

TRAGEDY AT LIMERICK DOCKS

How Young Lady Met Her Death

EVIDENCE AT THE INQUEST

Coroner Condemns Gossip

MR. J. S. MacNEICE, Deputy Coroner, with a jury, of which Mr. Ed. McNamara was foreman, held an inquest in Barrington's Hospital on Saturday evening concerning the death of Miss Marie White, aged 34 years, who was drowned in the Shannon at the Limerick docks on the morning of 16th instant, when a motor car in which she was seated toppled over the quayside.

Supt. Collieran conducted the proceedings. Mr. Martin Tynan, solr., represented Mr. P. C. Aiden Manahan, "Clongrennan," Ennis Road, the owner and driver of the car; Mr. D. J. O'Malley, solicitor, appeared for the next of kin of Miss White; Mr. Michael O'B. Kelly, solr., appeared for the Limerick Harbour Board, and Mr. Roger O'Sullivan, solr., appeared for the proprietors of the Brazenhead Restaurant, of which the late Miss White was manageress.

Dr. Joseph Hughes, House Surgeon, Barrington's Hospital, stated that he performed a post-mortem on the body, on which there were no marks of violence. Death was due to asphyxia, caused by drowning.

SHOUTS FOR HELP

Joseph O'Neill, a gas worker, living at 23 Lela Street, stated that as he was proceeding to his work at about 5.50 a.m., along the docks, he heard shouts "Help, Help." He ran in the direction from which the shouts came, near the quay he saw a man in the water.

Did the man speak to you?—Yes. He said that his car had crashed into the water.

Where was the man standing?—On the chassis of the car.

Did you speak to him?—Yes. I asked him if there was anybody else in the car and he said, yes, a lady. I asked him if he had tried to get her out and he said that he had done everything possible to get her out and failed.

Did you see the car?—I saw about a foot of the car above the water. It was upside down.

What was the depth of the water about?—About seven or eight feet.

Coroner—Was it dark?—Yes. The Harbour lights were on.

Supt.—What did you do?—I told him I would go for the guards, but I didn't, I went to the Gas Works and got out the men.

What did you do then?—I returned to the quay with some of my fellow workers. I had a rope with me and I attached this to the man standing on the upturned car.

Did you drag the man in off the car?—Yes.

Did you know him?—No. He was lying down for a while and then got up. He asked for a cigarette.

Did he say anything about the car?—No.

What condition was he in?—He was excited. He was bleeding from the neck.

Was he removed to hospital?—Yes, in the Corporation ambulance.

LIGHTS SHOWING UNDER THE WATER

When you arrived were the lights of the car on?—Yes, they were showing under the water.

Were the lights facing the opposite side of the river?—Yes, towards Barrington's Pier.

Was the man, when you saw him, partly submerged?—Yes, he was up to his waist.

Coroner—Was it a foggy night or a clear night?—It was clear.

Answering Mr. Kelly, the witness said that where the accident occurred it was bright. He could not say how many lamps were lighting at the spot. There were life-hooks on the wall opposite to where the accident occurred.

Asked by Mr. O'Malley why he brought the rope, the witness said that he brought it as a precautionary measure. He found that the rope attached to the lifebuoy was too short.

Coroner—How far out was the man from the quay wall?—About twelve feet.

Coroner—Did you attach your rope to the lifebuoy?—Yes.

What was the length of your rope?—About 200 feet long.

James Hanley, 5 Taylor's Row, another gas worker, stated that in response to the alarm given by the previous witness he, with others, rushed to the scene.

Superintendent—Did you see a man standing on something in the water?—Yes.

Were the lights of the car shining?—Yes.

Was there a lifebuoy thrown to the man?—Yes.

Was the rope of the buoy long enough to reach him?—No.

"IN AN AWFUL STATE"

When he was brought ashore was he excited?—Yes, he was in an awful state. He told us that there was a girl in the car and that he had done his best to get her out.

Did you see any sign of drink on him?—No.

What kind of a morning was it?—There was a light haze, but no fog.

