



*Cashel King Cormac's  
County Junior Hurling Champions 1953*

*Golden Jubilee Celebrations,  
Brú Ború, September 14, 2004*

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## 1953 County Championship: A Major Breakthrough

Cashel King Cormac's victory in the 1953 county junior hurling final was a major breakthrough for the club. It was the first victory at that level, and it came as a surprise to many.

No Cashel team had won county honours in hurling or football before that year. The nearest a team from the parish came to winning was in 1910. In that year Racecourse won the county senior hurling final, but they had the match taken off them in an objection.

Having affiliated in the South division – there was no West division until 1930 – Racecourse defeated Clonmel Emmets in the divisional final at Tipperary on October 30. They got a bye to the final in which their opponents were Toomevara. This game wasn't played until January 8, 1911, and Racecourse won by 3-0 to 2-2. Teams were 17-aside at the time and the lineout was as follows: D. Delaney, J. Moloney, P. Dargan, P. Devitt, J. Connors, J. Mannion, J. Kennedy, M. Kennedy, M. O'Grady, T. Doherty, M. Regan, P. Fogarty, J. Walsh, F. Flanagan, J. Dwyer, J. Gleeson, T. Devitt.

After the match the Racecourse captain, Dan Delaney, was interviewed and said: 'We went in to win. We are proud to be champions of Tipperary and to bring honours to Cashel.'

Toomevara objected, and Racecourse counter-objected. The

matter was heard at a county board meeting on March 19. Both sides agreed to a replay, and this was fixed for Thurles on April 16.

Racecourse decisively defeated Toomevara in the replay by 5-2 to 0-3. According to the report in the 'Tipperary Star', a heavy shower fell during the course of the game, which dampened 'the enthusiasm of the Toomevara players, but the Racecourse team was made of more virile material, and they refused to suspend the game, insisting on the continuation of play regardless of weather conditions.'

Toomevara objected to the constitution of the Racecourse team. The objection claimed that certain players had lined out with other affiliated teams in the 1910 championship. One of these was Johnny Leahy. Racecourse denied the allegation but the chairman, Tom Kerwick, upheld it and awarded the match to Toomevara.

The verdict didn't go down well in Cashel. The correspondent of the 'Tipperary Star' commented: 'On the last occasion Racecourse won by fourteen points. In the face of this Toomevara will hardly claim to be the champion team of Tipperary. Such a claim would be preposterous, and medals for 'paper champions' would be ridiculous.'

But 'paper champions' or not, Toomevara are listed as the county senior hurling champions for 1910.

*Cover photo: Celebration Céilí, City Hall, April 13th 1955*

## Honouring the Men of Fifty-Three

The executive committee of Cashel King Cormac's are delighted with the opportunity to honour the men of '53, who brought the first county final to the club. Fifty years ago this year they defeated Gortnahoe-Glengoolie in a replayed county junior hurling final at Thurles.

In fact they were lucky to get to the replay. In the drawn game they led by twelve points at the interval, and looked certain winners. But, a series of happenings, which included a downpour of rain, the sending off of goalkeeper, Paddy O'Brien, and, perhaps, a little complacency, allowed Gortnahoe back into the game, and it took a mighty effort by Billy Hickey, to get a goal in the dying seconds of the game, and earn a draw. Cashel won the replay easily enough, and we are here tonight to celebrate that victory.

Because it was the first county final won by the club, it is something very special, and it must stand beside the senior breakthrough in 1991, as a major milestone in the history of the club. The players, who made 1953 possible, deserve to be remembered and cherished, and their names will forever hold a special place in the hearts of all Cashel King Cormac's supporters.

It must be remembered that this victory was achieved at a time when Ireland was a very different place to what it is today. In the mid-fifties, Irish men and women were emigrating at the rate of 1,000 per week. The country was in a state of miserable poverty, and people had very few disposable shillings. At such a time, winning a county final must have given a great uplift to the spirit.

On an occasion like this it is but right and fitting to remember the members of the panel who are no longer with us. Already this year the trainer of the team, Mick Cody, passed on. Others who are no longer with us are Billy and Dinny Hickey, Jim Grogan, Jack O'Dwyer, John Murphy, Christy Stack and Bobby Keegan. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anamacha dílis.

