



LIMERICK: Ireland's Oldest Chartered City (1197) can proudly claim, as a city, to be much older than London, Edinburgh or Cardiff.

A stranger might wonder that the City of Limerick, despite all its historical, geographical and commercial significance, has no daily newspaper of its own. For Limerick is, and has been always, NEWS!

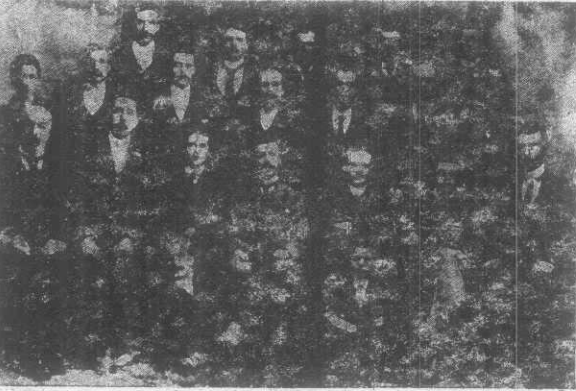
As far back as 1690, when William III was besieging the ancient walled city, a Paris reprint is the authority for stating that an Irish Capuchin priest was printed in Limerick at that time. The next Limerick book recorded is "The Liberator's School" which was printed by Samuel Terry & Bixton in 1722.

Whilst it would be futile to attempt to provide a constant guide to a domain of the numerous commercial, or job, printing houses that flourished in Limerick, since Liam Caxton introduced to Westminster in 1476 the "Art, Greatest of all Arts" it goes without saying that the Shannonside city was well served with news down the years, as the following list shows.

1716—The Limerick Newsletter, 1739—The Limerick Journal, 1749—Munster Journal, 1766—The Limerick Chronicle, 1779—The Limerick Journal, 1788—The Limerick Herald and Munster Advertiser, 1799—The Limerick Weekly Magazine, 1804—The General Advertiser or Limerick Gazette, 1811—The Limerick Evening Post, 1819—The Munster Telegraph, 1822—The Limerick News, 1824—The Irish Observer, 1831—The Limerick Herald, 1832—The Munster Journal and Limerick Commercial Reporter, 1833—The Limerick Guardian, 1834—The Limerick Times, 1837—The Limerick Standard, 1845—The Limerick and Clare Examiner, 1850—The Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator, 1851—The Munster News, 1853—The Limerick Herald, 1856—The Limerick Observer, The Limerick/Tipperary/Waterford Examiner, 1863—The Southern Chronicle, 1867—The Citizens Paper, 1887—The Daily Southern Advertiser, 1889—The Limerick Leader, 1893—The Limerick Star, 1898—The Limerick Echo, 1917—The Limerick Herald, 1923—The Limerick Herald, 1937-38—The Limerick Herald.

The Limerick Herald (1917, 1923, 1937-38) was published by the Limerick Printers Strike Committee, during trade disputes, lasting seven, eleven and seventeen weeks, respectively.

From the foregoing, therefore, it will be observed that the names Limerick and Printing are synonymous—as the following historical events, faithfully recorded, show, notwithstanding what the American humorist, Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) once said of our noble city, "not alone a place where they take life easy—and often... but also a place where something has been happening, right back to the days before the



This historic picture of members of the Society, employed by Limerick Leader, Ltd., was taken in 1902. Front row (l. to r.): H. J. Watson, J. Neelan, Seamus Row (l. to r.): J. M. Ginnane (manager), M. Duggan, J. H. McEnery, Editor; J. McDermott, E. B. Duggan, J. J. McGuire. Third row (l. to r.): M. J. Hartney, H. Ryan, M. H. Tacey, J. Dickinson. Back row (l. to r.): J. Kelly, P. O'Connor, L. Dickinson, J. Neelan, J. Ginnane.

Danes and the Vikings came, and long before King John of the many Irish castles built his fortress on the island which still bears his name.

