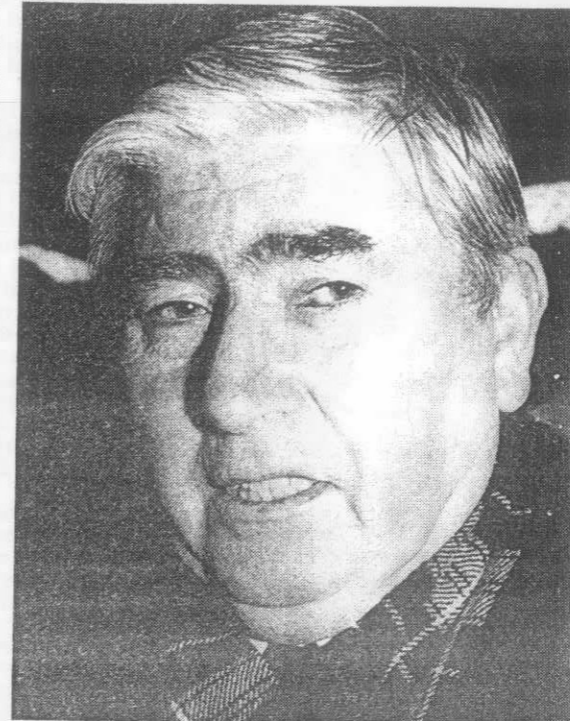


42.



George, Anne and Mary Bennett, Kilcornan, parents of the narrator Andrew Bennett



(LL) Patrick Sheehan, cousin of Frank McCourt's (LL)



Pat Lynch, Aughinish Alumina and Michael McCann, Castletroy, with District Court judge, Tom O'Donnell, in the background (LL)



Mayor Jack Bourke, who thought the film was "absolutely brilliant"

A rainy city soaks up premiere atmosphere



Gerry Lillis, Marie Ryan and Frank McCourt's cousin Thomas Sheehan, James Street (LL)



By IAIN DEMPSEY

A LONE piper played on the front steps of the Limerick Omniplex as guests arrived to attend the premiere of Angela's Ashes.

Dublin attracted the stars and celebrities, but Frank McCourt's home city staged a successful night with many local dignitaries and faces from Limerick's social scene attending the sell-out premiere.



actors who played Frank were very well cast but Robert Carlyle was a little bit too handsome for the part of the father.

"All in all while I think there has been a criticism that Limerick induced a lot of hardship on the McCourts but I think looking at the story on film now it was all of a result of their alcoholic father which would have had them in that situation anywhere.

"It didn't have to be Limerick and I think that this is based on a national story when





Edward Darling, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe (LL)

attending the sell-out premiere. Despite fears that protests would take place outside the cinema, the evening passed without a hint of trouble and after all the hype, Limerick people were finally given a chance to see Alan Parker's adaptation of Frank McCourt's bestselling novel.

A brief message from the novelist was read out before the screening, apologising for his non-attendance and complementing everyone who had seen the film.

Most enjoyed the film version of his memoirs, although a common gripe was that Limerick was depicted too much as a rain-soaked slum.

Frank McCourt's cousin, Tom Sheehan said: "I thought that the film was a bit wet and the poverty wasn't quite that bad but I really enjoyed the film."

An old neighbour of Frank's, Gerry Lillis, said: "I actually thought the film was better than the book. It was great to see the old times on the big screen. It was marvellous. I'd say his book is 95 per cent right, but of course some things are exaggerated to make for entertainment purposes."

Limerick's top model agent Celia Holman Lee commented: "I thoroughly enjoyed it but I enjoyed the book much more. I thought the accents were not great. We could have done with a good old Limerick accent and local phrases from the book are not used in the film."

"The book brought it home to me the way things used to be and I think that got a little bit lost in the film but it's a great story and I recommend it."

