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Joe McGrath, President.

The one and only . . . Bud Clancy.

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LIMERICK IN FOCUS

A great band needs your help

IF you're a Limerickman with an ounce of pride in your grand old city, then raise your hat in salute to the men of the Boherbuoy Number One Brass and Reed Band . . . They are carrying on a tradition that has few equals—a tradition that was born just two years after the Black Famine of 1848.

By Tom Tobin

And as I sat in their bandroom at Lord Edward Street, listening to several of their most popular musical selections, I could not help wondering why such an outstanding combination should find it necessary to appeal to the people of Limerick for financial support. I was thinking that Limerick people in all walks of life would be proud of the Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band.

It is true that an appeal for public support was launched by the band recently. It was their appeal that aroused my interest. Just three years ago they found it necessary to purchase new instruments, to the value of £2,000. Bit by bit they reduced the debt, but an outstanding balance of £416-15 has given cause to worry.

They have been asked to clear it off without further delay . . . and despite the public appeal, which told its own story and which was made a month ago, the sum of £350 is still outstanding. What a tragedy it would be if the people of Limerick lost their famous old band . . . and all because too many appear to take too much for granted.

DESERVE HELP

The men of the Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band deserve every financial support we can give them. They have earned our respect and loyalty. We should stand by them in their difficulties and ensure that the music which has been heard above the streets of Limerick for 113 years will continue to ring out for many a long day to come. And every one of us can help to do this. Indeed, we should, and we should do it to-day. Their history is too much a part of old Limerick to be ignored.

Following in his father's footsteps—Mr. P. J. McCormack—Conductor. He took over from his late father—Dave.

It was in 1850 that the band was founded. There are some older residents who will recall the stories told by their grandparents . . . stories like that which describe the unusual circumstances which brought about the establishment of the band. Life was very different in Limerick in those far-off days of 113 years ago. The Famine had taken its bitter toll and people were trying to find a firm footing again. One of the main sources of employment was breaking stones in the many quarries in the area, and one of these—Ryan's Quarry—was where the Boherbuoy Band was born.

On the fine evenings of summer, men and boys would gather near the quarry to make their own enjoyment. Music and song predominated. In the winter months they had the use of a room in a nearby laneway, where their musical evenings went on in the face of cruel adversity. But there were good friends in the local militia band who played no small part in helping to form a small band bearing the proud name of Boherbuoy. The army bandsmen trained the new band-members . . . and so it grew.

Undaunted supporters and followers of Charles Stewart Parnell the Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band followed him on many of his fiery journeys through this side of the country . . . and on many occasions they returned home with smashed instruments, torn uniforms and bloody heads. Nevertheless, they remained true to Parnell to the end.

It is also recorded that there were several Fenians among the membership of the band and on one occasion four of them were arrested outside Sir Peter Tait's clothing factory . . . an industry that was established the same year as the old band, in 1850, and where uniforms for the Crimean War were turned out in hundreds.

Andre Fernon — He plays the concert flute. He is also Chef de Cuisine at Shannon Airport.

There were many sore differences of opinion among the band-members and among members of the public when the Boherbuoy musicians gave their loyalty to Redmond and his recruiting drive. Many of their members joined the Munster Fusiliers in 1914 . . . and some never returned from the front. But the band kept on. Finally, the day came when a notice was posted up inside the door of the bandroom which made it perfectly clear, in effect, that there would be no place within the band for politics. And to add strength to this decision, the name was changed from the Boherbuoy National Brass and Reed Band to the Boherbuoy No. 1 Brass and Reed Band.

Nevertheless, nothing but sheer force could stop the men of Boherbuoy when it came to displaying their admiration for patriotism in their native city. One of the best remembered incidents happened in 1919. It was November 23 and the band was on parade to honour the Manchester Martyrs. Blazing away as they marched in their brisk style along Mulgrave Street, they were challenged by a large force of the Highland Regiment and the R.I.C. And among the membership of the band on this occasion were the members of the Munster Fusiliers who had safely returned from the battlefields of France.

The challenge was ignored . . . the band played on . . . only to be faced with a strong force of military with fixed bayonets, who charged. All hell broke loose and every member of the band had to run for his life, clutching his instrument for all it was worth. One of those involved in this incident was Mr. Joe McGrath, president of the band to-day. He was a playing member at the time and to-day, at the age of 65, Joe takes his place on parade still as good a side-drummer as ever.

This was how Joe described the incident for me: "I will never forget the way the military tried to break us up. They came at us with their fixed bayonets, but we scattered, every one of us . . . and we got away in different directions. I can never forget Ed. Hartley running down the street and trying to hold on to the big drum. All I could do was laugh at the time, even though it was no laughing matter. I wasn't too bad, but the lads with the big instruments had more than their hands full. Still, we managed to get away, having defied the miltary and the R.I.C. to the limit."