The town lay fair in the path of the regal O'Briens and their Dalcassian warriors on their marches of conquest into North Munster and beyond—the gateway into and out of Munster, and the road to Connacht. To the Gael and the Gall alike it was a strategic prize, a fair jewel in a priceless crown—a setting for war, famine, pestilence, bravery, heroic death and tragic capitulation, glorious sacrifice and heart-breaking disappointment.

Although the three Dublin dailies, the "Irish Examiner," and many of their English contemporaries enjoy a considerable circulation in Limerick, none of these interfere in any way with the sale of a local journal, published twice weekly, which has for very long been the established "friend of the family" in most homes. This paper, of course, is the "Limerick Chronicle." The oldest newspaper in the Republic, it is now, nearing the end of its 203rd year.

The "Chronicle" first published in 1766 at Quay Lane, in the parish of St. Mary, has recorded for two centuries the outstanding events of world and national history, the American Wars, the French Revolution, the Insurrection of '68, the bitter fate of Robert Emmet, the Risings of 1847 and 1849, the British colonial and European wars from Napoleon to Hitler, the 1916 Rising and the Irish War of Independence which followed.

However, it is the service rendered locally, by its consideration for all the little things which mean so much in the lives of the people living in the Limerick area, that furnishes the recipe for the journal's longevity.

In earlier times the paper championed the establishment and the privileged classes of the community. Its policy was one of obedience to the authorities. Much water has gone under Thomond Bridge since then and the "Chronicle," like many other Irish newspapers, was influenced very forcibly by the changes of the past sixty years. Conservatism in this part of the world was dead if not forgotten.

Thus, a new era began and the paper, gradually adjusting editorial policy, found itself in intelligent discourse with a vastly increased proportion of the people. To-day it may well be proud of its well-printed, readable columns and high-standard journalism, as distinct from its excellent advertising service.

The "Chronicle" was founded by poet and historian, John Fegan, author of the "History of Limerick," whose father fought on Cromwell's side in the first siege of Limerick, 1650.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the paper moved from where it was first published in the English town, "two doors from the Exchange." It went first to 2 Rutland Street, then to 39 and still later to 59 O'Connell Street (then George Street). For seventeen years past its home has been at 94 O'Connell Street. The "Limerick Chronicle" appeared twice weekly up to 1862, when the paper tax was abolished, and for the first time—from February 11 in that year—publication was on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

A search through the older files of the "Chronicle" illustrates what was news yesterday, yesteryear and the years before.

Thrilling reads the story of Andrew Buchanan of Thomondgate, who in 1784, long before the great Blenheim was born, first regularised road transport and ran his stage coaches on the perilous Dublin-Limerick route. The "rocky road to Dublin" was then infested with highwaymen, the "Chronicle" informs us, "and grinding through the brutality and blood of the muddy roads, Buchanan's wagon wheels turned mileage into money."

The aerial voyage of one, Richard Crosbie, recounted on May 1, 1796, a detailed account was given by the aeronaut himself of his ascent by balloon on April 29th, from the Strand, and his eventual landing in the area now occupied by Shannon Airport, in Co. Clare.

The story of the trial and public execution of Stephen Sullivan for the murder of Ellen Hanley, in a boat on the Shannon, was told in detail in the columns of the paper in the summer of 1820. The murder had taken place the year previous and excited enormous public interest at the time, and later was to furnish inspiration for Gerald Griffin's novel, "The Collegians," Boucicault's play, "The Colleen Bawn," and Benedetti's opera, "The Lily of Killarney."

"The Night of the Big Wind"—January 6, 1839—recalled still throughout Ireland and England, saw "thirty ships in the busy Limerick docks and in the pool torn like matchboxes from their moorings and many of them were smashed to pieces against the parapet of Wellesley (Sarsfield) Bridge." In Ireland, everyone knows what happened in 1846 and 1847. So, it comes not as a surprise when the "Chronicle" reports "the total failure of the potato crop and the collection of £5,000 in the city for the poor."

One of the worst shipping disasters off the Irish coast which the paper has ever covered was that of the "Edmond," which was wrecked off Kilkee Bay in November, 1850, with the loss of 98 lives (mostly women and children). The ship was an emigrant barque—a "coffin ship"—carrying 185 emigrants "who were leaving a country stricken with the aftermath of famine to begin a new life on the great American continent... The 'Edmond' was pounded to matchwood in one of the fiercest gales in living memory.

