

estates back in court

■ Court told accused jumped from window to evade gardai

By LEADER REPORTER

A MAN described by gardai as a "key member of a criminal gang" engaged in the city feud was before Limerick Court accused of breaching a court order excluding him from four estates in Southill.

Paul Crawford, 33, formerly of 567, O'Malley Park, is accused of breaching the order secured by Limerick City Council on July 12 on July 22, July 30 and August 3.

The accused was before a special sitting of

the court last Saturday accused of breaching the order on August 3. It was alleged that Mr Crawford jumped out an upstairs window of a house in O'Malley Park in an attempt to evade gardai.

Mr Crawford was remanded on bail in relation to the alleged offence on August 3, but was subsequently arrested by gardai in relation to allegedly breaching the same order on the two earlier dates and appeared before Judge Leo Malone this Wednesday.

Mr Crawford was granted bail in relation to the alleged breach on August 3, but remanded in custody in relation to the alleged offences on July 22 and 30. This was

despite protestations from Mr Crawford's solicitor, Ted McCarthy, that the court already had knowledge of the two new charges for the earlier dates.

"This matter has already been thrashed out by the State when it was brought to the attention of the court on August 4," Mr McCarthy said, asking that the bail terms for the alleged offence on August 3 be extended to the two new charges.

But Judge Malone said he was not prepared to take that course of action and remanded Mr Crawford in custody to August 15.

During the Council's application for an exclusion order on July 12,

senior gardai gave evidence that they believed Mr Crawford was a member of a criminal gang engaged in the control and supply of drugs for many years.

Det Sgt Denis Treacy said this gang were involved in a feud in which six people had lost their lives in an 18-month period up last April.

Supt Frank O'Brien told Judge Tom O'Donnell that Mr Crawford's family and the greater community in Southill had "suffered due to the presence of Paul Crawford" in Southill, and the application to exclude Mr Crawford from the estates was "absolutely necessary" to ensure the safety of the Crawford family.

The court heard that Noel Crawford, a brother of the accused, was shot dead in O'Malley Park last December 18 as he was celebrating his 40th birthday, but gardai believed Paul Crawford was the intended target as his brother was not involved in any feud-related activities.

Oposing the Council's application, Mr McCarthy pointed out that Mr Crawford was never convicted of offences related to drugs or firearms, which was accepted by gardai.

Judge O'Donnell made an order excluding Mr Crawford from O'Malley Park, Keyes Park, Kincoira Park and Carew Park for 18 months.



Munster and Ireland rugby star Paul O'Connell at the launch in Dublin, of the new stamps which feature himself as well as his Ireland team mates

Paul puts his mark on new stamp

By AINE FITZGERALD

CLUTCHING rugby balls and jerseys, scores of Irish rugby supporters formed a snaking queue this Wednesday morning outside the GPO in Dublin in the hope of shaking hands with Limerick rugby star Paul O'Connell.

The Drombanna man was in the capital to publicise the forthcoming edition of new postage stamps celebrating the Rugby World Cup which takes place in France during September and October. One of the stamps features the Munster captain.

"It's a great honour to be on the stamp representing the Irish rugby team, and I am particularly pleased that some of the proceeds from the stamp product will go towards my chosen charity, the Bluebell ABA School in Limerick," Paul said.

Philatelists and rugby fans started queuing at the GPO from 8am on

Wednesday in the hope of seeing Paul and securing one of 200 specially released First Day Covers, issued by An Post to mark the occasion.

"Paul had time for absolutely everyone. From jerseys and rugby balls to baby grows, he signed everything and shook hands with everyone," said Anna McHugh, head of communications with An Post.

The new 55c and 78c stamps, and a variety of related products, will officially go on sale on Monday, August 20, at main post offices and online at www.irishstamps.ie

A percentage from the sale of the material will be donated to the Bluebell ABA School for autistic children in Raheen, which has six full-time pupils.

"It's great news. Paul officially opened the school in March 2004 and we are delighted that he has continued supporting us," said Deirdre Bourke, manag-

er at the school.

One of Ireland's first independent schools for autistic children, the Bluebell ABA School employs professionally-trained tutors to help autistic children improve their lives. Focusing on applied behaviour analysis, the school came to fruition as a result of a parent's initiative supported by the full backing of Dóchas (Hope for People with Autism).

The launch of the school took place in the Dóchas centre in Limerick, and now the teachers have invited Paul to visit the school.

"He launched the school in the Dóchas office in 2004, and we also met him out in UL for the Limerick Mini-Marathon in 2005, so it would be nice for him to visit the school. We are delighted that he has chosen us as his charity for such a high profile event," said Ms Bourke, whose son, Patrick, 8, is a student at the school.

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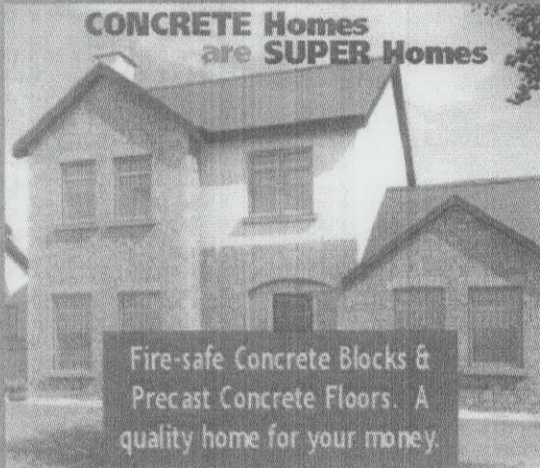
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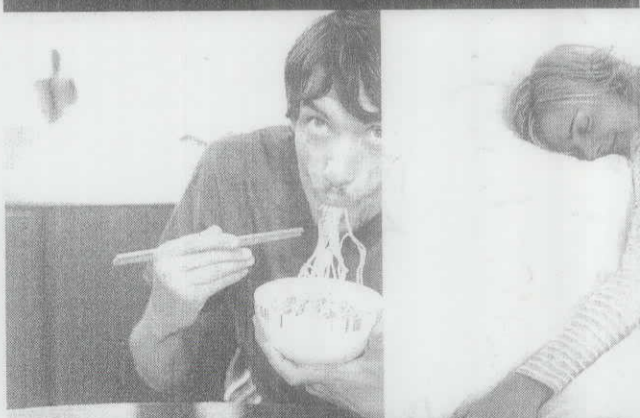
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