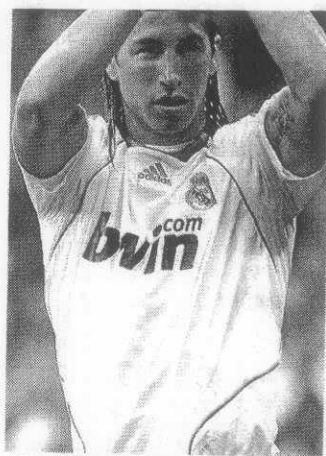


downe Road.  
The Leader has learned that talks between officials from the aristocratic Spanish club and Thomond Park chiefs are at an advanced stage.

A Thomond Park source indicated that Real Madrid's 'galacticos' - including Raul, Sergio Ramos and Jan Huntelaar - are likely to play the high-profile friendly at the 26,000 capacity rugby stadium in July. The source said that intense negotiations have been taking place for some time and the deal has been all but wrapped up. Real Madrid's opposition for the exciting fixture has yet to be finalised.

Back in September 1980, Limerick opted to play their European Cup tie with Real Madrid in Lansdowne Road in the hope of



Stars like Sergio Ramos could soon play in Thomond Park

cashing in on a bigger pay day than would have been possible if

whole competition, where they eventually lost in the final to Liverpool.

Soccer fans in Limerick are set for a bonanza over the coming 12 months with up to four of Europe's leading club and international sides expected to play mouth-watering fixtures at the new-look €40 million Thomond Park.

European heavyweights the Netherlands, former European champions Denmark and Premiership side Sunderland are also being lined up to entertain fans at the redeveloped stadium.

Speculation is also growing that the Netherlands will play a fixture in Limerick over the coming year.

Details of the impressive programme of games are expected

which are currently dormant in St John's, will constitute the extra 30 beds we need to find (to accommodate emergency patients from Ennis and Nenagh).

"We won't be sending emergencies to St John's but we hope to send some of the elective surgery there to vacate 15 beds in this hospital.

nary care beds - which has been put out to tender and should open at the end of 2010.

And he has reassured the public that doctors won't proceed with the new arrangements until they are completely satisfied it can work.

**GOVERNMENT TDS BACK HOSPITAL PLAN: PAGE 8**

## Cancer survivors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

⇒ my hair is coming back, it's coming back."

Her friend and fellow cancer survivor Julie-Anne Dineen, whose husband is organising the event, also shared her thoughts on beating the illness.

"Once people hear the word cancer they think you're gone, but that's not the case any more. The amount of people that get cancer and survive is so vast it's nearly like having the flu now. We want people to know there is life after this, that it's not all doom and gloom."

Ms Dineen, a 38 year-old mother of two young children, said her only wish in beating cancer was to be there for her children.

"You just say to yourself you have to get through this. I remember I was diagnosed on June 19, and the Novena started on June 20. It's not that I'm a religious person or anything, but I think that got me through."

She has recorded a song,

titled Do You Believe in Angels, which she hopes will reach No1 in time for Mother's Day. The song was written by Philip Scanlon, whose grandmother died from breast cancer.

A series of fundraising initiatives are to be held in the coming months, with the expectation of raising €250,000 for the breast cancer unit. "This isn't about me - it's about all the women out there. Your mother or daughter, whoever. You just never know. The Regional need the support of everybody now and until you're in that situation you don't realise how important it is."

Mr Dineen, who is credited with organising the events, was full of admiration for the five females.

"There the strongest five people I've ever seen," he said, standing back watching them sing 'Here comes the girls' as they made their way towards the photographers. Tickets for the fashion show cost €20 and are available from Russell's. Call 061-308080.

# International Rules windfall for city

David Hurley

IN a week when it was confirmed that Thomond Park is to host two international soccer friendlies later this year - as well as a likely visit from the superstars of Real Madrid - it was also announced that the city will stage a sporting code of a different kind next October.

The Limerick economy is set to receive a major cash boost when the Gaelic Grounds stages the first of two international tests between Ireland and Australia in the International Rules series. The match is likely to attract a capacity crowd of around 50,000 and experts say this could generate over €10 million for the local economy.

"There is a particular formula for calculating these things but if you look at the estimate that every match in Thomond Park generates around €7.5 million then that tells you how important these types of events are," said Maria Kelly, CEO of the Lim-



The Gaelic Ground is to play host to the first Test in this year's International Rules series, at which the new floodlights of the Ennis Road venue will be switched on for the first time

erick Chamber of Commerce.

"I'm sure our network of hotels are particularly delighted but even if people don't stay in the city people will spend money on things like fuel, food and drink so securing this event is important," added Ms Kelly.

The Test-match, which will only be the second to be played outside of Dublin will throw in at 7.30pm on Saturday October 24 and it will mark the official switching on of the new floodlights at the Ennis Road venue.

The second Test will take place a week later at Croke Park. Limerick GAA officials beat off competition from Casement Park in Belfast, Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon and Semple Stadium Thurles, among others, to host the International Rules Test.

County Board officials made a presentation to Croke Park chiefs earlier this month, but confirmation of the decision only came on Saturday when Central Council rubber stamped the fixture for Limerick.

## Castletroy Park

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The Carlton Group have signed a 21-year lease

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