

# Vision of 1916 embodied in gardens

■ The Memorial Gardens will remain as a legacy for future generations

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IF their proclamations are anything to go by, then the future as hoped and dreamed of by our young is indeed as visionary as that of the leaders who signed the 1916 Proclamation.

As part of the ceremonial openings of the four Memorial Garden, in Merchant's Quay, Limerick, and in Newcastle West, Rathkeale and Kilmallock, children from local schools read out the 2016 proclamations they had written. And it was stirring, heart-warming stuff.

"We strive to create a future that is better for everyone regardless of religion, beliefs, skin colour or social status," declared Adam Costello, reading the proclamation on behalf of the Courtenay Boys School, Newcastle West.

But he asked "Have we lived out the vision of our 1916 heroes?" and his answer was that we can do more. "We believe we must work to achieve an Ireland where difference is welcome and where equality and fairness become part of our C ad M ile F ilte mantra."

Turning ghost estates into homes for the homeless, free education and a free health system were among the boys' demands.

And they urged people to support local business. "In order to keep our community alive and vibrant we need to shop locally and use local services," Adam declared.

"All citizens have a right

to a safe home and job," declared the girls of Scoil Iosaf who also included animal rights, the Irish language and culture and the environment in their proclamation. "We will respect our planet so that generations to come won't suffer because of our mistakes," intoned Emma Spain.

Equal rights were also at the core of the proclamation drawn up by the girls of St Anne's Rathkeale. "In the last 100 years, we have introduced equality in marriage and woman's right to vote. We need to continue maintaining this equality," said Claire Power.

"Ireland is a great country. We have a lot done but still have a lot left to do. In the words of the American president, Barack Obama — *is f idir linn*," her school mate Kate Curtin declared in conclusion.

"These young, confident, idealistic people show us that the future of our country is in safe hands," said Damien Brady, chief librarian who was chief coordinator of Limerick City and County Council's 2016 programme, which included the development of the four Memorial Gardens.

But the proclamation of 1916 also got a hearing as part of the ceremony devised for each of the Memorial Garden openings. And at each venue, the 12th Battalion Honour Guard were present to salute the raising of the tricolour.

In addition, there were stirring renditions of songs connected with 1916 and its heroes: The Foggy Dew,



Mayor Liam Galvin lays a wreath at the council offices in Merchant's Quay



Members of the Irish Defence Forces pictured at the Memorial Gardens opening and wreath laying at Kilmallock Area Offices PICTURE: OISIN MCHUGH/FUSIONSHOOTERS

James Connolly the Irish Rebel and Grace. And pupils from various local schools played their part, with lively

Irish music. Officially opening the gardens, Mayor Liam Galvin said: "2016 belongs to everyone in Lim-

erick City and County and to our friends and families overseas. 2016 is our inheritance. It is our story and it

is a story that deserves to be told unambiguously and with pride."

