

# A Limerickman's Diary

By OBSERVER

## FANS REMEMBER GREAT RING CAREER

IT DOES not fall to the lot of every sportsman to receive fan mail a decade after his peak. But Christy Kelly—the last Limerickman to box for Ireland—is in the happy group of remembered ones, and the latest tribute to him comes from an admirer in Frankfurt-Mein.

The letter was addressed: "Mr. Christy Kelly, former professional boxer star in flyweight, and then a local ring hero of whole Limerick, Limerick, Republic of Ireland."

In it the writer, Gerd Riethenauer, says in part: "... I do recall and remember and followed your excellent and fine and wonderful ring career best and you was indeed a great and fine and classy ring hero, a real great and kindly sportsman, and a wonderful and lasting credit for boxing always in Ireland. Your nation, lovely Ireland, and your sport, boxing, can always be proud of you ..."

Christy's career in the ring was indeed memorable and remarkable, and it began when he joined the Army at the age of 18. His trainer was Corporal Mux Ryan, a native of Weston and trainer to the Southern Command.

Mux was himself a former All-Ireland champion, and among the many outstanding boxers he turned out were Harry Naughton (bantam), Christy O'Donnell (lightweight) and Patsy McInerney (flyweight). He trained, too, Mick Leahy of Cork, who won the British professional middle weight title.

### K.O.s

Christy made his debut at Collins Barracks in 1954 in the Southern Command novice championships. He had four fights and won each with a knockout in the first round.

His next outing, the all-Army novices championship in Athlone that year he had three fights, and won each with a knockout in the first round.

The next year saw him in the Southern Command junior championships at Collins Barracks. He had four fights, winning three by a knockout in the first round, and in the final beating the former Irish juvenile champion, Pte. Bourke of the 4th Battalion, on points.

That September the All-Army junior championships were held for the first time in Sarsfield Barracks. Christy had three fights and won the title in three first-round knockouts.

Another great victory in 1955 was the Munster Junior Championship title. The contest was held at the City Hall, Cork, and Christy had four fights. The first three he won with a knockout in the first round, and in the final he beat P. Leahy of Tipperary Town on points.

In that year, too, Christy contested the Irish Junior Championships at the Stadium. He was beaten in the final by J. Cauldwell of Belfast, who afterwards won the British Empire and European professional titles.

A year later in Cork he had three fights for the Munster Senior Championships, winning two with his deadly knockout and defeating N. Higgins of Sunnyside, Cork, when the fight was stopped in the third round.

Christy retired from Army boxing in 1956, when he was beaten in the final of the

National Senior Championships by Cauldwell.

### St. Francis

Returning to the ring in February 1958, with St. Francis Boxing Club, he won the Munster Senior Championships and in March entered for the Irish Senior Championships. He beat Cpl. Monsie Connolly, an Irish international, in the semi-final, and in the final was beaten by P. Lavery of Belfast. The decision was a close one, and it was booed by the crowd.

A month later, Lavery turned down a return fight in the Stadium and turned professional.

That same year Christy represented Ireland in the flyweight class against Germany and South Africa. After winning the Munster senior championship in 1959 he went on to contest the Irish senior title, knocking out Wiff McGarry of Belfast in the first round of the semi-final, and being beaten in the final by Adam McClean.

It was perhaps more than a coincidence that three who beat him in finals—Cauldwell in 1954, Lavery in 1958 and McClean in 1959—were in their turn named "Ireland's Boxer of the Year." Christy represented Ireland against Scotland and Germany in 1959. He had several other international offers, but turned them down as he was not in training.

### Amateur Tournaments

Amateur tournaments, too, had a remarkable run of successes. In 1959 he defeated C. Dunne of Ranelagh R.C., Dublin, on four occasions. Dunn—was the Irish senior bantamweight champion that year, and represented Ireland in the European

championships in Switzerland. Others whom he beat in amateur tournaments were: Noel O'Connor, Arbour Hill, Irish junior bantamweight champion in 1959 and an Irish international. L. Cress, Connaught senior featherweight champion of 1958 (k.o. in first round at St. John's Pavilion).

