

Fears for local jobs as receiver put in place at HMV

Nick Rabbitts

HMV'S two Limerick stores shut down this Wednesday afternoon as the British retailer's troubles hit hard.

David Carson, of Deloitte Ireland has been appointed to the Irish arm of the troubled firm, and its directors have moved to close all branches.

A spokesperson for Deloitte Ireland said that the stores will remain closed while the receiver carries out an assessment - and it is too early to put a time frame

on this. Thirty jobs at the HMV branches in Cruises Street, and the Crescent Shopping Centre are under threat.

A total of 15 people work at the HMV store in the city - one of the first shops to open in Cruises Street back in 1992.

Meanwhile, a further 15 people work at the iconic music retailer's store in the Crescent Shopping Centre.

Both units were trading as normal until Wednesday lunchtime - although the store at Cruises Street

was forced to close for a short time at lunchtime on Tuesday, as customers with gift cards sought clarification from staff as to their entitlement.

HMV was not redeeming gift vouchers in Ireland, a decision which has forced the National Consumer Agency to question the legality of this.

This is due to the fact that HMV Ireland is a separate entity to the British firm.

A staff member here said prior to the closure, they had been told to trade as usual,

and await further news.

The chairman of the city council's economic committee, Cllr Diarmuid Scully, said closure is "likely, but not inevitable".

"The bigger issue is the business model. I was in HMV over Christmas, and there were very few people in there younger than me, which I think says an awful lot. If we want towns, cities and villages to remain living centres, it is necessary to shop local as much as possible. I know in hard times, people get better

deals online, but the logical outcome of this is towns and cities die. We have to find a way to ensure this does not happen," he told the Limerick Leader.

Some 300 people work in HMV's 16 stores across the Republic of Ireland in total.

In Britain, HMV has 230 stores in operation.

If HMV closes on a permanent basis, it would represent the loss of the final music store in the city, as well as the vacation of a major unit in Cruises Street.

Editorial: page 16



HMV, Cruises Street: closed this Wednesday

The day the music finally died a sad one for the city

Leader editor Alan English laments how local record shops fell by the wayside, one by one

AS HMV shut its doors this Wednesday, those of us who grew up in a city full of record shops are faced with an appalling vista - not a single place left from which to buy the new releases, or to browse the old stuff.

It's unthinkable, but it's true. The power of HMV itself put paid to some of old shops and now - barring a new business emerging from the ashes - the digital revolution has claimed the last store standing.

Those who download their music and movies will barely notice, but when you've grown up in a time when vinyl was king and then spent hard-earned money amassing CDs and DVDs it seems like the city is already a less civilised and interesting place.

HMV has been part of the Limerick landscape for barely two decades, opening as one of the flagship stores in the new Cruises Street back in 1993. Perhaps its fortunes could be seen to have mirrored those of the street it fronts: a retail proposition that's no longer compelling.

One by one the city's record shops have fallen, taken out by the unsentimental forces of change. Clancy's, Woolworths, Golden Discs, Stardiscs, Empire Music, the old record department at the still trading Savin's: all gone.

There were others, of course: secondhand stores and other places whose names I can't instantly recall. What I do remember, though, is records I got there: the tiny shop at the bottom of Bedford Row where I bought the debut single of an emerging British band, Sultans of Swing by Dire Straits; the place in the now demolished Spaight's shopping centre where I picked up a limited edition double single by U2 called Fire. It was supposed to be worth a few quid, that. Obviously I still have it, along with well over a thousand pieces of vinyl and a similar number of CDs.

Like many in Limerick, I suspect, I bought my very first record at Woolworths, the identity of which I've never admitted before. I remember the conversation with the girl behind the counter.

Me (somewhat nervously): "Have you got the Bay City Rollers?"

