

A classical home for Sarsfield Credit Union

By PETULA MARTYN

THE modern renovation of the interior of the classical building, known to the people of the city as the Stone Jug, is a beautiful contrast to the building's 19th century exterior.

It is the new home of Sarsfield Credit Union, and many of its members queued to be the first to deposit their money when it opened to the public this week following extensive renovation and refurbishment work.

The credit union sold their former premises along with the Belltable Arts Centre to Limerick City Council which facilitated the purchase of the listed building from Trustees Savings Bank in 2007.

The building has been transformed, and manager, Sharon Mulkern said it was worth the wait. Skylights brighten the banking hall, and Ms Mulkern was pleased to open the front door to waiting members who were visibly impressed with the new interior when they stepped inside

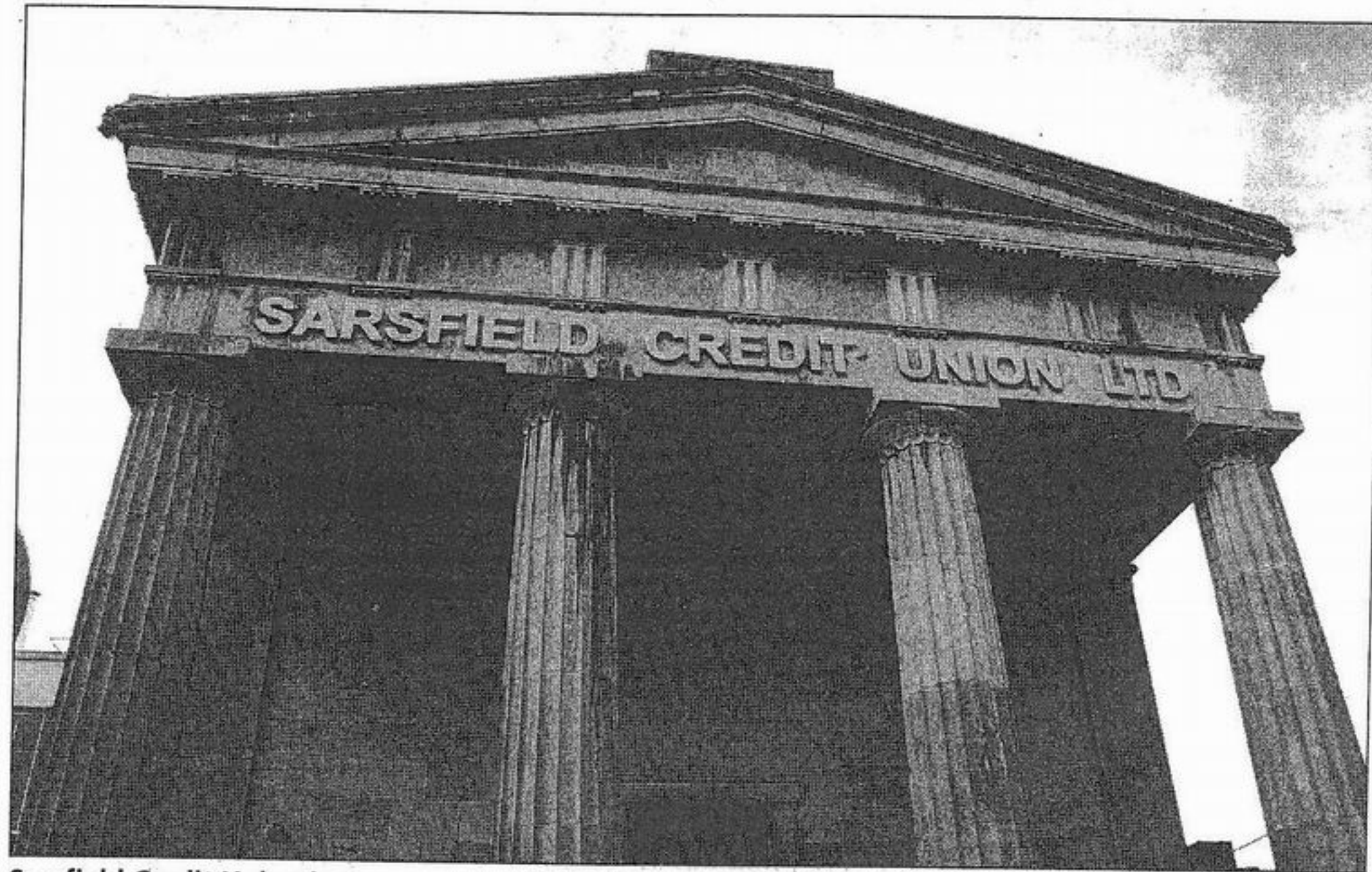
on Monday afternoon.

"We are absolutely thrilled, we couldn't be happier with how it has turned out and what has been done to bring this corner back to life. We're very proud of the finish and the restoration. Everything has been conserved and the building has been brought back to what it should be," she told the Limerick Leader.

The credit union is now more accessible to members - some of whom have been members since it opened in 1962 - who previously had to walk up two flights of stairs when it was based on O'Connell Street. Access also posed a problem for parents with children in buggies.

"It just wasn't who we are. We want to be open and friendly and accessible to everybody," Ms Mulkern said.

The building was originally designed to house Limerick Savings Bank whose policy was to encourage ordinary Limerick people to invest and save. This is an ethos shared by Sarsfield Credit Union. "We are by the members, for the



Sarsfield Credit Union is now open on Upper Glentworth Street

members, not for profit and that's what it is all about, and volunteer run," she said.

Chairman Flan O'Neill was thrilled to see the

doors finally open on Monday. He has been a member since the credit union opened almost 50 years ago.

"I'd like to compliment

Limerick City Council. The arrangement whereby we were able to sell the premises on O'Connell Street including the Belltable

Theatre which was bought by Limerick City, that enabled this place to be acquired and refurbished and we're absolutely delighted."