



Patricia Reddan, Rathbane, and Steve Costello, Kildimo, who were married in Janesboro church



# St Mary's town house: interesting history is recalled

ONE of the most ancient town houses in Limerick, situated in the grounds of St Mary's Church in Athlunkard Street, is a splendid example of a limestone building influenced by Palladian style with an unusual semi-ashlar finish on the front elevation.

The house dates from early 18th century (c 1710) and has remained unaltered for some 275 years, except for additions by the Arthur family to provide basic staff accommodation and stables for their houses.

The interesting history of the house, which is now used by many groups from St Mary's and outside, was recently recalled by Canon Brendan Connellan, who is maintaining an unbroken line of parish priests in St Mary's since the present parish was formed in the 1740's.

The origins of the house begin with one John Ingram, a Scottish Catholic who came to Ireland with King James' army, fighting against William of Orange. Reputedly, he lost one leg at the Battle of Aughrim, and then came to Limerick. After the siege of 1691

the Arthur family was placed over a narrow doorway into the gardens around the house (opposite present a sacristy door) and surmounted with a stone monument called the "Plumage of the Prince of Wales". It appears there was some connection between this trading family and Wales. The monument is now in the heritage room and the Arthur Crest is over the door of the Town House.

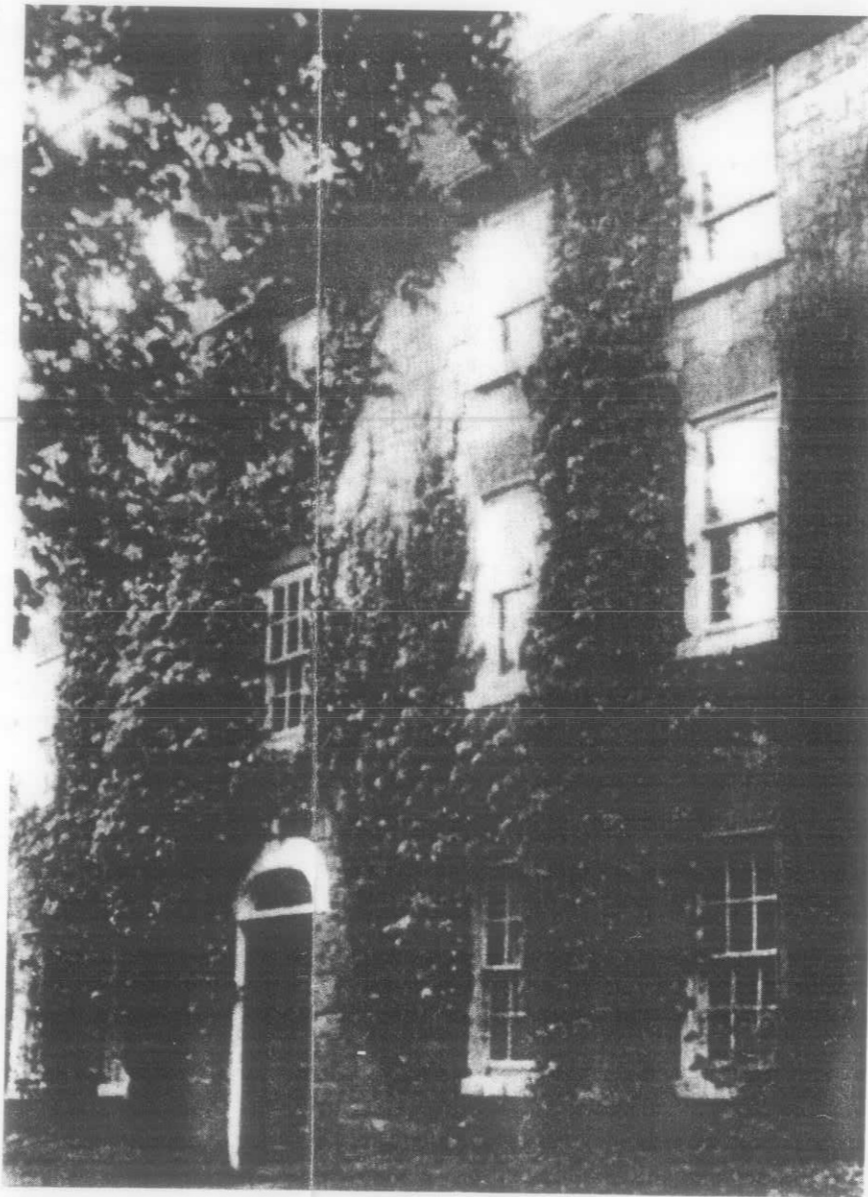
The next occupants in 1809 were Billy Carr's family, who had an excellent garden where his three daughters, renowned for their beauty, strolled around, often spied on by local lads looking over the wall. Some names of streets in the new city were called after them, e.g. Carr Street, Ellen Street.

Next occupant was James Kelly who also acquired the lands (Canon's field) and it was from him that Dr John Brahan PP, leased them in 1847. From then on, until 1982, it was St Mary's Presbytery.

