

Pairc Ide Naofa Chill Ide

In October 1980 the local newspapers heralded Killeedy's breakthrough in capturing their first county senior hurling title with a variety of headlines — "Sensational Win for Killeedy", "The year of the underdog", "first for Killeedy" etc. And sensational it was indeed — they had failed on three previous attempts and this one looked like going too. But luck was with them and so the county cup resided in Killeedy during the Winter months and many were forecasting a long domicile for the John Daly Cup in the West Limerick parish.

And when these same newspapers carried the headlines "Killeedy's reign as champs in a short-lived" and "Killeedy's reign brought to an end" just nine months later in July 1981 many might have felt Killeedy were only fluke winners and a team of the past. While the Killeedy team and supporters were disappointed to be eliminated from all championships early this year by being defeated by old rivals Tournafulla in the West Limerick senior hurling semi-final they used this set-back to renew their resolve to once again become a leading light in Limerick hurling and as a practical step on this course undertook with renewed vigor and enthusiasm the programme of field development which hopefully will see them train and play on their own grounds during 1982 for the first time in the club's history.

The success story of Killeedy G.A.A. is commendable especially when viewed against the background of a club without a field. This dearth of local facilities has caused the club to move all around the parish in search of playing accommodation right from its earliest days to modern times. A brief review of this movement is of interest. The benevolence of the Winters family of Ashford in the 1920s and 30s will always be remembered. They made two fields available — the one presently across the road from Ashford Church and the other across from Mrs. Mary Quinlivan's residence. Great duels are remembered from these fields and such were relations between the Winters family and the club that the former acted as bankers for the club — they held club funds on deposit and promptly advanced withdrawals on request.

Dan O'Mahony's field at Cloncon, now owned by Tommy O'Mahony, was occasionally used for matches and was usually free of charge. Situated at the rear of the residence of the former parish clerk at Ashford, Mrs. Mary Ita Hallinan, this field was also used for horse-racing and sports. Dore's field at Ballagh will be vividly remembered by many of the old gael's who still survive.

By Joseph O'Connor

Situated just below Dore's house, now owned by James Mulcahy, this field was constantly used for hurling and football training and many memorable incidents occurred there.

Danny Con Casey's field at Ballagh is remembered as the place where Killeedy gael's trained and practiced among themselves — situated in front of the then Casey home and now owned by Gerard Curtin games with outside teams were not played here. A feature of the training here were the nightly warming up sessions which consisted of long jump and high jump endeavours — it is known that the Killeedy athletes had little difficulty clearing 21½ feet in the pit and 5 feet on the high jump.

In the same locality John Hennessy's field of Killeedy was much used for games with outside teams. This field situated second from the road and on the left of the avenue now leading to its present owner, also John Hennessy, saw among others the teams of Knockaderry, Broadford and Tournafulla perform on its surface. On one occasion a Knockaderry player who ended up on the avenue following a hefty tussle had his collar-bone dislocated.

A field on the Broadford side of Cronin's house in Raheenagh and still in possession of the Cronin family saw many a fine inter-parish contest. One particular game at this venue between Broadford and Killeedy became very robust and was only defused by prolonged and passionate pleading from sideline spectators.

Con Magner's field at Killeedy is part of Killeedy G.A.A. folklore having been used for many decades — used as club headquarters for several years this field would have seen the real greats of Killeedy perform. A list of these would occupy much space but it can be said that anyone who was anything in Killeedy hurling or football would have played here. Bridging the period from the 1930s to the late 1960s the availability of this pitch brought permanence, cohesion and purpose to Killeedy G.A.A. and doubtless the seeds of recent successes were sown there.

A field the property of Kantoher C.D.S. was made available to the club at a nominal fee in the early seventies courtesy of the management committee — it was in this field that organised scientific training was first employed by Killeedy G.A.A. leading to their first county final appearance in 1973 and to their first divisional senior title in 1974. Inclement weather at times forced the club to train indoors in Cronin's hall on the Community centre and oftentimes road training was adopted.

