD OF YOU, PAUL

Limerick legend gets Freedom of the City

NICK RABBITTS
reports from Limerick City Hall

MUNSTER and Ireland rugby legend Paul O'Connell is the 64th Freeman of Limerick.

Paul, 32, joins an exclusive group of people who have been given Limerick's highest honour.

More than 500 people yesterday attended a special meeting of Limerick City Council where the honour was bestowed by Mayor Jim Long.

The former Lions captain said he was "truly humbled" and "surprised" by the honour and stressed that every Limerick person should remember they are "ambassadors" for the city.

► Full coverage, pages 2-3



It's official! Paul O'Connell signs the register to cement his status as only the 64th Freeman - watching are Mayor Jim Long and City Manager Kieran Lehane

Dundons sentence could be appealed by State

EUGENE PHELAN
News Reporter

GARDA chiefs are expected to decide later this week if they will appeal the sentences given to John and Wayne Dundon for threats against four members of the same family.

Following a three week trial, John Dundon received a five and a half year sentence for threatening to kill April Collins.

His brother Wayne was convicted on four different charges of making threats and interfering with or obstructing justice. He receive six years in jail.

Now the State has to decide whether or not to appeal the sentences which some gardai believe are too lenient.

"A decision will be made shortly on whether we will go to the Appeal Court. We have two weeks to make a formal request to do so, but you can expect news on it this week" said one high ranking Garda.

Mum takes on council

A Limerick mum of four has started a Facebook campaign to get Limerick City Council to provide her with a bigger house.

Serinna Corbett, who is expecting her fifth child, says her 18-month old baby is forced to share a bedroom with her 13-year-old son and that she is "in despair" at the situation.

FULL STORY: SEE PAGE 10

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LIMERICK LEADER

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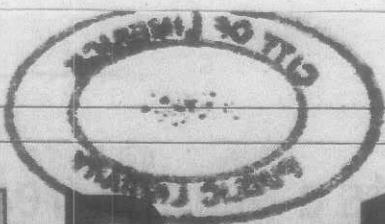
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Paul is 'humbled' to

NICK RABBITTS at City Hall

MUNSTER rugby legend Paul O'Connell has joined a host of illustrious Limerick figures in securing the Freedom of the City.

The highest honour bestowed on an individual by Limerick City Council, only 64 people have received the Freedom of the City since 1877.

And Paul, 32, has become the first sportsman to secure the honour following a special ceremony on the steps of City Hall yesterday.

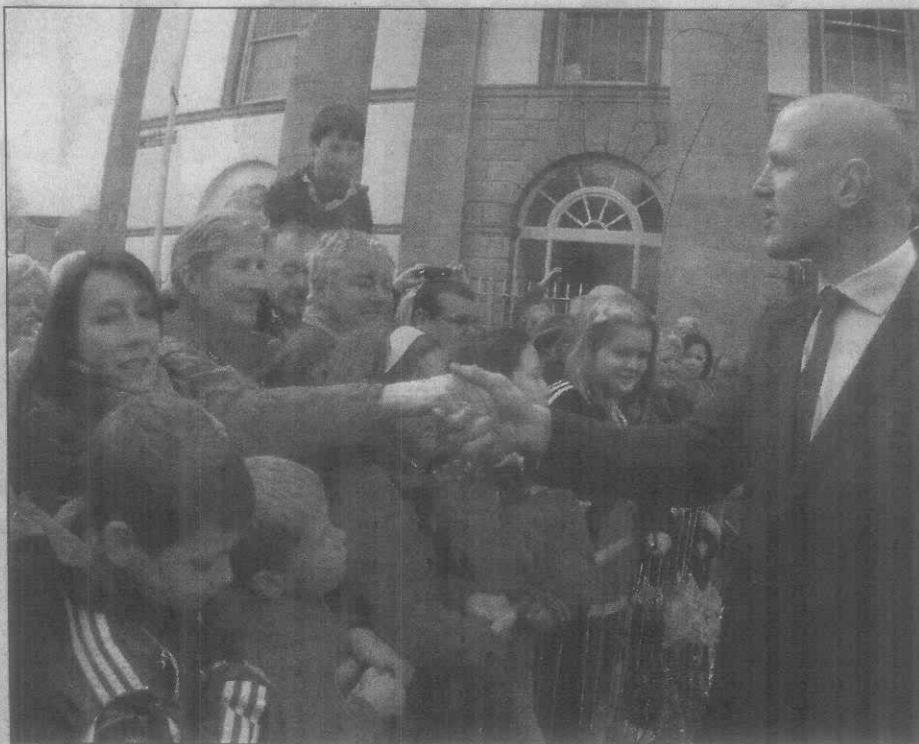
The entrance to City Hall was adorned with two large pictures of the rugby star: one in action for Munster, with the second showing him lifting the Six Nations Trophy in 2009.

