

Federation of Dublin Water Charges Campaigns, Mr Joe Higgins.

Mr Higgins, who stood in the Dublin West by-election on an anti-water charges platform and achieved over 20 per cent of first preference votes, announced yesterday a demonstration next Saturday in Dublin and a national conference on May 19th.

The demonstration at 2 p.m. at Parnell Square would mark an increased push against the politicians, campaign secretary Mr Gregor Kerr said.

## Yates helps farm aid applicants

The Department of Agriculture last night eased the regulations on farmers who were facing severe difficulty returning maps of their land by April 30th as part of their application for area aid payments.

The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Yates, said that farmers who returned their completed forms for area aid payments in time would not be penalised if they did not also supply the necessary maps.

The scheme is hampered by the Civil and Public Service Union dispute.

## Gallery appoints woman to chair

The board of governors of the National Gallery has elected its first chairwoman. Mrs Carmel Naughton succeeds Mr William Finlay, who has retired after 17 years in office.

Mrs Naughton has served on the Board since 1991 and has been vice-chairwoman since 1993.

## Dead schoolgirl is laid to rest

Schoolgirl Alison White (13), whose dead body was found near her home last Sunday, was buried in Bundoran yesterday. The white coffin was brought from the family home in St Colm's Terrace to the Church of the Immaculate Conception for funeral Mass. The family's wishes for the media to stay away from the funeral were respected, with photographers and television crews absent.

## Colorado beetle sparks alert

The discovery of a live Colorado beetle on parsley imported from Italy two days ago has led to a nationwide examination of all suspect produce by the Department of Agriculture. The Department has asked the public to be vigilant. The insect, which resembles a ladybird, could destroy potato crops.

## Man charged in Mayo killing

Mr Fintan Thomas Murphy, of Wakefield, Shrule, Co Mayo, was returned for trial to the May sitting of Castlebar Circuit Court when he appeared there yesterday. He is charged with the unlawful killing of Mr Stanislaus Moran at Church Lane, Ballinrobe on July 15th. Mr Murphy was remanded on bail.

A JOINT campaign for the introduction of mandatory reporting on child abuse has been launched by three voluntary agencies.

Barnardos, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children yesterday urged the Government to take this vital step immediately to protect children.

Mandatory reporting would le-

ading to the care of children including doctors, social workers, psychologists, youth workers, counsellors, child care workers, probation officers, teachers and community welfare officers to report suspected or actual abuse/neglect cases to the health board and/or Garda.

Mr Owen Keenan, director of Barnardos, Ms Olive Braiden, director of the Dublin Rape Crisis

the ISPCC, said abuse cases would remain hidden if such reporting was not introduced.

The measure would give people who report in good faith legal indemnity and would clarify the structures for reporting. A fear of retribution or litigation against the person making the report would be reduced and the extent of child abuse would be evident.

ciety's public commitment to dealing with child abuse", said Mr O'Tighearnaigh. "We need to ensure that procedures for the management of cases of child abuse will become more consistent and uniform."

The public did not realise there was no legally binding protocol for a health professional, working

Mandatory reporting was essential "in preventing child abuse, in breaking the silence and secrecy" necessary for that abuse, he added.

The organisations say that underdeveloped and unclear child protection laws, structures and practices would improve if mandatory reporting was introduced. It would also challenge the

menties. The agencies maintain that high-profile abuse cases such as the that of Kelly Fitzgerald and the Kilkenny case highlight this need.

"We want a powerful statement saying that it is unacceptable for someone with information on abuse not to pass it on to the relevant authority", Mr Keenan said.

# traveller couple's wedding

By Patsy McGarry

A DUBLIN traveller couple who have been refused facilities for their wedding by 32 hotels, as well as by pubs, clubs, and community centres, may still be able to go ahead with their plans on June 4th following tentative agreement on the part of a hotel in Co Meath to allow them hold their reception there.

The couple, both of whom are 18 and live at a halting site in Clondalkin, have been assisted in their efforts by Ms Marie Beacon, the chairwoman of a local residents' association.

Over the years, Ms Beacon said, she had become "very, very friendly" with the bride-to-be and her family. On Sunday night the bride's mother came to her for help in securing a hotel for the wedding, as she was having no success herself.

"So on Monday and Tuesday I took out the Yellow Pages and rang up to 32 hotels in the Dublin area," Ms Beacon told *The Irish Times*.

