

BELOW WE PUBLISH THE FULL TEXT OF AN ORATION BY MANNIX JOYCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING AT KILMALLOCK OF A PLAQUE COMMEMORATING MICHAEL SCANLAN, THE GALBALLY-BORN PATRIOT WHO WAS SHOT TO DEATH 50 YEARS AGO.

British troops tore the Tricolour from his coffin

TA PLAIC togha anseo i gcumhne ar Mhicheal O Scannlain, agus is maith ann. A bhfuil scríofa ar an bplaic seo beidh se le leamh ag na daoine a thiofadh inar ndáidh, agus teaspainfidh se do na daoine sin cen meas mor bhi ag pobal an cheantair seo ar Mhicheal O Scannlain. Ar ndoigh, bhi an meas sin tuillte aige. Fear breá uasal ab ea e, i ngach aon tsli.

Ba de thogall Ghallbhalle é, agus tháinig se anseo go Chill Mocheallóg i 1916 mar mhúinteoir i Scoil na mBuachaillí Muinleor den chéad scoth ab ea é. A cothlaigh ina chuid daltaí fearúlacht gíra agus don Ghaeilge thug se, mar ar thug earshír uile na gírlín sin, na beadh son náisiún Éireannach ann gan an Ghaeilge.

Chuaigh se sna hOglaigh, agus toghadh ina cheannfort e sa Chéad Cathain de Bhriogaid Oirthear Lúimnigh Gabhadh e agus tugadh ina phríosúnach e go Lúimneach ar an 27ú Deireadh Fómhair 1920. Dhéan se iarracht ar eile óna náimhdeach seoil-eadar leis agus lámhachadar e.

Níoi deineadh dea-miad tiamh ar Mhicheal O Scannlain i gceantar Chill Mocheallóg agus mar chruinn amháin ar eile to agninn an phlaic seo a nochtadh anseo inniu le hais Scoil na mBuachaillí. Tá an chreidimint ag dul don dream dílle sin a chinn ar an bplaic a chur suas. Go gceillt Dia a scothait seo agus go dtuaga se suimhneach seoirní do anam Mhicheal O Scannlain agus do anamacha na maibh go léir fuair bás at eon na hÉireann.

As I have already said in Irish, very much credit is due to that small devoted band centred here in Kilmallock who have had this bilingual plaque erected to the memory of Michael Scanlan. It was the same group who had the plaque to Liam Scully erected a few years ago on the site of the old RIC barracks.

And it is the same group who for a considerable number of years, have been caring for the graves of the patriot dead in Kilmallock churchyard. Molaim iad as a ndíograis agus as a ndíseacht.

Michael Scanlan was a Galbally man and a schoolteacher. He came here to Kilmallock in 1916 to teach in the local Boys' Primary School.

Strongly nationalistic in outlook, he joined the Volunteers, was arrested and conveyed to Limerick on October 27, 1920. He made a dash for freedom, was pursued by his captors and mortally wounded.

That very briefly, is the story of the man to whom this plaque has been unveiled today, here on this pillar at the entrance to this fine new Boys' Primary School.

It is eminently fitting that the plaque should be sited beside the school, for much of the great work done by Michael Scanlan was done in the schoolroom in Kilmallock where he sowed in the hearts and minds of his pupils the seeds of nationality and love of country.

And I might remark that he is in good company on this pillar for on the pillar surmounting the plaque that bears his name, is another bilingual plaque bearing the names of Bishop Patrick O'Hely of Mayo and Fr Conn O'Rourke, OFM, of Brelfne, who were martyred on the mound called Crochta, here beside the school grounds, in the year 1579. And that other plaque also bears the name of the great Geraldine leader, Seamus Mac Muirís mhic an Iarla — James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald—a man who, in his day, fought valiantly for Irish freedom, and whose dead body was quartered above the gates of Kilmallock in the same year that Bishop O'Hely and Fr O'Rourke died on Crochta.

Privilege

There are some people present here today who had the privilege of knowing Michael Scanlan. But very many of you—perhaps the majority of you—were not even born in that terrible year of 1920, the year that claimed the life of Michael Scanlan, and the lives of many others like him who were engaged in the fight for freedom.

