

# Discovering Art in Limerick

**I** HAVE talked to artists in Limerick about painting, and I have noticed a kind of dreamy look come into their eyes as they think of all those exhibitions that are going on in Dublin: the R.H.A., the Living Art the Independent Artists, and the one-man shows in three or four different places pretty well throughout the year.

They do usually consider the quality of these different exhibitions. They consider only the fact of them.

There are they, fixed in the Third City of the Republic, missing it all. Here are we, lording it away up in Dublin with an abundance of pictures hanging all over the place—those I have mentioned, plus those in the Municipal Gallery and the National Gallery.

We, they feel, don't go and look at them half enough! And what wouldn't they in Limerick give to be in our shoes!

## On their doorstep

And yet, when I ask them when last they visited their own gallery and looked at the pictures, they are all amazement. What gallery? What pictures? In Limerick? You must be joking!

I am not joking. There is a very good art gallery in Limerick, or at least the makings of one. There are some very good pictures, although most of them are in store.

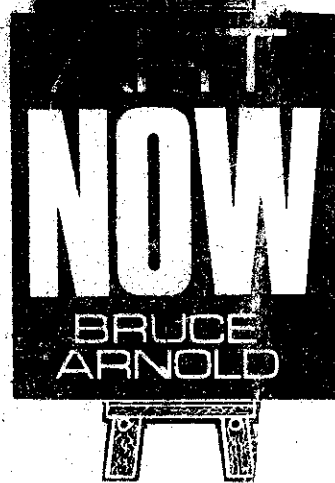
Certainly the necessary material is there for a great number of the requirements of Limerick artists. And there are individual paintings that both the Curator of the Municipal Gallery and the Director of the National Gallery would happily transfer to their own establishments if they were ever encouraged to do so.

## But neglected

Yet the Limerick art gallery—more correctly the Limerick Municipal Art Gallery—is at present a single room in a building that also houses the Library and the Civic Museum. The museum is shortly to move, but when it does so the space will be given over entirely to books, and the pictures will still be limited to the single room.

Of course, if nobody ever looks at the paintings except the odd tourist, bored with other diversions or seeking shelter from the rain, then there are no grounds for changing the situation. But I would like to think that Limerick people care about art enough to want to change the present situation.

And if the gallery, as it



exists at present, get a face-lift, then who knows perhaps it will soon be acquiring pictures of a period more modern than the Mainie Jelleths which are at present its most up-to-date works of art.

## Useful nucleus

What is the collection at present? It has some fine paintings by Sean Keating, Leech, Hone, Osborne and Augustus Burke. It has a small but pleasing Evie Hone cartoon.

It has a magnificent collection of James Arthur O'Connor drawings and a very fine George Barrett landscape. The paintings by Mainie Jellett, particularly "The Wave" are among the best of hers I have seen.

There is, perhaps, a pre-

ponderance of works of the period from 1900 up to the late 1930s. There is a better example of J. H. Mulcahy's work than the National Gallery possesses, which is probably not all that surprising in that Mulcahy was a Limerick painter.

There are two nice Jack Yeats oils, a very pretty William Mulready and a river scene by Eva Hamilton which completely changed my own view of her capabilities as a painter. And there is a general hotch-potch of other work of interest, quality and excitement.

## Time to act

Is it a neglected or forgotten heritage? Do the people of Limerick care about art enough to want to do something really constructive, like establishing an art gallery in which more than the tiny proportion of pictures at present on show could be hung?

And if a new building were found for the gallery, and someone to run it, would not more people give pictures to it, in the way that they gave them in the past?

I said earlier that the most modern painting was one by Mainie Jellett. I was wrong.

While poking around in the gallery's store-rooms I did come across a picture by Camille Souter called "Washing by the Canal." It was painted in 1964.

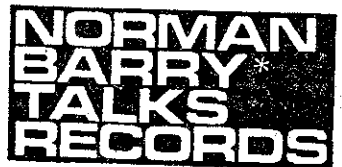
In its isolation and its loneliness—an infant among so many elders—it was an indictment of the city's inaction. Perhaps the time for change is at hand.

**I** WOULD normally consider that Clive Westlake's entry, at 31, into the record scene with his first record would be doomed to failure. But when you consider his extensive background and widespread contribution to other artists down through the years, his latest venture might have some logic. His record is called "100 days" and is backed by "From The Beginning to the End"; both are self-penned.

"I did it for a giggle," says Clive, "I am not a singer, although I must admit that sometimes I can interpret my songs the way I feel they should be sung."

Not that he has any reason to be dissatisfied. Clive for many years has been a successful songwriter. He wrote The Hollies "Here I Go Again," Dusty Springfield's "Losing You" and "Am I See Is You" and Kathy Kirby's "Big Man." He is also responsible for film themes for "Live Now, Pay Later," "It's Trad Dad," and "Just For Fun."

It's certainly a record of



his first No. 1 hit might be sung by himself.

"100 Days" is very much a one man operation. In addition to writing the song, Clive arranged the rhythm section, produced the record, conducted the orchestra, played the piano and did the vocal backing.

And the song's chances? It's a mid-tempo number, pleasant to listen to, beautifully arranged and with a reasonable chart chance. The singer himself says "Definitely not a raver, just a nice song."

Seventeen long playing records in 17 years of recording makes an equally significant career. But it is surprising that in all that time Willie Brady has never made a single.

He puts the matter right this week with a release titled "When I'm Alone"