

GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

Edward O'Dwyer Of St. Michael's

MENTION of Edward O'Dwyer, "Ned," as he was popularly called by his colleagues and the old sports of the early G.A.A. days, recalls stirring events of that period by Shannonside, and also the big part played by St. Michael's Temperance Society in the Gaelic events of the long ago. The record of that famous club is a proud and outstanding one, well worthy of the many famous figures that graced the arena in their colours, and deserves full recognition.

We find mention of the St. Michael's Temperance Society as one of the very first clubs to be affiliated to the G.A.A. in Limerick.

OVER FIFTY HURLERS

At that time they boasted over 50 hurlers amongst the prominent of whom were Ned O'Dwyer; Dick Gleeson, a member of the Corporation, who was afterwards Treasurer of the Central Council; his brother, William Gleeson, later Chairman of the County Board and father of the popular Fedamore family, who made such Gaelic history in after years—Willie, All-Ireland hurler, Tailteann and Railway Cup winner; Stephen, prominent Limerick hurler of many years and who, partnered by J. J. Bowles, won for Limerick the first All-Ireland Senior Doubles Handball Championship in the annals of the G.A.A.; Michael Joyce, who later was member of Parliament; Thomas Prendergast, afterwards Sub-Sheriff; and Dan McNeice, who was to become Secretary of Limerick Harbour Board.

PLAYED IN FIRST HURLING MATCH UNDER G.A.A. RULES

St. Michael's played in the first hurling match under G.A.A. rules contested in Limerick and Ned O'Dwyer was one of the participants. Their opponents were Shamrocks, and the referee was Tom Prendergast. The first game took place at Rosbrien, then well outside the city. And a return match was later played at the Island Bank, and in which St. Michael's demonstrated their superiority.

Coincident with their hurling team, St. Michael's also had a grand football side, thus having the distinction of participating very fully in the manifold activities and pioneering spirit of those that launched Gaelic games in a city that was at the period a great rugby stronghold.

MEMORABLE DISPLAYS

When the first big G.A.A. Hurling Tournament was announced St. Michael's were the first to enter, and they gave some wonderful displays in this memorable competition, which was played to a great conclusion at Brown's Field, Ballyneety. St. Michael's, Creora, Shamrocks and South Liberties qualified for the semi-finals, which attracted much attention and provided some great hurling of the old type between powerful men.

The finalists were St. Michael's and South Liberties, and their meeting attracted the first great crowd to witness a hurling game under recognised rules, which were, however, very different from those of the present day. In the first place, the field of play was nearly twice as big as a hurling pitch nowadays is. The teams were twenty-one aside, with a much altered formation from that which we are at present familiar with.

HECTIC EXCHANGES

The midfield was particu-

arly crowded, and with mighty men usually operating hereabouts the exchanges were always of a hectic nature, with little room for anything in the nature of the spectacular. It was rarely what one might now term rough, however, for wrestling was permitted then, and if a pair of players got into handgrips, they just fought it out, without any interference by the others, who went on with the game.

An old timer describing these "side shows," named so for want of a better term, told me they were "fair fights" between well-built opponents and never degenerated into anything really ugly. Others did not interfere, and the pair fought it out in sporting fashion. As only one fall was permitted such tussles rarely continued over long. It was an ideal way of "letting off steam" and was an interesting feature of most matches. In fact, that old timer maintained that the sporting spirit degenerated with the abolition of wrestling, and he held to the day of his death that were present day players given a like scope there would be very few incidents on our playing fields. The fellow "looking for fight" but never really wanting it would quickly have his bluff called in the olden arena.

TERRIFIC TUSSE FOR SUPREMACY

That first hurling tournament final was a terrific tussle for supremacy, fought at a right hard pace on a field freshly mown that morning. The teams were in close scoring company all through an exciting hour and that the spectators appreciated the thrilling nature of the exchanges was very evident.

The hurling rules, as already mentioned, were very peculiar at the period, and many were the devices used to take the best advantage of them. In fact, it was these various methods that led to the gradual revision of the rules, and to the game as we know it now.

