

The news of the century

THE FIRST issue of the Limerick Leader appeared on Friday, 8th August, 1889. In the hundred years since then the paper has carried many a story, happy and sad, joyful and tragic, humorous and serious, local and national — and even international. It has reported wars and revolutions, elections and sporting events, religious ceremonies and court cases, council meetings and the weekly happenings in the villages and towns of the county. And much more besides. For this series of articles in this Centenary Number of the Limerick Leader, I have selected, almost wholly from the "Leader" files, stories of events, big and small, that made the news in Co. Limerick in the past hundred years, and that reflected the course of Irish history in general.

That first number of the "Leader" gave news of an evening excursion by river to Foynes, in the s.s. *Mermaid*, on Sunday, 11th August. The ship was to leave Mount Kennett Quay, Limerick, at 4 p.m., and was due to arrive in Foynes at 6.30 p.m., when the tide at Foynes would be suitable for sea bathing. The excursionists would return by rail to Limerick. The fare was: cabin and second class rail, 2s. 6d.; deck and third class rail, 1s. 6d.

The horse fair at Newcastle West on the 21st August, 1889, saw some 300 horses assembled for sale in the fairground. Buyers attended from England, Dublin, Cork and other places. The prices for thoroughbred horses were in some cases over £100. The Dublin buyers bought up several carriage horses during the day.

A demonstration was held in Glenshorlick, West Limerick, on the 16th October, 1889, for the purpose of removing the crops off the farms of the tenants in the Glenshorlick Estate, who were under notice of eviction. Official constabulary reported in the *Leader* that the demonstration was a success.

A very large number of people with cars assembled in a short time in a large quantity of hay bales in the town. The hay bales were under notice of eviction. Official constabulary reported in the *Leader* that the demonstration was a success.

On the 3rd April, 1890, Charlotte Grace O'Brien, daughter of William Smith O'Brien, strongly nationalist like her father, and a courageous campaigner for the rights of the poor, was received into the Catholic Church at Foynes, by Very Rev. Fr. J. McGilgan, P.P., V.F. Shanahan, assisted by Rev. Fr. J. Kennedy, C.C., Patrickswell. The sponsors were Aubrey de Vere and Mrs. O'Connor.

Eight families were evicted on the Glenshorlick Estate, West Limerick, on the 20th May, 1890, for non-payment of rents. Fifty police and a detachment of troops from the Westmeath and Wick regiments, assisted by the constabulary, were on duty to see that the evictions were carried out without disturbance.

THE PARNELL crisis, arising from the Kitty O'Shea affair, and the resultant split in the Irish Parliamentary Party, were very much in the news in the early part of 1890. Parnell, supported by the majority of the party, refused to address the party in the news in the early part of 1890. Parnell, supported by the majority of the party, refused to address the party in the news in the early part of 1890.

The second anniversary of Parnell's death as commemorated in Akeson on the 11th October, 1893. At 1.30 p.m. the Independent File and Drum Band led a procession of about 200 people, all wearing the Parnell Memorial badge, through the streets. The town was beautifully decorated; boughs crossed the streets in many places with pictures of Parnell suspended from them.

What was called an "Indignation Meeting" took place at Knockaderry on Sunday, 12th May, 1895. Very largely attended, it was called to protest at the action of certain parties who had sent cattle to graze on the Kilgubbin farm from which Martin Scudlan had been evicted. The meeting unanimously resolved: "That we hereby call upon those parties who have given permission to the Kilgubbin farmer and grazer while evicted from the farm to attend at Mr. Scudlan's house on Sunday, 19th instant, to give an explanation of their conduct." Because of the holding of a cattle fair on the same date, it was reported that the meeting was not as large as it was the previous

COUNTY LIMERICK 1889-1915 ■ EXCURSION TO FOYNES ■ CONCERT AT CASTLEOLIVER ■ INDIGNATION MEETING AT KNOCKADERRY ■ LORD EMILY'S BLACKTHORNS ■ KILMALLOCK BELI ■ LIVED IN THREE CENTURIES ■ ANTI-TREATING LEAGUE ■ SEILS OF KNOCKFERNA ■ CENTENARIANS ■ WORKHOUSE TREATS ■ OLYMPIC WINNERS ■ LOCH GUR TEA GARDENS ■ WORLD CHAMPION FLY CASTER ■ CHANNEL FLEET IN FOYNES ■ GALLIC LEAGUE ACTIVITIES ■ LIGHTNING KILLS TWO ■ TITANIC DISASTER ■ THE PEELER AND PRADAR ■ GREAT WAR ■ ETC ETC



Sarsfield Street, Kilmallock, around 1900.

Limerick goes to war

AUGUST 1914 saw the outbreak of World War 1. And there was the passing of the Home Rule Bill in September — but its operation was suspended until after hostilities in Europe would have ceased. News of the fighting in the Dardanelles figured very prominently in the "Leader" all through the greater part of 1915, from late February until September. The Dardanelles, a long narrow strait, 48 miles long and 3 miles wide, led

from the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara and separated Europe from Asia. The attempted forcing of the Dardanelles by the British Navy had as its objective the capture of Istanbul, capital of Turkey, an ally of Germany in the war. The British suffered terrible losses from the Turkish batteries lining both sides of the strait.

The "Leader" of 28th May, 1915 reported the death of Lance

Corporal O Sullivan of the Irish Guards, a native of Ballybahill, killed in the Dardanelles.

