EIGHTY CITIES

Pat says that he is very excited at the prospect of joining the organisation in January, which visits up to 80 cities each year, doing concerts in each of them.

Pat was selected out of 22 people interviewed in Limerick, although he has no singing or musical background. He will start out in January and some weeks at the “Up With People” organisation.

For charity

Pat says that for every three concerts they play, the proceeds from two are donated to charity. Pat, an industrial design student, has already done medical and dental examinations for the trip, and is looking forward with great anticipation to next January when he will eventually sets off for Arizona.

Jim, 83, explodes historical ‘myths’

“...but there’s no such thing”, he replies contemptuously, “it’s just a medical term for something the doctors don’t understand”. Balance

He believes himself to have something to do with spatial balance, and man’s constant struggle with the force of gravity, he explains.

He discovered his balancing skill when he was 13: “I put a jackknife’s broken leg against a wooden connector”, he said.

Since then he has studied anatomy extensively and can do the same in many bones in the body. He says he was programmed as a young child.

He has kept up his friendship with Jack Lynch over the years. “He lived beside us when we were children”, he said, “and I still get a Christmas card from him.”

Jim’s children are Noell, who teaches at the School of Commerce, Pat, who runs the family upholstery business in Breden Street, Joe, who is head of Dairy Technology in Permanet, and his daughters, Rita, Maire and Helen. His wife is the former Rita Doyle of the well-known Limerick horse-riding family.

Attitude

He works each day on his history of the Irish Labour movement, with what he describes as “a healthy attitude”, gleaned from the diverse strains of a Labour Leader father, fond memories of Limerick, and, above all, his own memory of the life of his three children – one of the U.S. Army and two who stayed with the British forces - not unexpected at the Battle of the Somme, and lived to tell the tale.

Jim Phelan at home this week.

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

A LIMERICK MAN who recently received a plaque from the Tanaiste, Dick Spring, for his “outstanding dedication and loyalty to the Labour Party”, is now planning to expose the “myths” of Ireland’s fight for freedom.

Eighty-three-year-old Jim Phelan of Singland, a life-long friend and former neighbour of ex-Tanaiste Jack Lynch, says: “I played a small part in the years after 1916, and those years were neither glorious nor glamorous nor romantic. They were serious years, and very important years.”

He, who is setting his own history of the period, and the Labour Party movement, is not aware of the literature of those years and how “exaggerated” they may be. He has no formal training, but knows that the period of his youth was crucial. He spent 35 years in the Coate area of Limerick, and knew many of the key figures.

He has lived in Limerick most of his life and recalls the early days of Labour in the constituency. He says: “I thoroughly enjoyed being there. I spent a lot of time there. I had a good time there.”

He came to Limerick in 1945 and recalls the early days of Labour in the constituency. He says: “I thoroughly enjoyed being there. I spent a lot of time there. I had a good time there.”

He introduced Jim Kenny to the party and is his friend. He has 35 years of experience in the Labour Party.

He also recalls the entry of Cathal O'Connell and Mick O'Connell from Clonmel as new members of the party.

He remembers meeting William O'Brien, Jim Larkin and James Connolly.

Most Irish

“The Labour Party”, he says, “is not only the oldest but the most revolutionary force in Irish political life.”

He stresses the importance of the Labour Party as a force for social change.

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The Hughes

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