Recent years have seen team training sessions back again in Hennessy's farm in Killeedy which had been used earlier this century also by the club — on this occasion however a different field was used which carries with it the distinction of being ideally suited to training irrespective of weather conditions or time of the year.

And yet with all this field hunting the club has produced a remarkable list of achievements right through this century culminating in the spectacular successes of the past decade when the first senior county title was won in addition to five divisional titles, numerous titles in several other grades and participation by the under 14 national community games team in the All-Ireland final of 1980. The club's contribution to county teams has been most consistent throughout this century culminating in the seventies in the enormous Fitzmaurice input including Fr. Paudie's captaincy of the 1981 Munster senior hurling championship winning team.

Despite these successes the club never lost sight of the vision of owning its own playing field. Efforts to secure such a facility were investigated and undertaken on many occasions but the big breakthrough came in October 1979 with the acquisition of a 4 acre site at Raheenagh from the local community development association. In 1969 this association had nurtured the idea of a community centre — a place where young and old, the athletic and not so athletic could meet to pursue various social, cultural, educational and sporting interests. When completed the overall complex on 6 acres included a pitch and putt course and putting green, two tennis courts, basketball court, car park and community hall seating 300 people. A further stage of the development saw Killeedy G.A.A. acquire the pitch and putt site in 1979 and now the job of conversion to a full size playing field is well advanced.

To be named Pairc Ide Naofa after the parishes beloved Patron, St. Ita, who lived there in the 6th century, it is hoped the field will be officially opened during 1982. The provision of a full size playing pitch 160 yds. by 85 yds. approximately was made possible as a result of a very generous donation of two extra pieces of land free of charge by Fr. Martin O'Donnell P.P. and local far-

mer Mr. Michael Walsh.

Other generous gestures were to follow and within months the hiterto bumpy and uneven pitch and putt course had a major face-lift which saw the top-soil removed to enable the site to be perfectly levelled and thoroughly drained before the top-soil was again returned. The generosity of local heavy earth moving machinery contractor Mr. Jim Hickey will long be remembered as his machinery spent many days on the site at only a nominal rate, resulting in savings of a couple of thousand pounds for the club. Closely associated with the club Mr. Hickey has made several donations and presentations in the past. Local ACOT advisers Mr. James Barry and Mr. Liam Mullane offered expert advice on drainage and seeding and building contractor Mr. Denis O'Grady of Newcastlewast gave valuable counsel on setting up the controls for levelling. Much voluntary labour was required to remove stones, set boundary fences, lay pipes etc. and this was available in bounty as were the tractors and trailers of many local farmers.

By this time club officials had regularised the legal details resulting in the pitch being vested in the G.A.A. and having as trustees Mr. Donie Nealon secretary Munster Council, Mr. Tom Boland secretary Limerick County Board and local club trustees Mr. Pat Curtin, Chairman, Mr. John Magner Secretary, Mr. Benjamin Mullane Treasurer, Jeremiah Scanlon senior and Michael Deely.

At the time of purchase the field cost £5,000 and an additional £30,000 approximately will have been expended when the development is fully complete. Grants totalling £6,000 have been sanctioned to the club so at completion the net cost will be in the region of £29,000. The task of raising funds to meet this expenditure is spearheaded by the club officials who have been ably assisted by Messers Jimmy Magner, Mike Dore, Thomas McEnery and Pat Hayes. Most club members have also been working hard and the youth members are especially active.

Three main methods of fund-raising have been employed with much success. The club firstly appealed to business firms with G.A.A. sympathies and were more than surprised with the many generous contributions which were freely given. The second line of attack was an appeal to the parishioners who responded in their numbers in a most gracious fashion. The third approach was an intensification of normal club fund-raising methods and this approach will continue until the project is complete. Such things as the annual St. Stephens Day wren-boys outing, weekly 45 card drive in conjunction with the local community centre committee, 300 club draw, public dances in the local dancing centres and an annual Christmas raffle are among the normal fund-raising activities. The Christmas raffle, now in its third season, has been spectacularly successful and last year yielded a phenomenal 15,000 profit. It is a tribute to the fund-raising campaign that all work on the site to date has been paid from cash reserves and it is not envisaged at any stage that monies

will have to be borrowed to meet expenditure.

