

CHRONICLE COLUMNIST



I ♥ LIMERICK



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Goodbye is the toughest word

End of an era as Limerick pays tribute to a true gentlemen Eric Lynch

I WANT to pay tribute to one of Limerick's true gentlemen, my father Eric Lynch who passed away peacefully last week at the University Hospital Limerick surrounded by his entire family as we sang our favourite family songs.

My father and my mother Florence used to own the legendary pub bearing his name on St Joseph's Street. I am one of eight children and we all lived upstairs overhead the pub. The pub was synonymous with good times, a great atmosphere and above all, a first rate music scene for four decades and they sold it in 1997, after my mother was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. Many Limerick people have wonderful, nostalgic memories of the pub, with my mother playing the piano and my dad singing songs. Everywhere I go in Limerick people always ask after my parents. I come from a background steeped in history and I am incredibly proud of my heritage. My parent's pub was the first pub in Limerick to have music, the first to get a music licence. There were two people who worked at the pub who were an integral part of the history of Eric's. Cam Davern worked with them for over 30 years in their business and she was affectionately known as 'Abbe' by all the family and John O'Donnell who was the MC for every singsong session and who would call all the customers up to sing their favourite songs. I remember as a child lying in bed upstairs as the sound of all the old songs played below.

The pub was also famous for its 10 pence a game pool table and my dad kept the price at 10 pence for decades. Back in the early 80's our pub was also one of the first to show movies as we got a Betamax video player when they first hit the market. I remember the front lounge of the pub thronged with people who came to see screenings of the movies. I worked in Video City, 51 Thomas Street from the age of 11 so we were never short of movies to screen at the pub. My parents worked incredibly hard,



Richards parents Eric and Florence pictured behind the counter of Eric's pub in 1962

seven days a week, 365 days of the year, even on Christmas Day and Good Friday. I think that's where I got my work ethic, as I love to work, it keeps me sane.

Dad purchased the pub from Stevie Coughlan, who

was Mayor of Limerick twice, during the 50s and early 70s. When my parents eventually did close the pub my mam went on to play the piano for nine years in the Old Stand pub as the culture of music was such a huge part of their

lives and they could not let it go. Eventually my mother's health deteriorated and she could no longer continue to play, but she would play for my dad at home and he would sing her all the old love songs. I lived in New York for over

15 years but eventually came home in 2008 to care for my parents, as I could not bear to be apart from them.

My parents are very loving, kind, liberal people who always put an emphasis on the importance of loving one

another. I organised the first week long LGBT Pride Festival in the city in 2008 and my parents came to the parade to support my community. After that they would try to come every year and one of my siblings would wheel mam

To see lots of great Limerick videos, look under the 'Media' section in our website, www.ILoveLimerick.com



PICTURE: DAVID WOODLAND



Richard pictured with his beloved parents Eric and Florence at Limerick LGBT Pride 2011. Eric was laid to rest this Monday afternoon



Richards parents Florence and Eric join hands in honour of Lola Jane Nagle. Upload your own #JOINHANDSELFIE to social media sites and text 'ACT' to 50300 to donate €4 to ACT for Meningitis in honour of Lola
Picture: Cindy Saada

#JOINHANDSELFIE in honour of Limerick angel Lola

LIMERICK recently lost a very special little girl named Lola Jane Nagle, who was only one and half years old, to Meningitis. The heartbreaking reality of how Meningitis can change your life is never fully understood until you sadly walk that journey. As part of World Meningitis Day, Act for Meningitis wants everyone to show their support by uploading your own #JOINHANDSELFIE to social media sites and text 'ACT' to 50300 to donate €4 to ACT for Meningitis. #LOVELOLA. @ACT4Meningitis on Facebook and Twitter. See www.act-formeningitis.ie for more info.



Eric and Florence enjoying themselves at Limerick LGBT Pride 2012.



