

Mayor meets Ambassador

MAYOR of Limerick, Cllr Jim Long, held a reception on this Tuesday, for the Philippine Ambassador to Ireland, Ariel Y. Abadilla and members of Ballet Manila who performed in UCH that evening.

Fintan off to South Korea

RECENT graduate of the University of Limerick, Fintan Maher, is leaving Ireland for South Korea by early September to teach English as a foreign language.

Fintan, who hails from Clonmel, is preparing for his departure which will be an experience of a lifetime: teaching English in South Korea.

Fintan, aged 23, learned about the opportunity of teaching abroad while attending a career fair at the University of Limerick.

Share a Dream families in Limerick

Share a Dream will have 30 families travelling to Limerick for a fun weekend on July 29.

To accommodate the party, Formula for Fun will be closed to the public for a number of hours and a special party will be put on free of charge with a team from Munster Martial Arts on hand to do some fun activities with the children.

Bird hides and dragon sanctuaries

AN opportunity to explore Ireland's first Butterfly and Dragon Sanctuaries is on offer from the Limerick branch of Birdwatch Ireland which is hosting an outing on Sunday, July 17, at the Aughinish Nature Reserve.

The Reserve is located between Askeaton and Foynes on the banks of the Shannon Estuary and as well as the butterfly and dragon sanctuaries, there are also three bird hides facing on to the estuary, while a fourth is a watch point for birds of prey on the nest - if you're lucky!

There's an opportunity to enjoy pond dipping for fish and insects in the dragonfly sanctuary - the advice here is to bring wellington boots and fishing nets, that all children must be accompanied by an adult and that dogs are not invited.

Those interested should be in the Visitors' Centre Car Park at 2pm.

Grand Prix racing returns to city streets

By John O'Shaughnessy

First fatality in Irish motorsport was in Limerick

GRAND PRIX racing returns to the streets of Limerick on September 4 next-76 years after cars were waved off in O'Connell Street by the then Mayor.

The Limerick Classic and Vintage Car club, mindful of the days when upwards of 50,000 spectators watched in awe as some of the finest cars and drivers lapped city streets, will mark the September event with a photographic and memorabilia exhibition.

Unfortunately, the initial year of the Grand Prix was marred by the fatal crash of the Duke of Grafton on his first lap, the first fatality in Irish motorsport.

The Duke was driving his newly acquired type 59 Bugatti when it went out of control on Sexton Street, and burst into flames.

The organisers of the 2011 commemoration would now like to hear from anyone with pictures, programmes or memories of the original races.

The highlight will be a gathering of pre 1940 sports and racing cars of the type that took part in the 30s and 40s.

The cars will complete several laps of the original race circuit with a Garda escort, before parking in the picturesque Pery Square area for the day.

A plaque will be unveiled as a permanent reminder of these 'Round the Houses' races.

Last year's occasion attracted huge crowds to Pery Square.



The 4th placed Fiat Balilla and 5th placed Smithfield Special from 1935, created a direct link to the original race, and for the first time in seven decades, three Alfa-Romeo 8C 2300s graced the streets of Limerick.

A green 8C Monza, similar to that of the original 1935 race winner Luis Fontes, led off the cars.

Included also were a BMW 328, Bentley 6 litre and various Rileys, Lagondas, MGs and Ford based

Specials.

In 1936, the Grand Prix gained international status.

Participants included Prince Bira of Thailand in his ERA, who described the course as being the most difficult on which he had ever driven.

The race was won by A. Hutchinson from Belfast, driving an MG.

By 1938, Limerick's street circuit was to host its last grand prix and the sound of thoroughbred race engines was to

become just a distant memory.

This September's race will be held on a street circuit which uniquely remains unchanged since the 1930s, and will commemorate those brave drivers of a bygone age who hurtled their cars through its tight bends and long straights.

Those with memorabilia and photographs should contact Colin (087) 6103173, Martin, (087) 8174991

Bat sightings stall work on dangerous Abbeyfeale bridge

By Rebekah Commans

Survey to be carried out by an expert

THE reported sighting of bats has put a temporary halt to traffic lights, a footpath and road realignment works at Allaghoun Bridge, Abbeyfeale.

