

"Houses Of Refuge" Remembered At West Mayo Old I.R.A. Dinner

SPECIAL tributes to the 'ordinary' people of the rural areas who gave refuge to those 'on the run' during the Fight for Freedom, were paid by Brigadier Ned Moane, Carrabawn, Westport (now residing in Dublin), former T.D. for West Mayo and by Mr. Thomas Heavey, Ballina (a member of the famous West Mayo "Flying Column") at the first Annual Dinner of the West Mayo Brigade Old I.R.A. in Hotel Clew Bay, Westport, last Wednesday night.

Over 200 guests attended the highly enjoyable function. Capt. Broddie Malone, Castlebar, who presided, proposed the toast to the Irish Republic.

When this was honoured Mr. Paddy Duffy, who with his brother John, played a leading part in the fight for freedom, proposed a toast to all those who died for Ireland and said they should think of Major John Mac Bride, a native of Westport Quay, who died for Ireland in 1916 before a firing squad.

Mr. Duffy, continuing, said he hoped that a memorial to him and all the other Westport men, who gave their lives for Ireland would be erected in this year of the centenary of Major John's birth.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Mr. Duffy then named the men who died for Ireland in West Mayo as follows: Tom Lyons, shot on "Bloody Sunday"; James Duffy, Prospect; Jim Marley, Glenhest; Vol. O'Malley and Lally, Islandeady.

Five men killed in Kilmeeena Ambush on 19th May, 1921, Captains James McEvilly, Castlebar; Paddy Jordan, Kilmeeena; Volunteers P. Staunton, Kilmeeena; O'Donnell, Newport and P. Collins, Westport, an orphan aged 18 years Jim Browne, Kilmeeena, killed in Skirdagh.

Mr. Duffy also mentioned the following who were killed in the two unfortunate years of the Civil War: Tom Prendergast of Louisburgh; The "Three Joes" of Westport - Joe Ring, Joe Walsh and Joe Ruddy - and Vols. Woods; P. Mulchrone, Brockagh and J. Moran.

"They were our comrades in the Tan War but we differed with them afterwards. We are glad to see all our comrades united here again," declared Mr. Duffy.

Mr. Duffy went on to mention men of the Column who have since died. Died of wounds: S. Cannon, J. Keane, J. Swift. Others now dead: Tom Derrig of High St., Westport, who was a Minister of an Irish Government for 20 years; Dr. John A. Madden, M.O. to the Flying Column; Paddy Cannon, John Bradley, M. Gallagher, Kilmeeena, Jimmy Flaherty, John Dick Gibbons, Willie and John Malone of High St., Westport; John, Paddy, Dick and

John MacBride on the Octagon.

AUTHORITY

"You are the people who have the voice. The men who died gave you authority to go ahead and make sure that it is erected where it is intended to be", he declared.

Mr. Moane said he wished to pay tribute to the ordinary people of the country who supported them during the fight for freedom and who kept the men of the column in their houses.

The fighting men had the protection of their arms but those brave people had no defence. The boys were never spied on and no document was ever captured in Brigade Area.

Mr. P. J. Kelly (senior) O.C. Louisburgh Coy., said he was very pleased to be present and he wished to send greetings to their absent comrades in other lands. He hoped they would come home some day and settle down in a free united Ireland.

GAVE REFUGE

Replying to the toast to absent comrades Tommy Heavey, Ballina said the people who deserved to be remembered were the men and women of the country who sheltered the men of the flying columns.

"How could the small army sustain itself but for the fact that tired men and women surrendered their beds to us and it was something phenomenal that children went to school next day and mixed with other children without a word of the strangers in their homes the night before," he said.

"While we are here at this gathering of old comrades let us remember those people who were all our comrades," he added.

Bringing the speeches to a close Mr. Broddie Malone said he was glad to see present with them Brigadier Tom Ruane, North Mayo Brigade; John O'Dowd, former Court Clerk; members of Mayo Co. Council—Owen Hughes, Mtn. Joe O'Toole and Denis Gallagher; Westport Urban Council members—Ml. Kelly, Ml. Browne, Sean Staunton and Leo Joyce.