For that reason I would like to take your minds back 50 years by recalling for you, for just a few moments, some of the events, events heroic, and events terrible, of that blood-drenched year, when Irishmen fought, as never before, to free themselves from the iron grip of the British Empire.

It is against the background of these events I would like to set the sacrifice of Michael Scanlan.

On January 14, 1920, Limerick City elected a Sinn Féin Corporation and on January 30th that Corporation unanimously chose as Mayor of Limerick the Sinn Féin nominee Michael O'Callaghan—a little over a year later, Michael O'Callaghan and two of his comrades would be murdered in cold blood by British Crown Forces.

From early in 1920 a great build up of military strength was taking place in the Limerick area, and raids, hold-ups and bouts of indiscriminate shooting were the order of the day.

On March 6th the outlawed Tricolour of the Republic was defiantly flown from the National Monument in Kilmallock

in memory of the Fenian attack on the police barracks 53 years before.

On the night of March 19-20, Tomas Mac Curtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, was murdered by British Crown Forces.

On the night of April 3rd 137 police barracks in various parts of Ireland were burned by the IRA. Seventeen of the barracks were in Limerick.

Ballylanders

On April 26th Ballylanders Police Barracks was attacked and captured by the IRA, the actual attacking party being commanded by a Kilmallock man, Sean T. O'Riordan.

On April 28th six creameries along the Limerick-Tipperary border were burned by British Forces.

On May 28th Kilmallock Police Barracks was attacked and destroyed by the IRA, under Sean Wall. The actual assault was led by Tomas Malone (Sean Forde). In the attack the IRA lost Liam Scully, and the police lost Sergeant Keane and Constable Moleton.

On June 4th the first Black

And scorned the foeman's frown.

On, they were the men who conquered,

And brought an Empire down.

The Local Elections for Limerick, held in June, 1920, resulted in the election of a predominantly Sinn Féin Co. Council. Among those elected were the following, from the part of Limerick Sean Wall, of Bruff, who was unanimously chosen as chairman of the new Council. John A. Lynch, Kilmallock; John Ciar-witch, Ballyshane; Kilfinnec, Liam P. Manahan, Ballylanders; Sean T. O'Riordan, Kilmallock; William Quinn, Limerick; Andrew Ryan, Hospital; Damon Roche, Bruce.

Newcastle West

On the night of July 17th Newcastle West was sacked by Black and Tans and military. They fired indiscriminately up and down the streets, smashed windows, and set a number of buildings on fire.

On July 23rd, two Crossley tenders filled with Black and

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and Tans were seen on duty on the streets in Limerick. And about the same time Ireland's first Flying Column of the IRA—the East Limerick Brigade Flying Column—was established.

The idea of forming such a Column came to two East Limerick fighters, Donncha O'Hannigan and Patrick Clancy, as they marched back from Liam Scully's funeral to Johnny Lynch's of Tankardstown, in which house the first recruitment for that first IRA Flying Column took place.

They marched from Scully's funeral By Glin to Tankardstown, The men who in our freedom fight Won fame and high renown They came with arms in their hands, And marched right proud and free, And Johnny Lynch he bade them stay 'Till they would rested be.

In Lynch's house where Fenians stood The daring plan took shape, Those men who marched to Tankardstown Together now they'd stay; A fighting force ne'er to disband, A wholtime force who'd be The first Flying Column of them all In our Irish history.

Hannigan he was there that day, From near old Galtee more, And Crowley Tadhg and Murphy Tom And Howard who feared no foe; With O'Donnell, Clancy, Tobin, And others, too beside, They were Ireland's first Flying Column And Limerick's love and pride.

On, they fought at Grange and Emly, Shralerla and Dromkelen And as well near Annacarty, And down near famed Bruce Lackelly and Kildorrery, Oh these were places too, Where they struck their blows untiring And proved to Ireland true.

Wherever the fight was raging And death stood lurking nigh, There the men of the Flying Column Showed how to dare and die They met the Tans and the 'Auxies',

Scanlan, was shot by Crown Forces in Limerick City.

On November 1st, 18-year-old Kevin Barry, was hanged in Mountjoy.

