



# GAA DEFIBRILLATOR SAVED MY LIFE

by Cian Murphy

**It was a Thursday night kick around with the lads just like any other. But the events of October 11, 2010 would change Seaghan Kearney's life forever.**

He was playing indoor football in Dublin's St Oliver Plunkett's Eoghan Ruadha with club mates when his life was suddenly and scarily turned upside down as this apparently fit and healthy 30 year-old was floored by a massive heart attack.

The quick thinking of his team mates was crucial but, ultimately, it was the presence of a GAA approved defibrillator on the premises, and the availability of a trained person who could use it, ensured that this shocking event didn't become much more tragic.

"On a Monday night a few of the lads would meet and play five a side in the hall in Plunkett's and that night was the same as any other - only in the middle of the game my heart stopped and I had a massive cardiac arrest," Seaghan told the GAA Club Newsletter.

"I was the last person I thought could be affected by this. I had led an active lifestyle and exercised rigorously over a long time and had no inclination that anything like this might happen."

Instances of young, apparently healthy

people suffering instances of cardiac arrest continue to cause shock among communities around Ireland.

It's estimated that every year in Ireland there are 80 such instances which happen to people in the 14-35 year-old bracket. Only last month Leitrim U21 footballer Alan McTigue suffered a cardiac incident and thankfully survived. Sadly there have been many more instances where the results have not been as positive.

Initially when Seaghan Kearney dropped to the ground his friends thought he had slipped. But they soon realised something more serious was at play.

What happened in the next few critical minutes was where fortune came to Seaghan's salvation.

Working in the club that night as a volunteer in the bar was Terry O'Brien - a trained Paramedic.

When he arrived down into the hall Seaghan already had no pulse and he sent people to get the defibrillator and started CPR.

The defibrillator had been purchased by the club through a GAA scheme which had been in response to the tragic loss of Tyrone captain Cormac McAnallen in 2004



GAA clubman and sudden cardiac arrest survivor Seaghan Kearney

from sudden cardiac arrest aged just 24. The defib in Plunkett's hadn't been used before that night Seaghan Kearney needed it. But while it sat waiting to perform its miracle the charge in the batteries had drained down to its very last.

By the time it got into Terry O'Brien's hands and he applied it to Seaghan's chest it had enough for just one charge and one attempt at a life-saving blast.

"The defib had been bought off the back of the information campaign that the Cormac Trust had undertaken in the wake of Cormac McAnallen's death," says Seaghan.

"People might have felt that it was all they had to do by buying the defibrillator and

having it there - but just like a mobile phone or a car battery, the battery on a defibrillator will run down even when not in use and needs to be checked.

"By the time it got to me the defibrillator was down to its very last charge and there was almost no juice left in it. It had enough juice to give me a blast but if I had needed more than one blast... I know that I was very lucky."

He'd later find out that he suffers from a condition called HCM or Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy which is a primary disease of the myocardium (the muscle of the heart) in which a portion of the myocardium is hypertrophied (thickened) without any obvious cause, creating functional impairment of the cardiac muscle.

Rushed to the Mater Hospital he would spend three weeks there and ultimately require a device fitted to his heart which he jokingly calls: "like an internal defibrillator or a mini Terry O'Brien to shock me back into rhythm if I need it."

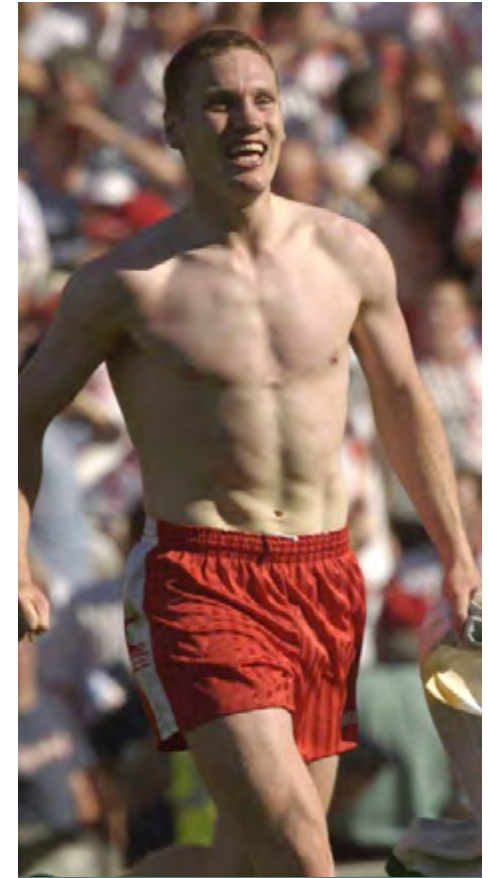
It could have been the end of the story for Seaghan - but upon his release from hospital he felt compelled to take action to improve the levels of education among GAA clubs about not only the need for a defibrillator - but also the fact that it needs to be regularly checked to ensure it is fully charged and also the requirement for there to be a constant crowd of volunteers who are trained up in how to use it.

Working with the Mater Foundation, Seaghan and the team came up with the **ACT** campaign to spread the message to clubs that defibrillators need to be **Accessible**, with **Charged** batteries regularly checked and able to be used by **Trained** people in how to administer it.

His YouTube video promoting the issue has had more than 75,000 views.

Lying in hospital Seaghan found it hard not to think of Cormac McAnallen who won an All-Ireland senior medal with Tyrone in September of 2003 only to die of Sudden Cardiac Arrest at his home on March 2nd 2004.

They were born only five weeks apart and like Kearney, Cormac was a teacher of Irish and Maths in a girls school and passionate about the GAA, Irish language and culture.



The late, great Cormac McAnallen, who passed away suddenly in March 2004 at the age of 24 - seen here celebrating Tyrone's 2003 All-Ireland semi-final win over Kerry at Croke Park en route to the county's first ever Sam Maguire triumph

"I got out of hospital on a Friday and it was the weekend of an International Rules game between Ireland and Australia and I knew that the cup for that was the Cormac McAnallen trophy and that his family would probably be in Dublin for the game," he explained.



“Through GAA contacts I was able to meet Bridget McAnallen, Cormac’s mother, and thank her for the awareness they raised through the Cormac Trust and for saving my life.

“If it wasn’t for her and for the awareness campaign there would not have been a defibrillator in my club that night – I owe a lot to them,” he added.

He is now a Patron of the Cormac Trust and a tireless advocate for the need for GAA Clubs to have defibrillators at the ready and

have people ready to use them. The heart attack ended his competitive GAA career. But as one door closed – another soon opened.

Through Mick Galvin in Plunkett’s, he got to use his love of numbers as a statistician. He was part of the analysis team for Dublin’s U21 All-Ireland victory in 2012 under Jim Gavin and he was there the following year when the Dubs won the Sam Maguire and he is currently working with Ciarán Whelan

and Paddy Christie providing statistical support to the 2016 Dublin minor footballers.

“I have been given a new lease of life and would probably never have got involved in this if it weren’t for that event and I’m thankful to the GAA that these outlets are there,” he says.

“Clubs should make sure they have defibrillators there and hope that they never need to use it but know what to do if that day ever occurs.”

For important information on defibrillators, training and the GAA position on cardiac screening see the links below:

**DID YOU KNOW:** *The match day stadium staff at Croke Park have received First Aid and defibrillator training. In 2015 they were called into action on three separate occasions and made life saving interventions.*

[learning.gaa.ie/Defibrillator%20Scheme](http://learning.gaa.ie/Defibrillator%20Scheme)

Our position on cardiac screening  
[learning.gaa.ie/node/110300](http://learning.gaa.ie/node/110300)



A model of a defibrillator used in GAA clubs

# DARE TO DREAM

by Damian Lawlor

**E**very year the AIB All-Ireland club finals bring together four clubs with an insatiable hunger for glory - but this time around all of those involved are chasing a first national title.

Their individual journeys to get here are remarkable.

Cushendall were written off in their own county at the start of the year, whilst down south there were serious doubts over whether Na Piarsaigh could maintain their stellar unbeaten run in Munster.

In the football championship, few gave Castlebar Mitchels much chance of bouncing into the business end of the campaign given that it was only two years ago that they lost an All-Ireland final.

Equally, Ballyboden caused a huge shock by getting out of the Dublin championship. Bear in mind that their real prominence had been in hurling in recent times.

However, all four clubs have overcome the odds to reach the final stages of this prestigious competition. For some players involved, they will never get a chance to reach this level again. So this chance of success simply has to be taken.

Much has been already written about the various teams and their displays to-date. So instead we take a behind-the-scenes look at the final four. We give a nod to their traditions, quirks and shine a light on the less detailed aspects of their history as they prepare for their biggest day.

From supplying the father of a future Taoiseach, to providing an actor for a popular TV series; from formation courtesy of a new collection of housing estates to boasting more registered GAA players than a whole county, their respective stories and backgrounds are quite fascinating.

They have taken treks that epitomise what the GAA is all about, they have negotiated roads full of obstacles and challenges but throughout they have shown strength and unity.

We begin our close-up focus with an analysis of Ballyboden St Enda's who shocked most observers when they emerged from their championship last year.



Tunnel Vision: Ballyboden St Enda's Darragh Nelson and Paddy Durcan of Castlebar Mitchel

## BALLYBODEN ST ENDA'S (DUBLIN)

Ballyboden St Enda's surprised people all over the country by winning last year's Dublin senior football title - and most of the shockwaves emanated from within their own county! Their powerhouse midfielder Michael Darragh Macauley acknowledged as much. "We've been called a hurling club for years," he openly admitted.

The truth is 'Boden are a potent dual club and have the numbers to remain just so. Having won five Dublin senior hurling championships in a row between 2007 and 2011, they are rightly regarded as a potent force in the small ball game, providing a wealth of players to Dublin hurling teams. But when they felled St Vincents in the 2015 county football final they reminded people how they can peak in both games. Indeed, they remain the only club in the country to have claimed county titles in all four codes - senior hurling, football, ladies' football, and camogie.

The football team is on a serious roll, but they won't take their rejuvenation for granted, even with their vast resources at hand. For instance, they have 89 teams across all the four codes and their club has more registered GAA players than the county of Leitrim.

