HISTORY

Unravelling the mysterious murder of the Colleen Bawn

By Louise Harrison
news@limerickpost.ie

A NEW book that unravels some of the myths and mystery surrounding the murder of a teenage girl almost 200 years ago was launched in Adare on Monday night.

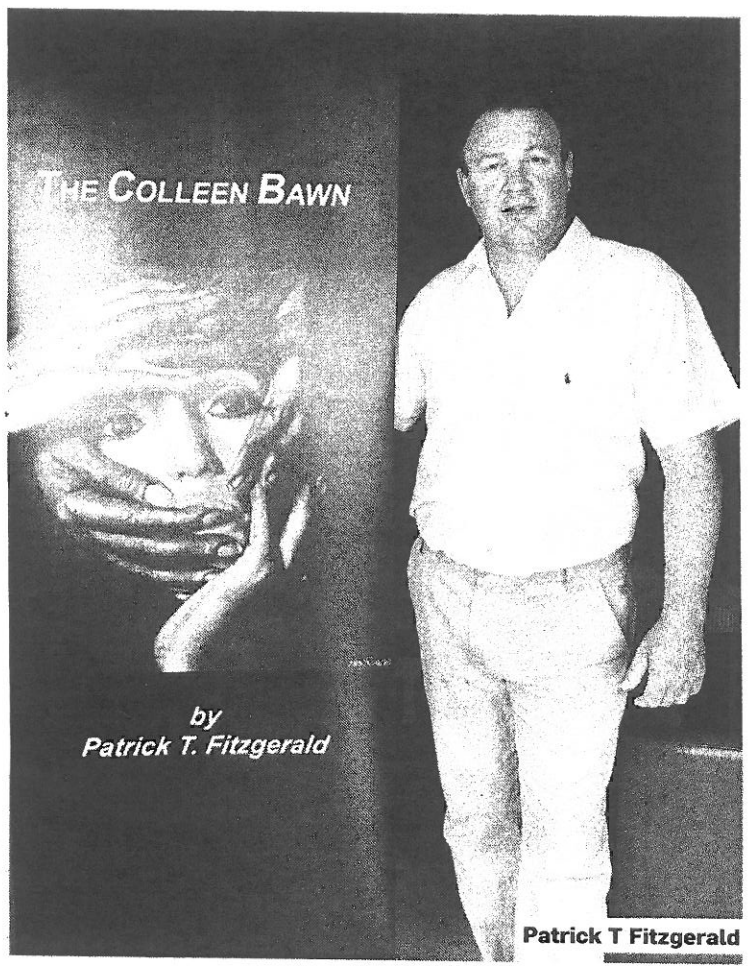
Author Patrick T Fitzgerald from Ballingarry says that the idea for his book stemmed from childhood memories of hearing different myths, songs and stories about the young girl known as the Colleen Bawn.

His curiosity was re-ignited in 2010 when he took a Colleen Bawn tour given by his friend Patrick C Fitzgerald, who spoke at the book launch.

"The story appears to me to have been largely lost to this generation. People have always wanted to know the full details and the local background of the story that spawned so many adaptations and myths.

"It is the aim of this book, the first in over sixty years on the Colleen Bawn, to present the true story insofar as it can be established as well as preserving and passing on the many variations, myths and legends," said Patrick.

Following eight years of research and with the bi-centenary of the murder approaching in 2020, Patrick said that he's picked apart the various elements that contribute to the overall story.



Patrick T Fitzgerald

"Hopefully it will encourage future scholars of the Colleen Bawn to research further and make more material available," he explained.

According to Patrick's research, the Colleen Bawn was a 15-year-old Catholic peasant girl named Ellen Hanley from Manister who became involved in a forbidden love affair with John Scanlan, the 28 year-old son of a Protestant Squire.

He convinced her to steal her dowry, elope with him and, after a short period of time, he got his foot servant Steven Sullivan to kill her and cover it up.

"I enjoyed doing it. I enjoyed all the people I've met during my research and the support and the challenge. It was a tough project.

"I was amazed that there was so much secondary source material and at the continued level of interest, because the story in it simplicity is one of innocence and beauty being murdered by oppressive power and everybody likes to see justice done," he added.