He thanked Mr. Brian Ruddy for allowing them to use his hotel for meetings and for the excellent meal provided that night.

He said the success of the dinner was due to the work of the little committee worked so hard to organise it: Messrs. Paddy Duffy, Pakie O'Grady, Josie O'Toole and Johnnie Hastings.

Dancing followed to the music of the Beat Minstrels Showband, Louisburgh.

ATTENDANCE

The Old I.R.A. men present were: Westport—Dan Gavin, John T. Walsh, Ned Sammon, Paddy Duffy, P. J. Kelly (senior), Ned Moran, Martin Geraghty, Pat Moore, Pat Duffy, Prospect; John O'Malley, Ml. Hastings, Ml. McGuire, Peter Cannon, Ned Kelly, Ed. O'Malley, Bofora; John Gannon, Belclare; John Grady, Cloona; Jonh Gibbons and Tom Gannon, Owenwee; Mtn. Berry, Lanmore; Leo McGuire, Drummin; Pakie O'Grady, Paddy Duffy, Cloonskill; Joe O'Toole, John Hastings, Tom Gill and Dan Sammon, Lecanvey; Jack Kelly, Clogher.

Members of Old Cumann Na mBan—Mrs. Julia Gillivan, Mrs. Jim Lyons, Mrs. John Malone, High St.; Mary Anne Grady, Cloona and Mrs. McGreal, The Fairgreen.

Newport—Dom. Mulchrone, Andrew Moran, James O'Malley, Knocknabola.

Louisburgh—Tom Harney, Jim Harney, J. J. Philbin and Dan Sammon, Mtn. O'Reilly. Other Old I.R.A. men present.

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Erris Farmers Say "Bottle Parties Destroying Land"

FARMERS in Eilly, on the Mullet Peninsula of Erris are complaining that a few hundred acres of land held by them in commonage are being destroyed by midnight bottle parties during the tourist season.

The lands on the shores of Blacksod Bay, near Blacksod are used freely by tourists for parking caravans and camps and for family picnics during the summer.

Now the farmers say the visitors leave broken bottles lying around after midnight parties which is a danger to their cattle grazing the sandy land.

As a result they have decided to divide the commonage with an equal share to each farmer, who will fence it off from his neighbour.

But Belmullet Development Association say that any partitioning of the lands would kill tourism in the area which is beside a very popular beach and attracts tourists from all over the country.

Said Dr. Tom Keily, Chairman of the Association: Any division of the lands would have an adverse effect on tourism. I agree the farmers should be compensated in some way and perhaps Bord Failte might help out in this matter to make sure the area is kept open for tourists.

Commented Mr. John Lynskey, one of the farmers concerned: "We always have been generous to caravaners and campers but this year's blackguardism by midnight bottle parties has united all the tenants and made us take action in our own interests. If anyone wants the land for development they can purchase it from us."

Now Belmullet Development Association are to ask Bord Failte to take some action to ensure that the "Sandybanks" will be available as usual for the visitors.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Members of Civil Defence will on Sunday next carry out a house-to-house survey in Ballyhaunis following the re-issue of the booklet "Survival in a Nuclear War". This is part of a programme organised by the Civil Defence Section of Mayo Co. Council with a view towards assessing the public's awareness of their responsibilities in the event of a Fall-Out situation.



"...for the occasion that's in it"

For the homecoming or the anniversary or for any occasion which says we're here and we're together. And for the drink which has been saying all these things for generations.

GUINNESS naturally



Westport Old I.R.A. Committee members who organised the First Annual West Mayo Brigade Dinner in Hotel Clew Bay, Westport. Front row (left to right): Joseph O'Toole (Secretary), Captain Broddie Malone (Chairman), Johnnie Hastings. Back row (l. to r.): Peter Cannon, Paddy Duffy & Patrick O'Grady (Treasurer). Photo by McLoughlin's Studio.