In 1884 the first Gaelic sports held under the rules of the G.A.A. and I.C.A. in Limerick took place at the Markets Field. The event concluded on October 2 with the first great hand contest ever held in the city.

The outstanding event of 1891 in Ireland was the death of Parnell, which was announced on October 8. Seven years later, John Daly became Limerick's first Fenian Mayor and 1901 was the year in which a controversy occurred when Mayor Daly took the chair of office with him on a visit to America. His critics maintained that the Mayor, not being directly sent by the city or by the Corporation, had no right to take the chair. On his return, Daly silenced the opposition thus: "My right to take the chair was vindicated by the fact that I was elected Mayor, for they said that here was a man who had been in chains for most of his life, and Limerick now sends him to us with the golden chain of office."

The files of the "Chronicle," for October, 1907, tell the tale of the epic rescue of the crew of the French windjammer, "Leon XIII," in tempestuous weather and boiling seas, by the fishermen of Quilly, Co. Clare. The rescuers put out in their currachs—raft craft without keel or rudder—to save the stricken sailors.

One reads of the appalling murders, on March 6, 1921, of Mayor George Clancy, ex-Mayor Michael O'Callaghan, and Volunteer Joseph O'Donoghue, at the dead of night in their own homes.

The Civil War period in the city, described in the "Chronicle" as the fifth Siege of Limerick, and covered so efficiently that, reading it, one almost relives the days of Ireland's greatest modern tragedy. Photographs of a barricade on O'Connell Street, premises damaged by gunfire, the shell-shattered facade of the old Strand Barracks and the burned-out shells of the Ordnance Barracks and New Barracks as they appeared after their evacuation, convey a vivid impression of the time of travail.

Limerick Graphical Society celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. A commemorative dinner dance will be held at the Savoy Banqueting Suite this Saturday. To mark the anniversary we present a special article by W. W. GLEESON on the history of print in the region.

Limerick craftsmen celebrate 150 years' organised endeavour

The Castle Barracks, part of which included the Palace of King John, is to-day only a memory. The modern part of the structure was completely destroyed, and nothing remains but the outer towers and grey old walls flanking the river which withstood the Williamite guns in 1690 and 1691.

Tragedy again in 1928: "The Dromedogher" fire in which 48 people lost their lives" in what was, up to then at any rate, the worst cinema-fire disaster in these islands.

Other interesting features to be found in the "Chronicle" tell the full story of: When Limerick was Ireland's gayest city, 1809; Limerick's first convent school, 1837; Clare Treasure Find, 1854; the Mayoral Chain; The great Limerick Show of 1883; 92 days on a Desert Island, 1887; McMahon's disastrous fire, 1911; The old Theatre Royal (destroyed by fire, January 23, 1922); "Drunken Thady," by Michael Hogan, Bard of Thomond; Biddy Early, the wise woman of Clare; Five miles of Waterway—Doonass and Castleconnell.

In a centre so preoccupied with sport of all kinds as Limerick is, cultural activities, with the arts predominating, cover a wider range in all pursuits: Faculty, Fine, Liberal, and Mechanical.

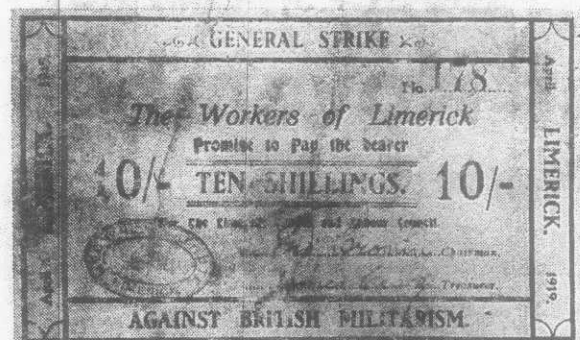
1819-1969

This year (1969) commemorates the 150th birthday, or sesqui-centenary, of the Limerick Typographical Society. In 1819 it became a Branch of the Typographical Association, and in 1964, on the formation of the National Graphical Association, its affiliation to that august body was automatic.