When, for instance the ball crossed any part of the "over" line, all the defending team had to get behind that line until the "puck-out" was struck, when the ball, if struck out in the ordinary way, was wholly at the mercy of the opposition. To combat the difficulty here, it was usual to select a player with a powerful drive to take the puck. The idea was to drive the ball as high as possible, that the defenders might be out by the time it reached the ground.

ANOTHER DEVICE

Dick Gleeson, who was St. Michael's goal-keeper in that important tournament decided adopted another device for dealing with the "puck-out," and it was this—he'd strike the ball a short distance, so that his own men would be on it before the opposition got in.

This succeeded for a while, until John Ryan, the full forward of the "Liberties," saw an opportunity of displaying his marvellous speed, and rushing in from the regulation distance, he almost swept the ball off the goal-keeper's hurley, banging in the only goal of the day, then equal to any number of points, to give the victory to South Liberties and the first silver cup of their great career.

The referee on the occasion was the far-famed athlete, Big Ned O'Grady of Ballybricken, and the outstanding players were — Jack

Malone, Kirby, Woods, Ryan ("of the stream"), Brien, Hayes, Rahilly (from the New Street), Johnny Leonard and Coll ("the runner"), all of South Liberties; Ned O'Dwyer, Dick and William Gleeson, Michael Joyce, M. Danaher, E. O'Reilly, M. Tuite and P. Stapleton, of St. Michael's.

A surprise success over the famed Limerick Commercials in the first county senior football final will be amongst the matters dealt with in the next article on the career of Ned O'Dwyer.

GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

Edward O'Dwyer Of St. Michael's

(CONTINUED)

ST. Michael's, as one of the leading Limerick clubs, sent delegates to the second All-Ireland Congress of the then infant G.A.A., being represented there by Michael Joyce and Dick Gleeson, both of whom took a prominent part in the discussions.

Ned O'Dwyer participated in the first inter-county match played by St. Michael's hurling team. This took place at Birdhill in March, 1896, and the opposition was provided by Nenagh, who came out victorious after a hard fought struggle.

THE TEAM.

The twenty-one that wore the St. Michael's jersey on the occasion were: J. Clancy, T. McDonald, E. Kearney, P. O'Sullivan, D. Gleeson, W. Gleeson, N. O'Dwyer, J. Collins, M. Danaher, J. O'Connor, M. Tuite, T. Fitzgibbon, M. Joyce (captain), T. Prendergast, J. Hennessy, P. Barrett, W. O'Connor, J. McCarthy, P. Stapleton, T. O'Donnell, J. Fitzgibbon.

This was one of the games which helped materially to advance interest in Limerick City in Gaelic pastimes, and it was not very long before teams were formed in most parts of the City and surrounding areas.

The Gleesons, Ned O'Dwyer, Mick Joyce and Tom Prendergast; with valuable assistance from Tom Guina, captain of the Shamrocks, were amongst the earliest hurling pioneers in the city, where through their work and influence a grand total of nineteen clubs flourished before the end of 1886.

THE CLUBS.

They were St. Michael's, Shamrocks, South Liberties, St. Mary's, Treaty Stone, Clan na Gael, St. John's, Wolfe Tone's, Carmen, League of the Cross, Henry Grattan's, Sarsfield's, O'Connell's, Smith O'Brien's, Glencore, Lord Edward's, Slashers, St. Patrick's, and Commercials. It is sad to find that only four survive of that pioneer band.

Ned O'Dwyer was present at the general meeting of affiliated G.A.A. clubs, which decided on the establishment of All-Ireland Championship competition in hurling and football.

The arrangement envisaged on that occasion was that clubs should play off within their own counties for the right to compete in the "All-Ireland," the respective county winners then to meet to decide the race for national honours.

COUNTY BOARDS DECIDED UPON.

County Boards were decided upon, for the purpose of organising the County series, and the arrangement for the first national championship was that the various

county winners — the individual club only, not a county selection — should play off on an All-Ireland basis, there being no provincial division of counties for the first championship.

This Convention made a very sensible arrangement to deal with roughness on the playing field, or other unseemly conduct by a player.

It empowered the referee to order the offender to stand aside during the whole or part of the balance of the game.

This, to my mind, was a much better plan than the rule now in force for many years, which gives automatic suspension for minimum periods of one, two or six months, according to the gravity of the offence, for misconduct on the playing field.