But, recalling the dead, does not inhibit us from celebrating the living, and that is the purpose of this evening. We are using this occasion to honour our heroes, to bring their names to the attention, not only of our members, but to the wider community also.

Fifty years ago they made people proud to be members of Cashel King Cormac's. Today, we want them to know how proud we are of them, how delighted we are to recall their deeds in this booklet, and how honoured we are to afford them this celebration.

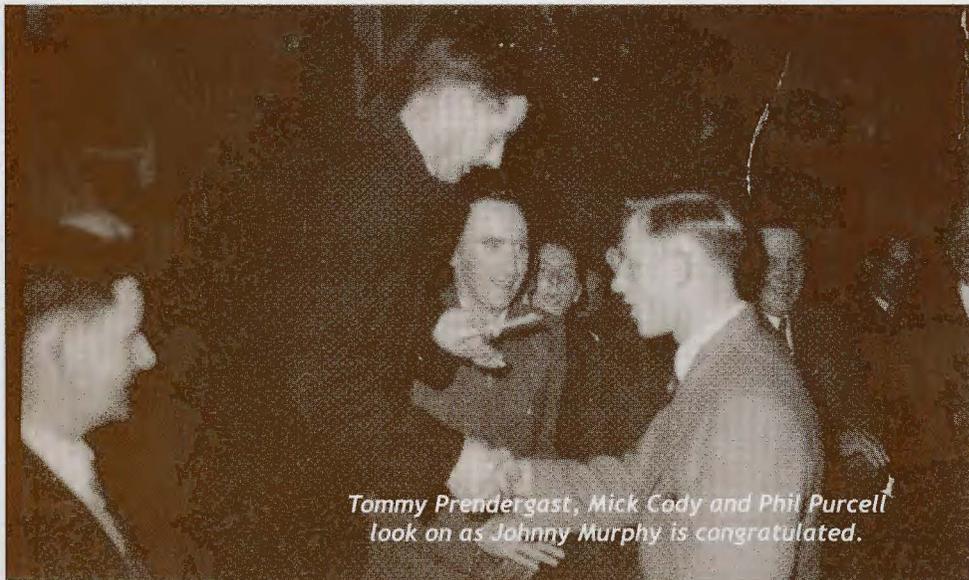
As chairman of the Cashel King Cormac's, I am proud to hold this position on this very special occasion. I should like to mention also the officers and committee, who have been involved in the organisation of this function: vice-chairman, Joe O'Leary, secretary, Mattie Finnerty, assistant-secretary, Donie O'Donoghue, treasurer, John Ryan, assistant-treasurer, Gearóid McDermott, president, Seamus J. King, vice-president, Joe Moloney, P.R.O. Michael Perdue, Jack Darmody, John Fogarty, Michael Browne, Dinny Keating, Pat O'Donoghue, Paddy Butler. Joe O'Regan.

*Gearóid Ó Slatara, Cathaoirleach, Caiseal Rí Chormaic*

Cashel King Cormacs had a great run of victories in the thirties. The club won a West junior title in 1933, and senior in 1934, 1936, 1937, 1939 and 1940. They reached the county final in 1937, 1939 and 1940, losing all three of them. Their opponents in 1937 were Moycarkey-Borris and the match was played at Thurles on September 19. It was described as the best county final for eight years, with Cashel putting up a tremendous bid for the title. Michael Burke was the star and Tommy Parsons scored four goals, but Moycarkey still won by 7-6 to 6-2. In 1939 Cashel came up against Thurles Sarsfields in the final, having beaten Roscrea in the semi-final. The game was played at Boherlahan on October 8, and again Cashel fell at the final hurdle despite putting up a better than expected performance. The final score was 5-3 to 2-4, and Cashel players, who were prominent, included Michael Burke, Stedie Morrissey, Florrie McCarthy, Jim Barrett, Paddy Maher and Geoff O'Shea. Moycarkey-Borris were once again Cashel's opponents in the 1940 final, which was played at Thurles on October 13. One

report had this to say: 'The game was proof once again – if proof is needed – that the town team is at a big disadvantage when it faces fifteen tillers of the soil. Ball manipulation, quick striking and nippy play, beautiful things in themselves, fail, more often than not, before rugged, sturdy style which has allied to it skill and fieldcraft. One felt on Sunday that all the time the dice were loaded against Cashel, that Moycarkey's natural advantage in weight and strength would prove Cashel's undoing. And so it was.' Cashel were behind by 4-7 to 4-2 at the end. The team was: D. Boland, M. McCarthy, F. McCarthy, P. Holmes, S. Morrissey, P. Maher, D. Ryan, M. Burke, G. O'Shea, J. Barrett, M. Ryan, W. Moynihan, E. Morrissey, M. Murphy, J. Maher.