To be able to meet all expenditure from cash resources is a formidable undertaking when viewed against the background of the establishment of a special sub-committee whose task is to push through the further development of the pitch. Headed by the two Fr.'s Fitzmaurice this committee's plan is that modern dressing rooms, a meeting room and handball alley which can be used as a gymnasium when required will be ready for use in late 1982. A number of other field developments were examined by the committee before submitting their plans for Killeedy and they predict their plans will give the club one of Munster's best G.A.A. developments. It is fortunate the G.A.A. development is strategically situated at Raheenagh beside the parish community centre and the local national school enabling all parishioners a broad range of social and sporting facilities in one place — doubtless the school children will make full use of these amenities under the careful guidance of Mr. Gerry Forde N.T. School principal.

Killeedy Gaels can look ahead with much anticipation to the improved performance of all their teams in all grades during the next decade. The achievements of the senior team in recent times makes pleasant reading — the next decade should be even more pleasant to read of. Already the seeds of success are being nurtured among the under age teams on whose shoulders will fall the task of making the next decade the golden era of hurling in Killeedy. Their record for 1981 is worthy of mention — they contested the under 14 western hurling final with Newcastle West, they were victorious in the under 15 divisional final over Newcastle West and the Under 16 hurlers contested their divisional final with Feohanagh. The possibilities will be limitless when all grades and all ages will have proper playing, training and changing facilities at their disposal within their own parish.

Owning its own field and facilities will be beneficial to Killeedy G.A.A. and to the parish in general. The benefits to the club have been mentioned already. The parish has already had the happy experience of seeing the whole community work together in one corporate unit to pay and prepare the pitch and its facilities. On completion the parish will have a control and public sports cum recreational centre geographically located within easy reach of all — a place where the young and old, the athletic and not so athletic can meet for the greater benefit of all. Generations to come will reap the rewards of the endeavours of to-day and sociologists will point to Killeedy as possessing the essential ingredients of a balanced and caring community.

And when the G.A.A. celebrates the centenary of its founding in 1984 Killeedy club can be justifiably proud of its adherence to the aims of the association and of its endeavours to put them into practice — by this and by having provided its own playing facilities the club can be regarded as saluting the associations centenary with dignity and honour.

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Killeedy County Champions for the first time

1980

SEVEN MINUTES remaining and it looked home and dried for South Liberties with Michael Butler possessing the opportunity of stretching the lead to seven points with only goal-keeper Pat Meehan to beat. For Killeedy – it looked like the same old story all over again. But Meehan saved and in Tony Doran like fashion Tom Mulcahy palmed the clearance to the net for Killeedy. With four minutes remaining Willie Fitzmaurice pointed to leave the sides level. Was there still a chance, or could Killeedy hold Liberties scoreless and hope to win the replay and maintain their impressive 100 per cent county championship replay winning record.

Yes they did hold Liberties scoreless and went one better, when a new Killeedy hero was positively identified – he was Mike Fitzmaurice and his twenty seventh minute goal, brought the John Daly Cup to Killeedy for the first time and to West Limerick for the first time since 1963. Killeedy had confounded everybody – the 1980 county championship was theirs.

Winning the first senior title is a milestone in our club's history, winning it from South Liberties is fantastic and winning it as way out underdogs is splendid. Pre-match ballyhoo and speculation had already awarded the game to South Liberties – they had the big guns, they had the strength, they must come out on top. Killeedy would try desperately hard but would in all

by Joseph
O'Connor

probability be found wanting.

