

IN BRIEF

Lero conference

LIMERICK is hosting a prestigious top tier international conference this week. The Evaluation and Assessment in Software Engineering (EASE2016) conference is being organised by Lero, the Irish Software Research Centre and the University of Limerick (UL) until this Friday, June 3. It is the first time the event has taken place in Ireland. 90 delegates from 22 countries, including Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Scandinavia and the US are attending the event which is sponsored by Lero, the University of Limerick, Fáilte Ireland and Crest.

School attendance

FIANNA Fáil Spokesperson on Social Protection Willie O'Dea has secured a commitment from the Minister for Social Protection that child benefit will not be linked to school attendance. During questions in the Dáil last week, Deputy O'Dea sought reassurances from Minister Leo Varadkar that child benefit would not be linked to school attendance as indicated in the Programme for Partnership Government. "I am pleased that the Minister has now committed not to proceed with this proposal. I also welcome his assurances that the Government will not means-test or tax this essential payment," the Limerick politician said.

Birdwatch outing

LIMERICK branch of Birdwatch Ireland will host a trip to Ballybunion on Monday, June 6. Avid ornithologists can meet at the church car park in Ballyduff, County Kerry at 11am for a bog visit to look for birds, green hairstreak and marsh fritillary butterfly and three insect eating plants. At 2.30pm birdwatchers will reconvene at the Cliff House Hotel in Ballybunion before heading to the cliffs to look for nesting seabirds, plants and butterflies. Participants are advised to bring lunch, warm clothes and good footwear and, with an eye to the good weather, some sunscreen. The outing will be lead by Geoff Hunt.

Scrap the charges

SINN Féin spokesperson on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Maurice Quinlivan TD, has called on the government to respect the democratic will of the people and scrap water charges. Speaking during a Dáil debate Deputy Quinlivan said: "A motion to scrap water charges should have been introduced in the Dáil immediately after the recent general election. In the recent election, the majority of elected TDs stood on a platform to abolish water charges and in my own constituency of Limerick, 60 per cent of people who voted supported candidates opposed to water charges. The latest figures from Irish Water show that people are not paying this unfair tax".

Youth funding

YOUTH groups and non-profits in Limerick are being reminded to apply for the €130,000 Coca-Cola Thank You Fund before the June 7 deadline. In celebration of 130 years of Coca-Cola, the €130,000 fund seeks to finance projects that that inspire and support young people in Ireland. This year the fund is being delivered in partnership with the Irish Youth Foundation and YouthAction Northern Ireland. Thirteen projects will be selected and will receive grants of €30,000, €10,000 or €5,000. Applications can be made online at www.coca-cola.ie/thankyou

HISTORY

Finding the Limerick link to The Liberator

by Simon Bourke
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THE city's main thoroughfare may be named after him but most Limerick people would struggle to come up with any kind of historical connection with Daniel O'Connell.

Help is at hand, however, with a new book, *Daniel O'Connell: A Graphic Life*, providing a more off-beat account of the life of the man known as The Liberator and documents his links to Limerick and its people.

