

## News

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## COMMEMORATION

# Spanish civil war memorial removes 'stain of shame'

by Alan Jacques  
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THE erection of a memorial to six Limerick men who fought against Fascism during the Spanish Civil War removes a "stain of shame" from their native city, according to Sinn Féin councillor Maurice Quinlivan.

The sandstone sculpture, created by local artist Simon Donnelly, was unveiled in the grounds of City Hall last weekend. Commissioned by the Limerick International Brigade Memorial Trust, it features the names of the six men – Gerard Doyle, Joe Ryan, Emmett Ryan, Paddy Brady (all Limerick City), Frank Ryan (Knockainey) and Jim Woulfe (Athea) – who joined the International Brigade in its fight with the Republican side against Franco's Nationalist Army during the 1936-39 conflict.

Speaking after the unveiling ceremony on Merchants Quay beside City Hall last Sunday, Cllr Quinlivan stated: "With the erection of this memorial we have atoned for a huge historical wrong when the then Limerick Corporation of the 1930s passed motions of support for Franco on a number of occasions.

"In 1939, Limerick was the first Irish city and one of the first in the world to recognise the Fascist dictator as the legitimate ruler of Spain. After the fall of Barcelona in January 1939, the Corporation recognised Franco's government and even sent him flowers. The dictator wrote back to the then mayor to express his gratitude in what must count as one of the most shameful periods in the history of our city council," he said.

The City North councillor, who has visited the battle site of Jarama, outside Madrid, on a number



Top: Joe (centre of back row) and Frank Ryan (back right) with International Brigade colleagues injured at Jarama. Left: Frank Ryan addressing a public meeting in 1932. Right: Frank Ryan and International Brigade colleague John Robinson

of occasions, believes Limerick man Frank Ryan played a "crucial role" in combatting the Fascist offensive in early 1937.

He insists that the "stain" on Limerick's history has now been removed by placing a fitting memorial to those great Limerick men in the grounds of City Hall.

"I am particularly proud that we have made a lasting commemoration to the six Limerick men who fought with the democratically elected Government in Spain. By taking this step, we have removed a stain of shame from our city's history," he concluded.

Charlotte Ryan Wetton, Frank Ryan's grandniece, unveiled the memorial, which formed part of a weekend programme of events organised as part of Limerick City of Culture 2014. Sarah Bennett, sister of Joe Ryan and the only surviving sibling of the men also lay a wreath in their memory.

Ger McCloskey, spokesperson for the Limerick International Brigades Memorial Trust, commented: "We are delighted to be able to deliver a permanent public memorial to the six Limerick born brigadistas, whose efforts have previously gone largely unrecognised."

## IN BRIEF

## Bolger is back

■ UNIVERSITY of Limerick Students Union (ULSU) president Tommy Bolger, whose 'Wolf of Wall Street' parody video became an internet sensation earlier this year, is back in business. His parody of Jordan Belfort was enormously successful as he triumphed in the ULSU elections and he has again turned to Hollywood to welcome new students to the university. Along with the other ULSU officers, he features in a seven-minute video 'The Legend of Tommy Bolger', which parodies Will Ferrell's popular 'Anchorman' movies. The video attracted more than 10,000 YouTube views within one week of being uploaded.

## Breast Cancer

■ THE Irish Cancer Society is calling on Limerick women, and the local TDs and Senators who represent them, to join them at Leinster House on September 30 to demand that the Government keeps its promise to extend BreastCheck to women aged 65-69. According to the society, an extension of the screening could save eight lives in Limerick every year and 87 lives across the country. The Irish Cancer Society is asking women to wear pink and meet at noon on September 30 in the square beside Agriculture House on Kildare Street, Dublin 2, opposite the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Employment.

## Mobility week

■ LIMERICK, Ireland's Smarter Travel Demonstration City, has unveiled a series of initiatives to support sustainable travel to mark European Mobility Week, which runs until Monday September 22. The initiatives include the unveiling of www.limericksmartertravel.ie, a cycle planner app for Limerick, and school transport workshops. New 'Park and Picnic Pod' proposals will also be unveiled at an event at Mortell's Delicatessen & Seafood Restaurant, Roches Street, on Culture Night, September 19. The theme of this year's European Mobility Week is 'Our Streets Our Choice' and the week-long event aims to support those hoping to continue healthy and sustainable urban mobility habits.

## Peter's new job

■ A COUNTY Limerick man has been appointed Head of Cabinet for Phil Hogan, the EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner designate. A native of Kilmee, Peter Power is a graduate of the University of Limerick and the University of Brussels. He worked with the late TJ Maher on the Agriculture Committee in the European Parliament. He then served in the Cabinet of Chris Patten, where he was responsible for relations with the European Parliament, before his appointment as European Commission Spokesman for Trade under Commissioner Peter Mandelson. For the past year, he has headed the press team for the European Commission Representation in Dublin.

## Supporting women

■ FAMILIES support group for families experiencing separation is now holding a mutual support group for women every Wednesday from 7.30pm to 10pm at its new premises at 291 Fr Russell Square (beside the railway station). FAMILIES has been supporting families in Limerick for 11 years and services include 24/7 confidential phone support at 087-2603603, weekly group meetings, one to one meetings, counselling services, information on legal issues and referrals to other groups and professionals. The support group for women will now meet at its new premises every Wednesday at 7.30pm. For more information email info@families.ie.

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CLLR MAURICE QUINLIVAN

## EMPLOYMENT

# Council to consider JobBridge ban

by Kathy Masterson  
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LIMERICK City and County Council is to discuss a possible ban on hiring employees through the JobBridge and Gateway schemes at its monthly meeting next week.

Anti-Austerity Alliance councillor John Loftus has submitted a motion urging the local authority executive to "immediately disengage from taking on any further Gateway or JobBridge trainees" and to instead create "real jobs with meaningful training and security".

"People are spending long periods of time in these positions that will never lead to anything. It's slave labour with no direction. There is no real training in any of these jobs," Cllr Loftus told the

Limerick Post.

"People are now being forced to take up these positions. I think you're allowed to refuse one position and after that if you don't take a position you will have your dole cut. In recent years the Government has shed 3,000 jobs, and in the same period they've created 3,000 jobs on JobBridge and Gateway schemes."

The Limerick City West councillor continued: "A lot of JobBridge positions are looking for people who have honours degrees. These are people who have worked hard at university and struggled to get their degrees. If they need someone to do jobs like these then why aren't they creating proper jobs?"

However, metropolitan district Mayor and Limerick City East councillor Michael Sheahan

believes that the schemes are of benefit to jobseekers.

"I've spoken to many people about this and most seem to be quite positive about the scheme. It seems to be people on the left side of politics that are totally opposed to it."

The Fine Gael councillor continued: "The general opinion is that it is a good thing; of course there are rogue companies that were taken off the list, but they are in the minority. If you're looking for a job, you're not just going to get one when you're sitting at home, so JobBridge does help in that way."

Cllr Sheahan added that he does agree with Anti-Austerity Alliance councillor Cian Prendiville's suggestion that rogue companies that abuse the schemes "should be named and shamed".