Of their current generation of players, adult and juvenile, it's estimated there's a neat 50-50 ratio of Dubs and country exiles back-boning the club - all with the one purpose.

'Boden present a holistic approach to their players and families and want to be more

than just a GAA outfit. Those in charge - and there are four executives looking after hurling, football, camogie and ladies football - are not just intent on providing silverware for club, but are equally engaged with the long term health and morale of the club, encouraging a sense of belonging in an urban setting.

Like all clubs, they develop players and then try and retain them as members for life, helping to foster a club spirit that is essential to keep any suburban club going. They don't look to be lacking on that front. Every Christmas, 250 senior citizens, aged from 70-95, will gather for a party at the clubhouse which will be provided free of charge. Before that, the club's drama society staged a play, there are over 200 people in their walking club and every Saturday evening their facility turns into a bingo hall.

"The aim," says one member, "is to make this more of a village than a club."

They owe much to many, not least Terry O'Neill, one of three brothers who joined the club several years ago. Terry is a brother of Paudie, the ex-Tipperary hurling coach and a member of Croke Park's Hurling Development Committee 2015-18.

Terry designed the club's 2020 strategic plan and plotted for not just the expected mushrooming of playing numbers but the success that could be associated with such a rise in their ranks. His project planned for an All-Ireland final appearance on St Patrick's Day for both the senior hurlers and footballers. What vision that was.

## CASTLEBAR MITCHELS (MAYO)

Not much has been made of how a side could dominate one of the toughest county championships in Ireland and still only have one 'guaranteed' starter on the county team.

But that's the situation Castlebar Mitchels find themselves in. From within, only Tom Cunniffe is a likely member of the Mayo 15, so it's clearly the team ethic that is standing to the prolific Castlebar.

And when you trace the club's background, however, it's easy to see where that fight comes from.

It's taken as read by local historians that the club gleans its name from John Mitchel, the Young Ireland leader who was banished to Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land) in 1848 after being convicted of treason. In December 1885, the local GAA outfit was named after him.

Now, all these years later, they are looking to create their own history by winning the All-Ireland senior football title for the first time on St Patrick's Day.

In doing so, they are looking to become the third Mayo club to win the title, following in the footsteps of Crossmolina Deel Rovers (2001) and Ballina Stephenites (2005).

They have had obvious disappointments at the highest level in recent years but their history is rich and their lineage strong. They won the Mayo title for the first time in 1888, landed a second five

years year later but then had to wait a further 27 years for a third.

Still, they fought back and during the 1930s and '40s their dominance was overwhelming. In the '50s they captured seven titles and a further three were added in the '60s before relative barren spells interrupted the next five decades.

What a batch of legends they produced over the years, however.

Seven Castlebar players - Tom Burke, Paddy Quinn, Patsy Flannelly, Jim McGowan, Paddy Moclair, the multi-decorated Josie Munnelly and Henry Kenny (father of current Taoiseach Enda) - were aboard the Mayo team that won the All-Ireland title for the first time in 1936.

And Munnelly holds the rare distinction of having won 12 county senior titles, six as captain.

A deeper look inside the club shows just how unique they are. For their first committee members comprised of prison wardens, British Army, doctors and shop boys. What a mix of diverse backgrounds with all the members sharing the one purpose. Quite simply they all wanted to play Gaelic football.

They also played hurling and plenty of it at that.

'Mitchels actually won the county senior hurling championship in 1904 and on the day of the final a 14 year old called Pat Cotter stood up and made his name. He scored 2-5, not bad going in anyone's language.

Pat's prowess was equalled by many in the area. In fact, in the first 40 years of existence Mitchels won more county senior hurling titles (five) than county senior football championships (two).

Gradually, however, Gaelic football flourished and the sport thrived. There were disappointments along the way but the common trait here is that the club keeps bouncing back. And after losing to St Vincent's two seasons back the will to go one final step further will be absolutely unbending.

Other notable landmarks for the Mitchels include the formation of a Bord na nÓg within the club in 1971; a programme that has helped keep the club near the top of the tree.

They will be hoping to finally soar to the highest point on St Patrick's Day. Few would begrudge them.

It's almost certain that the football final will be a cracker and people also expect a battle in the hurling equivalent. History has proven that anyone who writes off Antrim opposition can be left with egg on their faces and, tellingly, Cushendall arrive at this stage of the season hardened and resilient. Here is a look at their story.



Within touching distance: Shane McNaughton of Ruairí Óg Cushendall and David Breen of Na Piarsaigh

**CUSHENDALL (ANTRIM)**

Until this year, Cushendall boasted an All-Ireland semi-final record that belonged nowhere only in a house of horrors. Their record made miserable reading - played eight, lost eight.

All of that dark history was cast aside in Páirc Tailteann in early February, however, when the Antrim champions finally came good at the semi-final stage, upsetting the odds by leading from pillar to post and eventually hammering Sarsfields from Galway.

The margin of that win was surprising but fitting for a journey to the 2016 All-Ireland final that has been simply fascinating. No one can predict what will come next. In Antrim, you see, most people felt Loughgiel would prevail in the local championship. In fact, Cushendall nearly lost to St John's in their championship opener.

But they dug in and won. Then came from behind to beat Loughgiel in the semi-final and came from nine down in the final against Ballycastle to win

by four points. It was an epic county championship trail - and yielded one of Cushendall's sweetest triumphs.

'Digging in' has been one of the buzzwords of their campaign but how could they miss that fight with the many legends they boast in their ranks. Terence "Sambo" McNaughton is probably the best known warrior of the lot. In his own playing days, he was a force of nature and while his second son, Shane, has had his career blighted by serious injury, he is back fit and gunning for glory.

Along with his hurling commitments, incidentally, Shane is busy with acting too. In recent times he has performed at Belfast's MAC theatre and will soon appear in a production at the Lyric. Indeed he will make his TV debut shortly in a cameo of popular BBC drama 'The Fall'.

He is set for a bright future on the boards and in front of the cameras but there's a lot going on before he delves any deeper into acting. Winning an All-Ireland title for his family and friends is the immediate priority.

**NA PIARSAIGH (LIMERICK)**

During nine games and three Munster club championships, Na Piarraigh stand proudly unbeaten in their own province.

Taking into account the fabled history of that championship, that is some feat. The only club that has had achieved anything near that success is Cashel King Cormacs and while the Tipp side, once giants of the game, have since endured testing days Na Piarraigh's graph is going the other way.

Down through the years, it has been so that teams reaching All-Ireland club finals usually boast rich and storied histories but Na Piarraigh only won their first county title in 2011.

Two years before that, Adare whipped them by 17 points in the Limerick final and their reputation as a 'soft city team' took yet another battering.

But onwards they marched, undeterred. For a club only founded in 1968, when five housing estates on the north of Limerick city were developed, they fared exceptionally well.

In the early days, their success seemed dependant on pursuits in the Gaelic football championship. They won city minor and county U21 football titles in the early 1970s, an intermediate title five years later and they lost the senior football final in 1982.

The football culture, though, slowly lost influence and hurling took charge of the locals.

After a new wave of young talent arrived in the Noughties they accumulated underage titles at their ease. Their players started winning Harty Cups with Ard Scoil Ris. They landed medals with victorious Limerick U21 teams - most recently four featured in the hammering of Wexford last September.

"We are creating our own tradition over the last five years, which is fantastic for the club," one of their greatest servants Shane O'Neill says.

A golden legacy is already assured but their names will forever be carved into history and folklore should they win for the first time on St Patrick's Day. The stakes are high.

**BE THERE THIS ST. PATRICKS DAY!**

On March 17th it's the AIB GAA All-Ireland Club Championship Finals in Croke Park. Be there to support your club, your county and all those you've stood alongside.

At 2pm it's Na Piarraigh versus Ruairí Óg, Cushendall in the Hurling final. Then at 4pm Ballyboden St. Enda's take on Castlebar Mitchels in the Football final.

Your tickets are waiting now at [www.gaa.ie/tickets](http://www.gaa.ie/tickets), selected Supervalu and Centra stores and usual outlets. Adults €25/£20. Under 16's just €5/£4.

**THE AIB GAA CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS. BE THERE. ALL THE WAY.**





## MEN IN BLACK READY FOR CENTRE STAGE

**T**he All-Ireland Club finals will see Cork referees in charge on the double – one with a lengthy CV and the other making a debut.

The vastly experienced Diarmuid Kirwan will be in charge for the hurling decider with Conor Lane on the whistle for the football final.

For the Banteer clubman Lane, this will be an extra special occasion as it will be his first ever All-Ireland senior final to be in charge of.

“It’s a great honour and I’m thrilled with it. This is my first adult All-Ireland final after doing the minor final in 2013.

“That was a great day out and this is going to be a big challenge but, I am looking forward to it,” he said.

Lane has risen through the ranks quite quickly – starting out in 2003 and working away at juvenile level and starting in Duhallow before progressing through Cork, Munster and on to the national panel where he has been for the last five years.

His neighbour Richard Murphy was a referee and Lane started out by being an umpire and linesman for him and was soon bitten by the bug of it all and hasn’t regretted a bit of it.

“I’ve made great friends through refereeing and I have got to travel the world,” says Conor.

“I get great enjoyment out of refereeing. I was never good enough as a player to make it at the highest level and I suppose the next best thing is to be involved as a match official. I really like the training part of it.

“Of course you will have your good days and your bad days and you are always your own worst critic – but I’d encourage anyone thinking about it to pick it up and give it a go and to enjoy it,” he added.

Just as the players will leave no stone unturned in their preparations Lane will have a strict four night a week training programme in place.