Another occasion which Joe recalled was the night in 1920 when the band had to make a detour, "for safety's sake," to pay a special tribute to the man who is now President of Ireland, Eamon de Valera. The Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band had been warned. They would not stand a chance of getting into the city to play for the Irish leader, who was returning from Clare. But they agreed to try. In the darkness of night the band moved across to the Long Pavement, where they boldly played the National Anthem in honour of "Dev," who was coming in by train. The train passed by, but whether or not he heard it remains uncertain.

A remarkable personality, Joe McGrath has been a member of the band for 49 years. In that period he has played many instruments, but his favourite is the side-drum. He took it over in the '30s, following the death of Pat Keating, and has been tapping it ever since. "I might well be the longest member of the band," said Joe, "but Miko Ryan who must be in his 70s, now is the oldest member . . . and he is still playing with us." Miko, who was one of those who served with the Munster Fusiliers in France, is a first-class flautist. His home is in St. Joseph Street.

However, Joe McGrath has seen many changes. He saw many old friends go off to war in 1914 . . . and many of them never returned. The Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band carried on with only the nucleus of a combination. But there was one man who stepped in to shoulder much of the responsibility . . . his name should never be forgotten in Limerick—Henry Leslie, one of the finest clarinet players Ireland has ever known. His old home was at the back of the old bandroom, among the many old laneways that stretched out surrounding the old quarry. In his time he had been Assistant Bandmaster in the United States Army . . . at a time when the Spanish-American War was in full battle. He was a bandsman in the U.S. Artillery at a time when history was being carved. But between 1907 and 1908 he returned to his home in Limerick and set about to achieve the one ideal he cherished for many years — the encouragement of young boys as musicians. Henry Leslie went all over the district seeking young men who wished to play in the old Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band . . . and he found many. In fact, it may well go on record that he played a major part in building the band that we see and hear this day.

But, then, who could forget such names as Batt Dillon and Jack Noonan? They were personalities whose names can never be forgotten. Jack Noonan, in particular, was a character whose life was dedicated to the band and who retired some 20 years ago. There are many people living in this city to-day who will remember him with a great deal of pleasure.

However, there are many grand old characters of the past who will be remembered by readers of the **Limerick Leader** . . . but we will continue the story of the Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band next week when I will take you back in years to the days when names like Eddie Hartley, Pat Keating, Paul Mackey, Pat McGrath and Jackie McGrath, not forgetting the two Prendergast brothers, Sammy and Jimmy, were outstanding figures in a colourful story that can never be forgotten.

ANOTHER LIMERICK LEADER EXCLUSIVE

Dave McCormack—brother of the conductor—one of Munster's finest coronet players.

Kathleen's happy 21st birthday

PETITE Kathleen Ryan, the pretty young lady who tends the bar in the Shannon Arms Hotel, Limerick, will treasure the memory of the evening her friends gathered to honour her 21st birthday.

They gathered in the Glentworth Hotel for the celebrations and there was plenty of music, song and dance. But the highlight of the evening was, of course, the cutting of that beautiful 21st birthday cake. And it was Kathleen's finest moment.

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Denis Ryan of Castleconnell, Kathleen is a former student of Rosary Hill Convent in her native place and has been a member of the staff of the Shannon Arms Hotel for just over three years.

During that time she has become known to thousands . . . all of whom have a very good word to say for her efficiency and courtesy. Indeed, up to the present she is the recipient of messages of congratulation from customers who have come to hear of her departure from those teenage days.

Among those at the celebrations were Limerick's famous comedians, Tom and Paschal, whose contribution to the night's entertainment was enormous. But it is doubtful that any of those present that night will forget the laughs provided by Tom and Paschal in their well-known act—"We Runs Them In." And at the piano on the occasion was another member of the Shannon Arms Hotel staff, Miss Etta Flanagan, who certainly scored a hit with all. Yes, it was a night to remember.

Kathleen's parents were there . . . so were her brothers, John, Donal and Denis, also her sisters Bridie (who came over from England with baby daughter Margaret), Joan and Peggy. Also present were: Mr. and Mrs. C. Robinson, Janesboro; Peggy Manning, Bridie McDonnell, Mrs. Michael Herbert, Castleconnell; Mr. Henry Nash, do.; Mr. Sean Herbert, do.; Christine Doyle, Michael and Kathleen Walsh, Francis Kenny and Terence Moran.

It is all a memory now . . . like Kathleen's days as a teenager . . . but the future of womanhood lies ahead. May it be a very happy one.

Miss Kathleen Ryan.