Terry Farrell, Tevenure, Irish international (fight stopped in the 3rd round at the Stadium, Dublin).

P. Black of Drogheda, runner up for the Irish junior bantam-weight championships, 1959 (K.O. in the first round).

P. Leahy, Tipperary Town, Munster Senior bantam-weight champion, 1958 (fight stopped in the 3rd round at the Tower, Tipperary).

M. McDonagh, Galwey, Connaught bantam-weight champion (on points in Galwey).

P. Dowrey, Collins Barracks, Munster Senior and All-Ireland bantam-weight champion in 1959 (retired in the 3rd round).

M. Thornton, Connacht champion (K.O. in the 2nd round in Kilrush).

Christy fought in amateur tournaments too during his three years in the Army. At the Ulster Hall, Belfast, he knocked out the Ulster fly-weight champion, T. Armour, in the first round. Another victory was that over Mick Murray, Sandy-mount, the Irish junior bantam weight champion in 1958. The fight took place at the City Hall, Cork, and was stopped in the third round. He retired from amateur status towards the end of 1959 while with St. Francis, his trainer was Faxon Ryan, and the seconds were Skef Sheehy and Bill Logan.

### Professional

Christy turned professional in 1960, and won six of his nine fights. The first, that against Barry Adgie from Derby, in

the City Hall, Cork, was stopped in the 4th round, and, at the same venue, in his second fight, Christy knocked out Billy Anderson, Belfast, by a k.o. in the 2nd round.

His third, against Dick Hanna, Belfast, at Tolka Park, went to six rounds and the verdict went to Christy on points. Hanna was Ulster champion, a former Irish amateur international and a silver medallist in the European Games of 1958.

This was followed by a 2nd round k.o. victory against A. Bradshaw, British Guiana, at Tolka Park.

The succeeding two bouts, he lost to Johnny Mallin of Glasgow in Glasgow and to Dia Corp of Cardiff in Cardiff. Two wins followed, the one against Eddie Berwick of Rotherham, in the City Hall, Cork, and the other against Alex Smith, Belfast, in the King's Hall, Belfast.

In the ninth and final bout he lost of Orizua Oblasso, Nigeria, at the National Sporting Club, London. He had offers of other fights, but did not continue in training.

And his comment on it all: "I enjoyed it!"

### Standards

Christy is of the opinion that boxing standards have declined over the past ten years, despite the increase in the number of clubs and the standard of facilities. "Very few senior boxers are coming up," he adds.

He is a member of the staff of the Rotary Department of the Limerick Leader Ltd.

Christy is married to the former Miss Breda Lysaght of Ballinacorra Weston. They have four sons and live in Greecors Avenue. Christy's brothers are Mick Assumma, Erik, Noel, St. Munchin Street, and Jerry and John, London; and sisters, Janet and Patsy, Leixlip.

## A KINDLY GESTURE FROM SHAMROCK TRAVEL SERVICE

Denis McNamara, proprietor of the Shamrock Travel Service, New York, and Mr. Brendan Scanlan, Secretary of the Shamrock Social and Athletic Club, are supplementing their valuable work for tourism with some social activity which will benefit less fortunate people at home.

In their recent charter flight to the All-Ireland finals they brought 60 cartons of cigarettes which they have distributed to elderly patients in St. Camillus Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital, Limerick; Newcastle West Hospital and Ennis Hospital.

Later this year they hope to ship a consignment of clothing for distribution to needy people here.

But their work for charity extends further—to Biafra, in fact. A seat on their recent flight was donated to the

Biafra famine relief association, and the subsequent sum realised a substantial sum.

