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Saturday, October 16th, 1999

Michael Hartnett, poet, dies

By JIMMY WOULFE and MARTIN BYRNES

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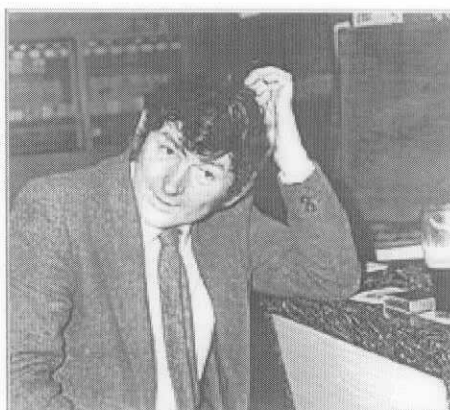
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The late Michael Hartnett

THE great County Limerick poet, Michael Hartnett, died after a short illness in Dublin this Wednesday. He was 58.

Born in Newcastle West, like many others he was forced to emigrate in the 1960s to England.

He returned to live in Templeglantine and decided to write his poetry exclusively in Irish in the mid seventies.

This departure was marked by one of his most famous works, *A Farewell to English*, and his most celebrated work in Irish, *Cúlú éde*.

After about ten years in West Limerick, he moved to Dublin where he wrote in English and Irish.

His last major work, *"O'Rathaille"* was published last year. At the time of his death, he was working on complex translations from German, and had also studied Oriental styles of writing.

Jimmy Woulfe
interview

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In a tribute, this Wednesday, fellow poet, Gabriel Fitzmaurice of Moyvane told the Limerick Leader: "Michael Hartnett was a major Irish poet and had a national stature. He was a major influence on my writing and he taught me virtually everything I knew. I recall travelling to meet him in Newcastle West every Saturday, where we would spend hours talking about poets and poetry over a few drinks."

He was made a member of Aosdána by the Arts Council in recognition of his work, and received an honorary licentiate from Trinity College. He travelled widely as a guest lecturer, most recently on an extended tour of Canadian universities.

A bilingual hour-long documentary on his life was lately screened on TG4 and RTE1, in which the Nobel literature laureate, Séamus Heaney, paid him fulsome praise.

Among his last works was a poem written for the Limerick Leader in memory of his friend, the late Jim Kemmy.

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