

Broadford to honour radical brothers and campaigners

■ Progressive tradition of Sheehy brothers lives on to the present day

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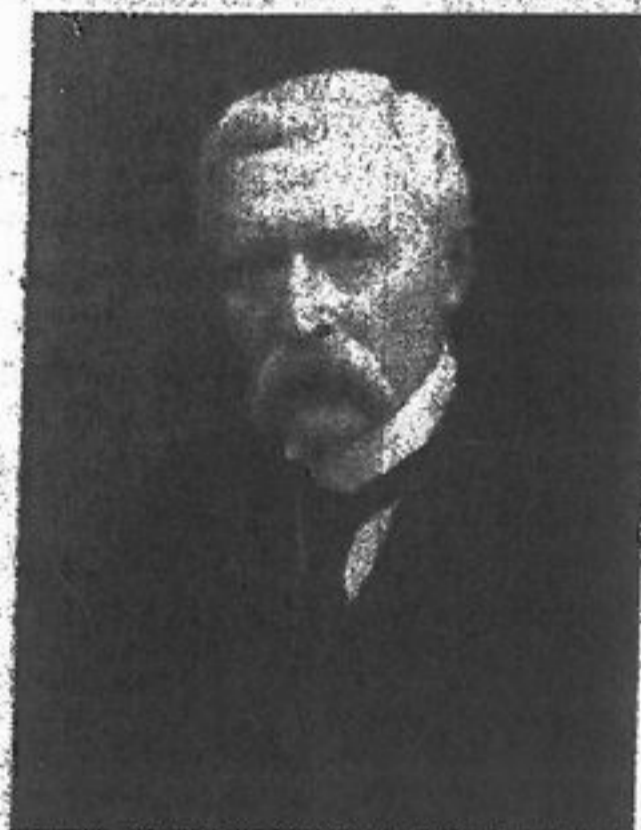
PREPARATIONS are now underway for an event in Broadford to commemorate two locally-born brothers who campaigned against the inequities of the Irish landlord system and made a big contribution to Irish public life over a century ago.

On Sunday, July 16, a memorial to the Sheehy brothers, Eugene and David, will be unveiled and a booklet on their life and times will be launched.

The event is being co-ordinated by the Broadford Heritage Society which has invited Dr Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, the great grand-daughter of David Sheehy and grand-daughter of suffragist and trade union activist Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, to unveil the memorial.

Dr Sheehy Skeffington hit the national headlines in 2014 when she won a landmark Equality Tribunal case in which her claim against her employer, NUI Galway, that she had been discriminated against in a promotion round was upheld.

The July 16 commemoration coincides with the 100th anniversary of the death of Fr Eu-



David Sheehy, MP

gene Sheehy, best known as the Land League Priest and the 75th anniversary of the death of his brother, David who was a Home Rule party MP for almost 20 years.

There is also a family connection to the late US President John F Kennedy, whose maternal grandmother Mary Assumpta Hickey was descended from the Sheehy family.

Eugene and David Sheehy were born in Tullaha, Broadford, in the years before the Great Famine - Eugene in 1841 and David in 1844.



Fr Eugene Sheehy

Eugene studied first in Mungret College and later studied in the priesthood in the Irish College in Paris. The Land War was at its height when he arrived in Kilmallock to take up his first curacy and he was a central figure at a meeting in Dublin in 1879, called by Charles Stewart Parnell to form a central body to carry on the land agitation. He was a forceful speaker and agitator and was arrested and imprisoned in 1881 for his Land League activities.

He was also present at the founding of the GAA in Thurles

in 1884. In the same year, Fr. Sheehy spoke to a large crowd in Knockaderry on the topic of Irish independence which was reported as far away as New Zealand. And in 1886, he went in Galway to oppose the election of Captain O'Shea and supported Parnell.

According to his niece, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, the famous phrase attributed to Parnell and engraved on his statue was first spoken by Father Sheehy at a banquet in Cork (where Parnell and himself were photographed together). During the evening Father Sheehy said "No man has a right to set bounds to the onward march of a nation", and Parnell was struck by the phrase and made it his own.

When the split came in 1890, however, Fr. Sheehy was opposed to Parnell's leadership. He moved to Dublin in 1900 and was in the GPO in 1916 as spiritual adviser to the rebels. He died the following year and was buried in Glasnevin. He is reputed to have said on his death-bed: "I wish I had died with Tom Clarke."

Eugene's younger brother David was involved in the ill-fated Fenian Rising of 1867 and was a supporter of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. He married Elizabeth (Bessie) McCoy of

Curramore House Ballyhahill and owned a milling business near Templemore, Co Tipperary.

He became MP for Galway in 1885 until 1900 and supported John Dillon and William O'Brien in the Plan of Campaign of 1886. He was jailed for 18 months for his different political activities. He sided against Parnell in the split and was MP for South Meath from 1903-1908.

He had six children, the best known of whom is Hannah, the suffragist, feminist, republican and founder of the Irish Women's Workers Union who married pacifist Francis Skeffington, who was killed during the 1916 Rising.

Another daughter Kathleen is regarded as the model for Miss Ivors, a character in James Joyce's *The Dead* while David Sheehy is named in *Ulysses* and the family, characterised as the Daniels, feature in *Stephen Hero*, a draft of *Portrait of the Artist*.

David Sheehy died in 1932 and both brothers lie, side by side, in Glasnevin.

They will be remembered at the ceremony in Broadford which starts at 2pm on Sunday, July 16 when members of the Sheehy, Shea and McCoy families from far and wide are expected.



ON THE WEB

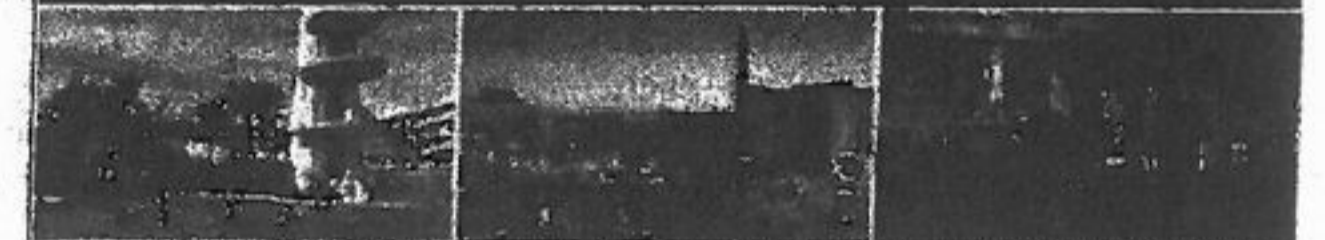
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