

**T**RADITION credits that great Gael, the late Dan Fraher of Dungarvan, with the revival of the standing jumps in his own magnificent manhood, to see them flourish during the early days of the G.A.A., and fitfully a little later.

It is rather a remarkable thing that most of our best jumpers from a mark have come from South Limerick, South Tipperary and County Waterford, and it is sad to relate that with the decline of those fine old characteristic events there, they have practically disappeared from our native arenas.

Jumping from a mark decreased in popularity here when the thrills provided by track events deflected public attention from field competitions, but Irishmen continued to keep the sport alive in America.

#### STERLING WORKERS.

Fraher himself, later though venerable, but vigorous in heart and intellect to prove a sterling worker through the formative years of the G.A.A.; with T. Barry, T. Keohane, G. O'Donoghue, J. Reynolds, T. Walsh, J. Wall, J. J. Bresnihan, J. Barrett, and M. Creedon, represented the earliest array of such talent, and until the advent of Courtney Barry, Holloway, the Leahys, Beazley, Mehigan, Con Kiely (our subject this week), Monnie Fraher (son of the famous Dan) and a few more, had been without equals in Europe in amateur ranks.

And, of course, I cannot pass on without recalling our own Jim Fahey, of Galbally, world's record holder for the three jumps, with

# (No. 58)—CON KIELY of Ballylanders

(By SEAMUS O'CALLAIGH)

van in 1913 with a clearance of 34 ft. 9 ins.—the last noteworthy performance of his we can find in an Irish arena. It was ten years later and sixteen from his first Irish championship success that he set his world's record at Chicago, the date, September 2nd, 1923. What a tribute to the natural character of the event and the natural healthy living of the man!

#### BORN BEFORE THE G.A.A.

Con Kiely, better known as "Nalie" to his many friends and admirers of athletic and footballing days, was born in Ballylanders on March 20th, 1884, just seven months prior to the founding of the G.A.A.

He was bred under the shade of Galtee Mor, in an area that gave Ireland some of her best athletes and patriots. Not far away Jim Fahey saw light of day, also John Blackburne, whilst Frank B. Dinneen was a son of Ballylanders who did the 100 yards flat in 10 seconds dead at Macroom in the infant days of the G.A.A., being later President and afterwards Secretary of that organisation. It was Dinneen that sold the sportsfield at Jones's Road to the G.A.A., and which is now Croke Park.

In this area, too, the Flying Column was formed, and there

to a meeting was by side-car, and once he walked the eight miles to Aherlow, and won three first prizes. On another occasion, the late Artie Howard of Killeen, a great sportsman, accompanied by Tom Guiry, a weight-thrower of no mean qualities, took "Nalie" to a sports meeting at Mitchelstown in a donkey and cart. "Nalie" won the 100 yards that day and came second in the running hop, step and jump.

On July 14th, 1912, Kiely travelled to Fermoy for the All-Ireland G.A.A. Athletic Championships meeting, and had hard luck to be beaten an inch for the three jumps title, the result:—J. J. Holloway, Bansha, 33 ft. 3 ins., 1; Con Kiely, 33 ft. 2 ins., 2. Other Limerick successes on that occasion included: 100 and 220 yards, won by J. Keays; long jump, D. M. O'Connell won; 28 lbs. M. W. O'Brien won with M. Heelan, second; high jump, Tim Leahy first, Mick Leahy and J. J. Holloway tied for second place. M. W. O'Brien was second in the 120 yds. hurdles and the 56 lbs., no follow.

At Aherlow sports on September 7th, 1913, Con Kiely returned his best figures for the three jumps—37 ft. 7 ins., to secure first place.

tion defeated Cork, at Clonmel, for the Munster title, and met Dublin, in October, for the All-Ireland final. The result was a draw of 5 points each, Dublin winning the replay, at Croke Park.

Con Kiely, skipper for many seasons, captained the Limerick team in that All-Ireland fight, other Ballylanders men on the fifteen being Mick Osborne (goal), Matty Walsh, Michael Davern, John Crowley, Pat O'Donnell, Tom Crawford, Dave Condon, Garrett Dalton and Dick Casey. Jack Meade played substitute for thirty-five minutes when Dan Breen (Commercials) had to retire injured.

#### DISTRICT SUFFERED FROM BRITISH AGGRESSION.

Like every district where the old spirit prevailed, many of the Ballylanders men suffered from British aggression. Several were interned in foreign jails and some paid the supreme penalty in defence of national independence. This was the first break in one of the best football teams that ever helped in the making of Limerick football history.