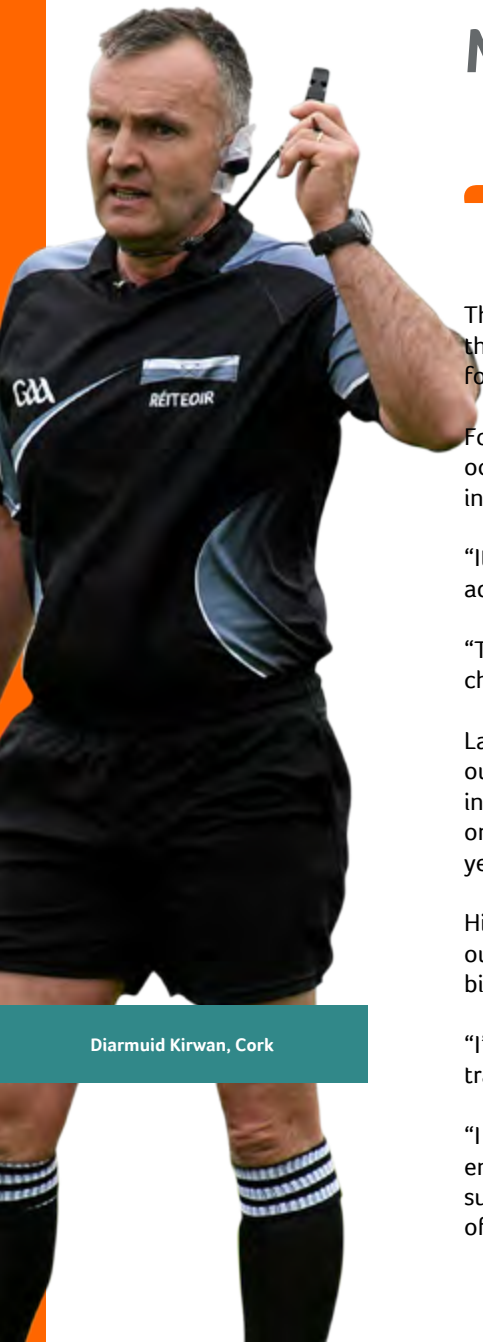
And he is looking forward to be able to share this special occasion with his father John Joe who is one of his four trusted umpires alongside Ray Hegarty, DJ O’Sullivan and Pat Kelly.

Diarmuid Kirwan will be in familiar surroundings when he steps out onto an All-Ireland senior final stage.

Originally from Ballyskeneagh in Offaly but now with Eire Óg in Cork, Kirwan is one of the longest serving and most decorated inter county referees in the country.

He has been on the national referees’ panel for 15 years and has accumulated a string of highlights – most notably the All-Ireland senior finals of 2007 and 2009, the minor All-Ireland finals of 2002 and 2003 and an U21 All-Ireland in 2012.

He also was referee for the 2007 All-Ireland senior club final and his glittering career sees him follow in the footsteps of his father Jerry who was himself a top ranked inter county referee and was the man in charge for the All-Ireland senior hurling final of 1988 when Galway successfully defended the Liam MacCarthy.



Diarmuid Kirwan, Cork



Conor Lane, Cork

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Now's your opportunity to take advantage of the limited number of Premium seats that have recently become available, so you're guaranteed to be there for all the big moments.

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Beyoncé concerts announced for 2016 (Please note seats must be purchased before the 2nd March to avail of the 2016 concert ticket option).

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# TOMMY WALSH – BACK IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN

by Cian Murphy

**H**e is one of the most decorated hurlers of his generation and ranked as one of the greatest of all time. But these days Tommy Walsh is at his happiest playing for his club Tullaroan.

And this month he has an extra spring in his step thanks to the Leinster Adult Club Hurling League.

The League has been one of the biggest success stories in Leinster GAA in recent years and features more than 60 hurling clubs from all over the Province coming together to play in a unique competition that gives them top level competitive action against teams from outside their native county.

With his inter county career at an end, last year Tommy Walsh excelled as Tullaroan won the Division 1 title and he is relishing their return to defend the crown in the 2016 competition.

“We played in it and won it 10 years ago and we had a great time travelling all around Leinster,” Tommy told leinstergaa.ie

“Last year we got great matches against strong teams from Camross, Clonkill and Myshall and they were great open matches in front of big crowds.

“It’s great to get good competitive matches like that at this time of year and it really sharpens you up for the season ahead in Kilkenny.

“It’s great for young lads and for the club too because there is great craic travelling around to the matches. Last year, before the Leinster League final with St Vincent’s there was a buzz around the club.

“It’s a new challenge playing teams from outside the county and in the Leinster League whoever you are playing is giving it their all. Maybe in the league in Kilkenny you don’t know how a team is going and they may not want to show their hand before Championship – but there is no one trying to hide in the Leinster League.

“Playing a team from outside Kilkenny they want to beat you so much because you are from Kilkenny and in some of the Leinster League matches we had to show great resolve to come through and I think it helped us.”

As a member of an all-conquering Kilkenny team under Brian Cody, Walsh saw it all. But he says he got to appreciate some of the little things all the more from Tullaroan’s run in the Leinster League.

“When you are playing with Kilkenny you are used to going on a bus to a game but

A different class. Tommy as he will always be remembered: making a dramatic impact on big matches



with a club team there is a great novelty and excitement in that. We brought supporters with us to away matches and it added to it.

“We didn’t have to think about entering it again in 2016 because there’s not many matches in it but they are all great matches and it was a big help in the development of our team.”

The sight of Tommy Walsh in a red helmet defying the odds to better all manner of opponents down that right wing has defined hurling for a generation of supporters. His courage and class endeared him to fans inside and outside of Kilkenny.

It also landed him a staggering nine All-Ireland medals, nine All-Star awards and 10 Leinster medals from a stunning senior career that ran from 1999 to 2014. For some, after the high of an inter county career like that the return to the mere mortal existence of club duty might be too much of a struggle for them. But not Tommy Walsh.

“I’m loving it,” he says.

“I love playing matches and in the Club I am playing matches every week and I’m having a ball with the Club and it has given me a new lease of life.

“I got to adjust to it (Kilkenny retirement) in my last year with Kilkenny when I was a sub and was playing very few matches when it is not easy to look on.

“But when I went back to the Club I had matches and that gave me a new lease of

life so it was a bit different to me and it was like a dream come true.

“When you are always playing you can take things for granted. Being a sub was not something I wanted to do but I’m back with the Club now and loving it. My plan is to go on until I can’t go anymore because you’ll be 40 years or more retired and not able to play so I will play for as long as I can.

“I’m back at wing back, wearing number five, and that is my favourite position – facing the ball and attacking the ball.” He credits his father Michael with instilling in him his initial love of the game and then came the steadying hand of mentors Bobby Sweeney and Ned Kennedy.

“They had us up in the field all the time – just hurling, hurling, hurling,” he recalled. Dreaming of matching trail blazers Liam Keogh and Bill Hennessy drove him.

“They allowed a young lad to dream of playing for Kilkenny and showed what it takes to win.”

Now he has passed the baton on to his younger brother Pádraig who, after playing in the 2014 All-Ireland win, grew even more influential in 2015, and Tommy has given him his full backing to drive on further.

“You want to see him do well and it was great to see how happy my parents were looking on at him. I was fortunate to have had a great career and to see Pádraig win two All-Irelands will give him great confidence.

“He has won them in his own right, he has



Cats and Kitten: Tommy Walsh's last inter county involvement came as part of the All-Ireland winning Kilkenny panel of 2014. On the victory lap after, he is here with his son Finn and younger brother Pádraig.

shown he is good enough and hopefully there’s more to come.”

Indeed, that’s a positive outlook he has for the entire Kilkenny team as the 2016 inter county season takes its first steps into being and Walsh feels the 2015 All-Ireland was the turning point as talk of the absence of retirees like himself, JJ Delaney, Brian Hogan, Henry Shefflin, David Herity and Aidan Fogarty was banished in the wake of their great final win over Galway.

“It will give them great confidence having won last year. If they hadn’t won then maybe the supporters would be thinking that they needed the boys that were there and who retired,” he reckoned.

“But in winning last year they showed they are good enough to win it in their own right and they will all take confidence from it. It is no longer about us.”

And with that it’s time to think of a match this weekend and the Club. For all he did and all he won and still wants to aim for, there is one nugget of wisdom that Tommy uses as his guide and is happy to share. Carlow man Pat Murphy was an influential teacher and mentor in St Kieran’s who gave Walsh and his team mates a simple guiding principle.

“He told us that ‘hurling is like a wardrobe – what you put in you get back out!’

“It sounds funny but I’ve thought of it so many times and that the harder we trained and the more we put in to our hurling that the more often we played well and won games.”

For more information on the Leinster Adult Club Hurling League see [here](#).



## UNMISSABLE EVENT PLANNED FOR GAA 1916 CELEBRATIONS

**D**etails of a spectacular show at Croke Park to mark the GAA contribution to the 1916 Centenary celebrations will be launched this month.

A specially commissioned 35 minute show is being put together by the world-renowned Tyrone Productions company and is being billed as one of Croke Park's 'unmissable events.'

Sunday, April 24 is already a big day in the GAA calendar as it will be where the Allianz

football league Division 1 and 2 finals are held at Croke Park.

It is also, however, the exact Centenary to the day that the first shots were fired in the Rising of 1916 in Dublin.

And the events at Croke Park on April 24 will mark the GAA's main contribution to the national calendar of events to mark the Rising.

Such is the scale and impact of the show that a decision was taken not to try and

cram it into the interval between the Division 2 and Division 1 finals.

It will now take place after the Division 1 trophy has been presented and will feature all four teams who play in Croke Park that day along with a sizeable cast of performers and musicians from here and abroad.

The full programme of events will be published shortly – but suffice to say this is one of those occasions when being there will be a special moment for those lucky enough to get their hands on a ticket.

Hopes are high that it will be an occasion to remember and rank alongside great events in the stadium's recent past like the 2003 Special Olympics opening ceremony, the first floodlit match of 2007 or the Dublin-Tyrone 125 celebration match of 2009 when the stadium was packed to the rafters.

A rallying call is to be made for GAA fans from every club in the country to be there on the day and help fill Croke Park to its 82,300 capacity and add to the sense of occasion with audience participation set to be a key element of the festivities.

# LÁ NA gCLUBANNA



In 2016 the GAA plans to celebrate the importance of your club in your community.

**Lá na gClubanna will take place on Sunday, 8th May, 2016.**

Every member of the GAA should mark this special day of celebration by participating at events in their Club... the real driver and engine of the GAA.