The property was purchased by the Parish in 1930 and it is clear from the lease that the lands were for the upkeep of the parish priest of the time being. After Dr Brahan was transferred to Newcastle

CITY OF LIMERICK

DISTRICT LINK



St Mary's Town House, built c. 1710.

ST. PAUL'S

## Shame! Shame!

A FEW years ago there was a big job undertaken to make the river bank on the city-side of the Ballyclough River, more colloquially known as the Creek, traversible for walkers from Ballinacurra to the Greenfields/Rosbrien road.

The work went on, not continuously, over a period of two years or so. It was hard, labouring work and those who participated in the scheme, both male and female, deserved their wage.

Subsequently, it became a popular walk for many but especially for those who wished to exercise "man's best friend"—the dog. This fast became a bit of a nuisance especially if you were not nimble or wary enough to step over or avoid the dog's "evidence".

However, time moves on and everything changes. The walking route from Ballinacurra to Rosbrien has obviously lost its popularity for one reason or another. Slowly and inexorably it is being covered with growth from both sides and before long more it will be narrowed further as nature endeavours to re-capture ground lost.

It is now free of the dog's dirt which is proof positive that it is being traversed by fewer people walking their pets. The grass and weeds have grown to a good length. Thistle plants, some as high as a metre, are plentiful along the route. Ragwort, a weed unlawful under the Noxious Weeds Law of whatever year, and for which many a farmer was visited by gardai in bygone days, now grows prolifically along the bank of the river and along the pathway. What was once a grand walking route, and heavens knows there are few near the southern environs of the city, is being neglected and before long more it will be abandoned except by the small number of inveterate walkers.

What a shame, truly a great shame!

## What's in a name

WHAT is in a name is a

used to access the new motor way from Adare to Annacotty states "Rosbrien". This sign appears in two places on the road. Undoubtedly, many will disagree with the spelling on these signs for it was always spelled as follows, Rosbrien. On checking with a spokesman in the rates section of Limerick Corporation the latter spelling was confirmed. On further checks with the County Library, Dooradoyle, I learned that it could be spelled either way such as Ros or Ross and it was the Gaelic word for a grove or promontary. Therefore, it is probable that the name was derived from a grove that belonged to a Brien, hence Rosbrien.

However, with the new road sign we are given an extra "s", hence Rossbrien. Oh! well, maybe it is because it is funded by the EU.

## Comyns 'n goin's

IN last weekend's edition of the Limerick Leader it was reported that Thomas Comyns was near to securing a place on the Irish 100m relay squad to compete in the Olympics in Sydney. This has resulted from a personal best in the 100m race in Dublin of 10.54 against an international field of runners from Britain, Canada, South Africa, Japan, Russia, Liberia, Trinidad, Australia, and New Zealand. Hopefully, Thomas will get the call for he has competed successfully for his country previously in the 4 x 100m relay team. He is dedicated athlete and would be an eminent athletic ambassador for this country.

His father Tom was a good runner in his day and also played rugby for Garryowen so once again the old Gaelic sean-fhocal "briseann and dúchas amach tri shúilibh an cat" is correct.

Also, this weekend Thomas' sister Mary married Denis Moloney in St Paul's Church, Dooradoyle, and it was a mighty occasion for the families and for many of Mary's relatives, neighbours and friends. A large





Adrian Liston and Joan Cunneen, Dublin Road, who were married at Darrenbuoy church



Lorraine Halvey, Rathbane, and Ger Moloney who were married at Adare church



Committee members of SIPTU active retired club: Tony Quinlivan, Tom Lavery, John Tierney, Michael Long and Michael Madigan

bays beside a brewery making Scottish whisky around 1710).

One of his sons was ordained a priest, Fr Jacques Ingram, and he set up a school on Old Dominic Street in 1715. The stone that was over the school door is preserved in the heritage room of the town house.

The entrance to the house and land (Robert Davis' meadow purchased in 1747) was by way of a lane coming down from Exchange Street and St Mary's Place (Athlunkard Street was not built until the 1820's) and to the old church until it was sealed off with the building of the new church in 1932.

By the end of the 18th century (c. 1790) the Arthur family were in possession (two Bishops of Limerick and many Mayors came from this family). The house became their Town House where their mother lived (Dower House) while they had an estate in Co. Clare.

The Arthur family added two more bays to Ingram's house. Viewed from the front, this new stone-work can easily be seen. The rear of the house was also added to for the use of their servants and coachmen.

The coat-of-arms of

Fr. Michael Fitzgerald, Dr. Michael Casey, Dr Daniel Fitzgerald, Dr Denis Hallinan, Fr Denis Shanahan, Fr Jeremiah Harty, Mons. P. J. Lee (1944-1980), Fr. Muiris O'Connor, CC, was the last priest to live there (1980-82).