It is but fitting then, to mark such happy and auspicious event, that the occasion be honoured in true Caxtonian tradition: Dinner (with Cap. D.), recheurche—tastefully spaced and punctuated with nectar (half-ones) of the pagan gods, to soothe the burning palates of those Knights of the Parched Lips!

With toasts one and two consumed, and now in merry mood, young fellows in their seventies, will recall with inky nostalgia, their heroes of yesteryear whose sacrifices, steadfastness and devotion to duty—come what may—made possible the splendid working conditions and happy relationship, between employer and employee, existing in the well-organised printing houses to-day.

Much more could be written of the "Pillars of the Labour Movement" from the turn of the century onwards... of the heroic part played by those staunch trade unionists, individually, and collectively, in that stormy



One of the "bank notes" printed by members of the Society for Limerick Strike Committee during the historic general strike of 1919.

period of political strife when seditious literature, ballads of the explosive kind—"all agin the government," were the order of the day! Bank notes, too, of several denominations, came off the treadle, and were in great demand—they usually are!!

Nowadays it is fashionable to hear people talk of the "good old days" (God be with them—may they never return!), when all was peaceful and still: no wars, revolutions, long hair or mini-skirts, and 5 pints for a bob! (Ballyhooh!)

The writer remembers during World War I, apprentices to the printing craft being paid anything from 2/6 to 4/- a week (1st year), with an addi-

LIMERICK GRAPHICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 1969

PRESIDENT

● HAYES, MICHAEL—Member of branch committee since 1955; Clerk of "Limerick Leader" Chapel since 1964; Secretary Limerick Council of Trade Unions, 1967 and 1968; delegate to South of Ireland and All-Ireland Conferences, 1969. Elected president January, 1969.

VICE-PRESIDENT

● NAUGHTON, JOSEPH—First elected to branch committee, 1966 and has served since; elected vice-president 1968 and 1969; Secretary "Limerick Leader" Chapel, 1969.

SECRETARY

● O'HALLORAN, MICHAEL—Secretary since 1968; member of committee 1965 to 1963, and 1960-1969; vice-president, 1960-'61-'63; Trades Council delegate since 1960; Clerk of "Limerick Leader" Chapel, 1963; Delegate to South of Ireland and All-Ireland Conferences, 1960, '66, '68; branch auditor 1965, '66, '67.

● BUTLER, MICHAEL—"Clare Champion" Chapel, first elected to committee, January, 1969.

● BUTLER, P. J.—1942-'44, Secretary, Guild of Young Printers, Limerick Branch; 1946, Branch auditor; 1947, elected branch committee; 1948-1949, Secretary Limerick Branch T.A.; and N.G.A.; 1960, president; 1967-1968, member of South of Ireland Regional Committee; 1964 to 1967, President, South of Ireland Region, N.G.A.; 1967-'68, President, All-Ireland Conference, N.G.A.; 1963-'64, Vice-President, Limerick Trades Council; 1968, represented T.A. at T.U. Congress, Killarney; since 1946 member of Irish Wages and Pension Advisory Panel, N.G.A.; branch delegate to Triennial Delegate meetings.

1950 to 1969; awarded Silver Medal, T.A., 1963.

● HINTON, MICHAEL—L.U.P. Chapel, Shannon, representative, 1969; served on various Chapels in U.K.

● KNIGHTLY, COLIN—Co-opted to committee as L.U.P. representative, October, 1969; Chairman L.U.P. Chapel, Shannon.

● MCINERNEY, DENIS—"Clare Champion" Chapel, representative, on committee since 1960.

● NAUGHTON, MARTIN—Committee member 1965, '67, '68 and '69.

● O'BYRNE, PATRICK J.—Elected to committee in 1963, '64, '66, '68; elected branch president, 1966 and '67; delegate to Trades Council, 1969; delegate to South

of Ireland and All-Ireland Conferences, 1966, '67.

