

GORT MEMORIAL TO LIAM MELLOWES

AT four o'clock on Sunday last a memorial was unveiled at Ballycahalan in memory of Liam Mellowes, Timire Oglaigh na Gaillimhe.

The memorial, which takes the form of a large limestone tablet set on a few feet high concrete foundation, is surrounded by a wall of concrete blocks with an aperture facing the main Ballycahalan road. Behind the monument is the old home of Mr. Padraig O'Fathaigh and the inscription on the monument to Liam Mellowes reads "Ba anseo is mo a biodh se ag fanacht 1915 agus 1916."

Very Rev. Fr. Conway, P.P. Kilbeacanty, blessed and unveiled the monument. Master of ceremonies was Mr. John Melville, Chairman of the Gort Battalion Old I.R.A., who introduced the participants. After the unveiling Mr. Padraig O'Fathaigh read the Proclamation of 1916 in Irish and then Mr. Sean McNamara, ex-Commandant, Sixth Batt., Co. Clare, delivered the oration. About 250 people witnessed the ceremony.

Mr. McNamara spoke in Irish and said: "Is maith an rud gur cuireadh an leacht cuimhneachain seo suas mar tlochfaidh an la nuair mach mbuidh comradai Liam Uí Mhaoiliosa ann chun tagairt ar na rudaí a thuit amach anseo. Bhi Padraig O'Fathaigh ag cur siol reamhloide sar a dtainig Liam O'Maoiliosa ins na ranganna Gaeilge a bhíodh ar bun aige agus is iomdha cabhair a thug siad da cheile. Fhaid is a bheas uisce ag rith agus fear ag fas beidh cuimhne ar Liam O'Maoiliosa, na h-actraí a bhain dho agus a bhas croga."

Speaking in English, Mr. McNamara said: "I am greatly honoured to be speaking at the unveiling of this memorial to Liam Mellowes. The discipline of men such as Liam Mellowes, Padraig O'Fathaigh, the Kilkellys, the Hynes, was edifying to us in Co. Clare. They showed us that they had started very early in life to learn how to be free. Padraig O'Fathaigh was sent to Kinvara by Liam Mellowes to get a priest to lead the rebellion with Mell-

owes in South Galway. At Kinvara Padraig O'Fathaigh was the first man to get entangled with a Peeler who tried to arrest him. In the scuffle which ensued the Peeler fired a shot which missed Padraig O'Fathaigh and though he was subsequently arrested his two comrades succeeded in making their escape. That was the first shot that was fired in the rebellion in South Galway.

Some might ask why are memorials such as these erected? I say, unless we remember our history how can we hope for a future. If we did not remember Good Friday how could we hope for a future in the religion. The lesson of our history is to depend on ourselves and on ourselves alone. We have a language of our own, music, songs, dances, culture of our own, and we should not be imitating a culture that jumped up yesterday.

BULWARK

We cannot fully appreciate the work of these men of 1916 yet. We can honour these men by speaking the Irish language. We have a bulwark against the Sasanach in our language and even if we have only ten words we should practice them and one day we will be a nation glorious and free.

It is very significant that Liam Mellowes' bandolier has been presented by Padraig O'Fathaigh to the National Museum.

On a platform at the rear of the memorial the committee of the Gort Batt. Old I.R.A. were seated, decked in their medals. They were Messrs. Padraig O'Fathaigh, Secretary of the Memorial Committee, John Melville, Chairman, P. Nellan, T. Regan, Mattie McGrath, M. O'Halloran, M. Kelly, Ned Roche, Mattie Connolly, Mattie Nolan, Pat Loughrey, Patsy Gillane, John McAllen, J. Noone and Pat Hynes. Also present was Mr. Paddy Fahy, N.T., Commandant of the Seventh Field Battery.

Mr. Melville thanked the committee who were responsible for the erection of this memorial and also those who subscribed towards it.

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