

# €2m revamped market finally sets out its stall

Anne Sheridan

**LIMERICK'S** Market Trustees can't change the weather, but the revamped Milk Market is set to provide greater coverage for traders and customers when it reopens at its historic site this Saturday.

After a 10-month relocation, the Milk Market will open its gates to the public this weekend following a €2m upgrade over two years of planning and construction.

It is hoped the revamped market will attract a minimum of 750,000 visits per year, and will be officially launched in two months' time.

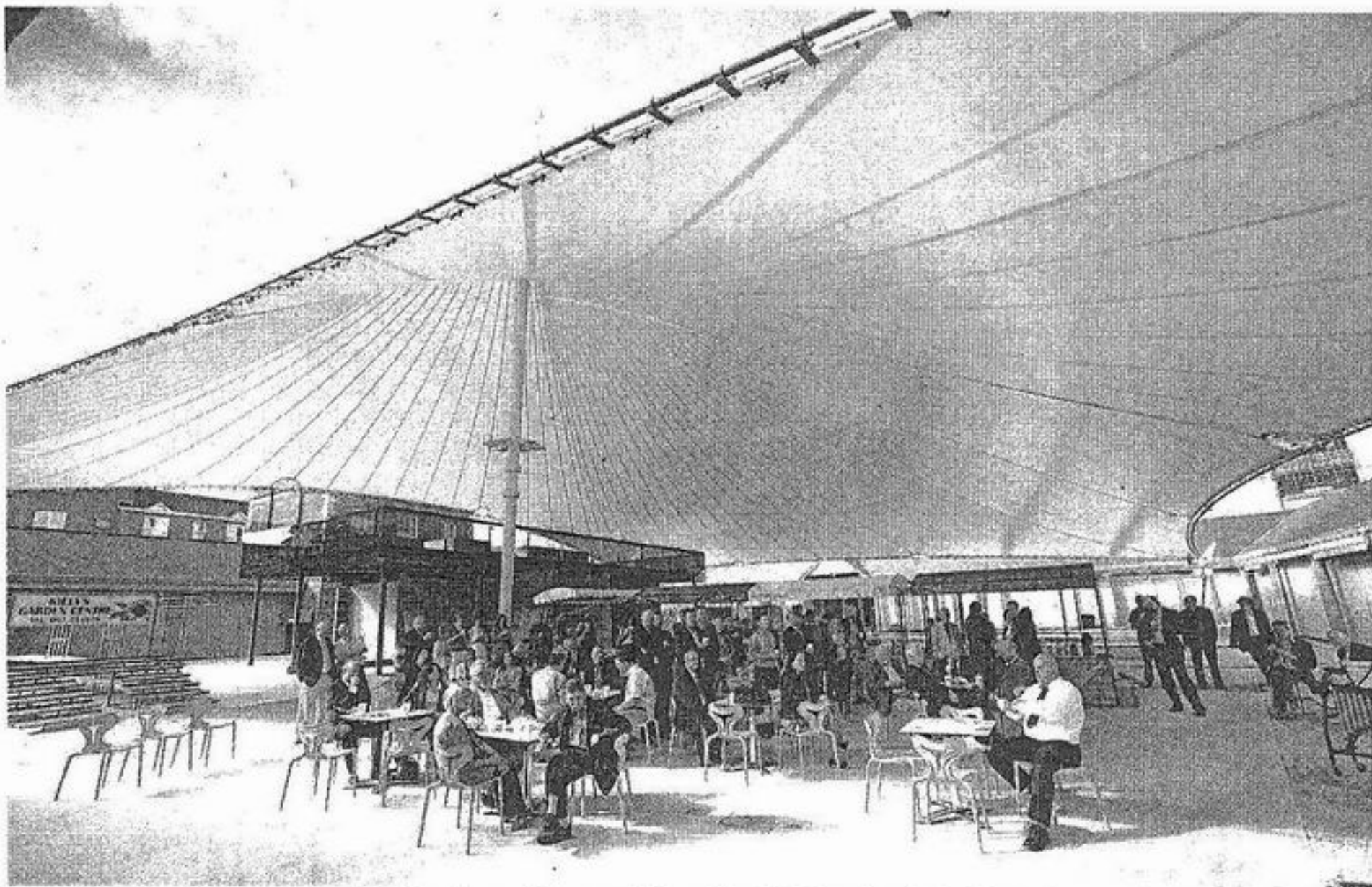
More than 200 traders applied for a stall in and around the market, with the majority selected from Munster, with traders travelling from Skibbereen in Cork and Offaly to attend the prestigious market.

Speaking at a business launch of the new venue, David O'Mahony, chairman of Limerick Market Trustees, said the project had been seven years in the making.

"This is a local project, done with local labour and professionalism. It was done on time, and on budget, without a cent of State aid. It was all down to the market trustees resources," he said.

The old market, which dates back to 1852, had "loads of character, little quirks, was a little bit chaotic, with loads of cars and lots of fun for five hours a week."

However, that is set to change with markets on



**Magnificent setting:** guests enjoy the the ambiance at a breakfast in the Limerick Milk Market, which reopens this weekend following a 2m revamping

Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and a month-long calendar of diverse events for different days of the week yet to be confirmed.

Three months ago a canvas canopy, weighing a 1.8 tonne, was hoisted on to a 79-foot-high steel column, comparable in height to an eight-storey building.

The redesigned all-weather venue has introduced a new mezzanine seating area overlooking the market's main courtyard, among other new features. It was originally intended to be a restaurant, but Mr O'Mahony said this may happen yet.