"All were very interested — until I told them I was making inquiries for a traveller friend," she said. "One hotel even offered to supply a free Rolls Royce or vintage car, with free accommodation for the bride and groom."

All, however, refused to hold the reception when they were told it was for a traveller couple. "On each and every occasion the answer was No," Ms Beacon said.

Some managements told her it was "policy", while others claimed that there had been trouble on previous occasions when there had been traveller weddings on their premises.

Ms Beacon contacted *The Gay Byrne Show* on RTE last Tuesday and explained to Joe Duffy what had happened. She also named many of the hotels, one of which was the Grange Lodge in Rathfarnham.

After the item, one of the hotel's managers, Mr Denis O'Hare, contacted the programme offering to hold the reception. However, he was forced to withdraw the invitation later on Tuesday when, as he explained to Gay Byrne yesterday, numerous objections were received from customers and residents of the area, and two functions were cancelled "within two hours of talking to Joe Duffy".

In the circumstances, Mr O'Hare said, he felt it was "unfortunate, but we are unable to proceed with the wedding."

A caller to the programme later claimed that the wedding of his traveller daughter, planned to take place in a hotel in Tralee on Saturday, had just been cancelled. The management had only then discovered the wedding was for a traveller couple.

He was now looking for a venue in the Cork, Kerry or Limerick areas, he said.

## Sports council withdraws stadium support

By Frank McDonald, Environment Correspondent

DISC, the Dublin International Sports Council, has withdrawn its support for the controversial Sonas Centre scheme for the Phoenix Park racecourse because of a pledge by the developers that the proposed 65,000-seat stadium would be used only 12 times a year.

In a letter to An Bord Pleanála, Mr Jonathan Irwin, the council's chief executive, said it was "beyond our comprehension that anyone, in a stadium of this size, would allow for so little use". As a result, the stadium would "add very little to the amenity available for international sport in Dublin".

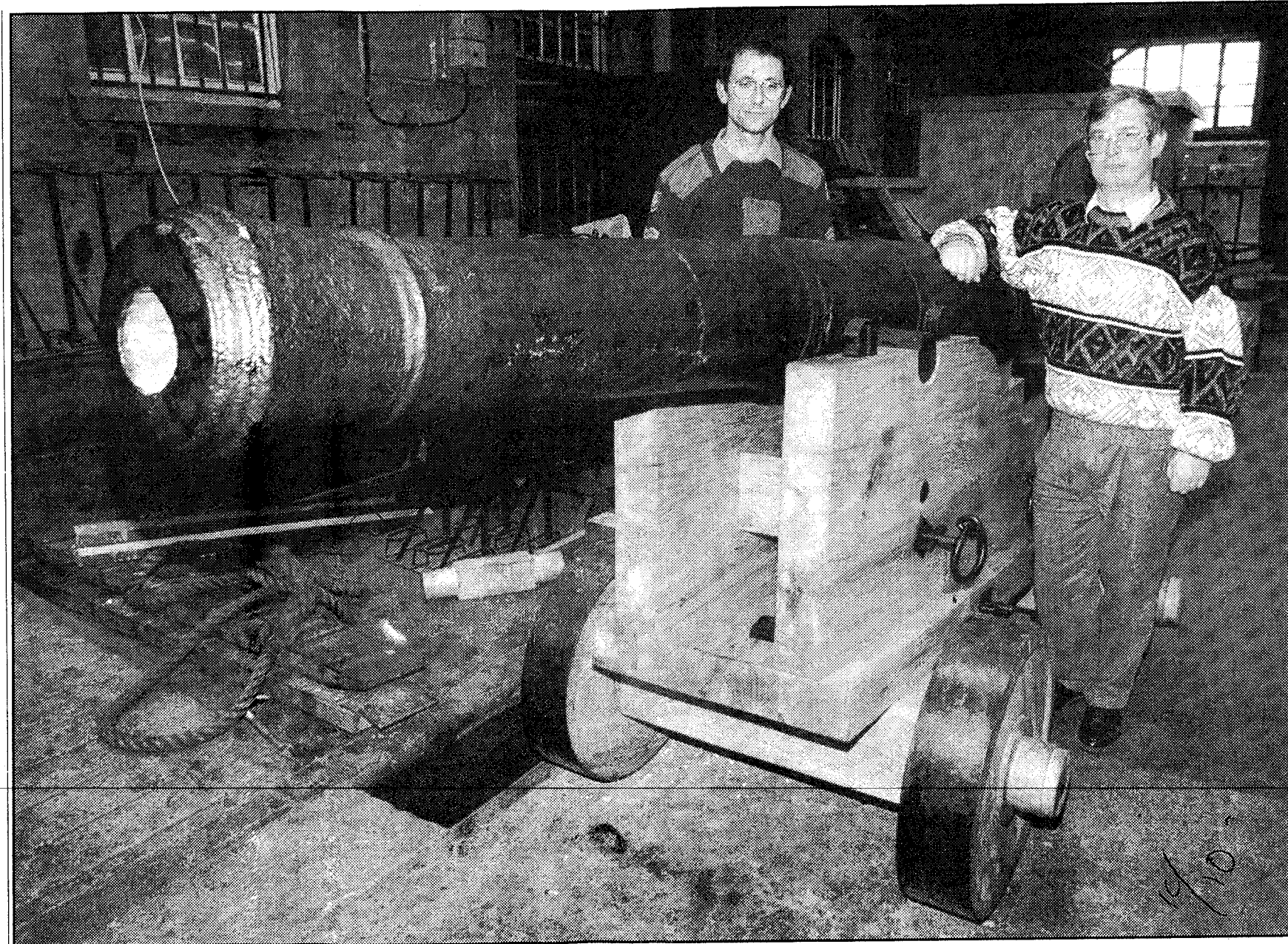
He said DISC was currently attempting to persuade one of the English Premier Division football clubs to relocate to Dublin. "If this should happen, they would play a minimum of 25 home games in any one season", he said, adding that this would rule out the Phoenix Park site.

