

# My brother Dermot, by Richard Harris

By PADDY MORONEY

WHEN DERMOT, film star Richard Harris' brother, died last week in Chicago, the two were negotiating the purchase of a West End theatre in London which would become their headquarters.

This was revealed by Richard to the *Limerick Leader* in an exclusive interview after Dermot's funeral in the city this week.

Richard, contrary to the expectations of many who had thought he would fly back to America immediately after the obsequies, remained on in Limerick to host a quiet luncheon for about 40 close friends, many of whom had flown in from London to sympathise.

It was then, in a meeting with the *Limerick Leader*, as the guests met in the Two-Mile Inn, that he revealed his and Dermot's plans to effectively "headquarter" themselves in this part of the world, from the business point of view.

## Camelot

Dermot, whom, he said, was several years younger than himself, was his producer-manager for their "roadshow," as he termed it—the musical "Camelot," a poignant tale of achievement and, later, departed friends.

"Our business, it's tough—this tour was 20 weeks on the road," said Dickie, as Richard is more popularly known as in his native Limerick. The tour had taken in not only the United States, but Japan, where it went down an immense success.

"Our future plans together were that we were trying, in fact negotiating for a West End theatre in London. We wanted to buy it, in fact," he continued.

"We were trying to confirm it from those who own it if they would sell it to us. Dermot and I were going to start our own theatre workshop there."

Asked if this meant that they would be effectively their headquarters, he replied: "It would be something of a headquarters."

He said that the "Camelot" musical, whose copyright he had bought out, had been an outstanding success. Of his own and Dermot's tour with it, he revealed: "It is the biggest grossing tour in the United States; eight-and-a-half million dollars will be the gross, and Dermot produced it."

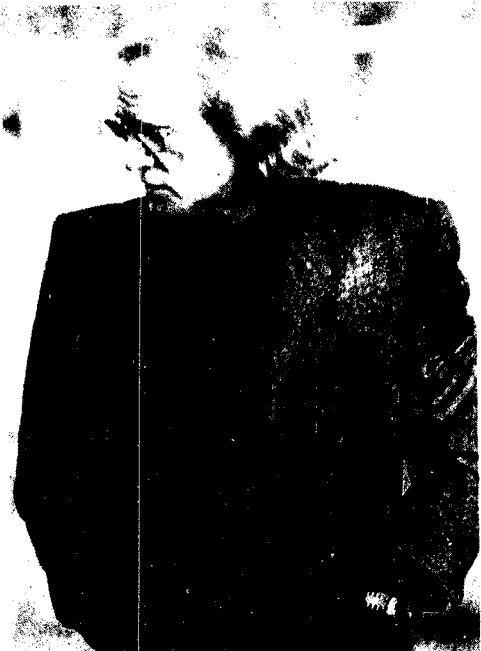
"Of the eleven venues it has been to in the States, it has broken seven house records."

Of Dermot, he stated: "He was eight years younger than me, because I remember when I was 18, he was only ten, and we weren't at that stage very pally."

## Crescent

"In fact, I remember that after I left the Crescent and went to England, to become an actor, he was still at Rockwell—he had been at the Crescent, too."

"I remember him growing up, all right, but I was always away from home so I didn't at first get to know



Richard in mourning in Limerick this week. □ Picture: OWEN SOUTH

him that well."

Dermot spent a few years in the family business in Henry Street, a flour and meal store as well as a bakery, before going to London to join his brother, Dickie, in the film industry. For some time, he managed Dickie's music publishing business.

Recalled Dickie: "Actually, he came over to London to visit me. He was very bright and all that and we started in the recording business."

"We began to produce albums and we have stayed at it ever since. Indeed, I can say that he was responsible for most of my record albums."

"He was terribly successful. We won a Gramme, that's the Oscar of the recording business. What happens is that they all get together and pick the best album of the year and they give that album the Oscar of the music business, a Gramme. It's very prestigious."

## Gold albums

"Not only that, he had five, mind you, five nominations for that Gramme in addition to the award itself, and he also produced three gold albums, two of them being 'Man in the Wilderness' and 'The Snow Goose.'"

Dermot, who died of a heart attack only an hour before the curtain was due to rise for another evening's performance of "Camelot" at 1 a.m. Irish time on Thursday last week, left two children, Charlotte Emily and Christopher Ivan.

Said Dickie Harris: "The fact that his children were over here today for the funeral is to me the

greatest moment of all. This would have been for him, as it is now for me, the greatest fulfillment of all."

Pointing to the large attendance filling into the private luncheon in the Two-Mile Inn, he said: "You know, twenty, thirty, forty people flew in from London today, just to be with Dermot, and there were hundreds more who could not come."

