

# About Barrington's

Barrington's Hospital's no introduction to sick citizens, as for the century and a half, its famed doctors and nurses have been giving nursing care to sick and dying citizens.

The story of Barrington's Hospital begins with Joseph Barrington, the proprietor of water works at Charlotte in the late 1700s. He was the Crown Solicitor of Munster and bought the estate, in the Murrowlands under the name of the Sliabh Felim mountains.

It was elevated to the rank of a Sir Joseph Barrington, and in 1829, with sons, Matthew, Croker, and Samuel, petitioned for the establishment of a charitable institution for the sick poor of Limerick. In 1831, the enabling act was passed and Barrington's Hospital was built on the east side of the Maingate — traces of the arcades is military building can be seen in the hospital's garden wall near the Baal's Bridge end of Mary Street.

In 1831, the first patients were admitted. The following year, a deadly cholera epidemic swept the city. The medical and nursing expertise and dedication of Barrington's Hospital staff helped greatly to alleviate the ravages of this epidemic.

A portrait of Sir Joseph Barrington and The Barringington family were hung in the hospital, as did "Christ Heals the Sick" by artist John Phelan (a native of Limerick and a protégé of Sir Matthew Barrington, the latter's son) and "The Good Samaritan".

Barrington's Hospital needed funds. So Sir Matthew built the Monte Pietà in the hospital garden.

Monte Pietà was a pawnshop which loaned money at low rates of interest. Monte Pietà means a charitable pawnshop. The Franciscans originated these charitable pawnshops in the 1500s in Italy and they flourished afterwards in France and Belgium. In 1841, when Barrington's Monte Pietà was needed, there were 20 pawnshops in Limerick city lending money at usurious interest rates to poverty-stricken citizens.

Despite its liberal interests, Barrington's Monte Pietà's losses forced it to close in 1841, and in 1847 it became a Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks. In 1866, Maurice Lenihan (in his story of Limerick) described it as "a remarkable object, with a cupola, pillars, gables and small enclosure". In 1892 it was demolished.

The photo also shows the bay River downstream from Baal's Bridge. Baal's Bridge is an English version of Droichead Maol Luimní — the Bald Bridge of Limerick, as called The Bald Bridge. It had houses and shops on it but not the usual shops. It was a miniature

fame as widespread as London's bridge — it was noted in the Pacata Hibernica and on a 17th century map published in Leyden, in Holland.

The Bald Bridge of Limerick was the scene of a battle between an O'Brien (of Thomond) chief and a Galway De Burgo in the 14th century.

A Royal Mint stood nearby.

Shortly after 1891, the houses on its east side were demolished. The western side's houses stood until medieval Baal's Bridge was demolished in the late 1820s.

According to a city folk tale, three Miss Purdons lived in one of the Baal's Bridge houses. Superstitiously, they didn't think any eligible young man good enough as a suitor, so they lived and died as old maids.

The Three Purdon's attitude was long recalled by a Limerick proverb about the too-choosy: "As proud as a Purdon."

In 1820, John Scanlan (of Groom) the murderer of Ellen Hanley ("The Colleen Bawn") was taken by carriage from the jail on Merchant's Quay to his place of execution at Gallows Green, Garryowen. The horses drawing the carriage refused three times to cross Baal's Bridge — so Scanlan got out and continued the journey to the gallows on foot.

On 4th February, 1775, an unusually high tide damaged some of the Baal's Bridge houses. A resident named Barry was swept through the floor and downriver to the New Bridge (where Mathew Bridge is now) where he was rescued by a brave sailor named John Fitzgerald.

Since medieval times Baal's Bridge linked the Englishtown and Irishtown of Limerick. Several paintings (of 18th and early 19th century vintage) of Baal's Bridge survive.

Various, they give vivid glimpses of Limerick features of those eras. In one, women can be seen washing clothes with bauletoirs — or beatles — in the Abbey River at a slip just below Baal's Bridge, on the same bank as Barrington's Hospital today.

The stage coach can be seen arriving from Cork. A picture of the scene on the Lock Quay side shows fishermen at their trade on the river. Lock Quay was then the fishmarket centre of the city.

In 1830, the Baal's Bridge we see today was built. The architect was James Pain, who designed all Limerick bridges of that era with the exception of Mathew Bridge (downriver, near St. Mary's Cathedral) which was designed by W. H. Owen, a Welshman.

The Watergate — the most impressive of the city's gates — guarded the immediate Irishtown edge of medieval Baal's Bridge.

## Tom Lawlor: a fearless and faithful Limerickman

AN APPRECIATION

MR. TOM LAWLOR of Clanmorris Avenue, Limerick, one of the gallant Mid-Limerick Brigade I.R.A. guerrilla fighters who, in the glorious, tough 1916-1921 campaign helped to wrest independence for three of Rosin Dubh's green fields from the then invincible British Empire — died recently.

Tom Lawlor was a friend who personified, in his ever-faithful way, all the best qualities of a true Irishman, Limerickman and Christian.

In 1917, like hundreds of other young men of that generation, Tom responded to the resolve for Irish freedom proclaimed by Pearce and his comrades-in-arms the Easter week before in Dublin, by joining the Blackbuoy Pike — Singland Company of the I.R.A. at a stone quarry in Singland, where (as he often recalled) the local Fenians of 1867 drilled secretly.

### Independence war

Tom served faithfully and fearlessly in the 1919-21 War of Independence against the Auxies and the Tans in his native Singland-Ballysimon-Blackbuoy area.

In July 1921, Eamon de Valera, then President of the Irish Republic (canonised by the Irish peoples democratic majority vote and defended by its gallant volunteer soldiers, but not formally established as a nation-state) addressed a meeting at the Theatre Royal in this city.

