

# No write-off in handwriting skills

by Bernie English

PUPILS of Limerick's primary schools have proved that despite the age of the computer and the keyboard, they haven't written off handwriting skills.

Limerick youngsters joined more than 100,000 children nationwide in entering a competition organised by the EBS Building Society and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) competition, which is now in its 20th year.

The competition highlights the art of handwriting. Entrants were asked to write a piece of prose or a poem about their own family or copy a piece connected to family in some way. Students were not judged on content but the style, flair, neatness and layout of their handwriting.

The first prize winners in the various categories Limerick were: Darragh Gleeson from Adare, Sophie McDonagh, Bruree, Caitlin Considine, the Dublin Road, Sadhbh O'Connor, Abbeyfeale, Nicole Kenny, Dromkeen, T.J. McCarthy, Templeglantine, Sarah Lynch, Castlemahon, Cormac O'Regan, Abbeyfeale,



Aisling Mc Namara, Ballybrown with her parents at the INTO EBS Handwriting Awards.

Alan Wallace, Rathkeale, Irtaza Umair, Abbeyfeale and Glenn Keating from Patrickswell.

"The INTO /EBS Handwriting awards are a valued part of the school calendar", said Margaret Bernard of the INTO Central Executive Committee who teaches in St. Paul's National School in Doora Doyle.

Joe Lyons, Press Officer of INTO for the Limerick region, said: the competition has been a huge success over the last 18 years and is a great achievement for all involved.

Aidan Power, Head of Marketing and Communications, EBS said they have a long association with education and have been partnering with the INTO for the past 20 years to ensure the skill of handwriting is kept alive among the youth of Ireland.

The Limerick awards were presented at the Pery Hotel, Glentworth Street. All regional prize winners will go forward for judging for the National Awards. The national prize giving ceremony will take place in Dublin in April.



Alex Purcell NS, Castletroy with Martin Leyden of EBS at the INTO Handwriting Awards.

# Fascinating insight into western rail corridor

Book reviews:

By John O'Shaughnessy

## Pictorial record from the 1960s a must for all train lovers

THOSE of us with a fascination for trains and the railway network will delight in the new publication, *Rails through the West*, an illustrated journey on the Western Rail Corridor from Limerick to Sligo.

The authors, Jonathan Beaumont and Barry Carse, are both lifelong railway enthusiasts who have an extensive knowledge of the 'rail through the west' of Ireland, referred to as unique and picturesque.

Illustrated mostly in colour from the 1960s to the present, it is a portrait of the Limerick to Sligo railway line in its 'Indian Summer', and the neighbouring Ballina branch, onto which many of the line's trains were diverted.

The book features many previously unpublished pictures, as well as extended captions that will revive memories.

In addition, it has an up-to-date chapter on the 'western rail corridor re-opening, which highlights the many changes that have taken place.

In the book's introduction, we learn that the line was built over a period by several different railway companies, with Ennis being reached from Limerick in 1859.

Athenry came into being in 1869, and the section beyond there to Claremorris received its first through train in 1894.

Several small railway companies had been formed to carry out these piecemeal extensions, but, after 1872, the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company (W&L) worked the train services for them.

Later it was to become the Waterford, Limerick & Western Railway, changed five years later to the Great Southern & Western Railway.

In 1950, Coras Iompair Éireann (CIE) was created, and which was an amalgamation of the GSR with the canal companies and the Dublin tram and bus systems.

