

## LimerickProfile

By Rachael Fincane

IT MAY have seemed half-baked to decide to start her own business a mere day after Ireland's recession became 'official' but for Limerick chef, Donnagh Gregson, the success of Bunratty Cookery School is the proof in the pudding.

Donnagh and husband, Lee—who is the manager of the Bunratty Castle Hotel—set up the school, which specialises in 'hands-on' cookery courses.

"I'm a qualified chef but I also worked for three years with an intellectual property company in Jersey, in areas like patenting, trademark and design. The best way of using the two areas was to set up a business. Our house used to be a B&B so we renovated an annexe for the school," she explained.

"Previous generations had to make a lot of stuff because there wasn't a supermarket. Women's roles have changed too because of work. As a country, we're losing practical skills. I really enjoyed watching other people cooking as a kid. I remember my grandmother cooking; she likes to take some credit for my interest. I got a Tupperware baking set and that was it," she joked.

Originally from the Father Russell Road, Donnagh trained in Limerick and worked in several top local restaurants before going on to work abroad.

"I felt I could go anywhere with it. The skills are very transferable. I first went to

## Donnagh Gregson Founder, Bunratty Cookery School



**'Working in the kitchen was hard work. I had to earn respect and show I could keep up. It's not just about food; you learned how to behave and deal with a very high-pressure**

# Liquidation shock for Murray Ó Laoire

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THE announcement by Murray Ó Laoire Architects, the designers behind the iconic Thomond Park stadium, that the firm will go into liquidation has been met with shock and dismay.

It is understood that it employed over 50 at its Limerick office and 127 overall with other bases in Cork, Dublin, Slovakia, Russia, Germany, Libya, Barbados and Abu Dhabi.

The firm was co-founded by Limerick native, Hugh Murray, in 1979 and also designed other innovative facilities such as the Tailteann Sports Hall at Mary Immaculate College; the CIT Cork School of Mu-

sic; GMIT in Galway, Athlone Town Centre and the Green Building in Temple Bar.

A statement issued on Friday "with regret" and said that "the firm is unable to meet its current financial obligations as a result of cumulative bad debts and the ongoing difficulty of securing profitable work as well as the increasing difficulties in getting paid on time, or at all"

The directors acknowledged "the enormous contribution of so many wonderful, talented and tremendously loyal staff and want to thank them for their professionalism and support over the years".

"We also thank the many colleagues, advisers, collaborators, contractors and

suppliers for their invaluable contributions. Our clients, from all sectors of society and the economy, also merit our great thanks for the faith they placed in us and the opportunities they gave us to contribute," it read.

The statement added that the company "will do all we possibly can within the constraints of the liquidation process to minimise the impact of this event".

City councillor, Maurice Quinlivan, paid tribute to its legacy and said he was saddened to see that it will most likely result in "significant job losses".

"These are top-end jobs. Murray Ó Laoire is very well respected and long established company, which employed a good number

of local people over the years. It was a Limerick firm with a strong international reputation," he said, before re-iterating his concerns that the city's Live Register figures are currently verging on 22,000.

Labour TD, Willie Penrose, said that the announcement marked "a shocking development".

"While everyone was aware that the architectural sector was facing severe difficulties as a result of the collapse in construction, the fact that such a long established and highly reputable firm could go to the wall still comes as a great shock. It is an indication of the extent of the economic problems we face and points to the need for urgent Government action."

## Tradesman 'swindled' OAP: activist claims

A CITY political activist has called on the public to be vigilant on behalf of their elderly relatives and neighbours after a woman in her eighties was robbed of €20,000.

According to Republican Sinn Féin member, Sean O'Neill, from Quinn's Cottages, Prospect, the elderly woman was "swindled out of her life savings" by an electrician who re-wired her house.

family called on the woman who disclosed that she had the house re-wired. The sad aspect of this incident is, not only did the elderly woman part with over €20,000, the electrician also brought his wife and daughter to the house and they stole her jewellery," Mr O'Neill claimed.

It's understood that the elderly woman in question needed the

advertisements in the local media.

"While we estimate that the work done is valued at around €10,000 the woman was charged over €20,000 by the man who claimed to be an electrician. In addition her jewellery was stolen and she has also suffered from the stress of the incident, which has upset her family," Mr O'Neill added.

The woman and her family, re-