

2009 – Clonduff are Double All Ireland Champions!

Contributed by Club Secretary Anita Brannigan

Kilmacud Double the highlight of a Busy Year



The 'Fairer' members of Clonduff collected the Kilmacud Sevens Shield for the first time ever on Saturday 12th September when the senior Camogie team having already bagged the Senior County Championship and League double won the coveted Kilmacud Camogie Sevens (see separate article). Seven days later the 'Lads' collected their first ever Kilmacud Sevens title to crown an extraordinary year in the history of Clonduff sports people – All Ireland titles are not 'handed out' – they are dearly won and only the best on the day succeed! To add the gloss to the Football Sevens title Jason Brown, who had cruciate ligament surgery at the end of last season and spent

most of 2009 in rehab was awarded the 'Player of the Tournament'! Hopefully the boys can convert their Sevens success into the 'big' game in the near future. At the time of writing and with one game left in the league, they have just managed to claw themselves out of the relegation playoffs and need to win their one remaining game to stay out of it!

At juvenile level, whilst not many county titles have come the way of Clonduff, the achievements of youth teams in tournaments from U8 up to and including U16 truly reflects the hard work and the success of the underage structures in place in Clonduff. Once again the VHI Cúl Camp was one of the largest in the County and Clonduff youngsters provided the largest contingent of any Down club at the first Campa Chaormaíic organised outside Tyrone (Castlewellan).



As always, however, the GAA calendar begins with the cultural events and as always there was a big entry from Clonduff in both Scór na nÓg and Scór Sinsear. The Murray family won the South Down Instrumental Music title and went on to



represent Down at numerous events including the post-match entertainment following the Ulster Finals when past captains of All Ireland winning teams were honoured, and also in the marquee following the County Finals in 2009. Another member of the Scór na Óg team, Christina McConville regaled spectators with her rendition of Amhrán na bhFiann at numerous match venues during the season. The Set Dancers and the Novelty Act won South Down and County titles and were both narrowly defeated in the Ulster Final. Clonduff has been actively involved in Scór since its inception and throughout its heyday in the

1970s/80s. Scór became less fashionable with clubs in the 1990s – but not in Clonduff and they are to the forefront during its current resurrection (long may it continue). Clonduff provided a big contingent of artistes for the annual Scór concert in Downings, Co Donegal (now in its 20th year) – Set Dancers, Novelty Act and Junior Musicians but it was the seisún in the hotel afterwards – the entire concert party made their way to it – that will live long in the memories of those who attended.

The season was in its infancy when one of the best ever 'Clonduff Days' was witnessed by almost the entire Clonduff community – Lá na gClub – Club Day, 10th May 2009, the day set aside to mark the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the GAA.



U16 Footballers won Bryansford Tournament



Unveiling the 1st Townland Stone

The day dawned bright and sunny in the midst of wet and windy weather and shone on the proceedings all day! A special Mass was celebrated by Club President Dean Anthony Davies who subsequently retired from duties following the Golden Jubilee of his ordination. For the Mass, Clonduff



Cutting the Lá na gClub Cake

native, and current member, Gerry Curran had written a special reflection for inclusion in the Mass. The parade of hundreds of players, officers and members, with each of the Parish townlands identified, got under way with the Clonduff Banner followed by the Tommy Kelly/Peter Hamill 'Clonduffmobile' with dignitaries and local musicians on board, and this was followed by the colourful McConville/Mini Mac float. On arriving at the Clonduff Club all those present formed a '125' on the pitch. Dean Davies said a Blessing and Christina McConville sang Amhrán na bhFiann. A time capsule including club memorabilia, a jersey, and submissions from both St Paul's and St Patrick's Primary Schools was buried to be raised at the 150th Anniversary of the GAA and a native Irish Rowan Tree was planted. The activity on the two pitches show-cased all the Gaelic field sports - football for men and women, Hurling and Camogie. The whole day was a highlight but the Rounders match between the 'Inner City' and the 'Country Cousins' drew a very interested crowd. The one-wall handball drew another large crowd of participants as well as spectators. There was Cic Fada, Poc Fada, Hurling and Football Skills and Penalty Kick competitions for various age groups and for both sexes. And to fulfil the 'Athletics' element of the GAA there were races for mothers and fathers (separate, of course). Just before the finale of the outdoor activities the 2009 Down County Set Dancing Champions (Clonduff) showed us all just why they are County



