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## Hunger strike recalled at Milltown

Andersonstown News

Aine McEntee

05/08/2007

Wreath-laying ceremonies took place right across the North at the weekend to mark the 26th anniversary of the 1981 hunger strikes.

A group of republicans organised events which saw graveside tributes paid to all those who died.

In Derry Patsy O'Hara and Mickey Devine's lives were celebrated, while in Dungiven tributes were paid to Kevin Lynch. In Bellaghy wreaths were laid upon the graves of Francie Hughes and Thomas McIlwee, and in Belfast the lives of Kieran Doherty, Joe McDonnell and Bobby Sands were all remembered. The same honour was bestowed on Martin Hurson in Galbally in Tyrone and Raymond McCreesh in South Armagh.

In Milltown Cemetery republicans from Derry and Belfast and the Mid Falls Commemoration Committee heard from O/C of the Blanketmen in Long Kesh, 'Bik' McFarlane as well as Martin McGuinness' sister Geraldine McColgan.

Musical laments on violin and flute also added huge emotion to the day. Mid-Falls Commemorative Project member Seánda Moore said: "The event was hugely poignant. It was the 26th anniversary of the hunger strikes but also the 20th anniversary of Loughall. We also have Stormont returning, so taking all that into consideration it was a very emotional day for everybody. We would like to say a big thank you to the staff in the Roddy's who put on a superb buffet for everyone in the club afterwards."

Gerry Adams

Meanwhile in Dublin, West Belfast MP Gerry Adams said the hunger strike had marked a watershed in modern Irish history, much like the Easter Rising 66 years earlier.

Speaking at the service in the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin at the weekend, Gerry Adams said the political growth of Sinn Féin and of Irish republicanism is "in no small measure a result of their courage".

He said their legacy could be found in the peace process and the positive transformation it has brought about in Irish society.

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