

WANDERING AROUND WITH J.N.S.

Gaelic Sport Flourishes Because It Is Never Dull

HOW is it that Gaelic football and hurling have such a big appeal, whereas soccer is in the doldrums? I rather think you will be expecting me to answer my own question by stressing the patriotic and the "undying spirit" of the Gael!

But I'm not. I think all this yearning about the "undying spirit of the Gael" is just poppycock, play-acting, soft-soap, or whatever you may choose to call it, and I do not think the rank and file of Gaelic followers claim such virtues.

GAELS ARE HUMAN.
I have travelled in many lands, and I cannot say I have found Irishmen in their outlook on sport differing from the rest of civilised mortals. In other words, they wouldn't just suffer bad sport in the name of patriotism. If Gaelic football and hurling were not worth watching, our folk, made like the rest of humans, wouldn't just watch it.

It is because Gaelic football and hurling are virile living games that they are flourishing—not because they are Irish. They may have been born to get rid of the "foreign complex" but their ever-growing prosperity is not due to bigotry, if I may be forgiven for using that word, but to their own excellence. Like a tub, Gaelic football and hurling stand on their own bottoms.

National fervour in my opinion plays only a small part in the wonderful progress of Gaelic games, except that it may have inspired our sports-folk to play them with the same flair and purpose as the nationals of other countries play their own games.

God hasn't made our people different from anybody else that they would suffer poor sport for a "cause" or patriotism, either. If Gaelic football and hurling were not good to watch or to play, they would be struggling—just like soccer.

GAMES ARE NEVER DULL.
All Gaelic semi-finals or finals may not have been good—some may have been bad—but here's the secret of success about hurling and Gaelic football: **THEY ARE NEVER DULL.** Whoever framed the rules in Gaelic football and hurling knew his job, and he knew his public too.

In Britain they are mad on soccer, a good game, too. We might also be mad on soccer in Ireland, if not in the small townships then in the larger ones, if it were played as expertly as in Britain. But it's appeal as a game is on the decline. And why?

Because it is badly played. We cannot expect human beings to be twined up like a clock and keep going with the same precision all the time. We can, as I say, get bad Gaelic football and hurling matches, but again, as I say, **THEY ARE NEVER DULL.** In soccer we get

bad football plus damned DULL football.

WHY THE PREFERENCE FOR G.A.A.?

Despite what my friends of the G.A.A. may say, I maintain that an Irishman can watch soccer and still be as good an Irishman as the best, and the only reason why he prefers Gaelic football and hurling is because they are giving him pleasure, whereas soccer, as it is played these days, is giving him heartache.

The idea that in sport Irishmen have different ideas from the rest of human beings, which impression is created by the triumph of Gaelic sport—a triumph which has been well earned—is all wrong. For instance, the newly imported sport of speedway racing is booming in Dublin. And why? Because Irishmen, like the rest of the people of the civilised world, have a weakness for speed and action.

Last Sunday at Croke Park, close on 60,000 saw Mayo beating Armagh in the All-Ireland football semi-final. There were round about 24,000 onlookers watching an imported team of riders from the Toffe town of Halifax. At Tolka Park the soccer season opened with Transport, the Cup holders, playing Drumcondra, League runners-up, and Dublin City Cup holders. And the attendance? A mere handful!

In Gaelic football and hurling there's nearly always something unexpected cropping up; their speed and action. In the same way the folk who are now watching speedway in Dublin got there expecting an occasional thrill. As a rule they are not disappointed. In soccer, as it is played in Ireland, it's rarely they get a thrill to make them forget the dullness they have had to suffer.

If we got the same stuff served up in Gaelic sport not even the national fervour and loyalty of the Gaelic "would tempt them from their firesides to watch it. And I am not saying this to question the loyalty of the Gaelic—merely telling you that "loyal Gaelic" are human. That's my view on human nature anyhow. We were not born to be bored to death.

SPEEDWAY v. SOCCER.

With speedway overlapping into the soccer campaign—I believe it will continue until about the middle of October—the directors of the Dublin football clubs are naturally a little worried as to the effect of speedway on their gates. There's no doubt whatever that a lot of soccer fans have now become speedway fans, and personally I cannot see them deserting the cinder track and going back to their old love until, of course, the "speedsters" pack up for the season in late autumn.

