



# CURTIN THROWS BOOK AT GARDA

■ Southill shotgun accused may face further charges after courtroom incident

By DAVID HURLEY

THERE were shocking scenes at Limerick District Court yesterday afternoon when a man accused of firearms offences hurled a book of evidence across the courtroom at a detective. The incident happened just seconds after Garda Paraig O'Dwyer, Roxboro Garda Station, had

solicitor John Devane to warn his client about his behaviour in court. Although Garda O'Dwyer was not injured, it is expected that Mr Curtin will face charges in relation to the incident. Christopher Curtin was one of three members of the same family who appeared before the court after they were previously charged in con-

nection with rounds of ammunition on the same date and his older brother, Christopher Curtin, is charged with possession of a semi-automatic shotgun and 13 rounds of ammunition with intent to endanger life on the date of the alleged shooting. Yesterday, when books of evidence were served on Eric Curtin and Paul Curtin both thanked

## New Thomond Park ready for the big kick-off



Ready for lift-off: An aerial view of the nearly completed Thomond Park taken this Tuesday ahead of the historic first match at the new stadium on Friday between Munster and Ulster Under 20s  
PICTURE: DERMOT LYNCH

# City Channel wins TV licence

By ALAN OWENS

LIMERICK is to feature as part of a new television channel following the decision by the Broadcasting Commission of

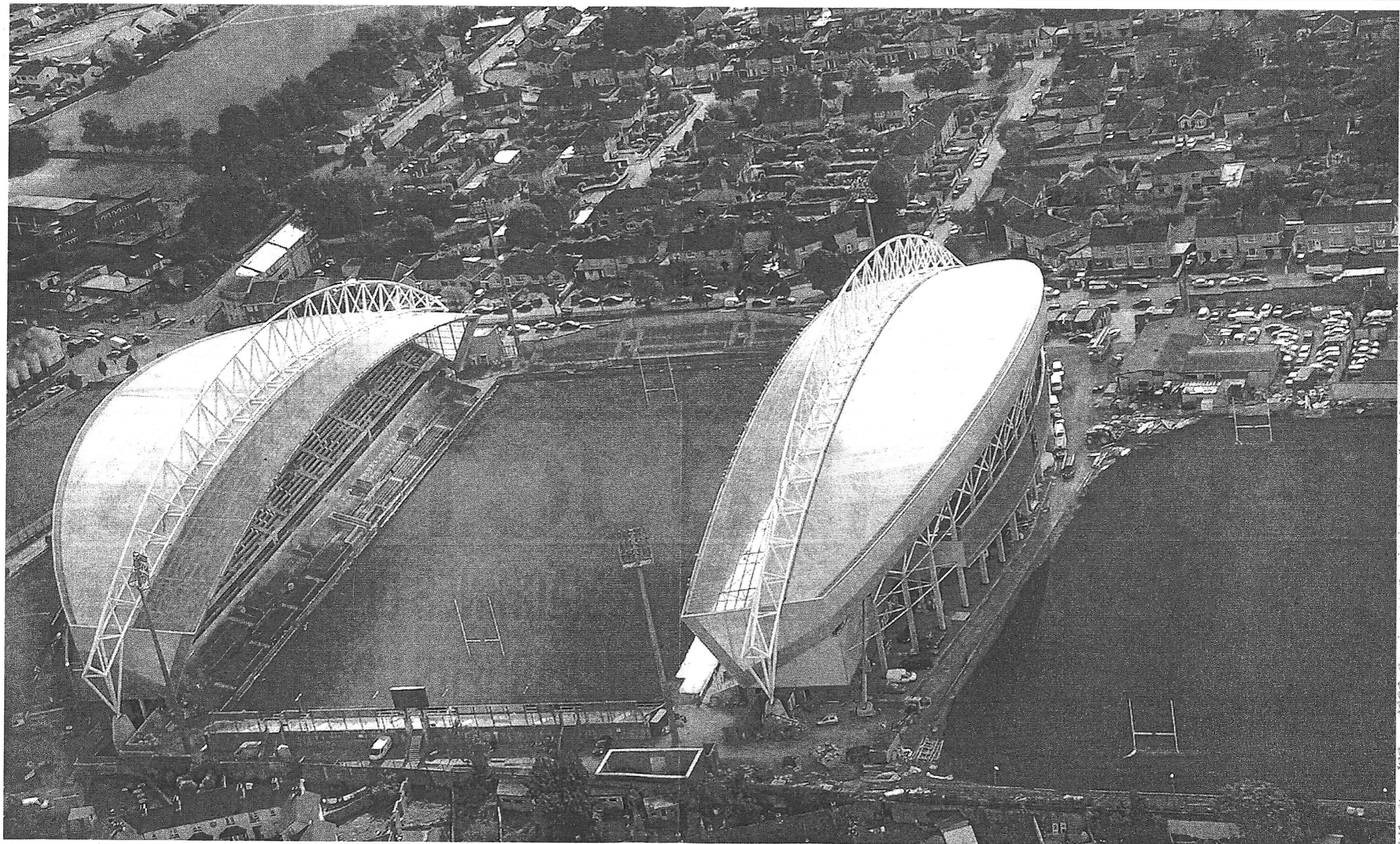
issues. "We are mostly confined to lifestyle programming as a rule but for this venture we are going to expand our offering to include news programmes on the hour and also a nightly half-hour show

"These things take time but we will be trying to use local sources and are hoping to build up a local presence in Limerick. We have an unusual schedule - what is called a chequerboard schedule - that allows us to drop stuff in as we

REV: AMERICK WEEKLY  
20TH SEPT, 2008 PAGE 1



# City's new crown jewel



Majestic sight: An aerial view of the nearly-completed Thomond Park taken this week ahead of the historic first match at the magnificent new stadium between Munster and Ulster Under-20s which kicks off at 7.30pm this Friday

PICTURES: DERMOT LYNCH

# Welcome to our stadium of dreams

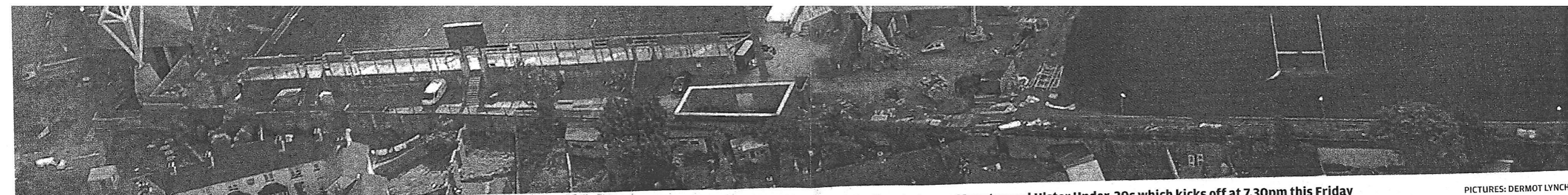
## THOMOND PARK

difficult. "To achieve every-  
thing without encroaching

The new stadium will  
have a capacity of 26,000







PICTURES: DERMOT LYNCH

Majestic sight: An aerial view of the nearly-completed Thomond Park taken this week ahead of the historic first match at the magnificent new stadium between Munster and Ulster Under-20s which kicks off at 7.30pm this Friday

# Welcome to our stadium of dreams

**THOMOND PARK**  
**David Hurley**

WITH just over a week to go to the reopening of Thomond Park, following its €40 million redevelopment, rugby fans are eagerly anticipating the first competitive match at the new stadium.

Although the state-of-the-art venue will host the under-20 clash between Munster and Ulster this Friday, the main focus is firmly on the Magners League match between Munster and Glasgow Warriors next weekend. The match, which is guaranteed to be a 26,000 sell-out takes place on Saturday, October 4, with a 7.30 kick off.

In advance of the historic occasion, which will also be televised on Setanta Sports, one of the key engineers behind the project delivered a unique insight into the design, planning and construction of the new landmark stadium.

Tom Cosgrove of Michael Punch and Partners said a number of restrictions were imposed on the developers, which made the job a bit more

difficult. "To achieve everything without encroaching onto the existing training pitch, without stepping onto the sacred turf of the main pitch and while maintaining the North, South and East terraces was physically a very difficult challenge and I think a key part of it was getting the land on the Knocklisheen side where the houses had to be purchased and demolished," he said.