Superintendent—Was there any protection chain at that point?—No.

Could you say how many lamps were there?—No. I only noticed the lamp on Glynn's shed.

Replying to Mr. Kelly, the witness said that the quay where the accident occurred is constantly used for shipping. Live stock is loaded at this point.

Do you agree that it would be difficult to have a protection on the quay from which cattle are shipped that would not injure livestock?—Yes.

Mr. O'Malley—If the Harbour Board had performed its statutory duty and hung a chain along the quays would Miss White be alive to-day?

Mr. Kelly objected to the question on the ground that the witness could only give his opinion.

Mr. O'Malley—I would not have asked the question had you not treated the witness as a sort of expert.

Coroner—I think we can leave this matter to the jury.

DIVER'S EVIDENCE

James Wallace, a diver in the employment of the Harbour Board, stated that, following a request from the Garda authorities, he entered the water, which was about fifteen feet deep at that time.

Superintendent—Did you find

the car upside down?—Yes. The engine was facing towards the Condensed Milk Factory.

Were the doors closed?—Yes. Did you see under the water?—No, because of silt.

Could you see the car?—Only dimly. I felt about. All the doors were closed and with terrific pressure I opened one of them.

Did you locate the body?—Yes. Where was it?—It was in the car, but I could not say. In my opinion I opened the left rear door.

Did you get the body out?—Yes, and in my opinion it appeared to have been held by something. I placed the body in my arms and brought it to the surface.

How far out was the car from the quay wall?—It was fifteen feet.

Was the body fully clothed?—Yes, there was one shoe missing; that was in the car.

Joseph Nestor, South Circular Road, stated that he accompanied Mr. Aiden Manahan to a dance in Ennis. With them was Mr. Jack McGreal.

Superintendent—What time did you reach Ennis?—It was after 12 p.m.

What time was the dance over?—3 a.m.

When it was over did you meet Mr. Manahan?—Yes.

Did he tell you he was bringing Miss Marie White to Limerick?—Yes.

What time did Miss White join you?—At about 3.20.

Did you all four then return to Limerick in Mr. Manahan's car?—Yes.

You and Mr. McGreal sat in the back and Mr. Manahan and Miss White in front?—Yes.

DIFFICULTY WITH THE LIGHTS

Had Mr. Manahan some difficulty with the lights on the way to Limerick?—Yes, they were not focussed properly.

Did the car stop on the way to Limerick?—Not so far as I know. I slept some of the time.

Were you dropped at Todd's?—Yes.

What condition was Mr. Manahan in—was he sober?—Yes.

You had some drinks during the night?—Yes, five in all.

Had you a meal?—Yes. Later that morning did you hear of the accident?—Yes.

Did you see Mr. Manahan in hospital?—Yes.

What did he tell you?—He told me that he made a mistake with the gears—that he thought he had the car in reverse, when it crashed over the quay wall.

ONE OF THE BEST PROTECTED PORTS

The Harbour Master (Capt. C. J. Henrahan), examined by Mr. Kelly, said that the Port of Limerick was one of the best protected ports in Ireland. The part of the quay where the accident occurred was constantly used for traffic, and, therefore, it was not practicable to have it fenced off. The roadway at the point was 75 feet wide. It was well lighted by four lamps.

Replying to Mr. O'Malley, the witness said that there were usually five to eight fathoms of rope attached to the lifebuoys.

Mr. O'Malley—Is there any obligation on you to provide chains along the quays?—No.

So what is done is done as a precautionary measure?—Yes. We have covered all side-street approaches to the docks with chains.

Were there ever chains at the point where the accident occurred?—No, never.

Mr. Tynan—When this quay is not in use would it not be practicable to have a guard chain where the accident occurred?—It might.

Mr. Kelly—Would that mean the erection of posts?—Yes.

Would these interfere with the boarding of cattle?—Yes.

John McGreal, 51 Henry Street, who accompanied Mr. Manahan and Mr. Nestor to the dance at Ennis, corroborated the evidence given by Mr. Nestor.

Superintendent—What time did you leave Ennis for Limerick?—At about 3.40.

