

Celtic Crosses were main targets

140 GRAVES VANDALISED

By EUGENE PHELAN

IN ONE of the worst vandal rampages ever in the city over 140 headstones were wrecked, causing up to £100,000 worth of damage to Mount St. Laurence Cemetery, at the weekend.

"This is the biggest piece of vandalism ever to be done in a cemetery in these islands," declared Alderman Jimmy Kemmy as he surveyed the scene this morning.

And chairperson of the cemeteries committee, Cllr. Jan O'Sullivan said that it could be the work of some "sect."

Ninety per cent of the damage was caused to Celtic crosses and those responsible travelled the whole graveyard with the intention of causing as much destruction as possible.

Bard

Many of Limerick's best known families have had family graves interfered with including the Good Shepherd Convent and a memorial to the Bard of Thomond,

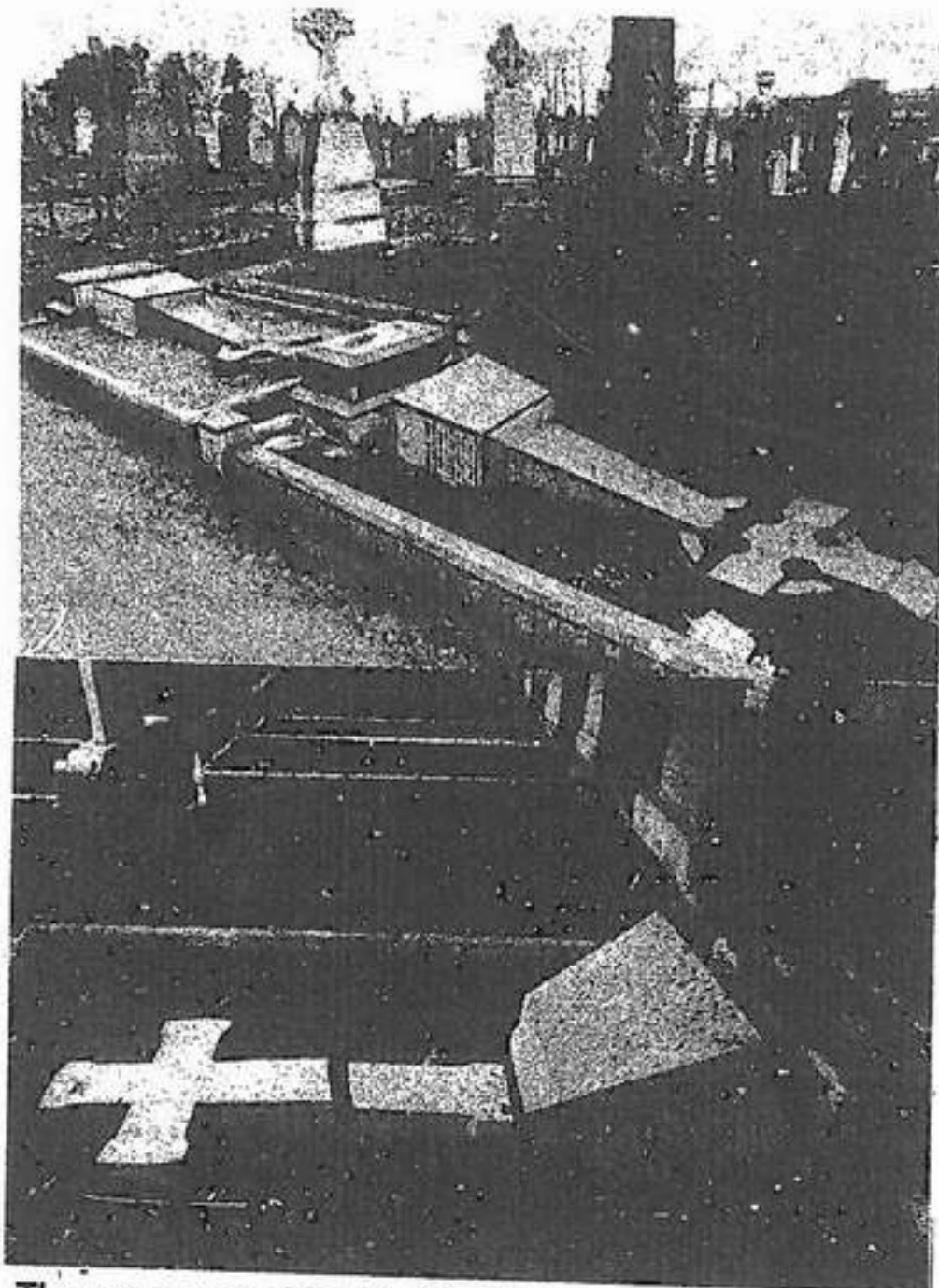
Prior to Saturday night's devastation, a photograph of how the memorial to the Bard of Thomond looked

School attacked

Three windows at St. Patrick's boys national school, Dublin Road, were broken by vandals at the weekend. The only damage to the inside of the premises was to a toilet bowl.



