



Behind the scenes at Limerick Co. Libraries

—A Service of National Value
'LIMERICK LEADER' SPECIAL
 (By Tom Tobin)

of the past most people carry in their minds the picture of a library as an old building filled with and gloom and the curved spines of withering men concentration . . . never making a sound. But the truth is far removed from such a picture as when I visited the County Library Headquarters in Limerick. It was the County Librarian, Mr. Dan Doyle, I, who took me through the many intricacies of a complex.

time about the numbers of miles they live in number of schools, the number of books, the number of departments and miles of shelving that his staff. There were calculations, upkeep costs, the of large quantities of almost deadlines . . . and on.

most was aroused at the long ribbon-lines of books making their way from the local library by rambles throughout the county. It seemed so remote the idea that I of the County Library tries to see what goes on behind the scenes.

thirty or forty thousand occupied almost every square foot of the 3,000 square feet of the Co. Librarian's scale map were orange blue pins, red pins and green lines—it gave an accurate picture of all points in the library gave serenity throughout the county.

Doyle told me that it was his job to acquire every volume of books, to keep the books balanced as between the interests, to get the books fast and then to spread across the county as far as possible. He has the responsibility for all the books, the cost, the of the distribution system, the acquisition of building the main part of book-keeping and the general supervision of the entire system.

There is a staff of fifteen at the headquarters, thirty branch librarians in country schools and seventy voluntary helpers in rural areas . . . What do they do to answer to this was — and see.

led up a long aisle, like a forest of tall trees where all the stems were made of book stacks that led to the right and left. The aisles appeared and disappeared between the bookshelves, laden, always purposeful, beside the rear entrance, vehicles were waiting for the books. The powerful library was already preparing to move away. Driver

ren had written to her giving their likes and dislikes. It was interesting to read of the child who faulted Enid Blyton because the mothers in her stories spoiled their children and because it was always the same kind of food the children brought on picnics.

Back in the heart of the library again, I met Miss Roisin de Nais, Assistant Librarian and Deputy to the County Librarian. She showed me all the catalogues and the indexes which allow her to trace where any book is at a moment's notice. Roisin is Chief Bibliographer, Cataloguer and Classifier. Her Bibliography of the Limerick History was published last year. She deals with nearly three thousand special requests every year.

Car number two was outside the door loading about 600 books. Library Assistants Helen Maher and Bridie Murphy were preparing to go to Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale. Helen told me "We go first to Newcastle West where we unload and hope that we get a few of the young lads to help us. We check, divide according to classes, we must choose the books we take away from the shelves of the branch library . . . all of which takes a lot of time. We must be sure that we do not leave the branch short of books on any important subject. Then we must check the branch accounts, take requests, load up and head for Abbeyfeale where the same thing happens over and over again . . . But it won't really. The people are just that much different at every stop and the books they want to discuss are different, too."

Miss Josephine McCabe, Assistant Librarian in charge of a hundred rural schools' libraries was starting off for five schools beyond Askeaton. Months ago, she had installed libraries in each of these. Now, she had fifty reference books for each, sent by the Department of Education. In each school, there was a senior pupil called a Maor na Leabhar and she worked under Miss McCabe. On her visits, Miss McCabe talked to the children about books and authors, showed them how to use indexes and how to use books to find the information they might require.

I met Miss Ann Barry, who looks after all the primary school children in twenty towns and villages and the secondary and vocational schools as well.

It is correct to say that this is the most troublesome section of the organisation because all the work being done is exploratory . . . but so far very successful. It is strange that in this age of comic and TV, children are reading two books a week. Miss Barry showed me a file of over 1,000 letters which children

Group at Cappamore Vocational School, where Mr. Mannix Joyce gave an illustrated lecture followed by a scoraiocht; Mairéad O'Reilly, D.S.I.; S. O'Hickey, N.T.; Maureen Connery, Cappamore; Sylvester Conway, Cappamore; National Chairman, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann; Mannix Joyce, Bruree; Eileen Lee, D.S.I., Cappamore; Donal O'Connor, Headmaster, Cappamore Vocational School.

service points and the doors of most of the rural branches do not close until nine in the evening. The modern vital library service is not alone part of the plan for Economic Expansion but is one of the country's main sources of cultural expansion as well. Librarians will soon play a much greater part in the school life of the nation and since Easter, teachers and librarians have



MISS J. McCABE
 been in constant session discussing the techniques of education through directed reading. One of these days we may well find children assembling parish histories, surveying the bird life or the varieties of trees in their areas . . . They will be trained in method and simple research from an early age . . . and future Ireland will greatly benefit.



MISS R. NASH
 Parteen driver fined 10/-
 "This performance suggests a reckless youth and I had expected to see a younger man," said Justice Hurley at Six Mile Cross Court when Patrick O'Brien, Whitehall, Parteen, Co. Clare, appeared on a charge of dangerous driving on January 17 at Bunnratty East, Co. Clare. Mr. M. Tynan (for defendant) said that his client was driving from Shannon Airport and as he approached Bunnratty Bridge there was a car ahead going very slowly. Defendant decided to pass this car out at an inopportune moment and the patrol car came on the scene. It was a foolish thing to do and he promised to be more careful in the future. Justice Hurley reduced the charge to careless driving and imposed a fine of 10/-.

DEATH OF MR MICHAEL HARTNEY

Former Mayor of Limerick
 THE death took place at his home on Saturday, of Mr. Michael Hartney, a former Mayor of Limerick and a member of the City Council for 20 years. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. He was aged 77 years.

The late Mr. Hartney gave the best years of his life in the service of his country. Born in St. Mary's Parish, he was a leading member of the Irish Volunteers and took part in many engagements against the "Black & Tans." During this period he lived in Davis St. and his residence was blown up by the "Tans." He then went to live at 12 Prospect Villas, where he resided until his death.