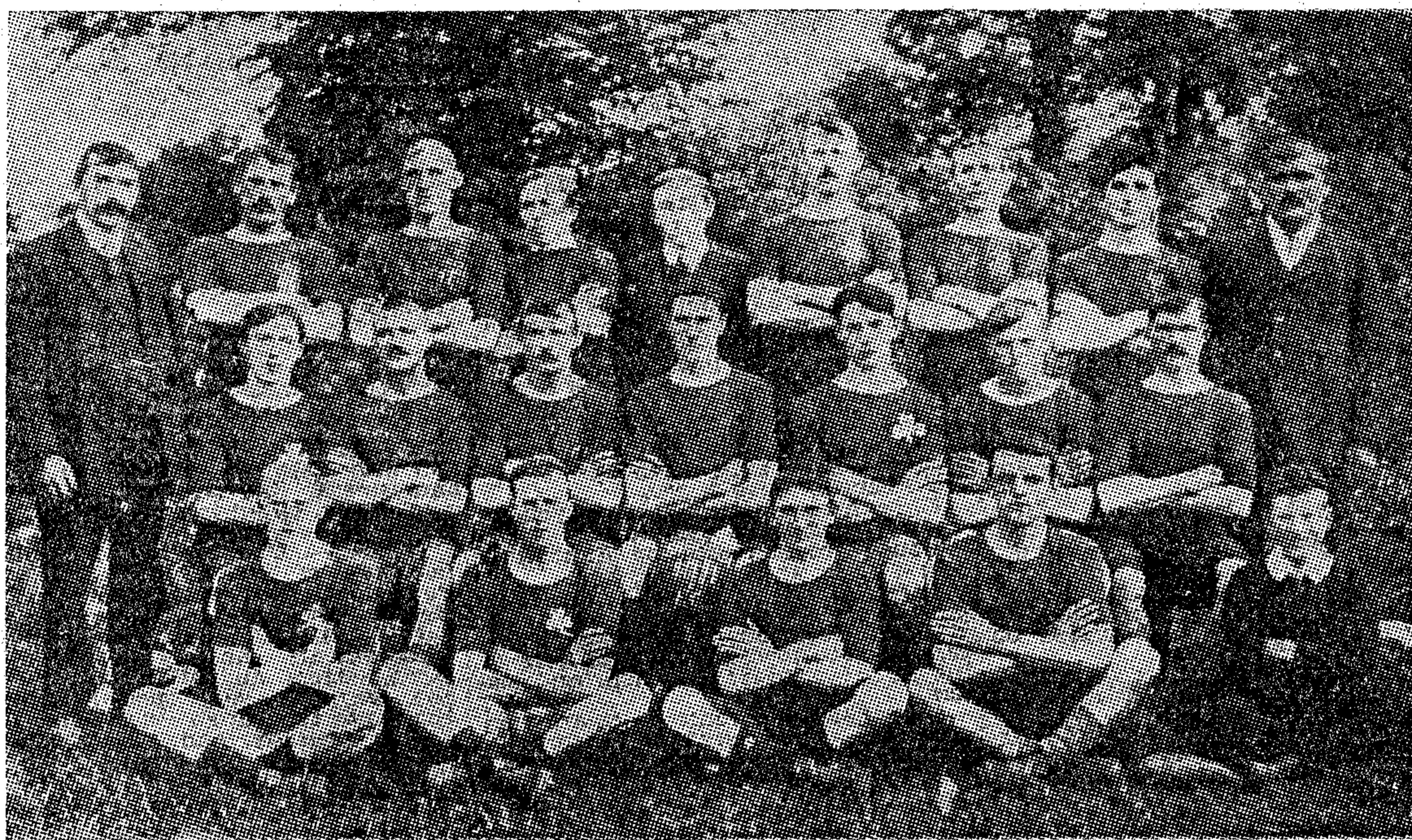
I cannot conclude without paying tribute to the great help I have received in the compilation of this article from my friend, Willie Crawford, to whom I am deeply grateful.

And now, as I prepare to leave Ballylanders, I tender to Con Kiely the best wishes of his many friends for further years in plenty to enjoy his memories of great days that are gone for ever.

Con has brought renown by his athletic pre-eminence to his native town and county, and, in the constancy of his devotion to the ideals and aspirations which the best of our race have ever cherished, he represents a factor in the realisation, or perpetuation, of our hopes that cannot under Providence, be denied success.

No. 59—Mick Madigan of Rathkeale.

## SHAMROCK FOOTBALL CLUB, BALLYLANDERS 1911



Back row—E. Noonan, P. Bourke, J. Doherty, W. Dalton, M. Osborne, E. Ryan, C. Hannan, R. Casey, J. Kiely. Middle row—J. A. Crowley, J. O'Sullivan, C. Kiely, P. J. O'Donnell (Captain), J. F. Crowley, M. Doherty, M. Connors. Front row—T. Murphy, D. B. Condon, Matt Hayes, M. Davern, Matt Walsh.

whose career I have already dealt in this series.

The standing jumps were the media through which he successfully essayed to express the traditional athleticism of the Celt. They were his forte, and in that choice we can discern the full compass of the athletic Gael. Jumping from a stationary position is the instant transformation of concentrated power into harmonious dynamic action.

The popularity of these events had unfortunately begun to decline, even in their great strongholds, before Con Kiely reached his peak. Year by year, the programmes on which one or more of them appeared became fewer and fewer, and they were being quickly eliminated from the championship schedule.

#### COMPETED WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

Opportunity did not come so often to Kiely as he could have wished, or as it might have done in earlier years. Wherever a chance of competition offered at all, it was mostly at rural meetings in adjoining districts, the accounts of which rarely reached the Press of those days.

