

NO NEED
when it
singing a

John B. Keane

OUT IN THE OPEN

WHAT misfortune I had to draw down mini-skirts in these columns a fortnight ago.

I dare say it would be worse if I had drawn them down some place else, although to tell the truth less blame would be attached to the second.

This week's prize-winning letter comes from J. G. of Kilmallock, who asks me to please not publish his name. Fair enough, J.G. There are other letters from more pious layfolk but the most literate by far comes from Kilmallock.

"Dear Mr. Keane, so the world would be a forlorn place if there were no mini-skirts. Do you really mean this or are you writing with your tongue in your cheek? I find it hard to believe that any Christian man (I presume that you are Christian) would write or speak in favour of the grossly immodest dress affected by many females at the present day.

"Such dress is a dangerous occasion of sin for some unfortunate men. The Sixth Commandment commands us to be pure in looks, words, actions and dress, but I suppose like many other things is a bit too old-fashioned for our modern girls.

"The strange thing is that the majority of people, men and women in Ireland would prefer a little more modesty in women's fashions but have not the moral courage to make their views known. Another case of the tail wagging the dog. I know this for I travel a bit and talk to a lot of people.

"There are cases it seems where owners of dance halls refuse to admit girls modestly dressed (in jeans and trouser suits) yet freely admit shameless creatures in micro minis and hot pants. If that is not pandering to lust I don't know what is.

"Any person who thinks that this can go on without serious sin being committed is very naive indeed. "The newspapers are very fond of publishing photos of these immodestly dressed females always sitting down with one leg crossed over the other to show off one thigh better. Holy Ireland, indeed."

Question

That's it from J.G. of Kilmallock. I would like to ask J.G. a question. When you sit with your legs crossed is your reason for doing so an attempt to show off one thigh over the other?

What do you think of ballet, J.G.? These dancing misses and madames wear far scantier attire than modern girls, yet ballet dancing is accepted in every Christian community. I



Back in August 1975 a Leader photographer took the main pictures here the Na Piarsaigh club in Caherdavin, which had only been founded seven years previously. The picture inset left was also captured that day, while the shot from inside the clubhouse shows a youth dance in 1970. Coaches and club members in the group picture could hardly have dreamed that, 41 years later, Na Piarsaigh would boast the top club hurling team in the land. What a journey!

Na Piarsaigh's journey to the promised land

■ Founded in 1968, the progressive Caherdavin-based GAA club has scaled the heights

CONGRATULATIONS TO Na Piarsaigh hurlers who raised the Tommy Moore Cup aloft in triumph on Saint Patrick's Day. The All-Ireland club final medals are prized possessions, and it was wonderful to see one of our own sides take the accolades at the hallowed grounds of Croke Park. It was a first victory for a Limerick senior hurling side after four unsuccessful attempts, by Ballybrown, Patrickswell and Kilmallock twice. Their great achievement will hopefully give inspiration to the county team who crave success at headquarters.

For Love of Town and Village was the title of a book written by the late Jack Mahon, the former Galway footballer in 1997. It tells the story of the All-Ireland club championship which has become such a prized competition to win since being introduced in 1971. The club unit has always been the bedrock of the Gaelic Athletic Association since its foundation in Hayes Hotel Thurles in 1884. The All-Irelands were contested by clubs representing counties, in the early days and Limerick Commercials won the first ever football final in 1887. This continued up to the 1920s when the club unit declined and the intercounty All-Irelands increased in popularity.

The move to re-establish club All-Irelands grew and club tournaments increased during the late 1950s. Unofficial club tournaments were held, which helped to sow the seed. The late Séamus Ó Ceallaigh from Limerick and other writers in the mid-1960s were in favour of their introduction. The GAA was slow to change but after a robust debate the motion for club All-Irelands was carried 92-74 at the 1970 Congress in Galway.

Na Piarsaigh, founded in 1968, are based on the northside of Limerick city. Their grounds are called Páirc uí Dromgúil, in Elm Drive, Caherdavin. The club currently field five adult teams, three in hurling (Senior, Junior A and Junior B) and two in Football (Senior and Junior A), the most of any club in Limerick. In 2011, Na Piarsaigh won their first Munster senior club hurling title. In November 2015, they won their third.



Then & Now

with Tom Aherne

The formation of Na Piarsaigh GAA Club was initiated in the industrial boom time of the 1960s and the inaugural meeting was held in the Ardhú House Hotel on Tuesday January 16, 1968 when the attendance included Rev. Fr J. Browne C.C. and three officials of the Limerick County Board - Jackie O'Connell, chairman; Tom Boland, secretary and Mick O'Brien, treasurer.

