

**GLIMPSES OF
LIMERICK**
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City of the 15 charters and of the 17 gates

LIMERICK was granted its first Charter by Richard I, King of England, on December 19, 1197. This Charter gave power to the citizens to elect a Mayor and two bailiffs; it was not until 1898, when the Local Government Act became law, which gave householders the right to exercise their franchise at municipal elections.

The City Council at that time consisted of forty members—euphemistically styled Ali Baba and the 40 thieves—and was presided over by the then Mayor, John Daly, Fenian. It also marked the occasion when Labour ruled the roost—23 against 17 all others.

The other Charters are as follows:

Edward I—4/2/1291.

Edward I—6/5/1303.

Henry IV—25/6/1400.

Henry V—20/1/1413.

Henry VI—27/11/1423.

Henry VI—18/11/1429.

Henry VII—26/6/1489.

Edward VI—20/2/1551.

Elizabeth I—26/10/1575.

Elizabeth I—19/3/1582.

James I—3/3/1609.

“New Rules”—13/2/1671.

James II—1688.

“Limerick Regulation Act”—1823.

These Charters conveyed certain rights and privileges on the Corporation regarding the *proper government* of the city. They were empowered to draft appropriate by-laws and regulations, to hold lands, to collect certain monies, and to appoint Justices of the Peace. At no time, in legal phraseology, was authority given by Charter to the “powers that be” eight hundred years later (whether under foreign or native rule), to extract monies from an already overburdened citizenry, who are compelled, under threat, to pay: sums of £50 upwards water tax, refuse collection (at doorstep or official dump), motor car, or any other mechanically propelled vehicle, whether at front door or laneway. Such being the latest “edict” from that august body, Arus na

Cathrach to wit, always on the ball for its pound of flesh, in £s and pence—enough to baffle Shylock! Charter, bedamned! Why not repeal it!?

17 GATES

In the year 1760, Limerick ceased to be a fortified garrisoned city. Up to this period the walls boasted of 17 gates, including two sallyports.

The celebrated historian, Maurice Lenihan, in his History of Limerick, re-printed in 1978, or thereabouts, while mentioning the number of gates as 17, omitted No. 6, Abbey South Gate (to the rear of Mary Street Garda Station), which has been included on the list by this writer. The list now reads:

1. Thomond Gate. Connecting King John's Castle/Tollhouse.
2. Island Gate. Enclosing St. Munchin's Cemetery.
3. Sally Port Gate. In St. Mary's Convent grounds.
4. Little Island Gate. Lower Pastor Noster Street, Monks Walk.
5. Abbey North Gate. 1st Athlunkard Street crossing.
6. Abbey South Gate. Rear Mary Street Garda Station.
7. Fish Gate. Opposite Nurses Homes, Mary Street.
8. Baal's Bridge Gate (N./S.). Connecting two parishes.
9. East Water Gate. End of Lough Quay.
10. John's Gate (inner/outer). St. John's Hospital grounds.
11. Mungret Gate. On site of Round House, High Street.
12. West Water Gate. Car park, occupies fragments of wall.
13. Creagh Gate. Opposite slipway, Barrington's Mall.
14. Quay Lane Gate. St. Mary's parish end Matthew Bridge.
15. Bow Lane Gate. Near Female Prison (east side).
16. New Gate. Northside, near West Tower, King John's Castle.
17. Rear of King John's Castle Gate. Nicholas Street.

Note: This gives the number of gates in the English Town (St. Mary's parish) as 13, while St. John's and St. Michael's share 4.

(To be continued)