The house, which was in poor structural condition at the time, was restored in 1987/89, spearheaded by Canon Connellan, and is now used by many organisations such as Fas, Senior Citizens, Alcoholics Anonymous, Parish Council, Adult Education Group, Parish Choirs, Apostolic Workers, St Joseph's Young Priests Society, Parish Residents Association and various local meetings as required. There is a special entrance for the scout hall, which was built on the old kitchen quarters.

### Bridge half open

An announcement in these columns some weeks ago stated that Baal's Bridge, closed for some time due to work being carried out to strengthen its foundations, was about to

Motorists coming from the Sandmall direction can use the bridge but it is still closed to those coming from Broad Street.

### ST MARY'S

### Feast of the Parish

With the Feast Day of the Assumption falling on Tuesday last, the traditional celebrations to mark the occasion in St Mary's will be held on Sunday next.

The 12 noon Mass on Sunday will be concelebrated and a special sermon will be given. At 3 pm Devotions will be held in the lovely Grotto in St Mary's.

As is now customary, St Mary's Fife and Drum Band will play outside the church after Mass.

### The late Tommy Ryan

The death of Tommy Ryan of 57 St Munchin's Street, St Mary's Park. Well known and highly respected, the deceased was a dedicated sports-

man. They founded Colbert Park soccer team.

Tommy worked in the Docks for over thirty years and suffered a grievous blow when his wife Philomena died. Later on he remarried, and with Rita, both raised their now extended family in exemplary fashion. The deceased was a man of great devotion to his religion, and had a special affinity for Padre Pio, having visited San Giovanni on several occasions.

The attendance at the obsequies testified to the popularity of the deceased and his family.

A neighbour, Fr Kirwan, celebrated a special Mass, and with Fr. O'Keefe, who offered up the Requiem Mass, paid special tribute to the deceased and his many qualities. Singer at the Mass was another former neighbour of the deceased's, Michael Phayer.

Tommy is mourned by his wife Rita, children Tom, Keith, Marie, Ger, Pat, Paul, Terence, Catherine, Rita, Mary, brothers Noel, Roger, Paul, Ger and Seamie.



At the Corbally United Golf Classic prizegiving were, from left: Neilus Kennedy (Corbally Utd.), Eugene Ryan, Noel Fitzgibbon, Eddie Cummins (winners), Peter Collins (Corbally United). Also on the winning team was Michael Ryan.

column concerning a pathway adjoining the river wall which protrudes into the roadway opposite Cowhey's pub in the Sandmall.

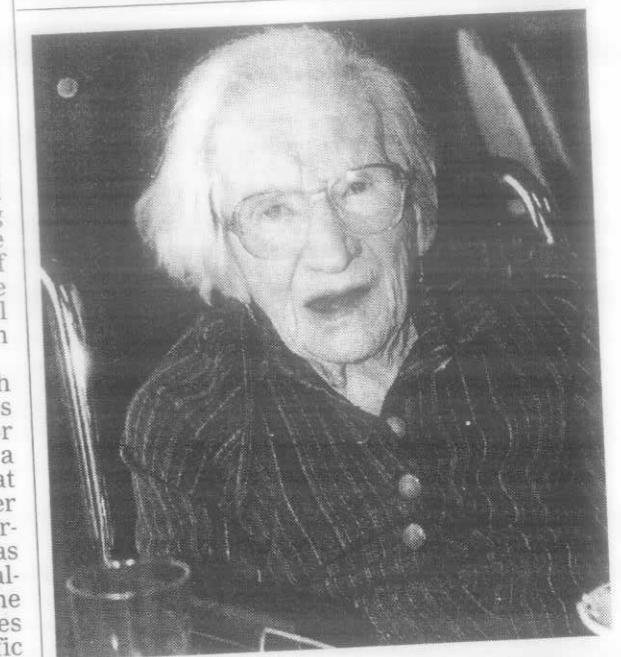
The pathway, built a few years back in conjunction with a raised platform, was erected in a well meaning attempt to help those who in the times of floods had to traverse from the lower Mall onto terra firma on higher ground.

The pathway, which is absolutely useless for the intention for which it was built, is a danger to motorists at night and this writer for one, has had several narrow escapes as the pathway, practically invisible in the darkness, intrudes into the line of traffic in this narrow thoroughfare.

### Corbally results

This week's Corbally United Lotto results: Consolation prizes: Mick Reynolds c/o Denis O'Shaughnessy; K. O'Brien, Gardice Green; Tom Bolger, c/o K. Kinsella; T. Kennedy, New Ark Grove; M. McNamara, Springrove; F. Hanley c/o Noel Hanley. Next week's jackpot, £1,100.

that will eventually be built together



At the St Camillus' Hospital barbecue: Annie McMahon (LL)

### "Enterprising Limerick"

Ulster Bank Crafts & Gifts

Exhibition 2000

Dates:

Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd December

Venue:

City Hall, Merchant's Quay, Limerick

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Details &/ or application form from: Caroline Roche, Carousel Marketing, 17 Nicholas Street, Limerick; e-mail: carolinerocche@eir.com.net; or telephone 061 410829



Closing date for return of completed application forms Friday 25th August