A full-page recruiting advertisement on the front page of the "Leader" on 3rd November, 1915, was headed in bold black letters "IRISHMEN! A Call to 50,000 Irishmen." The 50,000 Irishmen were invited to join the British Army and go off to the war. "Join at once!" the advertisement said. Pay and conditions were specified.

and some bargains were made at between £15 and £17 for services from beginning of March to Christmas.

On the morning of the Fenian Rising (6th March), according to the "Leader" of the 12th March, 1902, the green flag floated from the top of John's Castle in Kilmallock; and when night had set in many young men from surrounding country districts were in town and the normally quiet streets presented an animated appearance.

The police seemed to regard the occasion as one of the great moments. Members of the force from outside stations were drafted into the town, and from 7 p.m. onwards they patrolled the streets. At 8.30 a procession formed up, and led by Kilmallock File and Drum Band, the marchers paraded through the town and around by the "Fenian Route" (i.e. over the Hill) to the churchyard.

The Wyndham Land Act of 1903 did more than all the others to bring about an end to landlordism in Ireland. Under it an advance of £100m was provided to enable Irish tenants to buy out their landlords.

The "Leader" of the 25th March, reporting the introduction of the Bill, said: "This afternoon, Mr. Wyndham, Chief Secretary for Ireland, introduced his Land Bill. The house was crowded in every part, the Press Gallery being packed. Amongst those present were the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of Dunraven and Lord Montagu. Mr. Davitt occupied a seat in the Strangers' Gallery."

The "Leader" of the 31st July 1902 carried a piece about Mrs. Ellen Reidy, who was then living in Old Chapel Street, Abbeyfeale. At that time she was commencing her third century, having been born in 1797. She remembered many stirring events — Capt. Rock and the Rockites, the Whiteboy raids, incidents from the 1848 Rising in West Limerick. During the evi-

THE NEWS OF THE CENTURY



Edited by
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He told the labourers that they had succeeded in winning the right of direct employment on the roads from the District Council only "because they dare not refuse you". "If you had not come here with your blackthorns in your fists," he told them, "you would not have carried it."

And he gave them this advice: "Organise yourselves in every parish and if any contractor takes a road in that parish, meet him by day, meet him by night."

The speech drew a scathing denunciation from Kilmallock District Council.

As 1899 progressed, news of the Boer War figured more and more in the Limerick "Leader". The sympathy of the paper was wholeheartedly on the side of the Boers and against the British. Typical headlines in the paper at that time were: "Terrible picture of the scene at Ladysmith — How the Boers fooled Butler" and "Great Slaughter. Boer Accounts of the Fighting

on the Tugela — The English in Confusion."

The General Election of 1900 resulted in Nationalists being elected for the three Limerick seats: William London for East Limerick; P. J. O'Shaughnessy for West Limerick; Michael Joyce for Limerick City.

The Olympic Games of 1900, held in Paris, saw John Flanagan, of Kibreehy, Kilmallock, win the gold medal for the 16 lbs. hammer throw.

Mass demonstrations by the United Irish League and the Irish Land and Labour Association were common in the early years of the century and reports of them occupied much space in the "Leader". The United Irish League was the organisation that bought together the supporters of the reunited Irish Parliamentary Party under John Redmond, while the Irish Land and Labour Association sought to organise agricultural labourers and small farmers in an effort to improve the working condi-

tions and the social conditions of the people they represented. Mass meetings by one or other of the parties were held regularly in such places as Croom, Kibreehy, Rathkeale, Kilmallock, Bruff, Killybegs.

"Aubrey de Vere dead — A great Poet passes away." That was how the Limerick "Leader" of January 22nd, 1902, announced the death, at his home in Curragehouse, on January 20th, of the famous

Co. Limerick poet. He was in his 88th year, and in recent times had rarely left his home.

THE DEATH of Thomas Naughton, of Fillisteen (part of Knockanes townland), Adare, was reported in the "Leader" of 26th February, 1902. Naughton had emigrated to America some seven or eight years earlier, and when the Boer War broke out he joined John MacBride's Irish Brigade and went to South Africa to fight for the Boers. He later attached himself to General Botha's commandos, attaining the rank of lieutenant. He was killed in the Transvaal, aged 27.

The "Leader" of Wednesday, 5th March, 1902, told how Kilmallock's Annual Hiring Fair had opened the previous Sunday. Boys and girls seeking employment came from Limerick, Cork and Kerry, and farmers looking for workers came from as far away as Clare and Tipperary. The wages asked were in excess of previous years,

dence of her age was available. (Note: She died 6th February, 1905, according to "Leader", 12/2/1905)

A violent storm hit Co. Limerick on the night of February 26/27, 1903. Reports from Abbeyfeale (quoted in the "Leader" of 2nd March) said it was the worst ever experienced. One house was wrecked, and large numbers of others unroofed. The streets were littered with fallen chimneys, slates and tiles. The heavy bell of the church tolled continuously while the storm raged, something never before heard of. A great number of outcrops were killed. In Castleconnell the parish church was severely damaged. Great damage was also reported from the Kilmallock area.

The "Leader" of March 18th, 1903, reported that a branch of the Anti-Treating League had been established in Glin during a parish mission, a short time previously, its purpose being to end the custom of standing rounds of drink. A great many of the parishioners had become members.

An entertainment put on in Tervoe House, the seat of Lord and Lady Emily, on Sunday afternoon, 22nd March, 1903, was enjoyed by a very large crowd of parishioners, and Gaelic League singers and dancers from Limerick Gaelic League, all of whom had come on their lordship's invitation. The entertainment consisted of an Irish concert, private theatricals and tableaux vivants depicting the life of St. Patrick.

