

*Evening Echo*, Thursday, March 7, 2013

**WHEN was the business set up?**  
The business was set up in 1982 and started in 93 South Mall, in what had been an old cold storage warehouse for ice-cream.

**Tell me about the history of the business.**

The company was set up by Brendan Boylan, Barry Golden and John O'Mahony. At the time the business concentrated mainly on private cars, commercial vehicles and household insurance, and this is still very much our core business, although we now also transact commercial insurance as well. We moved premises off the South Mall into Parnell Place in 1987. The company amalgamated with O'Leary Insurances in 1990 and after starting out with about only two staff, we are now proud to be part of a group that employs nearly 200 staff nationally.

**How has the business changed over the years?**

Technology has seen a big change in the way we transact our business. There are more insurance companies trading online and more people making insurance enquiries online nowadays.

In the past, everything was done manually. Now the broker trades electronically with the insurance provider and the client. In the past, we'd often have to drive to the insurer's office with a proposal form to secure cover. It's a much faster, slicker service nowadays.

**How did you get involved in the business?**

I applied for a vacancy with the Royal Insurance Company in 1970 and got the job. That's how I got into insurance. I moved to the Insurance Corporation of Ireland in

# Catering to our customers is key



**MARIA ROLSTON** talks to **Billy Kenny**, managing director of **O'Mahony Boylan Golden Insurance Brokers**.

1980 and joined O'Mahony Boylan Golden in 1984. Tony Brooks and I looked after the company together until Tony retired in March 2012. I'm the managing director of the company, a Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute (FCII) and a past president of the Insurance Institute of Cork

**Tell me about your customers**  
Our customers are individuals and families mainly based in Cork. 'The man in the street' is our typical customer — they're ordinary consumers looking for good value for money. We have about 20,000

customers for car, van, house and travel insurance.

**Has your customer base changed much over the years?**

It's much the same but the method of communication is changing rapidly with technology.

**How have business trends changed?**

Our customers are now a lot more price conscious and demand value for money, excellent claims handling service, efficiency, a local service, strength and security.

**Has the recession affected your business?**

We're no different to any other company when it comes to recession. Insurance is sometimes considered to be an expensive purchase which people feel they never really see the value of until something goes wrong — then you're glad you have it

**Have you seen any famous faces through your trade over the years?**

Yes, 20,000! All our customers are famous and they keep myself and my fantastic staff in a job.

**What do you enjoy most about working in this trade?**

Dealing with so many different people and keeping most of them happy, most of the time.

**What's the hardest thing about working in this trade?**

I am a fussy person and I set high standards for myself and the staff so trying to keep up the standards we set for ourselves and to keep our 20,000 customers happy involves a lot of hard work.

**Have you ever had any strange requests?**

Yes. A few years ago a man called in looking for insurance for a loft of pigeons. It was a very unusual request and unfortunately we couldn't get insurance for him at the time but you could probably get it nowadays.

**What do you think has been the secret to your success and survival over the years?**

Hard work, giving the customer what they want; value for money; good service; independent advice and above all, looking after customers when they have a claim.

**Do you think there is a future in your business?**

There certainly is. Most of the insurance companies (as distinct from insurance brokers) have now gone from Cork and there is still a huge number of people who want personal service.

**Is the business likely to be carried on within the founding families in generations to come?**

The O'Leary Insurance Group has been providing insurance solutions for the past 50 years and will continue to do so.