

Now if, like me, you wouldn't know one end of a fishing rod from the other this zealotry might seem bizarre. I have to assure you that it is really a very seri-

ers come prepared. They carry gaffs and lamps and the salmon are their prey. Why they bother at this time of year is beyond logic. Spawning salmon are not about it. There is no such thing as a gentleman poacher. In two fairly recent occurrences, lines of salmon heads were strung on the church gate at Tournafulla

At a certain stage, I gave away in cars at key vantage points were dedicated anglers, watching for lights on the water, ready to move in at the first sign of activity. Up and went home. But the dedicated stayed to watch the rivers. And all in the cause of salmon.



Salmon watch . . . Christy Kelleher patrolling the Abhabheag River. (LL).

Weight thrower gave it his best shot . . .

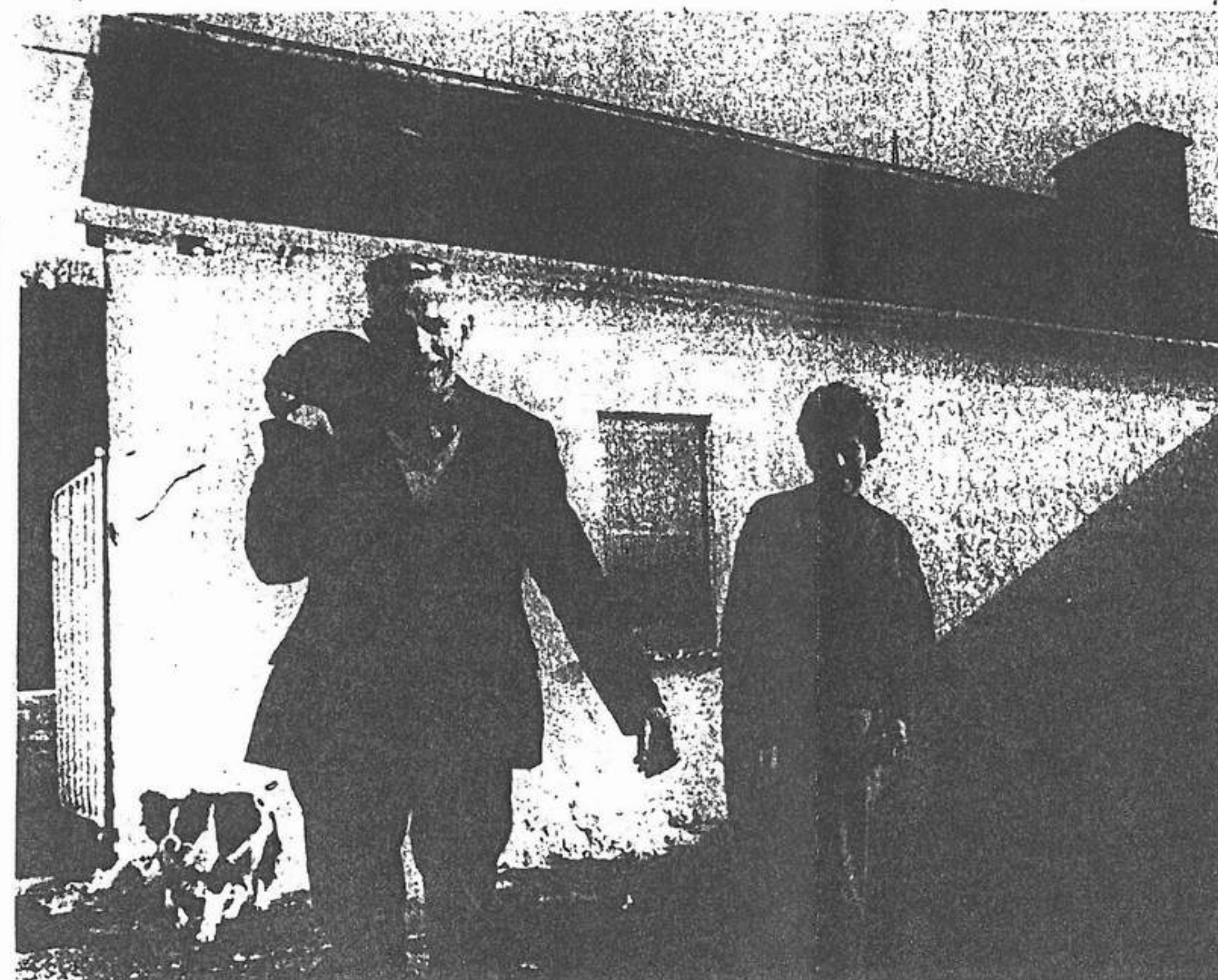
By PATRICIA FEEHILY
THE PARISH of Ballybricken last Saturday celebrated the centenary of the birth of its most famous son, world champion weight thrower, John O'Grady. Representatives from the local community placed a

