

Supporting carers

A REMINDER to the Government to adequately increase benefits and supports for the country's carers comes this week from Deputy John Cregan, who says the preparation of a new National Carers' Strategy now underway is an opportunity to boost the benefits offered to those who look after the more vulnerable members of society.

The deputy said he has lobbied Social Affairs Minister, Seamus Brennan for an increase to the income limits for carers so that those on average industrial incomes can qualify.

Currently an allowance of 200 euro weekly is paid to people over 66 years-of-age and a couple can have a weekly income of 580 euro and still qualify for their entitlements. Currently, the number of hours a carer can work outside the home and still be eligible for benefits has risen from 10 to 15 hours.

Deputy Cregan stressed the importance of providing better support measures for the country's carers.

Holycross pilgrimage

THE annual National Pilgrimage of the Apostolate of Our Lady of Fatima to Holycross Abbey, County Tipperary, takes place on Sunday, August 27.

Ceremonies commence at 2.30pm with the rosary procession followed by the stations of the cross, veneration of the relic of the true cross and the anointing of the sick. Concelebrated mass will begin at 4pm.

Dr Dermot Clifford, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, will be the chief concelebrant and will preach the homily. The United Nations International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima will be in Holycross for the pilgrimage.

Autumn walks

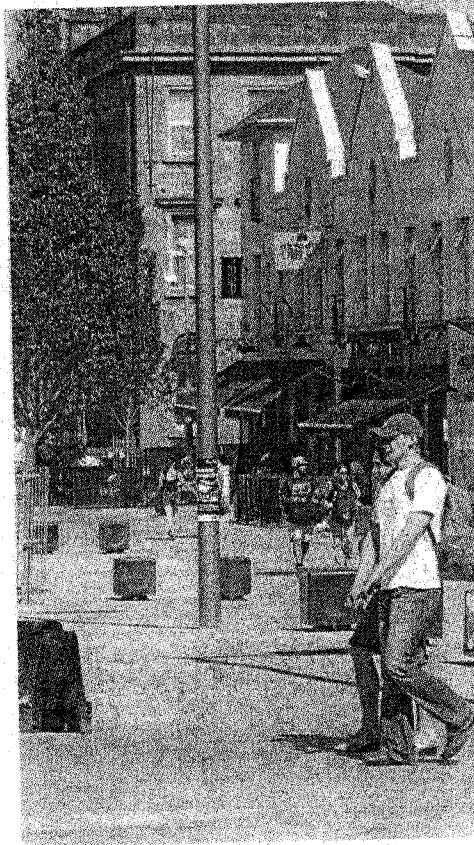
SUNDAY, September 3, will be a big day for the great southern trail, the group which has redeveloped stretches of the former railway line in West Limerick as a walking facility.

Four separate walks will be held that day commencing from Abbeyfeale, Barnagh, Newcastle West and Ardagh.

Harris will live on in Limerick

by Marie Hobbins

LIMERICK city has fallen behind in delivering on its decision to erect a specially commissioned bronze statue of the late Limerick actor of international renown, Richard Harris, who was born on the Ennis Road.



Bedford Row will soon be graced with a life-sized sculpture of the late Richard Harris

Last year, Limerick City Council was unanimous in its approval for an appropriate, top-level public, permanent commemoration of the twice-Oscar

nominated actor and star of Camelot, The Field, etc but so far, the life-size statue to be sculpted by Limerick born Jim Connolly has not materialised on the chosen city centre location of Bedford Row.

However, while the seaside town of Kilkee is preparing to go en fete to celebrate a gala unveiling ceremony of its statue to the Limerick actor whose family has a long association with the holiday resort, Limerick's mayor, Joe Leddin has given an assurance that Limerick city is pulling out all the stops to publicly honour its illustrious star.

Speaking to the Limerick Post Mayor Leddin said:

"There was unanimous enthusiasm from all the councillors for a statue of Richard Harris and all-round agreement that it should be erected in a prominent city centre location but progress was slowed down a bit when issues surrounding a relocation arose, but everything is now agreed on and the statue will be completed early in the spring and will be erected at the entrance to Bedford Row, just opposite the Bank of Ireland".

Mayor Leddin, who recently called a special meeting of the Cultural Strategic Policy Committee to copperfasten final details for the Richard Harris statue, said there is a general consensus that Bedford Row and its proximity to the site of the now demolished Savoy Cinema, is the most appropriate setting for the sculpture.

"I'm really pleased that the Harris sculpture will be an impressive and attractive work that will be a worthy tribute to the Limerick lad who went to school in the Crescent College, played rugby with Old Crescent and kept returning to his native city despite achieving international recognition on the world stage. It will take pride of place in the newly pedestrianised Bedford Row and I'm delighted that our urban architect, Nicholas de Jong, is designing a special plinth for the statue that will be compatible with the new paving on Bedford Row.

"As mayor of the city, I'm looking forward with huge anticipation to performing the unveiling ceremony of the statue in the spring - it will be an honour for me and one of the most pleasurable functions of my mayoralty. When the Council reconvenes in September I will be discussing with

my colleagues and the officials at City Hall various ways to complement the occasion with appropriate artistic performances, hopefully from our theatre and dance companies and other artistic organisations in the city. Details of these events will emerge when we've further discussed the issue," he said.

Major US promotion of region in Wisconsin

SHANNON Airport will be showcased as a key gateway to Ireland's mid west region at a major tourism drive in the United States later this week.

A promotional team led by Shannon Heritage, Shannon Development, Clare County Council and the Clare Tourist Council, will attend the Milwaukee Irish fest in Wisconsin where the region will be portrayed as a tourist destination to over 135,000 festival goers.

Established by members of the Irish community in 1981, the Milwaukee Irish Fest is renowned as the world's largest Irish culture festival.

"Located on Lake Michigan's shoreline the event showcases Irish music, history, dance, drama, sports and culture and is accessed by tourist agencies such as Failte Ireland and CIE Tours International as an opportunity to market Ireland as a very desirable tourist destination," explains a spokesperson for Shannon Development.

Last year, an estimated 3,000 visitors to the Milwaukee Irish Fest booked holidays to Ireland, choosing Shannon Airport as their preferred gateway to the country.

These visitors included 110 members of the renowned Milwaukee-based Bel Canto Chorus, which performed in Ennis Cathedral last May.

Shannon Development says that the loss of the Shannon stopover has raised concerns over whether the level of transatlantic business at the airport can be sustained. Clare County Council, along with other leading tourism development agencies, has decided to adopt a more proactive approach in a bid to maintain and build on such business by marketing the airport as a key gateway to Ireland and the mid west area.

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