A GREATER DETERRENT.

The old arrangement was, I maintain, a much fairer system — and in actual practice a greater deterrent to unsporting tactics. The penalty being only for the particular match referees had not to worry about the consequences for player, club or county, outside the game in progress.

The loss of his services was a distinct penalty on a team, and one readily invoked in the early days, when the efforts to enforce discipline had often to be drastic to be successful.

Clubs found it unprofitable to give any encouragement to the player who was frequently in "hot water," and some of the worst of these found themselves permanently consigned to the side-line rather than risk having to play most of a game minus their services.

The penalty now is so severe, particularly in the height of a season or for a player engaged in big fare, that referees sometimes let a game deteriorate almost to a brawl before taking the action that would be so much easier under the old law.

WHERE PRESENT RULES ARE UNJUST.

The present rules are unjust in that their application inflicts a much greater hardship on one player more than another. For instance, an individual figuring on a defeated team in what might be their last game of the season, even if played in July or August, would suffer very little, if at all, if ordered off during the course of this match.

On the other hand, a player of a winning team sent to the side-line at this period, might lose the opportunity of winning county and, maybe, other local honours, and, if of inter-county standard, could conceivably forfeit the

chance of a provincial or All-Ireland medal.

St. Michael's entered teams for the first Limerick County Championships in both hurling and football — that for the year 1887.

Both competitions were played off with great alacrity; much enthusiasm was evoked and big interest aroused.

THE FINALS.

The finals in both codes were decided at the Grocers' Field on Sunday, July 17th, 1887, and were witnessed by the largest throng of people that had yet marked the popular interest in the Gaelic pastimes.

St. Michael's contested the football final, their opponents being Commercials. The teams had met before, in the infant days of the organisation in the city, when Commercials scored a decided success.

The Commercials, led by Dan Ryan, Maurice Fitzgibbon, a grand oarsman with the Shannon Rowing Club, a footballer and athlete of renown; John McNamara, Tom O'Connor, Pat N. Treacy, P. J. Corbett and P. Gleeson, were the big team in Munster football at the period, having preserved throughout an unbroken record in different matches with crack teams and others.

SOMEHING OF A SENSATION.

It was consequently something of the sensational when St. Michael's triumphed over their far-famed rivals by five points and one forfeit point to one forfeit point. Ned O'Dwyer, M. Tuite, P. Stapleton, T. Prendergast and M. Danaher gave an unforgettable display that great day for St. Michael's.

The Temperance lads were, however denied the fruits of a grand success — a story that will form part of the next article in this series.

Edward O'Dwyer Of St. Michael's

(CONTINUED)

ST. Michael's Club was represented at a special general meeting of the G.A.A., held at Thurles on September 27th, 1886, which revived the rules of the Association.

It was on the suggestion of Maurice Davin, President of the G.A.A., and one of a family of world famed athletes, that a rule was added that "persons playing under rugby or any other non-Gaelic rules cannot be admitted as members of any branch of the G.A.A."

The rule was opposed by Michael Joyce, one of the St. Michael's delegates, who maintained that athletes competing under G.A.A. rules were allowed to play other games, such as cricket, under English rules.

The President said the Association made no rules for cricket, and as regards the games they catered for, they were determined, in accordance with the spirit which had prompted the starting of the Association, that the games should be played under old Irish rules.

There was no further discussion, and the rule was adopted.

INTERESTING FOOTNOTE.

An interesting footnote to this decision is provided by a meeting of the Executive of the G.A.A., held at Cruise's Hotel, Limerick, on April 11th, 1887, at which letters were read from the Rosanna and Tipperary Commercial Clubs asking permission for members to continue playing rugby for a few weeks longer until the Munster Cup Final had been disposed of. The permission was given.

The Limerick County Finals, as we have already noted, took place on July 17th, 1887, and a surprise result was the success of St. Michael's over Limerick Commercial in the football decider.

The matter did not end there, however. Commercial promptly lodged an objection on the grounds that five members of the victorious St. Michael's "Twenty-one" were rugby players.

ST. MICHAEL'S CONTENTION.

