

# Limerick merchants

Continued from  
last week

Roche purchased large quantities of grain, flax seed, rape and other cereals produced in the surrounding countryside and exported them to the Continent, mainly Holland.

Philip, who died in 1797, lived in Stradbally, Castleconnell. He is buried in Donoughmore.

Philip's father, though not as well known as his son, was also an enterprising merchant, who plied his trade in his own heavily armed ship between Limerick and the Continent. **NICHOLAS ARTHUR**

The mention of an armed ship brings to mind the fate of another great Limerick merchant who fell upon pirates and was held hostage for two years. This was Nicholas Arthur, whose family erected the famous tide mill in the Abbey River, opposite Barrington's Hospital.

Nicholas was once on his way to England in a ship chartered from John Church, who also acted as skipper. He was not long out of the mouth of the Shannon when he was set upon by pirates in the employ of the Duke of Brittany, at that time (1428) an inveterate enemy of the King of England, Henry the Sixth, for whom Arthur's cargo was bound. Arthur and his skipper were imprisoned in a dungeon in St. Michael's Mount and their cargo was auctioned in St. Malo.

It was a long time before Arthur's family became aware of his plight, and after lengthy negotiations a large sum was accepted for his release and the release of his skipper.

## THE RUSSELL'S

The most spectacular of all the city merchants were the Russells. The patriarch of the family, John Norris, was a man of remarkable enterprise. He was the first in Limerick to realise the advantages of steam power. Much to the wonderment of everyone, he built a steam mill in New Town Pery in 1827, which was a huge success. His firm, John Norris Russell and Sons, was also the proprietors of the Lansdowne Shipyard, where many fine ships left the stocks over a long period, the finest being the "Lansdowne," a name they attached to their beautiful home in the North Circular Road.

The firm also acquired the Lock Mills at the canal harbour, Plassey Mills, Garryowen Mills and Corbally Mills. In all their enterprises the firm were said to have 2,000 in their employment.

John Norris Russell died in 1853 at the ripe old age of 82 and left a thriving but complex enterprise to his sons. The most colourful of these was Thompson, who was said to be a "little eccentric." From what I read of this man I can find little evidence of this trait except perhaps his premature part-time occupation of the large mausoleum which he had erected over the graves of his ancestors in St. John's Cemetery in 1873. He fitted out this spacious sepulchre with a table and chair, and a lamp and oil stove, and spent many evenings catching up on his secretarial work. If one is to judge by the information in

the death notice which appeared in the "Chronicle" on Christmas week, 1880, the days were too short for the amount of work he wished to cram into them: "The late Mr. Russell's close attention to business was such that he was scarcely ever known to take a holiday or a trip to the seaside." Small wonder he made some use of his empty tomb!

With all his assiduous attention to business, it is said he never missed a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, the Harbour Board or the Market

sion was turning out elaborate coffins for some deceased members of the upper stratum of society.

On the death of the millionaire, Thomas Nevins, of Mountshannon House, in 1905, his massive ornamental coffin was on display in McCarthy's window in O'Connell Street.

Nestor Brothers is another old firm of which the city can be proud. They started off in Arthurs Quay in the middle of the last century and engaged in the little known craft of fish hook manufacture. In their well known premises in

## QUIN'S

Another old and respected firm which is still connected with the same family for more than a century and a half is Quin's of Ellen Street. From the beginning the firm engaged into Ellen Street. No expense was spared in the design and execution of the structure. The front arches are supported by columns of polished Aberdeen granite, material which is said to have cost one guinea a cubic foot. The building, still the most imposing building in the street, was designed by the city survey-

The outer walls of the building stood up to the disaster but the interior had to be completely reconstructed.

In more recent years a proprietor all but ruined the appearance of the building by painting much of the stonework a bright red. This was even too much for our planning department, who had the matter righted without delay. To-day the building stands out in striking contrast with the modern monolith across the street.

## TED RUSSELL

In this short article we have touched only on the

work and influence while a city councillor and a leader in many charitable organisations. His work, during his chairmanship of the Harbour Board, a position he held with distinction for 27 years, in promoting the Shannon Estuary and its development as a vital force in the mid-west region is of such importance as to be impossible to evaluate.

To the ordinary citizen he is best known for his work during his long time as a member of the City Council, where his adherence to the rules of ordinary debate and discussion dis-



## My Limerick



A weekly  
SERIES  
BY KEVIN  
HANNAN

## Trustees. SOME OLD FIRMS

McCarthy's is probably the oldest firm in the city still in the same family. To have supplied house furnishings for more than a century and a half and remain still in the same family is a tribute to the firm's honesty and integrity. In the old days fine furniture was made on their premises by their own expert cabinet makers, and one of their tasks on occa-

O'Connell Street they have been catering for the needs of anglers and all other sportsmen and women for nearly a century and a half.

