

THE EFFECTS of the National recession in the tourist industry have been less apparent within the Mid-Western Region due to the wonderful co-ordination of effort to encourage visitors here, states Mr. Michael Vaughan, chairman, Shannonside Tourism Organisation, in the annual report for the year ended, April 5, 1972.

The enquiries and bed-nights for the period May to September, 1972 showed a decrease: enquiries were down from 142,700 to 97,400 and bednights 28,000 to 23,000.

Mr. Vaughan referred to the fact that the main reason for this small success was due to the wonderful co-ordination of effort to encourage visitors and to develop the amenities and facilities necessary for the enjoyment of a holiday here made by our own Staff, SFADCO, Local Authorities and County and Regional Development Organisations.

Not least by the dedicated work of all those in the private sector or front line of tourism who were not dismayed by the task but answered with enthusiasm the challenges that the year brought. The success of the National Tourism Industry will, without doubt, be by the combined efforts of the Regional and National Boards aided and advised by the Organisations I have mentioned.

Improvements

The Report states that despite the decrease in the amount of business handled by the tourist information offices, the Board felt that this was a year in which they should work particularly hard to improve the service offered to our visitors as follows:—

(1) We expanded on the normal annual familiarisation course this year and in addition we introduced a Personality Development Course which all our permanent tourist office staff attended.

(2) A new tourist office uniform was designed by our own staff and was tailored within the Region.

The Mid-Western Board, according to the Report, stress that three things in particular need to be highlighted in the new National Industry Plan being prepared by Bord Fáilte:

(1) The need for a co-ordinated National effort in tourism.

(2) The need in the immediate future to maintain a balance be-

tween Development and Marketing activities.

(3) The need to spell out clearly the role of the Regions and to co-ordinate Bord Fáilte and Regional activities so that they co-operate together at maximum efficiency.

Last year a new Marketing section was set up by Shannonside and one of the immediate things to be done in the immediate future is the need to develop businesses from new sources in Europe to counteract the fall-off in the British market particularly.

New promotion

The major new promotion during the year centred around a new Charter Series from Paris to Shannon. The series operated this year at 83 per cent of its full capacity bringing in 908 visitors to the Region and the West and South West.

The Organisation carried out various promotions in the French, Swedish and Belgium markets, and promoted angling in the region.

Shannonside spent a further £10,500 on the development of rural accommodation and rural amenities.

Invested

Some £20,000 was invested in the further development of Rent-An Irish Cottage Village in Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. New developments were carried out at Lisdoonvarna and Kilkree. Shannonside give financial assistance to festivals and special events such as Limerick Festival of Theatre, 1972, Merriman Summer School, Spanish Point Holiday Festival, Felle na Maighé, Ennis Harvest Festival, Felle na nGael, Gala Angling Week, Limerick International Band Competition, and European Surfing Championships at Lahinch.

The late Dave Whelan

Mr. Dave Whelan, one of Ireland's great oarsmen of former days, has died at his residence, 18 Barrington Street, Limerick. His last public appearance in the realm of rowing at Athlunkard Boat Club—the club which won him fame—in September, 1971, when with another famous sporting colleague, Liam Forde, he was guest of honour at a function to honour the club's great oarsmen. Dave had won the 1923 I.A.R.U. senior eight and Liam the 1913 I.A.R.U. senior eight, and they were the sole surviving members of their respective crews.

Dave Whelan began his short but spectacular career in rowing in 1920 with St. Michael's, where he got his place in an under-age four. The club had no junior crews the following year, so he moved to Athlunkard and subsequently to senior ranks with the championship eight.

Winnings

In 1923 his list of winnings included, in addition to the Senior Union Cup, the Leander Ship, the Shannon Rowing Club Challenge Cup and the Ladies' Plate.

He took up the sport with Shannon Rowing Club in 1924, winning all the trophies of the previous year with the exception of the Union Cup. The S.R.C.



Dave Whelan, the last surviving member of Athlunkard Boat Club's senior eight's championship of Ireland winning crew of 1923, pictured with the trophy at a club re-union.

crew was remarkable in that it had three sets of brothers—George and Kevin O'Brien, Kevin and Vincent Quin, Billy and Dave Whelan. The other members were Jack Gleazer (stk.), Leo O'Grady and Frank O'Brien.

Patriot

Dave's father, Bill Whelan, was a Fenian and a Labour member of the old Limerick Corporation. Dave himself joined the Fianna in 1912 when the movement was under the direction of such national figures as Countess Markievicz, Sean Heuston and Bulmer Hobson, and became a member of the Volunteers on their inauguration in 1915. Up to the time of the Truce he helped in the making of munitions for the Volunteers at Killeogue, Co. Limerick.

The late Mr. Whelan carried on an extensive newsagency business in Upper William Street.

Dave's brothers, the late Paddy and Willie Whelan, also served with the Fianna and the Volunteers. Willie later joined the Cistercian Order and ministered in Roscrea until his death.

Sympathy

Sincere sympathy is extended to the late Mr. Whelan's wife, Mrs. Irene Whelan, and to his son, Billy, and sister, Celia, in their bereavement.