"A memorial garden by

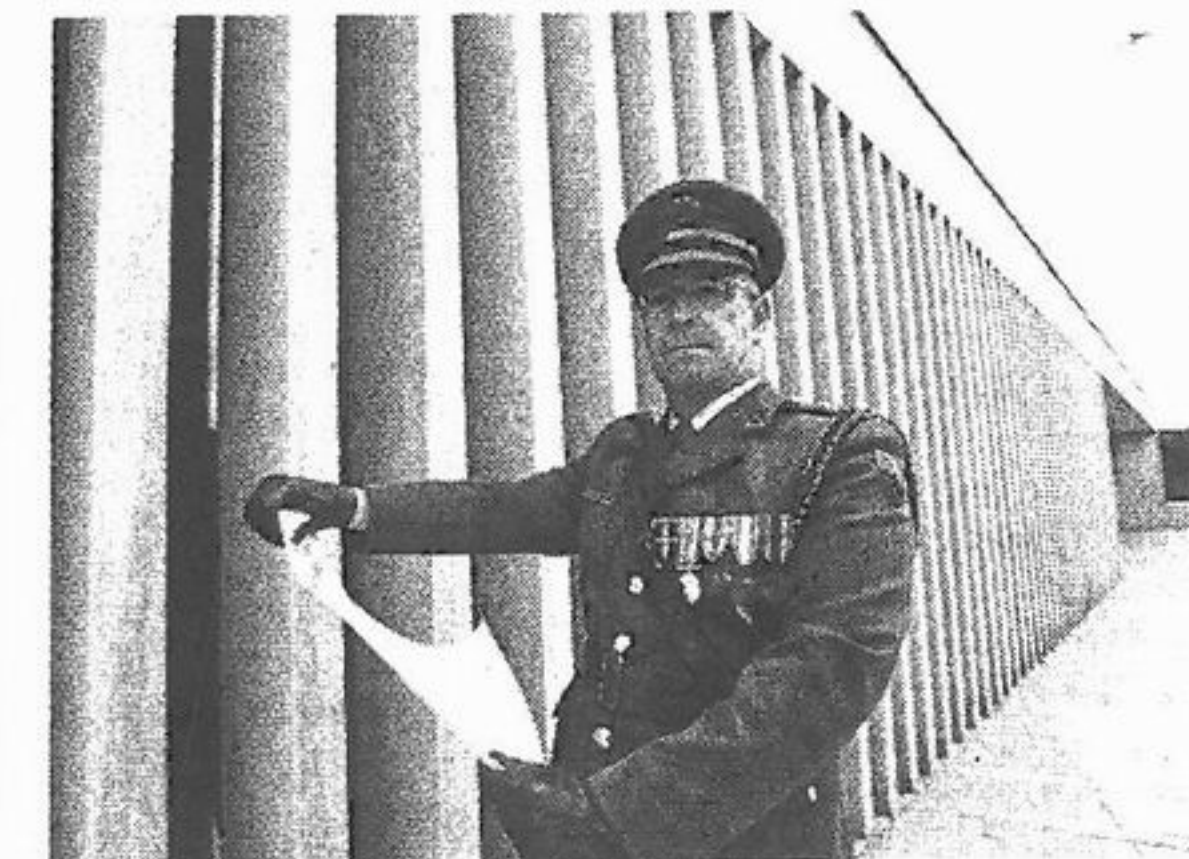
its very nature is inclusive as it belongs to everyone and can be enjoyed by everyone," he continued and went on to



Paudie Burke, 12th Battalion Piper and Michael Egan, Limerick City Pipe Band, at the Kilmallock ceremony



Mayor Galvin and members of the Irish Defence Forces at the ceremony in Newcastle West local area office



Captain Paddy McNamara, Irish Defence Forces

explain the concept behind each garden, designed by Lisa McKnight. "The elements of the Garden take as their references the key events of 1916," he said.

"The central feature of the garden is a limestone sculptural element, by Martha Quinn," the mayor continued.

"The seven trees represent the seven signatories of the Proclamation and the red and white flowers represent the red of sacrifice and the white of peace."

Life-sized replicas of the Proclamation, both in Irish and English, are part of the sculpture, the Mayor said, and at its heart is the National Flag.

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Parish looked to the past and future

Rathkeale exhibition

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THE 1916 commemorations in the parish of Pallasgreen-Templebraden will be remembered in 100 years time as a time capsule was buried on Sunday.

It was one of a number of events that commences in Nicker church with a special prayer service led by Fr Pat Burns. The CJ Kickham Brass Band opened the ceremony and the combined choirs of Nicker and Templebraden sang the first hymn to a packed church. The time capsule, full of items symbolising local life, was brought to the altar by a colour party.

After the moving service a parade led by the CJ Kickham Brass Band, Civil Defence, army, motor cycle cavalcade and parish organisations marched to St Columba's cemetery.

The ceremony began with a wreath laid by Fr Burns in memory of all who died during the Rising. Seven crosses were placed in the ground in memory of the



**Bridget Harding, the oldest citizen in the parish of Pallasgreen-Templebraden, had the honour of hoisting the Irish tricolour**

PICTURES: MIKE O'RIORDAN

seven signatories of the proclamation.