Twice married, his first wife was killed in the defence of Adare, during the Civil War, when the National Army forces besieged the village.

ALDERMAN
 He was elected as a Fianna Fáil member to the Limerick City Council in 1932 and was re-elected at each succeeding election until he retired in 1959, being an Alderman for five years. In 1945 he was unanimously elected Mayor of Limerick in succession to the late Mr. James Reidy.

Outstanding events during his year of Mayoralty included the consecration of the late Most Rev. Dr. O'Neill as Bishop of Limerick and the welcoming of the first Pan American plane to land at Rineanna. He also was responsible for the settlement of two strikes in the city and arranged with the Government to have Sunday excursion trains partially returned to Limerick.

During the War of Independence he was captured by the Crown Forces and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment in Wormwood Scrubbs Prison. While there he was one of those who went on hunger strike and was released in 1919. He immediately took up further active service with the Volunteers and was recaptured by the "Tans" and held as a hostage by them in their lorries to protect them from I.R.A. ambushes. He was then interned on Spike Island and an unsuccessful attempt was made to rescue him and others from the "Tans."

A compositor by trade, he served his time in the old Limerick Lead office in Patrick Street, and retired in 1930 after 53 years' service with the firm.

He was a former Secretary of the Limerick Typographical Society and represented Southern Ireland for 23 years as Officer of the Society.

OARSMAN
 A keen sportsman in his youth, the late Mr. Hartney was a well-known oarsman and captained St. Michael's Rowing Club. He was rowing correspondent for the local and national newspapers under the pseudonym "No. 7" for a long number of years.

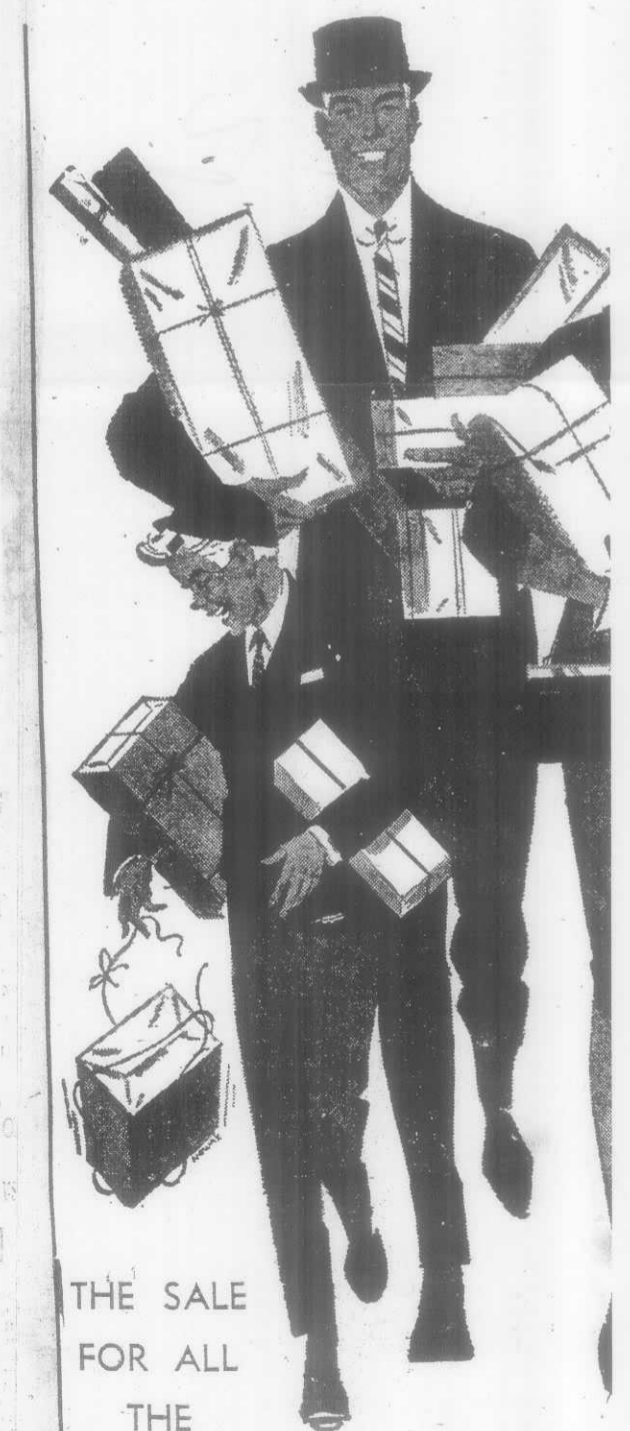
His many colleagues in the Old I.R.A. will remember him as one of those who marched to Killoan to take part in the 1916 rebellion and also as a very efficient O.C. of E. Company of the Limerick Volunteers and later as a capable Adjutant of the Mid-Limerick Brigade.

Clr. J. P. Liddy, leader of the Fianna Fáil party in the city, was deeply grieved when told of the death of Mr. Hartney, whom he described as a "very close and loyal friend." He said that Mick Hartney had been intensely national all his life. "He rendered tremendous service to his country and his native Limerick. A man of rare personal courage, he was also the possessor of everything that is best in Irish manhood. To spend any amount of time with him was a great pleasure. A thorough Irishman in every respect, his passing is deeply mourned. He leaves a void in the ranks of Fianna Fáil that will never be filled. May he rest in peace," said Clr. Liddy.

Mr. Donagh B. O'Malley, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance, said of the late Mr. Hartney: "He was a fine Irishman who gave all he could for his country. He suffered much in the fight to attain the freedom of his coun-

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