



A scene of the Crescent during the filming of Angela's Ashes.

## LETTERS EXTRA

### Angela's Ashes: the book, the film and

□ AS A Limerickman I did not like the book Angela's Ashes. In my view, the movie was well acted but tedious, at times very vulgar and violent.

The lanes were Dickensian. The musical score is as unimpressive as the falling rain. No wonder the screen testing in the USA is not going well.

There was a lack of Limerick idiom.

Director Alan Parker did no favour to the film or the city with his excessive use of rain. I suppose the latter could be interpreted as symbolic of the depression this dysfunctional family experienced at that time of their lives.

Limerick born film star Richard Harris, in a very impressive and revealing interview with RLO presenter Gerry Hannan, described Frank McCourt and his brother, Malachy, as "users". He also knew Angela in the States and liked her very much but her sons disliked her. Witness the slap on the face by Frank on his mother in the movie.

I believe it is high time to put Angela's Ashes to rest. Richard Harris tells us that Angela wanted to be buried in Ireland. Her sons would not pay for the flight of the coffin, so they had her cremated.

She was a devout Catholic and cremation

It was made 50 years ago in the West of Ireland. He asked me: "Is Ireland still like that today?"

The same question may well be asked of "Angela's Ashes" 50 years from now.

Fr DOMINIC JOHNSON, OSB  
Glenstal Abbey  
Murroe

□ REGULAR readers of the letters column may recall my reaction to the book Angela's Ashes. This could be summarised in a single sentence: Frank McCourt exceeded his literary licence but we forgave him.

I was lucky enough to be able to read John O'Shaughnessy's excellent review of the film (Limerick Leader 15/01/00) before I went along to see it. Nevertheless I was prepared for embarrassing disappointment at the prospect of seeing an English director (Alan Parker) and an Australian screenwriter (Laura Jones) bring even more disrepute on the Limerick of the thirties.

How wrong I was. The story was told unerringly by the book. There was no exaggeration for further effect and here I would disagree with your reviewer who found that the direction "made for rather heavy going". In fact the two and a half

the-lace scenes of the drunken father are overdone.

However, this is not to take away the excellent portrayal by Robert Carlyle. I am quite sure that John Murphy, given his head, would have brought more native authenticity to the part in this respect, but we know that the casting directors were looking for established names.

Limerick city figures sparsely in the scenes. The producers were accorded scant facility there. The churches closed their doors and keen-eyed viewers will recognise the Dublin churches in the film.

All this is readily understandable given the brouhaha which the book whipped up in the first instance. I have not changed my mind about McCourt's unique style of writing. It is not a good model for aspirant A-graders, with punctuation almost non-existent and I hope it does not find its way onto the list of Leaving Cert books. There are many more worthy.

However, we are judging a film on this occasion and its relation to the book. Neither is a classic but hats off to Frank McCourt. It doesn't matter whether he exaggerated or not, he gave us a startling book and a spell-

"Angela's Ashes".

Mr Harris gave a glowing view of Limerick in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Mr. Harris admitted himself that in 1962 the massive wealth his family had accumulated over the years was now gone and the family were in dire straights.

The type of poverty he described was that he lived in a fine house on the Ennis Road, had a gardener, maid and cook.

I can understand where Mr Harris comes from, and I only wish him well in his career but later on in the interview, he honestly admitted that he did not experience the poverty described in Frank McCourt's book.

Mr Harris, even though being a very honest man, seems to suffer from a short memory. He spoke about his rugby days in Limerick, and all his happy times.

He said that he played with people from St Mary's Park. This being the case I must say that those talented sportsmen were more often replaced by players who were equally as good, but had the advantage of coming from well-to-do areas and had plenty of pull.

Mr Harris also stated in his interview that Frank McCourt's father was a Northern Protestant. I

## COMHGHAIAS

ROCKCHAPEL: CCE - A treat awaits music lovers and dancers at Bruach na Carriage on Friday, February 11 with a traditional concert followed by a Ceili. Music by Dan Herlihy and friends, including John Drew on bouzouki and Jim Harrison on pipes. Am Tosnu: 8.30pm. Ceid Isteach: £5 ag on doras. Beidh Failte is fiche romhaibh isteach. Bruach na Carriage is now a recognised Regional Archive. Comhghairdeachais.