Earlier in the year when our League matches were being watched by a mere handful of spectators, the

amazing alibi was pleaded by certain club directors that Dubliners had lost their appetite for Saturday afternoon football—that the generation that once watched it has passed out!

The truth, of course, is that our clubs have found it much easier, and less exacting, to make ends meet by selling players to cross-channel soccer, minded folk are sickened. If soccer was worth watching, there would be a public for it. In Britain, speedway dare not challenge the ball game. Here it can—and beat it.

Some time ago our League of Ireland clubs squealed about English scouts crossing over to this country and "poaching" our junior players. "What right have English clubs coming over here and taking away talent that should be kept in the country to entertain our own people," shouted the League of Ireland clubs.

Now few junior players go to English clubs direct. Instead they are signed by League of Ireland clubs—but these promising juniors still keep going on to England! The only difference is that instead of the junior clubs getting full recompense, the money goes to the League clubs. In other words, junior clubs are the nursery for the League of Ireland clubs, and the latter are a still better organised nursery for the English League clubs.

In Gaelic, our juniors become our senior All-Ireland champions. This possibly explains why Gaelic football has soccer in this country beaten to a frazzle; and why it is a prosperous and flourishing game whereas soccer is practically dying on its feet. If it was up to the Gaelic standard it wouldn't be!

KILMALLOCK'S WIN

OVER EMILY HURLERS

A keen minor hurling match was witnessed by a large crowd at the Sportsfield, Kilmallock, where Kilmallock defeated Emily by 5-1 to 2-1, for Emily.

The match was more evenly contested than the score would indicate and it was their superiority in the first half that gave Kilmallock the laurels. The visiting team found it difficult to settle down on strange ground, and Kilmallock, taking advantage of this, ran up a score of 4-1 before the interval. Emily scoring 1-1.

In the second-half the game was much more close and very even. Each side succeeded in scoring only a goal each.
Scorers for Kilmallock were: Walsh, Brazil, Ellis, Conna and Galvin.
Mr. J. Ryan refereed.

ON MOUNTAIN MASS ROCK BUT WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

Memories Of Bitter Penal Days Recalled IMPRESSIVE CEREMONIES IN WEST LIMERICK Archbishop Unveils Memorial Cross

AFTER a lapse of two centuries a Holy Mass was celebrated on Tuesday, the Feast of the Assumption, on the historic West Limerick Mass Rock of Clais-an-Affrin, where nearly a thousand parishioners and many distinguished visitors assembled on the bleak mountainside for one of the most memorable events in the annals of Monagey parish (writes a "Limerick Leader", special representative). Simple, but edifying and impressive in the extreme, the ceremony was also made the occasion for the formal unveiling of the summit of the hill of a Holy Year Memorial Cross erected by the parishioners, whose ancestors suffered for their faith in the penal days. Braving the intermittent and heavy showers that fell throughout the morning, hundreds of visitors from the surrounding districts joined with the parishioners in making the difficult ascent to the all but inaccessible hilltop glen in which Mass was celebrated in the penal days, with a price on the heads of the priests and congregations. The celebrations were preceded by a striking procession of nearly eight hundred people, who marched from the nearby village of Strand, along the hazardous route across the mountainside, to participate in the Mass and ceremonies that followed. They were augmented by hundreds of visitors who came from far and near to be present at what must have been one of the most unique and memorable religious ceremonies of its kind ever held in Catholic Ireland.

AT THE MASS.

Most Rev. Dr. Duhig, Archbishop of Brisbane, presided at the Solemn Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. Father Lyons, P.P., Monagey. Also present on the altar were: Right Rev. Monsignor Hannan, P.P., V.G., Newcastle West; Rev. J. Butler, C.S.Sp., Blackrock College, a native of the parish; Rev. Father Whelan, P.P., Australian Mission, home on holidays in his native Tullylease; and Rev. Father Cagney, C.C., Killeedy.

Castlemahon Group of the F.C.A., in ceremonial dress and under the command of Lt. William Flanagan, provided a guard of honour in front of the altar, while the sacred music of the Mass was rendered by Monagey School Choir in charge of Mrs. Lena Hough, N.T. The congregation, numbering close on one thousand people, were accommodated at various vantage points in elevations around the altar. There was a particularly moving scene at the Elevation, which was signalled by a trumpeter, following which the voices of the choir, wafted across the hilltop by the breeze, rang out clearly as they sang:
"Faith of our Fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword."
After the Mass, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was celebrated by Monsignor Hannan, who was assisted by Rev. Father Cagney, C.C. Rev. P. Lyons, P.P., welcomed the Archbishop and expressed sincere thanks for the honour he had paid them by his presence there that day, at the first Mass celebrated for hundreds of years at Clais-an-Affrin. He also thanked Right Rev. Monsignor Hannan, P.P., V.G.; Rev. Father Whelan, P.P., Australia; Rev. J. Butler, C.S.Sp., and Rev. Father Cagney, C.C., for their attendance.

