

He put Limerick "distinctly" on the map of the world



The DAN RYAN Story

(AS TOLD BY TOM TOBIN)

THROUGHOUT the United States of America, the City of Limerick is looked upon by Travel Agents as the gateway to Ireland for the most enjoyable motoring holiday in Europe. . . Because of this the demand for self-drive cars is on the up and up and indications are that the coming season will see the establishment of a new record in the influx of American tourists.

Indeed, according to American travel agents, the popularity of Ireland, and in particular the Southern regions, continues to grow and is certain to go on attracting more and more Americans in the years ahead.

In Limerick, one man foresaw this development, and pinned his faith on an idea, an idea that has since become one of the most important businesses in the country and certainly the greatest boost to our tourist industry. He is Mr. Dan Ryan, whose firm, Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd., has become known throughout the world.

To-day the firm is looking forward to an exceptionally busy season. Already their bookings for 1964 show an increase of 75 per cent. on last year's figures, and it will be recalled that last year was a very good one for the self-drive industry.

FOUNDATION

Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd. have invested well over £100,000 in the purchase of 200 new cars this season and the majority of these are already on the road. In fact, a visit to their offices at 27 O'Connell Street in Limerick will show quite clearly that as far as they are concerned the 1964 holiday season is well under way.

What is the remarkable story behind the world-wide success of Dan Ryan? I visited the

modern offices of the company during the week to find the answer. Within minutes it was obvious: a keen personal touch and a sincere interest in the wishes of their clients. On such a foundation the business has developed and continues to thrive.

A REALITY

It was in 1950 that Dan Ryan started his business as a part-time concern operating from his home, which was on the Dublin Road in those days. During the day, Dan was employed at the large provisions stores of Messrs. Liptons in O'Connell Street. But his dream was to see the growth of his own business to the extent that he would derive a good living from it.

He had two small cars when he started and for quite some time there was nothing unusual about the manner in which Mr. Ryan's spare-time business was carried on. But it made progress. The demand for self-drive cars showed a striking increase and within three years it was quite clear to the Ryan family that the dream of so many years' standing was well on the road to becoming a reality.

In 1953 Mr. Ryan opened a full-time self-drive business and for the next three years built up his fleet to 15 cars; and the demand continued to grow. In 1956 he opened his first office in O'Connell Street and from here on the progress of the

business won the admiration of everyone who had seen its beginning.

It might well be said, however, that the growth of Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd. came with the growth of the tourist industry in this country. The man who foresaw this development never lost sight of the opportunities available and worked hard to take every advantage of them.

Dan focussed his attention on the American market and from the beginning he gave it the attention it deserved. He advertised to the limit of his resources, and when he attracted his customers he made sure that they returned to their native shores completely satisfied with the service he had provided and with the holiday they had spent.

Because of this wonderful policy he made it his business to attend to everyone personally, and to-day his business, which is strictly a family affair, offers that same personal touch.

EFFICIENCY

Another very important feature of Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd. is the close attention given to the servicing of all their cars. This is regular and completely thorough, ensuring trouble-free motoring at all times. And at the end of every season all cars are sold and new models purchased for the year ahead.

During the course of my visit

to the premises of Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd., I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Michael Ryan, son of the proprietor, who is also a director and manages the complex affairs of the business.

A brilliant young man, Michael had a most interesting story to



MR. DAN RYAN

tell in connection with the servicing of their cars. It means so much to them that they are eagerly searching for additional mechanics so that they can maintain their high standard of efficiency during the busy months ahead.

Michael also told me that they devote their full attention in their maintenance depot at the Bremen Garage to servicing their fleet of cars—something which pays valuable dividends at all times.

It was in 1960 that Dan Ryan took over the premises of the Bremen Garage in Thomas Street, for the purpose of maintaining their large fleet of cars, and for the setting up of their sales organisation to dispose of the cars at the end of the season.

Indeed, it may well be said that this concern has been one of the busiest in the city since the first day it opened. And here again the name of Dan Ryan is highly relied upon for the provision of a car—new or secondhand.

