Sharon Slater's Secret His

The aptly named John Unthank left his wife a ho stipulation that she remained unmarried. Take a

SHARON SLATER

THOMAS Street is in the heart of the Newtown Pery development of Edmund Sexton Pery (1719-1806) and his plan for the development of a new town on lands he owned in the south liberties of the city.

The town was built in stages as Pery sold off leases to builders and developers who built four and five story townhouses in the Georgian fashion with long, wide and elegant streets in grid plan design in accordance with the 1769 plan of the Irish engineer Christopher Colles.

The earliest houses - located along Bank Place, Rutland Street, Patrick Street - were built by the wealthy Arthur family. Patrick Street, Francis Street and Arthur's Quay were named after the Arthur family. Similarly, Pery named a number of streets after members of his own family, William, Cecil, Mallow and Glentworth Street are all named after his brother William Cecil Pery, the first Baron Glentworth of Mallow. While his sister Lucy is remembered under her married name in Hartstonge Street.

The name Thomas Street appears on the map prepared by Colles, though it was situated where Sarsfield Street is today. This shows that the name Thomas was always a contender when it came to the Newtownpery area. The street was most likely named after Thomas Knox who married Edmund Sexton Pery's daughter Diana in 1785.

Thomas Street in 1824 was considered a very affluent street with eight families classed as nobility or gentry living there, while others on the streets were recorded as solicitors, surgeons, milliners and merchants. A notable resident at this time was Andrew Watson (1754-1832) son-in-law of the noted historian and founder of the Limerick Chronicle John Ferrar. Watson himself went on to become the editor of the Limerick Chronicle.

In that newspaper in 1830, the story of another Thomas Street resident was recorded. Thomas Carey, a young doctor, was due to be married but took ill and died on his wedding day, his last words being "Oh death where is thy sting, Oh grave where is thy victory".

The will of John Unthank in 1849 left his wife a house on Thomas Street and £100 a year, on the stipulation that she remain unmarried.

This street housed the Queen's theatre, which was opened in 1840 by a Mr Collins and the first acts were The Scottish Outlaw and the Widow's Victim. He announced that 'the interior decorations of the theatre will be of the first order. The new and gorgeous wardrobe consists of costumes and dresses of all nations, with appropriate banners, properties, paraphernalia, etc.'

In August 1895 there was a police court report of an incident when Henry Talbot, a strolling musician, who was making night doubly hideous in Thomas Street last evening by his inebriate endeavours to play a cornet in his possession, was charged with drunkenness. When the constable intervened to stop the music, Talbot felt the matter so much that he raised the cornet to strike the policeman with it, but was not allowed. The constable, however, generously did not press this branch of the case against Talbot, who was fined 5s, or in default seven days imprisonment.

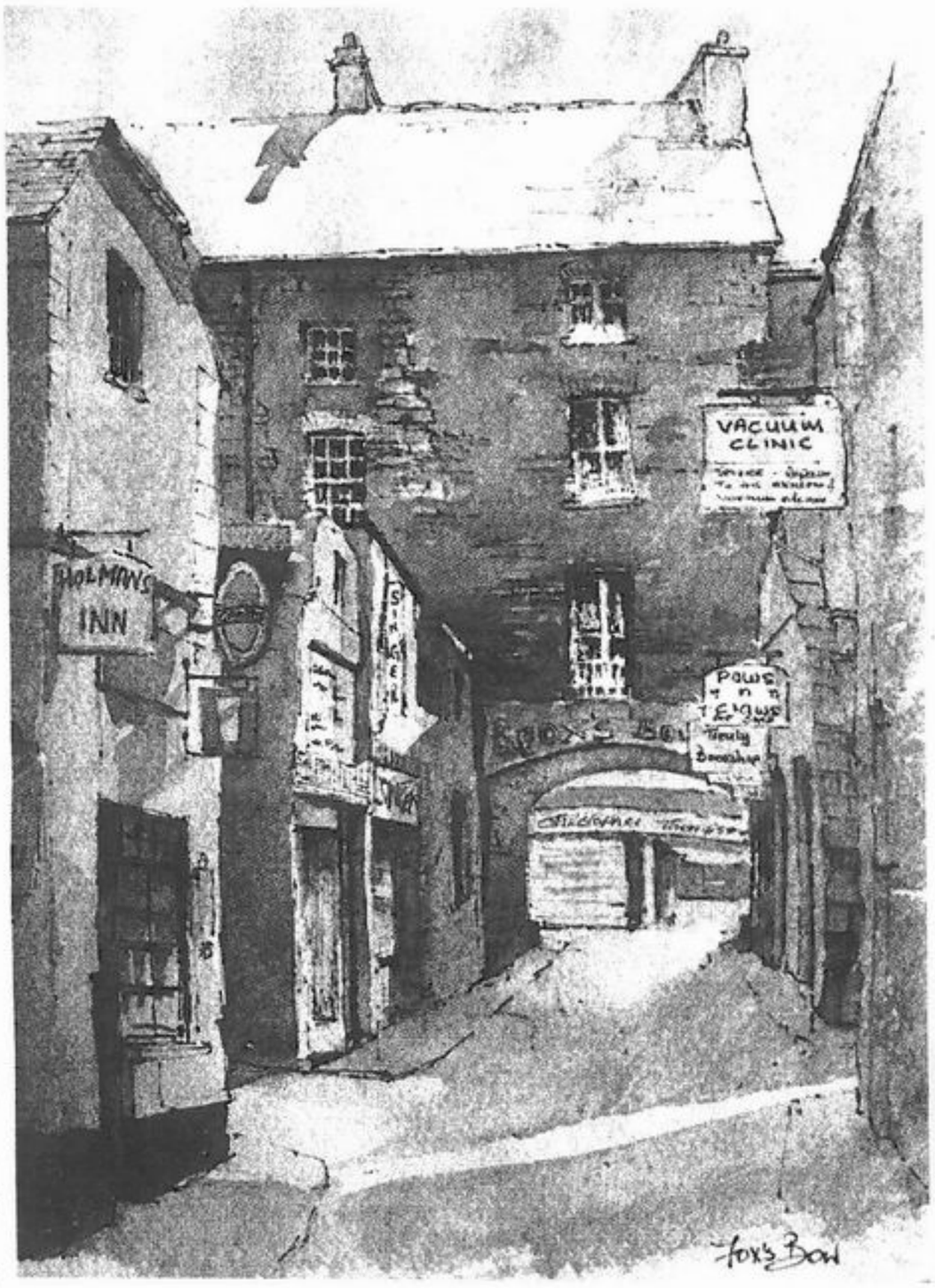
Fox's Bow was named after the hotel, which was situated in number 30 and 31 Thomas Street and extended over the bow. It was Tucker's hotel in 1897 and by 1901 it was owned by Thomas Fox who erected a stone sign above the door that can still be seen today.