Datai don Dialainn: Comhdail na Muinhan 2,000: Hibernian Hotel, Mal-low, Co. Chorcaigh, Sunday. February 27 ag tosnu 2pm.

Annual Congress: An Culturlann, Baile Atha Cliath, May 6 and 7, 2000.

Fleadh Nua: Inis, Co. An Chlair, May 25-29. Fleadh Amrain agus Rinne: Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, June 16-18. Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine: Birmingham, June 24-25.

Fleadh Cheoil Connachta: Leitrim, July 7-9.

Fleadh Cheoil Laighlin: Mullingar, July 14-16.

Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan: Lismore, Co. Waterford, July 21-23. Fleadh Cheoil Ulaide: Coothill, Co. Cavan, July 21-23. Fleadh Cheoil na h-Eireann: Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, August 25-27.

Teampall A'Ghleanntain CCE: The craobh are holding their annual social in the Devon Inn, Templeglantine on Friday, February 11. Music by the highly acclaimed Abbey Ceili Band O Chorcaigh. Dinner and Ceili £12.

Ardagh/Carriker CCE: Music teacher Denise Kelliher will resume music classes in the Halla, Ardagh on Saturday, January 29 at 4pm.

Set dancing will take part in the Halla, Ardagh on Thursdays, 7pm to 9pm. There will also be Set dancing in Carrickerry on Friday nights.

Baile Stiabhna CCE: On Tuesday nights there are dancing classes in the Library, Ballysteen with classes for beginners at 6.30 pm and all others at 7pm.

An Gleann CCE: Music classes in Ceol Corbrai on Saturday mornings 11am-12am. Singing classes in Ceol Corbrai on Saturdays 12.00 noon - 1pm. Sets le John Joe Tierney in Ceol Corbrai on Wednesdays at 9pm.

Ma Rua/An Cheapach Mhor CCE: Music classes in the Boys National School on Tuesdays, 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

Bord Chontae Luimnigh CCE: A well attended meeting of the County Board took place on Wednesday, January 19 in the Woodlands House Hotel, Adare. Cathaoirleach Sean O'Ealaith, chaired the meeting in a most courteous and efficient manner. A full agenda was dealt with at the meeting. It was agreed to hold a Singing Workshop in Ceol Corbrai, in Glin on Sunday, February 13 from 2pm to 4.30pm.

light of the coffin, so they had her cremated.

She was a devout Catholic and cremation was totally against her religion at that time.

Regrettably, the movie will probably be shown regularly on the American TV channels in the years to come.

Over a year ago I was saying Mass in Florida. After Mass a parishioner came up to greet me, he had seen the movie "The Quiet Man" on the TV the night before.

reviewer who found that the direction "made for rather heavy going". In fact the two and a half hours seemed to fly by, helped admirably by the splendid voiceover, which narration I wanted to believe was the bould Franks but turned out to be that of Andrew Bennett.

This film is excellently cast with the Oscar going to the young Frank (Joe Breen). One could be churlish and say that the overloud crashing-about-

around it doesn't matter whether he exaggerated or not, he gave us a startling book and a spell-binding film.

My own personal regret, shared by my friend Michael down the pub, is that we didn't upstage him because we understand where he came from — although we didn't have the pleasure of fish and chips till the fifties — but we were always playing catch-up in Galbally in those times!

**JIM O'BRIEN**

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□ **MAY** I make a comment or two on your excellent feature profiling Limerick's RLO presenter Gerry Hannan. I am sure we are all now very familiar with all aspects of both Frank McCourt and his book and film Angela's Ashes, due in no small part to the continued obsession of Gerry Hannan.

As a contemporary of the people depicted in the film, which I saw last week, I would like to say that in my opinion the film was very overdone. Of course there was poverty in Limerick, and from Clare to Donegal in the 30s and 40s — that is why we all headed for Holyhead!

However, as a literary work it was very well written, but definitely, at times, a figment of McCourt's imagination. However, one can only admire him for a tremendous "money spinner", and hope he will be "laughing his way to the bank" for a long time for his efforts.

However, as for Gerry Hannan, I think he is pandering to a nightly vulnerable section of our society. I have listened to him on occasions and I think he is biased in his attitude to his listeners, and if he doesn't agree with one, then he is very quick to "pull the plug"!!

