

A beautiful book, especially for printers - young and old

A good idea is a good idea and I've just read a very interesting and beautifully printed book that I wished had been written about Waterford but, in fact, it was written about the town of Listowel in County Kerry. Entitled 'Listowel - A Printers Legacy 1870-1970', it tells the story of the history of printing in Listowel and its printers. Lovingly written, researched and produced by Vincent Carmody, it is full of great stories and photographs plus historical facts and fabulous reproductions of a wide range of printed items such as posters (from auctions to dances), Mass cards, wedding invitations and song/ballad sheets. For any person who has ever worked in a printing works, this is an absolute treasure trove and it will be a wonderful walk down memory lane.



One of the reproductions in the book is of the poster that advertised the first ever amateur production of John B Keane's now famous play, 'Sive'. For many years, every theatrical poster printed in Listowel carried the following slogan on the bottom line: 'The stage shall never die'.

The first printer in Listowel was Robert Cuthbertson who opened his business in 1880. In 1959, his descendant, also Robert (Bob) Cuthbertson wrote to his friend, the late editor and chairman of The Munster Express, JJ Walsh, to congratulate him on the production of the newspaper's Centenary Edition. It was one of the last letters he wrote as Bob died a few months later, the last of the printing Cuthbertsons in Listowel. Available from selected bookshops and on-line at www.listoweloriginals.com this is Vincent Carmody's fifth, fabulous book about various aspects of his beloved Listowel. If his peers haven't already done so, I hope they honour his achievements by making him a Freeman of the Town.

The reason I wish the book had been about Waterford is because it reminds me of the rich printing tradition in our city, of the large and small printing companies and their craftsmen and craftswomen such as Harvey and Co, Crokers Ltd and some of the more modern ones like Intacta Print, Gallaghers, etc, etc. Then there were all the various newspapers down the centuries some of which, like The Munster Express, were also busy general printers. As the well known poet, Mr Willie Nelson, put it so aptly, "Ain't it funny how time slips away."