

Recent G.A.A. Publications 2022

By Seamus J. King

In my collection of publications relating to Tipperary G.A.A. clubs, I want to mention four in particular. They are: *Kilcommon My Home: Mountainy Men at Play* by Bill O'Brien (24 pages), *The History of Glengar G.A.A. Club and Area* by D. J. Treacy (36 pages), *Moneygall Hurling Story 1885-1975* by Seamus Ó Riain (44 pages), *Clonakenny G.A.A. 1905-1993* by Peter Byrne (84 pages).

I mention these to illustrate the contrast with the size of club histories coming on the market today. In particular I have in mind the Nenagh Eire Óg club history, the first two volumes of which appeared in 2014, and the third volume, which was published this year. I referred to the first two volumes under the title, *Gaelic Sport in Nenagh*, by Donal A. Murphy, P. J. Maxwell and Nancy Murphy in the 1916 Yearbook. This is part of what I said: 'Each volume is approximately 400 pages of closely packed print. I estimate that each has 200,000 words, which gives you an idea of the size of the production. When it is realised that the average novel will have sixty to one hundred thousand words, the extent of the production is put in perspective.'

Well, the third volume has now appeared and it puts the first two in the shade, having 830 pages, which makes it larger than the first two volumes put together. It is a monument to the thoroughness and research ability of the authors and will be an important reference work for any information on Gaelic sport in Nenagh for centuries to come.

The volume gives a detailed account of sport in the town on a yearly basis. It covers the period 1960 to 2,000. The format for each year is the same, with 1960 including some material from earlier years. The year begins with the North convention followed by the club AGM, information on club players and club playing activity, street leagues, hurling and football results, the schools 1952-60, handball 1952-1960, camogie, track and field, MacDonagh Park, in all twenty-seven pages of great detail, names, competitions, events, nothing omitted, a dream for future researches, and the same continues for all the years up to 2000.

Volume 3 contains at least 300,000 words and approximately 300 pages of illustrations. The very thought of compiling such information is mind-boggling, The sheer physical effort of researching and gathering so much information together must have been exhausting. And the story isn't finished yet! Volume 4 has to be completed and when one thinks of the proliferation of competitions over the last 20 years and the invasion of photographs recording every movement of people, I expect this book to set new records, which will put the booklets referred to the opening paragraph even further in the shade!

Gaelic Sport in Nenagh, Volume 3 is available at €25.

The Story of the G.A.A. in Silvermines Parish by Michael O'Brien was launched with appropriate celebration in Hickey's Pub in the village on November 5th. A very fine production of 555 pages, it was printed by the *Nenagh Guardian* and has a good colour picture of the club dressing-rooms and grounds on the cover.

One of the highlights of the history is the story of the club winning the Silver Cup way back in 1887. This cup was put up by Michael Cusack for a match between North Tipperary and South Galway in the Phoenix Park in February 1886. The North Tipperary team won the match and the cup was played off for in Tipperary and eventually won by Silvermines. It is a prize possession of the

club as it is regarded as the first inter-county cup to be played for in hurling. Michael O'Brien tells the story in great detail in chapter one. One of the players on the team was Martin Gleeson and his daughter, Nancy Ryan, is still hale and hearty at the age of ninety-eight and a half years. It was hoped that she would attend the launch of the book but wasn't quite up to it.

One of the high points in the history of the club was when Silvermines won their first North senior hurling championship in 1974, beating Roscrea in the final. In that year the county championship was a separate competition in an open draw of thirty-three teams. Silvermines went all the way to the final, only to go down to Thurles Sarsfields by a small margin. It was also a good time for football in the club as well, winning three North titles in a row in 1973, 1974 and 1975.

A native of the parish, Michael O'Brien was the ideal author for this history, having lived all his life in the parish, played football and hurling with success, became involved in administration, including being club chairman from 1976-1978, and went on from there to be secretary of the North and county boards. He was also a notable referee as well as being involved in handball.