"There will be lots of finishing touches over the next couple of weeks and months," he added.

He urged traders, and Limerick at large, to embrace the new market.

While the revised market attracted some controversy from a number of traders, he said: "We've done this because we're meant to run markets, not car parks. Nobody has done it like this before, no one in Ireland has a space like this and we're proud to think that Limerick can lead the way."

The market will have a capacity for up to 60 traders, and among the newcomers will be

Nenagh-based Country Choice delicatessen and Ponaire Coffee from Annacotty, who will start operating full-time, retail outlets at the market. Long-standing Milk Market traders, the award-winning Sallymills Artisan Cakes & Desserts, and the popular, Fleur de Sel Crêperie, will expand their operations and occupy the two remaining new retail units there. The venue will also be promoted for other complementary, midweek markets and events such as antique and fashion shows, classical concerts and pet shows.

The following markets will operate at the

revamped site:

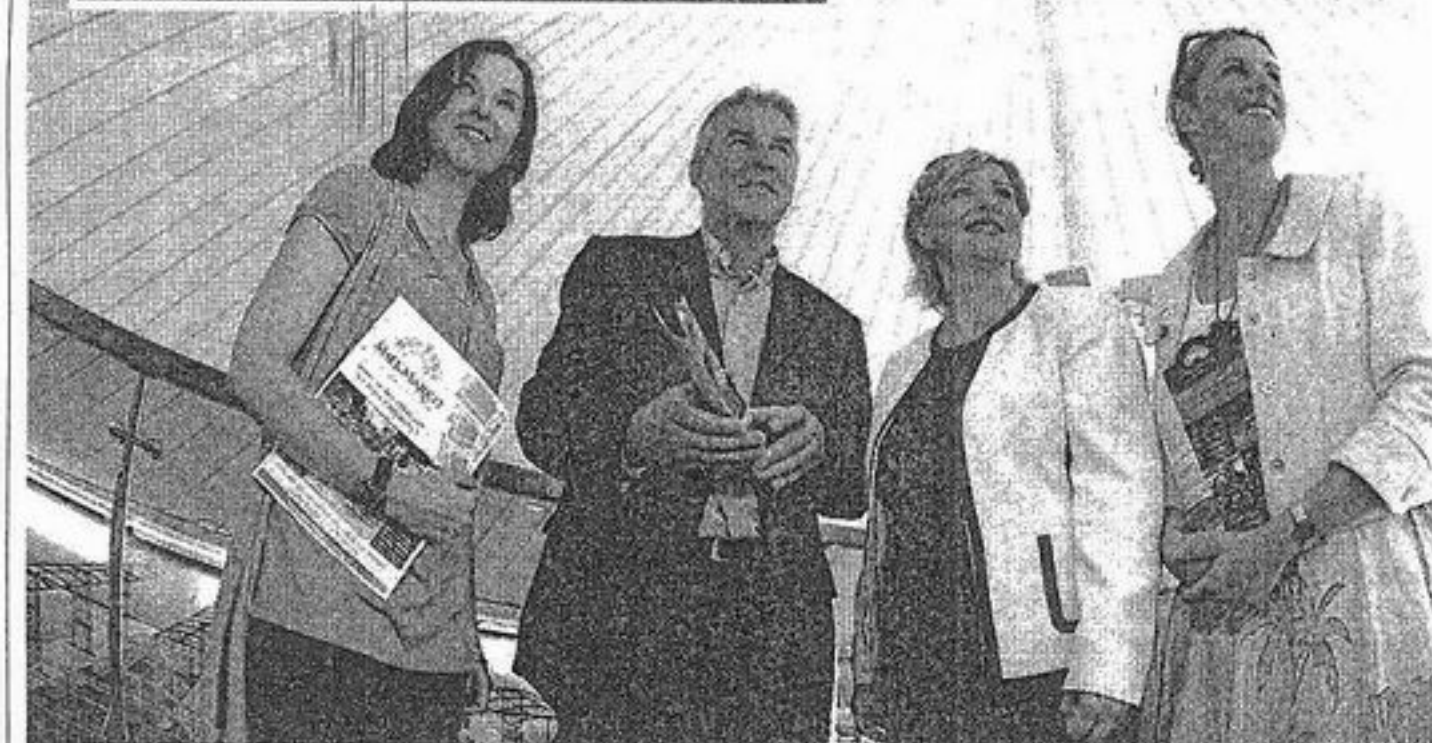
**Fridays:** City Market from 11am to 7pm, offering fresh flowers, fine foods, crafts and bites-to-go.

**Saturdays:** Famous Food Market from 8am to 4pm each week.

**Sundays:** Riverside Variety Market, formerly the Bedford Row Market, will showcase a wide range of arts and crafts, fine antiques and food-to-go from 11am until 4pm.

**Bank holiday Mondays:** a new Flower and Garden Market will operate on these days from 11am to 4pm.

Log on to [www.Milk-MarketLimerick.ie](http://www.Milk-MarketLimerick.ie) for more details.



**Looking over the Milk Market,** Maria Kelly, CEO, Limerick Chamber; David O'Mahony, chairman, Limerick Market Trustees; Karen Brosnahan, Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau, and Laura Ryan, Limerick Co-ordination Office. Inset: the market's gigantic canvas top dominates the surrounding skyline



**David O'Mahony, chairman of Limerick Market Trustees, and John Rice, Limerick Market Trustees, under the giant centre pole that supports the canvas roof**