

Celebrating 50 duty free years

By RON KIRWAN

OVER 300 delegates from all over the world were in Shannon this weekend for a special conference to mark the 50th anniversary of airport duty-free shopping.

The conference – organised by Aer Rianta – has as its theme “Look to the Future” and celebrates the opening of the world’s first airport duty free shop at Shannon airport in 1947.

The weekend celebrations also focused on the future of the duty free industry and in particular the threat to intra-EU sales after 1999.

The Mayor of Limerick, Cllr. Kieran O’Hanlon, greeted the delegates at the University of Limerick this Monday morning at a conference chaired by Aer Rianta chief executive Derek Keogh.

The conference was addressed by Transport Minister, Alan Dukes; Liam Skelly former DG of Aer Rianta; Heribert Diehl, from Gebr. Heinmann in Germany; Richard Bur-

rows, chairman of Irish Distillers; David Bernstein, president of the International Association of Airport Duty Free Stores; Guntram Brendel, senior vice-president Weitnauer Group; Colm McLoughlin, MD Dubai Duty Free.; Norman Beavon, CEO, Australian Duty Free Operators Association and Frank O’Connell, chairman of the Inter-

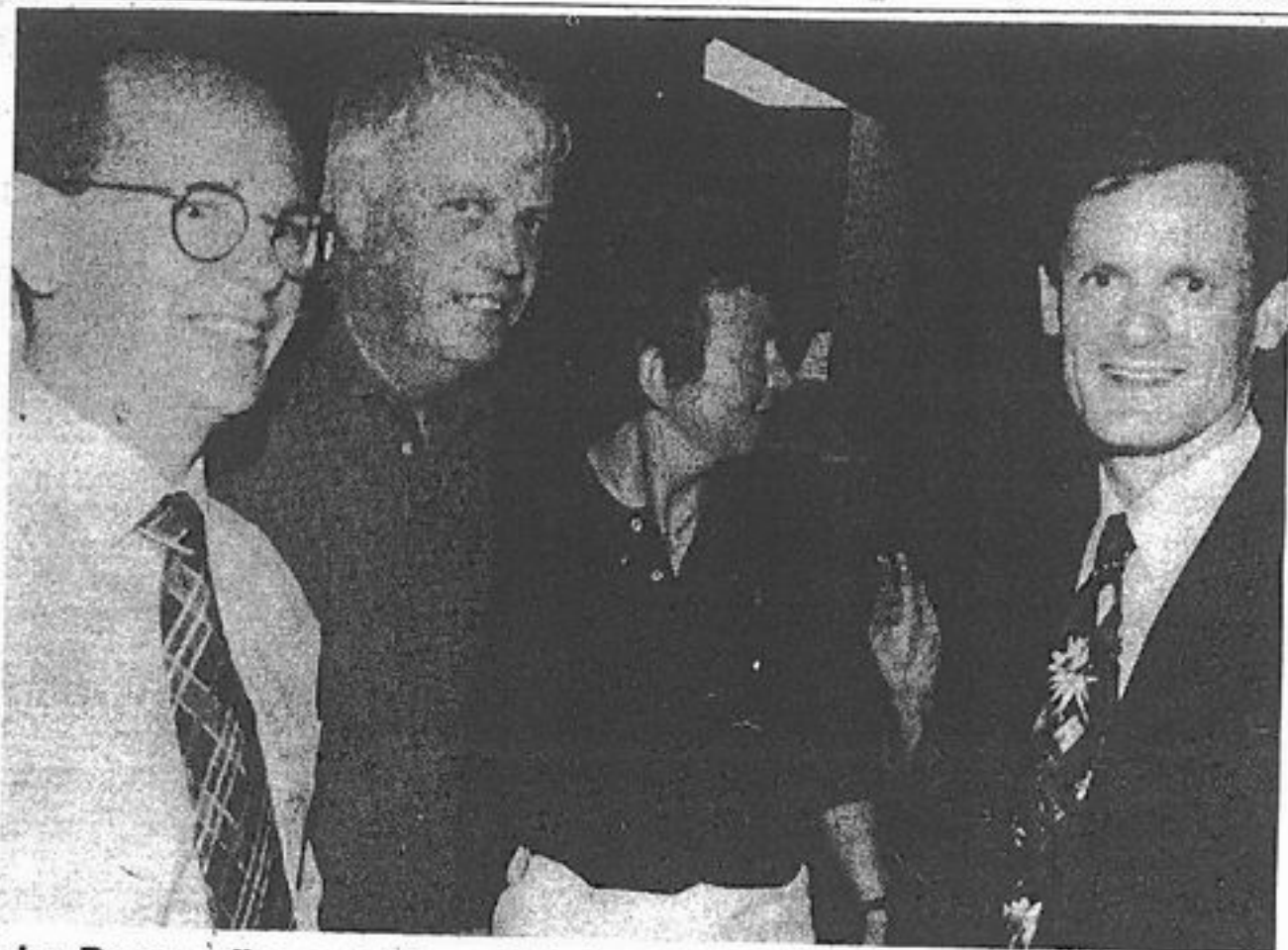
national Duty Free Confederation.

The celebration will conclude this evening with a gala banquet at Shannon Airport which will be attended by Kitty Downes who worked in the original shop at Shannon 50 years ago.

Conference chairman, Derek Keogh, Aer Rianta’s chief executive, said that

Aer Rianta took particular pride in the success of what is now a multi-billion pound duty free industry.

“The Aer Rianta flag is now flying from Shannon in the West to Beijing in the East. We are committed to continuing the fight to ensure that duty free retailing in Europe is retained as an integral part of the travel experience,” he concluded.



John Power, Jim and Mona Halpin with FF candidate Peter Power at the Limerick East count. (LL)