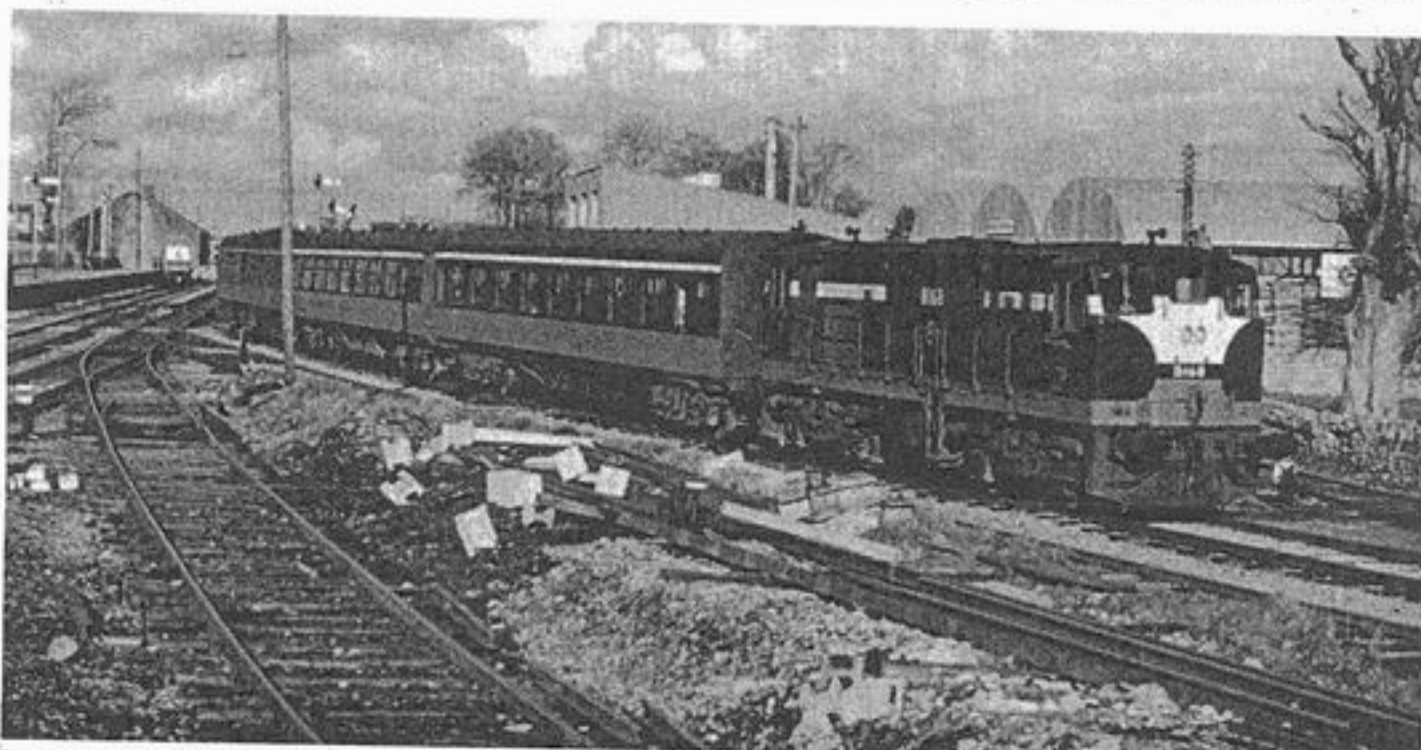
By the mid-1950s, the Limerick-Sligo line was operating with steam locomotives and passenger carriages dating from the 1880s onwards.

The late arrival of diesel railcars did little to revive the line's fortunes, as there was by this stage only one passenger train per day in each direction over the whole route. However, goods trains were busy.

Passenger traffic continued to decline over the next decade, and in the early 1970s the train had but a single coach and guard's van, hauled by a main line diesel locomotive.

Shortly afterwards the service was discontinued. *Rails through the West*, priced at €20, is a fascinating record and album of the Western Rail Corridor and a must for all transport users.

Available in most bookshops.



The daily 1355 Ballina to Limerick passenger train, leaving Athenry on March 13, 1976. The passenger service had but weeks to go before withdrawal.

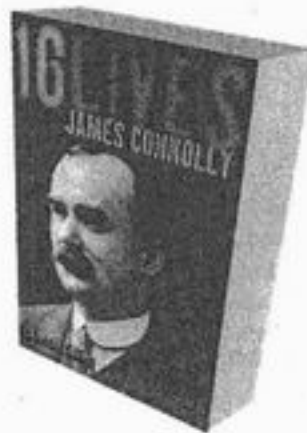
## Major new series on 16 men who changed a nation..

WITH the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising only four years away, it is appropriate that the extraordinary stories of the 16 executed leaders who changed a nation forever, should be recorded in a major new biographical series from O'Brien Press.

The first three titles in 16 Lives: Michael Mallin, by Brian Hughes; Joseph Plunkett, by Honor O Brochain; and James Connolly, by Lorcan Collins, each illustrated and offering fascinating, intimate accounts, are now available in bookshops.

The series editors are Dr Ruan O'Donnell, senior lecturer at the University of Limerick, and Lorcan Collins.

The 13 remaining biographies—Roger Casement, Thomas Clarke, Edward Daly, Sean Heuston, Sean MacDiarmada, Eamonn Ceannt, John MacBride, Willie Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Thomas Kent, Con Colbert, Michael O'Hanrahan and Patrick Pearse, will be published over the next four years.



16 Lives, informative, authoritative and accessible, is written by historians and, in some cases, by descendants.

The Joseph Plunkett biography is penned by his grand-niece Honor O Brochain, who was able to draw on

family archives and memorabilia.

The Easter Rising of 1916 was an attempt by armed revolutionaries to overthrow British rule in Ireland.

A small group of Irishmen and Irishwomen seized key buildings in

Dublin and fought a pitched battle with British soldiers for one week.

The execution of 16 of their leaders awakened a generation to the cause of Irish freedom.

— John O'Shaughnessy