On the 17th February, 1904, Patrick Dee, of Meeenell, Barnagh, Newcastle West, was killed by lightning when bringing hay from the hay bagger to a cow shed. On a happier note, June saw the publication of a new English/Irish Dictionary by Timothy O'Neill Lane, a native of Templeglantine. And the year 1904 also saw weight thrower John Flanagan, of Kibreehy, Kilmallock, win his second Olympic gold medal, this time at St. Louis, U.S.

The first big outdoor function organised by the Gaelic League in Co. Limerick was the Seil held by the Rathkeale Coiste Ceantair of the League on the summit of Knockferna on Sunday, 19th June, 1904. According to the very full report in the following day's Limerick "Leader", 4,000 people climbed the hill to be present at the Seil. The programme consisted of a recital by the Rathkeale Brass Band, singing (choral and solo), step dancing and a spirited oration on behalf of the Irish language movement by Fr. Jeremiah Murphy, C.C., Rathkeale.

John Ahern, a labourer, of Kells, Dromcollogher, was said to have reached the age of 100 when he died on the 8th January, 1905. According to the "Leader" of the 19th January, "those who knew him most intimately state that he had never seen a train, and had only once been in his market town, Charleville. He was a hard worker."

1906 was the year that Arthur Griffith founded Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin set out as part of its policy: refusal to co-operate with England in governing Ireland, and the withdrawal of the Irish Members of Parliament from Westminster and the setting up of an Irish parliament. Sinn Féin has been described as preaching "a doctrine of national self-respect and self-reliance."

News of the activities of Gaelic League branches in the county began to appear regularly in the "Leader" from 1906 onwards. The "Leader" of the 3rd of January, 1906, stated that the branch in Castleconnell, started by "a few patriotic young men a short time ago", was making rapid progress, with a membership of 60, and Irish classes being conducted by a Mr. Meany, a member of Limerick Gaelic League, who was giving his services free.

The "Leader" of the 8th January, 1906, told of the annual treat provided at Christmas time for the inmates of the Workhouse (Co. Home) in Newcastle West. The Newcastle West Orchestra was in attendance, and under the baton of Mr. E. J. Kennedy, T.C., provided a very enjoyable programme of music. Songs were rendered by the choral class St. Catherine's Convent and by Mr. T. Kelly and Miss K. Barry.

And a somewhat similar entertainment was put on in Croom Union Workhouse on Sunday evening, 7th January. The inmates there were treated

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Breaking into the running news line

By PADDY MORONEY

THE CONTROVERSIAL election of Mayor John Daly in 1901 gave the Limerick "Leader" its first recorded "break" into fast news.

The election meeting started at 12.10 p.m. on Wednesday, January 23. It was expected to last a while, which it did, bringing it well into afternoon. But the "Leader's" account of it had to be circulated to every newsagent in town, in time to capitalise as early as possible in the afternoon, really — on the public hunger for news of the latest goings-on.

The mechanics of it were present-day: it had to be treated like a "running story", with successive "takes" — relays of news reports — being written up by the reporters and passed to the printers. But unlike today, the printers would then have to painfully hand-set the type, letter by letter, for the presses.

The blow-by-blow report of the bitter arguments is a fine example, and the first on record also for the "Leader", of the obvious use of shorthand in a very fast exchange of words, by a team of reporters, though much of the cut-and-thrust was more sensational than relevant.

Shorthand was relatively new to the world, at the time, after an awkward transition period during which several systems competed for acceptance. Pitman eventually won out, being faster, if somewhat more difficult than the slower Gregg of secretarial use.

It was also the first occasion on record that the Limerick "Leader" was quoted as the gospel authority on what had been said by a party to a controversial matter.

Nevertheless, the narrative had something of a matter-of-fact quality about it, though not entirely without sensationalism at the sub-editing stage. The facts spoke for themselves, and the following are abridged extracts:

"The appearance of the city streets, this morning, would have speedily convinced an outsider that 'there was something on' . . . 'Groups stood at corners, excitedly discussing the situation, and, as the hour approached, a crowd surged down Patrick Street and assembled on front of the Town Hall."

"A Party — described as dock labourers — carried about a green banner and cheered for Sir Thomas Cleve, though where the connection between Sir Thomas and the National Colour came in, was pretty difficult to see."

"When the Town Hall doors were opened, the members of the Council pushed and elbowed each other frantically to gain admission."

"The staircase was quickly stormed, and in less time than it takes to write it, the space outside the barrier was a seething mass of excited men . . . 'It was stated that the military were confined to barracks, under arms, in apprehension of a riot. 'The passions of the men crowded in the streets were strongly inflamed, and perhaps 'stimulated.'"

"As the Mayor approached the entrance with Councillor Michael Frendergast . . . a few police . . . had much to do in making room for the Mayor and Councillors to enter. Inside the door, a number of members of the Night Patrol vainly endeavoured to regulate the entrance . . ."

"So great was the press, that it seemed that the stairs, strengthened by planks, would give way at any moment. Various scuffles took place between the supporters of the rival candidates."

"Outside the barrier, there must have been at least three hundred men — 'gang', perhaps, would be the better word — ready at any moment to inflict physical punishment on those who differed from them. Various incursions were made on the Council floor, which were repelled by the Mayor's sergeants . . ."

"When the rush occurred on the stairs, several Councillors were bundled unceremoniously into the Council Chamber."