There will be Requiem Mass for the repose of the late Mr. Whelan in St. Michael's Church tomorrow (Tuesday) at 11 o'clock. Funeral immediately afterwards to Mount St. Laurence Cemetery. —R.N.

At the College Players Press conference held to announce a Gunman", now showing in the Confraternity Theatre unit Left to right: Ray Morrissey, Triona Finucane, Elsie O'D Brennan, producer. The Press conference was held at the O'Connell Street, Limerick.

'Shadow of a Gunman'

—COMIC, TRAGIC, SIGNIFICANT

IF FOR NO OTHER reason than that Ireland is witnessing a period of political travail, the staging of "Shadow of a Gunman" is particularly appropriate at this time.

And it was very well received, and enjoyed with some mirth, when it was presented to a Limerick audience at last night's opening.

Were it not for the fact that everybody knows that the play treats of the Black-and-Tan period, one could be forgiven for concluding that it had a particular significance for this time.

It is, in short, one of these timeless plays which are the hallmark of Sean O'Casey.

Directed on this occasion by Seamus Brennan, the play is being staged nightly by the College Players in the Confraternity Theatre. Its current run, the first for some time here, will see its final curtain on Sunday night next.

Typical

The play treats of the lives of a typical group of Irish people, one evening in 1920 and is set in a tenement in Hilljoy Square in Dublin.

Search and arrest raids are a frequent feature and people live in constant fear of death or getting accidentally "involved."

To bring the play into the present day, a lovely recorded version of "We Shall Overcome" by the Sisters of the Cross is played before the opening.

Indeed it could be said that "Shadow of a Gunman" is as fresh in meaning for all of us today as it was when it opened at the Abbey Theatre in 1923.

It should have a particular appeal to young people, who, incidentally, made up the large part of the opening night's audience.

Not provocative

The staging of "Shadow of a Gunman" at this time is not a provocative thing; it is, rather, an evocative play which should help many to see today's troubles in their proper human context.

The scene opens in the tenement, where two men are lodging—a poet, well played by Ger Fulham, and a bed-dossing "character", which is portrayed with much spirit by John Butler.

Their standing with the landlord is demonstrated by the fact that no bills have been paid for weeks and they are under threat of the bailiff—the part of the landlord is executed by Jim O'Riordan with the panache which is so characteristic of the College Players.

The play comes into its own with the second act, where much of the comedy and the action is concentrated.

Tragedy

The hilarity is cut short when a girl, finely played by Triona Finucane, is shot dead after being arrested in the possession of a suitcase of Mills bombs.

The value of the play is that each and every member of the audience may search through the cast to find the kind of individual he is.

In the scene may be found the plain brain-washed in Celtic folklore, the innocent, the poetic, the patriotic, the crafty, the crawl-thumpers, the pretentious who weaken when the hour comes, and the humble who become heroes without ever expecting it.

It was a pleasure to witness the performance of Andy Butler, as the good friend and neighbour, Mr Gallagher.

And to Paul O'Neill must go some praise for his acting of the part of Mr. Maguire, and to Elsie O'Donovan, who plays the neighbourly Mrs. Henderson.

A brief, but significant, part fell to Francis Kelly, who dressed as the Auxiliary to give the audience much satisfaction with the way he put over a most difficult part.

Atmosphere

One striking feature of the performance was the atmosphere carefully engendered by the design of the set, which was prepared and executed by director Seamus Brennan.

Stage director is Gabrielle Wallace, assisted by Nuala O'Riordan, Betty McDonagh and Claire Earlie; the sound effects (which gave everybody a jump) were by Joe Reddin; the P.R.O. was Mrs. Ita Fitzgibbon and Manager was Mrs. Zena Gilbourne. (P.M.)

Minister praises Limerick co

GLORIOUS TRIBUTES were of the Mary Immaculate on the excellent preparation, dents, by the Minister for I Faulkner, T.D. on Saturday 1

The Minister said in Limerick that when Ireland enters the E.E.C. next month we should not lose our national identity. In Europe we will come under the influence of other cultures and languages but that will only enrich our own.

The Minister presented diplomas to 144 new teachers. Mr. Faulkner told the teachers that they were taking on a very responsible task.

In getting best results from their pupils they should not forget the important role of parents with whom they should keep in close contact. The Minister said that the Department now had ten teacher centres throughout the country.

Special certificates for excellence in teaching were presented to a number of Munster students. They included Mary Forde, Kanturk; B. O'Sullivan, Ballylanders, Malread Ni Colleáin, Corbally, Limerick; Cait Numan, Dromcollogher; Joan Moloney, Golden, Co. Tipperary; Eilish Considine, Ennis; Mary Burke, Newcastle West.

Special prizes for excellent in the following subjects:— Religion—Patrick Kavanagh, Taghmon, Co. Wexford. Teaching Malread Ni Colleáin, Corbally, Limerick. Irish—Marion Walsh, Claremorris. English—Teresa Rafferty, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway; Nellie Ryan, Kilmnane, Co. Limerick. Music—Eanna Ni Ceallaigh, Buttevant. Philosophy—M. Ni Colleáin. French—Mary Bevan, Shinnone, Co. Offaly. Latin—Geraldine Noonan, Moyvane, Co. Kerry. History—David O'Keefe, Mavournean Park Limerick.

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