

• Sculptor Seamus Connolly, who has been commissioned to cast a statue of actor Richard Harris in Kilkee, with project manager Manuel De Lucia at the alley wall in Kilkee

Kilkee to honour Harris

PLANNING permission has been submitted to Clare County Council for a lifesize bronze statue of legendary Limerick actor Richard Harris to be erected in Kilkee.

The resort town was the "spiritual" home of the Harris family; the home the star of numerous movies owned in the Bahamas was named Kilkee. It was sold after his death.

A Limerick / Kilkee committee of business people got together to plan the project which will cost in the region of €40,000.

The six-foot statue will depict the actor as a young man playing racquet ball, and Kilbaha-based sculptor Seamus Connolly, who also has the commission for a bronze of JB Keane in Listowel, is to carry out the work.

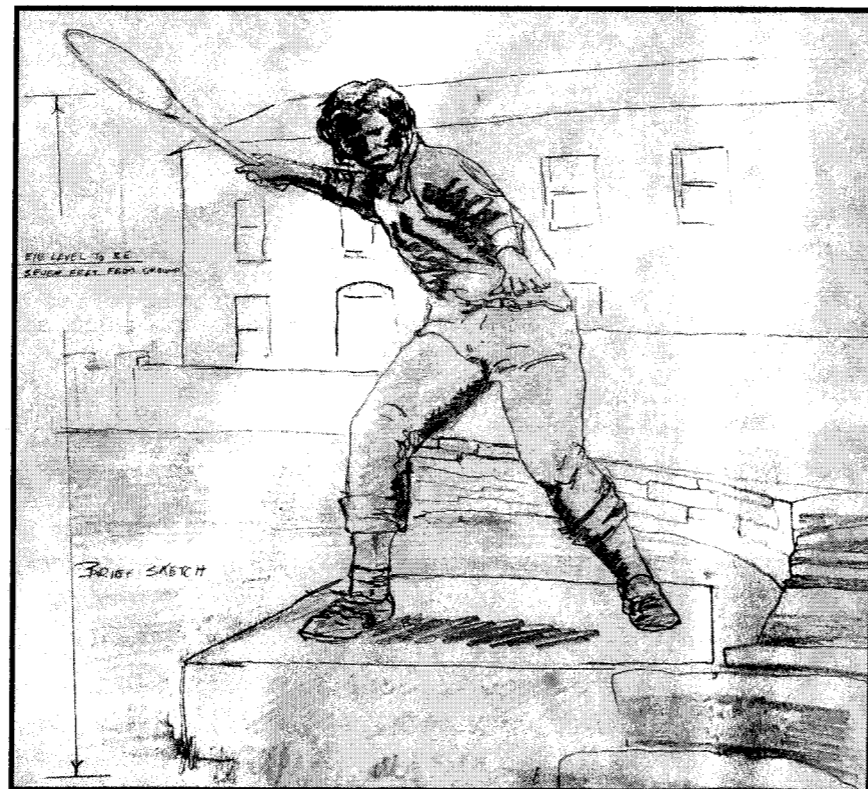
He said both statues will be cast in his foundry in Kilbaha.

"I am looking forward to starting both projects as soon as possible," he said.

Local architect Tony Byrne, based in Ennis, is also on the committee.

If planning permission is granted the target date for the completion of the Harris statue is September and it is hoped the unveiling will be attended by stars of stage and screen; the committee hope the star of Gladiator Russell Crowe will attend. He visited Kilkee and the old Limerick haunts of his friend shortly after his death.

The project has the support of well-known names such as



• A drawing of the proposed statue showing Harris playing racquets

producers Jim Sheridan, Noel Pearson and a once familiar figure in Kilkee, Limerick actor Darragh O'Malley who starred in the television series Sharpe.

The project manager is local

auctioneer Manuel di Lucia, who revealed that 50 per cent of the funding was coming from the actor's three sons Jared, Damian and Jamie.