St. Michael's admitted the position, but held they were entitled to play the men in question as they were recognised members of their club before the exclusion rule was passed, and, in any case, they were entitled to finish out the rugby

season, as had happened with the Tipperary clubs, who had raised the matter with the Executive and secured permission. St. Michael's further submitted that there was no evidence the players in question would go back to rugby when the next season opened. They merely finished out old competitions and did it in good faith.

The County Board did not accept this viewpoint, and decided that the final should be re-played, St. Michael's not to include the players objected to on their selection.

PLAYED ON WEEK EVENING.

This game had to be played on a week evening as the Central Council were pressing for a conclusion of the County Championships, in order to get the All-Ireland ties going, and Commercial won fairly comfortably from a badly depleted St. Michael's side.

The best criterion of the worth of the St. Michael's team of the period can be gathered from the subsequent progress of the Commercial—who won the All-Ireland crown, defeating Kilmacow (Kilkenny) on a re-play; Dowdstown (Meath); Templemore (Tipperary) at a second attempt; and Dundalk young Irelands (Louth).

The claim that St. Michael's could have won the All-Ireland crown every bit as readily as Commercial did is easily conceded, when one takes into consideration all the factors associated with that remarkable first county championship.

Football in Limerick was in an amazingly strong position at the period, for no other team in Ireland could do what St. Michael's did—score a win, and a good one at that, over the great Commercial.

OTHER GREAT CITY FOOTBALL SIDES.

Other renowned football sides in the city at the time were St. Patrick's and St. John's, and between this quartette some wonderful football was witnessed, reaching a standard and producing a rivalry that had not an equal elsewhere.

It was without doubt the quality of the home opposition that fitted Commercial so well for the role of giant killers in the wider All-Ire-

land arena, but, on the other hand, the experience gained by the Commercial in the six great games they had to play before capturing that coveted first All-Ireland crown was of immense benefit in moulding the team to a unit that made such a mark in the Limerick title race of after years, notching a run of successes that have never been surpassed by Shannonside, where Commercial are still proud leaders in the Honours Roll.

"STORMY" CONVENTION.

In the interval between the re-played county final, and the commencement of the inter-county series of 1887, there occurred one of the most historic events in the whole history of the G.A.A.

I refer to what has gone down in the annals of the Association as the "stormy" convention. This great gathering assembled at the Courthouse Thurles, on November 9th, 1887, and with eight hundred clubs each represented by two delegates it was easily the largest assemblage of club representatives in the 75 years of the G.A.A.

Ned O'Dwyer and Michael Joyce were present on behalf of the St. Michael's Club, but do not appear to have taken any part in the discussions.

The main reason for the big attendance was the divergence of opinion that had arisen in the clubs and between the members on what was a purely political issue—the struggle between the physical force adherents and the constitutionalists. The division spread into the Association because of a feeling that one or the other party was attempting to gain control of the G.A.A., which in a very short time had grown to an organisation of much power and influence.

WORDY WARFARE.

From the very commencement that thronged All-Ireland gathering was a lively affair, and the 75 minutes it took to select a chairman to preside over the proceedings were punctuated with charge and counter charge as the wordy warfare grew in intensity.

A proposal to put P. N. Fitzgerald, of Cork, in the chair was interpreted as an attempt to put the Physical Force Party in the ascendant, and it was bitterly opposed by a number of priests who were present, very prominent amongst whom were two from Limerick—Very Rev. Eugene Sheehy, P.P., Bruree; and Rev. Fr. O'Mahony, C.C., Killeedy.

Rev. Father Scanlan, Nenagh, was the main spokesman for the Constitutionalists, and he proposed for the chair Major Kelly of Moycarkey—a proposition that met with considerable opposition on the grounds that the person proposed had been expelled from the Association by the Executive a short time previously.

BREAK AWAY AND RIVAL MEETING.

The discussions grew very heated as the evening progressed and little or no hope of agreement, and a serious situation was only averted when Father Scanlan eventually called on his supporters to leave the meeting.

Most of the clergy and about two hundred delegates answered this call, and held a rival meeting elsewhere. Ned O'Dwyer and Michael Joyce were amongst this number, and by their action allied the St. Michael's Club with the break away group.

