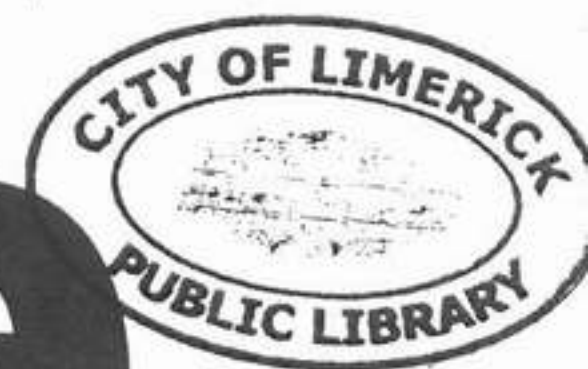


Limerick Chronicle



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McCOURT MUSEUM MAY HAVE TO CLOSE

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THE FUTURE of the Frank McCourt museum in the city is under threat, as the building has been put up for sale on the instructions of a bank.

Owned by businessman John Heaton, the museum in honour of Limerick's famous writer officially opened two years ago, and has attracted fans of the Angela's Ashes author from all over the world.

Friends of his wife, Una Heaton, the popular and well known artist who runs the museum, said she is devastated by the move to sell the property.

Ms Heaton was unavailable to comment to the Limerick Chronicle last night, but it is understood that all avenues to keep the museum open are being investigated.

The sale of the historic building has just been an-

nounced by the agents Murphy Gubbins auctioneers in the city for €325,000.

Commenting on the sale, Alphie McCourt, the youngest brother of Frank who resides in New York, told this newspaper: "We have a long history of eviction. In the beginning was the landlord, and then came the bank. Una and John Heaton are good people. In establishing the Frank McCourt Museum they demonstrated vision, initiative and, most important, a great deal of good will. They deserve better. I hope something can be worked out."

The Georgian property, which dates back to 1860, was the former school of the late Frank McCourt, and the museum in his memory opened in 2011, two years after his death.

The building, Leamy House, was purchased by Una's father-in-law Jack Heaton in 1956 three years after it ceased being a school.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 →



PICTURE: ALAN PLACE

Kitchen cabinet: Minister serves breakfast at LIT

MINISTER for Education Jan O'Sullivan and LIT president Dr Maria Hinfelaar take a turn behind the counter at the official opening of the new €750,000 dining facilities at the Moylish campus. The Green Rooms double up as a wifi-enabled social-learning environment. See page 6.

WATER CRISIS FURTHER PROTESTS IN CITY



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A CITY walking tour which uses mobile QR codes and limericks to give tourists information has been launched at Culture House.

Limerick's Limericks is the brainchild of Tara Hartigan, Serena Hartigan and Mark Manning through their company Bundlbee.

The project merges literature, history and technology.

Using a smartphone, tourists are asked to scan a QR code, or visit the dedicated web site www.limerickslimericks.com at a series of locations around the city.

These include The Treaty Stone, King John's Castle, St John's Square, the People's Park and O'Connell Avenue.

Tara said the idea was born when she, Serena and Mark were sitting around a table with a glass of wine.

"I always loved limerick poems, and I wondered why there was not more emphasis put on them around the city," she said. "We feel this project is an important marriage between history, literature and technology."

Limericks have been placed on plaques at these locations, and by scanning a



Sharon Slater, Domonic Taylor, Dr Mathew Potter, Ursula Callaghan, Mark Manning, Serena Hartigan, and Tara Hartigan at the launch of the Limerick's Limericks QR code initiative in Pery Square on Friday

QR code, more information can be found on the history of the location.

The information has been gathered by local historian Dr Ursula Callaghan, with photographs provided by Limerick's Life website owner Sharon Slater.

As for the limericks, they were gathered through a means of a national and international competition to find the best local writers.

Dolores O'Riordan and Terry Wogan also penned their very own limericks.

One of the judges of the limericks competition, Dr Matthew Potter, who au-

thored *The Curious Story of the Limerick*, does not feel the city's connection to the five-liner is not capitalised on properly.

"The limerick is one of the great underutilised resources of Limerick. I think the city is the only place in the world that has a poem named after it," he said.

With more than one billion people understanding English, Dr Potter added: "If even a tiny fraction of these were made aware of the connection, it would do so much to promote the city and county both nationally and internationally."

Uncertain future of the Frank McCourt museum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 →

He opened a factory there producing men's suits, and employing over 100 workers.

This July, Una spoke of the "great satisfaction in seeing people from all around the globe coming to Limerick purely to visit the Frank McCourt Museum."

Over several floors, the museum houses many impor-

tant belongings relating to the life of the award-winning author, whose account of a miserable Catholic childhood in Limerick after moving from New York propelled him to literary stardom in his 60s.

Among the items on display include a portion of his ashes, the manuscript of 'Tis, cuff-links given to the author from former US president George Bush, his personal copy of Angela's Ashes,

which he read from in readings around the world, and the robes he wore when he was conferred with an honorary degree from the University of Limerick. Some of the props used in the film of Angela's Ashes, starring Emily Watson and Robert Carlyle, are also in the Hartstonge Street museum, including the red coat, which was worn by the actress in the 1999 film directed by Alan Parker.

Frank McCourt's widow Ellen also revealed during her last visit to Limerick her plans to donate other manuscripts belonging to her late husband, some of his "many, many awards", and private photographs of him and his family to the museum.

She described the progress the museum was making as "exciting".

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