

# No. 148—SEAN HERBERT of Ahane

**T**HE Herberts of Sallymount have a great record in Limerick hurling. Some of the earliest play in the district so renowned for prowess with the caman took place in a field belonging to the family, members of which have been associated with every worthwhile hurling movement in the parish over half a century.

With Ahane back in the hurling limelight once more, striving to capture their sixteenth Limerick senior title, interest turns to Sean Herbert, one of the veterans of the present team, who can claim association with many of the successes secured by Ahane during their heyday.

From 1931, when they first donned the crown, to 1948, when they last won it, Ahane set a record without parallel in Limerick hurling. Their greatness was proved not alone on the playing fields of Limerick, but wherever a star team was found worthy to hurl them. Against the best teams in the land they lined out and conquered, and had there been an All-Ireland club championship during their years at the top there is scarcely a doubt but that they would have captured the title.

The spell of years during which they reigned was a long one and few players saw the campaign right through. Tony Herbert was the first of the "young blood" of the Herberts to appear on the hurling horizon and he had won laurels with Limerick C.B.S., Munster Colleges and Ahane before figuring on the Shannonside selection that won Munster and All-Ireland honours in 1940.

When Tony went to reside in Dublin, where he still wields the caman with much of his old mastery, a younger brother, Sean, began to show his paces in college games, wearing the Limerick C.B.S. colours.

In O'Mara, Keane and Dr. Harty Cup ties he was to the fore, with the result it was not long before he was asked to wear the green and gold jersey of Ahane.

## A GREAT HONOUR.

This was a great honour for a lad of his age, but one that was richly deserved. From his first appearance with Ahane he never looked back.

Whilst still a mere youth he got his first senior County championship medal with Ahane, and then kept adding to the collection, until the Castleconnell lads faded from the picture, following their 1948 victory.

Meanwhile, his prowess was noted by the County selectors, and his

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play in the 1945 Munster final, against Tipperary, earned him a place on the Munster team for the Railway Cup. His first game was against Leinster, at Waterford, and a right thriller it proved, Munster winning, 0-6 to 1-2. The final, at Croke park, against Connacht, was every bit as exciting, the Southern lads just getting the verdict in a stirring finish, 3-12 to 4-8.

Sean was right-half forward that day, the Munster team lined out—J. Maher (Tipperary), goal; W. Murphy (Cork), J. Cornally (Tipperary), A. Fleming (Waterford), J. Devitt (Tipperary), P. Lyons (Clare), M. Hayes (Waterford), Dr. R. Stokes (Limerick), J. Power (Limerick), S. Herbert (Limerick), C. Ring (Cork), Dr. Jim Young (Cork), P. Fitzgerald (Limerick), A. O'Brien (Clare) T. Doyle (Tipperary).

## WAS NOT ON THIS TEAM.

Sean was not on the team the following year which lost to Connacht in the final, after disposing of Ulster, 9-7 to nil, but participated in the defeat of Connacht at Ballinasloe, 6-5 to 1-4, on February 15th, 1948, to win his second medal, when Leinster were overcome, 3-5 to 2-5. He occupied the same berth on this occasion, but the team was a much altered one—T. Mulcahy (Cork), goal; W. Murphy (Cork), Con Murphy (do), J. Goode (Waterford), J. Devitt (Tipperary), P. Donovan (Cork) S. Solon (Clare), V. Baston (Waterford), M. Hayes (Waterford), S. Herbert (Limerick), J. Power (Limerick), C. Ring (Cork), M. Daly (Clare), E. Daly (Waterford), T. Doyle (Tipperary).

In that same spring of 1948, he helped Limerick to win their sixth National hurling league title, beating Kilkenny on a re-play, 3-8 to 1-7. The Limerick players on that occasion were—P. Collopy (St. Patrick's), goal; Jim Sadlier (Young Ireland), Mick Herbert (Ahane), Tom Cregan (Croom) Sean Herbert (Ahane), Jacky Power, captain (Ahane); Thomas O'Brien (Ahane), Mick Ryan (Dublin Young Irelands), Paddy Fitzgerald (St. Patrick's), John Mulcahy (Cappamore), Dr. Dick Stokes (U.C.D.), Mick Dooley (South Liberties), Paddy Fitzgerald (Askeaton), Denis Flanagan (Knockaderry), John Barry (Shannon Rovers).

## NATIONAL LEAGUE TRIUMPH.

It will be noted that his younger brother, Michael, participated with Limerick in that great National League triumph.

Munster beat Leinster, 2-8 to 1-8 in the 1949 Railway Cup semi-final, and disposed of Connacht in the final, 5-3 to 2-9. Sean was left-half forward on that team, which was captained by Jim Ware of Waterford. Only other two Limerick players on that side were Tom Cregan and Mick Ryan.

We do not contact Sean in Munster colours again until 1952, when Connacht were beaten in the final, the Southern side reading—A. Reddan (Tipperary), goal; J. Goode (Waterford), D. Walsh (Waterford) J. Doyle (Tipperary), S. Herbert (Limerick), P. Stakelum (Tipperary), M. Fuohy (Cork), P. Shanahan (Tipperary), J. Kiely (Waterford), M. Nugent (Clare), M. Ryan (Tipperary), S. Bannon (Tipperary), P. Kenny (Tipperary), D. McCarthy (Limerick), C. Ring (Cork).

He again wore the Provincial colours the following year, when Leinster were runners-up, once more occupying the left-half back berth, with P. Stakelum (Tipperary) and D. O'Grady (Clare) completing the line.

Sean played in five Munster finals, but failed to get a championship medal. His first was the re-play of the drawn game with Cork, in 1944 which the Rebel County men won, 4-6 to 3-6. In 1945, Tipperary beat the Shannonsiders, 4-3 to 2-6. Cork triumphed in 1946 (3-8 to 1-3), and in 1947 (2-6 to 2-3), but Tipperary came back to regain the Munster Cup, in 1949, defeating Limerick 1-16 to 2-10. Sean was captain on the latter occasion, filling the cenere back berth, right in front of his brother, Michael.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT.

A notable achievement in 1949 was the overthrow of the existing All-Ireland champions, Waterford, in the opening round of the Munster championship, and in which triumph Sean played a major part.

Another fine performance came from him when captaining the Limerick C.I.E. depot side to victory in the final of the C.I.E. All-Ireland Cup competition at Croke Park, a few years ago, a success they repeated at Limerick the following season.

Sean is long regarded one of the most stylish hurlers in the southern province, favouring the true original type of play that has so many devotees amongst the old school of hurling fans.

He hits cleanly on the ground or in the air, with remarkable accuracy, gets good distance in every drive, and is swift of stride and stroke.

Long may he flourish!