Cashel seniors won the West twice during the forties, 1945 and 1948. In the earlier year they lost by 5-7 to 3-3 to Roscrea in the county semi-final at Thurles on October 21. In the latter year they lost to Lorrha, 2-4 to 2-3 in the county semi-final at the same venue on September 19. Cashel got a £10 training grant from the West board for this game.



*Tommy Prendergast, Mick Cody and Phil Purcell look on as Johnny Murphy is congratulated.*

The junior team, which won the West in 1933, lost the county semi-final to Bawnmore. Abbey Rangers, a team from the parish that came into existence in 1941, and lasted until 1949, won the divisional number 1 junior championship in 1945, but did not advance in the county championship, which wasn't played, as it had been suspended for some of the war years. Cashel minor teams enjoyed divisional success in 1931, 1940, 1949, and 1952. In 1931 and 1940 divisional teams went

forward to the county championship. In 1949 there was no inter-divisional championship. There is no record of advancement beyond the divisional stage in 1952. By 1953, therefore, Cashel had failed to win a county final in any grade, with the exception of 1910, when a county senior hurling title was taken off Racecourse after winning it twice! There was no reason to believe at the beginning of the year that 1953 was going to change anything. And yet it did, in a dramatic way.

### The 1953 West Junior Hurling Championship

A total of eighteen teams entered and they were divided equally between number 1 and number 2 sections. Solohead won out number 1 when they beat Galtee Rovers by a goal, 2-4 to 1-4, in the final.

Cashel were in the number 2 section. The teams were drawn as follows: Clonoulty v Lattin-Cullen; Arravale Rovers v Golden-Kilfeacle; Solohead v Donohill; Kickhams v Cashel; Rockwell Rovers a bye.

With the Knocknagow club disbanding, Cashel affiliated a second, or B team, and were fixed to meet Rockwell Rovers, but they eventually pulled out.

Cashel got to the final with wins over Kickhams, the previous year's champions, and Golden-Kilfeacle. Clonoulty-Rossmore's first round game with Lattin-Cullen never materialised. Lattin sought a postponement, were denied and, when they refused to play, incurred a six months suspension. Clonoulty hammered Rockwell in the semi-final and qualified to meet Cashel in the final. This match was played at Dundrum on September 29, and Cashel defeated Clonoulty-Rossmore. There is no record of the score.

The number 1 and number 2 grades were introduced in 1944 for the first time. From 1945 until 1960 the winners played

off for the junior championship and the Leahy Cup, and the winners went forward to represent the division in the county championship.

Cashel played the number 1 winners, Solohead, at Sean Treacy Park, Tipperary on November 15. The Dinny Lacey Pipe Band paraded and led the teams on to the field. The hurling was of a poor standard, but the interest of the spectators was held because of the closeness of the exchanges. Cashel had a tonic of a goal in the first five minutes, but Solohead settled down and led by 2-3 to 1-2 at half-time. Murphy and O'Brien scored for Cashel. In the second half Cashel did most of the scoring, and Murphy, Gayson and Davern were their most conspicuous players. With ten minutes remaining Cashel were in a strong position, but Solohead put in a spirited performance for the final minutes. However, their scoring attempts were not successful, and Cashel won by 2-6 to 2-3. Cashel had last won the title in 1933, and a team from the parish, Abbey Rangers, won it in 1945. The panel of players included three Ryans (G), two Gaysons, two Hickeys, and the then chairman of Cashel UDC, Paddy O'Brien. The latter had a brother-in-law and five nephews on the team.

### The County Championship

As was common at the time, championships were often unfinished in the same calendar year, and the county junior championship of 1953 was a case in point.

The county semi-final wasn't played until May 9, 1954, and Cashel played Nenagh at Thurles. The result was a comprehensive victory for Cashel, winning by 7-8 to 1-2.