Mr Cosgrove also explained that one of the key decisions was to build curved stands as opposed to stands running parallel to the sidelines.

"The fundamental options that were looked at were rectangular or curved. Whereas rectangular are easier to build the difficulty is that the end gables are enormous and they would have been overpowering really," he said.

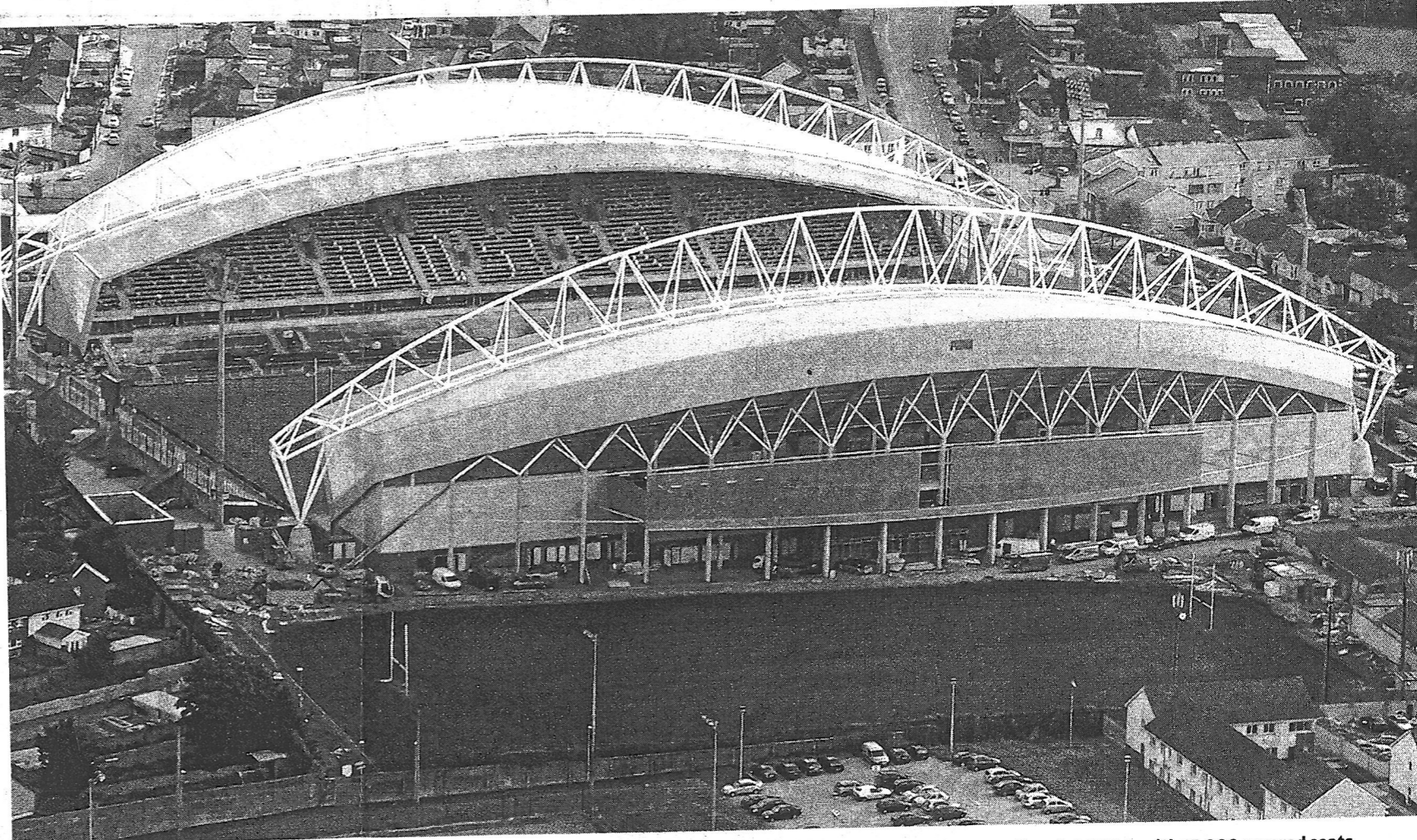
"The curved geometry has two huge advantages because it brings the roof down towards ground level and the other thing it does is it concentrates people towards the half way line so you get a much higher percentage of people with optimum viewing," he added.

The new stadium will have a capacity of 26,000 people, incorporating 15,000 covered seats but fans who choose to occupy the terraces will still be as close to the pitch as they were before the construction of the new stands.

Corporate hospitality will also be a major element at the new Thomond Park. Not only are there 15 corporate boxes but a number of different corporate packages will be available on match days.

Each of the packages include a pre-match speaker, a full drinks service in the main hospitality suite before and after games and the opportunity to socialise with players after the action on the pitch has finished.

"We are expecting significant demand for this hospitality especially the first game at Thomond Park against Glasgow Warriors on Saturday, October 4 and the first Heineken Cup game against Montauban on Friday October 10," said Elizabeth Hickey, customer service and events co-ordinator with the Thomond Park Stadium Company.



A different angle shows a view of the stands and some of the seats bearing the legend 'Munster'. The capacity of the new stadium is 26,000, with 15,000 covered seats

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# LEADER SPORT

MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2008

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## McGahan hopes Hayes will be fit

■ Munster's superb win over Leinster comes at a cost with John Hayes now an injury doubt

By AIDAN CORR

JOHN Hayes faces a race for fitness after injuring his right shoulder in the final stages of last night's emphatic win over Leinster at the RDS. The tight-head prop was in obvious pain as he left the field eight minutes before the end, but Munster coach Tony McGahan was confident this morning that the player will be available for next Saturday's Thomond Park opener against Glasgow in the Magners League.

Munster's victory over their keen rivals puts them top of the league table after four games and the performance of Keith Earls further strengthens his claim for inclusion in Declan Kidney's side for Ireland's opening game of the autumn internationals against Canada at Thomond Park on November 8.

Earls gave a faultless display, highlighted by a smart break and a popped pass that sent number eight Justin Melck away for Munster's first try. Defensively he showed maturity that belied his years and two clearances under pressure highlighted his all-round ability.

Earls, who celebrates his 21st birthday next Thursday, now looks almost certain to start in Munster's opening Heineken Cup Pool 1 game against Montauban in two weeks time.

These are heady days for Heineken Cup champions Munster, who remain unbeaten after six games, and with two home ties beckoning at their splendid new stadium, they could be heading off to play Sale with a huge amount of confidence.

The new stadium opened its doors for the first time last Friday night for the meeting of Munster and Ulster in their final game of the under-20 inter-provincial. It took 71 minutes to mark the occasion with a first score at the re-developed venue with Munster out-half Conor Murray kicking what proved to be the only score of an evenly-contested game.

Ulster fought bravely in the dying minutes and were denied a match-winning score by a knock-on.

This first game played on the newly-laid surface was a splendid spectacle for those lucky enough to



Flagging the future: an under-20 clash between Munster and Ulster opened the magnificent re-developed Thomond Park on Friday night. SP

get tickets for the game.

Many failed to gain admission with stadium officials sticking to their 'ticket only' rule and refusing to take money at the turnstiles.

Shannon lifted the Limerick Charity Cup on Saturday at Tom Clifford Park when they deservedly beat a disappointing Garryowen 27-9 in the final. On this performance neither side can be over-optimistic of another AIL title with the Light

Blues particularly weak in key areas.

The player drain from Dooradoyle at the end of last season is beginning to bite with the loss of Pat Humphreys, Donal Sheehan, Damien Varley, Peter Malone, Keith Earls, Eugene McGovern and JP Hartigan draining their resources. Garryowen appear to struggle in the front five and have been looking for a tight head prop from the English Premiership over the past few weeks,

but with Paul Neville, Conor Hartigan, Ronan O'Mahony and Conor Murray all expected to feature next weekend when they travel to play Clontarf in their opening AIL game, improvement is expected.

Shannon are running a bus to Dublin on Saturday for their AIL game against Blackrock College.

The bus leaves outside Thomond Park at 9.30am. Ring John Leahy (086 256 2730) or Des McInerney (087 830

5745) for details

Also next weekend Young Munster make the long trip to Ballymena, UL Bohs are at home to Galwegians while in division two Thomond travel to play Highfield, Old Crescent are at home to Wanderers and Bruff are away to Instonians.