The "split" quickly spread to County Limerick, where it continued long after the Special Congress caused through the action of Most Rev. Dr. Croke, and at which the national divisions were healed.

St. Michael's part in the unique County Finals played with the object of uniting the warring elements in Limerick, will be amongst the matters dealt with in the next article in this series.

THE events of November 9th, 1887, at Thurles—the "Stormy" Convention and the breakaway meeting, at which St. Michael's were present; coupled with a big bundle of letters to the newspapers denouncing the Convention and the happenings thereat, made a split in the G.A.A. appear inevitable.

This was avoided, however, through the almost immediate intervention of Most Rev. Dr. Croke, who held a conference at Thurles on November 22nd with Michael Davitt and Maurice Davin with the object of taking steps to reconstruct the Association.

The Conference set up a small Committee to draft proposals for a re-union of forces and when this met on December 5th at Limerick Junction it ordered the holding of a new Convention at Thurles on January 4th. It got over the vexed question of representation by altering the then system of a delegate for each affiliated club to one for every ten clubs, the arrangement which still holds for All-Ireland Congress.

It also directed the holding of County Conventions in each County for the purpose of selecting delegates to attend the Reconstruction Convention.

LIMERICK CONVENTION.

When the Limerick Convention met on December 30th, thirty-one clubs sent delegates. This was a rather heated meeting, and when the delegates voted by 71 to 59 in favour of the outgoing Chairman, Paddy O'Brien ("Twenty"), who was opposed by Bob Coll, a number of those present, led by Very Rev. Eugene Sheehy, P.P., left the meeting and held a second Convention, at which they selected delegates for the Thurles Convention. The St.

Michael's representatives, including Ned O'Dwyer, supported Father Sheehy, and thereafter were associated with the breakaway Board, which he led.

When the Reconstruction Convention met it had first to deal with the dispute that had arisen in Limerick. After debating the matter for a considerable time the delegates met the situation by allowing all nine Limerick representatives participate in the proceedings, as the County had just over ninety clubs at the time. Father Sheehy was appointed to represent Limerick on the Central Council.

PEACE BUT NOT IN LIMERICK.

The split in the general body of the Association was brought to an end that evening, but the Limerick breach was not healed.

The Shannonside division was brought to national notice for the second time when two teams—Castleconnell and Murroe—travelled to represent the County in the opening round of the All-Ireland Hurling Championship. Representing the warring Boards neither would yield, and the result was that no game was played.

The Central Council discussed the position in Limerick at a meeting in Dublin on April 29th, at which it was stated that each County Board had organised and brought to a conclusion County Championships in both hurling and football.

The Council decided to arrange for the winners under each Board to play off for the County Finals, and to summon a Convention of Gaels with a view to bringing the division to a close.

These games took place at Croom on May 15th and attracted a crowd that old timers maintain was the largest ever to witness club games by Shannonside.

TWO DISTINCT CAMPS.

Rivalry between the clubs of the opposing Boards was very marked, and the crowd was divided into two distinct camps, with enthusiasm and excitement at fever pitch.

On a beautiful pitch and in splendid weather conditions, great order was maintained, mainly through the good offices of a few prominent priests, who patrolled the pitch and marshalled the spectators in lines well organised so that all saw without interruption.

The hurling game, which opened the proceedings, was a thrill a minute affair which roused the crowd to a high pitch and had everyone in a frenzy in the almost overpowering closing stages with the only score a solitary point—the

margin that gave victory to South Liberties, and defeat to a very game Murroe side.

"Liberties" were affiliated to the O'Brien Board and their success was hailed as a triumph by all members old the "old" Board, as this was generally called.

THE FOOTBALL MATCH.

The football contestants were the same as for the previous year—Commercials and St. Michael's. It will be remembered that St. Michael's had won the first game of that occasion in rather sensational fashion, but Commercials objected because of the presence of rugby players on the "Saints" team, and won the re-play, going on to win the first All-Ireland Senior Football crown.

This circumstance invested the game with very great interest and the crowd, intoxicated by the stirring hurling hour, set themselves in anticipation of a pulsating struggle.

Ned O'Dwyer got a tremendous ovation as he led the challengers on to the pitch, but Commercials also got a great reception on this their first appearance before a home crowd, three weeks after their grand All-Ireland win.