The Irish tricolour was raised by the parish's oldest citizen Bridget Harding,

who was accompanied by the youngest pupils from Garrydoolis, Barna and Nicker schools, Aaron Ryan, David Power, Emma Carroll.

Amhran na bhFiann was played and Pallasgreen native, retired Brigadier General Paddy Hayes read the proclamation.

Siobhan English, of the historical society, thanked everyone for making it a "wonderful day for the parish".



**Leading the way: Part of the parade to St Columba's cemetery**



**Retired Brigadier General Paddy Hayes read the proclamation**



**Fr Pat Burns, parish priest, laid a wreath in memory of those who died during the Easter Rising**

# Caherconlish had its very own Michael Collins in 1916 ceremony

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ONE HUNDRED and twenty people attended the 1916 remembrance ceremony on Caherconlish's Main Street - a perfect location with the backdrop of the War of Independence monument and the ruins of the old Abbey and Steeple providing an historic vista.

After a brief introduction by local historian Pat Hourigan, a prayer was read by Fr Roy Donovan. It was followed by an address on the Rising by Mr Hourigan and an excellent contribution by John Kennedy on the civilian aspect of local life in Caherconlish in 1916. Mr Kennedy's family settled in Caherconlish after the fall of Limerick in the second Siege of Limerick in 1691.

The next speaker was Paul Merrigan, Caherconlish, whose father Paul was an officer with the famous West Tipperary Brigade 1914 to 1921. He spoke informatively about the aftermath of 1916 and in-

cluded events right up to the signing of the Treaty in 1921.

A wreath was laid by young Colin Ryan of High Street at the monument plinth. This was followed by John Hourigan singing Grace, which commemorates the marriage of the executed Joseph Mary Plunkett to Grace Gifford. The final honours of raising the national flag, reading the proclamation and playing the national anthem fell to the appropriately named Michael Collins, John Hickey and the young Merrick family.

Mr Collins, co-ordinator of the Caherconlish Workgroup Tidy Towns, prepared the ceremonial site and with his team of volunteers have undertaken excellent work in the last three years.

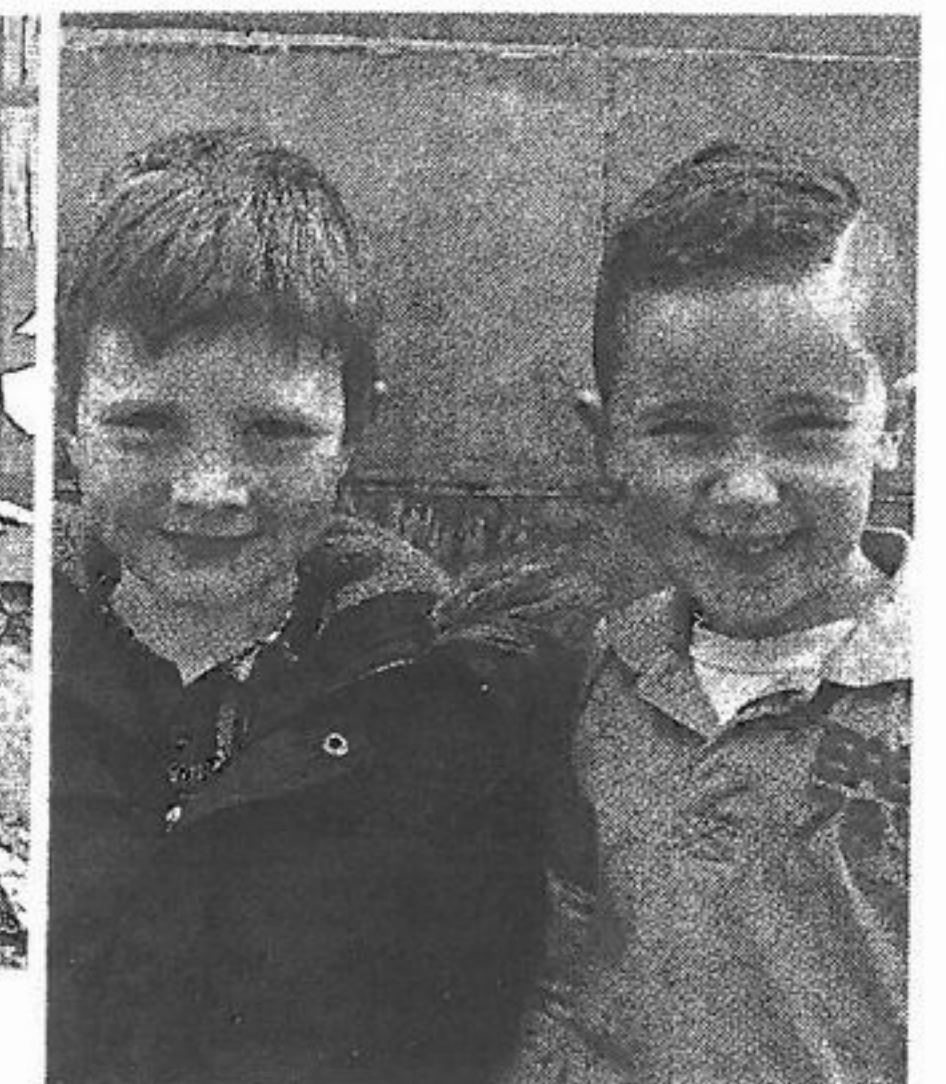
Mr Hickey is one of Caherconlish's newest citizens but chairs the Community Alert. While the Merrick youngsters are accomplished musicians, and with young Colin Ryan, they all represented their parish with pride.



