

# Follow me, says Sister Ann

AT THREE O'CLOCK this afternoon, Sister Ann Dominica, a black-and-white garbed Dominican nun, will lead a tour along Dublin's secret river, the Poddle.

This year's Dublin Arts Festival has Medieval Dublin as its theme, so the Dominican's walk along the course of the city's 13th century river is topical.

She'll start the tour at Mount Argus where the little river tongues, as they say, and she'll finish at Warrenmount on the fringe of the Liberties. The Poddle flows into the Liffey below Parliament Street — and was carried across the Liffey as a conduit to the north side of the city in the Middle Ages.

It was at Warrenmount just three years ago that an old Dubliner, a descendant of Huguenot weavers, showed me the hidden spot where the river could be seen above ground — a rare sight in the modern city.

Unfortunately, the mill pond on the site has been cemented over.

"That's already history," says Sister Ann. A local firm spent a year draining the pond before filling it in.

"One could get angry about this," she says. "But I don't blame the firm. I blame the planners who won't leave breathing space in our city."

Sister Ann first became fascinated by the Poddle when preparing a textbook for schools on the Liffey some years ago. "I couldn't have taken on a more difficult subject. There were absolutely no books or material available.

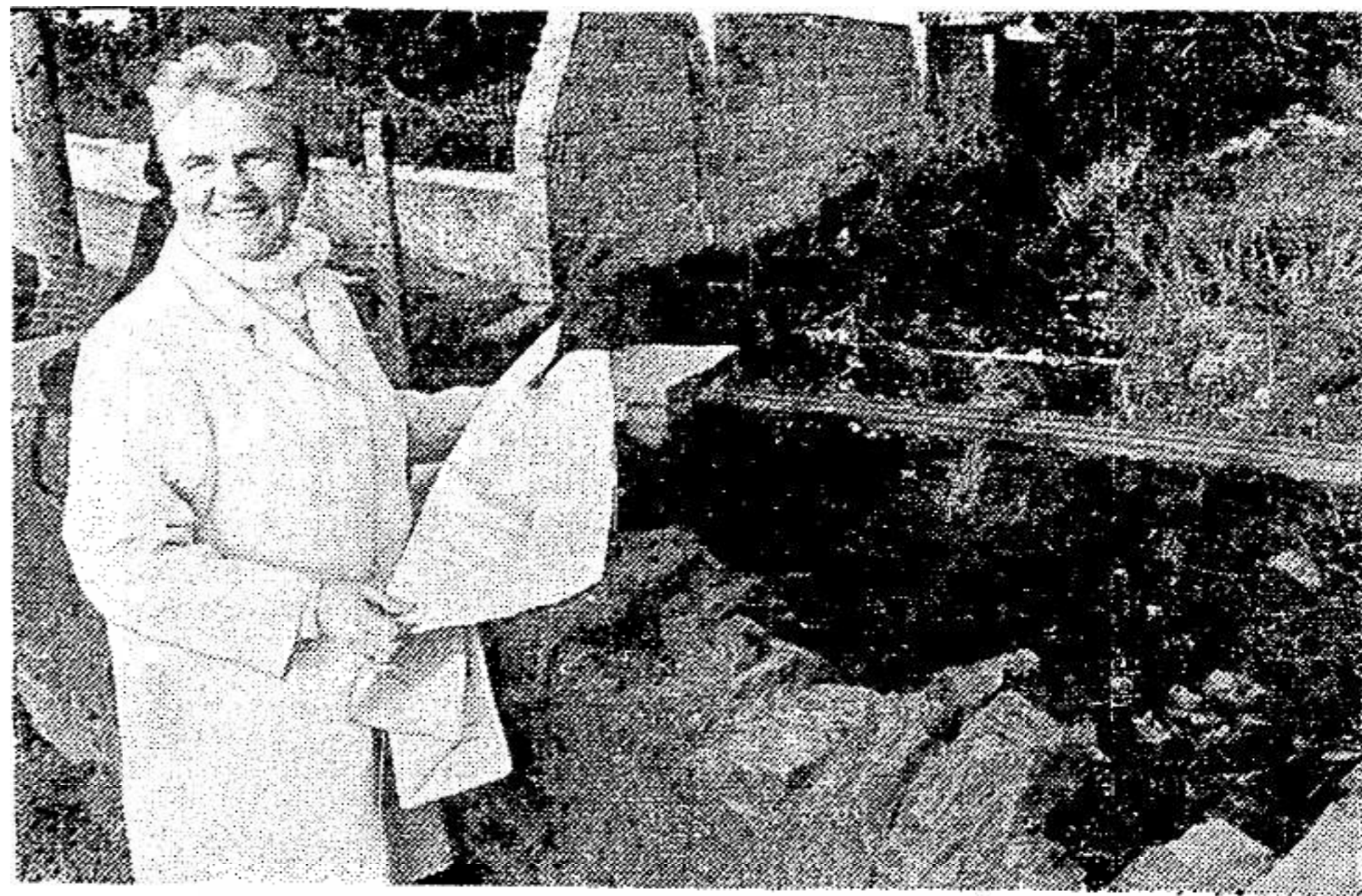
She has timed today's walk (which will provide another tantalising glimpse of the Poddle at Harold's Cross and a preview of the underground Poddle Shaft which is soon to divert the Poddle into the Canal).