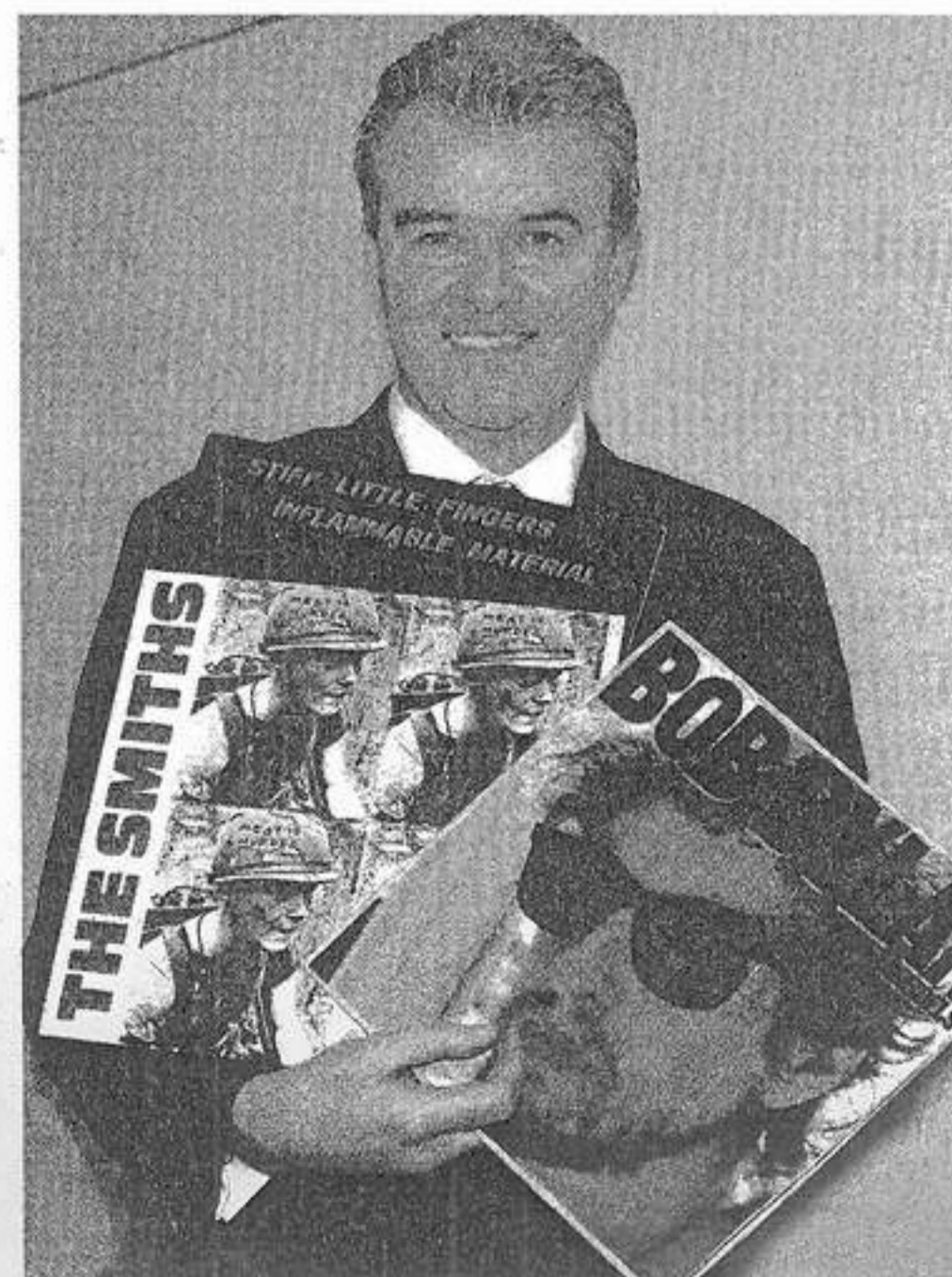
Girl: "The new one or the old one?"



Corbally's John Harnett has his LP signed by Phil Coulter at the old Golden Discs record shop in Todds back in 1985, as manager Eileen Holmes looks on approvingly. The shop is long closed, along with many others like it in the city



Below: the Leader's editor Alan English clutching some of his prized LPs, all purchased in Limerick record stores. Like many others, he bought his very first record at the former Woolworths store on O'Connell Street, bottom left. In an era when vinyl ruled, he also closed Clancy's shop further up O'Connell Street did a roaring trade in chart records. The picture above left shows the store's interior in 1965, with new releases prominently on display



Me (visibly thrown): "Ah, the new one ... I think."

The singles were stored in pigeonholes, depending on their chart position. She reached up to the No 1 slot and handed it over: Money Honey, it was called.

A little to the left of where HMV stands now, at the far end of Tots to Teens, there was Stardiscs. It was small but somehow glamorous and exciting. As you walked in, they always had something good playing, like Heart of Glass by Blondie. They had the latest UK singles and albums charts from the centrefold of Music Week magazine pinned on the wall. I studied them avidly.

One day, I entered a competition on the pirate Big L station for which the prize was your choice of three free LPs from Stardiscs, with the only proviso being they had to be by artists sharing the winner's initials. That lucky winner was yours truly and can still vividly recall the day I stalked the A and E sections, not finding much to my liking, before handing over LPs by America, ELO and the Eagles. I now realise, more than 30 years later, that I should have given Big L a bogus name.

For a brief, glorious period in 1988 I wrote a music column for the Leader and secured a sweet deal with Golden Discs, downstairs in Todds, which gave me three free LPs every week to review. Most of them got four or five stars: in fairness, I wasn't going to waste my freebies on rubbish.

Around the same time two friends went into business together and set up Empire Music in the old Williams court mall, so then we got to hear about the record business from insiders. It was still flying back then, and the shop later moved to a prime pitch on O'Connell Street. But the world was changing and eventually Empire Music went the way of the others.

If HMV does close, could some enterprising romantic swim against the tide and set up a new music store here? It seems unlikely: the wishful thinking of a dinosaur at a time when even those who don't download their music have been wooed by online giants like Amazon.

Tomorrow, depressingly, the only place you'll find new CDs is the likes of Tesco. We can only hope that changes, but it's not looking good.

news

Primary theme:

ALCOHOLICS different group Annual Convent Hotel Castletr 1 to 3.

The purpose carry the mes are members gives member to share their acquaintances of this year's This will be at 12.30 which any profession and others who alcohol proble City with 40 r Limerick Cour

Antique in Drom

OVER 50 stan will be attend Fair on Sunda This is the Castle Antiqu recognised as open from 11: children and ti organiser, Rob

Expect to se gold and Silver and, crystal, items from C along with fish Twelve mer Association IA "It is an ide: visiting one o said Robin.

Lecture city far

THE HISTOI of Limerick surviving b J Hodkin Sons ecc decorators, v subject of at Mary In College this evening.

The lectu 'God's D will be give Hodkinson, t generation p in room 206- 21. The lectu Archaeologic The illustr: of images wi business, w operated fro The comp: great grandf celebrated cl Included: a slideshow drawings of

Meetin cuts to

BALLYHOUE information 21 at 8.30pm regarding ch enterprise, e and which w delivered an It will be c Herbertstow: Glenbrohane Knockcarron Ballyorgan, C

This meeti recently an Environment to the deliver 2014-2020. Carmel Fo will attend t changes.

Spread Have you g Email the n Or call us a

EX: LIMERICK LEADER 19TH JANUARY 2013 PAGE 8