" . . . for some time, the Council Chamber was turned into a perfect pandemonium. Cheers, counter-cheers, cat calls, and whistling made such a din that one would think that it could not possibly be created by the human vocal organs. The Mayor said that there were some councillors outside who could not come in (cries of dissent). He regretted very much that this obstruction should take place (loud hisses)."

"A Voice — Take away the Night Watch."

"Another Voice — Take away the batons. 'The Mayor asked that members of the Press should make room for the members of the Council, though it was not apparent that there was any room required in the benches at this time . . ."

"As there was still a councillor unable to get into the meeting, it was decided to keep reading the minutes to give him time to get through the 'gang.' Continues the report:

"Councillor Barry rose and, vehemently addressing the Mayor, said, 'There is no trick. Don't be deluded to any crowd of paid corner-boys here today' . . ."

"While Mr Thomas Donnellan was speaking, there were loud interruptions, and several people attempted to get over the barrier, with the result that the Night Patrol were called upon to eject the intruders. One man was forcibly dragged out, and for the space of five minutes the Chamber was in a state of utmost disorder."

"Mr O'Brien (Irishtown) rose, and was immediately greeted with a storm of hisses and with some cheers for Sir Thomas Cleve. Alderman Joyce — don't blazon your shame before the public anyhow (cheers and interruptions)."

"Mr James Moloney asked whether they were Englishmen or Irishmen to conduct their proceedings in such a manner."

"Mr Donnellan — It is only a repetition of an ancient custom."

"Mr Kett referred to the fact that he was attacked last night. Mr Vaughan said he was sure it was painful to the Mayor to see what he called 'English rabble' present."

"Mr Slattery, seconding . . . said that when the Mayor went forward for the second year of office, he (the Mayor) had then said that he would never be induced to put his name forward again. Why did he not stand by his word? (Cheers and hisses)."

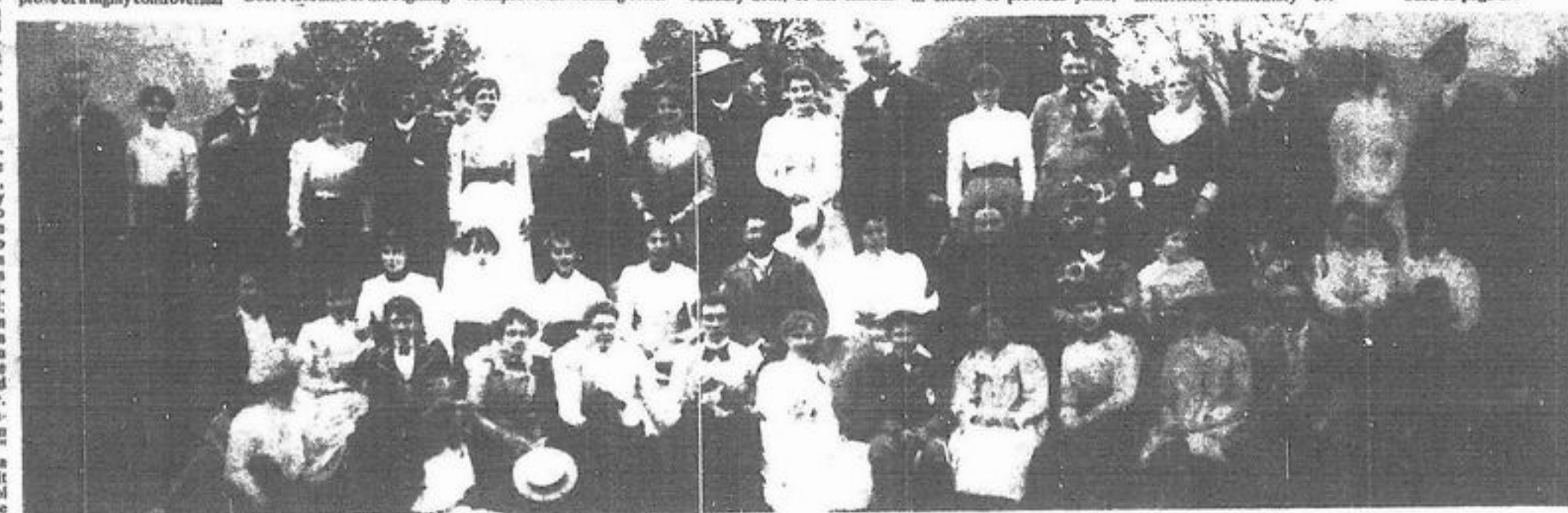
"Mr O'Brien (Irishtown) — I have a copy of the Limerick "Leader" here, and I will read the speech made by the Mayor on the last occasion."

"Mayor — I rule you out of order."

"Mr O'Brien — It is an accusing spirit."

"Alderman Joyce . . . believed the same men who would vote for Sir Thomas Cleve, that day, would not do so unless for a consideration . . ."

The debate ran on into irrelevancy, with Alderman John Daly being eventually re-elected Mayor after a series of ballots.



A picnic in Cratloe Woods, the time of the birth of the Limerick "Leader"; members of the Graham, McNamara, Hickau and Gleeson families.

By degrees Limerick sails ahead to success

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went on to Kilrush House, Knockree, to stay with his friend, John Mulcahy.

Monday, 15th February, 1971, was the day Ireland went over to decimal currency. Limerick city reported no great problems; but then the number of shoppers was small due to a heavy snowfall.

A monument to the civic leaders of Limerick city and county, who lost their lives in the War of Independence, was unveiled at O'Callaghan's Limerick, on Sunday, 7th March, 1971, by Fr. Gerard Wall, son of Sean Wall, Commandant East Limerick Brigade IRA and Chairman Limerick County Council. President de Valera attended the ceremony.

