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Farewell: Gerard P Murray toasts the end of an era before he spent his last night in the Limerick Ryan Hotel which closed this Thursday (LL)

End of an era as Ryan Hotel closes

By GERARD SKEHAN

IT'S the end of an era on the north side of the city with the closure of the historic Ryan Hotel this Thursday.

Winding down their activities the day before the hotel shut for good, staff said that it was "sad" and "upsetting" to see such a well known Limerick institution close its doors.

In operation as a hotel since 1940, the historic building served as one of the main hubs for visitors flying into Shannon for several decades.

One long standing guest of the hotel - Gerard P Murray - came down from Galway with his wife, Teresa, this Wednesday especially to bid a fond farewell the Limerick landmark.

"I've come down just to say goodbye to the place and stay the very last night. I've stayed here, on and off, for the past 30 years and I always liked the friendly atmosphere associated with the hotel.

"My wife and I had our wedding reception here and I became quite attached to the place. It's very sad to see it close," he said.

Despite being well established and popular, the Ryan Hotel is being closed to make way for an apart-hotel style development.

Just over a month ago, over 90 members of staff were given the news that the hotel would close in the run-up to Christmas.

Limerick rugby figure Pat Whelan, who runs a major construction and property company, is involved with Budelli, the company who will develop the apart-hotel. It should open its doors sometime next year, having undergone a complete transformation.



John Walsh, head porter, and Dermot Fehily, general manager, are thanked by Gerard P Murray for the service he received in the Limerick Ryan Hotel where he stayed on his regular visits to Limerick over the last 30 years, watched by staff members Keith Madigan, Noel Moloney, Cathal Callanan, James Deedigan, Eleanor Mullane and Declan Daly (LL)

The modern part of the hotel will be demolished, but the original house will be retained as it is a listed structure.

Head porter John Walsh, who has worked at the hotel for the last 33 years, said that he had enjoyed working in the Ryan Hotel and was sad to see it go.

"Today is a very sad and symbolic day for myself, all the staff and the locals in the area. It was an institution and had great character.

"Everyone from Mary Robinson to Garret FitzGerald stayed here over the years. It was the hub of Shannon because it was one of the first hotels between the airport and Limerick city for many years," he said.

According to Mr Walsh, most of the hotel's staff have been lucky enough

to secure employment in other Limerick hotels.

"Thankfully, 80 per cent of the staff have new jobs waiting for them in hotels around the city. I'd like to thank all those hotels for that," he said.

The original wing of the hotel building dates to 1780. Built by one of Ireland's foremost merchant families, the Revingtons, it was subsequently sold to a man called Robert de Rosse in the late 19th century.

It was the Hayes family who first converted the house into a hotel, however, when they bought it in 1940 and changed its name to the Ardhru Hotel.

In 1967 the Ryans acquired it and built the new wing. Despite all the changes over the years, fixtures and fittings from the Revington period can still be seen in the hotel

today. Located on the half landing of the hotel's imposing stairway is a stained glass window

bearing the Revington coat of arms and auspicious family motto 'vise a la fin, to see to the end.'



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Bellringing to bring back memories

FOR the first time in almost 15 years, church bells will ring out in full peal in Limerick this Saturday and echo through the city streets, writes Ger Skehan

required for a full peal. "It'll be three hours of intensity for the ringers. They'll be in their shirt sleeves with the windows open for fresh air. It's all about balance and tim-

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