

# THE LYRIC BALLROOM

EARL CONNOLLY—in his column in your issue of April 14th, under the heading The Forgotten Ballroom—put the question: "Did you know that there is a ballroom overhead the Lyric Cinema?"

That question carried me back, and in eidetic memory I went climbing again up the seemingly interminable stairs that led to that very ballroom. Reminiscent of going up Nelson's Pillar or the Wren Monument in London.

I remember the Lyric Ballroom well, and there must also be a lot of other people around, yet, like me, in their fifties, who attended the Saturday night Cinderellas and Sunday night dances there in the thirties.

It was small but select, with a big mirror in one side of it. Admission prices—for cinderellas from ten to three and Sunday nights from half eight to half eleven—were two shillings for men and one and six for girls.

Music was supplied by big bands which were a pleasure to listen to even if one never danced.

And always above the sound of slow dreamy or lively music, conversation could be carried on comfortably.

Ballroom dancers in Lime-

rick in those days took their pastime seriously, so that with assiduous nightly practice and talent they tripped the light fantastic with a very high standard of technical proficiency.

The dances were, usually slow foxtrots and fast waltzes, and the couples, holding each other in the correct Victor Sylvester style, would vary their graceful gliding and spinning around in the slow foxtrot and incessant turning in the waltz with intricate fancy steps.

I have seen good dancers in larger and more luxuriously appointed ballrooms in Dublin, in various cities in England, including the Cafe de Paris and the Albert Hall in London, and in Parisian balls, but the dancers of Limerick were as good if not better than any of them.

They dressed well, too, those dancers of the thirties, and their shoes shone like mirrors.

Nowadays, dance advertisements in newspapers include a warning to men not to turn up in jeans and to wear collars and ties!

And the girls wear ludicrous bell tent-looking trousers. They don't know even the rudiments of ballroom dancing, at least, not as it was

done in my time.

Lately, I have seen "dancing" couples holding each other in what was nothing more than a slovenly embrace, the men and girls with their arms around each other at waist level.

The "dance" appeared to be a stationary shuffle with the couples hardly moving from the same spot during its entire duration, to "music" little better than the racket of a compressor with its accompanying street-pavement-chewing pneumatic drills.

There is also a forgotten gallery, or "gods" up there under the roof of the Lyric.

It was cheap in every sense of the word. In it the stage and screen could be viewed, obliquely and uncomfortably, by craning from a Cliffs of Moher-like height on hard backless seats consisting of broad wooden steps rising in tiers one above the other.

For the admission price of fourpence. "Up in the gods at the Lyric" was a nightly venue for the impecunious in Limerick forty years ago.

It is best forgotten.

WILLIAM J. O'CONNELL,  
Oakfield,  
Clonlara,  
Limerick.

# AMALGAMATION OF CREAMERIES

ON TUESDAY, 24th April, the Blackabbey Creamery Society held what in all probability will be its last annual general meeting. With amalgamation imminent, Blackabbey's affairs will become a small part in a much bigger organisation.

This is the future for all county Limerick creameries and is typical of the trend in modern industry. There is no room for the small individual concerns; they must all be huge combined. Thus the more efficient march of progress?

Blackabbey Creamery was founded in 1901 by the efforts of people from all walks of life residing in the vicinity who produced the necessary capital to put up the buildings and instal the machinery.

Then with the help and advice of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, the newly formed co-operative or-

ganisation, founded by Sir Horace Plunkett, the local farmers, many of whom were included amongst the new shareholders, started to bring in their surplus milk for processing.

In return they received their monthly cheques from the creamery and the rich natural resources of the cattle breeding, milk producing lands of County Limerick were placed firmly on the path leading to the success they have now achieved.

Many of the members of the committees of management of the County Limerick creameries are direct descendants of those men who in the early 1900's founded the societies.

The business of the creameries has been conducted soundly through bad times and good for the past 70 years by these committees and their appointed managers and staffs, making it possible for the

farmers to take advantage now of the increased prices offered by the E.E.C., thus benefiting the whole community.

We have now come to the end of an era during which small individualistic organisations managed by individuals for individuals have been able to look after themselves and the system has worked.

In the new era each creamery society will have a small representation in the management of the vast new concern. Were it to have a larger one, the whole committee would become huge and unmanageable.

We can only hope that the new arrangement will manage the affairs of the County Limerick farmers as well as they have been managed in the past by themselves.

PETER FITZGERALD,  
Mondellin,  
Adare.

# DEAR MR. CORISH . . .

AN OPEN letter to Mr. Brendan Corish, T.D., Minister for Health and Social Welfare:

pects of Policy will be directed towards Social Objectives. This is good news as widows have been treated with in-

other source she is not entitled to any pension.

Are the ladies of the Irish Countrywomen's Association

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