In 1901, one of the visitors to the hotel was John Lascelles a young artist who was born in India. By 1911, Thomas Fox had passed away and his wife Maria Griffin had remarried Edmond Prenderast who was running the hotel. One of those staying in the hotel at the time of the 1911 census was George Clancy, who would later become known as one of the Murdered Mayors.

In the 1890s the Shannon Rowing Club had their club house on the corner of Thomas Street and Catherine Street, before moving to the purpose built club house on Sarsfield Bridge. During this period, there was John Murphy's stable yard and a veterinary clinic on the corners of Thomas Street and Anne Street. P. Walsh had a coach factory directly across from these - illustrating that the street was filled with not only the noise of its human occupants but also its four legged residents too.

On the 5 June 1914, the Limerick branch of Cumann na mBan was founded in number 18 which had been the Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge) rooms. Cumann na mBan became an auxiliary of the Irish Volunteers in 1916 and the Limerick branch had over 100 members. The famous Daly family played an integral role with Madge Daly as President of the Limerick branch. Her brother Edmund (Ned) and brother in law Thomas Clarke were executed for actions in 1916 rising. Her sister Kathleen Clarke became the first female Lord Mayor of Dublin.

Above the door of the building on the corner of Thomas Street and Catherine Street is a plaque, which reads in both English and Irish:



Artist Annemarie Bourke's impression of Fox's Bow

Number 18 Thomas Street where on June 5 1914, the Limerick branch of Cumann na mBan was founded

A photograph from the Limerick City and County Archive of Spence Collison, Newtown Pery Mill Manager, seated on a garden bench with his children

story Files

ouse on Thomas Street and £100 a year, on the a look behind the street names of Limerick

1892-1920

I GCUIMHNE AR
MHÍCHEÁL Ó SCANLÁIN
CEANNFORT AN 4Ú
CATHLÁN DE BHRIOGÁID
OIRTHEAR LUIMNIGH
ÓGLAIGH NA HÉIREANN, A
MHARAIGH FÓRSAÍ SHASANA
SAN ÁIT SEO 27 DEIREADH
FÓMHAIR 1920
COMRÁDAITHE AGUS
GAOLTA LEIS A CHUIR
SEO SUAS

TO THE MEMORY OF
MICHAEL SCANLAN
COMMANDANT 4TH BATTAL-
ION OF EAST LIMERICK
BRIGADE

I.R.A. KILLED BY BRITISH
FORCES AT THIS SPOT
ON 27 OCTOBER 1920
ERECTED BY COMRADES
AND RELATIVES

Michael Scanlan was a teacher in Kilmallock Boys' National School and the Commander of the first Galtee Battalion of the IRA. Michael was originally from Gabally, he was the son of a grocer and farmer John and Ellen Scanlan. Michael was arrested on several occasions from 1916 onwards due to his involvement in the IRA. In October 1920, he was on the run from the police. On the 26thof that month, he was captured at Kilmallock and was taken prisoner. The following day he was transported in a van to the William Street RIC Barracks in the city.

At about 3pm on a Wednesday, while the van was parked outside the Barracks unloading another prisoner, Michael, made his escape through the busy city. Although he was still handcuffed, he ran the length of Little William Street while the police opened fire.

He then managed to jump into a basement where he remained unfound for a period before his location was discovered. It was said that he was seen trying to make another escape through a widow and he was shot several times in the neck and stomach. He was removed to the military hospital in what is now Sarsfield Barracks where at 7:45pm that night he passed away due to the injuries he received.

The following day at 4pm his coffin draped in the tri-colour was driven through the city. A large crowd had gathered at O'Connell Avenue and the procession passed with no incidents until it reached William Street Barracks. Here the procession was stopped and the flag was removed by a military officer. The procession continued to Galbally where Michael Scanlan was to be buried.