

Paying homage to Elsa after 63 years

By ALAN JACQUES

LIMERICK Civic Trust is to unveil a headstone at the Jewish cemetery in Castletroy to commemorate the remains of an unknown soul.

The unmarked grave is believed to belong to Elsa Reininger, a Polish Jew who fled to Ireland after Hitler's annexation of Austria.

She lived with her daughter, Margaret Kaitcher, at Wolfe Tone Street and later with the Tobin family in Newenham Street.

The woman suffered from depression and shot herself on Thursday, October 27, 1938, after booking a room at the Hotel Crescent at 87, O'Connell Street.

Elsa is believed to have been laid to rest at an unmarked grave on the perimeter of the cemetery as was the Jewish custom with suicide victims.

The Castletroy cemetery was restored 10 years ago as a monument to the former Jewish community.

Denis Leonard of Lim-



The Jewish cemetery in Castletroy: unmarked grave may be that of suicide victim Elsa Reininger (U)

erick Civic Trust said: "The cemetery was in a terrible state during the Seventies and Eighties. The Civic Trust, with the permission of the Jewish community, took over the maintenance of the graveyard.

"Ten years ago we had an ecumenical event at

the cemetery with the Chief Rabbi, Bishop Newman and Bishop Darling, which was a very pleasurable occasion. We decided it would be no harm, 10 years on, in holding another gathering to show the Jewish community that Limerick is

looking after their cemetery.

"This prompted the opportunity to give the place a complete overhaul. And we thought it would be nice to recognise the existence of the unmarked grave which we think holds the remains of Elsa

Reininger.

"We got a headstone made which reads 'here lies the remains of an unknown Jewish soul'. This stone will be erected at the site of grave which is on the perimeter of the cemetery. This is where Jewish people buried those who had committed suicide."

The headstone will be erected at the Jewish cemetery in Castletroy at a private ceremony next Thursday evening.



GAFNEY—(nee Boland), Limerick, on May 29, 2001, peacefully, at The Regional Hospital, Mary (Masie), 44 Park De Valera and late of 12 Cross Road, Thomondgate and Sancta Maria Nursing Home, Cratloe. Beloved wife of the late Michael and mother of the late Martin. Deeply regretted by her loving son, Leonard; daughters, Precious, Rita, Carmel and Josephine; sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends. Rest in peace. Removal from Thompson's Funeral Home, Thomas Street, to St Munchin's Church this Thursday evening at 7 o'clock. Requiem Mass tomorrow (Friday) at 11am. Funeral afterwards to Mt St Laurence Cemetery. (f2c)