

Jack Mooney

one of the best of Rathkeale's gentle seniors

Rathkeale will be a poorer and less colourful place following the death, last week, of one of the last of its old stock, Jack Mooney. Jack, who died at 75 following illness, was born and reared in Rathkeale and throughout his life maintained a great affection for, and loyalty to, his native place.

As a young man, Jack joined the Irish Army where he became a PE instructor and a crack rifleman winning All Ireland honours as a champion marksman within the Army. Later, he set up his own wholesaling business travelling Munster to supply small family owned shops in towns and villages, making friends and adding to store of anecdotes along the way. He also worked for some years with McMahons, of Foynes.

In 1951, Jack married Maura Glynn from Galway, and the couple celebrated their 50th anniversary only months before Jack's death. They reared a family of nine, seven sons and two daughters.

A man of old-world charm and courtly manners, Jack was a convivial soul who loved music and a good yarn. As a young man, he played piano and mouth-organ and, until the end, took great -pleasure in a good sing-song and a few jokes. A townsman with a great affinity for the countryside and the ways of nature, he looked forward to the annual shooting season in his younger years but, towards the end of his life, became more interested in and concerned about conservation. In the 1960s, he was involved with Rathkeale Boxing Club, which has again been revived.

But his greatest passion was for fishing and each year, when the mayfly rose, he would make the "pilgrimage" to Lough Corrib. There, close to Maam Cross, he made a home from home for himself, enjoying the company of fellow Rathkeale fishermen who travelled with him, swapping fishing lore and tall tales and making life-long friends among the locals and other regular visitors.

A consummate handy-man, Jack could turn his hand and brain to the solving of many practical problems and was never happier than when he has some little job on the go. A man who liked to be active and useful, he became involved, following his retirement, with his son Bill's landscaping business.

In the late 1980s, Jack became involved with the Dohyle Lake Development Association and helped to oversee the transformation of the pool outside the town into a boating marina and water-sports centre. As a keen angler himself, he took a deep interest in protecting the lake and in its restocking. He also played a very active part in the Association's annual fund-raising event, the Valentine's Ball.

In all he did, Jack Mooney brought common sense and decency to bear.

Essentially a family man, he nonetheless came to embody the best attributes of his community, humour, conviviality, concern and kindness. He was courteous in his dealings with others, loyal to his family and friends and believed life was better lived with a smile and a grain of humour rather than a frown.

Only in the last twelve months of his life did he suffer any serious ill-health. In his last illness, his family are indebted for the great care and kindness of the medical, nursing and other staff in Limerick Regional Hospital.

Jack Mooney died on November 1 and was buried on November 3, following Requiem Mass in Rathkeale, in the old cemetery. He is survived by his wife Maura, his sons Bill, Aidan, Robert, Richard, Declan, Brian and Niall, by his daughters Lourda and Jacqueline, his sons-in-law Jack Meade and Luke McCarthy, his daughters-in-law Una, Halley and Joan, by his grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives, neighbours and many dear friends.