wreath at the O'Grady monument, one of Limerick's landmarks at the top of Mulgrave St. and at Kilmurry cemetery, Caherconlish, where the champion is buried. The occasion had special significance for one local man, Tom O'Grady of



The O'Grady monument at Mulgrave Street. (LL).

Ballybricken, a nephew of the deceased champion, who recently gave the monument a facelift. John O'Grady, who died at the tragically young age of 42, in 1934, was three times world champion, putting 28 lbs 39' 9", 42 lbs 30' 4" and 56 lbs 25' 4" at



John O'Grady's nephew Tom, and niece Bridget, with the 56lbs weights their uncle used. (LL).

the Olympics in Antwerp in 1920, and at the world championships in Paris in 1924. His nephew Tom, who lives in a new bungalow, beside the old O'Grady homestead, where the champion was born and reared was delighted that he was remembered in Ballybricken and Caherconlish. He still has the old weights used by his uncle and says: "I grew up listening to stories of his many feats." According to Tom, his uncle was "a fine cut of a man," who stood 6' 4", and who took size 22 in a shirt collar. His prowess is still recalled in Caherconlish, where Pat Hourigan organ-

ised a small commemoration ceremony at the weekend. According to Tom O'Grady, the champion returned from the world stage to live in Limerick, where he worked as a rates inspector with the County Council. He died suddenly in 1934, and he and his wife are buried at Kilmurry cemetery, Caherconlish. The Caherconlish men who organised the erection of the monument to his memory in the city have all passed away too, but John O'Grady's achievements continue to thrill the people of this part of East Limerick. Incidentally, his own uncle, Ned O'Grady was also an all-Ireland champion weight thrower.



John O'Grady.

The Hession session

By NORMA PRENDIVILLE

EDA HESSION is causing quite a stir in Newcastle West these days, And her theme song, There's always a Fire in the Kitchen, has virtually become the local anthem.

Eda, a mother of four, has been packing the pubs two and three times a week in the last month or so, and she is now in demand from all over the west county.

People who don't normally go out on a Monday or Tuesday night — indeed, people who don't normally go to pubs at all — are coming in droves to hear Eda. And some are coming back, again and again and again.

It's hard to explain exactly how and why the Eda phenomenon has taken off to the extent it has. There are those who claim she can't sing a note, but who wouldn't miss her for the world. There are others who plainly enjoy her versions of old songs and new and who seem to love her wise-cracking rapport with the audience.

Certainly, one can say without any fear of contradiction that her rise to prominence has been meteoric, and that her gigs are lively affairs. Packed like sardines, the audience sings along, crying out for favourite songs, even taking part themselves to give Eda a break.

Eda herself is sanguine about the whole thing. "I take it bit by bit, the same way you would eat an elephant," she says with aplomb and then laughs.

And she isn't a bit put out by the criticism that she knows is being voiced behind her back, if not to her face. That is only to be expected, she says. Her reply to those who criticise her singing is: "I must be doing something right."

And her attitude to "messers" who come along to her gigs, for a laugh



Eda Hession . . . packing them in. (LL).

and a bit of craic, is not to take them seriously. "Let them mess. At the end of the day it is us that will have the last laugh."

"People are not fooling me. They are not just laughing at me without my knowing it," she says. Not everyone who comes along is a messer, she adds, and besides, she is well able to give as good as she gets.

Eda launched herself on the music scene shortly before Christmas with her own tape, Tender Years, a compilation of mainly old songs, some of which she learned from her mother. Since then she has been doing two and sometimes three gigs a week, along with John Browne, guitarist from Tralee.

Eda has always liked to sing and as she says herself, to "do her own thing." She doesn't know if her present success is simply a flash in the pan or not, but for the moment she is determined to enjoy every minute of it.