

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

### ATHY MUSEUM SOCIETY



### STEPHEN CULLINANE AND MACRA NA FEIRME

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 1944 a number of men who were members of an agricultural class in Athy's Technical School attended a meeting convened by their teacher Stephen Cullinane. Cullinane, a native of Castlegar, Co. Galway, was just 24 years of age. Following that meeting a Young Farmers Club was formed which, with the Mooncoin Young Farmers Club, later established the National organisation Macra na Feirme. The first Chairman of Macra was Paddy Kehoe of Athy, while Stephen Cullinane was Macra's first Secretary. The Headquarters of the new organisation was set up in the Town Hall in Athy and was officially opened by President Sean T. O Ceallaigh on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1947.

Stephen Cullinane, with the financial backing of Paddy Kehoe and Juan Greene, started the Irish Farmers Journal that was initially distributed through the Young Farmers Club network. He died in 1951 but his legacy is recalled in the monument unveiled by President Mary Robinson in Emily Square, Athy on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Macra na Feirme.