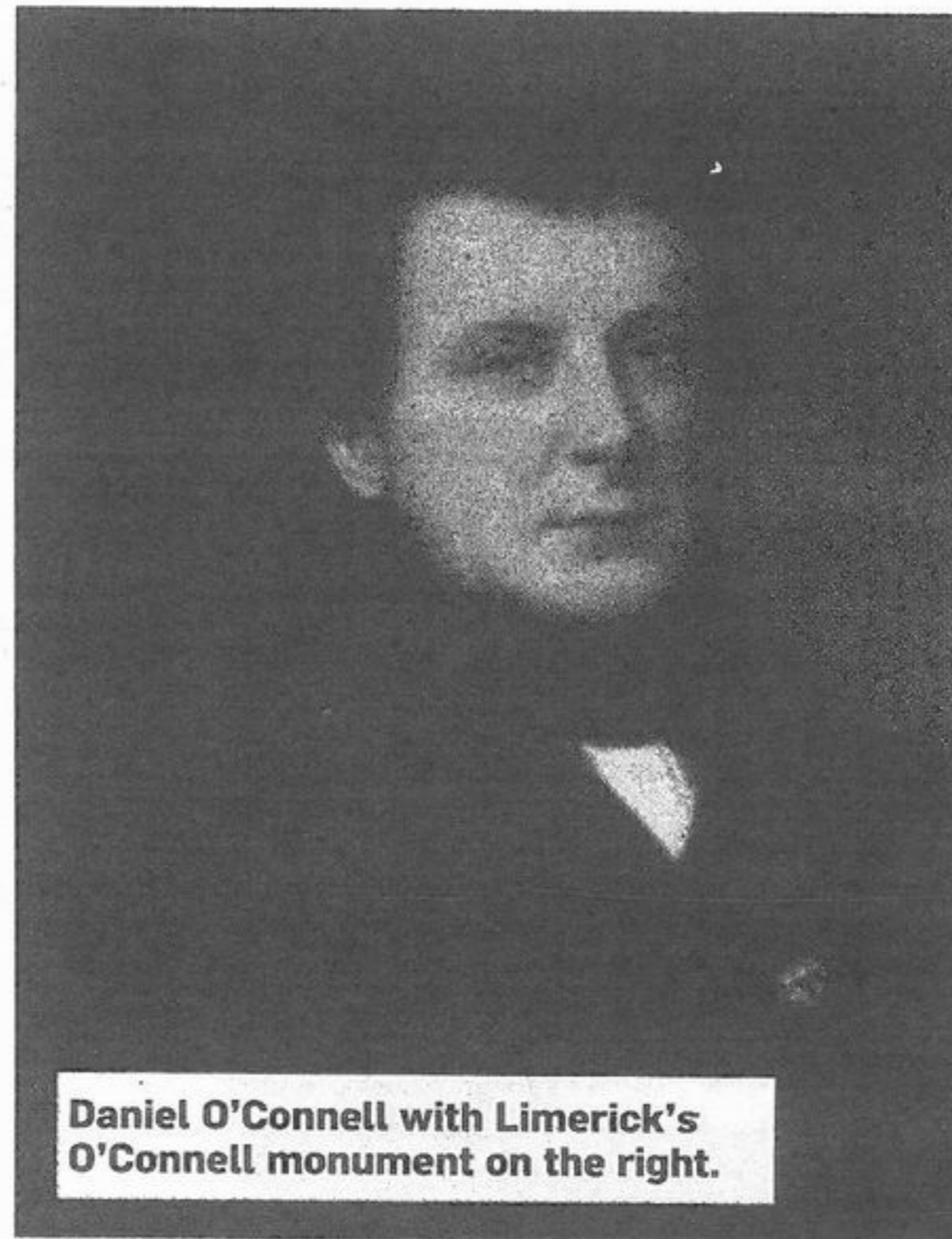
One tale recounts how in August 1813 O'Connell arranged a showdown at Limerick's Windmill Fields with a former colleague and friend. Maurice Magrath, the opposing counsel in a long and heated trial, was challenged to a duel after responding to Dan's claims that he was a liar by throwing a legal book at his head and kicking him on the shins.

O'Connell promptly struck Magrath in the face and, refusing to be calmed, invited him to meet the following morning to settle the dispute the old-fashioned way. The next morning, at dawn, the two squabbling friends arrived on the field, together with their entourages of prominent merchants and squireens.

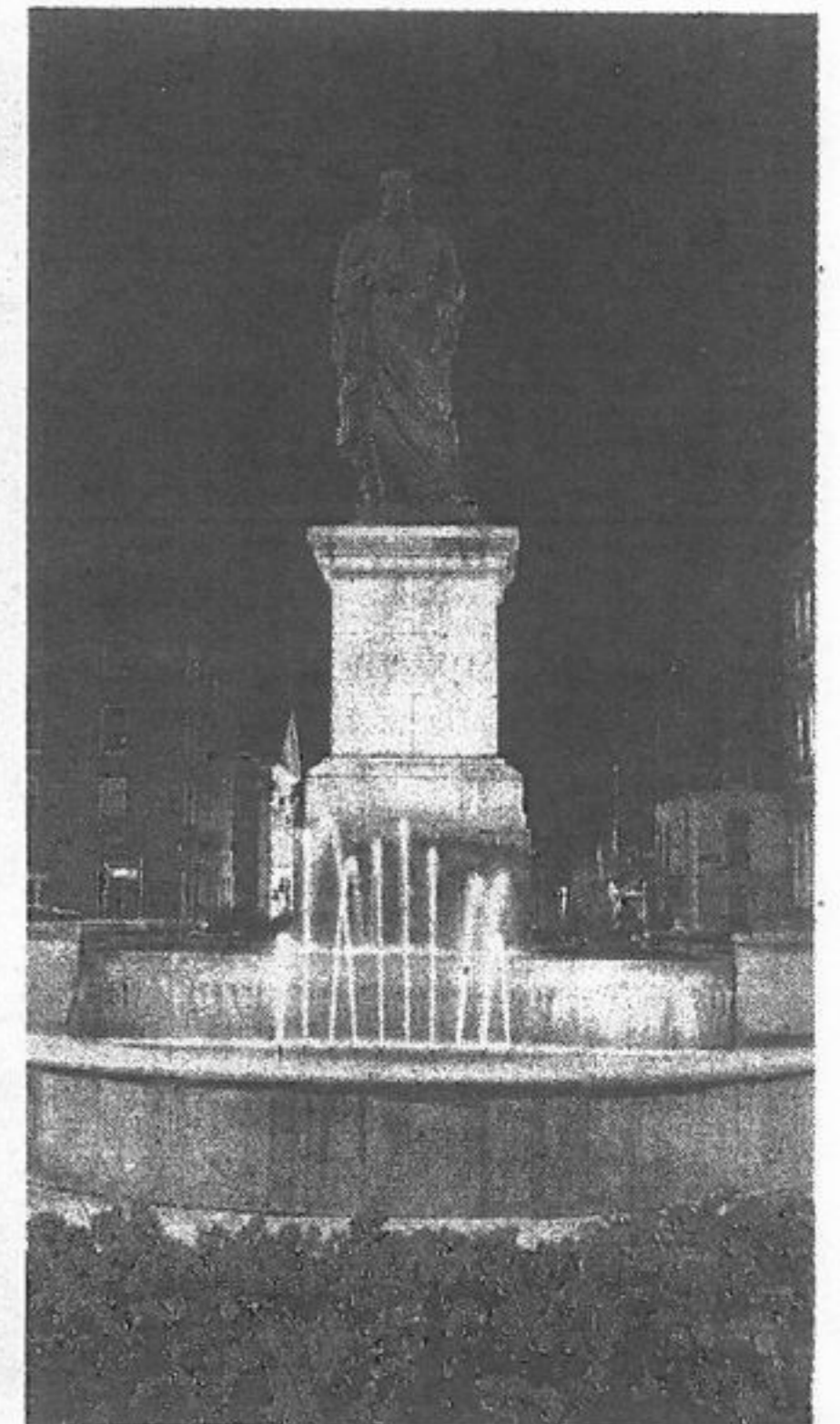
Another incident pays testament to the sheer scale of support O'Connell enjoyed throughout Ireland during his heyday.

