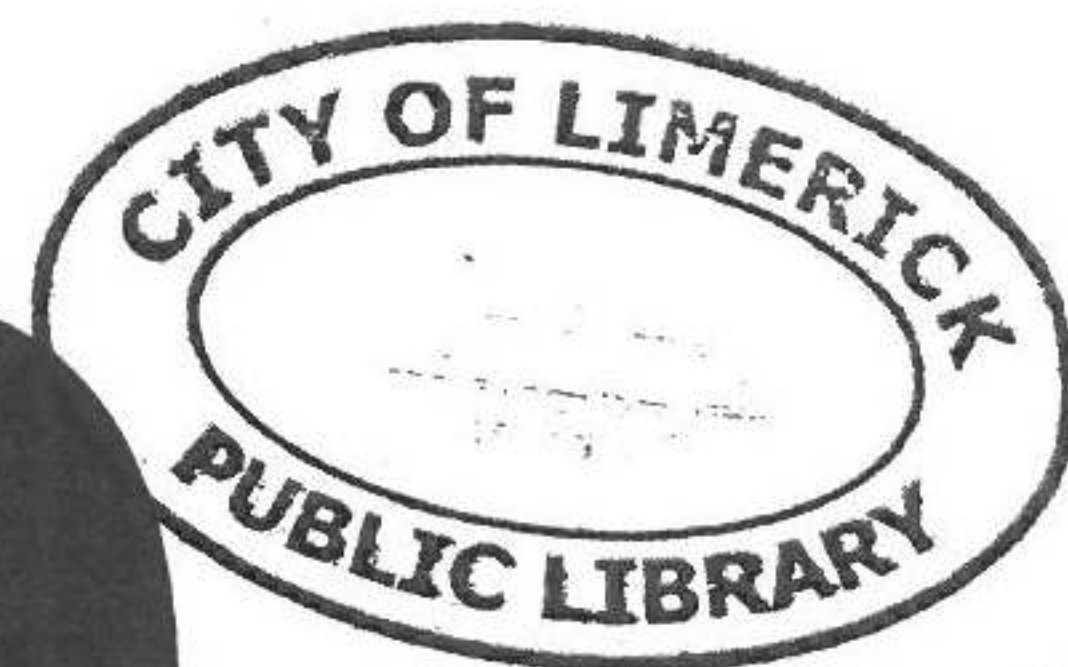


# Limerick Chronicle



## CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

## PANTOS, GIGS & FESTIVE FUN!

FOR THE BEST OF WHAT'S ON SEE OUR ENTERTAINMENT SECTION PAGES 27-37



# MASSIVE PARTY IN CITY FOR ANDY

### Commerce MARKET'S DIRECTION QUERIED



SEE PAGE 4

NE FITZGERALD  
zgerald@limerickleader.ie  
@nefitzgerald2

### MASSIVE homecoming event is being planned in the city for the return of world boxing champion Andy Lee.

Thousands of people are expected to line the city's streets on Wednesday afternoon to welcome home their sporting hero.

It is expected that the Limerick boxer, who won the WBO middleweight boxing title in the early hours of the morning, Irish time, will arrive into Shannon Airport at lunchtime on Wednesday, with a homecoming to take place in the city, coordinated by Limerick's local authority, later in the afternoon.

Ken Moore, head coach at the Francis boxing club in the city who coached Andy as an amateur, said the world champion is anxious to get home.