My mother would play for my dad at home and he would sing her all the old love songs. Here they are pictured at home in 2008

down in her wheelchair to the top of O'Connell Street with my dad to watch the parade as it passed. My father simply could not understand how anyone would have an issue with gay people. Why would you have a problem with a person unless you had a problem with yourself? He recalled a day back in the 1950's when a group of bullies were beating up Stevie Shinnors, the only known gay man in the city at the time and my father jumped to his defence and they all fled.

My dad was a very gentle person, but very strong and was also a boxer. He would always be the first person to defend the vulnerable and if

he read sad news or saw it on TV he would be genuinely concerned and distressed to see anyone suffering.

I Love Limerick would not exist, if it were not for my parents. I have done it voluntary and unpaid for almost eight years, not because I have no self worth, but because my greatest thrill was to see the smile on my parents face when they opened this column very week to read about their son working hard to try make a difference and to do something positive with his life. I am campaigning for a yes vote for marriage equality in the referendum on May 22, as my beloved father believed in equality, love and pride. He

would have voted Yes and he was 86 years of age. Yes, that's right, my dad was a freedom fighter, ahead of his time and without a doubt he believed that everyone had a right to love and be loved. Both mam and dad were married almost 60 years and were madly in love. He would have wanted the same for me and for everybody else. I am sure right now he is singing with the angels in heaven.

**Love you Dad. Your son,
Richard x**

Please turn out to the polling stations on May 22. Be sure you are registered to vote, Vote YES, for your friends, for your

family and your loved ones! For more info go to www.yes-equality.ie or www.marriage-quality.ie.

And finally...

If anyone wants to keep tabs with what I am up to around Limerick, you can catch me on Facebook and Twitter @Richardthor. If you have a good news story about Limerick I could share on this page, you can contact me via email at Richard@ILoveLimerick.com. Look forward to hearing from you!

**Love to you all
Richard (Richardthor) x**



Florence and Eric pictured in 1968 with Cam Davern who worked with them for over 30 years in their business. She was affectionately known as 'Abbe' by all the family and was an integral part of the history of Eric's

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Spring colours arrive Boutiques showcase the latest looks on the streets of Limerick >P22



Future actors to cut their teeth
The Lime Tree Theatre is set to host the Bualadh Bos summer camps for young thespians >P5

Tea and sandwich feminism
Patricia Feehily reflects on women in the workplace >P3



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Archive unearthed in attic

Fascinating photographs of Limerick from 1880 on have been discovered in Cornwall, writes **Anne Sheridan**

A CONNECTION made on social media three years ago with a local historian has led to an exhibition of never seen before photographs of the city taken over a century ago.

In all, more than 120 images of Limerick from 1880 to 1913 were found in an attic in Cornwall, by David and Steve Ludlow, the great great grandsons of John Riddell, a man who never saw his photographs published or shown to a wide audience during his lifetime.



The photographer John Riddell, who moved his family to Limerick in 1880

John Riddell came to Limerick from Glasgow in 1880 to run Walker's Distillery on Brown's Quay in Thomondgate. His wife Elizabeth and young daughter Bessie moved with him to Island View House, Thomondgate, and they had three more children - John, Jeanie and Lexy.

When not managing the distillery, the father of four could be found capturing a unique view of Limerick through a series

of personal photographs, which were only shared with his family - until now.

Some 56 of them will be on display in Merchant's Quay from this Thursday, until April - largely due to the help of Sharon Slater, who describes herself as a 'virtual local historian', and who made the connection with David via her Twitter page, 'Limerick's Life'.

They were only discovered in 2012, and Sharon gradually released some of the images, explaining the historical context, on her website of the same name.