Jan O'Sullivan, chairperson, cemeteries committee; Mr. Joe Finn, superintendent, cemeteries, Limerick Corporation; and Alderman Jim Kemmy at the memorial to the Bard of Thomond,



The scene at Mount St. Laurence Cemetery this Monday.

□ Pictures: OWEN SOUTH

Michael Hogan, erected by the people of Limerick.

Gardai were at the scene this morning combing the area for evidence and among the items taken away was a chain which was wrapped around one of the headstones.

Up to 10 people could have been involved. They struck late on Saturday night or early on Sunday morning, and visitors to the cemetery went away numbed after surveying the extent of the damage.

The graveyard was opened in 1848, and the Corporation

took charge of it in 1979. There are 15 acres and the group obviously went through the full area.

"They were selective and mainly went for Celtic Crosses, they did not touch any of the newer graves which would have been much easier to knock," said Alderman Kemmy.

"Some of the finest examples of stone cutters craft, the

ornamentation on the stone, it has all been destroyed."

Mr. Joe Finn, cemetery superintendent said that a preliminary investigation showed 140 headstones had been knocked or broken.

"They came with no other intent, but to cause damage," he added. He explained in all cases the vandals went to break crosses.

"The majority disintegrated when they fell."

Mr. Finn said around £100,000 worth of damage was caused. Headstones were very expensive. Some cost over £1,000.

Mr. John Braddish, who has been working at Mount St. Laurence for the past 42 years, and has seen much vandalism down through the years said: "I have never seen anything like this before."

Reported

It was Alderman Jim Kemmy who reported the matter to the Gardai after being phoned by a friend. They are treating the matter as a serious crime.

"Many of Limerick's best known families have been hit, including the Richardson family, Thomondgate, and the Hartmann family," he added.

The church in the graveyard has been wrecked by vandals over the years, and is closed up at present.

However, recently the cemeteries committee along with an architect visited the church in the hope of renovating it — and making it vandal free.

Actor killed after show

THE communities of Hospital and Knocklong were shocked this week to learn of the tragic death of well-known stage character and local postmaster, Mr. Patrick O'Carroll, Main Street, Hospital.

Mr. O'Carroll was involved in a car accident on the main Hospital/Knocklong road in the early hours of Saturday morning last. He was returning home from a variety show in which he was one of the chief participants. The show had been billed locally as the Leahy and O'Carroll Show by the Knocklong Varieties and it was the first time in 30 years that the two characters appeared together.

Mr. O'Carroll, who was a

passenger in the car, died immediately following the accident. and the other occupants of the car — his wife, Maura; son, Donie; daughter, Marlene; and neighbour, Mrs. Maureen Morrissey — were transferred to Limerick Regional Hospital. It is believed that the car skidded and went out of control.

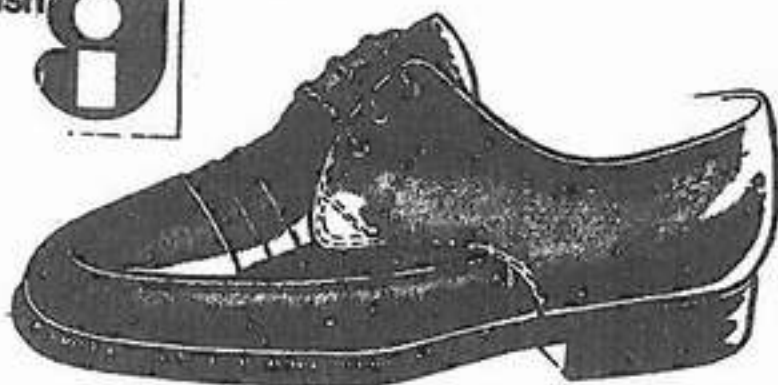
Mrs. O'Carroll was detained in the Regional and her condition this Monday morning was described as 'comfortable'.

The O'Carroll's have one other daughter, Deirdre. Mr. O'Carroll is also survived by his brothers, Donie and Phonsie, and sister, Marie.

His remains will be removed this Monday evening at 8 o'clock from Davern's Funeral Home to St. John's Church, Hospital.

MASCULINE moves...

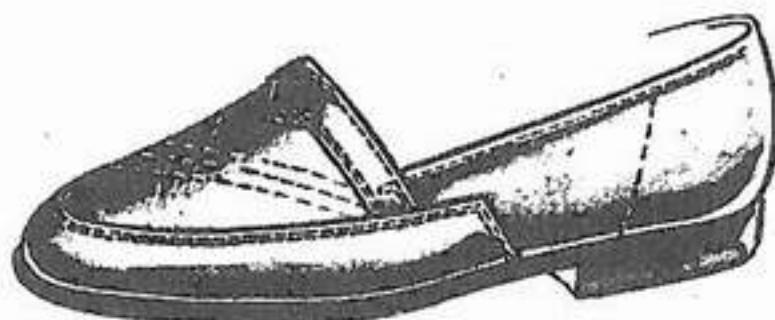
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