Finally, I would like to say to Gerry — concentrate on your own books, give Frank McCourt and Angela's Ashes a rest — perhaps you may give some thought to giving it up for Lent!!! Please!!

**KEVIN STAPLETON**  
College Green  
Ennis

□ **I WOULD** be very grateful if you would allow me a little space in your very widely read newspaper to comment on a radio programme hosted by Mr Gerard Hannan on 13th January, 2000, time 10.15 pm to 1 am.

On the programme Mr Hannan interviewed film star Richard Harris on

and he also stated in his interview that Frank McCourt's father was a Northern Protestant. I think Mr Harris was wrong.

In actual fact, Mr McCourt Senior was from Ballymena and was a Catholic.

I can't understand why Mr Hannan has such an obsession with Frank McCourt and his books. Mr. Hannan claims that he is not biased on his show but if anybody rings into his show and has not the same opinion as himself their call comes to a quick end.

In my own personal case Mr Hannan asked me when I rang into his show if I could come to the point quickly as other callers were trying to ring in and make comment.

Within a short time Mr Paddy Malone, who also has been on radio and on your newspaper condemning Frank McCourt, made two calls to the show and was allowed all the air time he wanted because his views suited Mr Hannan.

I now ask Mr Hannan if he believes in the freedom of speech as we live in a democracy. I am no spring chicken myself and I have to be quite honest I read Angela's Ashes and my honest belief is that Frank McCourt was actually writing about his own family and relations and telling his own story; in doing so it's only honest to say that many people would have been hurt by what he has written.

It's about time for us to be honest and open about past times in Limerick. I myself was born in 35 Nicholas Street. There were three children born before me. The roof was only partially slated and as my mother was giving birth to twins the rain poured through the roof. The late Dr Cullen from Pery Square was witness to this. After moving to Ballynanty in the late 50s, we were called Ballynanty Beggars by the more affluent in society.

We dreaded walking around the Ennis Road and North Circular Road, and such areas as people would see us in our tattered clothes.

Most times the people in these areas on just seeing us would call the Gardai, fearing that we would steal an apple from their trees. Such was the fear of poverty even in the 50s.

Even though my young days in Limerick might be considered by some people as being unhappy, I would relive all those days again.

**PADRAIG O MÓRDHA**  
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Thomondgate  
Limerick

agreed to host a Singing Workshop in Cool Corral, in Glin on Sunday, February 13 from 2pm to 4.30pm. The Workshop will cover traditional Irish, English and Sean-nos singing. Adults and children very welcome. If possible please include a tape-recorder among your instruments. Treoiraithe na Gaeilge and any of you interested, sa teanga Ghaeilge are very welcome as well. Gach eolais on Runai ar (061) 381269.

**Comhaltas Tour of Britain:** February 12-26.  
**Comhaltas Tour of Ireland:** February 18 to March 2.  
**Comhdhail na Mumhan:** 2,000: Munster convention will take place in the Hibernian Hotel, Mallow, Co. Chorcaí on Sunday, February 27 ag tosnú ag 2pm.

**Ceoltraí:** Ardacha Carraig Chiarraí CCE hosted the county finals of Ceoltraí in the Halla, Ardagh on Saturday, January 15. A fine attendance were treated to a great afternoon's entertainment. Mile buíochas to everyone who helped out on the day and especially to all in Ardacha Carraig Chiarraí CCE. The "cupain tae" and "refreshments" went down a treat.

Well done to all the competitors who performed so admirably on the day. The following prize-winners will now go forward as the Ceoltraí team to represent Luimneach in the next round of this competition: Half Set: Ardacha/Carraig Chiarraí CCE: Michael O'Dalaigh, Ede Ni Threambnait; Shane O'Liostuin, Cait Ni Angluin.

**Four Hand Ceili:** Ardacha/Carraig Chiarraí CCE: Rosaine Ni Dhaibhis, Liosa Ni Liostuin, Alva Ni Naraigh, Mareta Ni Dhaibhis.

