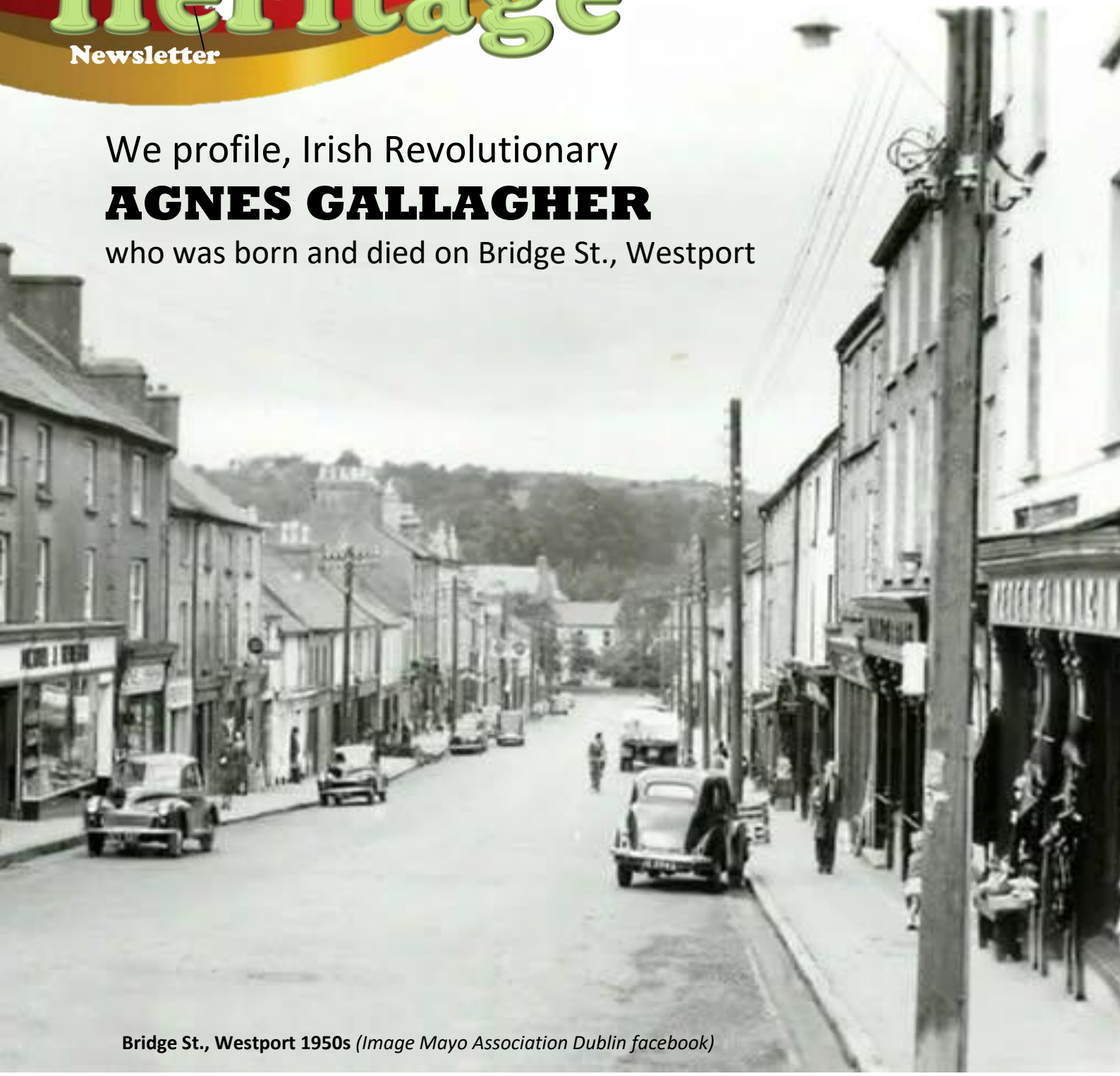
North Mayo Heritage Centre
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We profile, Irish Revolutionary

AGNES GALLAGHER

who was born and died on Bridge St., Westport



Bridge St., Westport 1950s *(Image Mayo Association Dublin facebook)*

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FEATURE ARTICLE

AGNES GALLAGHER

Agnes Gallagher (1863–1946) was an Irish revolutionary, musician and music teacher from Westport who actively aided the fight for Irish independence.