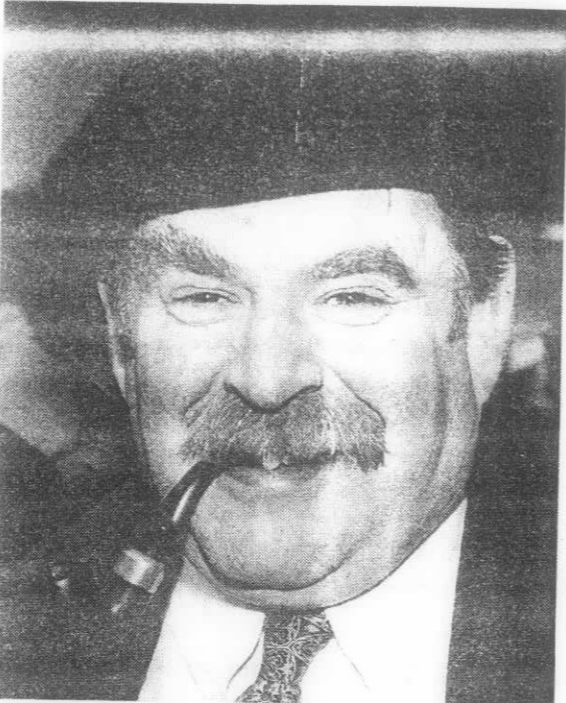
Mayor Jack Bourke described the film as "absolutely brilliant".

"I think anybody coming in looking at it objectively will realise that this is a story of an alcoholic father seen through the eyes of a boy. I think it's done extremely well but the one gripe I would have is that the film should not have been made in Limerick as we do not have such derelict hovels, but they could only use certain parts of Limerick and go to Dublin and Cork to shoot the hovels and lanes as we don't have that in Limerick anymore."

Fashion personality, Barbara McMahon said: "I thought it was a harrowing tale done



Barbara McMahon



Brendan Nix, BL, at the premiere of Angela's Ashes (LL)



Mike Finn of the Belltable (LL)

extremely well and in fact it's the first time I've been to a movie that I felt excelled beyond the

book. "It was a good story which moved me to tears. I thought the three

that this is based on a national story when they lived through times such as the war and depression and the wealth in Ireland was very unevenly distributed. All of these things induced hardship and Limerick can hardly be blamed for that. This story could have been relevant to anywhere in Ireland. Overall I thought it was an excellent movie."

Not all were taken with the movie though.

District Court judge, Tom O'Donnell, said: "Now that I've seen the film, I'm glad I stopped reading the book. It was very depressing and in my view, it doesn't always rain in Limerick but I thought it was very interesting and it would be nice to see what a lot of the older people of Limerick think about it."

The parents of The Cranberries drummer, Fergal Lawler, Audrey and Myles, said: "We thought the picture was brilliant but it rained too much. People will think it constantly rains in Limerick."

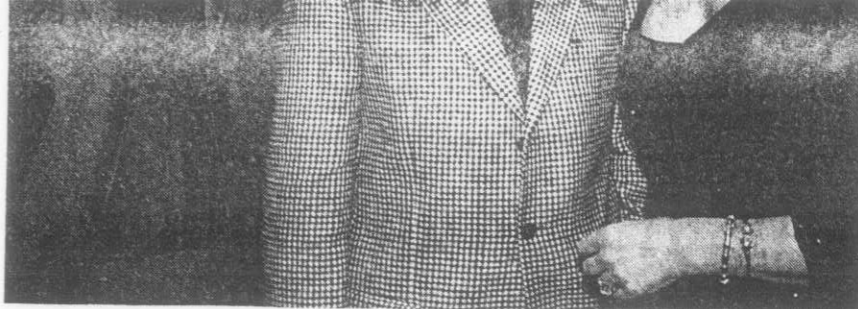
Flo and Eric Lynch from Emmett Place, old friends of Frank McCourt's, said that they enjoyed the film thoroughly but thought that the rain was overly exaggerated.

"Frank rang us the other night to tell us he had tickets waiting for us for the Dublin premiere but we wanted to go to the show in our home town so he transferred the tickets to here," said Flo. "We'd seen it already as Frank had sent us over a copy. Malachy is ringing us this weekend to see what we thought of it."

Eric said: "The film reminded me of growing up with Frank and it brought back some great memories. It never rains that much in Limerick though."

Billy Rice, chairperson of the local management group of the Limerick project of Focus Ireland, and organiser of the Limerick premiere, said that he was extremely pleased with the way the night went.

"We are absolutely delighted with the turnout tonight," he commented. "We had four days to sell over 700 tickets and we had to have a waiting list. We could have filled another cinema. The turnout at the reception was equally as good and a lot of money will have been raised for Focus Ireland tonight."



Designer John McNamara, Ger and Celia Holman Lee (LL)



Margaret and Kathryn Hayes, Ennis Road (LL)



Myles and Audrey Lawlor, Parteen, parents of Cranberries drummer, Fergal

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