**Ceol Beirte:** Ma Rua/An Cheapach Mhor CCE: Cathal Mac an Ri and Brid Ni Dhuinn. C.A.A CCE: Esther agus Susan Ni Ghorthoraigh. T. A'Gh. CCE: Nora Aine Ni Mhurchu agus Mairead Ni Chorradaín. Quartette: T. An Hg. CCE: Seacailin Ni Eataithe, Sorcha Ni Ruairi, Ciara agus Eighlin Ni Ghliosaín.

**English Singing:** Mairead Ni Shiochain (T. A'Gh. CCE). Amhran Gaeilge: Maire Ide de Bhal (T.A.H. CCE). Storytelling: Shane Breathnach. (T. A'Gh. CCE). Seacalocht: Padraig MacAmhlaoibh (T. A'Gh. CCE). Trios: T. A'Gh. CCE: Michelle Ni Mhaolcatha, Eibhlín Ni Ealailhe, Riona Ni Churtain. Naomh Mhichil CCE: Aoife de Niadh, Cear Ni Riain, Juliet Rowland.

The Ceoltraí Group met for a practice on Sunday, January 30 from 5.30pm to 7.30pm in The Woodlands House Hotel, Adare. Producer for the show Siobhan Uí Chonarain (N.M.CCE), may be contacted at 061-397200. Co-producer is Mareta Downey (Baile Stiabhna CCE).

## APPLICATION TO PLANNING AUTHORITY

Limerick County Council: Electricity Supply Board intends to apply to Limerick County Council for permission to build a new 110KV overhead line from the Co. Tipperary border at Moanahila to the Existing Killonan 220KV/110KV Substation at Milltown Townland in Co. Limerick

The proposed line will be erected over, or in the vicinity of, the Limerick townland of

Knockphelagh, Moanmore, Moanahila, Oolahills East, Gortyvahane, Moanroe, Ballyvalode, Gortnakistin, Garavin, Garryfrask, Cross, Brackyle, Dromlara, Pullagh, Killuragh, Cunnagavale, Dromalta, Tuogh, Dromcluher, Cappanouk, Eyon, Rathwood, Dromeliagh, Brittas, Gorteenaskagh, Killinure, Bohergar, Boher, Lismullane, Cloghnadromin, Kishyquirk, Scart, Clooncunna North, Keyanna, Killonan, Whitehall and Milltown.

The line will consist of three overhead wires supported on double wood pole structures, whose poles are 5 metre apart, of average height 19 metres. The angle structures will consist of lattice steel towers of average height of 13 metres and average base of 4.5 metres squared. For the first 1.4km out of the Killonan substation the line will consist of five overhead wires supported by double wood pole structures, whose poles are 5 metres apart, of average height of 19 metres. The angle structures for this section will consist of lattice steel towers of average height of 18 metres, with average base of 5 metres squared. The average distance between structures will be approximately 200 metres.

Outline of the structures and line locations will be shown on maps and drawings to be submitted with application. A Landscape Report will be submitted with the planning application. This Landscape Report together with any further relevant information regarding this application will be available for inspection at Limerick County Council, Planning Department, County Buildings, O'Connell Street, Limerick.

A separate planning application will be made to Tipperary County Council for the length of line proposed to be located in Co. Tipperary.

**Mr. L. Donald, Secretary, Electricity Supply Board.**

### APPLICATION TO PLANNING AUTHORITY

Limerick County Council: Application is made by David Guerin and Geraldine Naughton for retention of extended site layout at Creeves, Askeaton. (f5/73017)

### APPLICATION TO PLANNING AUTHORITY

Limerick County Council: Take notice that we, Joe Meehan & Margaret Cunningham intend to apply to Limerick County Council for permission to erect single storey dwelling house with garage, septic tank and percolation area, entrance walls, piers and driveway at Kilcoorha, Broadford, Co. Limerick. (f5/73135)

### APPLICATION TO PLANNING AUTHORITY

Limerick County Council: I, Cora McGlone, intend to apply to Limerick Co. Council for planning permission for a dormer bungalow with septic tank, entrance and boundary walls at Templethea West, Athea. (f5/73057)

### APPLICATION TO PLANNING AUTHORITY

Limerick County Council: Permission sought for alterations and extensions, including attic conversion, conservatory and utility room to residence at Carheeny, Kildimo for John Keogh. (f5/73062)