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Bringing home the Bacon to Limerick

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

THE ONLY thriving survivor of Limerick's once proud bacon industry says that it doesn't matter anymore if the pig comes from China, so long as EEC processing standards are met and the market demand for pre-packed convenience food is answered.

As the end came this week for O'Mara's, the firm which once sent pork to the Far East and advisers to Russia, business is booming at the rival Limerick Bacon Company's new premises at Raheen, where employment has shot from 12 to 55, in the five years since 1981.

Mr. Liam O'Sullivan, manager of the Limerick Bacon Company said that they had simply learned to "adapt to the times."
"We will still sell the odd side of bacon," he said, "but the real demand now is for processed convenience food."

25 years
The Limerick Bacon Company is a relative newcomer to an industry which has made Limerick famous throughout the world. It was established only 23 years ago. Another bacon processing plant, Mattersons, now also struggling through a crisis.
The death knell of Limerick's famous bacon industry was sounded even before the stringent conditions of EEC membership had to be met.

According to Deputy Fire Chief Prendergast, not all Limerick firms adapted to the free trading conditions of the 1960s.
"It was tragic to see the decline of an industry which once gave employment to hundreds of Limerick people," he commented.
Whole families in Limerick, Deputy Prendergast said, lived out of the pig industry. "St. Mary's Parish alone," he said, "was renowned for pig trading."
Limerick, he went on, even produced its own delicacies in the back line—bacon and breast bones, and Limerick ham was on the best menus in the country's top hotels.

Older
Limerick's pig industry is even older than most people realise. There is a reference from Norman times to "the sweet taste of Limerick pork" in Lenihan's History of Limerick.

And ironically it was Limerick itself which taught the lessons of bacon curing to the Danes, who came here to study the process in the early days of the centuries, and have now taken over most of our markets.
Deputy Prendergast believes that no-one anywhere has the same tradition and skill in bacon as the people of Limerick. "It is a tragedy to see it go," he said, recalling best industries like Dennis, Shawes and Clover Meats.

The situation for places like Mattersons and O'Mara's is hardly eased by the fact that slaughtering licences are now almost impossible to obtain.
But Mr. Liam O'Sullivan doesn't see this as a problem: "We buy our pigs from Roscooke, Co. Roscommon. But it is Limerick bacon because we cure them here. Curing is the real traditional Limerick skill, and it doesn't matter whether the pig comes from China so long as the standards are met."

Competition
He also sees competition as a good thing. "We put our money where our mouth is," he said, pointing out that they have now a vibrant export market in Germany for pork and processed bacon. They also have markets in 14 countries in this country.
Their curing process had to meet the most stringent standards. "We are, in fact, up to U.S. standards here," he said.
This Thursday saw the end of an era at O'Mara's Bacon Factory, when 50 jobs were lost as production was officially closed at the plant, which is now to become a depot for the Claremorris and Letterkenny branches of the Bacon Company of Ireland.
The end came swiftly after weeks of intense negotiations by the ITGWU to save the historic factory.



Col. Lawrence O'Connor, Officer Commanding Southern Command, F.C.A., presenting a statuette of Cuchulainn to CQMS William O'Brien, on the occasion of his retirement from the Army at Sarsfield Barracks recently. Also included are Comd. P. Daly, Lt. Col. A. Riordan, O.C., 12th Batt. and Sarsfield Barracks; Pte. G. Touchstone, Sgt. P. Kiely, CQMS P. Cuddihy, Sgt. P. Organ, Sgt. P. Franklin, Sgt. G. Cosgrove, Pte. P. Noonan and Comd. F. Swords.

GAA grandstand: city fire chief raises the roof

By CORMAC LIDDY

COUNTY BOARD G.A.A. chiefs got a rude awakening this week when they were told bluntly that there was no way that the Hogan Stand at the Ennis Road Grounds could be used ever again because it could constitute a fire hazard.

For a time the County Board juggled with switching this Sunday's crucial National Hurling League game out of Limerick, and Kilmallock was being mentioned as a likely alternative.
But County Board P.R.O., Mr. Michael Hanley, said that the idea was finally scrapped when it was realised that any Dublin supporters would have no direct rail access to Kilmallock.

Fire chief

The Limerick Corporation Chief Fire Officer inspected the Hogan Stand recently and immediately informed the authorities of his objections to its further use. The fact that Dublin were due to visit here caused an immediate problem for the local officials who sought ways and means of getting round their problem.