"The Sonas developers have penalised themselves from us even considering being able to use their stadium, which will mean that another stadium — possibly the crew with planning permission in Neilstown [a reference to O'Callaghan Properties] would become the team's home base."

With the GAA redeveloping Croke Park, Mr Irwin said Dublin could end up with three new stadiums, including the Phoenix Park and Neilstown proposals. "It would be surprising if a city the size of Dublin could maintain all the stadiums on a profitable basis."

Last November, in an earlier letter to An Bord Pleanála, Mr Irwin said DISC — set up two years ago to bring major international sports events to the city — supported the Sonas Centre scheme.

There were nearly 20,000 objections to the £300 million development which came mainly from local residents. The appeals board is to make a decision on the scheme by May 3rd.



Sgt Michael Keane and Mr Canice Keating working on the restoration of the cannon at Clancy Barracks, Dublin. Photograph: David Sleator

## Limerick cannon may date from Siege

By Brian McLaughlin, in Limerick

A RARE 17th century cannon excavated in Limerick is currently being restored and will go on exhibition in the city in the autumn.

The demi-culverin, which fired a 9lb shot, was found buried in Custom House Park with part of the barrel exposed. Specialists think it was used by the Jacobite forces during the Siege of Limerick in 1690/91.

"It's a very rare and historical piece, and there are very few of these guns in existence in England or Ireland", says Mr Denis Leonard, the director of Limerick Civic Trust, which carried out the excavation.

The gun is now in Clancy Barracks in Dublin, where the ordnance section of the Army has made a carriage for it. The cannon is 11 feet long and weighs 1¼ tons. It would have taken 35 men and

seven horses to manoeuvre it on the battlefield.

"It's a substantial piece of armoury and it will go back to Custom House Park as an outdoor exhibit for the Hunt Museum when it is located there", said Mr Leonard.

The gun was buried in nine feet of earth, its exposed barrel having been used as a bollard to tie up ships in the old city port.

Work undertaken by Limerick Civic Trust, which has spent £2.7

million on 66 projects over the last 14 years, has included the restoration of part of the city's medieval wall, the placing of the Sylvester O'Halloran Bridge over the Abbey River, the Lough Quay canal project, the restoration of the potato market, and the Bishop's Palace project, where the trust has its headquarters.

Work planned for the 800th anniversary of the granting of the city's first charter next year in-

cludes upgrading the O'Connell monument in The Crescent, restoring a Georgian house in Pery Square, and building a bridge over the canal at Rhebogogue.

The trust is funded by the private sector, Limerick Corporation, Government departments, the EU and donations from its own members. Last year it spent £500,000 and employed 78 people through community employment schemes.