

NEWS

LITERARY LEGACY: SERIES OF EVENTS PLANNED TO MARK THE 1996 RELEASE OF FAMOUS MEMOIR

# Twentieth anniversary edition of Angela's Ashes

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A 20TH anniversary edition of *Angela's Ashes* – which put Limerick on the literary trail for readers worldwide – will be released in August. With nearly five million copies of the trade paperback of *Angela's Ashes* sold in the US alone, the publishers, Scribner and Simon and Schuster, will be releasing a twentieth anniversary edition on August 16 this year.

A number of events will be held in New York and Limerick in the coming weeks and months to celebrate the work and the life of the Pulitzer Prize winning author.

Molly Friedrich, Frank's literary agent in New York, and her daughter Lucy, will also speak about him at a celebratory evening in memory of Frank this coming weekend. "Lucy was only ten years old when the manuscript first arrived at my house, so she can now claim to be the first and per-



Frank McCourt pictured during one of his last visits to Limerick, when he walked the *Angela's Ashes* literary trail. PICTURE: SEAN CURTIN

haps youngest person to have ever read this marvelous book," Ms Friedrich told the Limerick Leader.

She also revealed that Frank's only regret was that he didn't start writing sooner, after being catapulted to literary stardom in

**'Representing him was one of the greatest pleasures of my life'**

Agent Molly Friedrich

his 60s, after writing his first memoir, which received worldwide acclaim and often controversy in his native Limerick.

"About three years before he died, when Frank's cancer had returned, he and I were visiting faculty at the

Southampton Writer's Conference," explained Ms Friedrich.

"I asked Frank whether he had any regrets and his answer was that his only true regret was to have taken such a very long time in getting started as a writer."

She said that he lamented that he had spent so much of his life teaching as "becoming a published writer had been the time of his life and he was sorry to come to it so late in life."

"Representing him was one of the greatest, enduring pleasures of my life as an agent, I'll say that, it was a ride like no other. Plain and simple, I loved him and miss him terribly," she said.

In Limerick, Una Heaton, director of the Frank McCourt museum on Hartstone Street, said she is putting together a week-long programme of events for September 5-9, to coincide with the official release date back in 1996.

Among the tributes will be a montage portrait of Frank, which are number of

well-known local artists and the public, including his many fans who have visited the museum, are contributing to. While the museum has been at risk of closure in recent times, Ms Heaton said: "It's still open and rising from the ashes."

This July, the Creative Writing faculty at the University of Limerick will offer a summer school in New York in honour of McCourt, who passed away in 2009. The summer school will be led by the renowned novelist and Frank McCourt Chair of Creative Writing, Professor Joseph O'Connor.

"This year sees the twentieth anniversary of publication of Frank McCourt's masterpiece *Angela's Ashes*, a book that became a success all over the world, shedding light on the unique relationship that exists between Ireland and the United States, specifically between Limerick and New York. Frank's tale of two cities was translated into dozens of languages,

stirring recognitions for millions of readers," said O'Connor.

## Boost for tourism as Ryan broadcasts from Bunratty

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LOCAL tourism recently received a positive boost when TV and radio presenter Ryan Tubridy did a special live broadcast from Bunratty Castle and Folk Park.

The show was broadcast live to an audience of more than 320,000 people, celebrating the completion of a €1m investment, resulting in the development of a new retail store, café and admissions building at Bunratty.

During the show, Mr Tubridy described the resort as "teeming with fun and



Tubridy enjoying the hospitality at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park with Mary Ryan, Joan Murphy and Majella Wilson. PICTURE: ARTHUR ELLIS

things to look at". He added that he is looking forward to returning there with his own children.

He spoke to several people during the broadcast, in-

cluding John Ruddle, CEO of Shannon Heritage, Darren Smyth, Head of Retail at Shannon Group, some young locals and some of the actors who work at the Folk Park.

## HSE management to assess security after 5B incidents

A REVIEW of security at University Hospital Limerick is expected to take place, following five missing persons incidents at its acute psychiatric unit in recent months.

Three of five missing people were patients, and two others were understood to be waiting to be admitted, at Unit 5B – a 40-bed acute mental health unit which operated under the remit of the HSE's Community Health Care section.

These incidents are said to have taken place over the past two months.

The five people were reported missing to gardai after they left one of Ireland's busiest hospitals. The alarm was raised for the two people,

who were reportedly waiting to be assessed for admission to 5B in the emergency department.

While all five people were located and described safe and well, gardai were called to an incident in Raheen after a man barricaded himself into a housing estate home close to UHL.

When asked about the recent incidents, UL Hospitals Group CEO Colette Cowen said unit 5B is not part of her brief. However, she said that she is aware of the recent incidents.

Ms Cowen confirmed that she will be meeting Bernard Gloster, Chief Officer, Community Health Mid West, to discuss the matters.

"5B is not part of my brief,

it is part of the community health organisation but I am aware of the number of incidents that were there [the psychiatric unit] over the last few months. We have a full security team here. We are engaging with Bernard [Gloster] around that to see how we can help and assist with it," she told the press during a media briefing.

The HSE stated that it "does not comment on any individual cases but it reviews all patient care, as well as its systems, on a regular basis. A meeting is scheduled between Ms Colette Cowen, CEO, UL Hospital Group and Mr Bernard Gloster, Chief Officer, CHO3, for next Wednesday and this item will be discussed at that meeting."