Opening the meeting, Noel Drumgoole said that the fine attendance was most heartening. He paid tribute to Treaty Sarsfields for their work in promoting Gaelic games on the northside of the city, but stressed that in view of the considerable housing development in areas such as Greystones, Highfield, Mayorstone, Clareview and Caherdavin, a new club - which initially would cater solely for underage players - was a necessity. Many children were not given the opportunity of playing GAA, or any other games in fact, due to the deplorable lack of playing pitches.

Jackie O'Connell expressed his delight at the formation of the club and promised the full support of the county board.

Fr Browne spoke at length on the importance of providing recreational facilities for the youth of the parish. After many suggestions were made it was unanimously agreed that the club would be called Cumann Na Piarsaigh. It was agreed that for 1968 Na Piarsaigh would enter teams in the City Bord na nÓg competitions in the under 14, 15 and 16 grades in both hurling and football. Street leagues and challenge games were also arranged to ensure that those interested in Gaelic games would be afforded the chance to do so.

Awaiting the purchase of land, the club decided to avail of the offer of a fine playing pitch in Ca-

herdavin. The meeting decided that Na Piarsaigh would place particular emphasis on social activities, for the members and towards this end it was visualised that a pavilion and pitch and putt course would be included in their proposed pitch and complex.

A suitable site was secured from McInerney's the building firm at Caherdavin, and the club set about raising the necessary finance to purchase the nine acres. A five-year interest free loan scheme, GAA grants, and a bank loan provided the capital to get started. The pre-fabricated clubhouse, with a bar and function room was erected in 1969 and the bar licence granted early the following year.

The following officers were elected to guide the destiny of Na Piarsaigh in their initial year. President - Rev Fr Browne, C.C. Holy Rosary Parish; chairman - Noel Drumgoole, Greystones; vice-chairman - Eddie O'Connor, Highfield; secretary - Tom McInerney, Caherdavin; treasurer - Mossy O'Grady, Mayorstone. Committee: Michael Cotter, Greystones; Donal Curtin, Mayorstone; Jimmy Custy, Clareview; Oliver Moran, Clareview; Frank Cleary, Caherdavin; Jim Beary, O'Callaghan Strand; Michael O'Brien, Shelbourne Road; Paddy O'Malley, Shelbourne Park; Flan O'Neill, Greystones; Jack Ryan, Greystones; John Rowsome, Shelbourne Park.

The first major success was the winning of the county intermediate football championship in 1975, defeating Pallasgreen by 1-12 to 2-2 in the final. In 1980 the club made a major hurling breakthrough by winning the city junior hurling championship. They defeated Patrickswell by 1-14 to 3-5 after a replay and great celebrations followed in the clubhouse. Christy Wharton, the club scribe,

penned the following lines:

With minutes to go and two points between us

We were fearful our heroes would then surely yield

But the cry on the pitch was by God no surrender

'Twas the voice of Maloney the Na Piarsaigh midfielder.

There were many pints drank in the clubhouse that Sunday

For many more than on the field were scored

Deserved celebrations were held for the hurlers

The day that Na Piarsaigh came in from the cold

That year Noel Drumgoole, now the club president, was the manager of the Limerick hurling team that reached the All-Ireland final. By 1982 the newly extended clubhouse was fully operational at a cost of £60,000. In 1984 Na Piarsaigh were awarded the AIB Club of the Year Award.

Na Piarsaigh has traditionally well-developed juvenile structures which is reflected by the success of the underage teams at both divisional and county level. The pinnacle of this was the U14 All Ireland Féile Na nGeal Hurling Championship winning team of 1984.

Underage development is complimented by links with the local schools. Most of Na Piarsaigh's younger players attend Scoil Christí Rí Caherdavin or John F. Kennedy Memorial School. There is also a strong link to local secondary school, Ardscoil Rís, with Na Piarsaigh players making significant contributions to the very successful Dr Harty Cup panels of 2010, 2011, 2014, and 2016.

Na Piarsaigh continues to grow in the community. Each Saturday morning upwards of 150 children, assemble at the club to learn the required skills from members very willing to give up their time, and part with the knowledge handed down by previous generations. And so the cycle continues and the next generation learn their trade and so keep this hard working club on the road. The vision and work of Noel Drumgoole, Dan Hickey Timmy O'Connor, Paddy Verdon, and so many more has been realised and now Na Piarsaigh, are the top hurling club in Ireland.