

# Jack Hurley Of Ballysimon

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

JACK Hurley was delegate from the then newly formed Ballysimon Hurling Club at the famous "Stormy" Convention of the G.A.A., held at the Courthouse, Thurles, on November 9th, 1887.

This was the most historic G.A.A. gathering of all time — and the largest representation of the clubs ever to assemble under one roof.

Over eight hundred clubs were represented, each by two delegates, and special trains were run from many districts to suit their convenience.

The occasion was marked by a sharp conflict of opinion between supporters of the "physical force" party and those favouring constitutional means. This was evident immediately the Convention came to order, and the fight for the chair was a bitter and prolonged one, only resolved after a number of clerymen and some two hundred delegates had left, to hold a rival Convention elsewhere in Thurles, and set up their own Gaelic Athletic Organisation.

## STORM OVER VOTE OF SYMPATHY.

Mr. E. J. Bennett of Newmarket-on-Fergus had been elected President, defeating Maurice Davin on a vote, 316 to 210, and the proceedings were drawing to a conclusion, when Jack Hurley, representing Ballysimon, moved a resolution of sympathy with "their friend and the friend of Ireland—William O'Brien, who was suffering for them in prison."

The President said they were pledged not to take part in politics, and he appealed to the delegate not to press the point.

Jack Hurley persisted, amidst a stormy scene, and when his proposition was seconded by Edmund Cahill of Killeely, the President declared the meeting adjourned.

Many delegates, in sympathy with the sentiments expressed by Jack, remained after the adjournment, and on the suggestion of Edmund Cahill it was decided that they would pass the resolution as a body of representative Irishmen.

In this manner were the Gaels of Ireland introduced in dramatic way to the Ballysimon Club.

A short time previously the young men of Ballysimon had mustered themselves together into a team of twenty-one.

As their club colours they choose black, green and gold, and a set of jerseys of same were procured without delay.

## FIRST DONNED COLOURS AGAINST AHANE.

They first donned these colours against Ahane in the Camp Field, Ballysimon. Such famous hurlers as the Moynihans, Denny, Johnny, Jim Ryan and Ryan Goodbye, with Paddy Moloney, were in the Ahane combination on that occasion.

The most famous match they had, however, was with Crecora for a cup and medals. Ballysimon won that day but the cup was not forthcoming owing to some dispute.

Tom Crowe, the then captain, undaunted, marched his team to Thady Halpin's and commandeered the trophy, and then all went inside and had a little sup. The cup was filled with great gusto, and the players celebrated the hard won victory in no uncertain manner.

Now a word or two about the men that made the welkin ring for Ballysimon in those far-off memories, Joe Staturey, George Butler, J. McAuliffe, Jack Prendergast, Jack Clancy, Mick Fitzgibbon, Tom McCarthy, M. Hurley, Dick Butler, Denis Flanagan, J. Fitzgibbon, Bill Collins, Jack Keogh, Denny Kerley, Tom Hartigan, Tim Madden and Bill Lysaght.

Jack Hurley maintained his interest all down the years and when a new club got under way in Ballysimon he kept in close contact with their doings and often spoke of the old days and the events with which he was so intimately associated.

## NEW CLUB RALLIED THE DISTRICT.

This new club rallied the district to the Gaelic standard just 2 score years ago, and a set of black, green and gold jerseys were once more donned by the Faugh a Bealach.

The Christian Brothers' boys

were their first opponents. The game was a sterling, vigorous one, which ended in victory for Christians, who were then the Dr. Harty Cup holders and champions of Munster.

A little later the Faughs met the men from Killonan, first in Killonan and later in Ballysimon — the Faughs proving victorious on both occasions.

The greatest rivalry existed between the South Liberties and the Faughs. A match was played in Ballyneety between the sides. It was fast and vigorous, and ended in favour of the Ballysimon lads.

A return match was played in Ballysimon. This game was more exciting than a County final. The players and spectators were in a frenzy of excitement, and scenes of wonderful enthusiasm greeted a great home victory.

