

## NT&amp;OPINION

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

▷WRITE THE EDITOR, LIMERICK LEADER, 54 O'CONNELL STREET, LIMERICK ▷E-MAIL LETTERS@LIMERICKLEADER.IE ▷FAX 061-401424

### Insults and abuse don't amount to an argument

PLEASE allow me to point out to Daniel Clery (Letters, last week) and to anyone else who wishes to dispute my view of Angela's Ashes that insult and abuse do not constitute an argument. They were the only riposte of the author to any negative comment on his book. In his tribute (August 8) Malachy McCourt spouted a mouthful of the same vituperation on all who dared to question the veracity and integrity of his brother, labelling us half-wits, scum, etc.

The reliability of the said Malachy's comments may be judged by his declaration that "the coming of the Carnegie Library was the greatest event in our lives". Apart from the fact that the Carnegie Library was built in 1904, he asserts that the library staff were hostile to "us dirty little laners", whereas Frank gets much mileage out of the warm welcome he received every week from the librarian who not only allowed him into the adult section but had all the lives of the saints laid out on a table for him to peruse ("Here you are, Frank, volumes and volumes!") until, of course, she caught him reading a book on sex which someone just "happened to have left nearby".

Malachy apparently thinks we should be impressed when he quotes no less an authority on literature than Bill Clinton to the effect that "Frank told everyone's story through his own." He certainly did not tell my story, or that of the people with whom I grew up in Limerick in that era. It is my contention that he did not even tell the true story of his own family, but concocted a commercially-designed fable spiced with fantasy, lewdness and vulgarity, defaming even his own mother in the process.

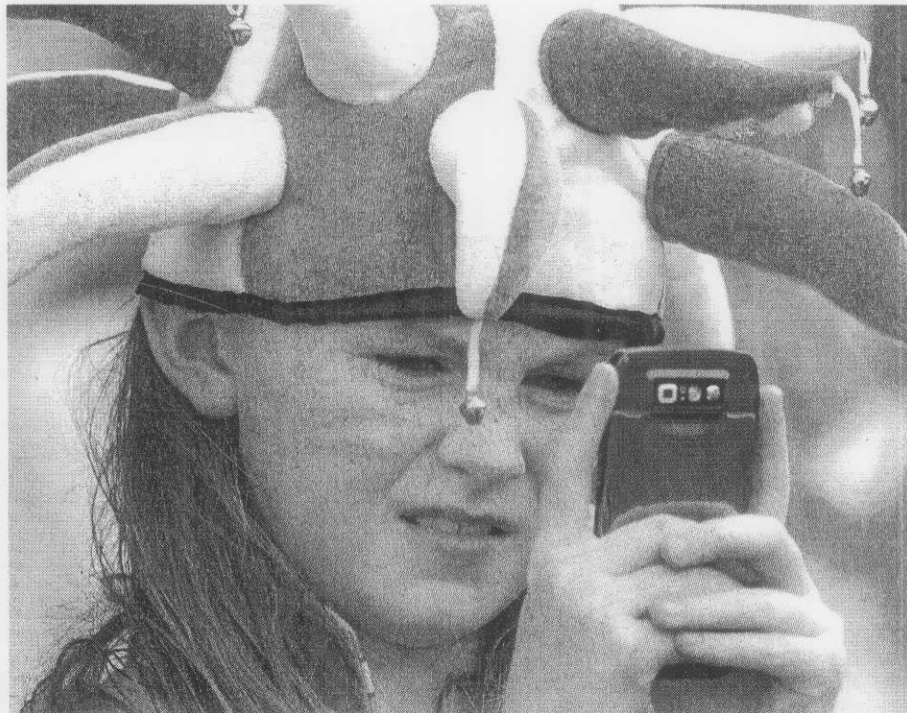
The assertion that McCourt did for Limerick what Joyce did for Dublin is ridiculous. Any foreigner reading the works of Joyce would have a very good idea of the capital city's various districts and their inhabitants; any such readers of Angela's Ashes would think Limerick consisted principally of a network of lanes at the "back of the Monument". They would learn nothing of the historic King's Island or other areas. It used to be said that the three R's in Limerick were Rowing, Rugby and Religion. McCourt's account of life in our city adverts to only one, Religion, and uses this as material for mockery that sometimes verges on the blasphemous.

As for the proposal to bury some of the author's ashes at the site of Leamy's school, this is an added insult to the memory of the professional pedagogues who taught him to read and write, and were repaid by being portrayed in his book as a bunch of contentions and uncultured boors.

The further proposal that the citizens of Limerick should honour McCourt by contributing to a bursary at UL for "a pupil from one of Limerick's disadvantaged estates" raises the question: why did the multi-millionaire McCourt not establish such a bursary himself? All he had to do, during his many sojourns at the luxurious Dromoland Castle, was to flash the cheque book at those people in UL who fawned on him with an honorary doctorate and a term as writer in residence.

Might I suggest a more worthy name for such a bursary? Many Limerick people would approve of, and gladly contribute to, a bursary in memory of the late Dr Mainchín Seoighe, scholar, folklorist, lecturer and for many years a columnist with the Leader, who was the author of many books including the excellent Portrait of Limerick, a most informative and comprehensive book on Limerick.

