



Author Tommy Geraghty and Ruairí Ó Brádaigh (centre), who performed the launch, pictured with guests at the launch of 'A View from the Lough' in the Bridge House, Athleague, on Friday night last.

Ó Brádaigh reminisces on internment days

■ Pauline Scott

Roscommon town resident Ruairí Ó Brádaigh reminisced on his days in the Curragh Internment Camp in the late 1950s as he performed the task of launching Tommy Geraghty's 'A View from the Lough' in the Bridge House, Athleague, on Friday evening last.

Guests were welcomed to the event by Master of Ceremonies Tom Morris from Kiltoom. Performing the launch of 'A View from the Lough', Ruairí Ó Brádaigh said that he was very pleased to perform the task of launching Tommy Geraghty's book. "I know this man, Tommy Geraghty, over 50 years and he never ceases to surprise me," said Mr. Ó Brádaigh. He praised the articulate Mr. Geraghty and also had words of praise for Ballygar Writers' Group, of which Mr. Geraghty is a member.

Noting his sporting achievements, Mr. Ó Brádaigh noted that Tommy Geraghty has won six county hurling titles with Tremane and Athleague and was a well known coach with local hurling and camogie teams, overseeing 14 teams that won county titles. "That's some record of service," said Mr. Ó Brádaigh. He went on to quote Patrick Kavanagh who said that at some stage events make their own importance and noted how a local row over Helen resulted in a ten-year siege of Troy. He also recalled how Dermot McMurrow ran away with Tiernan O'Rourke's wife and when he was pursued he "ran over for the Normans to help him and that started all our troubles".

'A View from the Lough' is largely comprised of autobiographical stories and deals with the author's travels to Paris, New York and the Canaries among other areas. Bluefield hurling club also features prominently in the stories.

On the subject of politics, Mr. Ó Brádaigh said, "Tommy is a hard-line republican like myself, that's how I came to know him. He was always very straight and direct and his inspiration was a neighbour Tommy McDermott from Lismaha, Mount Talbot, a Tan war veteran,



Ciarran Dolan, Frank Beattie and Sean Scott pictured at the launch of 'A View from the Lough' in the Bridge House, Athleague, on Friday night last.

who at the age of 18 marched in the funeral of Terence McSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, who died on hunger strike. He (McDermott) was interned several times and he made a big impression on Tommy Geraghty.

"He joined Sinn Féin, Republican Sinn Féin, real Sinn Féin if you like, the Sean Sabhat Cumann and he writes about that and the campaign with regard to joining the Common Market and indeed I remember myself coming to Athleague in 1960, for the local elections for Roscommon County Council and Tommy was a candidate and a very young one."

Mr. Ó Brádaigh went on to reminisce about other local men who were involved in the Sean Sabhat Cumann. Other topics covered in 'A View from the Lough' are farming and folklore and the current state of Ireland.

"He shows a great interest in things around him and you can dip in to this book and read a section and leave it down. His travels interest me enormously. With regard to sport, he donated a Cup for camogie in weaker counties and St. Dominic's won it in its first year."

Among the photos highlighted by Mr. Ó Brádaigh were a photo on page 74, which shows a group of people in the Square in Roscommon who were doing a fast in aid of those interned in the North. The people in the photo are principally from Roscommon, Athleague and Ballaghaderreen and were named

on the night by Mr. Ó Brádaigh.

The launch in Athleague took place on Friday night and a programme about Ó Brádaigh and Daithí O'Connell's escape from the Curragh Internment Camp in September 1958 was broadcast on TG4 the previous evening. Speaking of the programme, Mr. Ó Brádaigh said, "I want to remark on something that has been a part of my life experience. Some of you may have seen the TG4 programme on how Daithí O'Connell and myself showed a clean pair of heels in the Curragh Internment Camp.

"The experience in the camps, where 200 men were interned and also older men, was interesting. What we did, anyone that had any experience of teaching was put holding classes. The result was a kind of mini university. It was a great help to everyone and the classes were crowded."

There were eleven teachers of Irish and on Monday afternoons, Terence Mac Curtain from Cork taught students 'Cúirt an Mean Óiche', the 1100 line poem.

The 1500 men who were interned in the Curragh Camp emerged as "very self-assured people that could mix in any company because they had this close confinement together and what was available brushed off on them. We had a camp newspaper called 'Barbed Wire', a sheet done up every week and printed."

