

A look at what Limerick calls itself - and why!

WHAT'S NAMED AFTER WHOM?

By MARTIN BYRNES

LIMERICK has a street naming committee.

It hasn't met for more than six years. When it does, it has seventeen members - the members of the city council. Its function is to honour those who should be honoured, and to prevent what happened in Caherdavin where everywhere is named after some kind of a plant or tree - many of which species wouldn't thrive outside of a greenhouse, and which cause bewilderment to the visitor to the area. The obvious thing is to call streets after heroes, so we have O'Connell Avenue named in honour of the Liberator who brought in Catholic Emancipation - a very great move in human rights at the time. O'Connell is still remembered (see panel) and his house in Caherdaniel has just undergone a facelift for tourists.

And we have modern statesmen, such as presidents of the country.

Hyde Road, de Valera Park, and Childers Road. We don't have anything important for Sean T O'Ceallaigh or for Cearbhaill O'Dalaigh, however, and as Dr Paddy Hillery is still very much alive it is not expected that he will get anything named in his honour - just yet.

Heads of Government merit one inclusion - Cosgrave Park in honour of W T Cosgrave. John A Costello, Sean Lemass, Jack Lynch, and Garrett Fitzgerald are not included, although Liam Cosgrave might be able to wrap a bit of his father's honour about himself too.

Some places are named after the people who donate or built them.

Arthur's Quay was more or less exactly that - the Arthur family had traded from it and it was fitting to name it formally in their honour.

Pery Square is so named because the Earl of Limerick, of that surname, gave the quarry which is now People's Park, to be filled in and landscaped.

The latest in such magnanimous gestures came from Mr Ted Russell when he gave land near Barrington's Pier to create a new little park on Shannon Bridge Road.

Individual clergymen have imposed their holiness or good works so much on the public appreciation that we have seen fit to name things after them.

Fr Russell Square (and road), Canon Breen Park, etc.

But what about those people whose primary achievement was that they (a) were mayor and (b) are dead?

We have nothing to honour Frances Condell (1963) John Danaher ('64), Vincent Feeney ('66), Rory Liddy ('70) or Mick Lippper ('73).

Prior to that, however, it was hard to avoid having things named after you.

Donough O'Malley has the honour of O'Malley Park. But across the road we have C P Keyes (mayor '57) and John Carew (mayor '53) parks.

Burke Avenue is named in honour of TD and mayor of the '40s, Dan Bourke.

The 1916 victims get honourable mention, particularly in areas built around 1966 - Connolly, Pearse, and our own Clarke of course get a look in and so does the non-martyr, William Smith O'Brien. The railway station is named in honour of Con Colbert, another 1916 man and a native of Athea. It took them fifty years to decide that he was worth the hon-



Trotting to the fair. A charming summer jaunt in last evening's sunshine.

(DERMOT LYNCH)

our. Also from the time of the troubles in Clancy Strand and O'Callaghan Strands, named in honour of the mayor and his immediate predecessor, murdered on March 7, 1921.

Sarsfield has half the town named in his honour but if you look at it, only the barracks and one street are of any major importance.

And then there are the names that just emerge - such as Poorman's Kilkee at the bottom of Bedford Row, and Hell's

Gates at the mouth of the Abbey. And we would defy anyone to draw an exact line around The Back of the Monument, although we accept The Parish as well defined.

Looking back on the lists of mayors, many celebrated names spring out: the O'Maras are there, of course.

Peter Tait (Tait's clock), Martin Honan (Honan's Quay), Piersie Shannon (street?), the Verekers, the Roches, the Sextons. How many other examples can you think of? let us know.

But who were these people?

By MARTIN BYRNES

WE wanted to find out how much young people knew about the placenames about them.

So we brazenly walked up to them and asked them. Just walked straight up and asked one simple question.

In Arthur's Quay, for example, the question was simply this:

"After whom is Arthur's Quay named?"

We asked 25 young people, teenagers and students, all locals. Two had some idea that the Arthurs had been a major merchant family in Limerick for centuries. The rest hadn't a clue.

So then we asked another sample - 25 people who, we guessed, would not see fifty again.

Amazement - only four had the foggiest notion although of those, it must be stated, two old gentlemen were able to answer the question in considerable detail.

Next on to O'Malley Park. Same procedure.

Much better response, which is hardly surprising. Half of the young people knew about Donough O'Malley and all of the adults to whom we spoke.

Across at Keyes Park. A smaller sample, but the youngsters were mystified at the name and had never heard of the celebrated Minister for P&T.

Passers by at Pery Square - twenty at random at Hartstonge Street corner. One thought that the place was named for a bishop, another for a lord. The later was correct, the others were lost.

And as for Hartstonge Street - forget it!

O'Connell Street posed no problem, mainly because of the statue in the centre of the Crescent.

Thomondgate! Who was Sexton to seem to have two streets named after him?

The information seems to

have faded from the memory, although they certainly (15 out of a random 25) knew a good deal about Clancy and O'Callaghan's Strand.

Cleeve's Bank. Now there's where we felt that we would catch a lot of people. We were wrong. More than half of the people knew that the present Golden Vale premises was Cleeve's and that the embankment to Barrington's Pier had something to do with the trade of the factory in times of old. Full marks.

King John's Castle? Straightforward enough, but we asked two supplementary questions - when did he live and did he build it himself. One out of 20 passers-by was accurate to within 100 years, and sur-

prisingly most got the second question right - he didn't but he probably ordered it constructed.

Next we asked about Saint Murchin.

To be honest, we were being a bit unfair. In fact very little is known with any degree of certainty about the holy man other than the fact that he existed here and was a holy man. The rest, and there isn't much, is a mixture of folklore and wishful thinking.

A few people told us about The Curse of St Murchin, with varying degrees of gratuitous embellishment, and that did fine.

Hyde Road. Named after Dr Douglas deHide, the first president. Five youngsters - noth-

ing! Five teenagers - three!

Four adults - three! Cosgrave Park. Eleven people questioned. All of them knew that he was head of Government, but seven thought it was Liam Cosgrave, Taoiseach 1973-77, who was being honoured rather than his late father.

There were no problems at de Valera Park. We stopped after a random four respondents (one man voiced a very strong opinion about not wishing to live in a place thus named, but we had got the same from a woman in Cosgrave Park).

Unfortunately, local knowledge, though valuable and character forming, is not considered important in the slightest under a schools examination system which is established on a national basis.



Walk for Life... Donnacha O Dulainn (left) with Pat Brazil receive a cheque from John Kelly, Limerick Telecom, towards the Irish Cancer Society and St Anne's Cancer Therapy 1,000 mile walk at a reception at City Hall organised by the Mayor of Limerick, Alderman Jim Kemmy.

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BLOOD DONORS WANTED

The Blood Transfusion Service Board shall be holding Blood Donation Clinics at:
ST. JOHN'S PAVILION, LIMERICK

WEDNESDAY, 31st JULY, 1991
WEDNESDAY, 7th AUGUST, 1991
WEDNESDAY, 14th AUGUST, 1991

TIME: 3.30 - 5.00 p.m. and 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. each Clinic.

The wholehearted support of the community would be appreciated.

GIVE THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE...
A HUMAN LIFE MAY DEPEND UPON IT.