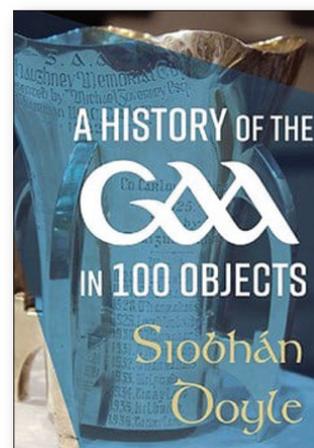
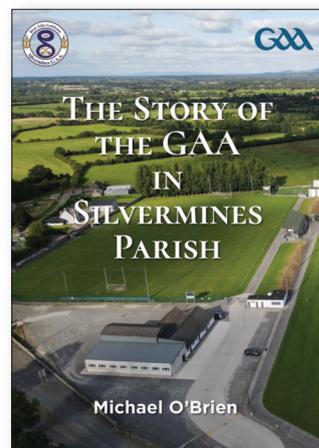
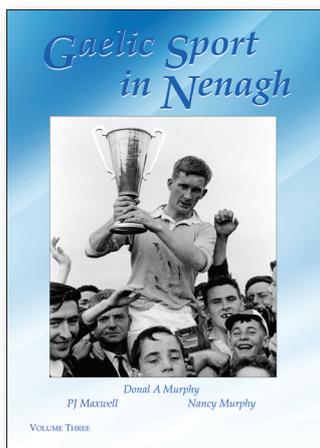
He has produced a very fine book and, while it doesn't include the story of handball, camogie, ladies' football and juvenile games, it will stand as a comprehensive account of the contribution of Silvermines to the story of Gaelic Games in the county.

The book is on sale for €25.

The History of the G.A.A. in 100 Objects by Siobhán Doyle will be of interest to some fans of Gaelic Games. It fascinates me how people can come up with new ways of telling a story and in this book the story of the G.A.A., is told through well known objects associated with the sport and the stories around them.

There's a variety of these objects, medals passed down through generations, jerseys that have changed so much down the years, objects like Michael Cusack's blackthorn stick, which was as much of an appendage to the man as his arm. The introduction includes a picture of the cracked glasses of Annie Burke of Sligo, who put her coat over Michael Hogan as he lay dead on the grass in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday. Many may not know that Annie Burke, was living in Cashel at the time and later married Michael Looby, They had one child and she is a nun living in a convent south of London at present. It was she who presented the glasses to Croke Park two years ago.

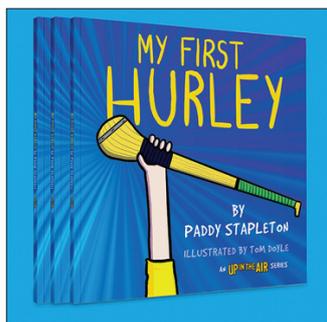
The range of items in this list comes from the counties of Ireland. Two of them are from Tipperary. One is the famous Silvermines Cup, which was put up by Michael Cusack in February 1886 for a match between North Tipperary and South Galway. It was won by North Tipperary and eventually won by the Silvermines Club in an inter-club competition. The second object is the Tubberadora Cap, two of which are in Lár na Páirce museum in Thurles. The cap was worn by the Tubberadora players, who won three All-Irelands in



1895, 1896 and 1898.

Published by Merrion Press, the book retails at €24.99

My First Hurley by Paddy Stapleton is for the kids. Continuing the *Up In The Air* story, this book has been written for kids in the 6 – 8 category. However, smaller kids are sure to love the vivid and colourful pictures. This short story follows Fitzzy, Lizzy and Bones' journey to get their first hurley/hurl from Old Neil. As well as being an entertaining story, it also educates kids on how sticks are made in the workshop.



Paddy has two full length children stories in his *Up in the Air* series.

All On The Line by Pádraig Maher is sub-titled, 'A Memoir of Hurling and Commitment'. It was launched in the Horse & Jockey Hotel on November 10th, and it tells the story of one of the great hurlers in the county during the past decade, and the shock that was felt when he announced his retirement from the game at the end of 2021.

It may have come as a shock to the public but the reality was a much more banal event as he describes it in the opening paragraphs: 'I think I'm done.' This is how a career ends. Not at the end of an All-Ireland final with the Liam MacCarthy Cup in your hands. Not with a realisation in the dressing room after club training. No, my career came to an end in an office in Limerick on an ordinary street, in the middle of an ordinary afternoon on the way to my engagement party with Claire, my fiancée."



And it was a quiet ending to a career in which Pádraic Maher won three All-Ireland senior hurling medals and six All-Star awards, was a key player on the Tipperary team, and helped his club, Thurles Sarsfields to seven county finals.

It isn't possible to include a full review in such a short space so I will mention a few points. Winning the minor All-Ireland in 2006 was very important for Pádraic after losing many underage competitions. Also, along the way to that All-Ireland he crossed hurleys with some of the best contemporary young hurlers in the field, Richie Hogan, Patrick Horgan and Joe Canning. Winning the county final with Thurles Sarsfields in 2005 meant so much to him since the club had gone for 31 years without one. So, was winning his first All-Star in 2009.