● O'CONNOR, JOHN P.—Member of branch committee since 1963; branch president, 1955; branch auditor, 1969.

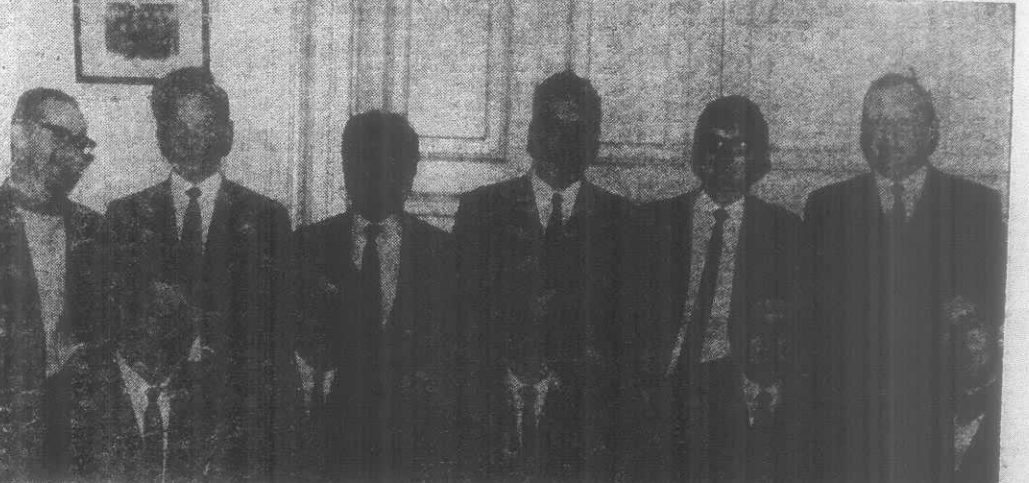
● O'FLYNN, ROBIN—Member of committee 1958, '60, '61, '66 and 1969.

● O'HALLORAN, PASCHAL—Mem-

ber of branch committee since 1968.

● PRICE, ANTHONY—Branch committee member 1964, '65, '66 and 1969.

● RYAN, GERRY—First elected to committee, January, 1969; delegate to Trades Council, 1969; Father of L.U.P. Chapel, Shannon, up to August, 1969.



From left, seated: Messrs. P. J. Butler, M. Naughton, M. Hayes, President; M. O'Halloran, Secretary, and P. O'Byrne. From left, standing: J. O'Connor, R. O'Flynn, J. Naughton, Vice-President; C. Knightly, P. O'Halloran and M. Hinton. Other members of the committee not in picture, are: Messrs. A. Price, G. Ryan, M. Butler and D. McInerney.

THE WORKER'S BULLETIN

Vol. 1, No. 3. (New Series)

April 1969, 1970

Remember Limerick.

Another day of the Big Strike has passed away, and the Strike Committee has kept working at full pressure. Messages of support arrive constantly from all quarters, and as time goes on determination grows.

Profiteers.

A few cases of shops attempting to use the present crisis to make a few pence out of all underweight was promptly suppressed by our pickets. We possess full evidence of any more such attempts in the Bulletin.

Up Thomondgate.

Our friends across the river are playing their part and making sure that the Strike Committee will send supplies to the besieged.

Our besiegers are trying to spread the idea that hunger is a result of the Strike Committee. They have made full arrangements, and we have a full supply of food stuffs. Hunger has no great terror for Limerick. We can suffer privation if necessary in the cause of freedom. We should place these services at the disposal of the Food Council, the Mechanics Institute.

Arrival of Tom Johnson.

Tom Johnson arrived from the North of Ireland, and was welcomed by the Congress last night, and had a good reception. He expressed his admiration at the Limerick strike, and the magnificent spirit of Limerick. He gave a report on the situation in the North, and gave most encouraging reports of the situation in the North and the South. We can assure the citizens that Limerick will not be left to fight the workers' battle alone. For obvious reasons we cannot give further details, as our pickets have to move, and the night must go on.

Significant Reports.

A singular point in our military movements, when in their blind and unaided search for revenge on innocent people, have overstepped the mark.