The dangerous bridge is at risk of collapse, and repair work is estimated at €300,000.

However, claims that bats are nesting in the area are to be further investigated by experts.

Bridge plans were put on public display earlier this year, but preliminary investigations carried out provided no evidence of the species.

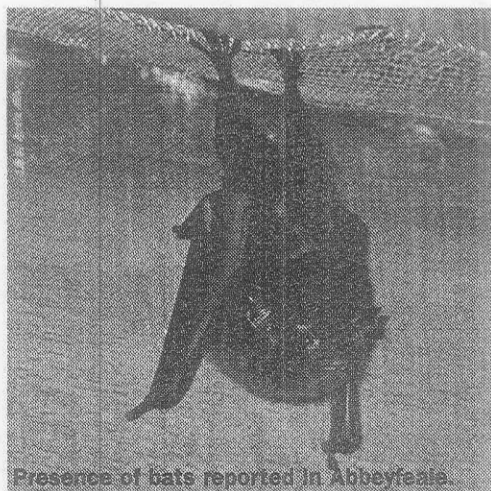
In the report to a County Council meeting, heritage officer Tom O'Neill, stated that "the lack of ivy and other vegetation on the bridge would lessen its attractiveness for bat species," among the reasons why the mammals are unlikely to be present.

However, it was recommended that a final survey be carried out by an expert immediately.

Bat boxes are also to be installed adjacent to the bridge, above flood level, in case nesting sites are needed.

Councillors have raised concerns at the cost of the work and fear that the bridge closure will affect the local economy.

Known as the Mart Bridge, the structure is



Presence of bats reported in Abbeyfeale.

protected, meaning Limerick County Council had to carry out extensive heritage and conservation surveys before going ahead.

A 17 page report on the renovation work was delivered to councillors, and it was revealed by Mr O'Neill, that the bridge was at risk of collapse.

A single lane traffic system is to be installed across the bridge, due to it being just 5.9 metres in width, and unable to accommodate two-way traffic, along with pedestrians.

A footpath is to be constructed and the parapets to be raised to reinforce the structure.

The approach to the bridge coming from Abbeyfeale Town is to be realigned.

The developments are expected to enhance the safety and security of pedestrians and cyclists on the route, and was tentatively welcomed by councillors.

"The current lights aren't working effectively and people are breaking them."

"I hope the new system will stop this," said Cllr Michael Collins.

Cllr Liam Galvin, claimed that the bridge has half collapsed, and could be knocked.

He added that the three week closure, while works are carried out, would be detrimental to the local economy of the town.

In response to concerns at the amount of money being spent, director of services, Paul Crowe, said it was an obligation of the council to carry it out.

"It is not something we went into willingly."

"Serious scouring began beneath the bridge 12 months ago, and it had to close because there was a risk to the public."

"Because it's a protected structure, we had to involve heritage and conservation measures, along with the Department of Fisheries and Department of Wildlife."

Funding is coming from the non-national road grants.

Measures are to be put in place to reduce the risk of construction materials falling into the river, to avoid possible pollution, among other reasons.

Invitation to world listening day in Limerick

AN INVITATION has been issued to members of the public to participate in soundwalk in Limerick city to mark World Listening Day on Monday, July 18.

The invitation comes from the Arts Department in City Hall.

Participants are asked to bring their own portable/mobile sound recording device (eg, mobile Phone, MP3 recorder etc).

"With or without a device, just bring yourself," the invitation states, adding:

"The issue we'd like to explore is the subjective and objective aspects of listening to our everyday environments and soundscapes."

"In addition to the soundwalk, listening and recording, the Grand Finale will be a performance, by all the participants, using the collected sounds as an ensemble."

"If, for any reason, you didn't bring a recorder then you can vocalise the recollection of your sonic experience."

Those participating should be at The Locke Bar on George's Quay, Limerick at 12 noon, on Monday, July 18.