In June 1829, while staying at Moriarty's Hotel in Limerick city, the Kerry native awoke to an incredible scene. A huge tree had been planted in front of the hotel, and an orchestra had concealed themselves in the thick foliage. Equipped with fiddles and flutes, they serenaded Dan as he emerged from the hotel.

And they didn't stop there. Following O'Connell as he continued his journey, the orchestra were joined by other supporters, with



Daniel O'Connell with Limerick's O'Connell monument on the right.



the procession numbering some 40,000 people by the time he arrived in County Clare.

In 1822, Dan acted as defence counsel for Paddy Dillane of Shanagolden who led a gang of Whiteboys in the killing of Thomas

O'CONNELL continued to defend members of the Rockite movement, often pleading the innocence of men charged with the most vicious of crimes.

Hoskins, the son of a land agent whose severe methods had caused unrest among the local community.

During the course of the trial, Dillane revealed to O'Connell that he was the original 'Captain Rock', a name given to him by a former schoolteacher due to his accurate rock-throwing. Dillane then informed on his accomplices and left the country for his own safety. However, he soon returned, emerging as the phantom leader of a new secret society called the Rockites.

Responsible for a spate of rural violence during the 1820s, the Rockites regularly stole produce from the great estates and issued death threats to several landlords, each of which were signed by 'Captain Rock.'

Dillane and his men also burned down a number of Protestant churches in Cork, Kerry and Limerick, crimes they believed would hasten the collapse of the Protestant establishment.

Instead it led to the hanging of over one hundred Rockites and the deportation of many more.

But O'Connell continued to defend members of the Rockite movement, often pleading the innocence of men charged with the most vicious of crimes. Finally quelled in 1824, the rebellion is considered the most violent of all the agrarian insurrections. The fate of its leader, 'Captain Rock' is unknown, but his name has become synonymous with the plight of the Irish peasantry during the 19th century.

AVIATION

Aviation Authority support for new Shannon service

by Bernie English
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A BID by a budget airline to get permission to operate flights between Shannon and Cork to the US is being supported by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA).

But the move by Norwegian Airlines International is being opposed by US unions including the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA).

The union is claiming that the low-cost carrier's registration in Ireland would lead to the hiring of cheap labour and endanger both employment and safety standards.

But a submission from the IAA to the department of transport in Washington supporting the application has dismissed the claims.

Describing the SWAPA claims as a flagrant disregard for the facts, the IAA said they also ignored a determination by the Federal Aviation Administration that Irish safety standards are in line with US and international standards.

The airline's application for a US foreign carrier's permit has been delayed by objections for two years.

If the airline gets the go-ahead, it will begin with services between Shannon and Boston.

PLANNING

Local residents object to Blackwater development

by Bernie English
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RESIDENTS of Ardnacrusha have objected to plans for a 15 house development in their area.

Republic Land Development Ltd applied for planning permission to finish two and build eight two-storey houses along with a further five storey-and-a-half houses at Blackwater in South East Clare.

There is currently planning permission for the site and architects have entered the latest application as an "update" of previous permission which they

describe as "still current".

A number of residents are objecting on grounds that the elevated nature of the houses is not suitable for the area and that the development is too high-density for a rural location like Ardnacrusha.

But architects for the developer, CMG Architectural Design in Middleton in Cork have pointed out that the development was previously granted planning permission and that the positioning of the boundary wall, another structure with which some locals are taking issue, was previously agreed with them.