"The value of social media is that you can make these connections. There is a whole new whole of history online. But people come into our exhibitions here [in City Hall] who have no interaction with the online world, so they needed to be brought to a wider audience. We were just astounded when we saw these images. You can see from the images that he really cared for Limerick,

audience. We were just astounded when we saw these images. You can see from the images that he really cared for Limerick,

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Amateur photographer John Riddell captured the visit of Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught, to Limerick in August 1900 to inspect the garrison

Images from turn of century unveiled

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and enjoyed life in the city with his children. His relatives are thrilled they're coming back to Limerick for display," explained Sharon who facilitated this exhibition in conjunction with Limerick Museums and Archives.

Jacqui Hayes, Limerick archivist, said that what is unique about these images is that he was an amateur photographer, simply going about his daily business and capturing life as he saw it - not life with a staged gloss of grandeur as others might have wanted it to be seen.

The only other comparable images of this time that exist are from the Lawrence collection, but this is a huge collection held by the National Library, and the photos from across the country were taken for the dedicated purpose of recording that time for posterity. By contrast, John Riddell photographs were never taken for public display - at least, he never presumed they would be. "He took candid shots in a time when people didn't take candid shots until much later, maybe the 1950s," added Jacqui.

There are natural street photography scenes of men swilling beer - at odds with the rigid Victorian style of the time - as well as images of the visit of Prince Albert, the Duke of Connaught, and the seventh child of Queen Victoria, to Limerick in 1900 to oversee the garrison. The Railway Hotel, which is still here today, can be seen in the background of one of the images of the royal visit.

Another image shows Prince Albert meeting Thomas Cleeve, of Cleeves Condensed Milk Factory, and his wife Pheobe Cleeve.

Perhaps unwittingly, he also



Prince Albert, the Duke of Connaught, meeting Thomas Cleeve, of Cleeves Condensed Milk Factory, in August 1900. His wife Pheobe Cleeve is also seen on the platform

shows the photography style of the time - by taking a picture of a picture produced by another photographic practice, the American Studio, established circa 1899, at 123 George's Street (now O'Connell Street).

It was a very different Limerick - and the former name of the main thoroughfare is indicative of its link with the Empire, as hundreds of people turned out to line the streets to mark the coronation of King Edward VII on the August 9, 1902. One banner can be seen hanging from the Young Protestant Men's Association, founded here in 1853, on George's Street, saying 'God Save the King'.

Incidentally, John's two eldest daughters Bessie and Jeanie married English shipping

agent brothers Edmund and Christopher Ludlow, and the former was the shipping agent for the White Star Line, who sold tickets to board the ill-fated Titanic from a premises



Pigs roam free on Parnell Street in front of MacInerney's bar

on Glentworth Street. After the death of his wife in 1913, John moved to Cornwall to live with his daughter Jeanie where he would remain until he died in November 1927, aged 81. It would take more than 80 years before the images were prised out of their confines.

"They take us into a time of enormous change in Limerick," continued Ms Hayes, "and show steamships side by side with sail ships in the Limerick docks. While at the docks we see the faces of the day labourers covered in coal dust and the interest in items being brought ashore by fez wearing foreigners."

What is also at odds with Limerick life today is what how populated the River Shannon is, by fishermen, and for other

larger commercial interests, via the docks. One image shows the SS Mantinea at Limerick's docks - another doomed ship, which was torpedoed and sunk on August 7, 1917 while on route from Newcastle to Genoa with coal.

You also, she said, wouldn't see the condition of the roads in professional photographs of the time, as "they literally were mud streets." Away from commercial life, there are wonderful, happy scenes of frivolity, such of skating on a frozen Shannon river in 1900. The images, which were developed on glass plate negatives, have become scratched over time, but that only "adds to their charm."

The exhibition opens this Thursday at City Hall, 6.30pm



Members of the Protestant Young Men's Association football team, enjoying a few drinks. An image of Queen Victoria hung above the fireplace in their offices on George's Street, now O'Connell Street



A horse waits with a wicker cart near Arthur's Quay to load or unload to incoming ships, as people look on in the background from the tenement buildings



Children in the Thomondgate area of the city skating on a film of ice on the road