What time did you get to Limerick?—I should say at about 5 o'clock; we had trouble with the lights.

Were you dropped outside your own house?—Yes.

What condition was Mr. Manahan in that night?—He was perfectly sober.

Was the meeting with Miss White accidental at the dance?—Yes, she asked for a seat home.

Coroner—What time was it when Mr. Manahan dropped you at your own door?—It was about 5.15 a.m.

MR. MANAHAN EXAMINED

Cornelius Patrick Aiden Manahan, "Clongrennan," Ennis Road, was then called by the Superintendent.

The Coroner informed Mr. Manahan that he was not bound to give evidence, but that he may do so if he so desired.

Mr. Tynan I have already explained to him his position. Mr. Manahan is most anxious to give evidence.

Examined by the Superintendent, Mr. Manahan stated that he was a commercial traveller.

Did you attend at Ennis with Mr. McGreal and Mr. Nestor?—Yes.

What time did you get there?—Between 12.30 and 1 a.m.

What time did it terminate?—At about 3.15.

Was there a bar at the dance?—Yes.

At the end of the dance did you meet Miss White?—Yes.

You knew her before?—Yes.

Did she ask you for a seat to Limerick?—Yes.

What time did you start for Limerick?—At about 3.00 or later.

Had you difficulty with your lights?—Yes.

What time did you get to Limerick?—It would be about 5 o'clock.

Did you drop Mr. Nestor near Todd's, and Mr. McGreal at his home?—Yes.

After dropping Mr. McGreal, where did you go?—I went up Henry Street and turned down Quin Street to the Technical Institute into O'Connell Avenue, to stop at "Maryville."

What did Miss White say?—She said she would like a breath of fresh air as she was not on duty early in the morning. We drove down towards the river.

Hartstonge Street on to Mount Kennett?—Yes.

Did you park your car, facing the river, at Glynn's shed?—Yes.

Did you park it by the pillars?—Yes.

Would that be about 8 to 12 feet from the edge of the quay wall?—Yes.

You switched off the lights and the engine of the car?—Yes.

Did Miss White put down her window?—Yes.

Was your own window down?—Yes, I always leave my window down.

Did you remain there chatting for about twenty minutes or so?—Yes.

Did Miss White then remark that it was getting chilly and put up her window?—Yes.

Did she say it was time to go home?—Yes.

Did you then "rev" up the car and put on your lights?—Yes.

Did you, as you thought, put the car into reverse?—Yes.

Did you then release the clutch?—Yes.

As you did that did you look back to see where you were going, as you thought?—Yes.

Instead of moving back did it shoot forward?—It did.

Just then did Miss White scream?—Yes.

As you looked around you felt the car going over the quay wall?—Yes.

When the car struck the water did the water pour in through the window?—Yes.

Do you remember the car turning over?—No.

EFFORTS TO RESCUE MISS WHITE

When the water rushed in did you try to open the door?—Yes, I tried to open my door, but couldn't. I then succeeded in getting out through the window.

After getting out did you catch Miss White through the window?—Yes.

Was she conscious then?—I don't think so; there was no movement.

You failed to drag her through?—I could not get her out.

You were under the water all this time?—Yes.

You had to surface to get fresh air?—Yes.

Did you take off your overcoat and coat and go down again under the water?—Yes.

Did you catch something and kept tugging?—Yes. I did not know, in fact, it was Miss White I was tugging.

Had you to surface again for air?—Yes.

Did you then shout for help?—Yes.

Was it long before help arrived?—It seemed ages, but I don't think it was long.

How long have you this Skoda car?—Since last August.

Before that you had a Morris?—Yes.

Had you previously made a mistake with the Skoda gears?—Yes.

How many drinks had you that night?—I had five drinks. I had one in Limerick before going to the dance, and the other four during the dance and supper. The drinks were stout.

Mr. Tynan—Had you a substantial meal?—Yes.

Sergeant P. Connoily, Roads Traffic Inspector, stated that he examined Mr. Manahan's car, the component parts of which were in sound condition. The lever, when the car was taken from the river, was in first gear position.

