

features

Kate O'Brien's defence of Spanish democracy, as much as her writing on the town's saint, has prompted Gotarrendura to honour the Limerick author, writes **Alan Owens**

Spain writes a new chapter into Kate O'Brien's history

A SMALL village in central Spain is to honour the memory of Limerick-born author Kate O'Brien by naming a street after her next month.

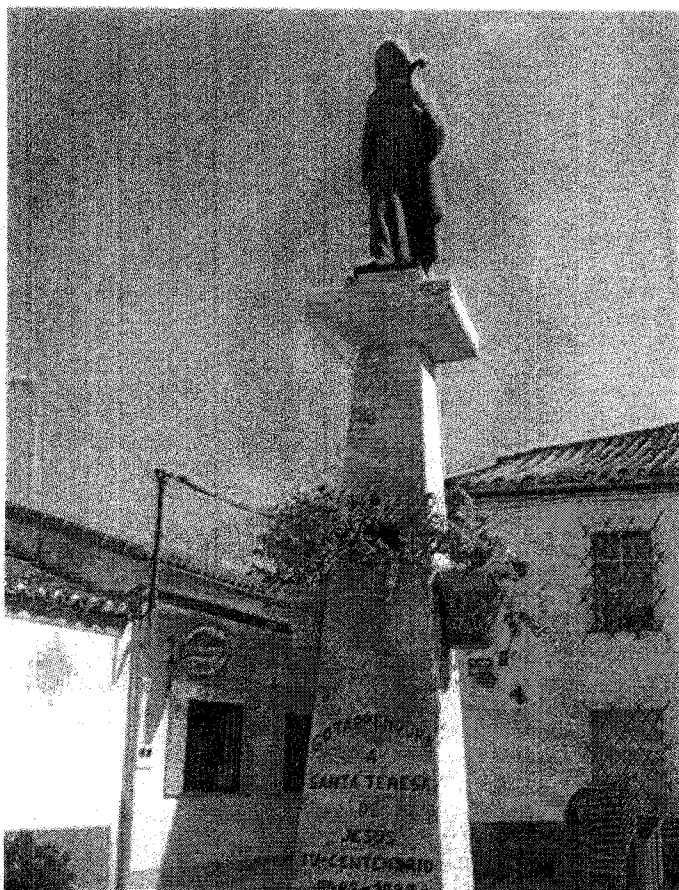
Members of the political parties of the village of Gotarrendura in the Avila region of Spain voted unanimously last October to name a street in the village after the writer to mark her long association with Spain and the land of St Teresa of Avila, about whom she wrote a short biographical monograph of in 1951.

The author, who was born in Limerick in 1897 and began her writing career in 1926, visited the region when she was young, but Spain, and particularly the Basque region, had a profound effect on her when she began to produce novels in later life.

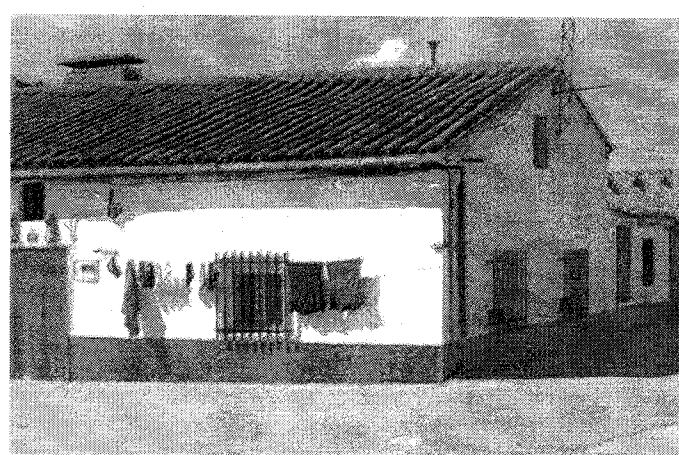
Antonio Sierra, who is from Avila but moved to Ireland in 1968 and established the Spanish Cultural Institute in Dublin, was the first person to approach the small town with the idea of commemorating the author.

"I lived in Ireland for over 30 years, and when I was there I was responsible for promoting Spanish culture in Ireland," explained Mr Sierra.

"I visited Limerick on many occasions and attended the Kate



Clockwise from main: the statue to St Teresa in the village of Gotarrendura, where the saint was born. O'Brien wrote a short biographical monograph of the saint in the 1950s; clothes hanging on the street in the sleepy Spanish burgh; a pilgrimage plaque in Gotarrendura



"Kate O'Brien, in my opinion, was a person that did a lot for Spain and the people and this small homage or tribute will be a way for Spain to recognise her work and her interest in our country. I think she was very progressive and advanced for her time."