In division three Nenagh Ormond will be hoping to get their campaign off to a winning start when they travel west to play Corinthians.

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## RUGBY CHARITY CUP

## Improved Shannon collect Charity Cup

FINAL	
Shannon	27
Garryowen	9

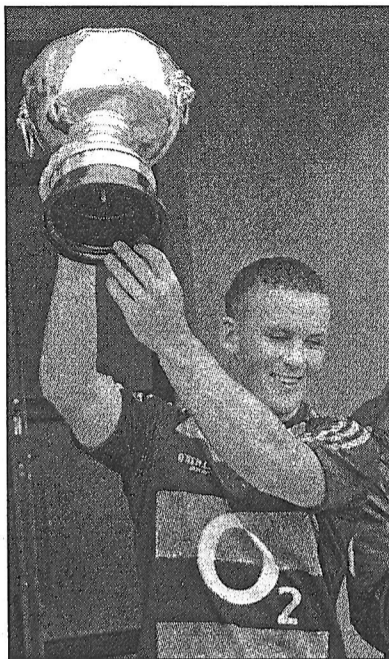
By AIDAN CORR

A WEEK can be a long time in Limerick rugby and Shannon showed considerable improvement from their Munster Cup exit at the hands of Cork Constitution seven days previous by lifting the first silverware of the season last Saturday in Tom Clifford Park.

They were by far the better side in a decider that was played in brilliant sunshine, on a perfect surface and before a sizeable attendance that contributed significantly to the kitty of this annual charity event.

Geoff Moylan re-shuffled his mid-field from the previous Saturday with Andrew Finn impressive in the centre and Marcus O'Driscoll moving to the left wing in place of Stephen Kelly.

Garryowen were disappointing. They struggled in the front five and are blatantly in need of at least one prop and a settled second-row partnership. Mark Melbourne and Frank



Fiach O'Loughlin (Shannon) lifts the Charity Cup in Tom Clifford Park on Saturday. Owen South

McKenna started well at four and five but as the game wore on and Shannon began to impose themselves up front, the light blues were in obvious trouble.

In fairness to Garryowen, they tried some neat running patterns through their threequarter line but while these may have looked promising on the training ground, they seldom looked like breaching the blanket defensive policy of Shannon.

Garryowen got two good penalty chances in the opening nine minutes. Willie Staunton missed both, sending the first wide of the left hand post and the second sailing the wrong side of the right hand upright from good positions. Ironically, Shannon got the first score on the board from their first serious attack, Tadhg Bennett landing his penalty from left of the posts and 35 metres out.

The Dooradoyle side responded well with Willie Staunton levelling matters with a well struck penalty on 16 minutes but after the referee had strong words with a Garryowen forward, Bennett kicked his side back into the lead at 6-3 with his second successful penalty with 23 minutes gone on the clock.

Matters got worse for Garryowen before the half time break. Lorcan Bourke made a good break to force a

fourth penalty chance for Staunton but again he sent his kick wide and on 34 minutes, they lost their captain Conan Doyle through injury. David Sherry then made a fine break only for the pass inside to go astray and right on the whistle Shannon edged 9-3 in front when Bennett tapped over a close-in penalty after a Garryowen indiscretion in front of the posts.

The light blues started the second half well with Kevin Hartigan breaking the tackle to offload to Kingsley but with the try line gaping a few metres in front of him the ball was knocked forward in the tackle.

Shannon lost Eoghan Grace to the sin-bin and Garryowen benefited from the advantage to land a Staunton penalty that left just three points between the sides at 9-6. Shannon responded with a clever

Mossie Lawler drop goal before Fergal Walsh settled the outcome breaking into space for the first try of the game, converted by Tad Bennett. Garryowen kept in touch with a penalty from Willie Staunton but that was to be their final score. Shannon defended well and although Garryowen showed good hands at times and ran the ball wide at every opportunity, they never looked like saving this final.

Shannon had the final say with Johnny O'Connor marking his appearance as a replacement to pace the cover for a fine individual try which Bennett again converted.

Both these sides are in Dublin next Saturday in the opening games of the AIB All-Ireland League and they will have to improve if they are to get to winning starts.

**Shannon:** M Lawler; D O'Donovan, A Finn, J Clogan, M O'Driscoll; T Bennett, F O'Loughlin, K O'Neill, J Cronin, G McNamara; P O'Brien, F Walsh; G Murphy, E Grace, D Quinlan. Replacements: S Hayes for Cronin, L Hogan for O'Neill, K Griffin for McNamara, F Broderick for O'Brien, J O'Connor for Quinlan, R Mullane for O'Donovan.

**Garryowen:** L Bourke; N O'Driscoll, K Hartigan, C Doyle, C O'Boyle; W Staunton, C O'Boyle; R Brosnan, K Buckley, B McNamara; F McKenna, M Melbourne; N Melbourne, A Kavanagh, D Sherry. Replacements: JM Griffin for Buckley, A Guiry for McNamara, B Paurini for McKenna, A Kingsley for Doyle, F Quagla for Hartigan, A O'Loughlin for Ciaran O'Boyle. Referee: Dermot Moloney, MAR.

## RUGBY UNDER-20 INTER-PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

## U20s open Thomond with three-point win

UNDER-20 INTER-PRO	
Munster	3
Ulster	0

By AIDAN CORR

IT took 71 minutes of this entertaining unofficial opening of the new stadium for Munster to break the deadlock and it proved to be the only score of what was a keenly-contested tie.

And Garryowen player Conor Murray had the distinction of scoring the first ever points at the iconic new home of Munster rugby, landing the kick from 38 metres.

It was no more than the home side deserved. They had dominated the opening half with number eight Peter O'Mahony stopped a few inches short after a super surge and it took a saving tackle from Ulster to prevent winger Mark Doyle from opening the scoring.

Munster had to defend in the early stages of the second half as Ulster began to get a better grip up front but a brilliant individual break from close to his own line by Conor Murray almost sent Finbarr Aherne clear before the home side eventually raised the first flags of the night. Good play by Brian Hayes gained good yards for the southern province, referee Eanna O'Dowd saw white hands in a ruck and Murray was on target with the crucial kick.

That score triggered an Ulster revival. They camped inside the Munster 22, creating a series of try chances in the dying minutes but the home defence held out for a narrow victory.

There were plenty of high standard individual performances from Munster on the night to generate hope for the future with full-back Ronan O'Mahony, second rows Brian Hayes and Darragh Frawley and number eight Peter O'Mahony outstanding.

**Munster:** Ronan O'Mahony; Mark Doyle, Danny Barnes, Michael Kelleher, Finbar Aherne; Conor Murray, Chris Nolan; Gavin Duffy, David Toomey, Felix Ross; Brian Hayes, Darragh Frawley; David O'Callaghan; Brian O'Hara, Peter O'Mahony. Replacements: Odhran Mulroony for Aherne 78, Ian Cross for Kelleher 63, Podge Hogan for David Toomey 53).

**Ulster:** Rickey Andrew; David McIlwaine, Johnny Sheils, David Funston, Kyle Fitzpatrick; Peter Henderson, Andrew Semple; Michael Crombie, David McGregor, Alan Whitten; Mark McDowell, Patrick McGowan; Gareth Hooks, Sean Dougal, Tom Patton. Replacements: Richard Reaney for Henderson 56, Fiyin Olysuade for Dougal 22. Referee: Eanna O'Dowd, IRFU.



Breaking new ground: the Munster and Ulster under-20s opened the newly-developed Thomond Park on Friday night. Owen South



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# Boy racers pose threat

Concern at late night drinking on banks of Shannon

By Marie Hobbins

BOY RACERS engaged in road races between Moyross and Parteen have been accused of showing scant regard for human life, by residents on Corbally Road and Athlunkard, who fear their irresponsible behaviour could result in tragedy.

It is also claimed that late night drinking sessions are taking place along the banks of the Shannon, leaving a trail of broken bottles and rubbish.

Following complaints, gardai are treating as a priority the issue of young motorists driving at excessive speed on the main Athlunkard Road between 8pm and 10pm, and also on the Longpavement road towards Parteen.

Deputy Jan O'Sullivan and Clare Cllr Pascal Fitzgerald recently raised the matter, as well as other security issues in the Corbally area, with members of the local Garda Traffic Corps.

