

## New measures at jail to

By **BARRY DUGGAN**

NEW security measures have been introduced into Limerick Prison to stop prisoners from selling urine samples to cheat random prison drugs tests.

Sources, who have spent time within the prison, told the Limerick Chronicle that prisoners who are drug free have sold their urine on to prisoners who feared they would fail the drugs tests.

"Urine samples were sold for money, cigarettes or often even drugs. This would be a way for prisoners who use drugs to cheat the tests, otherwise they would fail," sources confirmed.

In an effort to clamp down on the practice, a secure drug testing unit and surgery has been built in the near-completed €10m wing.

A prison spokesman confirmed that there have been anecdotal stories of urine samples being sold. However the

spokesman went on to say that it was never uncovered we have not found a larger case."

"Known drug use in prison would be tested by prison officers were not enough, prisoners would sell on their urine. The cost and current value of samples varies, it all depends on how much it is worth on the street. Prisoners are doing the drugs packs of cigarettes and lumps of hash would

# Closure of Royal George marks a new era in store

By **EUGENE PHELAN**

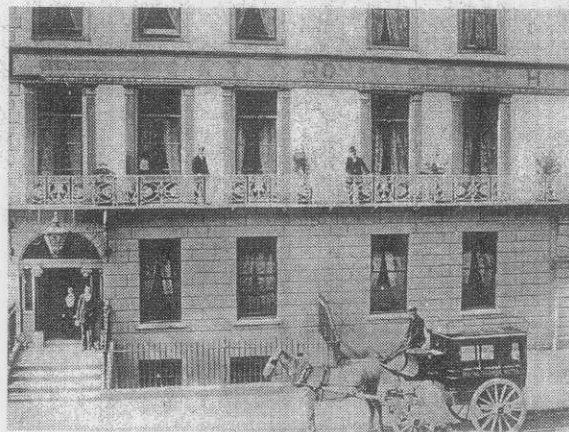
LIMERICK'S oldest hotel, The Royal George, closed this Wednesday after confirmation that it has been sold for around €13 million.

Twenty full time and another 40 part time staff will lose their jobs in the business, which opened its doors back in 1810.

But the good news is that Marks & Spencers are to create as many as 100 jobs in a new state of the art store on the site.

## MARKS & SPENCER

The news comes hot on the heels of confirmation that Jurys Hotel on the Ennis Road was sold for just under €10 million and is to continue as a hotel with no job losses. However, on Wednesday morning angry staff pick-



The Royal George Hotel in earlier times

eted the premises, clearly not happy with their deal.

At a specially convened meeting on Monday, Pat McCann, Chief Executive of the Jury's Doyle Hotel Group, reassured the employees that their jobs were "safe and protected."

Danefield Ltd, which is owned by John Lally who also owns the Harbour Hotel in Galway, has bought the popular Limerick hotel.

Mr McCann told hotel employees that the Limerick Jurys was bought by Mr Lally as a going concern. "It will continue to operate as a hotel and every single job is safe. The terms and conditions of all employees is protected—they will continue to work in the hotel.

It is understood that the staff at the Royal George have been given a months notice.

The new owner is local

property developer Aidan Brooks, who already owns virtually the whole block—except for the AIB bank, Savins and Timberland. Last year Mr Brooks bought part of the George site for €5 million.

The Limerick Leader can confirm that late on Monday night a deal for the sale of the property was concluded at Holmes O'Malley Sexton solicitors.

"It looks as if the plan is to demolish the hotel which is in a bad state of repair. Planning will have to be sought for a new development on the site, which we are told will be a new store for Marks & Spencer," said one property source.

When contacted this morning, a spokesperson at Brook's Properties said Mr Brooks was out of the country. They did however confirm that they have purchased the Royal George Hotel, but would not comment whether or not Marks & Spencers were coming to Limerick.

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