**The black and white photograph and old-style dress adds an extra dimension to Caherconlish's commemoration**



**Kathleen Styles looked the part in her early 20th century outfit**



**Sean Merrick and Colin Ryan, who laid the wreath**

# launch this Friday

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AN exhibition of paintings by the late Jack Donovan of key War of Independence leaders from Limerick is set to be launched in Rathkeale Arts Centre this Friday.

The exhibition includes portraits of Limerick men Sean Wall from Bruff, Sean Finn from Rathkeale, Con Colbert from Monagea, Edward Daly from O'Curry Street in Limerick City, Captain Timothy Madigan, Shanagolden and Liam Lynch. Also included in the collection are portraits of Patrick Sarsfield, Michael Collins and a self portrait of the artist himself.

They were painted by the Mr Donovan - a native of Rathkeale - between 1969 and 1982 and have been hanging in the officers' mess in Limerick's Sarsfield Barracks since.

In recent months, the Rathkeale Patriot Portraits Exhibition committee have arranged to have the paintings cleaned and restored and they will go on display in the arts centre for the next month.

The group has also produced a booklet containing reproductions of the paintings alongside biographical essays on each of the men featured. This will be on sale for €5, with proceeds used to



**Commandant Donie McGrath of Sarsfield Barracks and Tim Donovan with a painting of Michael Collins** PICTURE: ADRIAN BUTLER

offset the costs accrued in restoring the paintings.

In 1969, Rathkeale native Capt. Michael Madden, who was a senior officer in Sarsfield Barracks, commissioned Jack Donovan - who was then head of the Limerick School of Art and Design - to paint the portrait of Sarsfield. The portraits of the other rebel leaders followed over the next 13 years.

Mr Donovan, who died in June 2014, is regarded as a pivotal figure in the development of Irish art. As well as being a highly respected painter in his own right, he was credited with inspiring the next generation of Irish artists,

such as John Shinnors, Brian MacMahon and Henry Morgan.

Friday's launch will include an address by the group's chairman John Cussen and Tim Donovan - brother of the artist - and will also be attended by a representative of the Irish Defence Forces as well as family members of the men portrayed in the paintings. In addition to the paintings, the exhibition will include Sean Finn's uniform, old photographs of Rathkeale and a copy of the 1916 Proclamation. The exhibition will remain on display in the arts centre until May 27 where it may be viewed by appointment.