Over the years, I suggested continually, on radio and in print, that UL appoint Mainchín Seoighe to a lectureship in folklore and local history. It was left to Galway University to award him a doctorate in recognition of his



You're lucky you missed it! Nine-year-old Limerick fan Orlaith Roe texts her feelings on the bad news from Croke Park to her friends

## Hurling is in danger in our beloved Limerick

THOSE of us who follow Limerick hurling down through the years were to put it mildly, disappointed exiting Croke Park last Sunday. We were disappointed for the following reasons:

- 1: The lack of a game plan, whether A or B.
- 2: The lack of a free taker who addresses the placed ball properly and converts at least 85-90% of scorable chances presented.
- 3: We know we do not have the skill levels of Kilkenny, Tipperary and Cork but we have other assets that were so sadly lacking on last Sunday last, such as the required fitness levels and the controlled aggression we so often displayed in the past.

There are, indeed, many other aspects to this year's Munster and All-Ireland campaign that require drastic remedial action from the Limerick County Board executive.

lifelong achievement in promoting the history and culture of our city and county.

CRÍOSTÓIR Ó FLOINN  
DÚN LAOGHAIRE, CO DUBLIN

### McCourt was a hero to take on official Gaeldom

WITH reference to Críostóir Ó Floinn's letter (August 8), Frank McCourt was a good writer in style and substance. He wrote we should be proud of what we are and not supposed to be, an English-speaking pluralist people and not the mythical Gaelic speaking pure Gael of the official culture. The official culture was asking us to die for our country rather than to develop ourselves, to reach our full potential so that we could work for our country and positively help our community and ourselves.

The poverty he wrote about was not just in Limerick but also in most places, we went from an empire to an economic quagmire due to the foolish economic policies of "self-sufficiency" and a needless economic war with Britain. Neutrality during the war brought more poverty and isolation afterwards meant even war-devastated counties

May I propose the setting up of a commission of enquiry re the state of Limerick hurling in the 1970 Commission, which provided the stimulus for a number of good years like 1971-1974 and even the 1980s. Independent people like the late Dr. Dick Stokes, the late Jackie Power and Rev. Fr. Liam Ryan, together with members of the then County Board under the Chairmanship of the late Jackie O'Connell met over a period of some months and set in motion a blueprint that had much success.

I am aware that we now have a youth policy in place. However, that will take many years to yield results. Meanwhile, hurling is in danger in our beloved county.

Nero fiddles while Rome burns?

OWEN S. O'NEILL  
BRITTAS, LIMERICK

like Germany left us behind. We went from being the sixth richest people in the world in 1920 to the seventieth in the 1950s. In Dublin there were phrases like "your dinner is poured out" and Lanes called "Tea Lane" because the diet was tea and bread. The Church and state were in close embrace to oppress the Irish people and McCourt captured this in his writing. To me he is a hero to take on 'Kafkaesque' nationalists that increased the misery index; a poor childhood is bad but they made it miserable.

STEPHEN FALLON  
BARRINGTON STREET, LIMERICK

### Walk on the (unsmelly) Hunt Museum side!

"Don't walk on the smelly side," is what we say to people going into the city centre from Merchants' Quay. "Walk on the Hunt Museum side."

Or haven't you noticed? The buildings in Patrick Street and Rutland Street are abandoned. Water is getting in. The floors and basements are rotting. And there is now a powerful smell of decay.

The property developers have announced a two-year stoppage of work. This is ridicu-

lous. There are lots of building trade people in Limerick ready and willing to start work today. And we have no guarantee that work will start two years from now. The whole property must be taken away by compulsory purchase - either by the City Council, if they have the power, or by the government. The centre must then be put out for tender and work started before the end of the year.

Of course the smell might get less with the cold weather, but unless something is done, by next summer the stench will reach all the way to City Hall.

In the meantime walk on the Hunt Museum side.

ROBERT IRWIN  
COURTHOUSE LANE, BRIDGE STREET,  
LIMERICK

### Attack on the media completely unjustified

JOHN O'Riordan's attack on the media is completely unjustified (Letters, August 1). The simple fact of the matter is that with the absence of any available watchdog, it was left to the media to expose the extensive abuses that existed in the Catholic Church, with the prevailing culture that existed. The actions of some of these journalists bordered on the heroic.

Some commentators jump to the Church's defence by quoting the official figure of 3 per cent clerical sex abusers as only representing a minuscule proportion of convicted paedophiles. This is taken out of context when the ratio of those in religious orders is compared to that of the general population.

RICHARD RYAN  
PALLASGREEN CROSS, CO LIMERICK

### Recognition of Thomas Wall greatly deserved

WE wish to make reference to the article (August 8) on Thomas Wall as your newspaper's "Person of the Month" recipient. This article has been read on the Alliance website (www.alliances/port.org) more than 300 times as I write and has attracted calls from as far away as America.

Thomas Wall has made himself available to hundreds of former residents of Glin Industrial School. He has helped and assisted many in a practical way as they returned to visit the school or seek information or advice. He has always done so in a quiet and unsung way and he is very deserving of this award. He has also been a member of the Alliance Victim Support Group, in which capacity his wise counsel and willingness to help and assist others have greatly benefited everyone.

May we also thank the Limerick Leader for your support over the years past.

TOM HAYES  
SECRETARY, ALLIANCE VICTIM SUPPORT,  
RICHHILL, CO ARMAGH

### Seeking pictures of the Castle Barracks

I WAS born in the Castle Barracks in Limerick in 1952, long before Kings John's Castle became a popular tourist spot.

I am trying to collect as many pictures of the Castle Barracks before the castle was renovated. Any photographs from 1922 of the barracks itself I would love to have. I would be happy to share whatever I have myself here. Please send to the email address below. I would love to hear from anyone who was born or lived in the Castle Barracks.

MIKE KELLY  
GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA  
EMAIL: KELLY\_MIKE@BIGPOND.COM

The woman pulled her heavy coat tightly around her as she left the church, and was heard to

## Summer's over for this

weather to improve in the second half of August and even into September. And a late holiday, they say, shortens the gloom of