For details on how to get involved and for ideas see [here](#)



# THE GAA MUSEUM

The GAA Museum offers an unrivalled state-of-the-art visitor experience! The museum celebrates Ireland's unique national games of hurling and Gaelic football and features collections and exhibits which illustrate the rich history of these national games, highlighting the significant contribution the GAA has made - and continues to make - to Ireland's cultural, social and sporting heritage.

The museum includes exhibition galleries, a

Hall of Fame, match footage, and a magnificent new trophy display.

Visitors of all ages can also test out their own hurling and football skills in the interactive games zone – see how fast they can react, check out their passing skills, practice a fingertip save or the art of the high catch!

As well as its permanent exhibitions, the GAA Museum hosts a range of temporary exhibitions.



**WIN WIN WIN WIN WIN WIN**

## WIN A FREE TOUR OF THE GAA MUSEUM AT CROKE PARK

Simply answer the question below and email it to [clubnewsletter@gaa.ie](mailto:clubnewsletter@gaa.ie) before March 31 to be in with a chance of winning a pair of free passes to the Museum which is now listed on TripAdvisor as one of the top 10 things to do in Dublin.

**Q: IN WHICH PART OF THE STADIUM AT CROKE PARK IS THE GAA MUSEUM LOCATED? HOGAN, CUSACK, DINEEN OR DAVIN?**



# GAA PLAYER INJURY FUND - THE FACTS



## DID YOU KNOW...

As of today 25 per cent of GAA clubs are fully registered and paid for 2016 and have all of their players covered under the GAA Injury Fund.

Only three counties Meath, Cavan and Donegal are fully registered.

**The deadline for being registered and paid in full is just days away - March 31**

Failure by your club to pay for and register their teams by this date means they WILL NOT be covered.

There were 6,283 claims handled by the fund in 2015

The cost of claims was €8,320,817 of which team subscriptions contributed €6,157,802. The balance of claims costs was paid from Central Council funds.

Team subscription rates are €1,000 per adult team, €450 per U21 and €200 per underage team to a max of €1,200.

**Are you registered?**



# GAA 15 INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAMME / WARM UP ADVICE

Important information to help you cut down on injuries in training and matches

**T**he Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee in conjunction with a working group comprising of experts including Dr. Catherine Blake, Prof. Niall Moyna and Dr. Kieran Moran have developed the GAA 15, a standardised warm-up programme aimed at reducing the number of injuries sustained by GAA players.

Oisín McConville speaks about how Ulster Club

Champions Crossmaglen Rangers have benefited from using and adapting the GAA 15/Activate Warm-up as part of their training sessions.

The programme, including video tutorials on the exercises involved is available at the following links:

[learning.gaa.ie/GAA15](https://learning.gaa.ie/GAA15)

[activategaa.sini.co.uk/](https://activategaa.sini.co.uk/)



# CONCUSSION



## NOT ALWAYS A KNOCK-OUT!

### ACTION PLAN

**R**ecognise *the signs and symptoms*

**R**eport *if suspicious, don't hide it*

**R**ehab *with rest and medical guidance*

**R**eturn *after following Return To Play Protocol and getting medical clearance*

### SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Double/Blurry Vision
- Sensitivity to Light
- Feeling Hazy or Groggy
- Just not 'feeling right'
- Memory Problems
- Pressure in Head

For the Return to Play Protocol and further information on Concussion see [learning.gaa.ie/Concussion](http://learning.gaa.ie/Concussion)

## IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!!!



[Football](#)

[Hurling](#)

[Club](#)

[General](#)



## CONGRESS 2016

**C**ongress 2016 took place in Carlow last month and passed a number of crucial motions that will have a direct bearing on how we play and run our games.

A meeting of Central Council on March 19 will confirm exactly when the implementation dates of these rule changes will be.

### KEY MOTIONS

**Motion 4:** That the inter county minor grade will be reduced from Under 18 to Under 17 which will take these young players out of consideration for senior club activity. It will also mean the overwhelming majority of U17s will play minor without having to also sit their Leaving Cert in the same summer. This rule is proposed to come into effect in 2018. Proposed by Central Council.

**PASSED WITH 68 PER CENT APPROVAL**

*\*To cater for the Class of 2000 who would be due to play their last year minor as 18 year-olds in 2018 but who under this rule would miss that opportunity, it is to be recommended to Central Council that a special one-off national competition will be held in 2018 for 18 year-olds who otherwise would be denied the chance to play a final year minor.*

**Motion 5:** That the inter-county Under 21 football championship will be regraded to an Under 20 competition and be played during the summer months and viewed as a developmental age grade where none of the Under 20 players are eligible for senior inter-county duty. Proposed by Central Council.

**PASSED WITH 68 PER CENT APPROVAL**

**Motion 41:** That a 'Mark' be introduced into Gaelic football. A player who catches a ball cleanly from a kick out that has travelled at least as far as the 45 metre line without touching the ground has the option of calling a Mark and taking a free kick from that spot or can play on as normal. Proposed by the Standing Committee on Playing Rules.

**PASSED WITH 68 PER CENT APPROVAL**

*\*The date for the introduction of the Mark into the playing rules will be made by a meeting of the GAA's Central Council on March 19.*

**Motion 43:** Application to make all senior inter county championship matches that are broadcast live to be only available on a free to air basis and not available to exclusive subscription-based TV stations. Proposed by St Joseph's OCB Dublin

**REJECTED 15 PERCENT TO 85 PER CENT**



GAA Congress in Carlow in February 2016 passed a number of crucial motions



Kerry's David Moran pulls off a wonderful overhead catch. Under new rules he'd be entitled to call a 'Mark'.

# COACHES TOLD IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN NEW METHODS

Some of the biggest names in GAA coaching have shared their wisdom to help us all develop teams and players to be the best they can be

The 2016 Liberty Insurance GAA Games Development Conference in conjunction with Camogie, Handball, Ladies Gaelic Football and Rounders was held on Friday, January 22nd and Saturday January 23rd in Croke Park.

A capacity crowd was again in attendance for this annual event. This year's conference theme was 'The Coach, The Game, The Player: Building Connections' and focused on issues related to coaching the Adult Player (aged 18 + years).

Yet again, a major draw was the calibre of the speakers who were in attendance and who were happy to share their expert knowledge.

Speakers including Dr Liam Hennessy, (Director Setanta College), Cian O'Neill (Kildare Senior Football Manager), Eamon O'Shea (Former Tipperary Senior Hurling Manager), Jeffrey Lynskey (Galway Minor Hurling Manager) and Rena Buckley (Cork Ladies Gaelic Footballer and Camogie Player) addressed delegates from the 700 strong attendance while the Conference also included an Exhibition Village and a GAA related Research Poster Presentation.

For videos of all the conference presentations visit our GAA Learning Community & Development Portal at <http://learning.gaa.ie/Conference2016>



# STARS AND THEIR DRILLS

We spoke to two inter county stars and asked them about the drills they like the best. Here is what they said:

## BILL COOPER (CORK HURLER) – SUPPORT PLAY

“We are doing a warm-up drill with Cork this year devised by Frank Flannery. It’s a support play drill which I find very good. There are three players together – a full-forward line, for example – and Frank is in the middle with the ball. The idea is to support each other and if the ball comes to any of your team-mates you come out at a different angle and support them. It works with hand-passing or for strike play with a wider circle. The idea then is you recreate that in a match situation – moving off the shoulder, passing accurately and communicating.”

## JOHN HESLIN (WESTMEATH FOOTBALLER) – KICK PASSING

“Any drill that involves kick-passing. The way the game is gone we rely too much on hand-passing and the kick-passing skill has gone out of the game. If the drill involves scoring at the end of it, all the better. We do a full pitch drill with a few different options, but you have to scan the pitch and pick out a 30 or 40-yard pass. The ball travels so much faster than a player so drills like that are very important for the development of players.”



# WEXFORD GAA'S MAGNIFICENT NEW TRAINING CENTRE IN FERNS

**A** new Model home and a Model example to everyone in the GAA. That is how officials are describing the new home of Wexford GAA at their training centre in Ferns.

This state of the art development has had Phase 1 completed thanks to funding from Croke Park of €1.26m with an additional €275,000 in funding granted by Leinster GAA.

It's an example of how money raised by the GAA through gate money and commercial revenue is being channelled back into our units where it can have maximum impact.

Strategically located in the centre of the county, Phase 1 has seen the creation of four all-weather pitches at Ferns, two of which are fully floodlit and using their own power supply generator.

The four spacious dressing rooms can cater for modern day squads of up to 32 adults. The plan for Phase 2 is to carry out more work on the pavilion with the addition of stand-alone medical and treatment facilities, finishing a state of the art gym and the addition of catering facilities.

Already the feedback in Wexford is that there aren't enough hours in the day to cater for the level of activity taking place in

Ferns between county senior teams, school matches, development squads as well as camogie and Ladies football.

It means that plans for a Phase 3 development in the near future with the construction of an additional four pitches is warmly received.

The project was three years in the making to get to this stage and is being hailed as a great example of what is possible as it came in on time and on budget.

Derek Kent who was Development Officer for Wexford at the time and is now head of the Leinster GAA Infrastructure Committee, was a key part of the team that spearheaded the project.

He told the Club Newsletter: "It was a project that was the result of many years work with great vision from Ger Doyle to commence with the plan and excellent leadership from Diarmuid Devereux to complete.

"It has left Wexford with a facility that we can all be proud of and it is already being put to great use for the training and preparation of our teams, squads and schools etc and has been achieved within the timeframe and on tight budget."

Leinster GAA Chairman John Horan added:



Wexford GAA's magnificent new training centre in Ferns



Pitches to be proud of

"We value greatly the loyalty and support that we get from the GAA public and it is important that we show people where the money raised from our activities is invested back into the Association.

"Ferns is a great example of the GAA investing back into our grassroots. This project is a credit to Wexford and is a

superb state of the art facility delivered on budget.

"It truly is a Model for every other county to look at and learn from and I look forward to seeing the fruits of the labours on the pitches in Ferns being seen in the heroics of Wexford team performances at all levels in the years to come."