Limerick Soccer Club's cup victory on the 22nd April, 1971, led to great celebrations. According to the following day's "Leader", seldom were such fanatical scenes of jubilation witnessed as were witnessed the previous night when captain Al Hancane, with tears of joy streaming from his eyes, signalled Limerick's greatest moment in their 34 years of existence... the winning of the "Blue Ribband" in Irish soccer for the first time.

The opening of the National Institute of Higher Education on 27th September 1972 was a historic day for Limerick. That evening's "Leader" said: "Before leaders of Church and State and members of the Diplomatic Corps, the National Institute of Higher Education was formally opened today by An Taoiseach, Mr. Jack Lynch, and educational history was made in Ireland."

The ceremony was attended by 1,000 guests, including ambassadors of several countries. An interdenominational service of dedication was conducted by Dr. H. Murphy, Bishop of Limerick; Dr. D. A. R. Caid, Bishop of Limerick; Ardrett and Ashmore, and Dr. Isaac Cohen, Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

What the "Leader" called "the most important day in Limerick's history" took place in Limerick on Sunday, 11th March, 1973, with church services and an industrial parade.

There will be a hero's welcome for the All Ireland Champions who will arrive at Charlotte Quay at approximately 9 o'clock tonight - so declared the Limerick "Leader" of Monday, 3rd September, 1973. On the previous day, Limerick had won the All Ireland Senior Hurling Championship by defeating Kilkenny by 1-21 to 1-14.

News of the death of Dr. Henry Murphy, well known Bishop of Limerick, on 8th October, 1973, was received with the greatest sadness in all parts of the diocese.

In the early hours of the morning of the 7th December, 1974, two well-known establishments in William Street - Limerick, Newman's hardware store, and McCarthy's furniture store, were destroyed by fire. Some neighbouring shops were damaged.

The "Leader" of the 15th May, 1974, gave news of the appointment of Monsignor Jeremiah Newman, President of Maynooth College, as the new Bishop of Limerick. Dr. Newman was consecrated Bishop on Sunday, 16th July, by Cardinal Dermot Ryan, Archbishop of Dublin, in the presence of other prelates present. Also present were President Childers, Ald. Pat Kennedy, Mayor of Limerick, and An Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave.

On the 9th August, 1974, Tom O'Donnell, T.D., Minister for the Gaeltacht, announced plans for the setting up of a new College of Education at Pinnis. The College (now known as Thomond College) would be a national centre of training for teachers of manual, scientific and other special subjects.

The big Limerick story of 1975 was the kidnapping of Dr. Herrema on the outskirts of Limerick city on the 4th October. That evening's "Leader" began the story as follows: "In sensational developments this Friday it became known that Feranah chief, Dr. Teiki Herrema, had been kidnapped. After a prolonged search in many parts of the country, Dr. Herrema's whereabouts were finally discovered, and he was rescued. He was given a civic reception in the Savoy on Sunday, 7th December, 1975."

1975 brought bad news to Limerick with the closing of the Limerick Clothing Factory, which had been operating in Limerick for well over a century.

THERE WAS a memorable Civic Week in Limerick in March 1976, which was formally opened by President Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh. Highlight of the week was the pageant, "Reverence in the Night", written by Bryan Mac Mahon, and produced by Martin Deasy. The 1977 Civic Week was the occasion of a Golden

voice of Ireland competition added to the programme.

Fr. Aengus Buckley, Dominican priest and celebrated painter, who was attached to St. Saviour's, Limerick, died on 30th August, 1978.

On 31st October, 1978, Munster created rugby history at Thomond Park, Limerick, by beating the 9th New points to nil. In doing this Munster became the first Irish side ever to beat the All Blacks.

The "Leader" of Saturday, 29th September, 1979, was a "Papal Special", with words of welcome in Polish and Irish, WITAJ - FAILLTE, prominent on its front page. Monday, 1st October, 1979, was, of course, the never-to-be-forgotten day when the Pope, John Paul II, visited Limerick. He is greeted by the greatest hosting Limerick had ever seen - an estimated 300,000 people, all packed into Greenpark Racecourse, where the Pope addressed them in a memorable discourse.

It was in 1979 too that Denis Allen wrote "Limerick You're A Lady".

The Belltable, Limerick, was formally opened on the 21st April, 1981, by President Hillery. The distinguished attendance included Michael O'Leary, chairman Abbey Theatre Company, James Whelan, chairman Arts Council; Colin O'Brien, director Arts Council; playwright Brian Friel. After the opening the Abbey Players staged Brian Friel's "The Faith Healer".

The twinning of Limerick city with the French city of Quimper was reported in the "Leader" of the 21st March, 1981, which said: "In an impressive assembly of church authorities, local bodies, business communities and educational interests, Limerick city was this week twinned with the French city of Quimper at the Quimper Hall." The twinning document was signed by the Mayor of Limerick, Councillor John Coady, and Mr. Marc Boccia, Mayor of Quimper.

The new Church of Ireland Bishop, Dr. W. Sheehan, was consecrated in St. Mary's Cathedral, on 25th March, 1981. "The famous bells of St. Mary's," said the "Leader" report, "pealed in triumph for as hour after hour to mark the consecration of Bishop Sheehan, who was consecrated in St. Mary's Cathedral, on 25th March, 1981."

There was widespread regret at the sudden death of Tomás Mac Diarmada, Limerick City Manager, on 7th February, 1982. The huge funeral procession that accompanied his remains to Mount St. Oliver cemetery bore ample testimony to the respect in which he was held.

