

## NEWS

RECEPTION: THREE LIMERICK 'WOMEN OF DISTINCTION' RECOGNISED

# Posthumous honour for top city novelist

NICK RABBITS  
nick@limerickleader.ie  
@nick468official

**ACCLAIMED** city writer Kate O'Brien has been given one of Limerick's highest honours at a special event held to tie in with International Women's Day.

Prolific author Ms O'Brien, who was born in the city, has been given a posthumous civic reception by Limerick City and County Council.

Two other outstanding 'Women of Distinction', the aviation pioneer Sophie Mary Peirce and social reformer Charlotte Grace O'Brien from West Limerick were also given the same honour at a special event in the University Concert Hall.

Council arts officer Sheila Deegan told an audience including Sabina Higgins, Finance Minister Michael Noonan and former British politician Edwina Currie, of the long and varied life the author had lived.

Although born in Limerick in 1897, Ms O'Brien's career saw stints in Manchester, Ox-



Pictured with scrolls from Limerick City and County Council were: Richard Langford, relative of Charlotte Grace O'Brien, Iseult Murphy, relative of Sophie Mary Peirce and John O'Brien, Kate O'Brien's nephew

ford, London and Spain's Basque country.

"Kate O'Brien's literary career commenced in 1926 as a result of a bet with a friend that she could write a play within a number of weeks. The play 'Distinguished Villa' was the result of the wager and was performed in May that year, and was met

with wide acclaim," Sheila said.

It was on the advice of her agent that she then turned her hand to writing novels, including two which were banned in Ireland by the censorship board.

John O'Brien, a nephew of Ms O'Brien, picked up a scroll to mark the occasion, and said afterwards: "It was very emotional.

My brother and I continue to be her literary executors. It's brilliant to have this here today."

Relatives of the other women also received scrolls at the ceremony, which was hosted by RTE broadcaster Claire Byrne.

**For more pictures, and reaction, see the Limerick Leader weekend editions.**

## Tight security as Enda attends YFG conference

THERE was tight security at the Radisson Blu Hotel over the weekend as An Taoiseach Enda Kenny attended the Young Fine Gael national conference writes David Hurley.

While there was a large garda presence in-and-around the Ennis Road hotel, there were no incidents of concern.

In his address, Mr Kenny urged young Fine Gael supporters to "get out from behind your computers" during the campaign ahead of the Marriage Equality Referendum.

While the Taoiseach praised young people for their expertise using social media, he stressed the importance of getting out and meeting with the electorate face to face.

"The power of a young person engaging in conversation cannot be underestimated. So while you are brilliant at the social media remember there is very little to beat knocking on the door and saying who you are and that you are representing

Young Fine Gael and that I want to talk to you about a few things - about your family, about young people, about job opportunities - and that's a really powerful message for parents and for young people in general to show that young people are interested and that politics actually works," he said.

Following his address on Saturday evening, Mr Kenny mingled and chatted with delegates before holding a giant selfie stick and posing for a group selfie.

Earlier, Mr Kenny told delegates that the upcoming Marriage Equality Referendum, which takes place on May 22, next is not about politics but a more equal Ireland.

"We want the referendum passed because I believe in marriage. I believe very strongly in marriage in the right to marriage. It is about commitment it's about love and it's about respect. It's about companionship. It's about everything except gender," he said.

## Aldi seeks to expand its Dublin Road store

DISCOUNT retailer Aldi is seeking to build an extension to its store at the Dublin Road.

According to proposals lodged with Limerick City and County Council, the development will see the extension of the existing food store by a total of 359 square metres.

It will see an increase in the gross floor area of the store from 1,515 square metres to 1,874 square metres, the proposals from John Spain and Associates planning and development consultants states.

If the proposal gets the green light from council planners, the existing loading bay and bin store will relocate, and the layout of the car park at the Dublin Road store will also change.

Aldi opened in Castletroy back in 2007, and the consult-

ants state: "The store forms an important part of the convenience shopping provision within the Castletroy area".

Mayor of the metropolitan district Cllr Michael Sheahan, who also represents the Castletroy area at City Hall, welcomed the plans.

He said: "The fact that they are keen to expand is a sign of increased consumer spending power in the area."

Cllr Sheahan added that Aldi serves a wide catchment area beyond his own.

"From what I can see, it is not just serving my area, but it is serving a larger catchment from the wider North Tipperary and East Clare areas," he said.

Planners will decide on the application by Thursday, April 9.

## Houses destroyed in Southill fire 'due' to be demolished

A BLOCK of houses which were destroyed in a fire, had been earmarked for demolition prior to the blaze writes David Hurley.

The alarm was raised at around 8.30am last Thursday after smoke was seen coming from one of the houses at Palm Court, Keyes Park. Several units of the Limerick Fire and Rescue service attended the scene of the blaze which quickly spread to two adjoining houses. "It's disgraceful, they were perfect houses, there was nothing wrong with them, it's a shame," said Billy Carroll who lives at nearby Lilac Court. Garda at Roxboro Road are investigating the cause of the fire.



PICTURES: MICHAEL COWHEY