It is true that British soldiers have been used in the past to do the dirty work of their capitalist bosses. Men who realised "to fight for Social Nationalism" have been forced to drop their false notions of course in the interests of freedom, mayn't? We wonder if anyone ever heard of them being named the wrong way—we mean, of course, the best and to the best. Men like to fight, men are equal, but when it comes to starving and degrading our own class, especially women and tender babies, in the interests of capitalism, it may become a different story.

The Workers' Bulletin, produced by members of the Society, carried all the big strike news of 1919.

tional 1/- increase annually until the completion of the 7-year term.

What is more, a working week was 52 hours, with no annual holidays, two Bank Holidays, and should you have the misfortune to fall ill, well you had it—or had not it—no wages, no sickness benefit... and the employer couldn't care less.

Work—slavery would be more apt—usually commenced at 8 a.m. in job, or commercial houses, for journeyman and apprentice alike.

Lighting the fire, operating the treadle machine, "washing-up" machines, as well as untempered forms with potash (a liquid that smarted the eyes, and almost burned the fingers to the bone), were all part of the daily routine. (Should the boss live in the upper portion of the establishment, an apprentice on occasions did the shopping for dinner—that is no exaggeration.)

Conditions in newspaper offices were no less different, except on post days—long before the introduction of the rotary press—an apprentice was obliged to fold, wrap, lick and stick stamps for the bundles of papers which, when ready, he brought to the post office and railway station for despatch. That done, he returned to the office where he was given his "supply" to be delivered, on foot, to regular customers, residing at places between the Racecourse and Corbally Mill, or Caherdavin, and the Fair Green, as the case may be.

Work for him finished on those same evenings around 9 o'clock, and when pay day arrived he was not rewarded to the extent of even one penny by way of overtime... it was all in the day's work!

It will have been noticed that I refrained from mentioning the names of those stalwarts of the past, and rightly so. Had I attempted, in my effervescence and appreciation, to do them simple justice and omitted the name of even one of the old brigade, all my best efforts would have gone for naught. Suffice it to say their names will be enshrined in the annals of "Limerick and Printing" long after this old comp. will have passed on to the Almighty Editor for final revision.

Moving outside the confines of the Shannonside city, I think it only proper that mention should be made of the section secretaries: the late James Reel, Ennis; Michael Moylan, Nenagh, and the one and only J. W. McCormack, Birr, who between them have given over 100 years loyal and devoted service to the Society, for the betterment of their colleagues.

Within the past eighteen months a printing works has been established at Shannon, employing over 80 craftsmen. With the very latest techniques in lithographic and film setting, the port deserves well of every member of the Society and community in general for the wonderful development which has characterised it as the most progressive township in these islands.

Long may the good work—the most colourful—continue to expand and prosper, Shannon abun!

In conclusion, and with a justifiable pride, we recall the names of those officials of the parent body (Limerick), who, whether as president or secretary, down the past three score and ten years, have given sterling and loyal service, not to the "cause of printing" alone, but also to the trade union movement and their country, especially during times of crises. They were: Matthew Harvey, P. M. Cusack, B.C.; R. P. O'Connor, B.C.; John Gleeson, John Christie, G. Carey, Paddy Cusack, B.C.; Paddy Doyle, B.C.; James Casey, B.C. Mayor; Michael Hartney, Ald. Mayor; John Ryan, John Healy, W. J. Conlan, Tom Dargan, Felix Ryan, J. McSharry, G. O'Halloran, J. O'Halloran, J. A. O'Donovan, W. Naughton, W. W. Gleeson, P. O'Byrne, J. O'Connor, P. J. Butler—longest serving secretary (1948-68), and also the youngest ever to fill the office, only to relinquish it when more demanding N.G.A. duties compelled him to do so.

Another outstanding citizen, with printer's ink in his blood, was Maurice Lenihan, compositor-master printer, historian, and Mayor of Limerick, whose "History of Limerick" is the greatest treasure of our ancient city's storied past.

And so, at the end of this perfect day, I leave you with your thoughts and...

Slán agus beannacht De oribh go leir, a chairde Gaeil.