One of the Lá na gClub Floats



Shane Milligan U13 Handball Champion 2009

Champions. The finale was a mixed Hurling/Camogie game refereed by Gerry Coughlin and this was followed by a mixed men's/women's football match. The only prizes on the day were bragging rights!

Throughout the day a wonderful array of club memorabilia was exhibited in the clubrooms and the Club Officers and President cut the specially commissioned commemorative cake.

The evening proceedings got underway with a Céili, called by Joe Farrell interspersed with Scór participants - musicians, dancers, reciters, singers and the

Clonduff Novelty Act which won the County title in 2009. It was a long (12 hours) but memorable Lá na gClub!

Lá na gClub was just one of many events organised by Clonduff to mark the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the GAA – the big project was the marking of the townlands in the Parish and on Friday 8th May, Jarlath Burns, National Co-ordinator of the 125 programme unveiled the first stone (at eight mile bridge marking the boundary between Ballymaghera (in which the GAA grounds are situated) and Carcullion (in which most of Hilltown village is situated)). Two quizzes were organised – an interclub and the neighbourhood challenge quiz during the Boley Fair. Other 125 events during the Boley Fair included a Juvenile Handball Tournament, Poc Fada and the Parish Sevens tournament – Cabra, the winners, brought home a couple of ex-pats for the event! In conjunction with the local Historical society a bus trip to Dublin was organised taking in the Croke Park tour in the morning and Glasnevin Cemetery in the afternoon.



Another highlight in the Clonduff calendar took place on Friday 14th August 2009 when they paid Tribute to Kevin Mussen and Patsy O'Hagan and inducted them into the 'Hall of Fame' to mark Down's first Ulster title fifty years ago in 1959.

The two guests of honour attended with their children and grandchildren. Many of their former team mates and/or their families in both Clonduff and Down, four former players on the Offaly team of 1961 (Greg Hughes, Charlie Wrenn, Phil O'Reilly and Tommy Cullen), Paddy McFlynn President of Down GAA and former All Ireland GAA President, together with guests from Tyrone, Armagh and other parts of Down were in attendance. Clonduff Chairman, Brian McGreevy welcomed everybody at the beginning of the presentation which was presented by Clonduff PRO Jerry Quinn, assisted by Fintan Mussen (Kevin's brother). Austin O'Callaghan (BBC Sport) was the guest interviewer on the night (chaperoned by



Tommy Kelly) and he spoke eloquently and knowledgably to most of the former players. The computerised presentation was compiled by Colin Brannigan and Eoin Murphy. The presentation consisted of the life stories of Kevin and Patsy from their earliest days and was illustrated with photographs, video clips and footage from half a century ago. Being unable to attend there were video messages from Miceál Ó Muircheartaigh, Niall Sheehy and Mick O'Connell (Kerry), J J O'Halloran (Chairman Galway GAA), Maurice Hayes (Secretary of Down GAA in 1950s/60s) and Sean Spiers (formerly of Clonduff and now San Francisco).

Kevin and Patsy were presented with the P J McAlinden 'Hall of Fame' trophy by Bronagh McAlinden, cut glass vases as mementoes by the Clonduff Chairman, Brian McGreevy and 'This is Your Life' memory books compiled by Gerry Curran, Marie Walls and Anita Brannigan. Other members of the Clonduff History/125 sub committee (in addition to those previously mentioned) and who researched, resourced, compiled, recorded, etc were: Stephen Morgan (now Rostrevor, former Clonduff team mate), Sheenagh McConville, Brian Canavan (formerly Saval now Clonduff) and Marie Milligan (niece of Patsy O'Hagan). The formal proceedings concluded with a delightful



supper prepared by The Downshire Arms Hotel but the night continued into the wee small hours.