"Just to give you an example: Dermot was a great mixer, and when we were in Scranton, Pennsylvania, he was so popular he was made, I can tell you, deputy sheriff of the city. Now I don't mean one of these honorary things. He was made a real sheriff, a real deputy."

"And when he died, he had known those people no more than seven, five days. Yet they had taken to him so much, they were actually shattered. So they organised his entire funeral, planes, coffin, the lot—that's the people of Scranton."

## Overnight

"Now remember he died over in Chicago—that's a good distance from Scranton down in Pennsylvania—and he lay overnight in New York before flying home for the last time to Limerick. And yet six people came up from Scranton to sit with him overnight—throughout the entire night—as he rested in New York."

"People, remember, he had known only five days. He was an amazing man."

Dermot flew home over the weekend by Aer Lingus, and lay at Griffin's Funeral Parlour before being moved to the Church of Our

**'He was more than my very best friend... I looked upon him as my fourth son'**

Lady of the Rosary for Mass on Monday at 11 a.m., led by Right Rev. Mgr. Michael Tynan, who delivered a homily on Dermot and the contribution of the Harris family to Limerick.

Commented Dickie in his own tribute: "Actually he was more than a brother to me he was more than my very best friend, he was my son—and I can say that without fear. I looked upon him as my fourth son. I had three through Elizabeth, but he was my fourth. "We were very, very close."

He said that, to facilitate people in Britain and America who could not make the trip, there would be two Remembrance Services.

## New York

"A Memorial Service is being performed for him on December 13 in St. Patrick's Cathedral in the centre of New York, which will be led by Cardinal O'Connor," said Dickie. "There will be a Service too for him in London in the New Year."

Dickie, who flew in for the funeral on Monday—he had to be whisked by special car from the airport to be on time—said he would go to Dublin to stay overnight in the Berkeley Court Hotel before flying on to London to catch Concorde; he planned to be on stage with "Camelot" in Baltimore, Maryland, that Tuesday night.

Chief mourners at the family vault in Mount St. Laurence Cemetery—where the weather held, only barely, for the interment—were Dermot's brothers: Jim (the eldest), Ivan, Noel and Billy (the youngest) along with Dickie (third eldest of the six brothers in the family).

Dermot, who was fifth eldest of the six brothers and son of the late Ivan and Mildred Harris, of the Ennis Road, was predeceased by two sisters: Audrey in 1945, fiancée at the time to the late Donogh O'Malley, who eventually became Minister for Education, and Harriet, wife of Jack Donnelly, a manager of the Berkeley Court Hotel in Dublin, where Dickie stayed overnight this week.

## Mourning

At the Mass in Limerick, a friend from London, George McDonald, read one of the lessons, and Joe Healy, from the West of Ireland, another friend, read the other. Dickie himself left the front pew several times to comfort mourning friends, during the course of the Mass and homily. There was a very big attendance.

**'City rent strikers facing delays'**

By LEADER REPORTER  
MR. SEAN Griffin, Workers

## Moulding on a firm footing

By LEADER REPORTER

CONCRETE BOOTS may have spelled the end for the enemies of Al Capone, but they marked a new beginning for Mike Fitzgerald of Brosna. Now he is a market leader in concrete eagles, urns, dogs, and all kinds of decorative garden statuary, as well as ornamental moulded trellis work.

It all began with a German master craftsman in Liverpool in the early 1970s. Mike learned how to use the adaptability of fibreglass to make precision moulds which were both strong and supple to suit the concrete filling.

Back to Brosna after the death of his father in 1977, he took over the management of the family farm, but this moulding work, which was then a hobby only, would soon re-emerge as his principal work.

"I began to design my own shapes and to respond to requests from customers", he explained in his workshop. "I found that people's requirements changed, so I changed with them".

The principal demand is for ornate moulded wall-capping and trellis blocks. These are in constant demand at builders providers. Mike has his hands full at times just keeping pace with the orders.

## Excellent

"The demand for the ornamental work varies greatly", he explained. "Sometimes of the year are better than others, and some weathers are better too. People won't do much about their garden if it rains all summer long".

Nevertheless, Mike has had an excellent year overall, and has a curious method of displaying his wares. Opposite his home near the Brosna Cross on the Cork Line, south of Abbeystead, he has developed a curious alcove, decorated with samples of his work. Intrigued passers-by are delighted, and many stop



to enquire. His wife, Peg at St. Ita's in and their two delighted with what of the co

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- **Show House:** Viewing Sundays, 3-6 p.m., until December 7th. (Show house will be handed over on December 12th).
- **Site Information Office:** Open Mondays and Wednesdays, 2.30-8.00

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