Thomas White, Tulla, brother of the deceased, stated that his sister was aged 34 years. She was manageress of the Brazenhead Restaurant, Limerick, for some months before her death.

CORONER'S REMARKS

This concluded the evidence, and the Coroner, addressing the jury, said that, from the evidence, it was quite apparent that Mr. Manahan had done all that was humanly possible to rescue Miss White.

There are, said the Coroner, some people in Limerick who seem to think that they are exempt from the eighth Commandment, judging by the very uncharitable things that had been said since that very distressing tragedy had occurred. The people who allowed their tongues to run riot should feel ashamed of themselves. He could assure the relatives of Miss White and Mr. Manahan that they and he had the sympathy of all decent-minded people.

The jury then retired, and, after a brief absence, returned a verdict that death was caused by accidental drowning, and that no blame was attributable to Mr. Manahan.

Supt. Collieran, on behalf of the Garda authorities, extended sympathy to the relatives of the deceased.

The Coroner and all the legal representatives joined in the expression of sympathy.

STORY TOO LONG!

IT LED TO LIQUOR PROSECUTION

Expressing the hope that the next instalment of the story would not be told after hours, Justice D. F. Gleeson, at Sixmilebridge District Court, dismissed a prosecution against Joseph M. Keane, Sixmilebridge.

Evidence was given that Garda Torman arrived on the premises at 7.15 p.m., a quarter of an hour after the legal closing time. No drinks had been served since 7 p.m., and the delay in getting out of the premises was due to one member of the party telling a story, which apparently held the listeners enthralled.

Justice Gleeson, dismissing the summons against the publican and applying the Probation Act to the four women and four men found on the premises, said he hoped the next instalment of the thriller would not be told during prohibited hours on licensed premises.

Supt. Lavan prosecuted; Mr. M. Tynan, solr., Limerick, appeared for the licensed trader, and Mr. H. Sheehy, solr., for the persons found on the premises.

CHURCH RELICS

Opening Of Holy Year Exhibition

INSPIRING CEREMONY IN LIMERICK

THERE was a very big gathering in St. Munchin's New Church yesterday for the opening of the Holy Year Exhibition of Church relics, some of which date back to the dawn of history.

The exhibition was opened by the Lord Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. O'Neill, who was accompanied by the Minister for Education (General Mulcahy), the Minister for Local Government (Mr. M. J. Keyes) and the Mayor (Mr. Kevin Bradshaw) and the other members of the Corporation, wearing their robes of office.

Outside the church grounds a company of F.C.A. under Lieutenant Sean South, formed a guard of honour, while the avenue leading to the church was lined by members of the Knights of Malta, in uniform, under Mr. T. Smalle, D.M., officer in charge. The senior officers of the Knights' present were Capt. O. G. Quin, K.M., and Mr. P. Heffernan, D.M., and Mr. A. J. Sexton, D.M.

Right Rev. Monsignor Moloney, P.P., V.F., Chairman of the Organising Committee, presided at the opening ceremony, which was followed with the keenest interest by the packed audience.

As a preliminary to the opening ceremony, Dr. Rafferty, Curator of the National Museum, presented the Ardagh Chalice to General Mulcahy, who, in his capacity as Minister for Education, is the nation's custodian for this very famous relic. The Minister formally handed the chalice to the Bishop who, in turn, gave it back to Dr. Rafferty, who placed it in a glass case for public view.

THE BISHOP

The Bishop then declared the exhibition open and speaking first in Irish, his Lordship thanked the Ministers of State for their attendance. Dr. Rafferty and Mr. T. McCreery (National Art Gallery) and all others who had helped to make the display the great success it was.

Speaking in English, the Bishop said that at any time an exhibition of ecclesiastical relics would be of great interest and value. It was, however, singularly appropriate that such an exhibition should be held during the Holy Year of Jubilee. During this year many people had been impelled to reflect, as perhaps they had never done before, on the life of the Church in every land under the sun. It would be good for all, while in that mood, to recall the history of the Church in their own land, as they could easily and readily do by a visit to the varied exhibition they had now in Limerick.