Speaking to the Limerick Post, the councillor said:

"Boy racers are engaging in road

races between Moyross and Parteen to see who arrives at a particular destination the quickest - we have some vehicles travelling at a frightening speed on the main Athlunkard Road, and I'm calling for a clamp-down on all motorists who are driving with excessive speed in the area, as it's simply an accident waiting to happen. And if no effective action is taken and a serious incident does take place on one of our roads, it will be too late at that stage.

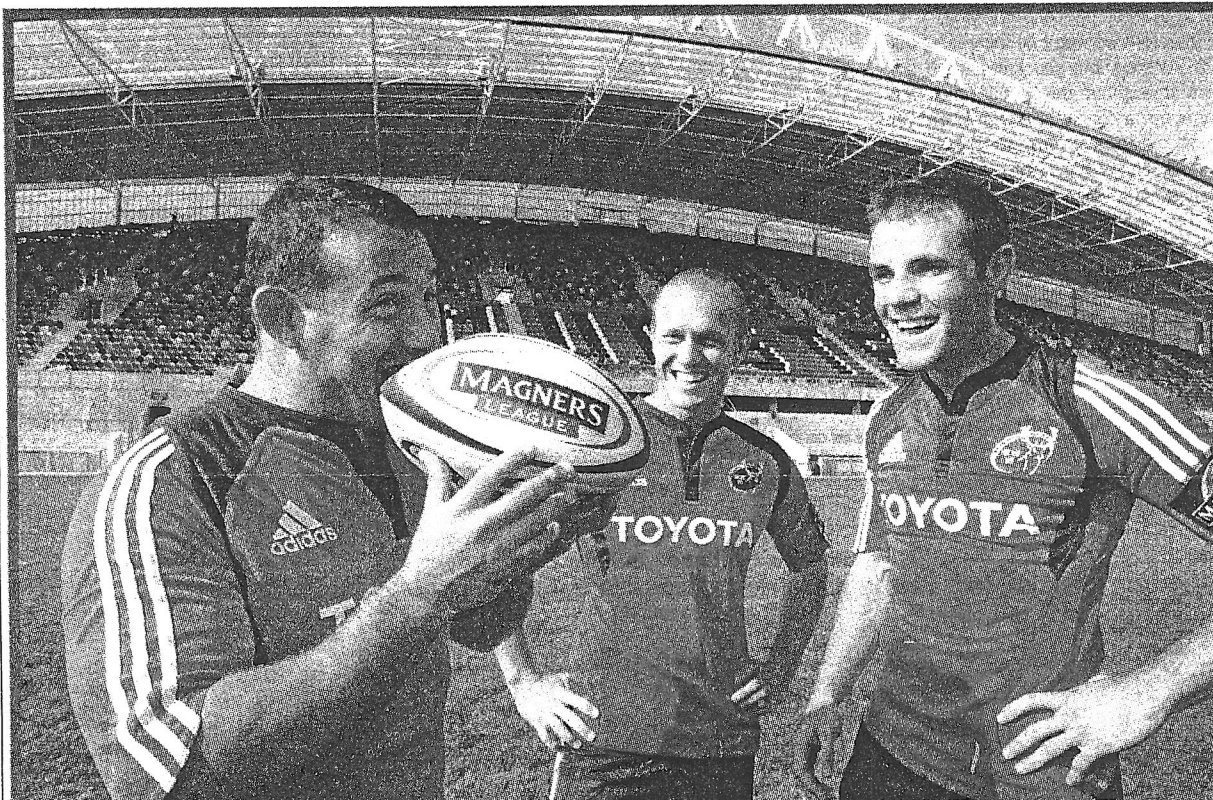
"There are a lot of children living in the Corbally-Westbury area and we must protect their safety. Motorists going about their business have also expressed their fears.

"This comes down again to having adequate resources for policing in the area, which Deputy O'Sullivan and I have been raising on a regular basis".

Another source of concern to the Corbally residents centres on alleged late night drinking along the banks of the Shannon.

"I've received phone calls from irate local people in the early hours

Continued on page 4.



Pictured with team mates Paul Warwick and Barry Murphy, Munster prop Federico Puccianiello, can't wait to get his teeth into this Saturday's match against Glasgow Warriors, the first Magners League game of the season at the newly refurbished Thomond Park.

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## Theatre of dreams becomes reality

By Andrew Carey

A MAGNIFICENT feat in engineering skills, that's Limerick's Theatre of Dreams, Thomond Park, which will be unveiled before the eyes of an expected record 20,500 rugby fans this weekend when Heineken Cup champions Munster pit their skills against Glasgow Warriors, in the Magners League.

Towering over the city's northside, the new-look Thomond Park presents a very impressive sight and is viewed as a most welcome addition to the sporting and cultural life of the Mid West.

With a budget of close to 40 million euro, the new 26,000 capacity stadium replaces the former 13,000 capacity arena and was delivered on time by Hegarty Contractors, exactly 20 months after site clearance commenced.

A spokesperson for the Munster Branch of the IRFU expressed delight that the stadium came in on budget.

Expectations are high for the success of this stadium and Thomond Park will be much more than a rugby venue. The Limerick Post is aware

Continued on page 4.

### weather



COLDER weather and some heavy spells of rain are forecast for the days ahead.

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the news on... who will be using revolutionary new technology to create renewable fuels from waste material which would have been destined for landfill.

CEO of Re3, Prof Debbie Boyd, believes Limerick is the best location to showcase this new technology, which will surely catch on all over the world.

This will arguably put Limerick at the forefront of the environmental issue in Ireland, something Pat Stephens, of the Limerick Clare Energy Agency, is already convinced of (see page 27).

So it is positive to see - at a time when Michael Dell may be turning his back on the skilled workforce that made his Raheen plant the jewel in the Dell crown - that companies of this technological magnitude have faith in the skills of the people of Limerick, and have no doubts that it is the best location to exclusively launch and develop their new products.

## 250 jobs boost for Limerick

IT WAS good news on the job front this week, with two companies, Cook Medical and Re3, announcing that they will be creating 250 jobs in Limerick, culminating in a 40m euro investment into the region.

Tánaiste Mary Coughlan made the announcement on Tuesday at the National Technological Park that Cook Medical would be investing 25m euro into its Plassey plant, with the creation of 200 jobs over the next five years.

The investment means Limerick will become the only manufacturer of the company's new product to treat peripheral arterial disease.

Minister Peter Power TD welcomed the move, saying: "In the current environment, it is very positive that Limerick and the country continues to concentrate on securing these high-value jobs as we work to make Ireland a knowledge based economy.

"Our high-skilled and adaptable work force is the key to our success, and today's announcement is another example of what it can deliver".

## Diary Dates

### THURSDAY 2

CONTACT Rape Crisis Mid-West for Sunday October 5th mini marathon at UL for sponsor cards.

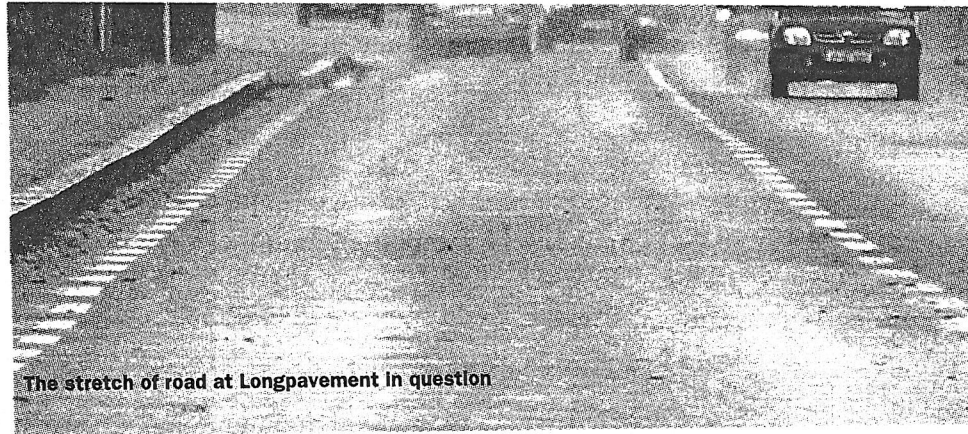
**MASS for Pro-life at Reparation Convent, 7.30pm, Laurel Hill Avenue. 1st Thursdays**

DOWN Syndrome Centre, 2 The Park, Castletroy hosts information night with Winston, of China Dragon International Travel, Beijing, 7.30pm. Chinese holiday tours that benefit DSL.