The winners had to wait until September 12 for the final. Their opponents were Gortnahoe-Glengoole. The match was played at Thurles and it was an extraordinary one. Cashel scored three goals in the first five minutes against a very shaky Gortnahoe-Glengoole defence. They led by 4-4 to 1-1 at half-time when the Mid representatives looked a well-beaten side. In fact some supporters had gone home at the interval to avoid the downpour, which began at the resumption.

But it was a different Gortnahoe-Glengoole that was seen in the second half. Perhaps the downpour helped them. Before Cashel had settled down they had the ball in the net twice. Only two goals now separated the sides, and Gortnahoe were all over their opponents. They weren't given what they thought a legitimate goal but they ate into the Cashel lead and, with time running out, went ahead by a goal. Cashel made a mighty last minute bid to get the equalizer. Billy Hickey came downfield and with the referee looking at his watch, shot for the corner of the net, and the next second the

green flag was up, and the sides were level at 5-5 each. Gortnahoe had to line out without three of their leading stars, Tom O'Hara, John Doheny and Mick Coady.

For Cashel Jim Grogan, Mickey Ryan and intercounty junior, John Murphy, forming the full-forward line, hit the high spots for Cashel in the first half, and each time the ball came their way, a score seemed likely. Tipperary minor, Johnny Murphy, showed up well at centre-forward, and was accurate off frees. Billy Hickey was again the mainstay of the backline, and veteran, Mick Murphy, played his usual sound game in the last line of defence. A player from each side, Paddy O'Brien (Cashel) and J. Tobin (Gortnahoe-Glengoole) were sent off in the second half following an incident in the Cashel goalmouth.

The teams were as follows: Cashel – Paddy O'Brien, John Eakins (capt.), Mickey Murphy, John O'Dwyer, Jim Ryan, Billy Hickey (1-0), Willie Anglim, Michael Davern, Ger Ryan, Michael Gayson (0-1), Johnny Murphy (1-4), Dickie Ivers, Jim Grogan (1-0), Mickey Ryan (1-0), John Murphy (1-0).

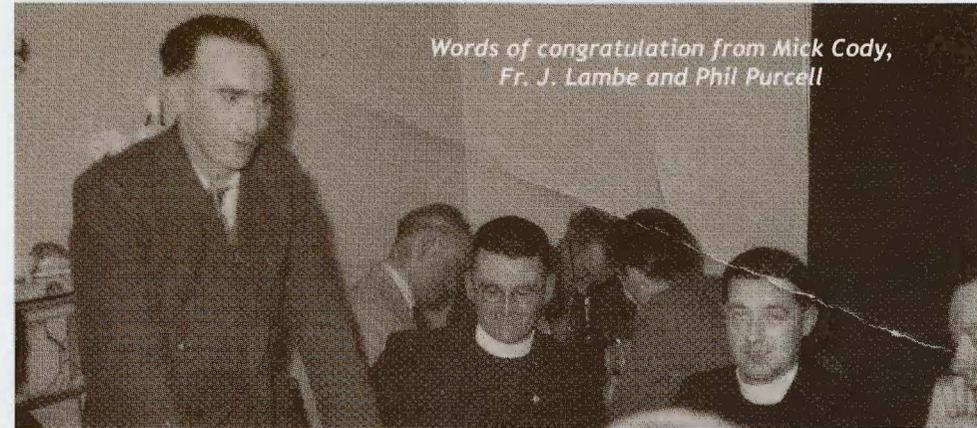
Gortnahoe-Glengoole – M. Darcy, P. Purcell, M. Doheny, T. Teehan, E. Long, L. Noonan, R. Fitzgerald, J. Laffin, P. Cormack, M. Long (2-1), D. Talbot (1-2), J. Bartley (1-1), P. Talbot, J. Tobin (1-0), W. Langton (0-1). Referee: Bob Stakelum (Holycross-Ballycahill).

