

## Local schools tops in science

TWENTY-eight Limerick primary schools will receive an Award of Science Excellence this year as part of the Discover Primary Science programme. The awards programme, organised by Discover Science & Engineering, the Government's national science promotion programme, acknowledges the efforts of primary school children and teachers who have demonstrated an increased knowledge of science and its many applications.

The Limerick schools are: Croagh NS, Feenagh NS, St John's Girls' and Infant Boys' National School, St. Patrick's, Bruree, Our Lady's Abbey, Rathkeale No. 2 National School, Knocknasna National School, Scoil Naisiunta Coincear, Scoil An Spioraid Naomh, St. Patrick's Boys NS, St. Patrick's Girls NS, Scoil na mBráithre, Shountrade National School, Mountcollins NS, Courtenay School, Castleconnell NS, Scoil Naomh Mhuire, Ballynahill, Scoil Mhuire, Broadford, Scoil Mhathair Dé, Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann, St. Brigid's NS, Our Lady Of Lourdes NS, St. Mary's Boys NSI, Dromtrasna NS, Ahane NS, Monaleen NS, Scoil Chríost An Sianaitheoir, Scoil Chaitríona and Bearna NS.

## Advocacy service

BALLYHOURA Advocacy Service will have their official launch on Wednesday, June 17, 2.30 - 4.30pm in the Charleville Park Hotel.

The service is available to adults with disabilities living in East/South Limerick and North East Cork. It will be held in co-operation with the Equality Authority who will be displaying an exhibition titled 'Giving Stereotyping the Boot'.

The aim of the exhibition is to highlight the positive impact of diversity and the negative impact of discrimination. This event is open to the public contact Mary on 087 2499090/ 063 30532.

## Letter to editor:

## Tracing roots

Two years ago I made a return to my 'roots' and made a visit to the house where my father was land steward, and where I was born - Kilfrush, Co. Limerick.

Following my father's death there in 1942, my mother decided to return to Scotland, to the land of her birth, taking four siblings and myself with her. I had hoped that I would be able to trace some of my father's relatives, as I am the last surviving member of that branch of the McCann family.

I know there were members of my family still living in the Drogheda area about 20 years ago. In fact one of them, Leila, visited Oban, where I then lived. I have since lost contact with her.

According to notes by my late mother, William Henry (Harry) McCann was born on June 18, 1892, in Ballindine, but having enquired through the Office of the Registrar General, no such trace can be found. His mother's maiden name was Louisa Carter.

I have returned on two more occasions to see if I can find any trace of relatives, without any luck. I have also drawn a blank on Ancestry.com. If anyone reading this can shed any light on this would they please email me at david.mccann24@btopenworld.com

## Waxing for Calcutta

HOPE Foundation Charity will host a fundraiser on Friday June 12 in Ray McMahon's pub in Ardnacrusha at 8.30pm.

Money raised at the event will be used to set up HOPE homes which provide shelter for children on the streets of Calcutta that are exposed to child labour, child prostitution and organ donation.

This event will feature a sponsored leg wax as well as beard shaves, one man in particular is parting with his beard after 30 years to raise much needed funds for the charity.

There is also a monster raffle and organisers are still seeking individuals and businesses to sponsor prizes.

# Byrne joins Clancy and O'Callaghan in honours list

by Marie Hobbins  
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## Dismissed by Post Office in 1919 after attending funeral of Limerick Volunteer

FOR many Limerick people and visitors to the city taking a stroll along Clancy Strand, there will be curiosity about the name of the newly opened riverside park, directly overlooking Curragower Falls and located at the end of the newly built boardwalk, running along the river edge from the Treaty Stone.

At the recent official opening of the park, the former mayor and noted local historian, Frank Prendergast, gave an insightful discourse on the momentous events that precipitated the young Limerick man, Robert Byrne into the course of Limerick's history. It is after this idealistic city man that the new park is named.

"It began with his dismissal by the Post Office authorities in Limerick in January 1919, for attending the funeral of the Limerick Volunteer, John Daly, who, as adjutant of the Second Brigade of the IRA in Limerick, was a delegate of the Post Office Workers Union to the Council of Trade Unions.

"He was arrested on January 13, 1919, and sentenced to a year in prison for the possession of a revolver and ammunition but he organised a campaign of disobedience there in support of his claim for political status for himself and those under his command. He went on hunger strike and was moved to the City Home, now St Camillus Hospital, where his condition was described as being very weak".

Robert Byrne met his death when on Sunday, April 6, IRA volunteers attempted to rescue him but he was fatally wounded in the ensuing gun battle and died later that day in John Ryan's cottage in Meelick.

Also fatally wounded in the affray was Constable Martin O'Brien of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), from Caherconlish, who was guarding Byrne.