"Shannon is the thing - he

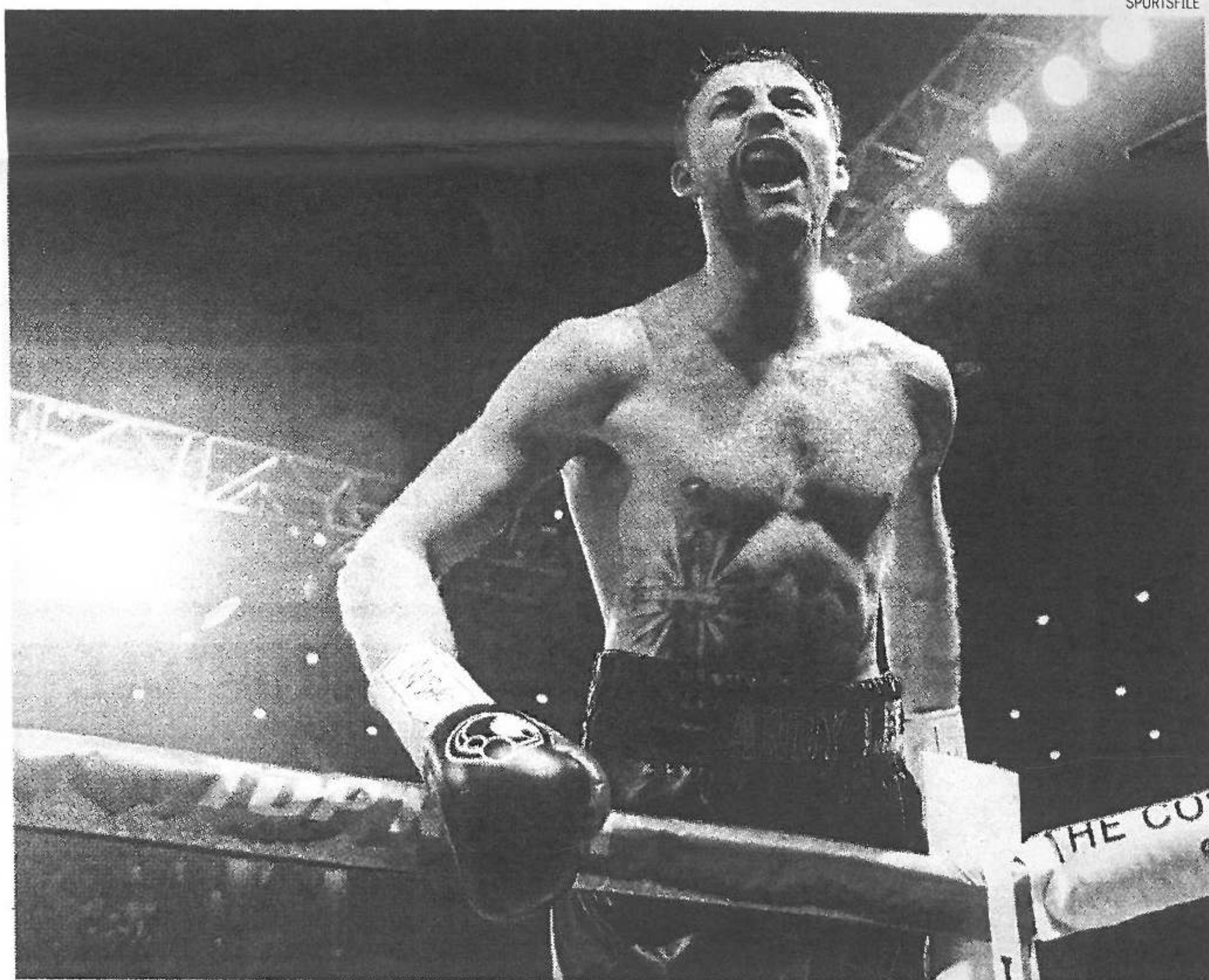
has to fly to Shannon. That has always been the dream to land in Shannon as world champion and walk up O'Connell Street with the belt," said Ken.

The champion boxer is expected to touch down at Shannon shortly after midday on Wednesday before he gets a garda escort into the city.

A press conference is to take place in the city at approximately 3pm followed by a civic reception at approximately 4.30 at City Hall on Merchant's Quay hosted by Limerick City and County Council. The world champion will be introduced to the public at the entrance to City Hall at approximately 5.30pm.

Following the announcement of the homecoming, the boxer tweeted this Monday afternoon: "Limerick, I'm coming home! Thank you to Limerick City, a civic reception planned for Wednesday. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone."

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On top of the world: Andy Lee is euphoric after defeating Matt Korobov by technical knock-out in the sixth round of the WBO middleweight title fight at The Cosmopolitan, Las Vegas

### Charity DRESS SALE FOR THE HOMELESS



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ing on the council to tighter regulate stalls outside the market walls, the traders have responded with their own criticisms.

