

WEEKEND TRAVEL

DUBLIN
A PROTEST march over the closure of three Dublin roads is expected to cause disruption in the city today. Beginning at 3pm, the march will start at St Patrick's Cathedral, travel to the Dail via Dame Street, and return via the same route.

Expect delays on the I.R. Road and the Kilgobbin Road. The Kilgobbin Road is a single-lane traffic. The Kilmacud Road is one-way. Sweetbriar Lane and N. Court. Gas works on Boo Road will reduce traffic to one lane. A diversion will be in operation, leading to disruption at the junction with Rock Road. Minor delays will be caused by road works on Kildare Street. Baginbun Street Lower. E. Street Lower reopens tomorrow.

CORK
Driver interviews taking place this month as part of a Corporation project may cause further delays on the Lower Glanville Road. Beales Hill and Skew Bridge cause of ducting work. The low/Mitchelstown Road is today but will be open to traffic on Sunday.

Phoenix Street is closed. Crane Lane and Smith Street. Telecom Eireann work. B. is undertaking work on Lough Road and Sumner Road.

DONEGAL
Expect delays on the B. Road while construction of Donegal bypass continues.

GALWAY
Roadworks continue on Headford Road and on the south of Oranmore. Shop remains closed.

KILDARE
Shaw Bridge in Kilkenny to heavy vehicles. An alternative route via Maynooth/Barrow Cross should be used if it is between Clane or Na. Kilkenny.

LIMERICK
Motorists are advised with care at Hassett's Cross roadworks are taking place. There is no through road. Athlunkard Street to Baal via Sir Harry's Mall.

MEATH
Pipelining will cause disruption on the Duleek to Kilmooie. The R152, Kilmooie to D. road, is closed at Duleek and bridge works. Detour in operation. There will be lights and diversions at Cl. to roadworks. Traffic-calming measures are in operation in the N4.

ROSCOMMON
Pipelining on Castle Street cause delays. Traffic on Dublin-Sligo road is being diverted to a new road over the mountain.

WATERFORD
A new traffic flow system been introduced at Rice Williamstown Road is sign from Farran Park to St. Catherine's for road improvement. Temporary lights are in operation on the N25 between K. and Waterford.

WESTMEATH
Reconstruction work at Bridge at the junction of 1. lin road, N4, and the Del. N52, will cause delays.

ROAD DEATH
There have been seven deaths so far this month, this year's total to 140. In four months of 1997, 130 were killed on the roads.

PETROL PRICES
This week's national petrol prices per litre, according to the AA - Unleaded Leaded 69.74, Diesel 56 Super Unleaded 70.41.



Ciaran MacGonigal, the new director, pictured in the Hunt Museum, Limerick. His move from Dublin to Limerick reflects his belief that a place doesn't have to be a capital city to have capital status. Photograph: Brian Gavin/Press 22

New head sees Hunt Museum as memory bank of mid-west

TIME was when galleries and museums were for gentry. Not any more, reckons Ciaran MacGonigal, new director of Limerick's Hunt Museum. "Culture isn't a matter of class and privilege now," he argues. "It is everyone's civic and civil right — the Hunt is a living witness to that belief."

MacGonigal is a fifty-something Dubliner, today celebrating one week as executive director of the best collection of antiquities in Ireland outside the National Museum and National Gallery. He knows some folk are wondering why he moved to Limerick. Simple: he wants to win acknowledgment for the Hunt as the memory bank of the mid-west, and confirm its international quality.

"Museums and galleries reinterpret the whole notion of what people did over a long period of time as a trick or treat process — you either establish the great trick that this is what constituted history, or else you favour the treat of letting people enjoy themselves, letting them realise these objects were once very ordinary things made by very ordinary people for the most part. The Hunt collection tells the endlessly fascinating life of the people."

If the task of a contemporary museum is indeed to tell the story of the people — and the story of the territory — the Hunt collection is uniquely well placed to do both. Perched on Shannon banks much like a Venetian palazzo, the building at once looks out on to the great waterway which linked Limerick and Clare to the rest of the world, and looks into Rutland

A vital part of the cultural renewal of Limerick is how the new director, Ciaran MacGonigal, thinks of the Hunt Museum in the city and its £60 million collection. Medb Ruane reports

Street, close to the heart of Limerick's contemporary urban renewal programmes.

"We have wonderful art and artefacts, but their cultural importance is geophysical too. The Shannon links the museum directly to medieval and much earlier bronze age sites, so contextualising the indigenous relationship between the objects and the history of both Limerick and Clare will be a central part of our educational programmes."

The collection was developed by John and Gertrude Hunt, who devoted their lives to assembling it, always with a long-term aim of giving it to the Irish State.