ALTAR ON SITE OF MASS ROCK

The Mass was celebrated on a specially constructed concrete altar, built on the very site of the famous Mass Rock of the penal days. The shrine, which was specially decorated for the occasion, was located in a hidden glen near the summit of the mountain, which commands a striking panoramic view of practically the whole plain of Co. Limerick, extending almost to the Cork and Tipperary borders. The congregation, which must have numbered over a thousand, assembled for Mass, as in the penal days, along the sloping ground to the front and sides of the Mass Rock, and the scene, as the solemn ceremony proceeded, in the open, was moving in the extreme. Looking down on the colourful spectacle one could not help endeavouring to ogle to mind the contrasting scene of those far off dark and evil days when the faithful gathered round the same Mass Rock in ever present danger of detection, and the ruthless penalties that followed.

NO FEAR OF GODLESS INTERRUPTION

On Tuesday, however, there were no furtive glances down the glenside, and no fear of interruption by the Godless forces of the enemy. Now as the priest recited the sacred prayers of the Mass a green and uniformed Guard of Honour of Ireland's voluntary army stood proudly to attention in front of the altar, as the flag of the Republic fluttered freely in the breeze overhead. Neither was there any occasion for secrecy in the impressive ceremony that followed—the unveiling of the memorial cross erected by the spontaneous energy and enthusiasm of the parishioners, to the memory of their forebears who endured so much in the long struggle for the preservation of the faith. By a very happy coincidence the drenching rains of the morning, and the cloud-like mists that all but obscured the hill top, passed off, and gave way to a fitting and welcome sunshine just before the mass was due to commence, and in the ensuing ceremonies were held under almost ideal weather conditions.

ARCHBISHOP DUHIG

Amongst the distinguished visitors at the ceremonies was Most Rev. Dr. James Duhig, Archbishop of Brisbane, Australia, who was on a brief visit to his native nearby Broadford. His Grace, who presided at the Mass and subsequently unveiled the cross, described the experience as one of the happiest and most memorable of his distinguished career and joined in paying homage to those who, in the penal days, had succeeded in preserving the great heritage of their faith. The Mass was celebrated by Rev. P. Lyons, P.P., Monagey, whose initiative and enterprise were mainly responsible for the erection of the Memorial Cross and the ceremonies associated with the unveiling. Also present on the mountainside altar for the occasion were: Right Rev. Monsignor Hannan, P.P., V.G., Newcastle West, who represented the Lord Bishop of Limerick; Rev. Joseph Butler, C.S.Sp., Blackrock College, a native of the parish; Rev. Father Whelan, P.P., of the Australian Mission, home on a holiday to his native Tullylease, and Rev. Father Cagney, C.C., Killeedy. Amongst those who occupied pride of place in front of the altar was Mr. Dan Ronan, on whose lands the Mass Rock is situated, and who was personally responsible for the erection of the shrine on the historic site. Mass was followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, after which the eight foot high Celtic Cross, finished in most attractive design, was blessed by Monsignor Hannan and unveiled by Archbishop Duhig.

THE GREATER IRELAND ABROAD.

It is because of them that our faith was preserved here in times gone by, and that it was preserved, not only for the people of Ireland but also for the vast majority of Catholics in far away Australia and for millions of Catholics in the great countries of Western America. It was the struggles of the Irish people in those times gone by that have led to the creation of the greater Ireland abroad. And it is the greater Ireland abroad that I am here representing to-day; here to thank you and our great Irish forefathers for their heritage of the faith which has lived anew."

His Grace went on to say that in Australia and other countries abroad there were more Catholic Churches dedicated to Irish saints than there were at home. They in exile abroad had not forgotten Ireland. They had revived the glory of the Irish abroad and had kept alive the names of the great Irish

saints and scholars. And they were now proud to come back and tell the Irish people that the Catholic faith was strong and healthy abroad thanks to the sacrifices of their forefathers and their loyalty to the faith given them by St. Patrick. It was the same faith that they held on to in the glens and mountain sides when their priests were hunted and outlawed.