President de Valera stayed at the O'Mara family's guest at Strand House (Ennis Road), that night and Tom Lawlor was one of his Mid-Limerick Brigade guards.

It was the night of the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in London.

Tom saw Comdt.-General Michael Brennan (of the East Clare I.R.A.) give the telegram informing about the signing of the Treaty to President de Valera, who was relaxing in bed at Strand House.

Tom Lawlor for many years carried on — with that lovely local courtesy and heartiness — the Singland trade of supplying delicious, fresh, creamy Singland milk to a host of customers all over Limerick city.

Although he went into residential exile at Clanmorris Avenue from his ancestral Shanavooca (Ballysimon) some years ago, his heart was always, faithfully and helpfully, with his ancestral area and its people and traditions.

Ten years ago, when the first efforts were made to restore St. Patrick's Well at Singland, the greatest inspiration the restorers had was Tom's presence, practical help and his inspiring treasury of local folklore.

Last St. Patrick's Day (to give

There were five redundancies in the plant in January, 1982, and because of difficulties the firm has been on a three-day week on and off for some time

Coolé East, Whitecross, Co. Cork.

## F.F. Party division

PLEASE PERMIT me space in your columns in which I wish to fully concur with Dr. Michael Woods in his statement at the Fianna Fáil Parliamentary Party meeting (quote): "It was people in this room, rather than the media, who are to blame for some of the current problems in Fianna Fáil."

I go further and say, it is the "vultures" within the party who are power-drunk and leaving no stone unturned to pressuring Mr. Charlie Haughey to resign as leader of Fianna Fáil.

In order to bring home to those people who are in the forefront, demanding Mr. Haughey's resignation, they would be well advised to recall what Mr. Charlie Haughey had done for the old age pensioners when Minister for Health and Social Welfare. Did he not grant us old age pensioners free travel, medical cards, free television licences, free electricity, or are we to take it, as the old proverb goes, "eaten bread is soon forgotten."

In my final analysis, I remain loyal to Mr. Haughey, the democratically elected leader of Fianna Fáil who will surely weather the storm into the calm.

PATRICK J. WALSH,  
50 Colbert Avenue,  
Jamesboro,  
Limerick

## Mungret re-union

ALL PAST pupils of Mungret College, Limerick, are reminded that the annual dinner dance will take place in the Victor Hotel, Rochestown Ave., Dun Laoghaire, on Friday, Feb. 18, the eve of the Ireland-France rugby international.

JOHN O'DONOVAN,  
Hon. secretary,  
Mungret Union,  
34 Leopardstown Grove,  
Sullaghan,  
Co. Dublin,  
Tel. 880062.

## Letters Home

"SYLVIA PLATH'S Letters Home," currently being presented at the Belltable Arts Centre, is a compelling charting of this agonised modern American poetess's journey to self-destruction from 1953 to 1963.

From 700 letters that Sylvia Plath wrote to her mother, American playwright Rose Laiman Goldenberg has vividly portrayed the poetess's tortured life, which arose from her struggles between self-deprecation and pursuit of literary perfectionism, aggravated by an unhappy marriage and failure to achieve literary success on her own terms.

Excellent acts by Fídelma O'Dowd ("Sylvia Plath") and Geraldine Plunkett ("Her Mother"), and expressively staged and lit, it's directed sensitively by Avril McRory, under the auspices of the Dublin Actors Repertory Theatre.

An almost capacity downstairs attendance (majority women) applauded it Thursday night.

The production continues this Friday and Saturday nights. It is

crown might fall squa head, for to defend cor be corrupt oneself.

The implications of it to quickly come to the events of the last two quite clear. How could seething with dissentive visiveness, have possible the road to economic when it all too obviously put it's own house in order seem to gloat too in meanderings down corruption, let me say th minute cuts in e and health services ce serve to shake what fait have in politicians. Whic tically-elected Govern right to discriminate i weakest and commu sections of the most

## THE W

MAY GOD bless you kindness and genero going to tell you about i in Dublin's Fair City happy if you enjoy. Kindest regards, Fr. E. W.F.

"BETTY" — Home ca. Shopping in Teren full. Trade brisk (it was Christmas). What a Africa! The weather wa too; an east wind. A col decided to have a cup Slipped into the "Oak How warm and cosy! H ating the hot coffee!

Who is She? Opposi the lounge sat an el Shabbily dressed. A Guinness in front of finished it, then promp another. She looked s to be thinking sadly. "Possibly she's an al thought. Then she through her basket. Tc plates. I looked at them

Breaking the Ice: I like to talk. So I I courage, walked over said: "Those are beau ma'am. Did you buy ly?" She looked up, "No", she replied. "I b at a sale of work. I pence each. I also got a showed it), a brooch a cooker". She display my approval "The om was only 50p". "You bargain," I replied. "continued, "it's for e sale of work was to be living alone. It was Quakers". "A very wo I commented.

Nice name . . . ye support them all",

## Retreat I kicked d

A COUNTY LIMEI who came into Lim retreat pleaded guilty Court to causing mal age.

He was given the b Probation Act on a causing malicious d Door, the property Heffernan, at St. Jc on January 30 last.

Insp. Gerry Hig court that the defend the home of the Inju 11.30 p.m. on th question. He kicke and broke a pane of door. It was unkno defendant selected question.

Mr. Garry McMi for the defendant, to that his client came ick to attend a retru invited out by so friends.

Mr. McMahon sa drank whiskey whi nately had an u effect on him. The o "shatterin'" effect