The Hunts had excavated the Bronze Age remains at Lough Gur, and MacGonigal believes their close relationship to that site explains their love of Limerick.

"People don't understand generosity these days. They get worried and think there might be some other agenda, but the Hunts were great and glorious people who understood Limerick's potential as a modern city long before most others."

"The collection is valued in excess of £60 million, with so many absolutely unique objects of world importance, and it is really quite extraordinary that their children, John and Trudi, sought to honour their parents' wishes and kept going until our Chair, Tony Ryan,

helped them find this wonderful facility."

MacGonigal comes to the Hunt Museum from the RHA Gallery in Dublin, which he established as a national venue. He's a serving member of the National Gallery's board, and about to finish a five-year term as a member of the Arts Council.

Wholly committed as he is to decentralising arts and culture generally, this move reflects his belief that capital status is not required to be a capital city.

"If the arts belong to the nation, then they belong all round the country, not just concentrated in one metropolitan area. I'm probably very identified with life in Dublin — well it isn't just about Dublin, it's about other places too, and Limerick is a beautiful city with magnificent Georgian buildings and a whole sense of cultural and civic renewal that is very exciting."

MacGonigal ascribes much of Limerick's cultural success to the unsung efforts of two people — Brid Dukes, founder of the Belltable Arts Centre and now a director of Dublin's Hallward Gallery, and Dr Edward Walsh, the University of Limerick's president.

"Brid first got me down to Limerick — she made everyone notice the city. Ed Walsh was an extraordinary *animateur* of the intellec-

tual and business life of the city — now the university has the orchestra, a performing arts centre to be opened next week, a dance company, its own arts officer."

What MacGonigal hopes to achieve during his time at the Hunt is to expand Limerick's understanding of its own civic pride to a point where "people recognise that the cultural institutions, like the galleries and Belltable and all the community work orchestrated by such people as Mary Coll, are landmarks in the imagination of the people."

He pooh-poohs Limerick's image as "Stab City." "That's an easy epithet, but to someone who in the last 10 years has been burgled 15 times — and once burnt out by the General — I tell you Dublin is crack city."

We talk about the experiences of writers Kate O'Brien and Frank McCourt, both testifying in very different ways to the sense of isolation and powerlessness they felt growing up at a time when their lives and experiences were neither valued nor valid.

McCourt's own story bears out MacGonigal's beliefs — the writer from the back streets was appointed to the board of the Hunt on the same day MacGonigal was appointed its director.

His plans mean changes for other institutions too. "The cultural treasures of the nation must

be re-examined: many places are entitled to first-rate collections, or at least to access to them, and if that means re-examining the curatorial and conserving policies of bigger institutions like the National Museum and National Gallery in favour of devolution to non-capital cities, then I think it needs to be done."

He hopes to open up the Hunt collection in different ways — through education, by loaning out objects to suitable exhibitions, and by listening to what people want. But he also wants to copperfasten the Museum's international reputation.

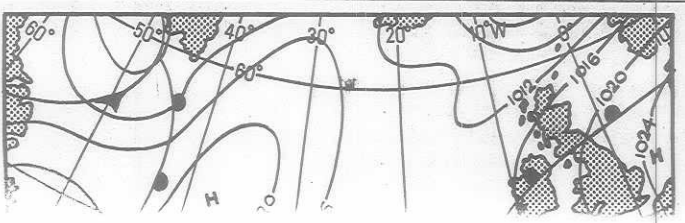
"I'm negotiating with the Victoria and Albert Museum in London about a major exhibition of Irish delaware made in Dundalk, some of which is in our collection, some in places all round the world."

The Hunt needs more than £250,000 each year, so MacGonigal advises people to expect "mendicant letters soon". The museum already has an active force of sponsors and of voluntary workers.

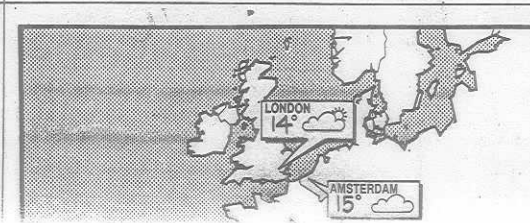
Meanwhile, he is anticipating moving into a dower house in Adare this autumn — "I'm bringing my blackmoor fish and the dogs Hector and Hercules, but I'm looking for good homes for my two tomcats, and for my 12 geese," — and is being encouraged by friends to stitch himself into the life of the city.

"Mary Coll of Belltable says I must support Shannon — I who went to a rugby-playing school and have spent my life avoiding the game..."

WEATHER FORECAST



EUROPEAN RESORTS



Suspend sentence for foiled drug deal