The first half hour produced a thrill-packed spell of vigorous but fast and open football, and the issue was still very much in doubt at the interval, with the champions fighting desperately to maintain the pre-eminence they so recently demonstrated in the All-Ireland arena.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE TOLD.

The second half was not long in progress, however, before it was evident that St. Michael's had shot their bolt. The superior training of Commercials and the experience gained in the many matches for the All-Ireland crown came to the aid of the champions at a crucial period of the play, and they ran out rather easy winners, 2-8 to 0-1.

The fall of "Saints" meant a double defeat for the "new" Board, and it was earnestly hoped that all would now rally around the originally constituted Board and end the disunion which existed.

The Central Council called a Co. Convention for June 11th, which was attended by the great majority of the clubs. Mr. R. J. Frewen, Treasurer of the Central Council, presided. On a vote for the position of Chairman, Paddy O'Brien again got the post, defeating Rev. Father Dunworth by 123 votes to 86. Very Rev. E. Sheehy, P.P., and their supporters left the Convention when the result was announced, and Rev. Father O'Mahony of Killeedy subsequently lodged a protest with the Central Council, who, however, decided to take no action.

THE ANNUAL CONGRESS.

The two Limerick Boards were represented at the annual Congress of the Association at Thurles on January 23rd, 1889, but Very Rev. E. Sheehy, P.P., and about thirty delegates left early in the proceedings and held a rival meeting, at which a motion was carried calling for the abolition of the Central Council, owing to the expense of maintaining same—the work of the G.A.A. to be carried on, in accordance with the existing rules, by the various County Boards. At the Congress proper, Mr. Anthony Mackey of Castleconnell was elected Treasurer of the Central Council, and Mr. P. B. Cleary of Caherconlish became Secretary. Mr. P. D. Grogan replaced Father Sheehy as Limerick representative on the Council.

St. Michael's did not compete in the 1889 County Championships and the dissolution of the club followed in a short time.

The participation of some of the St. Michael's members with other clubs, and their return to the arena to win the County Senior Hurling title a few years later, will be dealt with in the concluding article on the career of Ned O'Dwyer in next issue.

GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

Edward O'Dwyer Of St. Michael's

(CONCLUDED)

ONLY a few clubs entered for the 1890 Limerick County Championships, and they were mainly county ones. The dissensions at successive conventions and the political troubles of the time seriously affected the G.A.A., and the majority of the great clubs of the early days—the first flush of the Gaelic revival—dissolved, some never to return.

St. Michael's went out of existence in this big fall away, and did not respond to the call which went from the County Convention held on November 12th of that year, asking all seceding clubs return to the ranks and end the disunion which existed.

Another effort—on a national scale this time—was made to re-organise the Association, and a special congress held in Dublin on July 22nd, 1891, discussed ways and means of overcoming the difficulties the political upheaval had caused. Only two Limerick clubs responded to the invitation to attend this meeting. They were Hospital and the Rangers (Castlemahon).

FURTHER DECREASE IN NUMBER OF LIMERICK CLUBS.

There was a further decrease in the number of Limerick clubs this season, and most of those that remained were only able to carry on with the aid of some members of the disbanded clubs. This was best illustrated at the county finals played at Loughmore, in which Treaty hurlers beat South Liberties and St. Patrick's footballers were successful over Commercials.

Treaty were assisted by seven members of the disbanded St. Michael's Club, and Jack Connors, a former Liberties goalkeeper, also lined out with them. South Liberties were aided by several members of the former Mungret Club. A couple of the Treaty players who had just won the hurling championship, turned out and won the football championship, with St. Patrick's immediately afterwards.

REMARKABLE SEQUEL.

This hurling championship had a remarkable sequel, and might be written down as chapter one in the Limerick story of lost All-Irelands. The Treaty lads were drawn against Kerry in the opening round of the All-Ireland Championship, and met Ballyduff, winning by a point after a terrific contest.

It was something of a sensation when Ballyduff objected on the grounds that time was up when the winning point was scored, and to the surprise of all, the objection was upheld and a replay ordered, which Ballyduff won by a narrow margin.