Juvenile Poc Fada Competitors

Back on the field of play, the Senior Ladies Footballers terrific run came to a halt when they bowed out of the Championship in the Semi Final after three Championship titles in a row. Since their formation in 2001 they set the standards for the grade in which they were playing and other teams have had to catch up with them. They will be back –the nucleus of the team is still in place and the underage teams are playing their part in ensuring that the glory days will return – the U16s had a great run in the league and at the time of writing the U14 team is in the County B Final. The senior team took part in the Feis Sevens for the first time and collected the title. Michaela Downey crowned a brilliant career at the end of last season when she was awarded a National All Star and the Newry and Mourne ‘Sports Personality’ of the year. Michaela is only the second Clonduff player (after Ross Carr) to secure a National All Star Award.

On the Hurling front Ryan McShane won an English Universities All Star and a Special Recognition Award from the University Sports Department for his coaching roles in Hurling and Camogie. When the academic year finished Ryan returned to his native Clonduff to play football and hurling and assist with training of the Ladies football team with special responsibility for the Junior Ladies.



Ladies Feis Sevens Winners 2009

The Senior Hurlers reached the semi final of the Ulster League as well as having a good run in the domestic league. The U16 team won their League and at the time of writing are awaiting a date for the Shield Final. The U12 boys topped their group in the Go Games League.

Young Shane Milligan became the first juvenile player in 17 years to win a county singles handball title – at U13 level. Shane is an ‘all rounder’ – he plays football, is a member of the Scór na nÓg Quiz team and won the club’s U12, U14 and U16 Pool titles in 2009, narrowly missing out on the U18 title. Three other lads were runners up in their respective county Handball title bids. Paul Shields is the current Senior title holder and is again in the final for 2009. He and Sean McNally are the Senior Doubles title holders for 2009 and the Des McNeil/Eddie Clancy partnership picked up the County Junior Doubles title. A very successful Newry and Mourne sponsored coaching week was held in July just before the Boley Fair Tournament which was opened to participants from Downpatrick and Saval for the first time. The finals were held at the 125 wall at the Club.



U14 Ladies Footballers 2009

A big boost for Clonduff Handball has been the selection of Sean McNally (with Brian Havern, Saval) for the Irish team

competing in the World Championships in Portland, Oregon, USA. Sean and Brian competed in the Silver Masters Doubles.



Health and Wellness Course

Life in Clonduff was pitched into extreme grief and sadness at the beginning of the summer when young dual player, Daniel Andre tragically lost his life in a drowning accident. On Wednesday 24th June 2009, Daniel was doing what generations of children before him have done in the Hilltown area during good weather – playing ‘down at the Bann’ near Mussens Corner. Sadly Daniel slipped into a deep pool on the river known as the ‘Mill Pool’. Despite the best efforts of members of the Emergency Services to revive him after he was pulled from the river Daniel died in the early hours of the following morning. The

community was shocked and stunned at the loss of this sports-mad, fun-loving little boy who endeared himself to everyone with whom he came in contact. He was always smiling and his grin would light up his entire face.

Daniel joined Clonduff GAC four years ago where he enthusiastically acquired the basic skills of Gaelic Football and Hurling. He was always happy to get his place on the U10 football and U10 and U12 Hurling teams. During his short time with the club he never missed a training session. He was a quiet boy who co-operated well with his



The Murray Family – talented musicians

mentors and was an excellent team player. Daniel is greatly missed by all in Clonduff – May he Rest in Peace.



Novelty Act Co Champions 2009

There is much more to Clonduff than just playing games – they picked up a ‘Grounds Award’ at the recent County Finals, a tribute to some of the people who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep it all going. Three new referees and 18 foundation level coaches were recruited during the year to help cope with the ever-increasing involvement of Clonduffians in the various Gaelic disciplines. In further support of this increasing participation Clonduff will embark on a major development with the provision a new floodlit playing surface in the first phase – work is due to commence imminently.



The Architect’s Impression of the New Development – due for completion 2010