Lorry was parked dangerously

Brian Murphy, Knockatoon, Rockchapel, was at Newcastle West Court fined £2 when convicted of dangerously parking a lorry at Bishop Street at 1 a.m. on January 14.

Garda D. Flynn said he found the unlighted lorry parked near the Library.

Replying to Mr. R. J. Cussen, solr., who represented defendant, witness said when questioned defendant said he usually parked the lorry in this way. He understood defendant had been attending a local dance but could not say if there was a street lamp lighting in the vicinity up to 12 midnight.

Justice J. P. Feran—He must be pretty well off if he can drive a lorry to a dance.

Castleconnell ICA birthday

Castleconnell Guild, I.C.A., held their first birthday party recently.

There was a large number of members present. Very Rev. Fr. Fogarty, P.P., Castleconnell; Rev. Pennafather and Mrs. Pennafather, Newport; Mrs. O'Riordan, Federation President, and members of the local G.A.A. and Gun Club were also present. Mrs. Fitzpatrick, President, welcomed the visitors.

At the annual meeting held recently the following officers and committee were elected for the coming year: President, Mrs. Fitzpatrick; Vice-President, Mrs. Connors; Treasurer, Miss B. Hartigan; Secretary, Miss M. O'Carroll. Committee—Mrs. Cox, Mrs. O'Gorman, Mrs. Shanahan, Mrs. Delaney, Miss A. Ryan, Miss J. Madden. An Grianan representative, Miss J. McCabe.

Youth Takes a Hand—Kevin Flanagan on clarinet; Ben Whelan on cornet, and Stephen Halpin also on cornet.

Good year for Macra in Croom

MR. Michael O'Regan (A presided at the fift annual meeting of the Croom District branch of Macra Feirme, which was held at C on Friday night, Feb. 22 las

There was a very good at ance and the chairman ba particular welcome for the members who were there fo first time. He appealed to members to patronise the club all its functions as much as sible and exhorted them to part in the public speaking debates, which are of much e tional benefit, particularly to younger members.

In conclusion, Mr. O'R thanked the officers and comm for the interest they had s throughout the year; Mr. H for the use of the hall and Jack Carroll for the use of premises for the annual field He had a special word of th for Mr. Pat Duggan, headm of Croom Vocational School, Mr. Joseph O'Sullivan, the taker.

The hon. treasurer, Mr. Looby, presented his report finance, which showed the cl a very healthy position.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. J. Kelly, the hon. secre presented his report on the ious activities of the branch fo year and said it was one of progress. There were 21 mee and the attendance was exce Some members competed in tion time, public speaking debating competitions, with ca results. He requested greater terest in these events, as they of a highly educational n ar

In conclusion, Mr. Kelly tha all club officers and all those contributed in any way to success of the club during year.

This and the treasurer's re were unanimously adopted.

OFFICERS

The following officers were el to conduct the affairs of this gressive club for the coming —President, Mr. William Cas vice-president, Mr. James Kenn chairman, Mr. Mark O'Shea; chairman, Mr. Thomas Sto hon. secretary, Mr. James K assistants, Miss Nuala Moloney Miss Anne Noonan; hon. treas Mr. Denis Murphy. Committ Pat O'Connor, Michael O'Re Jim Noonan, and the ladies on committee are: K. Kennedy Carey, M. Kelly and K. McMa

Kilfinane man fined for larceny

A 20-year-old man, who stated by his solicitor as one had to live a lonely life, appe at Kilmallock Court on charges. He was Anthony O'S Cush, Kilfinane, and he charged with breaking and en ing the garage of Mrs. Bgt. (nery, Kilmurry, Kilfinane, stealing a lady's bicycle, value with on February 25 stea another pedal bicycle at Mos town, Kilfinane, value £7, breaking and entering the ga of James Ryan, Kilfinane with malicious damage to a of the dwellinghouse of Ja Ryan to the extent of £1.

Defendant, who was represe by Mr. W. A. Lee, solr., plea guilty to all charges.

Supt. M. Dolan, who prosecu said that defendant's parents other members of his family w living in England. He came h last October and was hang around Kilfinane since. He drink taken on these occasi There was nothing prev against him.

Mr. Lee said that the defend was in employment in Eng for some time. He was obl to come from England on acc of the smog, because he suff from his chest. He suffered injury to his head and, with t two disabilities, he has had to this lonely life outside Kilfin When this asthma comes at he gets a violent headache he gives way to drink. He mitted the offences and ap gised for what he had done bicycles had been recovered the Gardaí and no damage been done to them. The wea had new improved and he co go back to England. The ho be sold, in near Kilfinane his parents' cottage and he live alone there.

The Justice imposed a fine £1 on each of the charges inv ing the bicycles and ordered to pay £1 compensation on malicious charge and applied Probation Act on that charge on the remaining one.