



St Michael's - last resting place of Ellen Arthur

'Whilst many of the tombs and headstones are now gone, some are preserved, but at least the souls buried there will have some monument to their memory,....'

Marie Hobbins charts history of city's least known graveyard with Dr James Ring

ONE of the least known graveyards in Limerick city is St Michael's which, ironically, is located in the heart of the city.

Just across from the Granary Building, the cemetery is behind the BDO offices on Michael Street and many people using the Charlotte Quay Car Park pass it every day.

Director of Limerick Civic Trust, Dr James Ring, points out that the Trust has been responsible for St Michael's Graveyard, which was one of the very first projects it became involved with in 1986.

"St Michael's is arguably one of the least known graveyards in Limerick and the odd thing about it is that it is in the city centre - with the majority of the people who pass it every day and probably admire the beautiful stone boundary wall, not knowing what's behind it".

Promising not to deliver a history lesson on the cemetery, Dr Ring says:

"The noted Limerick historian, Kevin Hannon, has already done so in a brilliant article in the Old Limerick Journal but I will say that it is

worth a visit to this small graveyard.

"There is so much Limerick history attached to it - such as it being the burial place of Ellen Arthur, whose tomb may be lost but her name lives on in Ellen Street, which is named after her.

"When the Civic Trust got involved with the graveyard in the early 80's, it had suffered the best part of a century of neglect.

"Now, after a lot of hard work from the Civic Trust it has been relandscaped and is cleaned and maintained on a weekly basis".

The restored graveyard was formally opened in 1986 by the then Deputy Michael Noonan, who at the time, was the Minister for Industry and Commerce.

"Whilst many of the tombs and headstones are now gone, some are preserved, but at least the souls buried there will have some monument to their memory, and regardless of whether or not we know who is buried here, this graveyard and those buried here, are still part of our history.

"Next time you are in town, take a look, it's worth seeing."

Dr Ring is very pleased with the latest project undertaken by the Trust, the Ballinacura Weston Grotto.

"Over many years this grotto, which means so much to the

community in the area, was vandalised and destroyed.

"However, thanks to a great team effort between ourselves, Limerick City Council, Limerick Regeneration and local residents, we have turned this into a grotto the whole of Limerick can now be proud of.

"There was a superb party atmosphere on the day of opening, enhanced by the brilliant CBS Pipe Band and I was delighted to see my old school represented on the day - apart from the odd deserved detention, I have nothing but good memories of CBS.

"When the grotto was finished a lot of people from the area thanked me for getting the Civic Trust involved and some people complained that they didn't like the look of the statue after it was painted.

"I guess you have to take criticism with praise in this game but I will leave the debate to you all.

"I think the grotto and Our Lady herself look great but have a look yourselves!

"Next month I will take a look at the two bridges that Limerick Civic Trust can be credited with establishing in Limerick - the Sylvester O'Halloran Bridge by the Potato Market, and The Guinness Bridge on the canal."