Despite torrential rain threatening to affect proceedings, the sky broke into a blue sky, with the sun breaking through when O'Connell signed the order which ensured his Freedom.

The 500-strong audience gave him a standing ovation, as he spoke of the "honour" he felt.

"This is something I will treasure for the rest of my life. Sharing this event with Emily and our son Paddy makes it all the more special. This is also special for my family, my brothers Justin and Marcus, and my parents Michael and Sheila."

Paul O'Connell dedicated the honour to the people who have coached him throughout a sporting life



Paul meets his fans: The latest Freeman of the City took time out to sign autographs and pose for pictures with members of the public who braved the rain.

All Pictures: Owen South

which included South Liberties GAA Club, Limerick Swimming Club, Limerick Golf Club, "and of course my rugby club Young Munsters."

Referring to the other people who have been awarded the Freedom of the City - including artist Thomas Ryan, UL founding president Dr Edward Walsh and JP McManus who were present - he said the common theme which runs through their achievements is "focus".

"Limerick City needs

to advance, and it is only through genuine focus this can happen. When it comes to Munster rugby, people show incredible support, solidarity, pride, ambition and unity. We need to take this and apply it to our city. We must stand up to anti-social behaviour, to crime, and other obstacles to our ambitions. We have to take an active part in the running of the city and the direction it takes. Party agendas, organisational agendas and personal agendas need to be put aside to allow Lim-

erick the greatest chance to thrive," he said.

Mayor Jim Long described O'Connell as "an icon" and "Captain Fantastic".

"He carries the Limerick badge of honour with him, and displays it with pride. He encompasses all that is outstanding and special about his native city. We are blessed and proud of our new freeman," Mayor Long said.

Fianna Fail's Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon, who seconded the proposal to give Paul

'I am genuinely surprised: this is something I will treasure for the rest of my life.'
- Paul O'Connell, Freeman of City

O'Connell the freedom, noted that it is the first time there has been a mass gathering in Merchant's Quay since the march in protest against gangland violence.

He called on the audience to remember fellow rugby player Shane Geoghegan, who was gunned down in 2008, and Roy Collins.

Born in 1979, Paul was educated at the Model School and Ard Scoil Ris.

He toured with the Lions in 2005, and 2009 - where he was captain.

He also captained Munster to Heineken Cup success in 2008, a competition also won two years earlier. He captained Ireland in this year's Six Nations tournament.

Paul was joined in his celebrations by many of his team mates: Donncha O'Callaghan jokingly said: "He is a freeman, but he has been walking around like he owns the place for the last ten years anyway!". The Munster Rugby Supporters Choir were on hand to entertain the crowd.

Buyer found for troubled waste company

NICK RABBITTS Business Correspondent

THERE is good news for the thousands of customers of troubled waste firm Mr Binman after a buyer was found for the company.

The Kilmallock-based bin collection service has more than 50,000 customers across the region, and is a major employer with some 200 people on the payroll, as well as up to 200 more people relying on the service. However, it is unclear how many of these jobs will be retained.