### The Replay

The replay on October 3 at Thurles, was an anti-climax after the thrills of the drawn game. It never reached a high standard and Cashel, who led by 2-2 to 2-1 at the interval, did virtually all the scoring in the second half, and finished ahead by 4-9 to 2-1. The wing-forwards, Johnny Murphy and Michael Gayson, were the stars of a strong Cashel attack, which ran up a spate of scores in the second half, when Gortnahoe could manage only a point. Michael Davern and Ger Ryan gave Cashel the edge at midfield, and the stars of the backline were Billy Hickey, Willie Anglim and Mickey Murphy. It was a very satisfying result for all the players, and particularly for trainer, Mick Coady.

The teams were as follows: Cashel – Martin Gayson, John Eakins (capt.), Mickey Murphy, Dinny Hickey, Jim Ryan, Billy Hickey (1-0), Willie Anglim, Jer Ryan, Michael Davern, Johnny Murphy (0-5), Jim Grogan (1-0), Michael Gayson (1-1), John Murphy, Mickey Ryan (1-1), Dickie Ivers (0-1). Subs: Christy Stack (0-1), Mattie Ryan.

Gortnahoe-Glengoole – M. Darcy, P. Purcell, M. Doheny, T. Teehan, N. Long, R. Fitzgerald, L. Wall, D. Talbot (0-1), P. Cormack, M. Long (0-1), L. Noonan (1-0), J. Bartley, S. Cleary, S. Laffin, P. Talbot (1-0). Sub: M. Laffin. Referee: Philly Ryan (Borrisoleigh).



County Junior Hurling Champions 1953

Back, left to right: Joe Byrne, Paddy O'Brien, Michael Leamy, J. Ryan, J. Grogan, M. Ryan, J. Murphy, J. Eakins, J. Ryan, C. Stack, B. Hickey, Mickey Leamy, Stedie Morrissey, Dinny O'Brien, Connie Carroll, Monto Carry, Mickey Hickey. Front, left to right: Tommy Prendergast, W. Anglim, M. Davern, D. Ivers, D. Hickey, M. Gayson, M. Murphy, Mick Cody. Missing from photo Mickey Murphy.



County Junior Hurling Final Replay  
(Thurles: October 3, 1954)

Cashel King Cormacs

	1	
	Mattie Gayson (Racecourse)	
2	3	4
John Eakins (capt.) (Cathal Brugha)	Mickey Murphy (The Tank)	Dinny Hickey (Cathal Brugha)
5	6	7
James Ryan (G) (The Commons)	Billy Hickey (Cathal Brugha)	Willie Anglim (Rosegreen)
	8	9
	Ger Ryan (The Rock)	Michael Davern (John Street)
10	11	12
Michael Gayson (Racecourse)	Jim Grogan (Shanballyduff)	Johnny Murphy (The Tank)
13	14	15
John Murphy (Friar Street)	Mickey Ryan (G) (The Commons)	Dickie Ivers (Cathal Brugha)
Subs: 16. Jack Dwyer (Rathcowan)	17. Bobby Keegan (Rosegreen)	
18. Mattie Ryan (G) (The Commons)	19. Christy Stack (Rosegreen)	
20. Tom Toomey (Rathordan)	21. Paddy O'Brien (The Rock)	

## Victory Dinner and Presentation

The Cashel King Cormac's club honoured the victorious 1953 county junior champions at a function on April 13, 1955. The celebration took the form of a dinner at Grant's restaurant, and a céilí at the City Hall. Notable G.A.A. personalities from the West and Mid divisions attended, and a link between the old and new was the presence of E. D. Ryan, famed Tipperary of the 1890s, and one of the fathers of the G.A.A. in the area.

The chairman of the club, Paddy O'Brien, welcomed everyone to the function, and had a special work of welcome for Fr. John Lambe, newly arrived in Cashel as a curate. The chairman hoped he would help to bring more enthusiasm to the club, and would be a guiding light to them.

He paid tribute to Fr. Philip Morris, who was president of the club since he arrived the previous year as chaplain in Presentation Convent. He also welcomed Sean O'Dwyer, chairman of the West Board, Jerry O'Dwyer, secretary, Willie O'Dwyer, treasurer, and Phil Purcell, county board secretary. Others in attendance were Bill O'Donnell, former Tipperary hurler, and Rev. W. Breen, P.P., Moycarkey.

The chairman stated how proud they all were of the players. It was hard to pick out any of the team for special mention, because each and every one played his part.