While the market is governed by its manager among 27 trustees - under legislation which dates back to 1852 - the traders feel the market has not progressed due to the absence of a voice with market experience on that board, among other factors.

Numerous businesspeople, who have leases on the shops along the perimeter of the market, have criticisms about its lack of progress over the past four years since the €2m redevelopment and its inability to operate successfully outside the Saturday mainstay. "Imagine spending €2m on any business and opening it just one day a week? It wouldn't happen. We're open on Fridays and Sundays too, but there are more pigeons here than people at the Sunday market," said John Coughlan of The



An overview of the busy Saturday market, where 80 stall holders operate, but traders want it to move beyond being a Saturday market

Edge clothing store.

Kieran Walsh of the fishing and tack shop, which has also introduced a coffee shop to boost its coffers, said December 8 was traditionally one of the busiest days of the year, and yet he made just €23.

"It's a fantastic place but it's completely and utterly under-utilised. We have 6,000 to 10,000 people down here on a Saturday, but it needs to be like that at least three to four days a week,"

**'Imagine putting €2m into a business only for it to open just one day a week. It shouldn't happen'**

said Mr Walsh, who has been in business here for 11 years.

Toby Simmons, of The Olive Company and Toonsbridge Dairy, said he supplies 25 markets around the country, and Limerick is the most expensive one to have a stall in - a view rejected by Mr O'Brien, who said Howth market is much more expensive.

While Mr Simmons' company have had a presence in the market since 1996, they opened their permanent outlet in August 2013. "The shop

has made it a lot easier for us, but Fridays are desperate here. Attempts to launch market days on any other days bar Saturday have been appalling. We're open two days a week here - Saturday is a cracker, but Friday is tiny. The market is operating under a very old system, which is top heavy. I think it should be run by the council," he said.

Mari Hussey of Green Acres cheese shop in the market said she blames the market of trustees for a lack

of voice. There is no system a complaints procedure, that's bad for both the market and the market. I think we should get rid of the board of trustees. How many of them have any retail experience? Do they visit the market regularly?

Last week, Mr O'Brien said: "We have nothing to do with the shops along the perimeter, with the exception of those which angered shop-owners who feel they contribute greatly to the market. Mr O'Brien wished to clarify the headline in last weekend's Limerick Leader, which read: 'Market doomed if Noonan cuts funding'. He was referring to the income generated by the car park in Potato Market, which is used to subsidise the Market."

Minister Noonan has mentioned using the Potato Market for a public plaza in the future. The next set of abridged financial accounts for this year due to be presented in February. This year's accounts not available for public scrutiny until a decision to release them is agreed by the trustees.

## Thousands expected to hail Lee, king of the boxing world

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 →

The Castleconnell man was expected to fly from Las Vegas to London this Monday afternoon and is expected to spend time with his relatives in London this Tuesday before flying into Shannon on Wednesday. Reflecting on Andy's stunning victory, Ken

Moore said the world title wasn't won by one perfectly placed right hook - "it was won through 20 years of dedication and hard work".

"Andy should have been broken three or four times during his career - each time he put the head down somehow, and came back.

"For fighters, physically

it's never the battle, fighters aren't scared of that - it's the mental thing of getting up and going again - that's the hardest bit," he said. "Andy is the most single-minded individual I have ever met and he is the nicest lad you could meet - very dedicated and very well-spoken. He is a dream to train."

Congratulating Andy,

Mayor of the City and County Council, Cllr Kevin Sheahan, said Limerick is looking forward to welcoming home the sporting giant. "Andy Lee is our first world boxing champion and we're thrilled with his success," Mayor Sheahan said. "Since his early days as an amateur boxer in the city to bringing home the WBO middleweight world championship title from Las Vegas over the weekend, we are immensely proud of his achievements. I know the people of Limerick will turn out in their droves to welcome him back home this Wednesday."



### Fergal meets the man himself

Among the lucky children to get tickets for Shannon Airport's Santa Flights at the weekend was Fergal Archer

from Ballinacurra, who was lucky enough to meet Santa. See the weekend Limerick Leader for more pictures.