

Promoting local talent: Gigtown organisers at Limerick Boatclub, Ross O'Donoghue and Padraig Butler

(LL)

Pushing the boat out for local talent

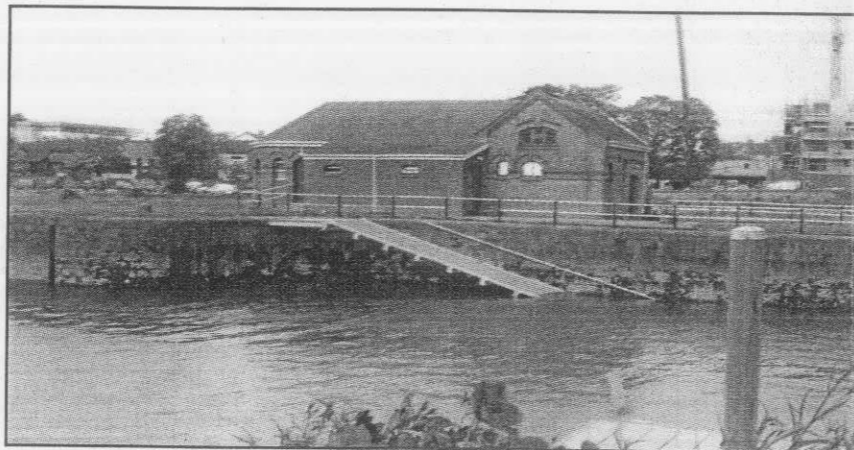
By FRANK O'CONNOR

AN opportunity to showcase home-grown musical talent and a desire to offer an alternative entertainment experience for the punters were just some of the reasons behind two Limerickmen's decision to turn Limerick Boatclub on Sarsfield Bridge in to perhaps one of the city's most interesting and unusual live music venues.

"We really believed we could change people's opinions of the Boatclub from potential to professional," said Ross O'Donoghue, one half of the Gigtown promotion team.

"It is one of the most unique venues in Ireland with that backdrop of the Shannon and the skyline and everyone who comes down is always up for a goodtime," he said.

The story began when the other half of the part-



Limerick Boatclub: now one of the city's most exciting venues

(LL)

Boatclub.

A lot of hard work saw the building change from a room into a bar, something which Ross has immense respect for.

"It's mad, he still has to work two days a week in a shop but at the weekends he runs the Boatclub place as professionally as any other bar in town. The candles are lit and the vibe is just amazing. But he needed someone to help with the missing ingredient; punters.

"I'm just finishing a media degree up in Mary I

friends and it just made sense to be the one to help him turn the place from a bar into a venue," said Ross.

He had experience of seeing some of Ireland's finest acts play the venue in the past, and this was one of the factors that led to him establishing the Gigtown promotional company.

"I set up Gigtown Music. I tracked down the best bands in Limerick and said: 'here's the place to launch your album, dvd, private yacht or

your debut headliner here'."

And what of the name Gigtown—it sounds a little like a well-known play produced by Island Theatre Company a few years ago?

"Well, the name for our little promotional organisation comes from the fact that Limerick was once the home of ham. We just thought that Gigtown was a much more appropriate name for modern Limerick than Pigtown," said Ross.

There are many differ-

it differently.

"We genuinely don't see ourselves in competition with other venues. Obviously we need to keep our heads above water, but if there were 20 venues in Limerick we'd still be trying to promote local talent and stop some of the bigger acts from overlooking Limerick altogether," he said.

"There's real consensus that Limerick is only just behind Cork and Dublin for its activity, but the opportunities aren't there for some acts. We're working on changing that," he said.

The Gigtown crew also bring in outside promoters who want to use the venue to promote the acts they are bringing in to the city.

Ross feels that a number of circumstances have led to promoters seeking an alternative space within the city, sometimes dictated by the lack of choice that some of the more established venues give their clientele.

"Limerick people have more money and less time to spend it than ever. Some people have responded to that by offering sanitised weekend experiences that

WWW.VOLVOCARS.IE

SO MUCH, FOR SO LITTLE

SELECT LEATHER UPHOLSTERY

17" ZAURAK ALLOYS

RAIN SENSOR

WOOD EFFECT TRIM

CRUISE CONTROL

HIGH PERFORMANCE SOUND AUDIO SYSTEM

AUTO-DIM REAR VIEW MIRROR



THE VOLVO V50 SE FROM ONLY €32,400*

ENJOY A LEVEL OF LUXURY NOT NORMALLY FOUND IN A CAR AT THIS PRICE. CHOOSE THE VOLVO V50 SE AND SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE KIND OF CREATURE COMFORTS THAT MAKE EVERY DRIVE A PLEASURE. QUITE SIMPLY, NOTHING ON THE MARKET IN ITS CLASS COMPARES TO THE VOLVO V50 SE. EXPERIENCE THE VOLVO V50 SE AT YOUR LOCAL DEALER, CALL 1800 246 135 FOR MORE DETAILS OR GO ONLINE AT VOLVOCARS.IE

FUEL CONSUMPTION (L/100KM) FOR THE VOLVO V50 SE RANGE: URBAN 6.3 - 13.9; EXTRA URBAN 4.3 - 7.1; COMBINED 5.0 - 9.6 WITH 132 - 229/KM OF CO₂ EMISSIONS. CAR FEATURED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

*Delivery and related charges not included.

