

listed as occupants before the end of the 18th century were Perys, Glentworths, Dickinsons, Vere Hunts of Curragh, Monsells of Tervoe, Tuttills of Faha, Wilsons of Caherconlish, Roses, Franklins, Boroughs and others. The houses subsequently fell from fashion and in their decline housed such various uses as barracks, school, nursing home, offices, tenement, and butcher's shop. In the spring of 1973 all but three of the houses were vacant and derelict.

The Square is unique in layout, form and architectural quality, and has been listed for preservation. Its rehabilitation led to its nomination as a National Project for the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975.

LIMERICK MUSEUM

The museum, founded in 1916, transferred from the City Library to two of the restored houses in John's Square in 1979. The displays are wide-ranging, with an emphasis on Limerick City and the Mid-West region. The permanent exhibitions include the City Insignia: charters, the four city maces, the civic sword, 1575 (the earliest surviving Irish civic sword), chains of office, the mayoral chair and the famous Nail from the City Exchange; Irish archaeology from the Middle Stone Age to the Medieval Period; currency from the Viking period to the present; historic local craft products such as silver and lace; historic trade guild regalia; Limerick printed books and newspapers; local aspects of 19th and 20th century independence movements; historic maps, topographical paintings, prints and photographs; natural history—Irish mammals, birds and fish.

Special temporary exhibitions are held regularly.

The Friends of the Museum, established in 1982, are active in fundraising for the purchase of exhibits and the promotion of the museum.

The development of the museum by extension or movement to a larger premises is under active consideration.

Hours of opening: Tuesday to Saturday, 10.00 - 1.00; 2.15 - 5.00, Closed public holidays. Admission free.

NEWTOWN PERY

Newtown Pery, which comprises Rutland Street, Patrick Street, O'Connell Street, and the street which intersects them, is the "new" part of Limerick, being some two hundred years old. In this area is the commercial life of the city, with its department stores, public building, offices and business premises.

Newtown Pery was not laid out until well into the 18th century. In the rebuilding which

followed the demolition of the town walls in 1760, the Hon. E. S. Pery mapped out the squares and avenues of present-day Limerick. The short time in which it was all built has given it its distinctively Georgian character. The original names of its streets commemorated people who were in the news during the 1760s. Georges Street (now O'Connell Street) was named for King George, Cornwallis Street for Lord Cornwallis, Nelson Street for Admiral Nelson, Patrick Street and Francis Street after two members of the Arthur family.

At Mathew Bridge one stands at the parting of the ways between the old and new Limerick, between Bridge Street of English Town, and Rutland Street, the beginning of Newtown Pery. Mathew Bridge, built in 1844, stands on the site of the New Bridge, which was one of the first buildings undertaken after the resurgence of 1760. On the left is Charlotte Quay, built in 1761, connecting Baal's Bridge and New Bridge. In line with this was the Assembly Mall where the Assembly Rooms were built in 1770, to give the citizens the diversion of balls, assemblies and "drums". The Ball Room and Supper Room were subsequently converted into a Theatre, and it was here that the tragedian Edmond Kean suffered one of the few set-backs of his career. Engaged to play Richard III for twelve nights, he gave up after appearing for five nights to empty houses. The Assembly Rooms were demolished in 1838 because of their dangerous condition.

The road continuing around Honan's Quay leads to Sarsfield Bridge, the first of the Shannon Bridges. It was designed by Alexander Nimmo, who modelled it on the Pont Neuilly on the Seine, and it was originally known as Wellesley Bridge. The foundation stone was laid in 1824 and the bridge was completed eleven years later at a cost of £90,000. It was opened in 1835 by the Earl of Mulgrave, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and was a toll bridge until 1883 when the Corporation renamed it Sarsfield Bridge.

In January, 1974, some lamp standards and their accompanying coping stones were blown down in a storm. Subsequent examination showed the original parapet had been built using iron dowels and cramps. Over the years these had rusted and swollen causing extensive loosening of the parapet structure. This necessitated the dismantling of the entire parapet system, replacing parts that had been damaged or lost over the years, and resetting all the stones with bronze. It was decided to replace the parapets and lamps exactly as they were before.

On the bridge stands the 1916 Memorial designed by Albert Power and completed by his



Georgian Doorway, Newtown Pery.

son, which replaced a life-size statue of Viscount FitzGibbon, who was killed in the Battle of Balaclava. The FitzGibbon statue was blown up, but by a strange coincidence, the present 1916 Memorial rests on its pedestal which formerly depicted the famous cavalry charge in the Crimea in which FitzGibbon fell.

On either side of Sarsfield Bridge are the headquarters of Shannon Rowing Club and Limerick Boat Club, while at the Clare end begins the Ennis Road, which leads to the northern suburbs of the City, and also to Shannon Airport, Bunratty, Ennis, Kilkee, Galway, and the west of Ireland.

THE O'CONNELL MONUMENT

The Crescent affords a vista down the length of O'Connell Street and Patrick Street to the very heart of the city. Here stands the statue of Daniel O'Connell, the Kerry born lawyer and Member of Parliament, who won Catholic Emancipation for Ireland in 1829. The statue is by John Hogan (1800-1858), and is regarded as one of his finest works. It is noted that this was the first public monument erected in Ireland to O'Connell.

THE PEOPLE'S PARK

A left turn from the Crescent leads down Barrington Street, named for the family which founded Barrington's Hospital in 1831, and on to Pery Square and the People's Park, founded as a memorial to Richard Russell, a Limerick merchant of the past. In the park stands a statue of Thomas Spring Rice (1790-1866), first Lord Monteagle of Brandon. He represented Limerick in Parliament from 1820 to 1833, and held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1835 to 1839.

MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY

The idea of establishing an Art Gallery in Limerick was first mooted by Mr. J. J. Johnson at a banquet on the occasion on which he was made a Freeman of Limerick City.

In 1936 a Committee was formed for the purpose with District Justice J. M. Flood as Chairman, Mr. Johnson as Secretary and Mr. Paul Bernard as Treasurer.

The Committee set about acquiring a representative collection of paintings by Irish Artists and they made it their aim to secure examples of the work of all well-known artists