What Limerick lost by this decision can be judged from the fact that the Kerry men afterwards became champions of Munster, and later of Ireland—the only hurling title ever secured by the "Kingdom" Gaels.

ONLY A FEW CLUBS**AFFILIATED.**

Only a few clubs affiliated to the County Board in 1892 and no county championships were played. Limerick did not compete in the inter-county championships and the county lost its representation on the Central Council, through not having sufficient clubs.

The Limerick County Board lapsed shortly afterwards, and the Central Council issued the invitations to clubs re entry for the 1893 championships. The football response was very poor and no competition was played. St. Michael's returned to the fold and participated in the senior hurling championship, the final of which they reached, only to be defeated by a South Limerick selection, having its headquarters in Bruree, 8-1 to 0-1. This game was played in Croom on October 29th, 1893, Mr. Denis ("Spenser") Lyons refereeing.

CENTRAL COUNCIL IN CHARGE.

The Croom Band attended and rendered a choice selection of national airs. The Central Council was in charge of the fixture, which was under the direct control of its Vice-President—Frank B. Dinneen, of Ballylanders. Very Rev. E. Sheehy, P.P., Bruree, and Rev. Father Carroll, C.C., Croom, helped in maintaining order.

St. Michael's re-established their grounds at Corkanree this season and one of the first games played there was a match between the Commercials of Tipperary and Limerick, which the former won 2-3 to 0-1.

COUNTY BOARD RE-FORMED.

The County Board was re-formed at a meeting held on November 11th, 1894, and R. A. Gleeson, of St. Michael's, became a member of the governing body. The Murphy Cups were presented subsequently, and for many years provided very interesting competition. A set of medals was also offered for a juvenile hurling championship. At the annual Congress of the Association held a short time later, R. A. Gleeson was appointed as Limerick representative on the Central Council.

St. Michael's beat Smith O'Briens in the opening round of the 1895 senior hurling championship, which was played at their own grounds at Corkanree.

Their next tie in the competition was again at Corkanree, where they beat Nationals by a substantial margin.

BECAME POPULAR GAELIC VENUE.

That the St. Michael's field was now the popular Gaelic venue in the city was demonstrated by the fact that every team they came up against agreed to play at Corkanree. In the semi-final, South Liberties travelled there, but this match was unfinished. The Temperance lads were leading their old rivals when the Liberties left the field following a goal scored by St. Michael's, which the Liberty lads disputed. The County Board awarded the game to "Saints."

In the second semi-final, Boher Nationals created a big surprise by defeating the fancied Kilmnane Emmets (who won the All-Ireland crown two years later), 2-7 to 1-3.

The county senior hurling final was played at Corkanree on August 18th before a great crowd of spectators, but the game proved a disappointing one of poor hurling, spoiled by frequent squabbles. St. Michael's won 2-3 to 0-1.

ST. MICHAEL'S TEAM.

The St. Michael's team on the occasion was: P. Stapleton (cap-

tain), J. Ryan, T. Hogan, W. O'Connor, R. A. Gleeson, J. O'Sullivan, T. McMahon, P. Kelly, J. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, J. Heath, E. O'Dwyer, D. McKnight, M. McKnight, J. O'Driscoll, D. McNeice, T. Real.

The St. Michael's lads afterwards fought their way to the Munster Final, played at Kilmallock on February 23rd, 1896, and in which they were defeated by Tubberadora (Tipperary), who afterwards won the All-Ireland crown.

With successes over Ballyagran, 1-7 to 0-2, at Croom; and Mungret, 2-9 to 2-4, at Kilmurry, St. Michael's reached the final of the Murphy Hurling Cup, played at Caherline on July 12th, 1896, and in which they were defeated by Kilmallock, 6-7 to nil.

SWAN SONG OF THE CLUB.

This was the swan song of the St. Michael's Club, but Edward O'Dwyer had one further hour of glory when he figured with Munster hurlers in the first interprovincial game ever played, and which took place at Stamford Bridge, London, on Easter Monday—a memorable occasion in the history of the G.A.A. He had as team mate on the occasion his fellow clubman, R. A. Gleeson, who was goalkeeper on that fine Munster team which beat Leinster 5-7 to 2-8.

On this note I leave one of our great hurlers and one of our great teams of the early Gaelic days.