

## 'Stayed too long in pub'

Jim Kelly, Ashgrove, Newcastle West, was fined £70, had his licence endorsed and was disqualified from driving for 12 months at the local court for driving with excess alcohol in his blood. Inspector P. J. McSweeney, prosecuting, told the court that Kelly was topped by gardai after driving erratically. A blood test showed that he had 255 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

Mr. Garry McMahon, solicitor, defending, said that Kelly was a farmer. He had sold a number of animals that day and stayed too long in the pub afterwards.

## Limerick shipping

During August, 27 vessels totalling 21,883 tons, entered Limerick port. This compares to 28 vessels totalling 43,958 tons for the previous month.

Of the ships arriving with cargo, four were foreign and 23 Irish. Sixteen vessels carried petroleum, five coal, three timber and once each of fertilizer and grain. One tug arrived at Aghinish Island to tow out a crane barge.

## 'The only hope for Ireland'

Calls for a national government were flatly rejected this week by Fine Gael's Deputy Willie O'Brien. "I can see no sense whatsoever in joining up with Fianna Fáil. The only hope for this country is a Fine Gael government with Labour support or a coalition of Fine Gael and Labour", stated Deputy O'Brien.

He said that members of Fine Gael who were calling for a national government "had lost their head completely".

# A Limerick portrait by Mainchin Seoighe

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

THE FIRST ever comprehensive portrait of Limerick, in which the old Gaelic poets of the Maigue meet the Bard of Thomond and others, amid settings that range from storied Thomondgate to mystic Lough Gur, has just been produced by local historian, Mainchin Seoighe.

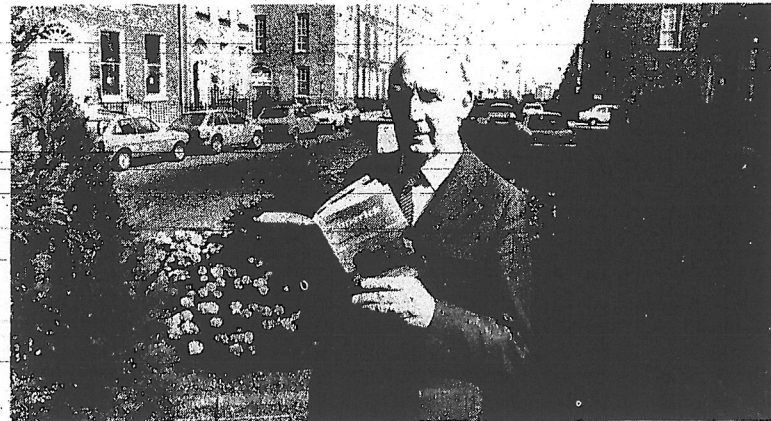
"Portrait of Limerick" by the man better known to Limerick Leader readers for nearly 40 years as "An Mangaire Sugach", will be published by Robert Hale, London, on September 30th next.

Although part of a series of portraits of places throughout these islands, the Limerick story is far from a guide for strangers to this historic part of the country.

"The one thing that really pleased me," says Mainchin Seoighe, also known by the English form of his name, Mannix Joyce, "is that they allowed me to write my own kind of book."

### Approached

Mannix, who accumulated a wealth of material through his Leader column over the years, and who has already produced four books, had the production of a book about Limerick in mind himself long before he was approached by the Hale representatives here in Limerick last



Mannix Joyce with an advance copy of his latest book this week.

Picture: OWEN SOUTH

year with a view to contributing to their "Portraits."

He wrote in his own fashion. The publishers were pleased, "describing it as a fascinating book," and the people of Limerick, both city and county, will find in its pages everything from the sources of their identity to the more familiar stories and legends of their individual streets and townlands.

Mainchin Seoighe was born near Bruree in the heart of the Maigue Valley. Speaking of his new book, he says: "This (the Maigue Valley) was the section in which I took the greatest satisfaction in writing. I know it so well: I love its tradition of poetry, horses, hurling and the beautiful countryside which identifies it."

At the National School in Bruree, once attended by Eamonn de Valera, he got his first interest in local history from the headmaster, Donncha Horgan. From here he followed the same route as de Valera to Charleville CBS, after which he joined the staff of Limerick County Council.

He has been contributing articles to many publications since then and has become Limerick's recognised local historian.

### Neighbour

Incidentally, he knew the late Eamonn de Valera personally. "He was a neighbour of my mother's and visited her occasionally. It was through her that I came to know him personally."

His book he says, is not a history of Limerick. It is rather an attempt to see Limerick from many angles—topographical, historical, cultural, sporting, social, religious and industrial.

And like every Limerick townland which had a story or a song written about it, many of the places mentioned in "portraits" would also merit a whole book to themselves.