For that reason, Dr. Duhig continued, the commemoration there that day was a very sacred one with holy memories which, he was sure, would be cherished by all present as long as they lived. Certainly he would like very much to commend Father Lyons for having brought about the celebration.
EVERY REASON TO BE PROUD.
"For hundreds of years," said His Grace, "our forefathers suffered persecution for that same faith. They suffered to be driven from their own land and their own native homes; to be forced from their native shores into exile because they were loyal to that faith. I do say here to-day that you have every reason to be proud, and there is nothing you have to be more proud of than the faith, which was kept alive by our saints and martyrs and forefathers who went before us."

In conclusion, Archbishop Duhig thanked Father Lyons and the parishioners for the warm welcome accorded him. The experience of that day was the happiest and most memorable he had ever shared, and he was very proud, indeed, to be present at the parish's commemoration of the heroism, sanctity and glory of their ancestors who had kept the faith alive throughout the dark and evil penal days.

FURTHER IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY.

After the Mass there was a further impressive and edifying ceremony on the summit of the nearby hill when the attractively designed Holy Year Cross was formally blessed by Monsignor Hannan and unveiled by Archbishop Duhig in the presence of the assembled throng.

Father Lyons, who presided at the ceremony, paid a glowing tribute to Archbishop Duhig, whom he described as a wonderful man for his years and a Prelate who had kept the flag of faith flying high in far away Australia. The cross, continued Father Lyons, had been erected in memory of their forefathers who had kept the faith alive by attending Mass in mountains and glens such as Clais-an-Affrin. Only for their loyalty the faith could not have been preserved. Thank God, the times had changed, and changed for the better, as they could now all see on looking around them that day.

TRIBUTE TO PARISHIONERS.

Paying tribute to the parishioners present at the ceremony, Father Lyons recalled that when he introduced the memorial cross proposal after Mass in the local church a couple of weeks ago and invited the congregation to express their opinion on the project, they unanimously showed themselves in favour of the project. For this reason he now took the opportunity of thanking each and every individual who had given so much encouragement on that occasion. He also thanked the memorial committee and the workers who had assisted in the erection of the cross. In that connection he reminded them that when all of them of the present generation had passed away the cross with its inscription would still stand over Clais-an-Affrin to tell their children and their children's children down through the ages of the rocky road their forefathers had to tread in order to preserve the great heritage of the faith. "I can assure you all," added Father Lyons, "that this is one of the happiest days of my life, and I am sure it is a very happy day in the lives of you all here, too, and that to-day's ceremony will go down in your memories as a very happy one."

FURTHER THANKS AND PRAISE.

In conclusion, Father Lyons thanked all the workers who had helped so much during the past few weeks to finish work on the memorial. He thanked the Muleahys, the Harnetts, the Shanahans, "Delees and Enright's, to mention but a few of those who had done so much. He paid a special tribute to Mr. Dan Ronan, who was responsible for the erection of the altar on the site of the Mass Rock, and to Mrs. Ronan, who had been so generous in looking after the needs of the workers engaged in the erection of the cross. Thanks were also due to the members of the F.C.A. and to Mr. Denis O'Connell and the members of the Broadford Band. He felt he could not conclude without expressing a word of thanks to their Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. O'Neill, who, when asked for permission for the erection of the memorial, immediately approved of the project and told him: "Go ahead; it is a good thing to remind the people of the penal days."

BLESSING AND UNVEILING OF CROSS.

Monsignor Hannan then blessed the cross, and the unveiling ceremony was performed by Archbishop Duhig, who, in the course of a brief address, said the memorial would always help to remind them of the great sacrifices made by their forefathers in order to preserve their great heritage of the faith.

The proceedings concluded with the playing of "Faith Of Our Fathers" and the National Anthem. The cross, which was erected by the local Memorial Committee, of which Father Lyons was president, carries the following inscription:
"De Cum Gloir De augu Onire na h-Eireann
This Memorial was erected in Clais-an-Affrin
By the People of Monagey To Commemorate Their Ancestors who suffered for the Catholic Faith in the Penal Days. Requesant In Pace, Amen."

SOUTH LIMERICK COURTS

Owing to the fact that most of the legal profession go on holidays in August, District Justice H. L. Conner, B.L., is holding no Courts in South Limerick during the month of August.

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