Volvo Car Ireland, Killakee House, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: 01 4621122 Fax: 01 4621137



ELM MOTORS

ENNIS ROAD, LIMERICK. TEL: 061 451577

TRADERS EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS AND INCREASE YOUR SALES

MID WEST MODERN HOMES & BUILDING EXHIBITION

BOOK YOUR SPACE NOW AND GET IN THE FOOR BEFORE YOUR COMPETITORS

LIMERICK RACECOURSE 15th 16th & 17th SEPTEMBER

Fri: 6pm-10pm . Sat and Sun: 12noon-6pm

MODERN HOMES EXHIBITIONS: A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL YOUR ENTIRE MARKETPLACE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS AND THE BUSINESS COMES TO YOU - A WINDOW TO OPPORTUNITY.

Bear in mind the earlier you book the wider the choice and availability



Show Enquiries: Phone: 058 48633 . Fax: 058 48648 . www.modernhomes.ie

unique venues in Ireland with that backdrop of the Shannon and the skyline and everyone who comes down is always up for a goodtime," he said.

The story began when the other half of the partnership, Padraig Butler, left his job in a bank to take out a management contract with Limerick

in town. The candles are lit and the vibe is just amazing. But he needed someone to help with the missing ingredient; punters.

"I'm just finishing a media degree up in Mary I where I worked as student campaigns officer, student health promoter and tour manager. We're best

Gigtown promotional company.

"I set up Gigtown Music. I tracked down the best bands in Limerick and said: 'here's the place to launch your album, dvd, private yacht or whatever'. I tracked down bands who were rehearsing but not gigging yet and said: 'you deserve

that Limerick was once the home of ham. We just thought that Gigtown was a much more appropriate name for modern Limerick than Pigtown," said Ross.

There are many different established venues in Limerick, and they face stiff competition week, week out, but Ross views

established venues give their clientele.

"Limerick people have more money and less time to spend it than ever. Some people have responded to that by offering sanitised weekend experiences that don't differ much from week to week.

"It's the same cover bands and the same DJ's in almost every venue. Anything that stands out from that has something to offer. Obviously promoters are tapping into that for the benefit of culture lovers," he said.

One such promoter is Shane Mac Curtain, from the Cheebah crew, who run the increasingly popular Roots, a monthly reggae night.

Mr Mac Curtain, who has been involved with the music scene in Limerick for over 10 years outlined the uniqueness of the venue, and Gigtown's enthusiasm as being decisive factors in his decision to run nights there.

"We are excited by the diversity of music on offer there—in any given week you could hear anything from Finnish guitar music to Japanese hardcore. We now offer a Jamaican reggae night. There is a feeling that this isn't a processed venue, the Limerick crowd have made it very much their own," he said.

However, Ross feels that more people in the city need to try different venues when viewing live music.

"The groundswell of support for what we've been trying to do has been huge but we do wish there was more willingness to experiment out there. Coldplay may never gig in the Boatclub, but live original music is a unique experience. It's something you just can't download.

"We want people to realise how rewarding it can be to check out an unsigned act on a Thursday or a Sunday and not just make a night of it during the weekend," said Ross.

The Gigtown crew view Limerick as an ideal place to launch future events as Ross reveals plans for open air shows, and bringing more international acts to the city.

"Limerick is an amazing place to live in at the moment. A lot of young motivated people are really making a difference to culture, our social scene and its image.

"We want to see ourselves along side these guys flying the flag for independent music in the Mid-West.

"At some stage we also want to bring some international scale events to Limerick city centre. It's about time really.

"We're investigating a number of open air sites which could stage the highlight of the Limerick event calendar. Limerick deserves it," he said.

AIB Smart Home Insurance

Call

1850 27 26 25

for a great
deal on
home insurance

Be sure you've got the best deal.

We can tailor your home insurance to cover you for the things that matter most:

- Contents cover from as little as €12.95 per month
- Up to 20% No Claims discount
- Spread your payments over 12 months at no extra cost

For a competitive quote, call 1850 27 26 25 or
click on www.aib.ie/homeinsurance

be with



Terms and conditions apply. AIB Insurance Services Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. AIB Insurance Services Ltd. is a Multi Agency Intermediary regulated by the Financial Regulator.