GOOD EMPLOYMENT

Another feature of the Dan Ryan business complex is their progressive Dublin office, which was established in 1959 to cater for clients who wished to drive right to the boat or 'plane in Dublin.

Their staff in the capital offer a most useful service in arranging to take delivery of the car there, thus making matters perfectly convenient for their clients. Fifteen people are employed in the Dublin office of Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd., while in Limerick some twenty-five have good employment with the firm.

However, a flash-back to the point made by Mr. Michael Ryan in connection with the shortage of motor mechanics in Limerick,

It would appear that far too few young men are keen on entering the trade today, yet it is one of the best paying available.

In fact, this is something that is not generally known—the Limerick rates of pay are higher than those available in London. For a 42½-hour week the Limerick rate is £12-6-1, while the London rate is £11-11-0, and it must be borne in mind that these are the basic rates.

Mechanics can earn much more through overtime if they so desire. And from my investigations during the past week, it would appear that there is plenty of work available for good mechanics in Limerick generally.

THEY REMEMBER

In America, Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd. is a firm that takes no chances. Their campaign is carefully planned and thoroughly followed through to success after success.

An example of this will be found in the story of Michael's trip to America and Canada some three years ago. With a sharp eye on the trend of things to come in the travel trade, he toured New York, Boston and Chicago in the U.S. and Montreal and Toronto in Canada. And Michael had every reason to feel confident that day he appointed an official representative of Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd. in the U.S.

This man works in close touch with the travel agents of many states and organises a widespread advertising campaign annually. He handles the business in a capable and strictly personal manner, assuring Ireland, and Limerick in particular, of a worthwhile influx of American visitors. And, fortunately for all concerned, because of the service pro-

vided, more than 70 per cent. of these visitors remember the name of Dan Ryan and go on repeating their bookings.

It is true to say that the close proximity of Limerick to Shannon Airport has helped tremendously in the remarkable development of this wonderful business. Mr. Ryan (junior) had no hesitation in stating that he was confident that there were great hopes for Ireland as a holiday centre in the years ahead.

"As a matter of fact," he added, "it is only right to say that American travel agents are well aware of this. Ireland is certain to attract more and more visitors in the future and the proof of this lies in the fact that to-day it is much easier to sell our country as a holiday resort throughout the entire U.S.A. And this happy situation continues to develop."

He went a step further when he stated that 1964 would be a record-breaking year. And knowing Michael as I do, I have every reason to place faith in his statement to the effect that the success of their "Vacation in Ireland" campaign would go on developing.

As I have stated earlier on, bookings received by Dan Ryan Car Rentals Ltd. to date show an increase of 75 per cent. over last year's figures, and still they continue to pour in. The same can be said of other car rental firms in Limerick.

It is good to see this come about and it is good to see men like Dan Ryan, his son, Michael, and every member of their staff achieve the success that is coming their way. They pinned their faith on the development of their business at a time when few would do so. And they have opened up new

opportunities for the nation as a whole.

Dan Ryan is a big man in the business life of Limerick today, but he has never been one to forget the many friends he met on the way to fame. A happy family man, he has seen his son, Michael, do a job to advance the business—a job any father might well be proud of. He has seen his daughters, Helen and Mary, take their place in "their" business, and like a team they have pulled together every inch of the way.

In the background is the charming lady who helped to make it all come true—Dan's wife, Bernadette. For her, the success of the venture that her husband gave so much of his life to, is something to feel justly proud of, something to feel greatly thankful for. And like many an Irish mother, Mrs. Ryan never loses her gift of inspiration and faith.

Today, Dan Ryan and his family look forward to even greater development. They have purchased the finest service station in Limerick—Punch's Cross Service Station—which is being greatly extended. They have big plans for even greater developments in the car rentals business—and already these are well advanced.

Limerick may well be proud of men like Dan Ryan. He will long be remembered as a pioneer of something new in the commercial life of the city of the "Violated Treaty"—and when it comes to record the history of the development of the tourist industry in Ireland his name, and that of every member of his family will occupy a place of honour. They pioneered a golden pathway to tourist development, and place Limerick distinctly on the map of the world.



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