But he was sure if he referred to one man in particular, no one would object. That man was Mickey Murphy, who had given a service to the club in his quarter of century of hurling, which no other player had given. They were proud of him.

Father Lambe assured the club of all his assistance. He congratulated Cashel on its Sportsfield. It was a field they could be proud of. He thought it a wonderful thing to have had a father and his son playing on the winning team.

E. D. Ryan stressed that it was training that counted with any team. 'A team should be going better at the end than at the beginning of the hour, no matter what the pressure,' he said.

West Board chairman, Sean O'Dwyer, added his words of congratulations to the Cashel team. 'Down the years there have been great hurlers in Cashel – men like the McCarthys, the Morrisseys, the Bolands, Jack Gleeson, Mick Burke, Dinny O'Brien, Fr. Tom Dwyer (Malachy) and Fr. Ml. Ryan, and several others. They were unlucky that they did not win county medals,' he added.

Other speakers included captain, John Eakins, trainer Mick Cody, who complimented Martin Hackett and Stedie Morrissey for their work in making the players fit, and club president, Rev. P. Morris.



## Some Contemporary Comment on the Victory

**Father and Son** – Hats off to veteran Cashel hurler, Mickey Murphy, who, last Sunday, had the distinction of winning a county junior medal with his son, Johnny, the Tipperary minor. Mickey, who is over forty years of age, began hurling for Cashel back in the early thirties – when his son wasn't born! He quickly won a name for himself as a defender of outstanding merit, and not alone was he a great clubman, but he also played many games for Tipperary in junior and senior grade. The Cashel King Cormacs club has had its periods of triumph and its periods of disappointment, but right down the years, from 1930 or so, Mickey Murphy has been there through thick and thin upholding the honour of the club.

His son, Johnny, is carrying on the family tradition. A forward of great promise, he won an All-Ireland minor medal last year, and played again in this year's final against Dublin. He was the star of the Cashel attack on Sunday, scoring five points and 'making' at least two of the goals. It was a great day for the Cashel Murphys.

**Came on in his Shirt:** The Cashel sub, Mattie Ryan, who came on in the second half of the junior final, was in such a hurry, that he hadn't time to take off his shirt. The spectators roared with laughter as he ran on to the field with his shirt tails flying in the breeze above his togs a la Chinaman. Then he swapped his shirt for the jersey, which the player, who was retiring, quickly handed over. It brought some life to a game that had gone rather dead.

**Hurling History:** Our junior hurlers made history on Sunday when they defeated Gortnahoe in the replay of the county junior hurling championship. In the past other Cashel teams have failed to achieve such distinction as that accomplished last

Sunday. Our hurlers and footballers, down the years, have won their way to the final stages of the championships, but luck never smiled on them before.

**Salute:** West Tipperary salutes the boys from the ancient capital of Munster on their success in the junior final. Here we saw some grand stick-work from both sides, with county minor Murphy in scintillating form for Cashel

**Letter to the Editor - Who is West Tipperary Sportsman of the Year for 1954?** I read with much interest your article on a recent 'Nationalist', and was delighted to see you selecting the sportsman of the year in the South. This is a grand idea and I would be delighted to see you doing the same for West Tipperary. Something like this is needed to encourage sport. Finally I must congratulate you and give you some men who, during the year, have hit the headlines in the West.

Vincent O'Brien, the Cashel horse-trainer, whose charge, Royal Tan, won the Aintree Grand National; Mossy Cleary, Tipperary A.C., who put up a great show in Dublin in the National junior tests; Johnny Murphy, Cashel, who played a leading part in Tipperary's minor success, and so added his second All-Ireland medal; Dick Ryan, the Gouldscross greyhound trainer, whose charges won many coursing cups during the season; Martin Carroll, the Anacarty athlete, who was very successful on the athletic field during the year; Denis Ryan, the Cashel rugby star, who played a leading part in helping Cashel to reach the junior final; Sean Hayes, the popular Gaelic referee, who handled many important matches during the year.

All those are entitled to the honour of Sportsman of the Year in the West. Hope to see you publish those on 'The Nationalist'.