"They are delighted that the

statue will hopefully be put up to their father and it's only fitting that it would be placed in the West End where he played racquet ball at the ball alleys and was champion four years in a row. In fact he beat me in the semi-finals once," he said.

He said that the three surviving Harris brothers Billy, Noel and Ivan and all the extended family "are quite excited about having a statue to Dickie possibly erected in Kilkee".

As a young man before fame came to him, Harris was noted for putting on dramatic events in the local amphitheatre during the holidays.

The sculpture will contain a piece of bronze from the wreck of The Intrinsic which sank in Kilkee Bay in the 1800s when all hands perished.

Any funds left over will be given to the Children's Ark Project in the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Limerick.

The Kilkee decision to commemorate Harris follows-on a decision by Limerick City Council to erect a memorial to the actor in what will be a pedestrianised Bedford Row in the city centre.

Each year in August there is an international swim in Kilkee Bay for the Richard Harris trophy which started in 1971. Last year, over 160 swimmers from home and abroad took part in the swim. The actor used to swim in the bay when he was young.



The night sky The nature of stars

FIND a dark site away from light pollution. Give your eyes about 20 minutes to dark adapt and gaze at the night sky.

Concentrate on the colours of the stars and note the differences. Our eyes are not the greatest at picking up colours at night. A camera is much better and an exposure of only a minute will produce an image of a star cluster like the one included here.

This star cluster is just a tiny part of the sky and illustrates different coloured stars—mainly red and blue-white. They are all in our own galaxy, the Milky Way, which is known to be home to about 100 billion stars.

We know that stars are made from many of the same chemical elements that are found on earth. Their temperatures, masses, and sizes are also known as well as some understanding of their internal structures. We also know why stars come in different colours and that blue / white stars have very high surface temperatures, whereas the redder stars have relatively lower surface

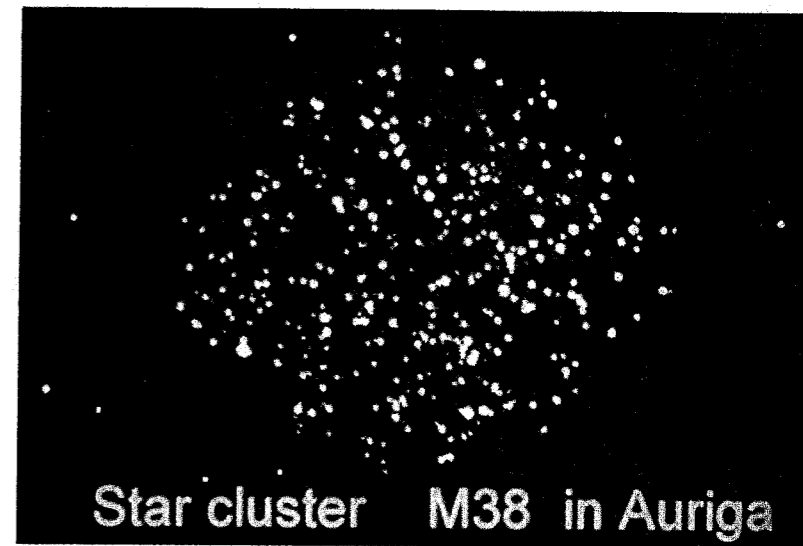
temperatures.

A short article like this cannot begin to explain the techniques astronomers use to measure and calculate the properties of stars, but suffice to say that a wealth of data can be gathered and systematized.

The properties of every star in this image can be measured and from this, their evolutionary stage can be determined. For example, our nearest star, which we call the sun, is a mediocre, middle-of-the-road, middle-aged yellow star of about five billion years, with about another five billion years of life left.

Basically, the evolution of a star is largely determined by its initial mass—the more massive stars will burn more brightly but will consume their store of hydrogen more quickly. Less massive stars will burn their hydrogen store more gradually but will not be as luminous. But one way or another all stars come to an end and this will be discussed in a future article that gives an overview of the death of stars.

Clear skies!



Star cluster M38 in Auriga