National Finance manager Kathy Slattery and Leinster GAA Chairman John Horan flanked by members of the Clann na Gael club in Louth who received €35,000 towards their club development.

A total of 106 clubs in Leinster received more than €760,000 as part of Croke Park's national club grant allocations and a special cheque presentation was held recently in Áras Laighean

## GAA FINANCE – IN NUMBERS

- €56M** – This is the total amount in revenue for Central Council in 2015 and made up of Gate Receipts (48%), Commercial Revenue (33%), Other Income (14%) and Sports Council Grants (5%).
- €9.5M** – The operating cost for Central Council to run the Association
- €12.5M** – Distributed to counties to assist in their operating costs
- €10.3M** – Games Development investment, an increase of €1M on 2014
- €6M** – Funding used for the more than 200 full time coaches employed nation wide
- €3.9M** – Spent on Player Welfare initiatives in 2015
- €2.8M** – Spent on developing county grounds and training centres
- €2M** – Spent on Club Development Projects
- €2.7M** – Spent on County administration and sister organisations and educational bodies
- 339** – The number of matches run by Central Council across all levels
- 48** – The number of matches out of the 339 that made a profit



# INNOVATION ACADEMY

UCD Programme to Transform Careers for Job Seekers across the country in 2016



**A**n exciting and innovative programme to assist job seekers in the West, the South and the South East has just been announced. The programme which is free for eligible jobseekers has been developed and will be run by the Innovation Academy UCD in collaboration with the GAA. It is funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Springboard+ Initiative.

Participants who successfully complete the course will gain a qualification from University College Dublin along with a highly transferable skill set with the skills to gain employment or to start their own business or social venture. The course has been run in multiple

locations over the past three years with 72% of participants going into regular employment or establishing their own business.

The course applies a 'learn by doing' teaching method with no exams and attracts a diverse mix of people from a range of sectors who either wish to start their own business, embark on a new career or rejoin an existing career path. The course is 18 weeks long running 2 days a week (9am-5pm) and is open to participants of any age who meet the course criteria. Places are limited and offered on a rolling basis.

For further information and to register your interest see [www.innovators.ie](http://www.innovators.ie)



## WHAT PAST STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY:

*"After five months looking for jobs I started getting called to interviews when I added that I was undertaking the Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Postgraduate Certificate to my CV. I got 4 job offers in one week, and 3 employers specifically said that studying at The Innovation Academy made me a stand out candidate"*

– Alannah Goggins, Graduate of the Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Enterprise programme.

*"The UCD Innovation Academy course was an excellent opportunity to learn about business. It provided me with creativity skills which I never knew I had. Most of all its an opportunity to meet with new people and build networks."*

– Michael Fennelly, GAA All-Star, Hurler of the Year 2011, and co-founder of Pivot

*"Participating on this programme with the Innovation Academy gave me the space to trial my business concept for MyLadyBug.ie, without having to spend funds on the initial stages of research. The members of the class are all from such different backgrounds and it was really great to meet a group of people who have studied and worked in different areas and who all bring fresh, unique ideas."*

– Maryrose Simpson from Laois, founder of MyLadyBug.ie

*"It was a fantastic opportunity. It's a great way to network with like-minded people and lectures are delivered by people who teach in international business schools."*

– Brendan Byrne, Area Manager at FarmFlo

## BELOW ARE THE LIST OF UPCOMING COURSES AND START DATES:

Location	Start Date
Wexford Town	23/02/2016
Cork City	31/03/2016
Galway City	31/03/2016
Cork City	19/04/2016
Galway City	28/04/2016
Waterford / South East	28/04/2016



# GAA HEALTHY CLUBS – RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF MODERN IRELAND

Award winning project grows to include at least one club across 32 counties for Phase 2

by Colin Regan

**R**epresentatives from all 60 clubs participating in Phase 2 of the Healthy Clubs project, including at least one from each county, attended the national orientation day in Croke Park on Saturday, February 20.

Inspirational addresses in the famous stadium usually come from the steps of the Hogan Stand, but Gwen Lannigan of the St. Colmcille's club, Bettystown, Co. Meath, stirred the audience with an address that any of Sean Boylan's All Ireland winning captains would have been proud of. St. Colmcille's is one of the 16 original Phase 1 Healthy Clubs and when they were asked to outline their journey and experience, Gwen was identified as the natural spokesperson.

Despite "never having owned a pair of boots" and only getting involved in the club relevantly recently, she is now one of the drivers of their vast suite of Healthy Club activities, including their award winning 'How Are You Today?' early intervention community mental health programme.

"I now spend about six or seven hours a week in the clubhouse and I absolutely love it," confessed Gwen, who is also the club's Irish Cultural Officer, citing the conversational Irish 'Caife agus chat as Gaeilge' and cards nights for isolated members of the community as amongst her favourite gatherings. They are just two in a

long list of health-orientated activities the club now offers, including: a club healthy eating policy, sun safe campaign with Irish Cancer Society, links to Operation Transformation, walking groups, Gaelic for Mums and Others, Gaelic 4 Dads and Lads, Men's Shed, Men on the Move, Mature Movers, ballroom dancing. They even helped a new athletics club get established – Cilles Athletics – and are involved in the local schools, many of which avail of their facilities.

"The club has been transformed, it is now at the heart of everything that happens in the community and everyone knows they are welcome, that there is something for them at St. Colmcille's," explained Gwen.

"Our catchment area population in east Meath/south Drogheda grew from approximately 9,000 in 2005 to 30,000 presently. The services have not kept up – despite serving such a large population base we experience similar challenges as many isolated rural communities as a result of little or no services, infrastructure and transport. The club recognised that it could play a vital role in responding to our local needs while embedding health and wellbeing in our club ethos and our local community."

An Uachtarán Cumann Luthchleas Gael, Aogán Ó Fearghail, commended all the



clubs that applied for Phase 2 (almost 100 in total) and wished those selected every success on their journey.

"The GAA is more than just a sporting association, we are also a community organisation. We want to ensure that everyone who comes in contact with our clubs – be they players, officers, coaches, referees, parents, or just members of our communities – benefit from that experience. We believe that the Healthy Clubs project will help support clubs in achieving that goal," he said.

The Healthy Clubs project is a key element of the GAA's growing work in the area of

wellbeing. It involves a unique public-private partnership involving the Irish health sector (Health Service Executive/ National Office for Suicide Prevention) and Irish Life, whose Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investment has made Phase 2 possible. It also benefits from input by Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland, the Public Health Agency, and numerous academia. It aims to support the grassroots implementation of the island's two leading health frameworks – 'Healthy Ireland' in the Republic and 'Making Life Better' in Northern Ireland.

### Selfless work

The independent evaluation into Phase

1 (which ran from March 2013–July 2015 and involved 16 clubs across the four provinces) strongly endorsed the project’s partnership approach to addressing health and wellbeing at community level. The report, by a team from Waterford IT’s Centre for Health Behavioural Research, also commended the clubs’ volunteers for their selfless work.

It is not imagined that all clubs will be capable of, or expected to, offer what St. Colmcille’s does, explains GAA Community & Health Manager, Colin Regan. “We asked St. Colmcille’s to outline their vast array of work to inspire the other clubs and provide ideas that might respond to a specific need in their community.

“We are extremely conscious of how busy GAA volunteers already are. What Gwen

outlined reflects the upper echelons of what any primary health care team could deliver, never mind a GAA club. Beyond the phenomenal volunteer hours involved the club accessed €30,000 funding from the GENIO philanthropic organisation over three years (now concluded) which allowed them financially resource many of their programmes, from free counselling and mindfulness classes to transport to such opportunities for isolated members of their community.

“Recognising the value of their upstream community work, and its cost-effective nature, the HSE has subsequently stepped in with a further €10,000 per annum for the coming three years. Viewing the evidence of St. Colmcille’s work, it’s the best money they will ever spend. The club has also received great support from local GPs,

the Louth & Meath Employment and Training Board, schools, while their Healthy Club work has helped attract new volunteers into the club, such as Gwen.”

Phase 2, which will run for approximately 18 months, remains a learning experience for all involved. The 60 participating clubs and the Community & Health team in Croke Park are breaking new ground and that involves learning as they go. The participants will be encouraged to explore all elements of their club to ensure that it is healthy in a truly holistic way, from their coaching practices through to insurance and finance, and of course, from a physical, mental, and social health perspective. The aim is to support Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Clubs.

Through the continued evaluation of Phase 2, the intention is to develop a suite of fit-for-purpose resources and programmes for all interested Healthy Clubs when Phase 3 begins in 2018.

Phase 2 Healthy club have been encouraged to use the national Lá na gClubanna on May 8th as an opportunity to launch their participation in the project to their local community. It will be an opportunity for all interested persons to come along, get involved, and help make their community a healthy place for everyone to enjoy. As the GAA motto states: ‘Ní neart go cur le chéile’.

