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## EDUCATION

# Limerick literacy skills report highlights need for new books

by **Kathy Masterson**  
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A NEW report by the Transforming Education through Dialogue (TED) Project at Mary Immaculate College has highlighted the need for reading material that focuses on post-primary students' motivation to read and gives students a greater sense of achievement.

The report, entitled 'Improving Literacy Outcomes - Bridging the Gap' is an analysis of the literacy needs of

young people aged 12-18 years as identified by teachers in 14 post-primary schools and other education settings.

The purpose of the report was to establish the levels of support needed by teachers and students in developing literacy skills.

The report authors, Fiona O' Connor and Dr Ann Higgins, found that teachers believe the key to motivating and engaging their students in reading is capturing their attention through reading materials on subjects that interest students including: stories and

factual texts about cars, horses or footballers lives; detective and crime stories; local newspapers and magazines related to individual interests such as pets, cars and parenting.

They said: "What the research has shown us is that, in order to ensure all students achieve relevant literacy skills to engage with the academic demands of education and indeed for life, the necessary supports need to be in the right places and administered appropriately to support the students' progression."

## HISTORY

# Memorial to Limerick War of Independence casualty

by **Bernie English**  
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THE memory of a Limerick man who became the first IRA volunteer to die in the War of Independence will be commemorated this Sunday.

The Meelick/Parteen/Cratloe Commemoration Committee will unveil a memorial at Knockalisheen, Meelick to honour the memory of Robert Byrnes.

A native of Limerick city and an officer in the 2nd Battalion Mid-Limerick Brigade, he was rescued from the Union Workhouse at Shelbourne Road (nowadays better known as St. Camillus' Hospital) by Limerick City Volunteers on Sunday, April 6, 1919.

However, in the course of the rescue, he was shot at point blank range by one of the RIC men guarding him. Mortally wounded, he was brought to Knockalisheen and given refuge in John and Margaret Ryan's farmhouse.

Robert Byrnes died on the evening of Monday, April 7, 1919 and was later buried at Mount St Lawrence Graveyard in Limerick on Thursday, April 10, 1919.

The funeral of Robert Byrnes was also unique in that the man in charge of the funeral cortège was Michael Brennan of Meelick, who was commanding officer of the East Clare Brigade, although Byrnes was an officer of the Mid-Limerick Brigade.

The official unveiling of the Robert Byrnes memorial at Knockalisheen will take place this Easter Sunday at 1pm, when an oration will be given by Limerick historian Tom Toomey.



**Robert Byrnes, who was the first IRA casualty in the War of Independence.**

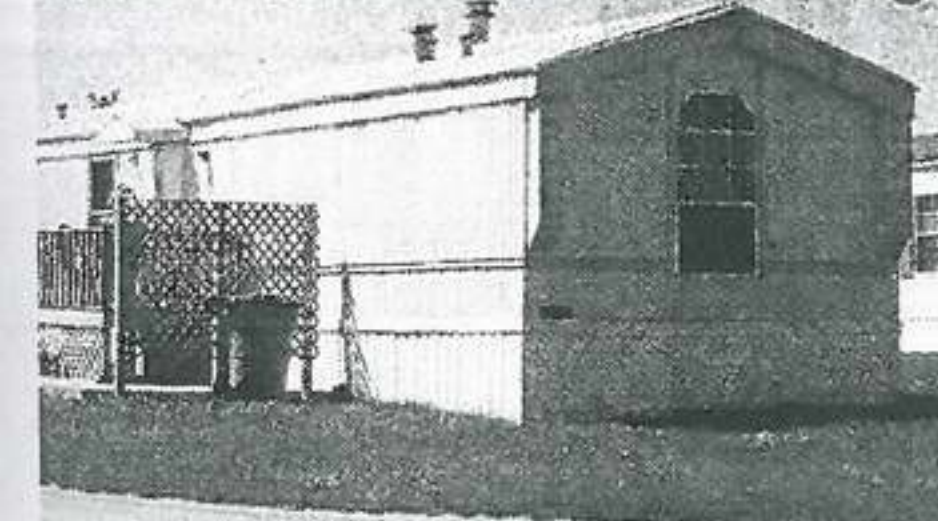
According to local Fianna Fáil county councillor Cathal Crowe, the Meelick-Parteen and Cratloe Commemoration committee pride themselves on being non-political. They come from many walks of life and are united in their interests in local history.

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