### FRIDAY 3

**POLISH-Irish Encounters in the New and Old Europe, free conference Mary Immac. Coll with 6pm performance by Tailteann.**

REQUIEM for a Factory launched by Dr Jacek



The stretch of road at Longpavement in question

# Theatre of dreams becomes reality

Continued from page 1.

that a leading Irish concert promoter inspected the ground last week and, according to sources, was suitably impressed with the acoustics and the option to host some 45,000 concert goers.

There is also a strong possibility that Limerick 37 will investigate the possibilities of using the venue to attract clubs such as Sunderland and Glasgow Celtic as a means of raising funds.

However, if pop concerts were to be staged at the

ground it would require the permission of the local authorities, gardai and residents in the area.

Several social and corporate events have already been pencilled in.

While the attendance has been slightly curtailed for the visit of Glasgow Warriors, it will be all systems go on Friday week when Munster open their defence of the Heineken Cup against cup newcomers Montauban, with a sell-out 26,000 guaranteed.

When plans for the new

Thomond Park were first announced, many thought it a mere pipe dream. Now it has become a reality, and the Limerick Post salutes all concerned in the venture.

\*See sports pages 67-74.

## Unlocked car easy target

**THE owner of a car had been shopping in Dunnes Stores on Childers Road on Friday last, when she returned to the car park at around 11.30pm to discover a number of items missing from the vehicle, including a mobile phone, a Panasonic camera, wallet, a small sum of cash and a driving license.**

**A garda source stated that the car had been left unlocked and it would appear that three females were involved in the theft.**

People, a composition for voice, live electronics and kitchen appliances by Dorota Koncsewska and An Alsatian Ate My Dog, a composition for bass clarinet by Karen Power.

Requiem for a Factory by Dr Jacek P Rosa of the Polish embassy in Dublin, features photographs of disappearing industrial landscapes in Poland by Dorota Koncsewska and runs until October 10 in Tailteann, Mary Immaculate College. Further information from [www.polishirishencounters.mic.ul.ie](http://www.polishirishencounters.mic.ul.ie)

## First aid courses

COUNTLESS people are fearful of being the first one on the scene of an accident, not knowing what to do and unaware that the simplest actions can save someone's life.

In response to public demand, practical first aid courses are being offered by Limerick Red Cross up to October 23. This is a five-week course where members of the public are taught a wide variety of skills to deal with an emergency situation.

People who have already completed a basic or occupational first aid course in the last three years can apply for the intermediate first aid class.

For more information, contact 061 318580.

Rosa of Dublin's Polish Embassy 5.30pm at Mary Immac., photographs by Dorota Koncsewska. Until 10th.

**HOLY Hour with the Franciscan Friars of Renewal at Moyross, first Fridays 7.30pm. Corpus Christi Church;**

OVEREATERS Anonymous meets weekly 8pm at Social Services Centre, Henry St.

### SATURDAY 4

**LIMERICK Toastmasters offers proven way to improve communication, listening skills. 25th anniversary Greenhills Hotel 8pm, open to public. <http://limerick.freetoasthost.ws>**

LWA leads 11.15am Cratloe Woods 6m walk, meet Meelick Gate 11.30. Woodfield House Hotel

11.45am for 3m.

### SUNDAY 5

**IRISH Heart Foundation has organised 5 walks in Limerick: UL, 11.30am.**

### MONDAY 6

THOMOND Archaeological & Historical Society hosts lecture by Dr Una Ni Bhroimeil at Mary Immac. Coll. on The Catalpa Rescue. 8pm.

**EATING disorder support group meets weekly 6.30-8.30pm, Pastoral Centre, Denmark St.**

TALK on Understanding Trauma and the Impact of Traumatic Death, marking World Mental Health Day, at Devon Inn Hotel, Templeglantine, 7.30pm. Psychologist Gerard Dore.

BRI, support & advocacy group for people with

Acquired Brain Injury, meets 11am Pastoral Centre, Denmark St.

**LIMERICK Toastmasters leadership and communication skills, 8pm at Pery Hotel, Glenthworth St.**

### TUESDAY 7

WORD of Mouse Marketing: Building Brand and Attracting More Profits To Your Business. Free day hosted by Limerick Co. Enterprise Board at Castletroy Park Hotel,

### WEDNESDAY 8

**GUNA Nua Theatre & Plan B Productions present Unravelling the Ribbon, play on how breast cancer impacts. 8pm, 2 nights Belltable.**



Aidan Corr

## Rugby Round-Up



## Saturday will be laden with nostalgia

**T**HE new-look Thomond Park opens its doors to a new era this Saturday night when Glasgow visit for a Magners League fixture that will be laden with nostalgia.

First opened in 1937, the first try scored there is credited to 'Flutey' Fitzgerald, a tearaway Young Munster under-20 flanker who got the historic touchdown during a midweek game at the new venue. Now the name Conor Murray can be added to the annals of the famous ground after his 71st minute penalty kick for Munster under-20s last Friday night became the first score at the newly-developed stadium.

'Flutey' Fitzgerald's achievement has never been contested and came from no less a rugby liminary than the late Richmond legend Paddy 'Whacker' Daly. That was during an era of Limerick rugby when local club rivalry surpassed anything in present-day sport. It was not unknown for patrons entering a certain pub on the Yellow Road to be met by a miniature coffin flanked by two lighted candles when Garryowen defeated Young Munster in the Munster Senior Cup. It was an era of fun and banter that will be forever buried by progress.

## Sunday at the RDS

It would be interesting to learn what new Irish coach Declan Kidney took from last Sunday's game at the RDS.

The most outstanding players on view were imports with no Irish qualifications and Howlett, Mafi and Tipoki in particular were a class apart.

Mafi is like a slippery eel and made decent ground at every touch, Tipoki is of the quality that Ireland sadly miss at outside centre and Howlett's reading of the game and blinding pace make him a constant threat.

Eight years since his Ireland debut, Ronan O'Gara remains head and shoulders above everybody else in the number ten shirt on this island.

Jeremy Staunton impressed for his club Wasps last weekend and that should move him into contention for a possible second cap this season.

He probably needs more consistency but given the lack of out-half quality around at present could put pressure on Paddy Wallace. Last Sunday was the perfect opportunity for Jonny Sexton to shine, but the



Flagging the future: the Munster and Ulster under-20s played the first competitive game at the re-developed Thomond Park. **DERMOT LYNCH**

youngster did not show enough flair despite a decent supply of good ball from his pack. To be cruelly honest, he was light years off O'Gara's standard and Kidney will not have any problems naming his half-back pairing for the opening November test against Canada.

Other positions may not be as easy for the new boss to fill and when you scan through what is available it now looks almost certain that, barring injury, Keith Earls will win his first cap before the end of the year. To get the full-back berth he will have to fight off the challenges of Girvan Dempsey, Geordan Murphy and Rob Kearney and that is where Decie will feel the pressure. The Canada game provides the best option if Earls is to break into the big time and were he to sparkle in that one, there would be sufficient support for

further caps against the All Blacks and the Pumas.

## Geared for victory

It never ceases to amaze me how Munster can click into playing at a level of rugby that is totally geared for victory.

Twice last season, away to Gloucester in Kingsholm and Saracens in the Ricoh Arena, they stepped up their play sufficiently to get the necessary victories.

Last Sunday in the RDS it was a similar approach: totally focused, intelligent slowing down of the game at crucial periods to frustrate the opposition and as good a defensive display as you would see at any level of rugby on this planet.

After that it was the patient approach. Build, edge forward, nothing rushed or fancy, vary the play between the pack and

**Totally focused, intelligent slowing down of the game at crucial periods to frustrate the opposition and as good a defensive display as you would see at any level of rugby on this planet**

the backline and wait for the scoring chances.

The areas that will have disappointed Tony McGahan will be the early lineouts, four of which they managed to mess up, and their failure to hammer home their first half advantage after owning the ball for lengthy periods.

Those will be addressed in detail this week and will be rectified before Montauban visit on October 10.

The Ireland boss will now have to wait until the second series of pool games are completed to get his squad together but by then he should have a good idea of what his best starting line-up should be.

