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masked men, who blocked the road between Adare and Rathkeale with hi-jacked cars and fired shots as the van drove straight through the road block.

The attempted robbery took place between 9.30 and 10 a.m. at Five Cross Roads near Rathkeale.

Passing motorists were held up and their car keys taken from them by a group of men, who then moved the vehicles across the road just as the Securicor van was approaching.

Arrived

However, as the van arrived at the road block, the driver increased speed and drove straight through as the four armed raiders rushed forward, firing their weapons.

The van kept going until it reached Rathkeale. It was not escorted by Gardai or Army at the time. It was later escorted to Newcastle West, as Rathkeale became the local headquarters for the investigation of the incident by a team of detectives from Henry Street, Limerick.

So far there are no reports of injuries.

"The Securicor driver, though driving at high speed by the time he reached the road block, managed to graze through the narrow opening without damaging the cars of the innocent passers-by which had been hi-jacked," said a Garda spokesman

In less than half an hour after the incident, the area was being combed by detectives and uniformed Gardai, for members of the gang.

Another Garda spokesman said that they did not have much of a description of the raiders to go on.

The Securicor company, contacted later, had no comment to make.

One shot was fired at the van by the raiders and the bullet struck the vehicle.

The last big security van hold-up in West Limerick occurred in 1977 when £460,000 was taken by an armed gang at Barnagh on the Abbeyfeale/Newcastle West road.

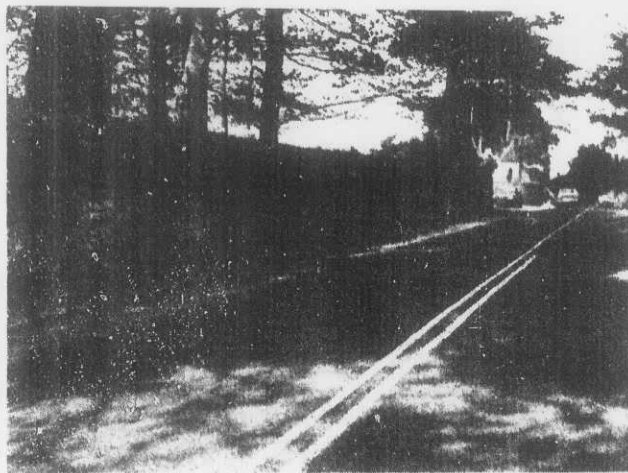
Limerick band launch single

LIMERICK five-piece The Groove last night launched their debut single, Blue Blue Monday, at Belltable Arts Centre.

The single, which was part of the first prize for winning the Borderline/H.M.V./E.M.I. Band of '87, is now on the play list on R.T.E. Radio 2 and is receiving extensive daytime and night-time airplay. It is reported to be selling very well at the moment and seems destined for the Irish Top 30.

Among the large crowd that attended the launching was Ald. Jim Kemmy, T.D., who, in a short address, said that having known the members of the band for a number of years he was delighted to be present and he strongly urged the crowd to go and buy the single and help launch the band on the road to stardom.

The Groove's manager, Bob O'Connell, said: "The successful launch and general enthusiasm about the single is very encouraging for the lads and will be a great boost to them as they prepare to open the Bowie gig at Slane Castle on Saturday next".



Gardai at the scene of the attempted robbery
Picture: DERMOT LY

Family prep greet granda

After the news, on Monday, that lone trans-Atlantic Limerick yachtsman Pat Lawless had arrived off the Irish coast, his family are today flying out by helicopter to make contact with him as he journeys northward up the Kerry coast towards the Shannon Estuary.

Best estimates, this morning, based on wind, tide and current, put him at somewhere off the Dingle peninsula.

Some friends flew out, late yesterday evening, to see if they could make contact, but although they got within view of the Blaskets, they had to turn back because of daylight flying regulations. Pat Lawless' wife, Nancy, and their sons Dan and Jim, flew out this morning from Shannon by helicopter to get a sighting of him, and also to hover as near to the yacht as possible.

Mrs. Lawless had been in Dingle, when she got word, and overnighted, last night, at Tarbert, one of the possible points on the estuary where Pat Lawless might decide to drop anchor, bringing his historic voyage to an end.

Dan left Limerick at 6 a.m. this morning, for the flight with the other members of the family.

Meanwhile other members of the family have gone to Kilbaha, from where they will go to Carrigaholt, a favourite stop for Pat when sailing on the Estuary, in case he decided to drop anchor there.

Arrangements are being made for Pat's two other sons, John and Pat, and daughter Helen, to go out to meet him on the Estuary in a currach. Also going to Carrigaholt will be John's wife Jackie.

Pat Lawless' brother, Pete, was this morning optimistic



Pat Lawless

that Pat might be able to
the Estuary some time t

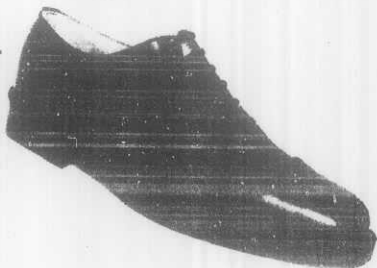
Last evening, three of Pat, Brian Cullen, C McDonnell (who was America to meet Pat, last round) and Eddie McC—all of them boat club sailing friends of Pat—off in a light aircraft to they could see the Cealra" sailing cruiser the lone yachtsman but had to turn back sight of the Blaskets, b of the failing light and regulations.

Late last night, V. radio made contact with Lawless, as he headed but could not make a message, as his boat appeared weak, but the estimate of his position radio Direction Finder guess as to his distance based on poor battery him off Kerry Head.

Shannon Marine Centre this morning as Pat Lawless' yacht has seen at 8.45 p.m. in Sound, heading north.

At about 11.20 a.m. however, Valencia station phoned in a sighting Lawless: at that point, I

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