But this did not upset the men from the West who kept a low profile and steered their resolve to give the appropriate answer on the field of play. Killeedy were quietly

confident in the knowledge that their preparation was right – the team was motivationally well tuned, trained to perfection and playing tactics were adopted with computer like precision.

The Killeedy boys were well aware of their great hurling tradition but realised that these memories were no substitute for the real thing. They were also aware that in hurling, as in other areas, each generation must win its own laurels. These were the convictions which paid rich dividends to the Killeedy tigers at the sun-drenched Gaelic Grounds on October 12th.

Its twelve years since Fr. David O'Connor changed the face of Killeedy hurling – he passionately instilled in the players the conviction that one day Killeedy could make it to the top ranks. "You can do it if you believe you can do it", he said. Leaving Ireland in the early seventies he predicted Killeedy would shortly be

among the top teams in the county. How rewarding that his forecast is fully accomplished this year.

An under 21 western title in 1969 was evidence of Killeedy's emergence from obscurity. Defeat by Ballygarry in the west junior final was a setback that same year but a revamping of the club structure and administration saw Killeedy opting for senior ranks in 1972 as a new revised hurling structure was introduced in the county. Killeedy has been in every west Limerick senior hurling final since then.

But did Killeedy possess the tenacity and durability to contest county finals? That question was resoundingly answered in 1973 when the boys in blue overwhelmed county champions South Liberties in the county quarter final – this Liberties team had spearheaded Limerick's All Ireland Triumph in the persons of Eamon Grimes, Pat Hartigan and Joe Mc-



KILLEEDY — Community Games Team — Standing: John Wagner, Michael Browne, Denie O'Donnell, Oliver Kenny, Jerry Forde, John Linn, John Manner, John Hennessey, Anthony Hartnett, Mike O'Donnell, Kevin Kelly, Jerry Forde, Front: Sonny

Thanks for the Memories

RECORD BOOKS are an integral part of any game. Students of each and every sport love to delve into the statistics and if they know who won what in such a year they believe they are the unchallengeable experts. Very often, though, they are wrong. Take the 1980 finals of the Munster and All-Ireland Hurling Championships.

In years to come, your sons and your grandsons will open their records and see that Limerick beat Cork by 4 points in the Munster Final at Thurles and then lost by 3 to Galway in the All-Ireland at Croke Park. All very well and factual as far as it goes, but those Limerickmen who revelled in the Munster final and suffered agonies at "Croker" in September know only too well the drama that unfolded on those memorable afternoons.

And I'm glad that I write these few humble words without the aid of notes or press cuttings of the matches. I prefer to remember them for the marvellous occasions they were for the teams involved and even more so for the game of hurling itself. I don't believe anybody outside of Cork begrudged Limerick their success at Thurles, while we

Says Charlie Mulqueen ("LIMERICK LEADER")

Limerickmen found it hard to bemoan the Galway triumph at Croke Park, coming as it did after 57 long years.

Let us ignore the statistical facts and cast our minds back to some of the more memorable moments instead. The one that stands out especially for me of the Thurles game was when will-of-the-wisp Olly O'Connor flashed on to a loose ball after a dreadful collision between Cork defenders Martin O'Doherty and John Horgan. The little Ballybrown man was in behind them like a flash, gathered and shot to the net before many in the 44,000 crowd were aware of the possibilities at all.

What a goal from a great hurler! And on the other side of the full-forward line was the ever-reliable Eamonn Cregan, on hand to scoop home a goal when the Cork 'keeper fumbled and ice-cool in the taking of vital second-half frees into the wind.

And it was the day, too, that many Limerick hurlers came of age! Jimmy Carroll

at mid-field was perhaps the man of the match, and his partner, David Punch, prospered the longer it went on. The striking of Liam O'Donoghue was magnificent and one eighty-yard point was wonderful. The men who perhaps won the day most of all were in the last line of defence, with Donal Murray, Leonard Enright and Dominick Punch in control against one of the greatest of all hurling front lines. So effective, indeed, was Enright that the Cork selectors felt obliged to take his illustrious opposite number, Ray Cummins, out of the game – the first time Cummins had been substituted at inter-county level.