HISTORY UNDER THEIR EYES

Continuing, his Lordship alluded to some of the relics on view, and said that in the exhibition they had history under their eyes. In the marvellous craftsmanship of the Ardagh Chalice they may glimpse an age of glory, while in the pathetic pewter chalices and crude altar-furnishings of the penal times they may feel something of the misery of those dark days. The Kilmallock Chalice would remind them that there was once, in that town, a Collegiate Chapter devoted to the more solemn worship of God. The portrait of Bishop Young would recall the days when it was sought to obtain a Government veto on the appointment of Catholic Bishops.

From what is to be seen here, it was easy to pass to the thought of what had been lost forever. Those who come here will surely be stimulated to ensure that every object of historical value of which they may know, and every unrecorded particle of history will, for the future, be carefully preserved.

GENERAL MULCAHY

General Mulcahy said the Exhibition was a magnificent reminder to the people as a whole of the greatness of Ireland's past and the glorious inspired workmanship of the men of centuries ago. The church in which they stood, built in a critical time in Irish and world history, was filled with works of art and objects of veneration associated with the glorious days of the Faith. These objects had been constructed with few facilities but their workmanship was inspired by faith. The minds and hearts of the people who saw this exhibition must inevitably be turned to the spirit of those ancient days. Even if these of the present times lived in a stricken world, they lived in an Ireland free to devote itself to any work it chose free to develop its society as it chose and free to build up its civilisation.

Thousands of Irish people who made the Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome had looked upon the ancient churches of Italy and France with jealous eyes, wishing they could worship in the old Irish monasteries which now lay in ruins. Yet they should not be dejected about the destruction of their old churches and monasteries. The Ardagh Chalice alone should be sufficient to inspire the people. The craftsmanship which went into these relics of the past was not for the eye of man but for the abiding eye of God. These relics now served to link the people of today with the past. The Minister concluded by congratulating the people of Limerick on the work they were doing, particularly on the wonderful array of exhibits.

TALK ON THE ARDAGH CHALICE

Dr. Rafferty, curator of the National Museum, then gave a short talk on the Ardagh Chalice, describing its finding together with a bronze cup and four brooches, in a peat bog at Ardagh, County Limerick, in 1868 and describing its workmanship. The Minister for Local Government, speaking on behalf of the Committee, thanked His Lordship the Bishop for opening the exhibition.

The Exhibition will remain open until 3rd December.

FATAL FALL FROM BICYCLE

Stephen Lynch, labourer, aged 30, fell off his bicycle while cycling to his work at Pynchbowl, Meelick, on Saturday morning. He died soon afterwards. It is thought that he had a seizure. The deceased was employed on the construction of a bridge and had cycled three miles when he collapsed.

POSTAL

And The

CALL ON T

A T a mass meeting in the Limerick Branch of the Office Workers' Mechanics' Institute, presided over by Mr. R. Gloster, J. Curran, and J. O'Neill, it was decided to call on the Government to restore the postal service to the normal state.

The stabilising of the early emergency services and of living to end such increases up to the 29th kept step with the control over prices and the real cost of living. We call on the Government to make immediate demands for such restoration of the relative cost of living as the stabilisation. We further call on the Government to accept an as long as two matter is reviewed.

FRAUD

LONDON CO

John P. Connors, Agent, and Ethel Connolly, Lane, Woodthorpe, Limerick, were charged with Limerick book before the Court 5th, 1949, at 15 London, unlawfully to defraud obtain from the a sum of £105.

Both were al with a surety of Mr. Maxwell.

Directors of P said in the Court were seven charged, the conspiracy alleged between the 1950 to defraud of horse-racing, dealt with alleged three to obtain actually obtained people, by the racehorse named Valley, at Worcester.

Counsel said would not have run in the name "It is alleged," two defendants played their part of these fraud.

In the Supreme to-day, the heart Mr. Duggan's High Court's resolve a conditional habeas corpus.

BOOK C