Over 10,000 people attended the funeral in St John's Cathedral of Robert Byrne. Among the attendance was his celebrated cousin, Alfie Byrne, MP and TD and five times Lord Mayor of Dublin.

"In a panic response the British authorities proclaimed martial law under the Defence of the Realm Act, which meant that city workers had to apply for a permit to go to work, notably the women and girls of Thomondgate who worked in Cleeve's Condensed Milk Company of Ireland, at Lansdowne," informs Mr Prendergast, who said the workers there voted to go on strike the following Monday, April 14.

"The RIC blamed Sinn Féin for the strike and Batty Stack, who worked in Cleeves, was a member of the IRA squad who tried to rescue Bobby Byrne - the Trades Council met the following Sunday, which was Palm



The Mayor of Limerick Cllr. John Gilligan officially opened the restored Clancy's Strand in Limerick City. The restoration of Clancy's Strand is a collaborative project, administered by Limerick City Council, with a grant of €1.6 million secured by Shannon Development towards the €2.1 million overall cost of the project. The grant was secured under the NDP 2007 - 2013 Tourism Infrastructure Fund which is also part of the Failte Ireland and Shannon Development Tourism Product Development Strategies. Pictured from Left at the Robert Byrne Park were: John Gilligan, Mayor of Limerick, Tom Mackey, City Manager, John Crowe, Shannon Development and Eoghan Prendergast, Shannon Development.

Sunday and declared a general strike throughout the city, in protest at the declaration of martial law. It was an unanimous decision by the 35 affiliated unions and within two hours, the city's walls were covered by the strike notice".

Led by John Cronin, a carpenter, James Casey, a printer and James Carr, an engineering worker, the strike committee elected sub committees to deal with propaganda, finance, food and vigilance and what turned the strike into a major political embarrassment for the British Government, who saw it as a threat

Limerick Soviet, a term then fashionable throughout Europe, after the Russian Revolution in 1917. The author and former RTE correspondent in Brussels, Liam Cahill, recounts details of the strike in his classic work, Forgotten Revolution - Limerick Soviet 1919, A Threat to British Power in Ireland".

"Each evening, the strike propaganda committee held a press briefing for the journalists who now gave the Soviet their undivided attention which was generally sympathetic to the strikers, and among them was a big American delegation, one of

published their own newspaper.

They attracted worldwide publicity. However, the strike ended after 10 days, due mainly to the divisions between the Trades Council and the Irish Trade Union Congress who stated that their constitution did not allow them to call a national strike.

"The Trades Council also knew from their meetings in Dublin that they could not rely on Sinn Féin, the IRA or the Dail for support, and there was also opposition to the strike from the head office of the National Union of Railwaymen in London, whose support was crucial," observes Mr Prendergast.

"It was also believed that the Unionist workers in Northern Ireland would do likewise and the appeal by the Mayor of Limerick, Alphonsus O'Mara and the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Dr Halinan, to the Trades Council, to call off the strike, also had its effect".

What was the high point in the almost 200-year history of the Limerick Trades and Labour Council, ended on April 24, when a strike committee proclamation called for a full resumption of work.

The Irish Times editorial of April 23, 1919, described it as "a very bold and candid experiment in Irish syndicalism (movement among industrial workers to transfer means of production and distribution from their owners to unions of workers).

Mr Prendergast, who is a former president of Limerick Trades Council, says that, whether socialist or nationalist in its inspiration, 90 years after the Limerick Soviet, "as the Limerick Trades Council approaches its bicentenary in 2010, it can look back with legitimate pride on an unrivalled heritage of service to the city of Limerick and its people".

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to security, was the fortuitous presence in Limerick of an international press corps of journalists, photographers and 20 newsreel photographers.

"They had come here to record an attempt by Major Wood of the Royal Flying Corps to fly the Atlantic Westward - the flight was to start from the 70-acre airfield at Bawnmore and the London Daily Mail had offered a prize of 10,000 euro and the State Express Gazette Company, another 2,000 guineas, for a successful crossing, but as it happened the flight never took place because Major Wood had to ditch his plane, The Shamrock, off the coast of Anglesea on his way to Limerick".

Journalists from all over the world were now trapped in Limerick by the strike, which was being called the

whom, Mr Morris of the Associated Press of America, had his reports syndicated to 750 US newspapers - they would file their copy through the US cable station at Valentia Island, thereby loading the British censor," reveals Mr Prendergast.

"When an English newsagency claimed that the cables were being scrutinised by the strike committee and that any journalist who told the truth was a marked man, this was refuted immediately in a letter to the Limerick Postmaster by the special correspondents of the Daily News, Daily Express, Daily Chronicle, Manchester Guardian and Daily Mail".

For two weeks, the people of Limerick, under the direction of the Trades Council, ran the city's affairs - they organised food and fuel supplies, issued their own currency and