## 1954 Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on January 17, 1955, and attracted a record attendance in the City Hall. The proceedings were presided over by chairman, Paddy O'Brien. In the course of his remarks, he welcomed the members and thanked everyone, who had made it one of the most successful years in the history of the club. He wished Jim Sullivan, who was absent, speedy recovery from his illness. 'Jim rendered great services to the old club, to his family, and to Cashel. With God's help, he will be quickly restored to his wife and family and the club.' He went on to say that while he didn't agree with the Ban, it would be strictly enforced while it was there. He would like to make an appeal to the hurlers of Rosegreen to think well before they formed a club of their own. 'We will miss them: they rendered great services to the King Cormacs, and contributed a big share

in the winning of the county junior hurling championship,' he said. 'I would earnestly ask them to re-consider their decision and to resume their places among us again.' The following officers were unanimously re-elected: President – Rev. Philip Morris; vice-president – E. D. Ryan; vice-chairmen – Tim Hally and Michael Leamy; treasurer – Mick Davern, T.D.; secretary – Tommy Prendergast; assistant secretary – John Murphy. There were two candidates for the office of chairman, outgoing Paddy O'Brien, and Michael Leamy. On a show of hands O'Brien was elected by 22 votes to 17.

The following were elected to the committee: Mickey Murphy, Michael Devitt, Mick Cody, J. J. Ryan, Billy Hickey, Michael Gayson, Johnny Murphy, Martin Hackett, Dinny Hickey, John Burke.



*Sean O'Dwyer West Board Chairman on his feet, Phil Purcell County Secretary and Paddy O'Brien, Chairman Cashel K. C. listen intently*

## Some Interesting Facts

\*The team had the bare fifteen jerseys. The incoming sub had to don the jersey of the player coming off. A rather sticky exercise on a hot summer's day! The jerseys were in a very poor state. Johnny Eakins remembers them as torn and well darned. The purchase of a new set of jerseys was a rare occurrence. In earlier days they were knitted jerseys, and for a period a nun in the Presentation Convent did the knitting. The set in use in 1953 was a purchased one.

\*The dramatic turnabout in the fortunes of Gortnahoe in the drawn game was partly due to the sending off of Cashel goalkeeper, Paddy O'Brien. Johnny Eakins, who was captain of the side, and right cornerback, recalls that he had to substitute as goalkeeper for the departed O'Brien. In fact he had to play in two places, mind his man at cornerback, and dart back to the goals to stop potential scores. He fails to understand why the selectors didn't bring back one of the forwards to guard the net.

\*The team had no substitute goalkeeper in the county championship. The man who had filled in during 1953, Mattie Gayson, departed for England at the end of that year. He started playing with Young Irelands in Paddington, London. After the sending off of Paddy O'Brien in the drawn final, Matty got an urgent message to

return home for the replay. The fare from Paddington-Fishguard return was £5. He received half the amount from the club for his trouble!

\*Mattie Gayson was probably an illegal player. As he was already playing for a club in London, had played during the year, he wasn't eligible to play for Cashel King Cormac's. However, communications weren't as good then as now, so nobody probably knew.

\*Mattie returned to London the Monday after the game. He remained there until the Suez trouble began to loom, and returned home. He thinks back to the time the game was played, and recalls how little they had. They might be 'lucky to get a suck of a bit of an orange at half-time. They had no bottle carriers then. Today, it is like a circus, he says.

\*Billy Hickey played at centreback, and John Murphy at full-forward on the Tipperary junior team in 1954. They defeated Kerry in the Munster semi-final by 4-6 to 3-2 at Cashel on May 23, but lost the final to Limerick by 5-4 to 1-7 at Kilmallock on July 11.

\*Johnny Murphy played for Tipperary in two All-Ireland minor finals. He was on the winning side against Dublin in 1953, but on the losing side against the same opposition the following year. He also played in the first round of the 1952 championship.

## A Dependable Runai – Tommy Prendergast

Tommy Prendergast was secretary of the Cashel King Cormac's when they won their first county final. He recalls taking up the position when Fr. English was chairman, probably in 1946: he represented the club at that year's West convention.

The club was finding it difficult to get a secretary at the time, and Fr. English said: 'If we have no secretary, we can have no club.' This may have concentrated minds a bit because Mick Davern and a few more got around Tommy to take up the position.

Tommy was an ideal man for the position, able and accomplished in his own right. Born in Killeenasteena in November 1916, he had ten siblings, five brothers and five sisters. He went to school to Tom Keegan

in Templenoe, and stayed there until he was sixteen years old.