For more details on the GAA’s work in the space of community, health, and wellbeing visit [www.gaa.ie/community](http://www.gaa.ie/community)





**The full list of Phase 2 Healthy Clubs is as follows (\* denotes club that completed Phase 1):**

CLUB NAME	COUNTY	PROVINCE
Mount Leinster Rangers GAA Club	Carlow	Leinster
Galmoy GAA Club	Kilkenny	Leinster
Dromard GAA Club	Longford	Leinster
Castletown Liam Mellows GAA Club	Wexford	Leinster
St. John's Volunteers GAA Club*	Wexford	Leinster
St. Kevin's GAA Club	Louth	Leinster
Bray Emmets GAA Club	Wicklow	Leinster
Annacurra GAA Club*	Wicklow	Leinster
St. Loman's Mullingar GAA Club	Westmeath	Leinster
Ballynacgary GAA Club	Westmeath	Leinster
Tubber GAA Club	Offaly	Leinster
Clonad GAA Club	Laois	Leinster
Kilmacud Crokes GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Raheny GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Good Counsel GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Craobh Chiarain GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Thomas Davis GAA Club*	Dublin	Leinster
Castlemitchell GAA Club	Kildare	Leinster
Kiltale GAA Club	Meath	Leinster
St. Colmcille's GAA Club*	Meath	Leinster
Killeagh GAA Club	Cork	Munster
Castlehaven GAA Club	Cork	Munster
St. Finbarr's GAA Club*	Cork	Munster
Midleton GAA Club*	Cork	Munster
JK Brackens GAA Club	Tipperary	Munster
Fr. Sheehy GAA Club	Tipperary	Munster
Nenagh Éire Óg GAA Club*	Tipperary	Munster
Na Piarasigh GAA Club	Limerick	Munster
Mungret's St. Pauls GAA Club*	Limerick	Munster
Parteen GAA Club	Clare	Munster
Tralee Parnell's Hurling Club	Kerry	Munster
Beaufort GAA Club*	Kerry	Munster
Brickey Rangers	Waterford	Munster
Cumann Naomh Padraig GAA Club	Tyrone	Ulster
Omagh, St. Enda's GAA Club	Tyrone	Ulster
Gaeil Truicha (Emyvale) GAA Club	Monaghan	Ulster
St. Tiernach's, Clones GAA Club	Monaghan	Ulster
Castleblayney Faughs GAA Club*	Monaghan	Ulster
Derrygonnelly Harps GAA Club	Fermanagh	Ulster
Erne Gaels GAC Belleek GAA Club	Fermanagh	Ulster
Clonduff GAA Club	Down	Ulster
St. Peter's Warrenpoint GAA Club*	Down	Ulster
St. John's Drumnaquoile GAA Club*	Down	Ulster
Michael Davitt GAA Club	Derry	Ulster
Killygarry GAA Club	Cavan	Ulster
Cavan Gaels GAA Club	Cavan	Ulster
St Joseph's Glenavy GAA Club	Antrim	Ulster

CLUB NAME	COUNTY	PROVINCE
St. Marys Rasharkin GAA Club*	Antrim	Ulster
Naomh Mochua Derrynoose GAA Club	Armagh	Ulster
Culloville Blues GAA Club*	Armagh	Ulster
St Marys, Convoy GAA Club	Donegal	Ulster
Naomh Muire, Kincasslagh GAA Club	Donegal	Ulster
Ballindeereen GAA Club	Galway	Connaught
Melvin Gaels GAA Club	Leitrim	Connaught
Aghamore GAA Club	Mayo	Connaught
Achill GAA Club	Mayo	Connaught
St. Michael's GAA Club	Sligo	Connaught
Eastern Harps GAA Club*	Sligo	Connaught
St. Aidan's GAA Club	Roscommon	Connaught
Oran GAA Club*	Roscommon	Connaught

**For more information contact Colin Regan on 00353-1-8658764 or email: [colin.regan@gaa.ie](mailto:colin.regan@gaa.ie)**

## SHOWCASING THE ROLE OF GAA CLUBS IN THE AREA OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

As part of the GAA Healthy Clubs project we are aiming to capture the existing work underway in clubs to promote health and wellbeing for members and the wider community. It is important that we collect this information from a wide range of clubs to showcase how GAA clubs are unique entities in Irish life.

You and your club can play a really important role in this exercise by completing a two part questionnaire about the daily workings of your GAA unit. It is hoped that all GAA clubs will be welcomed into the Healthy Clubs project in 2018 and your support will prove another step on that journey.

We would really appreciate if a club officer could complete this questionnaire by clicking on the link [here](#). (This should take no more than 30 mins.)

Additionally, we would appreciate it if your club coaching officer could complete the following questionnaire [here](#). (This should take no more than 5 mins.)

Your contribution will ensure that we accurately report on the fantastic work carried out by GAA clubs across Ireland.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the GAA Healthy Clubs Co-ordinator Aoife O'Brien at [aoife.obrien@gaa.ie](mailto:aoife.obrien@gaa.ie) or the WIT Evaluation team, led by Aoife Lane and David Callaghan at [davidcboyle@hotmail.com](mailto:davidcboyle@hotmail.com)

## SEE GAA LIKE NEVER BEFORE - WELCOME TO THE NEW GAA.IE

**T**he new [GAA.ie](#) brings our Games to you like never before. We have taken our digital presence to a new level with the aim of bringing our audience, at home and abroad, a website experience that will leave them coming back for more.

To really give you what you want, the site has been split into three separate portals. The main home of [GAA.ie](#) offers our most sought after content; fixtures and results, tickets, news and video. It's also where you will find our live match centre.

MyGAA is the hub for those involved in our games at all levels; players, coaches, referees, administrators, etc. If you're looking for information that supports you in your day-to-day role, this is the place you will find it.

TheGAA is the home of all of information regarding the Association as a governing body, its history and its structures.

This website redevelopment is step one on a journey to creating a digital sporting experience that will see the GAA on par with world leaders in digital sport.

We look forward to bringing you on this journey.



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR CLUB OFFICERS UNDERWAY

**T**he GAA Club Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) aims to provide you, as a club officer, with the basic knowledge and key leadership skills to carry out your role effectively. After almost a year of planning by the Association's National Officer Development Committee, the Leadership Development Programme began on Saturday the 13th of February and is proving to be extremely popular with Clubs.

Monaghan and Laois were the first two counties to deliver modules and over 100 officers were in attendance between both events. Here is a breakdown of activities in the first week of the programme:

- \* **6 different counties visited**
- \* **8 training events held**
- \* **22 Leadership Associates facilitated modules**
- \* **25 2-hour modules delivered**
- \* **385 attendees**
- \* **Countless amounts of issues, ideas and knowledge shared**

### Why should you get involved?

Quite simply, the Club Leadership Development Programme has been designed to meet your needs in a thorough manner. After conducting a survey with club officers in April 2015, it was clear that two things were required: 1)

Comprehensive information on what the various club officer roles involve 2) skills to carry the roles out successfully. By taking part in the programme, you will:

- \* **Gain a thorough understanding of what your role involves**
- \* **Develop basic leadership, management and communication skills**
- \* **Experience increased role satisfaction**
- \* **Have an awareness of where to access resources and supports**
- \* **Be able to share ideas and solve problems with fellow officers**
- \* **Be better prepared for future roles in the Association**
- \* **Get an online certificate of completion for each module**

### What exactly does it involve?

Officers will learn from trained Leadership Associates who have experience of being a Club/County/Provincial Officer and of delivering training courses. Learning will take place in a relaxed training environment in appropriate venues in the participating counties. All courses run for two hours and involve a lot of learning activities to encourage problem solving and idea sharing with fellow club officers. The programme will have several core modules which will be delivered on a county basis and a selection of optional modules which will be delivered on a provincial basis once

INVESTING IN LEADERS, INVESTING IN YOU.

the core modules have been delivered. To see the programme brochure, visit the Programme Overview.

### How can Club Officers get involved?

All training sessions will be organised by County Development Officers in conjunction with the Provincial Councils. The participating counties in 2016 are:

**Ulster: Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Donegal, Down, Monaghan, Tyrone**  
**Munster: Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Limerick**  
**Leinster: Carlow, Dublin, Kilkenny, Laois, Louth, Westmeath, Wicklow, Wexford**  
**Connacht: Roscommon, Galway**

There is no cost for officers who wish to attend any of the courses. The dates, times

and venues will be communicated to Clubs by the Development Officer in each County [here](#).

### More information Expression of Interest Form Programme Overview

For more information, visit [learning.gaa.ie/clubleadership](http://learning.gaa.ie/clubleadership)

### Club Advice Manual

The Club Advice Manual is a resource for all Club officers. It contains information on many aspects of Club activity and administration, such as:

- \* **Mission, Vision and Values of the GAA**
- \* **Introduction to the Club Manual**
- \* **Club Activity Checklist**
- \* **Club Committee Structure**

- \* **Role of the Club Chairman**
- \* **Role of the Club Secretary**
- \* **Role of the Club Treasurer**
- \* **Role of the Public Relations Officer**
- \* **Other Club Officer Roles**
- \* **Property Ownership – Vesting of Property and the Appointment of Trustees**
- \* **Effective Club Meetings**
- \* **The Club Annual General Meeting – AGM**
- \* **Coaching and Games Development in the Club**
- \* **Communication in the Club**
- \* **Membership and Registration**
- \* **Financial Matters in the Club**
- \* **Insurance and the GAA Injury Benefit Fund**
- \* **Culture and Heritage in the GAA Club**
- \* **The Inclusive GAA Club**
- \* **Volunteer Recruitment Toolkit**
- \* **GAA Fundraising Toolkit**

To access it, visit [learning.gaa.ie/clubmanagement](http://learning.gaa.ie/clubmanagement)

### IT Resources

A central library of supports and resources for the GAA's IT systems is available online. Resources are available for:

- \* **Office365**
- \* **GAA Management System**
- \* **Yendo – The official GAA Club Accountancy Software**
- \* **Injury Benefit Fund Claims System**

To access these resources, visit [learning.gaa.ie/itresources](http://learning.gaa.ie/itresources)

### Member and Player Registration

Clubs must register their players and

members for the 2016 season on the GAA Management System which can be accessed by visiting [people.gaa.ie/admin](http://people.gaa.ie/admin).

When logged on, the designated Club Administrator (Secretary or Registrar) should go to the 'Register Members' page and complete the necessary steps.

This page will contain the details of all of those people who have been registered with the Club in previous years. To add new members to the Club, go to 'Add and View Members', click on the 'Add' button, select 'Member' and complete the necessary steps.

Please note that anyone whose name is in red on either the 'register' page or the 'add and view member page', is unregistered for the current year.

Please ensure that all members, including all players, are registered. The deadline for registration to allow voting rights is March 31 2016.