"I've done it in an hour. But we'll start sharp at three and latecomers may get left behind."

If you don't feel energetic enough today she'll repeat the tour next Sunday.

## Sex Equality, Irish-style

From the new monthly "Books Ireland": Terence de Vere White revealed that his private market researches in Messrs. Eason's had produced the information that women buy the sex instruction books and men the religious books".



★ SISTER ANN . . . on the banks of the Poddle.

## There's a boom in Barriers!

What goods can we possibly buy more of than Britain?

Would you believe crowd control barriers?

Once upon a time the barriers were used at exhibitions and sports events. But in recent years they've been needed at the scene of bomb scares, political funerals, trials and demos.

And the biggest customer of at least one firm, Scafco, has been the Garda Síochána.

Scafco's managing director, H. A. LORIMER, tells me that 2,000 barriers have been sold in the past couple of years.

It would seem to be a lucrative little industry for Irish labour, but Scafco's barriers come from Mitcham in Surrey.

Scafco first started business in 1933 making

scaffolding for building sites — when tube fittings were replacing the old-time wooden poles.

Scaffolding is still the mainstay of the business. The crash barriers are a recent phenomenon and H. A. Lorimer says: "I'd like to think that in future they would be used for more pleasurable occasions."

Right now Scafco are sold out of barriers. But if you're anticipating any riots, just place an order with them and they'll meet your demand.

*Thirsty dogs are to be provided with drinking troughs at Killiney and Dalkey this summer. But has anybody looked into Dublin's horse troughs recently? I'd hate to be a thirsty horse.*

## CHRISTY SELLS, CHRISTY SETTLES

Christy Brown's bungalow at Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, is to be turned into a nursing home for retired priests.

The author, who made the sale for around £30,000, says, "I hope they get some vibes from the last tenant."

Christy Brown now lives at Ballyheigue in Co. Kerry with his wife Mary. Already they are making extensions to their new house.

"That suggests we're settling in, doesn't it?" says Mary.

The author's last book "Shadow on Summer", will be issued in paperback by Pan this week at a party in Cork. And his new novel, "Wild Grow The Lilies", is due for publication in April.

Credit card holders nowadays receive envelopes bulky with unsolicited brochures for hotels or special offer luggage.

Recently American Express sent a circular to cardholders on the assumption that they were well-helled enough to supply a list of their "other" addresses . . . including their "summer cottage".

And last week Access sent clients a March Hare card in a sealed envelope marked "Private" — just to tell them that, though it's March, they should "stay sane with Access."

Liam O'Callaghan is the only Irishman in the company of the impressive new Clwyd Theatre which opened at Mold, in North Wales last week (on St. David's Day) with "Macbeth".

His fellow-actors include Welsh, English, Americans, Australians, a New Zealander and a South African. And the director is Hungarian.