

# Athlunkard Boat Club's unique and historic gates

**AT LEAST** a century old, the unique ornamental wrought iron gates gracing the entrance to Athlunkard Boat Club, have recently been refurbished.

Originally part of a set that stood at the entrance to Todds Bow in William Street, they were dismantled towards the end of the last century. Half of this set were procured in the month of April, 1901, by a Mr. Archibald Murray of William Todd & Co. and duly presented to the then fledgling Parish rowing club.

The other section of these unique gates are also happily still in existence and can be seen at the entrance to the residence of the Gubbins family in Castleconnell.

## Craftmanship

Cast towards the end of the last century in the foundry works of Bethells in Watergate — long since demolished — the gates have been the subject of much admiration down the years and are a wonderful tribute to the skill of local blacksmiths of that era.

While the gates are cast in iron, the adorning motifs are made of copper and consist of miniature replicas of the Treaty Stone, the Coat of Arms of Limerick, round tower, spinning wheel, Maid of Erin, a harp, and a figure of Henry Grattan. As both gates are identical, all these replicas are duplicated.

## Stolen

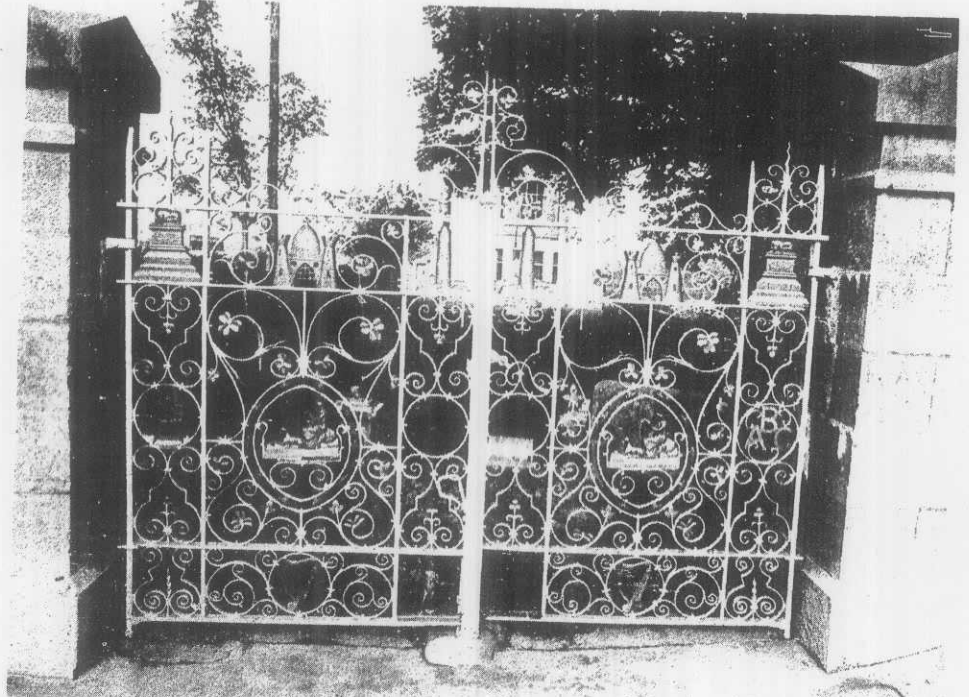
Back in the 1930's the spinning wheel replica on the right hand gate at Athlunkard was stolen and deemed irretrievably lost. The late Dan O'Connor, a life-long member of the club (A.B.C) cast in iron in the Shannon Foundry and put in place of the stolen spinning wheel. This can clearly be seen in photograph.

## Coincidence

By a remarkable coincidence, five years ago David Hollywood of St. Mary's Park Hollywood in the Shannon near King John's Castle when he hooked a copper object from the bottom of the river in the shape of a spinning wheel. After refurbishing, he had a picture taken of the wheel which was published in the "Leader" and was at once recognised by Christy Kiely of Mary Street as the long lost replica missing from Athlunkard's gates. It had lain in the river for almost half a century. David consequently kindly returned the motif to the club and was it put back in its original position.

## Stolen again

Lightning never strikes twice, they say, but is hardly true in the case of the replica of the afore-mentioned spinning wheel. It was stolen again recently when the bolt holding it in place was unscrewed. A



Athlunkard Boat Club's unique cast-iron gates which in the last century stood at the entrance to Todds Bow in William Street.

strong appeal is made to those responsible for its safe return. It is of little use, monetary or otherwise, to anyone except in its place of adornment on the gates.

## Refurbished

The gates, which were showing signs of their age, have been recently expertly refurbished by Paddy McNamara, a former oarsman with Athlunkard, and tastefully painted by

Christy Kiely, who could well be described as custodian of this unique work of art.

Another of Athlunkard's unique features, the all concrete statue of an oarsman, cast in the 1920's by the late Stan Quinn, and modelled for by the late Jimmy Quinlivan, a senior champion oarsman in 1923 with the club, is also maintained and painted by Christy Kiely.

## NATIONAL TREE WEEK

INDUSTRIALISTS in the Limerick area with a little bit of space are being asked to recognise National Tree Week by planting a tree next month.

National Tree Week is from March 9th to 16th, and Limerick Corporation intend playing a full part.

Trees are to be planted in different schools and in a number of public areas while it is hoped that local firms will also join and plant.

At a recent Cultural and Environmental Meeting Parks Superintendent Mr. Des Murphy told Alderman Tim Leddin that the standard tree cost between £5 and £10. If you

had to add stakes and tree guards another £20 would have to be added.

Earlier he stated that there was no particular policy regarding planting of trees and that they did not plant them in one area in preference to another.

### SUCCESS

However in some areas they had found one hundred per cent vandalism while they had 90 per cent success in others.

"But if an area is vandalised it does not mean we will not go back there."

"I think that you are doing an excellent job and are improving the image of the city," said Alderman Leddin.

## Protect facade

THE Mid-Western Health Board have been warned not to make a "dog's ear" out of the elegant stone facade of their offices in Catherine Street, in their efforts to facilitate wheelchair bound visitors' by stone mason Ald. Jim Kemmy.

vide access for wheelchair bound people to the board's office but requested officials. "not to make a dog's ear out of it."

Cllr. Win Harrington...who made the original proposal that access be provided to the main health board building in the region, said that she was afraid of any change which might damage the facade and



David Hollywood pictured in 1981 with the replica of the spinning wheel which he fished out of the Shannon. It had lain in the river for almost half a century following its larceny from the gates of Athlunkard.

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On Wednesday, 26th February, from 11.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

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