E-mail and Telephone Support Each Club will have access to the system either through their Secretary or Registrar. For any queries on access to the system, or on the system functionality, please e-mail or call the Servasport Helpdesk on:  
Email: [gaasupport@servasport.com](mailto:gaasupport@servasport.com)  
Phone: ROI: 04890 313 845

NI: 02890 313 845  
International: +44 2890 313 845

Support hours until 31 March are as follows:

Monday to Friday – 9am to 10pm  
Saturday to Saturday – 10am to 6pm



### User Forums

The GAA Management System provides Clubs with functionality to:

- \* **Add, view and register members and players**
- \* **Set-up teams, groups, committees and families for reporting and communication purposes**
- \* **Communicate with these groups via bulk text message and e-mail**
- \* **Generate team sheets in Irish and English**
- \* **Generate registration reports**
- \* **Pay and record fees**
- \* **Affiliate teams and pay Injury Fund subscriptions**

- \* **Request membership cards**
- \* **Create amalgamations**
- \* **Access resources and supports**

A number of helpful online forums are available where you will find User Guides and FAQs for these sections. Please visit [here](#) or google 'GAA Help Desk.'

### Online Training Documents

The GAA Learning and Development Portal contains a GAA Membership Training Manual and videos explaining the system. To access this information, visit [learning.gaa.ie/gaamanagementsystem](http://learning.gaa.ie/gaamanagementsystem)

# SCÓR HELPED ME BECOME THE PERSON I AM

by Catherine Daly

**S**cór was born in 1969, so was I. For as long as I can remember Scór has been a part of my life. I am the youngest of six and my father was deeply involved in Scór and its promotion from the start. He embraced the ideals and values promoted by the Scór competitions with open arms.

We were brought up in a home steeped in all things 'GAA'.

During the summer months we all went to hurling and football matches and during the winter months we went to Scór. I don't believe a babysitter was ever called upon to mind me when the rest of the family went to Scór, I certainly have no recollection of this being the case. I was brought along too and according to my mother my instruction, before falling asleep after the Solo Singing, was to waken me for the Ballad Groups. As a result of this, I had quite an extensive repertoire of Ballads by the time I reached the age of 10.

My first love is certainly singing, and I participated in both Solo Singing and Ballad Group competitions over the years, and continue to do so. However, I have participated in all other Scór competitions, except Ceol Uirlise. Often, I should add, to make up the numbers and not because of any particular talent or skill. Nonetheless I have always thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the sense of achievement one gets out of such participation.

I got involved in the preparation and mentoring side of the competitions in my late teens, training the

Scór na nÓg Ballad Group in my home club, Delvin, for many years. There is a considerable fulfilment to be gained from working with young people and guiding them to reach their potential, whether on the hurling, football or camogie pitch or on the Scór stage.

There is no doubt that my involvement in Scór over the years has helped me become the type of person I am, fostering within me a love for all things inherently Irish – singing, dancing, storytelling, music and of course the language itself.

Why is Scór so worthwhile? It gives an opportunity to cultivate 'Irishness' and love of culture in our club members.

Participation in Scór competitions encourages inclusivity in our clubs and, as with every competition, there is a chance of success, which is always attractive.

I continue to be involved in participation and preparation, with my current club, Ballycomoye and in administration and adjudication.

My own children are now Scór participants, and I have even convinced my husband to thread the boards in the Novelty Act and, more recently, the Léiriú competition. My proudest Scór moment was when my son achieved All-Ireland success in the Tráth na gCeist in 2012. His Grandfather stood on the All-Ireland stage in the same discipline but unfortunately victory eluded him. I can't help feeling how proud he would be if he were still alive.



Scór helps the GAA offer more to people outside of playing games and is a cultural outlet





## KICKFOR KOLKATA

**C**é chomh fada a thógfadh sé ort pointe a scóráil i ngach páirc CLG sa tír? Cuir ceist ar an bhfear seo...

Chas Pádraic Ó Ciardha le Kevin O’Riordan, fear óg atá ag iarraidh pointe a scóráil i ngach páirc CLG sa tír ar son na carthanachta. Labhair sé linn faoina aistear agus an obair atá i gceist leis...

Cé chomh fada a thógfadh sé ort pointe a chiceáil ar gach páirc CLG sa tír? An cineál ceist sheafóideach a chuirtear go minic ag an gcuntar sa dteach tábhairne, an cineál ceiste a gceapfá nach bhfuil freagra ar bith uirthi. Ar an dea-uair an turas seo, tá freagra na ceiste ag fear amháin, nó, ar a laghad, beidh freagra na ceiste aige faoi cheann trí mhí nuair a thiocfaidh deireadh lena aistear dochreidte.

Faoi láthair, tá Kevin O’Riordan, múinteoir óg ó Thiobraid Árann, níos mó ná leath bealaigh tríd a thuras agus é mar aidhm aige pointe a chiceáil i ngach ceann den breis agus 1,600 páirc CLG atá sa tír. Nuair a chas sé le Tuairisc.ie ag deireadh na seachtaine seo caite, bhí Kevin ar cuairt ar an bhfichiú contae dá thuras – é mar aidhm aige a 1,000ú pointe a chiceáil sa Ghaillimh, sprioc a bhain sé amach ar an Domhnach ar pháirc churaidh iomána na Gaillimhe, Na Sairséalaigh.

Is ar mhaithe le hairgead a bhailiú ar son carthanachta atá Kevin ag tabhairt faoin iarracht seo. Agus é ag staidéar in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad dhá bhliain ó shin, chaith an Tiobradach sé seachtaine ag múineadh gasúr óg i Kolkata san Ind. Chuaigh an turas i bhfeidhm air chomh mór sin gur shocraigh filleadh ar an gcathair a luaithe agus a tháinig sé abhaile go hÉirinn.

Is deartháir é Kevin le Colin O’Riordan, iarimreoir Thiobraid Árann a shínigh conradh le na Sydney Swans san AFL anuraidh, agus nuair a bhí Kevin ag imirt le Colin agus a dheartháir eile sa ghairdín a tháinig an smaoineamh don aistear seo chuige.

“Bhí muid ag caint faoin Chumann Lúthchleas Gael agus na clubanna uile atá timpeall na tíre. Thosaigh mé ag bailiú eolais ansin,” a deir sé. Is ar a bhreithlá anuraidh, an 29 Lúnasa, a thosaigh Kevin amach ar a thuras agus tá sé mar aidhm aige an pointe deireanach dá aistear a chiceáil i bPáirc an Chrócaigh ar Lá Fhéile Pádraig.

Nuair a chloiseann tú an scéal ar dtús, déarfá leat féin gur bealach maith atá ann airgead a bhailiú ar son na carthanachta, ach tá i bhfad níos mó oibre i gceist ná mar a shílfeá.

Cé go mbíonn comhluadar aige anois agus



arís ar a aistear, caitheann Kevin laethanta fada leis féin ag tiomáint timpeall na tíre.

“Tá tú ag iarraidh a bheith ar an mbóthar chomh luath agus atá solas ann. Bím ag an gcéad chumann ag éirí na gréine, sin thart ar 8.10 na laethanta seo, agus coinním orm ag imeacht go dtí go mbíonn sé dorcha. Tá tú ag caint ar 12 uair a chloig in aghaidh an lae uaireanta, ó thaobh an taistil agus gach rud,” a deir Kevin.

Tá an oiread sin oibre i gceist gur togra

lánaimseartha atá ann anois. Cé go raibh sé ag obair mar mhúinteoir ionaid roimhe seo, rinne sé an cinneadh éirí as an múineadh go dtí go mbeadh a sprioc bainte amach aige.

Bhí sé i gCorcaigh roimh an Nollaig agus thóg sé naoi lá air an contae uile a thaistil. “Tá an méid is mó cumann sa tír ann – 155. Bhí mé breá sásta an ceann sin a chur den liosta roimh an Nollaig agus briseadh a thógáil,” a deir sé.

Ní bhíonn deireadh leis an obair do Kevin

nuair a éiríonn sé dorcha ach an oiread. Mar chuid dá thuras, glacann sé pictiúir agus déanann sé físeán ag gach cumann le cur suas ar a chuntais Twitter agus Facebook.

Nuair a shroicheann sé an baile, bíonn air eagarthóireacht a dhéanamh ar an ábhar agus é a uaslódáil, rud a thógann cúpla uair a chloig nó níos mó air, ag brath ar céard atá bainte amach aige i rith an lae.

Cé go raibh an geimhreadh go dona ó thaobh na báistí de, deir Kevin nár chuir sé isteach rómhór air. “Bhí báisteach ann, sneachta, tintreach agus toirneach ach nuair atá mé thíos in iarthar Chorcaí nó ar leithinis i gCiarraí nó pé áit, níl mé in ann tada a dhéanamh ach cur suas leis agus mé imithe chomh fada sin.

“Ba í an Ghaillimh an áit ba mheasa mar a tharlaíonn sé. Bhí mé ag iarraidh dul chomh fada le Cinn Mhara an lá cheana. Caithfidh gur thriail mé ocht mbóthar éagsúil ach bhí siad ar fad faoi uisce. Ní raibh Google fiú in ann bealach eile a fháil dom!”

“Ní hé deireadh an domhain é mar go mbeidh mé ag teacht ar ais arís i dtús mhí an Mhárta chun Oileáin Árainn a dhéanamh, ach ba é sin an chuid ba mheasa dhó go dtí seo.

“Más fliuch atá mé, níl orm ach geansaí nua a chur orm. Tá urraíocht déanta ag O’Neill’s ar roinnt geansaithe dom agus tá sé sin iontach agus níl orm ach ceann nua a chaitheamh orm agus an teas a chasadh air sa gcarr!”

D’fhear a bhfuil dúil mhór aige i gCLG, is é ceann de na príomhbhuntaístí a

bhaineann lena aistear ná go bhfuil sé ag tabhairt cuairte ar na cumainn agus ar na páirceanna is stairiúla agus is suimiúla sa tír. “Tugann sé deis dom taisteal go dtí cuid de na páirceanna is áille sa tír. Suas Slí an Atlantaigh Fhiáin, i gCorcaigh, i gCiarraí, in iarthar na Gaillimhe.

“Is in Éirinn amháin a rachfá thar pháirc ceithre nó cúig huaire gan é a thabhairt faoi deara. Bheadh cuma gharraí feirmeora air, an geata dúnta, meirg ar an gcúl agus bíonn ort an cheist a chur ar dhuine áitiúil, ‘Cá bhfuil an pháirc?’,” a deir sé ag gáire.