On November 21st, the day we know ever since as "Bloody Sunday", 14 British Secret Service agents were shot by the IRA in Dublin.

That afternoon British Forces rained shots into the crowd attending a football match in Croke Park, killing 12, and wounding scores of others.

Among those killed was Tom Hogan, a young IRA man from Tankardstown, who was viewing the match.

On December 10th, Limerick City and County, and most of Munster, was put under Martial Law.

But the IRA continued to strike, and that December they ambushed British Forces at Glencurrane and the Cross of the Tree.

Limerick

In Limerick, the year ended in a tragedy.

The IRA organised a dance in Cahergullamore on December 26th Cahergullamore House, where the dance was being held was surrounded by hundreds of military, who immediately began firing into the building.

Five IRA men were shot dead.

These were some of the events of that year 1920. Great men and heroic men proved their worth that year when the test came, and among the bravest was Michael Scanlan of Galbally and Kilmallock.

Men of the Galtee mountain country were never ones willingly to bow to foreign domination.

The will to be free was in their blood. Michael Scanlan brought that love of freedom with him when he came to Kilmallock.

And he brought with him too the love of all things Irish—the love of our Irish language, our songs, our culture, our traditions, all the vital things that go to make Ireland a nation.

From the Gaelic League it was a natural step to the Irish Volunteers. It was the step that Pearce Mac Donagh, Ceannnt Mac Swiney, Collins de Valera, Brugha and innumerable others had taken. Michael Scanlan soon rose to the rank of Commandant in the East Limerick Brigade, being officer in charge of the No. 1 Battalion of the Brigade.

From now on he was a marked man. Arrested by British Forces, he was conveyed in a military lorry to Limerick on October 27, 1920.

Jumped

The lorry drew up in front of William Street Police Barrack.

Knowing well the treatment he could expect at the hands of his captors, Michael Scanlan jumped from the lorry and made a gallant dash for freedom.

He sought shelter in the basement of a house in Thomas Street, where he was found by pursuers.

Unarmed though he was, his pursuers poured a fusillade of bullets into him.

He died a few hours later. When his remains were being brought home to his native Galbally, the funeral was stopped on the outskirts of Limerick City by the British Forces who forcibly removed the tricolour in which the coffin was wrapped.

Today, thanks to the sacrifices of men like Michael Scanlan the tricolour can fly in freedom in 26 of our 32 counties and we can gather here to honour Michael Scanlan, and to honour, through him, all the dead who died for Ireland, without fear of interference from any truculent foreign soldiery.

But that is not to say that the dream of Michael Scanlan, or the dream of those who rose in Dublin that Easter-tide 54 years ago, has been realised in the full.

That day will not come until the tricolour flies over every part of Ireland, flies over an Irish Ireland that will cherish all her children equally, and that will be worthy of all the blood that was shed through the centuries in her cause.

Nara fada uainn an la sin!

A tribute

MR. PATRICK RYAN, 11 Fairyfield, Kilmallock, who was a pupil of Michael Scanlan, pays the following tribute:

'He was a very great Irishman. He was an illustrious man of Ireland.

I was a pupil of his. I can recite many of the poems he thought us.

He inspired a love of Ireland and a love of Irish history and Irish tradition in the minds of his pupils.

'He told us of the great Irish freedom fighters down along the centuries—the men of 1798—the men of 1867—and, as he himself used to say, the glorious men of 1916.

'On one occasion, when referring to the Fenian attack on Kilmallock RIC barracks, he mentioned a Patrick O'Riordan of whom a surviving relative lives at Fairyfield, Kilmallock.

'May God be merciful to the noble souls of all those who died for Ireland.

Kilmallock

On September 22nd, John A. Lynch of Kilmallock, was murdered in his bedroom in a Dublin Hotel, by British Crown Forces.

When his body was brought back to Kilmallock, and again on the day of his interment, in Kilmallock the town swarmed with military and Black and Tans.

It was a scene of armed arrogance. The Crown Forces stood on the side-walks and kept their guns trained all the time on the people who marched in the funeral procession.

On October 25th, Terence Mac Swiney died in Brixton Prison, after a hunger strike that had lasted 73 days. Two days later that is, on October 27th the man we commemorate today, Michael