

Press Release

Commemorative Monument to General Sean MacEoin to be installed in Ballinalee

2014 is the fortieth anniversary of the death of General Sean MacEoin and as part of an extensive programme of anniversary events Longford County Council have commissioned a commemorative statue to be installed at the cross roads in the centre of the village of Ballinalee.

Mayo sculptor, Rory Breslin who recently completed the emigration sculpture in Centenary Square Longford, was the successful applicant in an extensive selection programme. The selection committee received a wide variety of proposals from some of the country's leading sculptors, each sculptor interpreting the brief of "Sean MacEoin – blacksmith, freedom fighter and politician", in their own original and imaginative way.

The statue will be designed along traditional lines. The portrait in the sculpture depicts MacEoin in his early twenties, the figure will be in bronze, 2000mm high (from heel to the top of his head) and will stand on a limestone base 1000mm square. His head is turned to the right towards Clonfin while his right arm is resting on an anvil on its plinth and in his hand is a copy of the Treaty. He is dressed militarily and depicted as young, vital but relaxed as most of the images and newsreels show him.

According to the sculptor Rory Breslin; "This seemingly simple presentation tells the story of his background (the anvil), his daring and dangerous youth (the uniform and gloves in hand ready for action) and his later dedication to constitutional politics (the copy of the Treaty). This narrative encapsulates the brief while retaining a freshness capturing the vitality of the man."

According to Councillor Micheal Carrigy: "the dedication of a suitable commemorative statue to General Sean MacEoin has been an objective of mine since I entered politics, the statue will form the centrepiece of an entire programme of events being organised next year to commemorate this towering figure of Irish politics and history. The monument will not just be a testament to the man himself, it will also stand as recognition of the courage and patriotism of all of the men and women of North Longford in the nation's struggle for independence".

County Arts Office Fergus Kennedy says; "not only is this project a fitting memorial to a Longford man who has achieved historical status, it will also contribute to the visual enhancement of the attractive village of Ballinalee. It is just one of a number of public art commissions being undertaken by Longford County Council in 2012 – '13. Starting with the Centenary Square emigration memorial, the commemorative limestone sculpture to celebrate the opening of the new Fire Station in Edgeworthstown, followed by the N5

Longford By-pass celebration of Longford's rich musical heritage (a work in progress), the General Sean MacEoin memorial in Ballinalee (also a work in progress) and early in the New Year we will begin the commissioning process for a "five villages" public art scheme. At the completion of this public art programme we hope to have significantly enhanced the visual amenity of many communities throughout the county"

Ends

20/12/12