So it was glory all the way for Limerick, and the huge green and white throng cheered themselves hoarse throughout and went almost berserk afterwards as the gallant captain, Sean Foley, accepted the trophy.

Yes, indeed, that marvellous match was savoured well by Shannonside. The road home was a sea of green and white and already

the slogans for the All-Ireland final day banners were being conjured up in vivid imaginations. For that victory over Cork put Limerick straight into the All-Ireland final and now it was the job of manager, Noel Drumgoole and his fellow-selectors and trainer Tim Crowe to get them into the right frame of mind for the big day.

Galway had beaten Offaly, the shock Leinster champions, to reach their second successive decider and were the underdogs when September 7th came around. Alas, the betting men got it wrong for once! Limerick, shattered by a terrible start and 2-1 to no score behind after seven minutes, played with their hearts more than their hurleys. Men who had seen off the challenge of Cork and Clare, and helped to provide two memorable league finals at Pairc Ui Caoimh, had lead in their boots.

Usually superb strikers of the sliotair were afflicted by butterflies – and butterfingers – and some couldn't even get a sideline cut airborne. With nothing going right and a lot wrong, they battled away with the courage of men who just wouldn't give up. At the end, just 3 points separated the sides and if that margin was an injustice to an admirable Galway side, it also showed the mettle of the Limerickmen. Had Conor Hayes not somehow intercepted a goal-scoring pass from Eamonn Cregan to Joe McKenna in the closing minutes, God only knows what would have happened.

Still, justice was done and no Limerickman suggested otherwise. We took our beating well (I suppose we had plenty of practice doing so over the years! (and at least could take pride and pleasure from the knowledge that the Limerick of 1980 had played probably the major role in maintaining the game





KILLEEDY SENIOR HURLERS — COUNTY CHAMPIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME

BACK ROW: Mick Delee (Trainer), Paudie Fitzmaurice, Mike Cunningham, Willie Fitzmaurice, Gerard Magner, Jack O'Connor, Denis O'Connor, Mike Scanlon, Tom Mulcahy, Jody O'Connor, Mike Fitzmaurice, Mike Cunningham, John Magner (Secretary).

FRONT ROW: Benjo O'Sullivan, Donie Flynn, Ben Mullane, Con Herbert, Eddie Mullane, Pat Meehan (Capt.), Neilly Browne, Mike Browne, Mike Sheils, Willie Cronin, Pat O'Connor.

MISSING: Jim Mulcahy, Liam Shine, John McGrath, Pat Joe Cronin, John Cunningham.

enna a few weeks earlier. Later that year Killeedy were competing in their first county final against Kilmallock.

Since then the outstanding ambition of our club has been to win a county title — so we have kept on trying against all the odds. South Liberties beat us in the 1976 final and Patrickswell did likewise in 1977 — but we weren't to throw in the towel yet. Our fourth attempt this year was abundantly successful.

So Killeedy's do or die spirit had at last been handsomely rewarded — and what a welcome home our heroes received. From the summit of Mullaghenuish at 1189 feet to the lowly lands of Moanroe at only 200 feet the bonfires blazed and the people praised. From Glenquin to Glenduff, we drank lots of black stuff as the cup went around and around. The little parish has rarely seen such joy and excitement as was witnessed that evening — the pubs served frothy pints into the night as feats of earlier days were recalled and compared. This victory is one swoop brought together all the followers who have constantly followed Killeedy for decades — long gone parishioners were to return to join the natives and the celebrations on the bhonn

The victory was excellently timed, for the club itself which embarked on a heavy club development programme this year. The newly acquired field will be ready for 1981 when dressing rooms, ball alley and club rooms will be constructed. The victory is an ideal platform to give hope and inspiration to the upcoming generation of young players. Congratulations to the under 14 community games team who contested the All Ireland final this year — now they know what can lie ahead for them too. Heartiest congratulations are extended to the senior team and their co-workers — but a word of appreciation is also due to the people of the parish who have kept the dream and ideal of a county title before their eyes for many decades.

