



This image of the Ahane Fife and Drum Band was taken about 1945. It shows the band member wearing sashes bearing the name Ahane Band

And the band played on...

Ahane Fife and Drum Band: Charting the musical history of the ensemble

Sharon Slater

Email: sharon.slater@limerickleader.ie

THE Ahane Fife and Drum Band was formed around 1910. They were first noted in June that year as being present at a match between Newport and Murroe at Newport. The earliest known photograph of the band was dated with the year 1911. Although, in John T. Gilhooly in "The Annals of Castleconnell and Ahane since prehistoric times" the foundation year was given as 1918. While Mary Antoinette Moloney in "The Story of Ahane" gives the year as 1924.

What is agreed is that John Vaughan was one of the driving forces behind the formation of the band. The local landowner Charles Barrington who donated the big drum to the band supported Vaughan in his endeavour.

This was the first of three incarnations of the band. They practiced at the home of Ned Lawlor of Killeenagarriff. Many of the band members played on the local hurling and Gaelic football teams.

The band members did not have a uniform but distinguished them-

selves by wearing a green, white and gold sash with the words Ahane Band emblazoned on it. The big drummer wore the traditional garb of a marching band, a leopard print vest.

The second incarnation was formed around 1930 when two brothers Martin and Mattie Collins revived the band. During this period, there were about 30 members of the band. Under the guidance of Paddy Sammon they practised in a cowshed on the O'Malley Farm in Killeenagarriff each Tuesday and Friday.

The Leader of January 12, 1931 noted the band were due to play at a hurling match at Glenstal:-

"Ahane Fife and Drum Band will give some splendid selections. This talented group has made great headway under the competent instruction of Mr Sammon, Limerick, so their attendance at the hurling grounds ought to be another source of attraction."

On November 14, 1931, the Leader wrote of the fundraising event held at Barrington's Bridge in aid of the band:-

"This athletic meeting, in aid of the Ahane Fife and Drum Band, was

even more successful than its promoters anticipated. The weather favoured the venture, and too much praise cannot be accorded to the perfect arrangements and the splendid order maintained, while every item of a heavy programme was got through. Would that every centre in the country supplied such a splendid day's amusement to the neighbours and the host of visitors who patronised the fixture."

The Leader of November 21, 1931 noted the improvement in the band:-

"The above band, which started scarcely 12 months ago, having improved wonderfully. An instructor attends the band-room several nights a week. New members are being enrolled, and the outlook on the whole is very satisfactory. Mr J Vaughan is to be complimented on the herculean part he took to bring the band to such a high standard." A-The bands was. Is it one band or two?

The band was reformed for the final time in 1942. On September 1, 1945, the Leader noted the band's attendance at an athletic meet in Murroe, "The Ahane fife and drum band put the finishing touches to a most enjoyable and entertaining day."

In 1946, the band played at the Murroe fete, the band was led by Martin Collins and his deputy was Willie Ryan. The Leader of October

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6, 1946 wrote that the band "put the crowd in good humour with a choice selection of airs, and it was a pleasant note the proceedings commenced."

Martin Collins, of Lought, Lisnagry passed away in January 1993. Not only was he the leader of the band but he was the last known thatcher in the parish of Ahane.

The band had some unusual means of getting both themselves and their instruments to the sports fields around the country. On July 10, 1947, about twenty-two members of the band travelled in the back of a lorry from the Ahane area to Thurles. This was an unfortunate move by the lorry driver as he was spotted by a member of the Gardaí and was fined as not only

did he take passengers in his lorry but he charged them too.

When the Minister for Local Government, M J Keyes, visited Murroe in January 1950, at the entrance to the village he was met by the Band who led him the mile to the Muintir na Tire Hall.

Some of the notable members of the band were the leader of the band and flute player Martin Collins. On drums were Harry Ryan, Patrick Ryan, Willie Doyle, Tim Aherne, Larry and Joe Flannery. On cymbals was Phil Fleming. On triangle was Tim Moloney, On Flute were Mattie Collins, Denny and Tom Fogerty, Ned and Jack Malley, John Moloney, John and Joe Connors, John Connell, Ned Nealon and Harry Richardson who passed away in 1994. Eamon Hanley played both violin and flute. While Willie Ryan carried the flag. Other members of the band were Ned Lawlor, John Vaughan, Larry Fleming and 5 men with the surname Richardson, Chris, Bob, Paddy, Mick and Jack.

The last mention of the band performing that appeared in the Leader was on May 7, 1966 when they participated in the "1916 Jubilee Year Commemoration Ceremonies" at Murroe.

The disbanding can be explained by the emigration of a large number of the band members in the 1950s and 1960s.