## O'Connell as captain

There is little doubt who is captain will be and it would be a major surprise if Paul O'Con-

nell does not lead out the international side this season.

Once again Ireland's front-five looks like picking itself with Horan, Flannery, Hayes, O'Connell and O'Callaghan unlikely to be pushed.

Wallace was again brilliant against Leinster and if Leamy is fit should join Heaslip in the back-row. O'Gara and Reddan will remain first choice at nine and ten but there is growing concern about the current form of Brian O'Driscoll.

There is no denying that Drico is the best outside centre of the present era but on the evidence of last Sunday, he is far from his best.

The aggression is missing, the spring in the step is gone and when you realise that it is now eight years since he set Irish rugby aflame with his hat-trick of tries on a sunny Saturday in Stade de France in Paris, we probably have seen the best of this iconic figure.

Even relieving him of the Leinster captaincy has not put the zip back in the step of the great man and O'Driscoll's lack of form is a big blow to Irish rugby. What is left in the pot is not fully cooked and Declan Kidney has an unenviable task to craft a back five that would give Ireland the edge in mid-field as well as provide solid defence.

## Changing times

This is a time of change for Irish rugby and a visit to see progress at Lansdowne Road last Sunday made the heart beat a bit faster.

Like Thomond Park, the Dublin headquarters is going to provide a superb venue for international rugby.

Putting together a team to match that progress is the challenge that faces the IRFU and the omens at present are not encouraging.

Last week-end in the Magners League, Leinster, Ulster and Connacht failed to score and between them leaked 11 points. That is incredible and must have made interesting reading for those who put forward the 'Plan to Build on Success of First Strategic Plan' last week.

Setting targets are good, but achieving them are another matter. Semi-final of the World Cup 2011, two provinces in the semi-finals of the Heineken Cup during the next four seasons? Let's wait and see.

## AIB Cup

ALL of the region's competing teams in the opening round of the AIB Cup advanced last Saturday with wins for Bruff, Thomond, Old Crescent and Nenagh Ormond.

Old Crescent defeated DLSP 25-21 at Rosbrien having led 15-11 at the break. Crescent had tries from Mark Ryan 2 and a try each from Keith Ellis and Aaron Carroll. JP Hartigan kicked a penalty and a conversion.

At Kilballyowen, Bruff eased into round

two with a 29-10 win over Clonakilty. Scorers for Bruff were tries from Peter Malone, Brian Cahill, Martin O'Rourke and John Moore. New Zealander Dave Mawe added a penalty and three conversions.

Thomond had a surprise but deserved win in Dublin. They defeated Wanderers 27-9 with tries by Declan Cusack, Mark Cosgrave and Darragh O'Neill while Cusack also contributed two penalties and three

conversions. Former Shannon out-half Niall McNamara kicked all Wanderers points.

Nenagh Ormond kept up their good form with a great victory at home over Lansdowne. New signing David Delaney again made his mark and proved to be Ormond's match-winner, kicking three penalties

AIB Cup Results: Ards 34 Suttonians 10, Bective Rangers 13 Corinthians 8, Belfast

Harlequins 30 Banbridge 9, Bruff 29 Clonakilty 10, Highfield 13 Sunday's Well 6, Instonians 17 Rainey Old Boys 28, Malone Queen's University 7, Midleton 20 Old Wesley 24, Naas 20 Ballynahinch 41, Nenagh Ormond 9 Lansdowne 5, Old Crescent 25 DLSP 21, UCC 26 Greystones 9, Wanderers Thomond 27, Waterpark 16 Portadown 29 Connemara 14 Barnhall 17, Dublin University 10 Co. Carlow 29.



## Aidan Corr

## Rugby Round-Up



## Thomond Park is now a truly iconic venue

**T**HERE was a lump in my throat last Saturday night.

This was the Thomond Park that I was reared on, where my father brought me almost every Saturday afternoon to watch his favourites, Bohemians, play and my aunts stamped their rug covered legs on the steps of the old wooden stand shouting 'feet Garryowen' as the Light Blue forwards marauded mercilessly towards the opposing try line.

Days when the quality populated the stand side and the six penny side was the domain of the working classes.

My mother christened the Thomondgate venue 'Pneumonia Park'. It was an accurate description of a ground that was angled to catch the full belt of the 'north westerlies' as they raged in from the Ballynanty end and the bitterly cold 'easterlies' that picked out the weaker souls on the terraces as they blew in over the newly-built Mayorstone estate.

For almost four decades we went to Thomond Park on a Saturday and the Markets Field on a Sunday.

There was no demarcation, no snobbery: soccer and rugby went hand-in-hand in this sports-mad city and in pre-television days there was an insatiable appetite for live sporting entertainment.

The 50s saw friendly visits from some of the leading clubs in world rugby, such as Racing Club de Paris who played Garryowen at Limerick's rugby headquarters and Limerick AFC used the venue for important cup matches.

Little were we to know then that Munster rugby would become the undisputed kings of Europe after we had turned into a new millennium and this elevated site would be transformed into its current iconic structure.

### Revived old memories

Walking towards the new stadium in the rain last Saturday night revived those early mem-



Glenn Quinn, president of Old Crescent RFC, pictured making a presentation to Aidan Corr to mark his retirement after 20 years as rugby correspondent of the Limerick Leader at the pre-match lunch in Rosbrien last Saturday afternoon. Aidan retired from the Limerick Leader this week.

ories. Turning around the corner that hugs King John's ancient castle, the fully-lit new Thomond Park came into view and my heartbeat increased.

The experience was surreal and as I emerged from the concrete steps that led me to my seat in the West Stand, a deep intake of breath was required before the full splendour of this magnificent home of Munster rugby sunk in.

Thomond Park had come the full circle from a once damp, dreary, unhealthy venue to a 26,000 capacity stadium that can match any of its size in the world and will further enhance Limerick as the sporting capital of Ireland.

Thirty years almost to the day, Munster will entertain the All Blacks at the famed local

ground on November 18, but already, forces outside of Munster's control have conspired to undervalue the fixture.

With the IRB deciding to use the November tests for World Cup 2011 rankings the internationals against Canada (Thomond Park, Nov. 8, 5.15), New Zealand (Croke Park, Nov. 15, 5.15) and Argentina (Nov. 22, 2.45) have taken on a more serious nature.

Ireland need to win at least two out of the three and run New Zealand close enough to gain Brownie points at least.

The view appears to be that Munster, the only Irish side to beat the All Blacks, have had their day.

Now it appears that the IRFU will pull out all the stops to record an equally momen-

tous Ireland victory at Croke.

### McGahan's major problem

Losing most of their first choice pack for the November 18 tie, as well as O'Gara, possibly Earls and at least one of their two first choice scrum-halves, creates a major problem for Tony McGahan.

But for those who will get the opportunity to play in one of the biggest games in Limerick for over three decades it will be the highlight of their careers and the strength of the current Munster squad will be exposed to the acid test.

All eyes will be on Declan Kidney's squad which is expected to be announced at the end of this month.

With Neil Best suspended,

there could be a recall for Alan Quinlan while the inclusion of Mick O'Driscoll cannot be ruled out.

The way Frankie Sheahan is playing at present, he too could get the call and if O'Connell, O'Callaghan and O'Driscoll were all ruled out by international duty, it is not outlandish to suggest that Munster may have to draft in a guest second-row for the Blacks match.

Interestingly, bookmakers have been reluctant to offer odds on Munster's chances of a second Limerick victory over the Kiwis.

Almost every other rugby competition has been quoted, but the odds on a Munster victory on November 18 will be high.

Ladbrokes were offering 17-1 on Munster winning both the Magners League and the Heineken Cup this week.

Unbeaten so far this season with five straight victories in the league, McGahan's side continues to be the bookies' favourites and with Leinster losing to Connacht last Sunday, odds on the southern province winning the league title have shortened from 7-4 to 5-4.

### Connacht's win

Connacht's win over Leinster in Galway last Sunday shows how unpredictable this Magners League has become.

A week earlier they were beaten by over 50 points by Cardiff, failing to register even a single score.

Nine days later they add to Michael Cheika's woes with a performance that was taken straight out of the old Munster handbook.

The western province may continue to struggle, but they continue to give youth its fling with Fionn Carr, who was outstanding for Blackrock last season in the AIL, and Ian Keatley showing against Leinster that they are capable of competing against the best on this island.