She was born on 19th November 1863 (163 years ago this week) in Bridge St. Westport, the sixth daughter of Patrick Gallagher and Margaret Gill. Her family operated a drapery shop on Bridge Street. She had two older step siblings. Both sides of her family were actively involved in the struggle for Irish Independence.

Major John MacBride was her cousin as was Joseph MacBride who was elected to represent South Mayo in 1918. Her half – brother Martin was a Fenian who had to leave Ireland for America when there was a price on his head.

Agnes was a revolutionary musician and music teacher. She came from a wealthy family and both she and her sister studied violin. She ran a music academy for the children around the area where she lived.

Agnes held concerts and raised funds for Volunteers and Fianna Eireann members. She also raised funds for dependants of volunteers in prison. As a member of Cumann na mBan she travelled to Dublin on a number of occasions for business.

In 1918 Agnes became Westport Cumann na mBan branch president. She made her home available for IRA senior officers. She was able to obtain rifles and ammunition for the IRA. Agnes was also used to liaise over the terms of any truce being offered.

Between 1919 and 1920 British forces began to suspect her due to her activities. This led to her home being raided and her students searched by authories on a number of occasions. Her music academy was shut down.

At one time her home was nearly burnt down by the Black and Tans but thankfully they ran out of petrol before they reached it. Agnes escaped to Islandmore in Clew Bay where she stayed with her relatives, the Gills. She still managed to organise surveillance of the boats arriving to the island.

When she returned to Westport she established a communication station which recorded dispatches and set up an intelligence service to warn off impending attacks. Agnes became the main courier for the IRA despatches in the Westport area.

On June 28th 1922 Civil War broke out. It was a difficult time for Agnes as she was Anti Treaty. On the 21st of April 1923, Agnes, then aged 59, was arrested and sent to prison in Galway without trial. Later she was transferred to Kilmainham Jail. In that same year she, along with seven thousand Republican prisoners in other prisons, went on hunger strike. Due to a fall she lost her sight and despite being weak she was transferred to the brutal North Dublin Union Workhouse on the 28th September.

Agnes was released in October 1923 and sent back to Westport. Her health was poor, she was blind, she could not teach anymore. Her brother Edward supported her. In 1934 the Government introduced the Military Pension Act which included Cumann na mBan members. She received it in 1942. Agnes died at her home on Bridge Street in Westport on the 19th June 1946 aged 82 years.

Sources:
Mayo Ireland.ie
Our Irish Heritage.org

IRISH BLESSINGS AND SAYINGS

Níl aon tínteán mar do thínteán féin (translated as there is no place like home).

Is fada an bóthar nach mbionn casadh ann (translated as it's a long road that has no turning).

Is fear an tsláinte ná an táinte (translated as health is better than wealth).

Tús maith leath na hoibre (translated as a good start makes half the battle)

In English we often hear the following:

- May your home always be too small for your friends.
- May you live as long as you want and never want as long as you live.
- May the road rise to meet you.
- May you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead.
- Many hands make light work.
- Good things come to those who wait.
- Money is the root of all evil.
- Better to be late than sorry.
- It's the early bird that catches the worm.
- You're never too old to learn.
- Be kind to those who meet you as you rise, you may pass them again as you fall.
- Time is a great healer.
- You'll never plough a field by turning it over in your mind.
- A kind word never broke anyone's nose.
- The older the fiddle, the sweeter the tune.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
- May your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow, and may trouble avoid you wherever you go.
- May joy and peace surround you, contentment latch your door, and happiness be with you and bless you evermore.
- May misfortune follow you all the days of your life and never catch up.
- As you slide down the bannister of life, may the splinters never point the wrong way.
- You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.
- Mutton dressed as lamb.