Copies of The Colleen Bawn can be ordered directly from the author by emailing pfitzgeraldeng@gmail.com

COMMUNITY

Animal Welfare sanctuary to benefit from Tesco fund

by Tom McCullough
news@limerickpost.ie

THE Limerick Animal Welfare Sanctuary in Kilfinane is the latest in a list of 480 local causes throughout the city and county to have benefitted from the Tesco Community Fund.

€158,000 has been distributed to Limerick voluntary and community groups over the past four years and the Animal Welfare Sanctuary was nominated as a recipient by Tesco customers throughout the county.

Explaining the scale of the sanctuary's work, committee member and long-time volunteer with Limerick Animal Welfare (LAW) Geraldine Gunning said that last year alone they re-homed 334 dogs, 279 cats, 15 horses and 64 greyhounds.

"However this all comes at cost. Monthly running costs at the sanctuary are around €60,000 of which electricity and veterinary bills are the highest.

"We have three charity shops in Limerick city and receive some government funding, but without fundraising and donations we couldn't survive.

"We are in the process of expanding our facilities at the sanctuary, so we can help even more abandoned and neglected animals in the Limerick area.

"Tesco's Community Fund donations and support really means the world to us. Our vet bills have gone up considerably in recent years, we also rescue horses, so every donation is much needed and much appreciated.

"Getting the word out about the sanctuary is also very important and Tesco has helped in this regard also by promoting the work we do in their store through the Community Fund," she added.

Since 2014, Tesco customers have been able to donate to their local charity of choice using their blue tokens. By allowing locals to nominate the special causes close to their heart in the community, the donations make a huge difference for those who really need it.

Tesco employee Rachel Judge (centre) with Limerick Animal Welfare volunteers Katherine McCrann and Audrey Parent at the LAW sanctuary in Kilfinane.

IN BRIEF

Public banking

■ MUNSTER Sinn Féin MEP Liadh Ní Riada has accused Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil of protecting their own vested interests in banks. She was responding to a Government report that claimed there is 'no compelling case' for the establishment of a public banking system in Ireland. Ms Ní Riada, who sits on the EU Budgets Committee said the report doesn't present a single coherent argument against public banking. "It's quite clear this report was designed to soothe the fears of the existing pillar banks and assure them that as far as monopolies, corruption and outrageous fees go, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil will make sure that it's business as usual," she said.

Arson attack

■ AN ARSON attack on a car at a housing estate in Pallasgreen is being investigated by Gardaí. The incident occurred around midnight last Wednesday July 11 at The Grove, Pallasgreen where a car is believed to have been deliberately set alight. Gardaí say that they are treating it as a criminal damage matter and although there have been no arrests, patrols in the area have increased. Gardaí in Bruff are asking for anyone with information to contact them on 061 382 940.

Autism camp

■ THE Limerick Autism Group's summer camp will be held at the Limerick Youth Service's Factory Youth Space in Roxboro from Tuesday to Thursday, July 24 to 26. The socially inclusive camp is for children who have an autism spectrum disorder and their siblings with a range of activities including art and craft, music by music generation, movement with Bazzy B, bouncy castle, pet farm, sensory games, basketball and soccer. Children of all levels of ability are welcome and there will be a sensory room available for children who need a break. More information at www.facebook.com/limerickautismgroup/

Bog walk

■ THE Castleconnell/Ahane/Montpelier (CAM) cancer support group's 5K Bog Walk will take place on Friday, July 27 at 7pm, from the Parish Hall in Castleconnell. Established to help families who have been impacted by cancer, the group will help friends and neighbours by offering practical support when somebody has received a cancer diagnosis. All fundraisiing by the group will go towards financial support for patients travelling for treatment, professional counselling, home help and childcare. Full details at www.facebook.com/CAMcancersupport/

Doubt and belief

■ 'DOUBT and Belief' is a free exhibition of five recent works by Maurice Quillinan exploring drawings by Michelangelo, Raphael, Rubens and Goya, that will run in the Old Franciscan Friary, Henry Street until July 27. The title 'Doubt and Belief' refers to the 'doubts' the artist had as to whether all elements of a project would come together and the 'belief' an artist has to have to complete the task. The drawings are part of a series exploring some of the artists who have most influenced Maurice and the drawings will eventually become large format paintings.