A consortium led by Tralee-based firm Dillon Waste and Recycling purchased Mr Binman's operations in Limerick, Kerry, Clare, Cork and Galway.

The sum has not been disclosed, but the former chief of Mr Binman, Martin Sheahan alleged the figure is €4.5m.

As news of the takeover came through, a dejected Mr Sheahan staged a protest outside the plant in Luddenmore. He placed a coffin outside the building.

Despite being made redundant



End of an era: Martin Sheahan Sr with his son Martin Jr, staging a picket outside Mr Binman's headquarters - they are losing control of the company they set up in 1992.

Picture: Sean Curtin/Press22

by the firm's receivers KPMG late last year, he is refusing to move until he gets more information on the future shape of the company.

"I started this company 20 years ago, and I will be the first to walk away as soon as I get some answers. All I want is to sit down, and talk through this. I don't want people who are going to run and

leave this place decimated, as well as the people of Limerick. This is a good viable business," he said.

The consortium confirmed Mr Binman would retain its unique identity, while Brian Dillon of Dillon Waste and Recycling, will be installed as managing director.

Commenting in the acquisition, he said: "Mr Binman is a strong

Limerick company, which despite undergoing a receivership process has managed to hold its own in what is a highly competitive market. I would like to thank our customer base for their loyalty and support during the process, and assure them that it is our intention to continue and enhance further the quality Mr Binman's customer service. I would like to also thank the loyalty and support shown to Mr Binman by its employees."

Fianna Fail's Enterprise spokesman Willie O'Dea expressed his hope the new owners of Mr Binman would preserve the jobs.

"It brings an end to a period of uncertainty not only of the workers, but also the consumers of Mr Binman's services, including my good self. We welcome the fact somebody has stepped up to the plate to take on the business, and it is a good thing from the point of consumers." However, Mr O'Dea expressed sympathy to the Sheahan family who have lost control of the firm they founded in 1992.

The communications firm representing the new owners had not responded to further calls from the Leader as we went to press.

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become Freeman of City



Well done Paul! Paul O'Connor shows off the certificate marking his Freedom, with partner Emily, son, Paddy and parents Michael and Sheila.



Ger Madden, Craig Madden, Rhona O'Neill, Greg O'Connor and Carmel Galligan inside City Hall.



Mayor of Limerick, Cllr Jim Long, with Paul O'Connell outside City Hall.



Paul O'Connell addresses the crowd after receiving the Freedom of Limerick City.



The Munster Rugby Supporters Choir, under the direction of Anita Mahon, kept the crowd entertained with 'The Fields of Athenry' and 'Stand up and Fight'



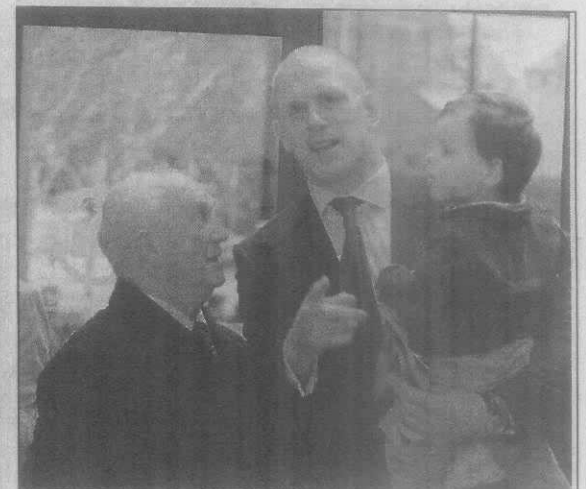
The watching faithful: a section of the crowd gathered outside City Hall.



Freeman of the City, JP McManus, in the audience with his wife Noreen, Pat Whelan and Dick Sadlier



Limerick City Councillors and officials as Paul O'Connell officially becomes a Freeman of the City.



Paul O'Connell with his son Paddy, and Tommy Creamer.