Paddy Hartigan, who was later to take a man's part in Young Ireland and County teams, respectively, was very prominent for the Faughs on those occasions.

Some time later Ballysimon met South Liberties in the County Championship. The Markets Field was the venue on this occasion and South Liberties reversed the result of the two previous games, proving superior. Jim Butler, later Father Jim, played a big part that day for his team. This convinced the Faughs that the Markets Field was their unlucky venue, as they seemed capable of overcoming the Liberties anywhere else.

## THE BOYS FROM KILMURRY.

The most interesting match of this era, however, was with the boys from Kilmurry, which the local bard commemorated in a ballad:—

On the 11th January to Kilmurry  
We went,  
To hurl the boys there it was our  
intent;  
The boys from Ballysimon they  
gave a great shout,  
When O'Dwyer in the forwards  
the ball he put out.

Chorus:

Hurrah for the boys in Black,  
Green and Gold,  
The laurels they won they intend  
to uphold;  
Before half-time was over it was  
plain to be seen,  
That the match would be won by  
the Black, Gold and Green.

With Mick Kerley in goal no ball  
could go out,  
For out to the wing man he shot  
every clout;  
John Hickey and Hurley played  
on the wing,  
Every ball that they hit made  
Monaleen ring,  
Lysaght and Pakenham played  
in the front,  
And they showed the Kilmurry  
boys how fast they could run,  
'Twould do your heart good to  
see the ball that they hit,  
For it soared through the air and  
into the net.

Chorus:

Jack Shea in the centre with a  
heart stout and brave,  
Shook the lids of the coffins in  
the Dollymen's graves;  
Mick Sheehan and Shaughnessy  
both played a great game,  
And of Tom and Mick Hurley we  
Mick Shea, the full forward, was  
there like a man,  
Saying to Deegan, the goalkeeper:  
"Stop that if you can."  
Bobby Nolan, full back, sure  
'twould be hard to get  
A team that would beat them, for  
they're around not yet.

Chorus:

Everyone thought that Kilmurry  
would win,  
For they searched the county  
looking for men;  
They had them from Kerry and  
up from Ahane,  
And how in the devil did they  
miss Jack Keane?  
The Dasher was there as he oft  
was before,  
For many a time in that field he  
did score,  
And now he has the pleasure to  
witness his son,  
Dashing through the goal-posts,  
as himself often done.

Chorus:

When the match was all over we  
gave a great cheer,  
And went into the "Hurlers" to  
let down some beer,  
For the next time we hurl we'll  
be better than before,  
And during the hour we won't  
give them a score,  
Now, hurrah for the Faughs  
wherever they go  
They're a credit to their fore-  
fathers as everybody knows,  
So now we will wish you a happy  
New Year.

Anr the next time we'll hurl we'll  
win, don't you fear.

During the years of the "Trouble" operations were more or less suspended, but when the Truce was signed the Faughs again became active. Their first match was with Castleconnell in Monaleen.

## CASTLECONNELL SELECTION.

The Castleconnell selection that day included Ned Carroll, Anthony and Mick Mackey, and Sean Kelly of Monaleen. The combination, of course, proved too good for the Faughs, who only surrendered after some hard bouts. Jack Carroll was an eager spectator on that occasion.

In the county championship about the same time they gave the famous Shamrock combination a "good run for their money" and in 1925 they were only beaten by Treaty, the ultimate winners, after having reached the county semi-final.

Already, though, the team was being weakened by the departure of their most notable players. Paddy Hartigan went to make a name and fame in senior ranks with one of the greatest Young Ireland sides of all time. Jack, Tom and Bill Morrison, Tom and Mick Hurley, Jack and Mick Shea, and Jack McMahon all followed within a few seasons and soon the old club was but an honoured memory.

Jack Hurley, who was an Excise Officer, eventually retired from that post and fulfilled an old ambition by enjoying life travelling the Continent.

He never forgot the old colours, however, and it was his dearest wish to see fifteen manly boys once more take pride and glory in wielding the caman and upholding the noble name Faugh a Bealach in its true sense.