O'Brien Weekend. I thought that Spain was in debt to Kate O'Brien because she was very interested, not only in Spanish language and culture, but also in the people, and Spain had a big influence on her novels.

She spoke openly about defending Spanish democracy and freedom when Franco came to power and as a result he banned her books and forbid her from coming to Spain for nearly 20 years. I think this was an injustice."

Gotarrendura is resident to only 200 people and is the birth-

place of the St Teresa.

"Kate O'Brien, in my opinion, was a person that did a lot for Spain and the people and this small homage or tribute will be a way for Spain to recognise her work and her interest in our country. I think she was very progressive and advanced for her time."

Antonio explained that, although the officials were unfamiliar with the author's work, they quickly approved the idea to name a street after her.

"When I presented the case to the mayor and the village offi-

cials, of course they didn't know anything about Kate O'Brien, but they very carefully studied all the material that I sent to them and unanimously approved the proposal which also proves how progressive they are," he said.

Antonio believes this honour could also be beneficial to Limerick.

"This would also be a way to promote Limerick in Spain, and especially the Kate O'Brien Weekend among scholars, and to encourage interested in Irish/Spanish historical relations to attend the weekend," he said.

The ceremony takes place in the village on June 7, but Antonio stated he was unsure if a deputation would travel from Ireland for the ceremony.

"I don't know about that, I know they have received the information and certainly the people and officials from the Avila region will be attending the ceremony. Maybe the Irish ambassador will come, I don't know. But for a small village like that to take such a decision is revolutionary, and I know that Kate O'Brien would have been thrilled," said Mr Sierra.

LSAD fashion designers show their stuff next week

Aine Fitzgerald

YOUNG fashion designers the length and breadth of the country are set to battle it out on the catwalk in Limerick next week in a bid to take home the Bulmers Light Cutting Edge Award.

With their sources of inspiration varying from James Bond to James Joyce's daughter, a total of 34 budding designers will descend on the University Concert Hall on Thursday, May 15, for the annual fashion showcase of the work of Limerick School of Art and Design students.

The final year fashion



Michelle Wilson, Ann Conmy and Magie Danaher are three of the students vying for the final year prize at LSAD PICTURE: OWEN SOUTH

One student who will be hoping for more of the same is Magie Danaher from Shanagolden.

"It would be a real bonus to win the Cutting Edge award," said Magie, fresh from her win in the DIT Toyota Fashion Show Student Designer of the Year Award.

"It is high pressure at the moment as we are all trying to get our collections finished. We will be working right up to the deadline," she continued.

Magie's own collection, 'The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing' is just one of the collections set to feature in the fashion extravaganza. Consisting of

including womenswear, menswear, eveningwear and knitwear. The evening promises to display the wealth of innovative, contemporary talent that is synonymous with the Limerick School of Art & Design.

The judging panel is headed up by acclaimed designer Sharon Wauchob, one of Ireland's greatest successes in the fashion business. The winner will also meet Ms Wauchob who is the only Irish designer to exhibit in Paris Fashion week.

The annual fashion showcase will kick off at 8pm on May 15.



Hooray and all

Greetings from Fermanagh! I'm writing this week's column from a very sunny Fermanagh where I'm taking advantage of the long weekend.

My parents and I spent yesterday evening working in the orchard, clearing the way for fruit picking the coming months. It's great to see the apple blossom on the trees and the rhubarb ready to be cut. The next couple of weeks will see steady production of rhubarb and ginger jam from the gingergirl kitchen so rhubarb-chopping volunteers can sign up any time! The arrival of May brings a glut of wonderful produce from asparagus, new potatoes, watercress, broad beans and spinach to name a few, sure to get down to your local market to make the most of this great season.

ASK GINGERGIRL

Hi gingergirl, I always seem to shy away from cooking fish even though I often get for the fish option when eating out. I would like to cook fish the next time I have friends over and am happy to experiment a little! Have you a recipe I could try?
Lisa B, Croom.

Hi Lisa, This recipe is based on a wonderful Jamie Oliver recipe that I found about five years ago. I have made some changes over time and this is now dinner party favourite.

Serves 4
Roast monkfish with tomato and olive tapenade
1 small jar of sun dried tomatoes
A handful of black olives
1 large bunch of fresh rosemary chopped
Olive oil
Approx 16 slices of parma ham