The great annual Solemn Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Rodesport church, Limerick, in June, 1983, was attracting congregations totalling 60,000 daily.

The people of Limerick city and surrounding areas were saddened at the closure of Woolworths on Saturday, 6th October, 1984. Some 40 part-time and full-time staff lost their jobs as a result of the closure. Woolworths had been in Limerick since 1921.

The "Leader" of Saturday, 14th December, 1985, carried a report of the entertainment of St. Rev. Edward Dalling, an Bishop of Limerick, Ardrett and Ashmore, in St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, the previous Sunday.

DRAT LAWLESS, 60-year-old Limerick city man, received a barefaced welcome when he flew back to Shannon on the 7th August, 1986. Pat had crossed the Atlantic in a private 57-day solo voyage, from Limerick, to Newport, Rhode Island, in his 26 foot boat, "Inchiquin", the first Irishman to sail solo across the Atlantic. Pat was in the news again, when, having completed his second solo Atlantic crossing - this time from west to east - he stepped ashore at Turbot Jetty, on 3th July, 1987, happy and fit, after a 31-day gruelling sail from Rhode Island US.

The fight to keep Barrington's Hospital was waged with vigour and determination from the beginning of 1988; but on the 24th February, 1988, the Government made the final decision and announced that Barrington's would close on the 31st March.

On Monday, 30th May, 1988, the new Shannon Bridge was opened by An Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, T.D.

On the 14th January, 1989, Mary O'Rourke, T.D., Minister for Education, announced full university status for N.I.H.E., Limerick.

And on Thursday, 25th May, 1989, in glorious sunshine, Pat Lawless, intrepid Limerick sailor, set out on his Round the World Voyage from Limerick Docks, in his 25 foot cruiser, Limerick Leader 100, a name, that, like this special commemorative issue of the paper, celebrates the centenary of the Limerick

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"with several little luxuries, including sweet cake, oranges, tobacco, snuff, etc." The children were also treated to a pleasant treat. Songs were rendered by some of the officers and patients.

AN ADVERTISEMENT in the "Leader" of Friday, 2nd February, 1900, announced that a Grand Concert and Lantern Entertainment would take place in Effin Schoolhouse on Sunday evening, 11th February. Exhibitions of Irish dancing would be given by Messrs. Fisher, Charville; Burke and Pillion; Effin; Henebry, Bruff; Ambrose, Croom, and Mac Auliffe, Banogue. The latter was Maurice Mac Auliffe, a famous dancing master, who practised his art in the Bruree/Dromin Athleas/Banogue area and surrounding districts.

The advertisement also announced that selections on the Irish pipes would be given, as well as music from the gramophone and from a string band.

A short note in the "Leader" of 2nd May, 1906, said: "There was jubilation in the Irish camp at Leahy's high jump, winning by a leap of 5 ft 11 ins." This was the occasion of Con Leahy's winning of a gold medal at the Olympic Games in Athens. Leahy was a native of Creggane, Co. Limerick.

An item headed "Romantic Lough Gur" in the "Gossip" column of the "Leader" on the 15th August, 1906, had this to say: "This beautiful and romantic spot at last becoming a popular pleasure resort on Sundays. Situated within a few miles of Bruff, on the Limerick side, it is being visited Sunday after Sunday by Limerick citizens and residents of Bruff, Kilmallock, and the surrounding districts."

"Perhaps," the "Leader" said, "the reason it has become so popular of late is because of the Tea Gardens recently established by Mrs. Riordan. Here luncheons and teas are served in excellent style by the proprietress. Within a few years of the Gardens is the 'Enchanted Lake' of the Dreamlands."

Home Rule had been very much in the news since the 1870s, it being the main objective of the Irish Nationalist Party sitting in the English House of Commons. A Home Rule Bill was defeated in the Commons in 1886; a second Home Rule Bill was defeated in the Lords in 1893. In 1894 there were hopes that a third bill would shortly be introduced and, responding to that hope, an editorial in the "Leader" of 31st August, 1906, spoke of "the three Kingdoms" being "afflame with the burning question of Home Rule."

Castleconnell was a name for long synonymous with fishing, so how appropriate therefore it was that the Limerick Leader of 2nd November, 1906, should be able to tell its readers that: "Mr. John Enright, World Champion Fly Caster, returned to his home last night from the U.S. after his recent brilliant achievement in defeating all comers and winning the championship of the world by 7 feet. He was met at the railway station at Castleconnell by a large crowd of fellow-parishioners and received a most enthusiastic reception. A torchlight procession was formed and accompanied him to the hotel where the welcome was renewed with even greater enthusiasm. During the night the entire village was illuminated and tar barrels blazing at different points in honour of the occasion."

Much excitement was caused by the arrival of the Channel Fleet of the British Navy at Foynes in November 1906. The "Leader" report of the 7th November said: "The Channel Fleet arrived at noon yesterday (Tuesday) and cast anchor in the Roads of the pier, the battleships and cruisers of the squadron as they came slowly to their anchorage ground presenting a magnificent appearance. Ten battleships and two cruisers were included in the squadron that has arrived, and they are reported as follows: Exmouth, the flag-ship of the newly-appointed Commander of the Channel Fleet, Lord Charles Boscawen; Caesar, Ocean, Abernethy, Vengeance, Triumph, Prince George, Jupiter, Russell and Cornwallis, battleships, with the cruisers Dido and Juno. Owing to the prevalence of bad weather... the Fleet... were some three hours coming up the Shannon from Loop-head to the anchorage that is to be occupied until the vessels take their departure on Monday next. The ships will be on view to visitors from today, by which time, it is understood, the remaining vessels of the Fleet will have taken up their stations in the harbour."