“Tá gach duine chomh bródúil as a gceantair agus a bpáirceanna féin. Bheadh daoine ag ceapadh go bhfuil áiseanna iontacha acu ach bheadh ormsa an ruaig a chur ar chaoirigh ón bpáirc céanna chun go mbeadh mé in ann mo chic a thógáil!”

Fiú nuair a chas Tuairisc.ie le Kevin i mBearnna na Gaillimhe, bhí geata na páirce faoi ghlas agus obair dheisiúcháin á dhéanamh faoi láthair ann. Chun a bhealach isteach a dhéanamh, bhí air léim thar chlaí, dul isteach sa phuiteach sa gharraí taobh leis an gcarrchlós, cromadh faoi shreang dheilgneach agus léim thar chlaí eile. Ar son na cúise.

In ainneoin na ndeacrachtaí seo, tá an spiorad pobail a spreagann CLG feicthe ag Kevin chomh maith. Go dtí seo, bhí Kevin ag brath ar chairde chun lóistín a thabhairt dó má bhí sé rófhada ó bhaile ach tá áiteanna ann nach féidir brath ar a leithéid.

“Tá mé ag déanamh Cúige Uladh an mhí seo chugainn agus bhí amhras orm mar nach bhfuil aithne agam ar mhórán daoine



thuas ann ach tá tacaíocht á fháil agam cheana féin. Tá triúr nó ceathrar tagtha chugam ag rá go bhfuil siad ag iarraidh cúnaimh a thabhairt dom. Seo daoine nár chas mé leo riamh i mo shaol ach tá siad ag tógáil lá saoire ón obair chun mé a thiomáint timpeall nó tá siad chun leaba a thabhairt dom ina dtithe féin. Sin é an meon atá ann i gCLG, tá sé dochreidte.”



Is é Maigh Eo an chéad chontae eile ar an liosta ag Kevin, agus é ag tabhairt faoi an tseachtain seo. Faoin am go mbeidh sé críochnaithe, measann Kevin go mbeidh thart ar 70,000km déanta aige ó cheann ceann na tíre. Is dúshlán ar leith é, cinnte, nár thug aon duine eile faoi go dtí seo. Nuair a smaoiníonn Kevin ar an méid sin, ní dhéanann sé tada ach a ghuailí a chroitheadh.

“Táim i ngrá leis an smaoineamh, táim i ngrá le CLG. Is rud suimiúil, is rud difriúil é.”

Is fíor dó.

Foilsíodh an t-alt seo ar dtús ar an suíomh nuachta idirlín Tuairisc.ie. Is féidir síntiús a thabhairt do Kevin ar a shuíomh KickForKolkara [anseo](#).

# NEW ONLINE PLAYER TRANSFER SYSTEM

**A**pplication for an Inter-County transfer may be made online as part of a pilot scheme by Central Council. If a player wishes to apply online, he should contact the Secretary of the Club he wishes to join and refer him/her to the transfers section of the official GAA website for information on the process. Benefits of using the new system include:

- Quicker processing of applications.
- Less chance of incorrect information being submitted.
- Ability to check status of applications.
- Easy access to transfer history.
- Less administration work.

Answers to frequently asked questions in addition to step-by-step user guides for players, Club Secretaries and County Secretaries can be accessed by visiting [here](#).

Please note the new online transfer system can only be used at present for transfer which are cross-provincial (i.e. approved by Central Council).

#### Accessing the Player Transfer System (Club and County Secretaries only)

A Club or County Secretary can access the Player Transfer System by visiting [pts.gaa.ie](#) and entering his/her 7 digit Membership Number and Password.

For more information, please refer to the user guides on the GAA website [here](#).



## CLIMB4CLARE UPDATE – WHAT'S HAPPENING?

**W**e are in our second year of involvement with our Climb4Clare fundraising campaign and once again we want to thank you for your support and encourage you to continue fundraising for this excellent cause in the months ahead.

This weekend we had our second phase of CLIMB Facilitator training and the programme will now also be available through:

- Cancer Care West
- St James Hospital Social Work Unit
- Hope Cancer Support Centre Wexford
- Galway Hospice Foundation
- Dóchas Tullamore

with further personnel being trained for Cuisle, Portlaoise and ARC Cancer Care Centres in Dublin.

This will add to the trained centres from last year:

- Cork Arc Cancer Support
- Cuan Cootehill & Cavan Centre Social Support Group
- Cancer Focus Northern Ireland (Cookstown)
- Arc Dublin South
- Arc Dublin North
- Tuam Cancer Care

- Hand in Hand Children's Cancer Charity Galway
- Éist Carlow Cancer Support Centre
- Portlaoise Cuisle Cancer Care

The demand for training has been extremely high and we will be hoping to organise further dates in the next few months to continue the spread of CLIMB throughout Ireland. We will be adding to this in the coming weeks as many centres have also asked about the possibility of training up volunteers for their centres to assist the trained facilitators and this CLIMB Assistant training will take place on 7th March in Dublin.

The 'CLIMB4CLARE' Campaign could not be a success without the support of our members, clubs, county boards and provincial councils and we appreciate your continued support and assistance with fundraising for this hugely beneficial campaign.

Please feel free to follow the Climb4Clare Facebook and Twitter pages for regular updates and we will be once again linking with Hell&Back for a big fundraiser on 10th September and would encourage as many clubs and counties as possible to get involved in what is a brilliant fun filled day and great for team building. Please forward this to your all clubs and members to share the impact their generosity is generating across the country.



Clare Clarke who passed away in 2015 and after whom the programme is named. Clare was a member of staff at the LGFA for 12 years and was diagnosed with breast cancer which eventually spread to the rest of her body. She was the mother of 2 young girls and found there was no help for her, or her children, until after the parent or loved one had passed away. She found the Climb programme in Northern Ireland and undertook to introduce it across the Republic of Ireland. The Climb4Clare fundraising initiative was set up to generate the funds necessary for the programme to be rolled out across the country and was spearheaded by Clare. The fundraising was successful and in January 2015 the first Climb tutors were trained to deliver the programme to children. That evening Clare finally succumbed to cancer herself but her determination saw her live long enough to see her dream become a reality.

## CAMOGIE4TEENS 2016

**T**he Camogie Association is delighted to launch it's 'Camogie4Teens' programme.

This is a new and exciting initiative specifically for teenagers.

The Camogie Association applied for funding for this initiative and were one of 5 national governing bodies to receive funding for a project from the Coca Cola Thank you Fund.

The aim of this unique programme is to cluster Camogie clubs together in a county in order to provide targeted programmes for their teenagers (15-18 year olds).

There will be 5 clubs clustered together for each programme. Each club will be able to nominate 6-8 teenagers for the initiative. There will be 20 programmes in total. The 20 programmes will run over 2 phases.

County Boards have already applied for the programme and the 20 counties chosen are as follows:

**Phase 1:**  
**Dublin, Meath, Carlow, Westmeath, Derry, Antrim, Cavan, Galway, Limerick, Cork**

**Phase 2:**  
**Wicklow, Offaly, Wexford, Kildare, Down, Armagh, Donegal, Roscommon, Clare, Tipperary**

The county boards chosen are now in the process of determining what clubs within their county are interested in the programme and 5 clubs will be chosen within each county for the programme.

Each club in the cluster of 5 that is chosen within a county will host an element of the programme for the teenagers involved.

Programmes include Coaching Course, Referee Course, Admin/PR Course, Lifestyle & Blitz days. Tutors for the courses will be organised by the Camogie Association through the Regional Development Co ordinators.

For more information on this initiative please contact:

Caroline Murray, Project & Initiatives Co Ordinator with the Camogie Association  
[Caroline.Murray@camogie.ie](mailto:Caroline.Murray@camogie.ie)



## GAA HANDBALL

The 2016 GAA Handball All-Ireland Senior Singles Championships kicks off this month with all players vying for that cherished spot at the Finals Festival Weekend in Kingscourt HC, Cavan on March 18th - 20th.

On paper it looks like there could be repeat finals as last year in store but there are a number of young guns hungry for success that could cause an upset along the way.

See [link](#) here for full draws.



## CLUB COLOURS – THE HEATH, CO LAOIS



The Heath GAA Club was formed in 1888. The exact date is unknown, but the first officers elected were: President - James O'Brien, Vice-President - John Tynan, Secretary - Patrick Bates, Treasurer - John Daly and Captain - Denis Booth. Initially the club used the prefix St Patrick's in its title but this was later dropped.

The founding members of the club also took part in athletics and cricket and in the early days the club played and trained on an area of The Heath that was known as the cricket grounds. The GAA ban on playing cricket, rugby, soccer and hockey did not come into effect until 1902.

The Heath made their first ever appearance at the Timahoe Tournament on Sunday the 28th of November 1888 in the Lambourton Estate. The Leinster Leader reported "A goodly number turned out to see the games and amongst those seen was a due proportion of the fair sex." The game itself was against Luggacurren and it was the first public appearance for both teams. The paper reported "although

both teams appeared for the first time in public contest, they displayed an amount of science and pluck as would do credit to much more noted teams. The play was so well sustained throughout that at the call of time, they were evens, each party having scored a point."

Following the Heath's county final win in 1913, the club colours of black and amber became the colours worn by Laois teams and the county team was wearing them when they won the All Ireland Senior Hurling Final in 1915, the county's first and to date, only All Ireland win.

The Blake family, originally from Mayo, purchased The Heath House in 1880 and for 80 odd years ran a very successful racing stable, training 29 classic winners including 7 Irish Derby winners. The Blake's racing colours were scarlet and grey and the club wore these colours from 1930 to 1950 having been presented with a set of jerseys by the Blake family. The club reverted to the traditional black and amber in 1950.

Our Club Crest reflects this aspect of our history showing both our original colours of black and amber and also the scarlet and grey racing silks of the Blake family which were worn for the 20 year period up to 1950. It also depicts a sprig of heather from which the area derives its name.

### FEEDBACK

Many thanks to all of those who have contributed to this month's edition of the GAA Club Newsletter.

We value your feedback.

Any comments or suggestions to [clubnewsletter@gaa.ie](mailto:clubnewsletter@gaa.ie)

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