



Cannock's clock



For almost a century Cannock's Clock had been a central Limerick landmark. For successive generations the clock had been an enduring symbol of security and permanence in a changing world.

The sight of the clock tower, high above the eastern end of O'Connell Street, gave re-assurance and confidence in troubled times; its familiar chimes ringing out over the city brought the tidings of time to citizens young and old.

Earlier this year the replacement of the city's best known clock by a brash, brightly coloured Disneyland-type timepiece caused widespread concern, especially among the older folk.

While the clock tower remains much the same in shape and size, the loss of the stately, old clock and its distinctive chimes has robbed the centre of Limerick of one of its main attractions.

In 1888, when building work began on an extension to Cannock's store, the clock tower was also added. The clock soon became the shop's crowning glory. It was known as a Westminster chime clock, and its five bells were designed to ring out every fifteen minutes, in addition to striking the hours.

Despite its "Toytown" clock and the incongruous aluminium windows, however, it must be said that the appearance of the new red brick facade marks a welcome improvement on the previous frontage and brings a further advance in the standard of design of city centre building.

The take-over by Penney's brought to an end Cannock's 130 year old link with the city. But though the Westminster peals have been replaced by a less attractive sound, their melodious echoes will linger on, not only in the memory of their chimes, but also in the innocent words of the jingle chanted by successive generations of Limerick children to celebrate the "music" of the clock as it tolled out the carefree hours:

"Here comes a man,
What does he want?
He wants calico.
How many yards?
One (chime) ... two (chimes) ...".