Gaelic League activities and the affairs of the Irish language made a great part of the news in 1907. In April there was a Gaelic League concert and play in Monaghan, and a Gaelic League concert in



Templeplanning. In May there was an Irish League concert in Castleconnell and an acaeracht in Abbeyfeale. The Thomond Feis was held in Limerick city in June, and in July there was a feis in Rathkeale, an acaeracht in Foynes and a Grand Irish Night in Castleconnell. In September new branches of the Gaelic League were established in Bruree, Ballygran and Athleas. An acaeracht was held in Bruree in September, and one in Ballygran in October. An editorial in the Limerick Leader around that time, commenting on the enthusiasm for the Irish language then sweeping Co. Limerick, said:

"Nowhere in Munster has the Gaelic League movement made such rapid strides as in Co. Limerick. West Limerick, represented by Rathkeale, Foynes, Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale, had long been to the fore; and so have Castleconnell, Athleas, Croom, Bruff, Kilmallock, Kiltelly, in the eastern part of the county. Supporters of the League in these districts have done excellent work in the interests of the movement."

On December 29th, 1907, Fr. William Casey, P.P., of Abbeyfeale, died. His able and courageous championship of the tenant farmers against the injustices of landlordism at the time of the Land War made him one of the best loved and most respected priests in Ireland. Twelve thousand people attended his funeral in Abbeyfeale on the 2nd January, 1908. Dr. Edward O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, presided at the High Mass and officiated at the graveside.

IN THE Olympic Games held in London in 1908, two Co. Limerick men won gold medals: John Flanagan, Kiltree, Kilmallock (his third gold medal), throwing the hammer; and T. J. Aherne, Athleas, in Hop, Step and Jump.

And again in 1908, as in 1906 and 1907, there were the many Gaelic League activities: an Irish concert in Glin in January; new branches of the Gaelic League established in Rahoonagh and Ashford in April; an acaeracht in Bruff in June; and an acaeracht in Bruree



rick's hay were burned near Bruree, and hay was also burned near Glin. Lightning struck the house of Fr. Kirby, P.P., at Patrickswell and set it on fire. A second violent thunderstorm hit West Limerick early on the morning of the 12th August. It was particularly bad in the Glin area; the peals of thunder were deafening, while lightning flashed with such frequency and vividness that night was turned into day.

The great Titanic disaster made the lead story in the "Leader" of the 15th April, 1912. On her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York, this, the world's largest ship at the time, and reputed to be unsinkable, hit an iceberg on the night of the 14th April and sank with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. Among people from Limerick who were drowned were: Patrick Colbert, Kilkonea, Abbeyfeale; Patrick Dooley, Patrickswell, Bruff; James Scanlan, Rathkeale; and from Limerick city: Nora Keane, Daniel Keane, Patrick Lane, Nellie O'Dwyer, John Kennedy, T. Morgan.

The rescued included Bertha Moran and Mary Madigan from Askeaton. The "Leader" of the 12th June, 1912, told the story of Peadar O'Annrachain chief Gaelic League Organiser for Munster, who, after an acaeracht in Abbeyfeale on Sunday, 9th June, called at Leahy's licensed premises, where he was accosted by a policeman, who asked him for his name, but refused to accept it when given it in Irish and demanded it in English. Peadar refused to give it in English, and was taken to the barracks and detained for some hours until released on the order of Mr. Flanagan, R.M. He was subsequently charged with being on a licensed premises and with refusing to give his name, but both cases were dismissed. Brian O'Higgins wrote a song about the event:

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A monument to the Kilmallock Fenian, Patrick O'Riordan, who died as the result of the hard treatment he had received in prison, was unveiled in Kilmallock churchyard on Sunday, 2nd November 1913, by Sean Mac Diarmada. Piaras Bessalio had travelled from Dublin with Mac Diarmada (a future signatory to the 1916 Proclamation), and both spoke after the unveiling ceremony. Both were to be involved in the formation of the Irish Volunteers later that month.

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Peaceful Castleconnell in 1904.

President

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called "Dromcollogher's Day of glory" was on Sunday, April 20, 1969, when President de Valera came there to present the town with the premier award in the Glór na nGael competition. Some 2,500 people were present, including Monsignor (now Bishop) Newman, a native of the parish; Fr. (now Cardinal) O'Fiaich, Maynooth, and Brendan O'Banachalla, Uachtarán Chomhaidh Náisiúnta na Gaeilge.

At the General Election of June, 1969, the Limerick results were: East Limerick, Fianna Fáil: Desmond O'Malley, Michael Herbert; Fine Gael, Tom O'Donnell; Labour, Stephen Coughlan; West Limerick, Fianna Fáil: Gerard Collins, Michael Noonan. Fine Gael, Denis Jones.

In the Six Counties, 1969 was, of course, the year that saw the attacks on the Civil Rights marches and the seige of the Bogside in Derry. The long years of discrimination against the Northern Nationalists had filled the powder keg that now exploded. The Northern conflict had begun - and it still goes on.

The first Féile na Máighe, a bilingual festival commemorating the Gaelic poets of the Máighe and devoted to Irish culture, was opened by Bryan Mac Mahon in the town hall in Croom, on Friday evening, April 10, 1970. "Tubs with flowers and shrubs on the pavements," began the report in the "Leader" of the 18th April, "bunting spanning the streets... flags flying from many houses. That was Croom last weekend for Féile na Máighe. The Féile, organised by Cumann na Máighe, was an outstanding success."