Apart from the quality of their goods, a wealth of expert advice has always been readily available. Many members of the family down the years excelled in the practice of angling. Two past masters of the craft, Gus and Joe, are still actively engaged in the business.

or at the time, Mr. Corbett, and the builder was Messes. John Ryan & Sons.

While Quins continue their business in their old premises in Ellen Street, the Patrick Street building has changed hands on a number of occasions. For many years the place was known as "Egan's," from the proprietor, Michael Egan.

The Danus clothing factory took over the first floor in the late 1940. It was destroyed by fire in 1953.

fringe of the history of the merchants who gave so much, and meant so much, to our city, but it would be tragic if we omitted the name of one who is still happily with us. Ted Russell, politician and businessman, the father figure of Limerick's merchants.

He is still as vigorous as ever after 60 years of service to the commercial and cultural life of the city, and to the welfare of the citizens through his sterling

played an elegant scholarship. His long tenure of public office, including his five times office of Mayor, was marked by the probity and sang froid he maintained on a stage sometimes resounding to a cross-fire of acrimony and invective. While opposed, altogether, to mere speculative and theoretic policies, Ted, at the same time, strove to give to local politics a practical and philosophical basis; to throw light upon local problems from every possible point of view.

# Two jailed for obstructing search

TWO brothers, whom gardaí suspected of dealing in drugs, told the city court that money taken from them by the gardaí had been raised through selling clothes.

The gardaí were applying, under the Police Property Act, to have certain sums of money seized by the court, while the two brothers were applying to have the money returned to them.

Paul Dillon (35) of 125 Cliona Park, married with one child, and his brother Anthony Dillon (38), single with two children, were also charged with obstructing gardaí from carrying out their duty under the Drugs Acts. They denied this charge, but were convicted of it, and jailed for six months each.

Sergeant Reilly told the court that on October 11 he was with Garda Collins when he saw a car driven by Paul Dillon, with Anthony Dillon in the passenger seat, leaving Whitecross Gardens, Moyross. Information he had received from a reliable

source led him to believe that they were dealing in cannabis resin, he said.

He approached them with Garda Collins, and searched Paul Dillon. He found £100 and a sheet of paper, which Mr Dillon attempted to prevent him reading.

"He told me it was a private letter, and refused to give it to me, he started pushing me away. At one point he opened the letter and held the back up to me to show me there were no drugs in it. I could see through the paper that there were three columns on the sheet. They looked like dates and writing and figures."

He said that Mr Dillon passed the letter across the roof of the squad car and a passerby, from a large crowd that gathered at the scene, took it. He did not see it again.

Sergeant Reilly said that Paul Dillon had struggled and been unco-operative.

Garda Collins said that he had searched Anthony Dillon and found £100 on him.

Detective Sergeant Michael Melody said that on June 11, the house of Paul Dillon was searched. A sum of £1,225 was found in the living room, and was

seized. A large knife was also found, and three pages of a child's exercise book, with names and figures on them.

Sergeant Melody said that in his 12 years in the drug squad he had come across several of the names on the three pages.

"I had information that Mr Dillon was selling drugs. I had no doubt in my mind about the accuracy of that information," he said.

Paul Dillon told the court that he had £100 on him in October because he was after drawing the dole.

"I showed the sergeant the letter I had back and front, but I insisted that it was private, and he could not read it. I attempted to pass it to my brother but it fell on the ground, and Sergeant Reilly made no attempt to pick it up.

"The letter came from my girlfriend. That is why I was trying to keep it quiet.

Mr Dillon is a married man.

He added that the £1,225 found in his home on June 11 was money from his clothing business, and the three pages found by gardaí were accounts of the business.

Deborah Dillon, Paul Dillon's wife, said that they

had been involved in buying and selling clothes from their home for about two years, and that is where the money came from.

Josephine Power and Angela (Bella) Hughes said that they had purchased clothes from Paul Dillon from his home. They paid for the clothes in instalments.

Cyril Bourke said that he initially bought clothes from Mr Dillon, then later began selling clothes for him.

Clement Wheelan said that he sold clothes with Mr Dillon.

After hearing the evidence Judge Michael Reilly said that he had no doubts

that both Dillons were obstructing the gardaí on October 11, and he sentenced them both to six months in jail.

"They know, and everyone else knows, my views on this type of incident," he said.

On the applications under the police property act to seize the £100 taken from both brothers on October 11, and the £1,225 taken from Paul Dillon's home on June 11, Judge Reilly reserved his judgement. He adjourned the applications, and an application to bind Paul Dillon to the peace, until this Wednesday, December 22.

## REWARD

Strayed/missing/lost from the Parteen area (opposite Co-op.), 5 year old Yorkshire Terrier, black/blue and tan, answers to the name Teddy. Missing since 8.00 am Friday, 3rd December (collar with name tag and phone number).  
Telephone Frank Moloney 061-340152.