They arranged to Ireland over the past months by the Shamrock Travel Service include one in connection with the 1916 commemoration, another for the John F. Kennedy Memorial ceremonies in May, and, of course, that for the All-Ireland finals.

Shamrock Travel also cater for the travel requirements of the various groups in the Shamrock Social and Athletic Club, and they arrange some dozen fights a year for St. Patrick's Fathers, a missionary order in New York. Their help is also availed of by the many hurling and football clubs in the New York area.

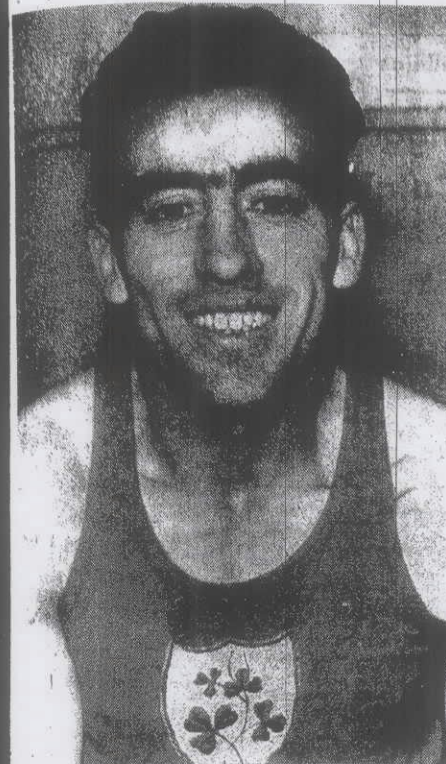
The foregoing is, indeed, only a small facet of the work of this busy and helpful Travel Service, and, in the overall picture the Company is making a tremendous contribution to the work of putting Ireland on the tourist map.

United States, but in all these years he has never missed an All-Ireland final.

In 1956 he brought Mick Mackey to America in connection with the Limerick Hurling and Football Club of New York. He was also associated with the invitation of the Limerick Hurling Club of New York to John Madden. On that occasion John, a former captain of the club, presented the medals to the winning team.

### Brendan

Mr. Brendan Scanlan, who will be looking after affairs in the absence of Denis McNamara.



Christy Kelly was the last Limerickman to box for Ireland.

## PAL RENT-A-CAR COMES TO LIMERICK

There is good news this week for the ever-growing number of people who are interested in availing themselves of the facilities offered by car-hire firms. Last Monday, Pal Rent-a-Car, which is also prominently identified with the travel business, opened its new Limerick branch at 117 O'Connell Street (overhead R.T.V.).

The firm's substantial fleet, ranging from Minis to Mercedes, caters for the widest range of hirers' requirements, and any model can be had at the most attractive and competitive rates. A chauffeur-driven service is also available.

In addition to its Limerick office, Pal Rent-a-Car has a desk at Shannon Airport. The company is also associated with the well-known travel agencies, Heffernans of Cork and Neenan Travel, Dublin.

Three years ago Pal Rent-a-Car opened its first office in Cork at 31 Parnell Place. Subsequently, it expanded to Dublin, at 35 Westland Row, and now its first-class facilities are being made available in the Limerick area. All airports and major sea ports are also serviced.

### Management

The Company's General Manager, Mr. Sean Hurley, is a well-known and popular personality in business and sporting circles. He is a native of Pallaskerry, and for five or six seasons played with Bohemian R.F.C.

Earlier this year he travelled extensively in Europe and

the U.S.A. promoting car hire and all-in holidays. Next week he will be in Puerto Rico for the American Society of Travel Agents' annual convention.

Mr. John Flanagan, Regional manager of Pal Rent-A-Car, is a native of Castleconnell and for some years has been associated with the car hire business. He has done promotional work for the company in England this year, and will be engaged in similar activity in the United States and Canada during October and early November.



Miss Eileen O'Neill, Herbertstown, was an interested spectator at Limerick Horse Show.