Keatley in particular looks a neat out-half and looks like joining the list of 'O'Gara suc-

Walking towards the new stadium in the rain last Saturday night revived those early memories. Turning around the corner that hugs King John's ancient castle, the fully-lit new Thomond Park came into view and my heartbeat increased.

cessor' hopefuls that already includes Jonny Sexton, Jeremy Manning, Ian Humphreys and Paddy Wallace.

Now Keatley needs to step up to the plate with consistent performances in the European Challenge Cup and Magners League games outside of the Sportsground.

## Rugby Fixtures

### Friday, October 10

Heineken Cup  
Munster v Montauban, Thomond Park 8.00

### Saturday, October 11

**AIL Division 1**  
Garryowen v Blackrock, Dooradoyle 2.30  
Shannon v Buccaneers, Coonagh 2.30  
Young Munster v Old Belvedere, Tom Clifford Pk 2.30  
**AIL Division 2**  
Bruff v Thomond, Bruff 2.30  
Old Crescent v Dublin University, Rosbrien 2.30  
**AIL Division 3**  
Nenagh Ormond v Co. Carlow, Nenagh 2.30  
**North Munster Under-20 League**  
Richmond v Young Munster, Richmond Park 1.00  
**Gleeson League**  
Abbeyfeale v Thurles, Abbeyfeale 4.30  
Young Munster v UL Bohemian, Derryknockane 12.30  
**Junior 2 Friendly**  
St. Mary's v Old Crescent, Corbally 1.00  
Thomond v Shannon, Fitzgerald Park 12.00  
St. Senan's v Garryowen, Jim Slattery Park 2.30  
**Under-20 Friendly**

Garryowen v UCC, Dooradoyle 12.00  
Nenagh Ormond v Shannon, Nenagh 12.00  
Bruff v Old Crescent, Bruff 5.30

**Under-13 Friendly**  
Garryowen v Glenstal, Dooradoyle 12.15  
**Under-15 Friendly**  
Garryowen v Connecticut, Dooradoyle 4.30  
**Under-16 Friendly**  
Ennis v Roscrea, Lee's Road 2.30  
**Senior Schools**  
St. Munchin's v Glenstal, St. Munchin's 2.30  
Glenstal v Castletroy, Dooradoyle 2.30  
**Junior Schools**  
St. Munchin's v Glenstal, St. Munchin's 2.30  
Glenstal v Castletroy, Dooradoyle 2.30

### Sunday, October 12

**AIL Division 1**  
Dolphin v UL Bohemian, Musgrave Park 2.30  
**Junior League Division 1**  
Bandon v Cashel, Bandon 2.30  
Richmond v Kilfeacle, Richmond Park 2.30  
Thurles v Crosshaven, Thurles 2.30  
Tralee v Newport, Tralee 2.30

Abbeyfeale v Charleville, Abbeyfeale 2.30  
Ennis v Muskerry, Ennis 2.30  
Mallow v St. Senan's, Mallow 2.30  
Newcastle West v Clanwilliam, Newcastle West 2.30  
**Junior League Division 3**  
Kilrush v St. Mary's, Kilrush 2.30  
Presentation v Scariff, Rathuard 2.30  
Galbally v Douglas, Galbally 2.30  
**Senior League Division 1**  
Bruff v Highfield, Bruff 2.30  
Garryowen v Young Munster, Dooradoyle 2.30  
**Senior League Division 2**  
Thomond v Old Crescent, Fitzgerald Park 2.30  
**Evans League**  
Clonmel v Kilfeacle, Clonmel 2.30  
Waterford City v Clanwilliam, Waterford 2.30  
**Junior 1 Friendly**  
Nenagh Ormond v Shannon, Nenagh 2.30  
**Womens AIL**  
UL Bohemian v Clonmel, Annacotty 2.00  
Kinsale v Nenagh Ormond, Kinsale 2.30  
Shannon v Tralee, Coonagh 2.30  
Youghal v Young Munster, Youghal 2.30  
**Under-13 League**

Thomond v Bruff, Fitzgerald Park 11.30

**Under-15 League**  
Richmond v St. Senan's, Canal Bank 11.30  
Ennis v St. Mary's, Lee's Road 12.00  
Old Crescent v Ballina/Killaloe, Rosbrien 11.00  
Newcastle West v Shannon, Newcastle West 12.00  
UL Boh's v Young Munster, Annacotty 11.30  
**Under-18 League**  
Bruff v Young Munster, Bruff 11.30  
Kilrush v UL Boh's, Kilrush 11.30  
St. Mary's v Shannon, Corbally 11.30  
Ennis v St. Senan's, Lee's Road 11.00  
Garryowen v Richmond, Dooradoyle 11.30  
Old Crescent v Newcastle West, Rosbrien 12.15

### Wednesday, October 15

**Bowen Shield**  
Bandon v Rockwell, Bandon 2.30  
PBC v Glenstal, Cork 2.30  
St. Munchin's v Crescent College, St. Munchin's 2.30  
**Under-14 Schools**  
Bandon v Rockwell, Bandon 2.30  
PBC v Glenstal, Cork 2.30  
St. Munchin's v Crescent College, St. Munchin's 2.30



## RUGBY THOMOND PARK

## Tierney - king of all he surveys

Gerard Tierney describes Thomond Park as the 'pinnacle' of his professional career. He spoke to **Colm Kinsella**

**G**ERARD Tierney stands proudly at the back of the iconic new East Stand at Thomond Park Stadium, king of all he surveys.

Tierney gazes over the multi-coloured seats, across the freshly laid lush pitch beneath and his eyes catch a glimpse of the 150-metre long, 134-tonne rainbow-shaped truss which dominates the roof structure of the West Stand. He reveals that the past 18 months, working on the €40 million Thomond Park re-development project, have represented the 'pinnacle' of his professional career. This Friday night the new-look stadium will host a capacity 26,000 attendance for the first time as Munster open the defence of the Heineken Cup against competition new-boys Montauban.

The scene at Thomond Park will be a far cry from the modest one which greeted Gerard Tierney 30 odd years ago as he lined out for Bohemians RFC in U-20 league and Cup games.

### A second home

Since the spring of 2007, Thomond Park and its impressive tubular arches has become a second home for Tierney.

An employee of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors, PJ Hegarty & Sons, the main contractors for the stadium project, Gerard Tierney diligently worked as contracts managers with responsibility for the overall project. During the course of the re-development work, the number of people working at the site rose to as many as 400, while the numbers averaged out at closer to 300 during the construction phase itself.

The new stadium is built on solid foundations, those involved in the project eager to ensure that the link with the past is maintained.