Let us not exclude those who have already departed this life from the list of credits — many of them did trojan work when tangible rewards were not in sight. The 1980 team was embodying their efforts as well as its own. Well done also to the ladies of Killeedy — the mothers, wives and sisters of players who made their own sacrifices.

Above all, let us keep before our minds the sacrifice and dedication of the

hard slog at training week in week out and the interference this has on one's personal, family and job commitments.

The parish of Killeedy has benefitted much from this victory — a fine hurling tradition has been perfected and it will serve as a medium to embrace and unify all strata of opinion within the parish and it will further the links between parishioner and ex-parishioner.

Killeedy is now in the limelight of the G.A.A. stage. Its success from very humble beginnings must give hope to other clubs in similar circumstances. From a small rural population with nearly half the panel working outside the parish the club has moved gradually but steadily from non-existence to county fame. The advance was painfully slow at times — but every inch, every foothold was seen as progress, every bruise and every injury was seen as part of the price. It took effort, dedication and resolve — “great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance” said Samuel Johnson 200 years ago.

Being in the limelight carries with it duties and obligations for Killeedy G.A.A. Having admirably promoted gaelic games the club's dedication to the cultivation

be urgently reborn. The club might be expected to show exemplary leadership in civic and religious parish activities — assist at senior citizens party, maintain St. Ita's cemetery, assist at Sunday mass readings and prayers of the faithful. The administration and public projection of the club must never be allowed to fall short of that expected from county champions. While the loyal supporters of Killeedy will have many opportunities to drink from the Daly cup, the elderly and immobile parishioners should have the same privilege accorded to them. Hopefully the club will also have the challenging captain's duty of instilling into the county team the Killeedy attributes of never say die. Success will come for those who keep on trying.

The winning of the county senior title in 1980 has marked the end of one phase in Killeedy's history and the beginning of another. The era of self-conviction and triumph is ended — the era of consolidation and advancement lies ahead. Just as the history of a nation never ends, neither does the history of a club and time alone will determine its destiny. The history of Killeedy club has been exciting and successful — time as it rolls onwards will be adding to its

KILLEEDY The pride of the West

(Air: The Men of the West)

*They called them the "Team of No Hoppers", whose
chances of winning were slight,
But they proved when they got to the final, that the
critics don't always be right;
Three times they had reached the decider, and three
times they'd tasted defeat,
So they knew it was this time or never, and they vowed
that they would'nt be beat.*

*The bonfires now burn in Killeedy, the West is no longer
asleep,
They showed on the 12th of October, that the Form
Book was up in a heap;
They now have the Cup in Killeedy, the one that
escaped them so long,
Ant their win on that day in October, will be Honoured
in Story and Song.*

*Now none will begrudge them their victory, as none
can deny them their win,
For when they had to end up as Losers, they took their
defeats with a grin;
With Stalwarts like Paudie and Willie, their luck had to
alter some day,
And now that the Cup's in Killeedy, they won't want to
give it away.*

*Now none will forget the last quarter, or the last seven
minutes whats more,
The Cup was'nt going to Killeedy — of that we felt very
sure;
Their Challenge now seemed to be over, and the Game
was'nt going their way,
It was then that they hurled with a vengeance, their
Spirit it carried the Day.*

*So I'll give you a Toast to Killeedy, surely the pride of
the west,
When the odds were really against them, it was then
they refused to give best;
The Cup now rests in Killeedy, they're Dancing by Day
and by Night,
They say they are going to keep it, and who is to say
they're not right.*

Eamonn Devereaux.



The long wait is over — Pat Meehan the Killeedy captain holds the Daly Cup aloft.

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