"My point is the question of third level education. Now, Tommy Geraghty would be typical of his

time and when he was finished in the National School, he cycled into the Tech in Roscommon where I taught and my good wife taught. All that was available was a course of two years for the Group Cert, with no exit any higher. I met many young men in the internment camp who could have benefited from third level education but never got a chance. That was in the 1950s and I would say that our author tonight, if he got his chance and as he is so articulate with the pen and paper, he surely would have benefited from third level education. Things have changed since that and so much to the better." Concluding, he urged people to buy and read the book, which he found very interesting.

At the close of the launch, the author Tommy Geraghty read a poem entitled 'The Old Biscuit Tin', which was inspired by a trip to Keane's grocery shop in Athleague. He also criticised the "chipping away at our heritage and culture" and cited examples such as the takeover of British newspapers in Ireland, the decrease in emphasis being placed on the GAA league finals, the promotion of foreign games in Ireland and he said that it appeared that some people would like to bring the Queen to Ireland to throw the ball in at Croke Park!

Dismissing the current political status quo, Mr. Geraghty said, "We are told by opposition parties that if they got into power they would solve all the problems in Ireland, but they wouldn't be long in power until they would be feeding us with the same dose we are getting."

Concluding, he said "I do know that in the future we are going to see a 32 county republic" and he called on the women of Ireland to work towards this aim as their female forbears such as Maud Gonne and Bernadette Devlin had done. His last words on the night were a quote from the programme for the first Dáil, "It shall be our duty to promote the development of the Nation's resources, to increase the productivity of its soil, to exploit its mineral deposits, peat bogs, and fisheries, its waterways and harbours, in the interests and for the benefit of the Irish people."



arts news

■ With Pauline Scott

Mondo muses

There will be many familiar faces in the cast when City Theatre Dublin bring 'God's Official' by Robert Farquhar to Roscommon Arts Centre on Wednesday 19th May.

God's official centres on the story of two madcap football fans who decide to kidnap a referee for a bad refereeing decision. George McMahon, Mondo of 'Fair City' fame and Edwin Mullane of 'Wacker Murphy's Bad Buzz' play the football fans, while Mick Lally, known to thousands as Miley from 'Glenroe' plays the hapless man in the middle.

Two football fans, Degsy and Cliff, have just seen their side relegated after a referee disallowed a perfectly good goal, allowing the opposition to go down the other end and score. The referee's decision is final, or is it? Taking matters into their own hands the two lads come up with a plan to kidnap the Ref and force him to change his mind on the all important goal with hilarious and unexpected consequences.

George McMahon was on tour with 'God's Official' in Cork when Roscommon People caught up with him. Speaking of the plot, he said, "Myself and a mate decide it would be great to kidnap the referee and try to get him to change his mind. Madness ensues."

25-year-old George began his acting career at the age of 14, when he appeared on children's TV show 'Custer's Last Stand-Up' for two series. The series won a BAFTA for the best children's drama. In recent years he spent three years playing Mondo in 'Fair City' and also appeared on a docu-drama about the events surrounding the Stardust tragedy. Another highlight of his career to date has been appearing in the movie 'Fifty Dead Men Walking' alongside luminaries such as Ben Kinsley. "Between those I have been on tour with various different productions, including 'How Many Miles to Babylon?' and various Gaiety pantomimes."

George is enjoying the current experience of touring with God's Official. "I am enjoying the experience, it's great to see every nook and cranny of Ireland. We have been to Belmullet, Limerick Thurles, Carlow, Mullingar, Cork and Galway, Derry and Antrim."

God's Official comes to Roscommon Arts Centre on Wednesday, May 19th. To book, call (090) 66 25824.

Cinemobile visits Castlereah

Cinemobile will be in Castlereah from Friday 14th May to Sunday 16th May.

Starring Sandra Bullock in her Oscar winning role The Blind Side tells the true story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatised boy who became a National Football League player with the help of a caring woman and her family. The Blind Side will be screened at 8 pm on Saturday.

Friday evening's screening at 8 pm is the latest Scorsese/DiCaprio collaboration, the mystery crime thriller Shutter Island and on Sunday afternoon we have the most recent Tim Burton release, Alice in Wonderland.

For teenage audiences Cinemobile will be screening Kick-Ass, while younger audiences will have the opportunity to see the ever-popular Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel; Nanny McPhee and the newly released How to Train Your Dragon.

