

LEADER

to make the Leader as a local journal"

THE LIMERICK LEADER LTD, LIMERICK

crisis us all bit

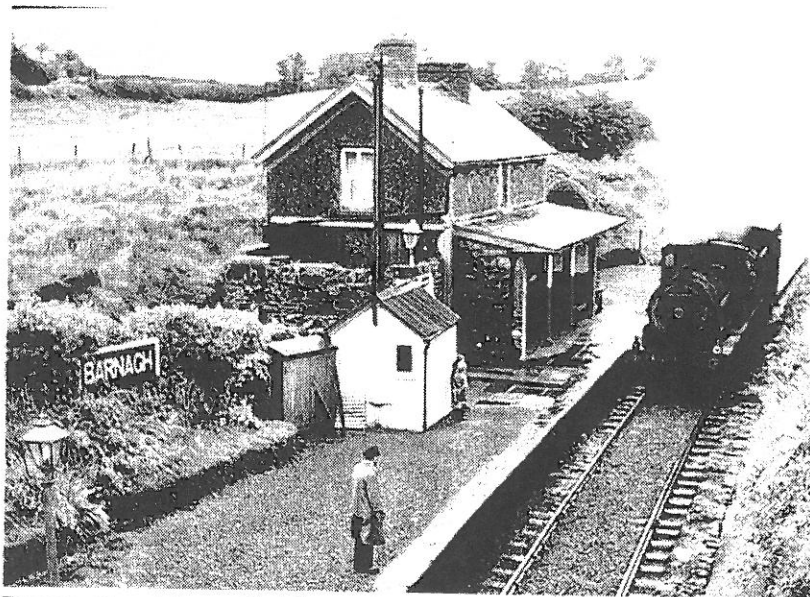
the generosity and compassion of the people Limerick. It shows too that we have not forgotten our past and how, for many generations, Limerick people have been welcomed in Britain, the United States, Australia and other countries and the world when we are in dire need of refuge ourselves. Those families who have survived flimsy rafts, razor wire and intimidation to reach Europe deserve not only our generosity, but also our respect. Simply welcoming refugees here is just the first step.

Council should step up to promote Trail

BARNAGH station was once noted as one of the highest railway stations in Ireland and served the parish of Templeglantine in West Limerick. It had another station on its westerly end, Devon Road station, towards Abbeyfeale, which by all accounts was the only parish in Ireland to have two functioning rail stations at the same time.

Sadly, Barnagh station is now in ruins and gone back to nature, but on a happier note Devon Road station has been restored to its former glory and is now a private residence. The bed of the old railway line, stretching 25 miles from Rathkeale and meandering its way through the West Limerick countryside as far as the Kerry border just beyond Abbeyfeale, is now a superb amenity and the envy of many counties who are quickly catching up and surpassing the trail which was the first trail of its kind in Ireland and achieved against all the odds.

Take, for example, the world renowned Great Western Greenway in Mayo, who sent down an exploratory team of researchers to the Great Southern Trail committee, as no other such trail existed in Ireland at the time. Mayo



The marvellous picture on the left was taken at the old Barnagh station, near Templeglantine, in the 1930s, as a steam train pulls in. On the right is the last weed-spraying train to pass through, in 1977, before the closure of the line. The 25-mile line is now a superb amenity in West Limerick, under the auspices of the volunteer-led Great Southern Trail, but vice-chair Denis McAuliffe believes Limerick council should now carry on the GST's good work

County Council came on board, as well as the local hotels and development committees in Mayo. They marketed and promoted their greenway no end and now it brings in millions of euro to the local economy of Mayo, for bed and breakfasts, restaurants, cafes, hackney/taxi hire, a multiple of bike hire

shops and other businesses along the Greenway.

Sadly, West Limerick's Great Southern Trail never got such a backing or marketing drive to promote it as a tourist destination and remains an undiscovered gem.

The visionary voluntary group who created such an amenity

have been in place over 25 years and are the only voluntary group in Europe to manage a public amenity. It's now time that the council and tourism promotion groups in Limerick stepped up to the plate and built on what a group of volunteers have achieved.

The trains may be long gone

and the tracks lifted but what has been put in place needs management and promotional skills beyond the remit of a purely voluntary group of people.

DENIS MCAULIFFE
VICE-CHAIR, SOUTHERN TRAIL
VOLUNTARY GROUP, LIMERICK

On the new roof at St Joseph's Church

YOU'RE putting a roof on a church [St Joseph's] that nobody lives in.

Limerick/Dublin bus service, as has a former Minister for Defence. With a general election in the coming year, the Government parties do not seem to value those that inhabit the hill country between Bearnna and Gleann Searún!

Fail who introduced water charges when in government both parties have common abolition issues. It is like the pot calling the kettle black.

Since the late Charles Haughey became Fianna Fail leader, that party has

HAVE YOUR SAY
If you've got a view on a local topic