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We get six super-trams to link us into Europe

SIX new railcars will take us closer to Europe.

Brussels is already pumping cash into the Rosslare-Waterford-Caher-Limerick-Ennis-Galway road. The parallel rail line, Rosslare-Waterford-Limerick Junction-Limerick (Colbert)-Ennis is also to get EU upgrade money. Iarnród have bought six fast super-trams to link us with the south-eastern port.

Both Welsh access ports, Fishguard and Pembroke, are linked to the British 125mph and 200km/h rail grid, including through-trains to Paris and Brussels via Eurotunnel, and onward into Europe. It should be possible to rail from here to Rome in under 24 hours.

The other route to get the new supertrams is the the Nenagh-Roscrea line to Dublin.

The cost of the deal is £23 million, and in all 27 railcars will be built by GEC Alstom Transport (GECAT), a subsidiary of the Paris-based GEC Alstom Group, at its plant in Barcelona.

Supertrams, otherwise called railcars can be described as passenger carriages which have their own power: very often, they run in pairs, and are a very economical way of providing rail services where conventional trains - ordinary carriages pulled by a separate diesel-electric engine (circa 2,000 horsepower) - would be too expensive.

They are used particularly as commuter trains in the larger cities

of the world: 16 of the new Spanish railcars, when they arrive in Ireland, will be added to others of Japanese manufacture on the Dublin suburban routes not already served by the DART electric trains. (These are sometimes used here as auxiliary trains to Thurles or Cork for GAA matches.)

the last time railcars were used regularly from here was when the Limerick to Tralee line was open, via Adare, Rathkeale, Newcastle West, Abbeyfeale and Listowel, more than twenty years ago.

The new railcar order was made to replace the older Craven-type coaches, which are now about 30 years old.

The Spanish plant got the order on foot of a competitive tender: Iarnród Éireann itself put in a bid

for the manufacture of railcars in a joint venture with Mitsui/Tokyo Car of Japan, but the tender was not cheap enough.

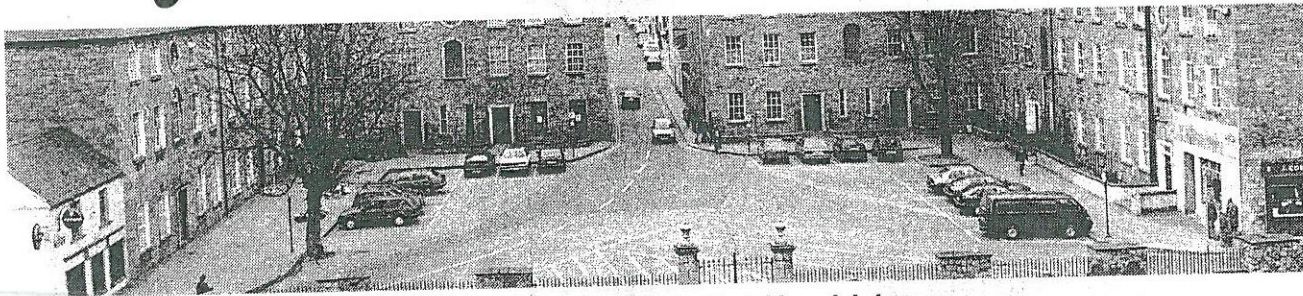
On the other hand, the Spanish plant has a continuous production line making railcar shells, which are then fitted out to meet individual customer gauges, making that company's tender more competitive.

The first of the new railcars will arrive here a year from now.

They are intended to attract more commuters to the Iarnród Éireann system which, last year carried 25 million passengers, the highest ever on Irish railways.

The 27 new railcars will bring the total Iarnród railcar fleet nationwide to 44.

We take our Georgian city entirely on Trust



John's Square - where Georgian Limerick began.

GEORGIAN Limerick might not be as well known as mediaeval Limerick, with its castle and majestic St Mary's Cathedral, but now the balance has been redressed by Limerick Civic Trust.

They have published **Georgian Limerick**, in co-operation with FAS. The 200 page volume is available in local book shops at £14.95.

The Georgian era witnessed the transformation of Limerick from a small fortress town, enclosed within stifling mediaeval walls, into a modern flourishing commercial city of bustling quays and splendid Georgian terraced houses.

This new city was built on land owned by Edmund Sexton Pery, and the Georgian section of the city is still known as Newtown Pery. (The present Earl of Limerick, a direct descendant, pronounces his surname as "peery", not "perry".)

In celebration of this heritage the Civic Trust, with the co-operation of FAS, have produced the new book providing a fascinating and entertaining insight into the social life of Georgian Limerick.

Illustrated throughout, it contains a whole host of articles dealing with topics such as Limerick as a garrison city; peasant secret societies; 18th century fashion; quaint herbal cures; and the use of flogging to maintain discipline in the British army.

Extensive research was carried out by the FAS trainees involved in the project, and one of the main sources of information were the files of the Limerick Chronicle.

The lively and excellently researched book is written with the general reader in mind, and contains many bizarre and

amusing stories throughout.

For instance, there is a gruesome account, taken from our sister paper, Limerick Chronicle of August 25, 1809, of a man found unconscious by the roadside and covered with maggots. According to the journalist: "From every aperture of his head, his eyes, his ears, mouth and nose, poured innumerable worms, as if the interior of his skull was filled with them."

Georgian Limerick is one of a number of publications and projects jointly sponsored by Limerick Civic Trust and FAS, which are designed to heighten public awareness of Limerick's Georgian past and to develop a greater appreciation for the cities rich Georgian heritage, and the model town which Pery and others established.

The Civic Trust have planned an ambitious course of action to achieve a revival of Georgian Limerick. Last year they published a map of the Georgian city, and this was followed by the book. An interpretative museum on the history of Georgian Limerick is also planned, to be located at the Georgian House Project on Pery Square.

A new Limerick Chapter of the Irish Georgian Society has been established, and the trust has purchased 2 Pery Square, which will be restored according to precise detail of Georgian style, architectural detail, and decor.

The building will be open to the public and will demonstrate the best of Georgian architecture which will encourage other property owners to undertake similar work.

Burren-ing question is arty theme

BY PADDY MORONEY

THIS Friday will see the opening of a unique exhibition of artists who want to save Mullaghmore Mountain in the Burren, Co Clare.

It will include paintings, sculptures, photographs, installations and "land art" inspired by the Burren. The 8pm opening will be at Lisdoonvarna Town Hall.

This is the high season at Lisdoonvarna which, unlike a lot of resorts, actually extends well into September-October, later than most, because of the match-making festival.

Because of its health spa, "Lisdoon" has had a long association with Limerick.

Four years ago, the Burren Action Group organised, "The Ancient Landscape" art exhibition in aid of the campaign to relocate the interpretative centre, proposed for Mullaghmore.

Fifty artists who live in, or have long association with, the Burren, took part in order to display their opposition to "this attack on the Burren landscape", as they described it.

"Despite the government's promise to abandon the interpretative centre, last year," said a statement, "it now appears that it has new plans to erect an interpretative facility at Mullaghmore.

"Once again, the artists of the Burren have responded