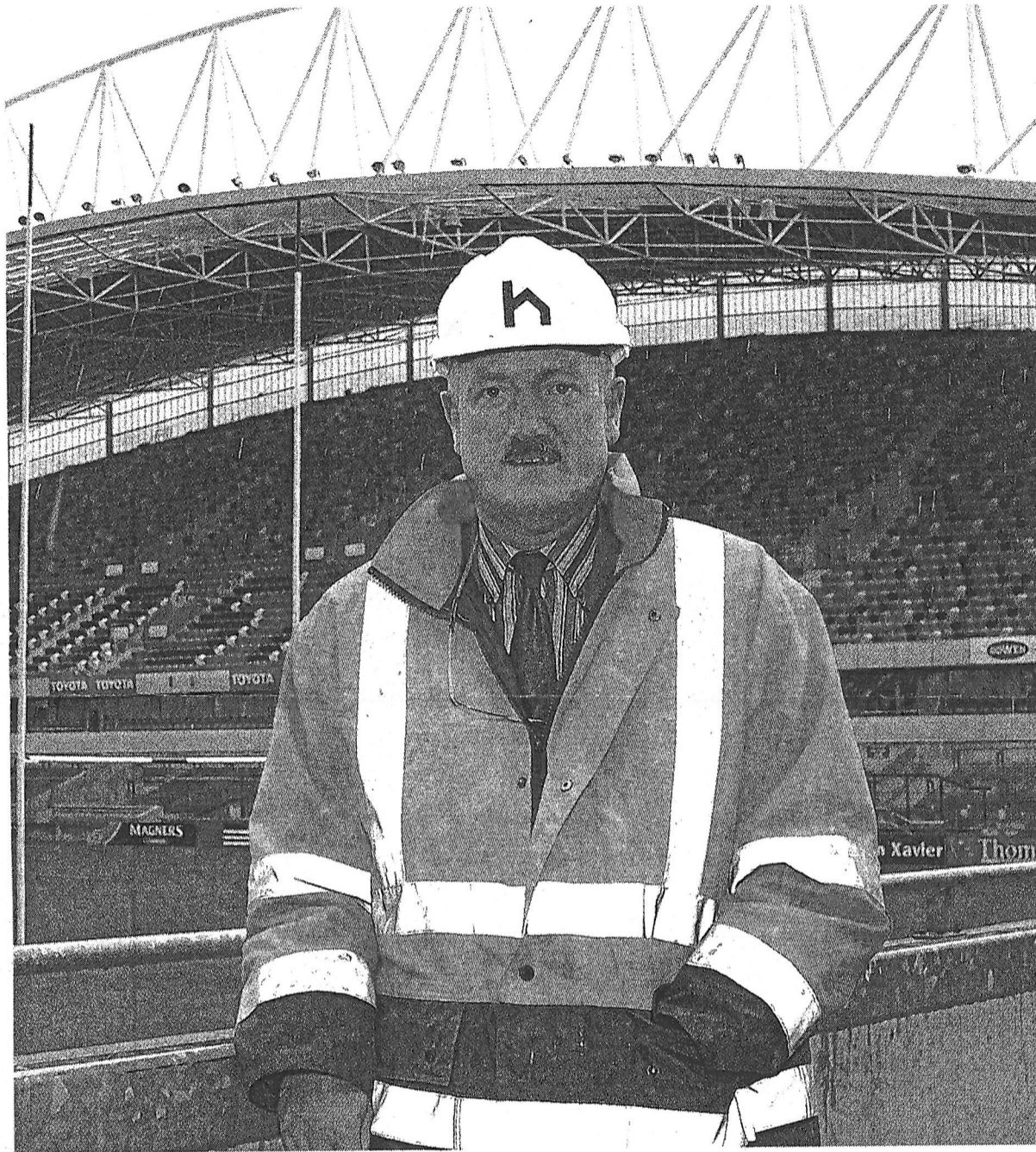
A portion of suitable rubble from the demolished 'old' Thomond Park and adjoining houses at Knocknalisheen has been used in the construction of the new venue. A portion of the rubble was crushed on site and used for temporary roadways to assist in the construction process.

The dominant feature of the new-look stadium are the East and West Stands, which are visible for several miles around.

The impressive trusses used in the stands were supplied by West Limerick-based Foynes Engineering.

"The trusses were fabricated in their workshop. They were transported from Foynes to here at night time," Gerard Tierney explained.

"The transportation of the two main rainbow trusses was done in 25-metre sections and carried out under



Gerard Tierney: "The atmosphere will be every bit as good as old days."

OWEN SOUTH

licence. While the main roof trusses weigh 134 tonnes each, the smaller ones weigh between two and six tonnes each. Both main trusses were assembled fully at the back of the stands.

"That was done to ensure that when they were lifted into position that they fitted perfectly into place.

"That was a great engineering feat. It all had to knit together to be able to carry the stand roof.

"They were then split into three units and lifted into position. The centre section was done first and then

either end. It was a five-day operation where we initially scheduled on our best efforts. We felt it would take three weeks, a week for the centre and each of the two ends. The East side was completed first. When the main truss was up it was tied off and then the secondary trusses were put in place. It was a substantial contract for Foynes Engineering.

"Assembly started in August 2007 on East Stand side. That ran through until March and April of this year.

"It was intricate enough." The new-look stadium was

designed by Murray O'Laoire Architects and UK-based Stadia Architects, AFL, which has completed new stadia, or stadia redevelopments at Premiership soccer giants Chelsea, Everton and Blackburn Rovers.

### Pitch was never walked on

One of the requirements laid out in PJ Hegarty's contract with the Thomond Park Stadium Company Limited, the development company for the project, was that during the construction phase, the venue needed to be avail-

able to host three Heineken Cup pool games.

"The pitch was never walked on. Any of our sub-contractors and our own people were advised at their site induction that the pitch was a prohibited area," Gerard Tierney explained.

"Over the 18 months, until it was decided to replace the pitch, no one went on it bar the players who played the three Heineken Pool matches.

"We had some very busy weeks preparing for 12,000 or 13,000 coming into a building site to watch a match. That created its own issues at the time. We got co-operation from everyone. Thankfully, we did not have any incidents. Thomond Park has always been a home to me. To come back here to do the stadium is the pinnacle of my career.

"People living around here have put up with a lot while work on the new stadium was going on. This was a heavy construction site. There were trucks going up and down the Cratloe Road. We got a closure for the Knoakalisheen Road in conjunction with the City Council.

"We have to say big thank you to our neighbours."

### Striking visual aspect

Another striking visual aspect in the stadium is the colour scheme of the seating in the two main stands.

Originally it has been planned that red-coloured seats would be used, coinciding with Munster's team colours. However, this was changed to a mixture of red, navy and yellow seats because it gives the impression of less empty seats on any days when the stands are not full.

The generators for the impressive new floodlighting system at Thomond Park have arrived from the old Lansdowne Road stadium, while part of the old scoreboard at the world's oldest international rugby venue has also made its way to Limerick. The goalposts have been retained from the old Thomond Park stadium.

Gerard Tierney is adamant that the re-developed stadium, which has resulted in the doubling of the capacity, will boast the same raucous atmosphere as the one which preceded it.

"In fact I think people will feel more of an involvement this time," Gerard Tierney said.

In the first five or six years people got very involved. It was the cauldron of dreams for Munster supporters and the disaster for visiting teams.

"The atmosphere will be every bit as good as old days.

"To have 26,000 people in this place, the din will be deafening."

## Bruff RFC

BRUFF kicked off their first round of the division two AIL with a fabulous 35 points to 12 defeat of Instonians in Shaw's Bridge.

Bruff opened their account with a penalty by David Maw, Instonians replied, Davy kicked another, Instonians replied Bruff went 9-6 up, Instonians returned the favour to go 9-all and then following a line-out about five meters out from the Instonians line the Bruff pack pushed over for try num-

ber one, John Shine claiming the grounding. Instonians replied with two more penalties to allow Bruff to go into the dressing rooms leading by 14 points to 12.

Five minutes in to the second half Davy Maw fired out a fabulous looping pass over the heads of all of the Instonians back line straight into the hands of Paul O'Brien who then left with only his opposite number to beat, managed to burn him on the outside to

make try number two in the corner, Davy Maw adding the extras. Bruff at 21 points to 12 looked very comfortable.

The pack dominating at the breakdown, carrying the ball and Scrummaging Instonians off their own ball five times.

Try Number three came from a switched dummy pass from Davy Maw who cut a reverse to Brendan Deady storming into the line. Brendan broke two tackles before crossing the whitewash.

The bonus point came with eight minutes to go when Brian Cahill finally was given the touchdown on his second crossing of the try-line. Davy again added the extras and Bruff closed out the game finishing 35 points to 12.

This coming Saturday sees the much awaited first competitive first team clash against Thomond in almost 20 years.

We expect things to be very busy this Saturday and we hope that everyone will come

along and support the lads who have got off to a great start.

J1 Friendly: Nenagh 17 Bruff 14 - J2 Gleeson League: Cashel 36, Bruff J2 10 NML U18 St. Senans 15 Bruff 25 NML U15 Bruff 7 Ballina/Killaloe 0.

Fixtures: Sat 11th Oct. - AIL Bruff Vs. Thomond, Kilballyowen, 2:30 U20 Friendly, Bruff Vs. Old Crescent, Kilballyowen, 5:00. Sun 12th Oct. - MSSL Bruff J1 Vs. Highfield, 3:00, U10 Blitz in UL Bohemians, 10:30, U12 Blitz, Bruff away in Terenure

College, 11:00 am, U18 Bruff V Young Munster, 11:30, Kilballyowen. There are a couple of slots coming open for pitchside signage, please contact Ger Hehir or Ger Malone if you are interested.

Also a few slots have come open for advertising on the Bruff RFC website please contact me by email at pr@bruffrfc.com for more information.

Next Committee meeting on Monday night at 8:00 pm.