Tom wanted him to go to secondary school but times were poor in 1932, and work was more important.

Tommy worked at home and did odd jobs around until he was 18, when he was apprenticed to E.D. Ryan, who had a drapery business in Friar Street. The apprenticeship was for three years, with no pay for the first two, and five shillings a week in the third year.

When he completed his apprenticeship he was offered a job in Delaney's Drapery, Bank Place, one of the foremost drapery stores in Munster, but he remained with E.D. Ryan, and did so until 1969.

On the same day as he started his apprenticeship, he also commenced night classes in the Technical School, Hogan Square. He was part of the very first night class – the school had been completed in 1933, but a dispute about the caretaker postponed its opening for a year. Tommy started a course in shorthand, typing, Irish, English and History, under Galwayman, K. P. Jennings, and continued to go there for nearly ten years, becoming proficient in shorthand. In fact when he completed that course, he commenced carpentry, and stayed at it under Phil O'Dwyer for five or six years, completing many pieces of furniture, which furnish his house today.

It is no wonder then that a club looking for a secretary, should cast a glance in Tommy's direction. Although never a hurler of note, Tommy played with the club. His early interest in the G.A.A. came from reading the reports of games in the 'Nationalist'. This interest developed after he started working in E.D. Ryan's. E. D. was himself a famous hurler from Tubberadora. Through working there he became friendly with Michael O'Dwyer, and also with Sean Dunne, who worked in Davern's drapery. There was another good reason why Tommy might be the man for the job. The club was deep in debt, much of it incurred in fencing Brooke's field with wire and galvanise. This field was located to the east of Leahy Park, and was owned by John Brooke, who carried on a successful flour and meal store in what was Sonny Butler's house at the corner of Friar Street and Feehan's Road. It was rented to Cashel King Cormac's and it served as practice area after the field on the Ardmayle Road was given up, and while Leahy Park was in preparation.

As secretary Tommy inherited a debt of over £3,000, a huge amount in those days. Bringing his business acumen to bear, Tommy set about reducing it through regular '25' drives. Dances were also run with two very important ones on St. Patrick's night and Easter Sunday in the City Hall. The debt was reduced within two years. Martin Hackett was chairman.

Tommy was involved in the purchase of Leahy Park, which cost £4,000 at the time, again a very large sum. In contrast only £600 was realised in the sale of the field on the Ardmayle Road.

While Tommy was secretary Cashel won a senior divisional title in 1948, and were unlucky to lose to Lorrha in the county semi-final. He was very much involved with the successful 1953 team as a selector, and was responsible for the arrangements for the presentation dinner and the victory céili in the City Hall.

In fact he was responsible for getting twenty-one medals for the panel. The custom at the time was fifteen medals for the team and three for the subs. Tommy convinced Phil Purcell, whose wife was a Walsh from Tubberadora, to give the club three more, with the result that twenty-one players got medals.

He continued as secretary until 1954, when Johnny Murphy became joint secretary. It appears as if Johnny was secretary in 1955 and 1956, and William McInerney took over in 1957. However, the club went into debt once more, and Tommy was drafted in again, this time as treasurer. He served in this position from 1958 to 1963, and, presumably, put the club back on a good financial footing again.

Even when he ceased to be an officer of the club, he retained a huge interest in the fortunes of Cashel King Cormac's. In 1969 he inherited a farm from relations of his father in Shanballyduff, and went farming fulltime. Earlier, in 1948, he married Mairead Ryan from Holyford, and they had seven children, four boys and three girls.

Tommy always had a great interest in local history, and is an expert on Shanballyduff. He likes tracing the history of people and places and has a huge amount of lore about Cashel over a long period of time. He is in fine health, and plays cards on a regular basis. The only thing he complains about are his legs. Otherwise, as he puts it, 'I'd fly in the sky'. May he continue to walk for many years yet!



*Below: E.D. Ryan of the famous Toberadora All-Ireland winning team of the 1890s addressing the gathering. Mick Cody, Fr. J. Lambe and Fr. Morris are also identifiable.*

*Above: Fr. Morris congratulates Mickey Murphy while Sean O'Dwyer (West Chairman) and Phil Purcell (County Secretary) look on.*