He competed whenever possible. His heart was in these familiar tests of cultured vigour and it is a cause of grief to him now, and to many other old lovers of the traditional Irish events, that these ancient Gaelic contests, toe-to-toe, seem destined to fall into remorseless oblivion here.

Jim Fahey strove with success to establish and maintain them in the sports arenas of the Americas. His fellow Limerick exiles—Leahy and Ahearne—being allied with him in old associations and happy recollections, co-operated towards the same honourable end, and the American Athletic Union gave a place of esteem to our distinctive jumps that was denied them here. America thus secured additions to its world fame through the exploits of Irishmen who often had not the opportunity of proving their prowess at home.

These jumps, a distinctive feature of the days when athletics here were under G.A.A. control, were restored in the programme of the Tailteann Game, but little has been heard of them since. Will it not be a disgrace if we allow them to perish? Yet we seem inclined to do so, in pursuit of a fatuous idea of a stereotyped internationalism that would rob all nations of distinctive pastimes and

also many of our young athletes shed their young life blood to stain the bright heather of the Galtees in the cause of freedom. And from Anglesboro' came the renowned leader of the Fight for Independence, General Liam Lynch, and Willie Condon. Condon led the Galtee Fenian Brigade into Mitchelstown, where two of its members were shot dead in the Square by British policemen. Today, the Fenian Flag is held by Willie Condon's daughter, Mrs. Hannie Condon Cleary.

#### TEAM THAT REPRESENTED ALL-IRELAND.

A junior football team representing Limerick, in 1917, for All-Ireland honours, was captained by Con Kiely, and ten other Ballylanders men were members of that team. They drew with Dublin the first day but were beaten in the re-play. After this game most of the members laid aside their football boots and went training in defence of Mother Ireland, and to-day there sleeps in the scattered Republican Plots of Limerick County many of these bravest of the brave. Next June a memorial will be unveiled in Ballylanders to their memory and "Nalie" Kiely, with God's help, will be there to pay his tribute to those of his old comrades who gave their all for Ireland of their dreams.

Con Kiely is as active to-day as he was forty years ago, and only last year resigned the Treasurership of the football club. He is to be met at all the G.A.A. fixtures in his area, and his friendly manner and warm hand shake are well known.

"Nalie" began his athletic career in 1904 and continued for nigh twenty years. He competed in the flat events—100 yards, 220 and 300—besides his favourite three jumps, the running hop, step and jump and the standing hop. That great athlete, Beazley of Cork, remarked concerning Kiely that "if he had another two inches in height he would make a world champion three jumper."

The Ballylanders man says, that in his opinion, the best athletes of his time were Fahey and Galbally; J. K. Beazley of Cork and Dave Connell of Ardpatrick.

#### COLLECTED SOMETHING LIKE 70 PRIZES.

At large and small meetings "Nalie" collected something like seventy prizes, the principal venues at which he competed included Mallow, Fermoy, Dungarvan, Mitchelstown, Galbally, Kil-

#### AT ALL-IRISH G.A.A. CHAMPIONSHIPS.

He had another narrow defeat at the All-Ireland G.A.A. Athletic Championship meeting at Mallow on July 18th, 1914, the official return for the three jumps reading: J. K. Beazley, 34 ft. 2½ ins., first; Con Kiely, 33 ft. 11½ ins., second.

When Monny Fraher won the Munster Three Jumps title at Dungarvan on September 5th, 1915, he was following in the distinguished footsteps of his renowned father. His distance was 35 ft. 4 ins. and Con Kiely filled second place at 33 ft. 5½ ins.

"Nalie" never smoked, was a very moderate drinker and always believed in sound ordinary food during training. Like most honest men in this world, he is a toiler, a shoemaker by trade, and a decent subsistence is his aim in life. In his active days he used walk and run about five miles in the morning whilst in the evening he would meet at the Cross for the casting of weights or hop into an adjoining field and practice jumps.

Kiely says that Rev. Fr. Finn, P.P., was the fastest runner he ever met, a great sprinter who won All-Ireland titles in the 100 and 220 yards, in 1911 and 1915, and would have had much more to his credit only for the fact that he was absent from Ireland during his best years.

On the occasion that Kiely walked to Aherlow he suffered a scalded heel. He took off his boots and socks and ran barefooted to the meeting, carrying off most of the prizes that day.

His most exciting remembrance is of a sports meeting in Ballylanders where a Press reporter was struck in the hip by a hammer thrown by one of the competitors. The man was lucky to escape death but he carried a limp for the rest of his days.

#### NOT ENOUGH SPORTS MEETINGS.

Kiely feels that our schools and colleges are turning out very good athletes, but the zest seems to be gone from our country youth, the men who in former years put the Irish flag flying in the athletic arenas of the world. He holds that before the advent of motor cars or the plentiness of bicycles we enjoyed the golden age of athletics in this country, when our youth assembled at the cross roads of an evening and indulged in various athletic events. He holds, too, that there are not enough of sports meetings now to keep the