He has the highest regard for Caroline Currid: "Any issues, such as confidence, she'd offer you something, from images of matches in which you'd played well to changing your routine a little, even examples of positive contributions. Sh'd build a little film of things like that in your head and lift you. And she would also steer you: 'Ypu know what you have to do' would be one of her directions."

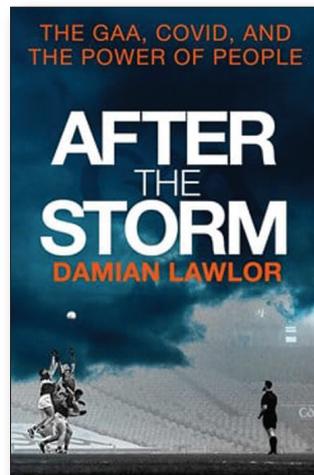
He makes the interesting point that the motivation for 2010 didn't come from aiming to get their own back against Kilkenny for the defeat in 2009, 'The motivation was to achieve for ourselves.'

He has an unusual twist on the Monday get together by players after a match: "These get-togethers helped us, enjoying each other's company and getting to know one another's personalities. We might have played in an All-Ireland final together but a lot of us didn't know each other all that well at that stage. Even with the team holiday there are wives, girlfriends, officials, a whole other crowd around. Going out on a Monday like that, it's just the players, lads cutting the back off each other. . . . By the time training

comes round on the Wednesday or Thursday of a week like that, fellows from rival clubs are definitely closer and more willing to back each other up because they know each other better.'

There is much more besides in this interesting book, written with the help of Michael Moynihan and published by Hachette Books, Ireland, and retailing at €16.99. It was launched at the Horse & Jockey Hotel on November 10th.

After the Storm: The G.A.A., Covid and the Power of the People by Damian Lawlor is the story of how the G.A.A. responded after Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, announced that Ireland was locking down. People had to stop meeting one another in what became a dark time. The G.A.A. was at the centre of the country's fightback against Covid 19. From the start thousands of volunteers delivered food and medicine to vulnerable neighbours and friends during lockdown. Croke Park and other major stadia transformed into testing centres, as the G.A.A went online to keep people connected and become a beacon of hope..



This book by Damian Lawlor, who hails from the parish of Kilruane and has eight, mostly sport, books to his credit, tells the stories of how G.A.A. members lived through the pandemic, and their acts of kindness and decency.

The book is published by Black and White Publishing and retails at €19.99

Irish Sporting Lives by Terry Clavin and Turlough O'Riordan is published by the Royal Irish Academy. It is a prestigious work of scholarship by two historians, who were involved in the Dictionary of Irish Biography. It has a foreword by sports historian, Paul Rouse, and it puts a heap of meat on the bone of the stories of 60 Irish sports people, offering biographical essays on them all. It includes a few G.A.A. people, and some of the stories are of sportspeople long forgotten, with a spattering of women. One such person was Mabel Cahill, one of 13 children, born in Kilkenny in 1863, who moved to the America, where she won 5 U.S. open tennis titles. After her death from tuberculosis in a workhouse in 1905 she was buried in an unmarked grave in Lancashire. The book might be of interest to some readers. It contains 416 pages and is available for €19.95.

Terence Coskeran informs me that the G.A.A. history of Aherlow is well underway, and he hopes to have it published by the middle of 2023. He is on a last roundup of relevant pictures and his message to anyone who has something in the cupboard is to give it the light of day: it is of no value hidden away.

With the Aherlow publication the West division will be left with very few clubs still to do their club history. Clonoulty-Rossmore did a short one of 64 pages for the 125th anniversary of the G.A.A. in 2009, but a successful club like it needs a full history. Michael Ryan C commenced work on the Solohead history some years back but I haven't heard of any progress. Rosegreen club was covered by the Cashel King Cormacs history up to 1984 but could do with a volume from that year to the present.

Breaking News! We had almost gone to print when I heard that Fr. Sheehy's G.A.A. Club were celebrating 50 years in existence and they had produced a book to celebrate the occasion. Compiled by chairman, Jimmy McHugh, it is a colourful production intended to celebrate everything the club has achieved over the years and reveal the dedication, skill and passion of the members. It is a treasure trove of pictures of the club stalwards and the teams that brought successes and achievements to the area over a half-century.