President and Mrs. Nixon arrived at Shannon Airport on Saturday, October 3, 1970, and travelled by road, via Limerick City, to Kilrush House, Knockree, to spend the weekend with their friend, John Mulcahy. About 200 people were waiting to greet the visitors at Kilrush.

There was good news regarding the establishment of the Ferenka factory at Ballyvarra, East Limerick, in the "Leader" of Wednesday, October 28, 1970, which stated that on that morning "an informal ceremony, Mr. H. F. Wesenagen, executive vice president of Enka-Glanzstoff, cut the first sod for the factory foundation."

Dutch promoters of Ferenka Ltd. visited the site where the steel cord factory was to be located. The "Leader" of the 16th January, 1971, declared "It's boom time in East Limerick" as it reported that the multi-million Ferenka factory was now under construction at Ballyvarra.

The 1970s, like the 1960s, was a decade of many changes in Ireland, one of the most talked of being the change-over to decimal currency on Monday, Feb. 15, 1971. August, 1971 saw the introduc-

tion of Internment in the Six Counties. And on October 3rd of that year a great light went out in Ireland with the death of Seán Ó Riada, a native of Adare, and a musician and composer of immense talent who changed the whole scene in the field of Irish traditional music.

Across the front page of the "Leader" on Wednesday, Feb. 27, 1972, ran, in large letters, the headline "A Nation is Mourning." The mourning was for the 13 men shot dead in Derry the previous Sunday, "Bloody Sunday."

No Monday or Wednesday editions of the "Leader" were published during the period 17th to 26th April, 1972, because of an ESB strike. The Referendum as to whether we should join the EEC was held on the 10th May, 1972, and resulted in an overwhelming "Yes" vote. In Limerick the result was: East Limerick, Yes, 25,957, No, 7,280. West Limerick: Yes, 22,971; No, 3,432.

THE OPENING of the de Valera Museum in the old schoolhouse in Bruree, on Sunday, October 8, 1972, was a memorable day in the village. President de Valera, a former pupil of the old school, himself performed the opening ceremony, in the presence of a huge crowd which included Gerard Collins, T.D., Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, and Desmond O'Malley, T.D., Minister for justice. Prior to the opening, the President attended a Mass in Irish in Bruree Church, at which the homily was preached by Monsignor (now Bishop) Newman.

January, 1973 saw Ireland's accession to the EEC, a development that has brought many fundamental changes, especially regarding the economy, in its wake. There was a General Election in March, 1973, with the following results in Limerick: East Limerick, Fianna Fáil: Desmond O'Malley, Michael Herbert; Fine Gael, Tom O'Donnell; Labour, Stephen Coughlan. West Limerick: Fianna Fáil: Gerard Collins, Michael Noonan. Fine Gael, Denis Jones. In the ensuing Coalition Government, Tom O'Donnell became Minister for the Gaeltacht.

Elections and referenda kept on recurring. At the Presidential Election in June, 1973, Erskine Childers defeated Tom O'Higgins. This was how the voting went in Limerick: East Limerick, Childers, 16,013; O'Higgins, 16,952. West Limerick: Childers, 16,013; O'Higgins, 12,772.

There was a petrol shortage in December, 1973, but the "Leader" of December 8, told how "Knockaderry's pony express beats the petrol shortage." Twelve year old Marrieta Murphy and her pony Scamp, the report said, carry out delivery of telegrams. Marrieta's father, Paddy Murphy, was the local sub-postmaster.

The flood of August 11th and 12th was followed by a disastrous harvest; in fact, the sun was hardly seen again for the rest of that year. The army was sent out to help in saving the harvest, and the people of the towns and cities also rallied to the help of their rural brothers. "Rush to save Harvest - City Workers in Wheat Fields" was the heading in the following week's "Leader" read, "Fine Gesture - Town closes down to help in Harvest Work". The town in question was Newcastle West.

Devastating flood, disastrous harvest, and then a ferocious winter - that was the sequence of events from August 1946 until April 1947. Indeed, so bad was that winter of 1946/47, with continuous freezing temperatures and recurring snow falls, that there were some people who thought we were at the commencement of another Ice Age! And then, after all that, we got a sweltering but rather late summer.

At the General Election in February 1948 the following were the Limerick results:

Hard Times

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coaching days of the last century. The coach drew up at Cruises Hotel, once Binnocni's stopping place."

Included on board were Lord Adare, Lady Charles Cavendish and the Hon. Frank Pakenham. Mungrat College was the venue for Muintir na Tire's annual Rural Week in 1942; the Week ran on the 8th to 15th August.

... opening address was given by Fr. John Hayes, founder of Muintir na Tire; and during the week the following papers were read: "The Need for Rural Organisation", by Rev. P. Mac Kevitt, Ph.D.; "The Parish as a Unit of Rural Organisation", by Rev. E. J. Coyne, S.J.; "Rural Playtime", by Rev. R. Wyse-Jackson, Litt.D. The Taoiseach, Mr. de Valera, was among the distinguished visitors attending the week.

A General Election in June 1943 saw de Valera and his Fianna Fáil party returned yet once again to power. The results for Limerick were: Fianna Fáil: Dan Bourke, Doncha O'Brien, Tadgh Crowley, Robert Ryan, Fine Gael: James Reidy, George C. Bennett; Labour: Michael J. Keyes.

In 1943 the tide of war began to turn against Germany and her allies; and the beginning of the end came with the allied landings