From the sparse uplands of West Limerick, where the famous Ardagh chalice was found, to the rich Galtee country, which produced the Fenian founder John O'Mahony; and from the island city of Viking memories to Roches Hanging Gardens, Mainchin Seoighe pursues the story which encompasses so many traditions over so many centuries that it seems presumptuous to assume that the Limerick identity is not still in the making.

The name Limerick, he tells us, very likely comes from the Gaelic, "Loimneach"—"Bare Marsh"—and may have originally applied to the Shannon shoreline below the present city. Attempts to attribute the name to a Viking source have been made, he told the Leader, but it probably came from the Gaelic "Loimneach."

### Placenames

Talking of placenames, many Limerick names still are a puzzle to the experts, Mainchin tells us, particularly Mungret, Ecdamora and Meanus. No-one can say for certain where they originated.

"Portrait of Limerick" was written in only ten months. The author ran various competitions over the years for the best collections of local history, local traditions and local songs. Another advantage was the fact that his work with the County Council brought him into contact with every part of the county.

The book runs to 225 pages and is profusely illustrated with some 40 pictures.

The publishers' blurb describes the book as being steeped "in the rich tradition of Gaelic culture—its language, games, music and dance. The diversity of information and the enthusiasm of its telling will make this book popular with all Ireland's admirers."

The decision to include Limerick

in the Portrait series was taken on the suggestion of Terry Montague, Hale's Irish representative, who is a first cousin of the poet John Montague, and a nephew of Mrs. Cregg of Bridge Street, Croom.

### O'Mahony's

Terry thought that Limerick would be a good subject for a series which included Cornwall, Argyll, Brittany and the Southern Hebrides.

He was put in touch with Mainchin Seoighe by Mr. Arthur O'Leary, a director of O'Mahony's Bookshop.

Mainchin Seoighe has been involved in Irish language activities for many years, and is chairman of Cumann na Maighe, the body which organises the bi-lingual festival, Feile na Maighe. This year the Feile, he tells us, is being held at Bruree, and the theme is "The de Valera Heritage." He is also a member of the Thomond Archaeological Society and is honorary treasurer of Carrigaholt Irish College Committee.

Readers of the Limerick Portrait will almost certainly be drawn to the author's description of Lough Gur, the place which has known human contact long before any other place in Limerick. "Small wonder," he says, "if at times at Lough Gur, the mind seems to become receptive to the dim racial memories of 150 generations, sighing through the tangled forests of the years."

### In Irish

Mainchin Seoighe has already published two books in Irish, "Maraidh Sean Sabhat Aireir" and "Cois Maighe na gCaor." He has also written books on Bruree and Droim Aibléac.

"I have a few ideas for more books in my mind," he says when asked about the future.

## 'No use at all for clubs'

A County Limerick man stole golf clubs worth £250 from a booth of a car parked in Newcastle West was fined £50 at the local court. John O'Dwyer, Assumpta Park, Newcastle West, admitted taking the clubs from a car parked at the Market Yards, Newcastle West, on May 21st. Inspector Patrick McSweeney prosecuting, said that O'Dwyer had been drinking in the town since 2 p.m. that day, according to statement he made to the gardai. He got very drunk. He woke up next morning and saw the golf clubs in his room and "asked himself where the hell I got them."

Mr. John Cussen, solicitor, defending, said that O'Dwyer had no alcohol at all for the clubs, and took them when he had a considerable amount of drink taken.

Mr. Cussen said that O'Dwyer was a good employee and had a good record with his family. Although he had three previous convictions he had been out of trouble for some time.

## Self-service hospital?

People could die in Limerick Regional Hospital because of Government cutbacks in the services, Deputy Willie O'Brien claimed this week. He called for a press conference at the hospital board offices to convey to the public the urgency of the matter.

"We have been told by responsible doctors at our committee meetings that people could die as a result of these cutbacks. There is responsibility on us to convey a message to the public," he stated. "Are the Government going to turn the Regional Hospital into a self-service?"

## Excess alcohol

At Newcastle West Court, mas Hannigan, Coolroo, meedy, Co. Limerick, was fined £60, had his driving licence endorsed and was put off the road 12 months for driving with excess alcohol at Castleamhar. Inspector P. J. McSweeney told the court on being stopped by the gardai Hannigan failed a breathalysing test. A blood sample was found to have 247 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

"It was pretty high," remarked Justice Maguire. Mr. G. McMahon, solicitor, defending, said that Hannigan, aged 50, was a bachelor and farmed in a small way.

## Fined and disqualified

Denis Ahern, Ballinacorney, was at Newcastle West fined £60, had his licence endorsed and was put off the road for 12 months for driving with excess alcohol.

He was found to be driving with 246 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, it stated.

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