Eventually the only compromise which could be reached whereby the dressing rooms could be used for this Sunday's game was to agree to a recommendation from the Fire Chief to have the roof of the famous stand removed by that stage.
The idea of having the roof removed is to ensure that nobody enters the stand area.
"The Fire Chief thought that even if we did not open the stand that many people would climb onto the stand in the event of a sudden downpour. If such happens there will be nothing to be gained by entering the stand area," said a County Board spokesman.
The Hogan Stand was first built in Croke Park in 1924 and at that time it became the first seated bookable stand at Croke Park.
It was transferred to Limerick in the mid-1950s and was



officially opened in 1957 for a game between Limerick and Kilkenny. The present Limerick Co. Board treasurer, Declan Moylan, was a member of the Limerick team on that occasion.
The sudden closure of the stand will pose immediate problems for the County Board and for some 1,000 spectators who would normally use the stand.
But in the long-term the decision of the Fire Chief could be of immense benefit in that it could mean the earlier construction of the proposed Mick Mackey Stand. And it could also mean a switch of location for the new million pound complex.
Originally it was intended to build the stand on the opposite side of the field to the Hogan Stand. But I learned this Thursday of the possibility of replacing the Hogan Stand with the new Mackey Stand.
Consultants Michael Punch and Partners have already been called in to discuss the latest development and I understand that within a week Mr. Punch and the County Development GAA team and officers of the County Board may be able to review new plans for the Mackey Stand.

Sideline

Already a major draw in under way to raise funds for the new Mackey Stand and tickets on the Hogan Stand were issued on a ten-year basis to early supporters of the Mackey project.
"We regret that these people will have to use the sideline for the time being," said a County Board spokesman.
Meanwhile, the Limerick GAA Development Chairman, Noel Drungoole, is to raise the question of whether Government financial aid could be made available to sporting organisations whose facilities have to be replaced because of new fire regulations.
Mr. Drungoole is to raise the matter at a meeting of the National Sports

FIRE CHIEF SUGGESTS RAHEEN STATION

By LEADER REPORTER

COUNTY LIMERICK fire chief, Mr. Joe McGrath, has recommended that a fire station be established at Raheen to cater for the Croom/Patrickswell/Raheen area.

In a report to the county council, Mr. McGrath states: "This area is of particular concern because of the level of industrial development, the high density of housing and the presence of hospitals."

"There is an added disadvantage of the position of the City Fire Station which is situated on the eastern side of the city with the problems of negotiating traffic at peak times and the possible delay at the level crossing at Ballykeefe.

Advantages
Pointing out the advantages of Raheen as a location for the new fire station, he cited the following reasons:

- Proximity to Raheen Industrial Estate and Mungret Cement factory.
- Proximity to Regional Hospital.
- Good clear roadway to both Patrickswell and Croom.
- Easy access to Caherdavin via Dock Road when new bridge is completed.
- Access to Castletroy area via inner ring roads.

In his report, Mr. McGrath said that there was an added advantage in selecting Raheen in that manpower should be more readily available due to the industry located at Raheen/Mungret and the large housing estates in the area.
"In addition, the proximity to the city of a brigade in Raheen would be of great advantage to the city brigade as the existing county

bridges at Cappamore and Ratleale are in the region of 25 to 30 minutes response time to the city."
Mr. McGrath pointed out that the present fire station at Foynes is a demountable building which can be transported from place to place. He recommended that when the new station in Foynes is complete in 1987, the existing building be transferred to a site which is available at Raheen.



Left to right: Guest speaker, Personal Financial Services Association.

A SEMINAR on the theme "Life Market - New Influences," was held at the Limerick Inn today. This Shield Life sponsored venture was organised for members of the Limerick zone of the Life Insurance Association and the National Insurance Brokers Association.

It was the second seminar in a series of three. The first was held in Dublin's Royal College of Surgeons and the final seminar will be held next Monday in the Imperial Hotel Cork.

'Only had two drinks, was on medication'

By LEADER REPORTER

ARISING OUT of an accident at Deegart, Askeaton, on November 27 last, Edward O'Grady, Ballymore, Askeaton, pleaded guilty to driving with excess alcohol, and dangerous driving, before Justice M. C. Maguire at Askeaton court.

On a charge of driving with 185 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, on the date in question, the defendant was fined £100, disqualified from driving for 12 months and the conviction endorsed on his driver's licence.
He was fined £40 with £20.91 expenses on the charge of dangerous driving.
Supt. John McCormack told the court that at 9 p.m. on November 27 last, the defendant was driving a car from Limerick to Askeaton.
He said it was alleged that the defendant accelerated when an articulated truck endeavoured to overtake his vehicle.
"The car came in front of the truck at some stage and there was a collision," he said.
Mr. Frank Keating, solr., who appeared for the defendant, told the court that his client, who was on medication, only had two drinks and could not understand how his alcohol concentration was so high.
Mr. Keating said his client did not consciously increase his speed and was not trying to get ahead of the truck.



At the seminar "Life Co. Ltd. at the Limerick Glennon, Zone Office secretary, N.I.B.A.; D executive marketing Limerick."



At the annual dinner Management, Mr. M. Essilor Student of I chairperson, Mid-Wes I.I.P.M.M.; Senator P. Wang Ireland Ltd.;

KEEP UP. With Limerick's New-Loo LIME LEAF