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No. 187—JOHN RYAN ("JIM") of Boher

WE find first mention of the Boher Hurling Club as being represented at a general meeting of the still infant Gaelic Athletic Association, which was held at Thurles on September 27th, 1886.

Boher was one of a number of Limerick clubs attending this meeting. The others will be read with interest as indicating the districts closely associated with the G.A.A. almost since its inception:—South Liberties, Treaty Stone, Shamrocks, Murroe, Castleconnell, Gaelic Bicycle Club, St. John's Temperance Hurling Club, St. Mary's National Hurling Club, St. Patrick's, St. Michael's Temperance Hurling and Football Club, Ballylanders, Sarsfields, Commercials, Clán na Gael, Ahane, Garryowen, League of the Cross, John Mitchells.

This was a most important gathering, at which new rules for the government of the Association were sanctioned.

The establishment of County Boards was decided upon, and it was agreed that All-Ireland Championships in both hurling and football should be inaugurated.

NATIONAL OUTLOOK.

The national outlook of the Association was apparent in a motion passed which stated:—"That the Gaelic Athletic Association shall not be used in any way to oppose any national movement which has the confidence and support of the leaders of the Irish people."

One of the rules agreed upon ordained that "all dress material and other articles required in the games to be, as far as possible, of Irish manufacture."

The President, Mr. Maurice Davin, said it was proposed to add a rule that persons playing under rugby or any other non-Gaelic rules could not be admitted as members of any branch of the G.A.A.

Mr. Michael Joyce (afterwards M.P.) representing St. Michael's Temperance Club, Limerick, took exception to the proposed rule, inasmuch as athletes were allowed to play other games, such as cricket, under English rules.

RULE ADOPTED.

The President said that the Association made no rule 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 game should be played under old Irish rules.

The rule was then adopted. A rule was also adopted that only hurling, football, handball and athletic clubs could be affiliated with the Association.

Mr. Pat Hassett of Ahane was elected Treasurer of the Association, and Mr. F. B. Dinneen of Ballylanders was appointed official handicapper.

Boher were represented at this memorable meeting by their cap-

tain—John Ryan ("Jim") of Killonan and Michael O'Neill.

Amongst those who took a prominent part in the discussions were Anthony Mackey of Castleconnell; Edward Cahill of Killeely, and John Hurley of Ballysimon.

FIRST COUNTY BOARD.

The Boher Club was strongly represented at the Town Hall, Limerick, on Saturday, 15th January, 1887, at which the first County Board was appointed. Paddy O'Brien ("Twenty") of the Clán na Gael Club was the choice for the chair and Michael Looney of Caherconlish became Secretary.

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

Boher boast the unenviable distinction of being one of the oldest clubs in the G.A.A., and are after seventy years still without a county championship title in any grade to their credit.

One of the first teams to enter for the County Senior Hurling Championship in 1887, following the formation of the County Board, they were drawn against South Liberties in the semi-final of the competition.

It proved a hectic game and ended abruptly when a dispute arose regarding a score.

The County Board ordered a replay, which, in order to expedite the quick completion of the championship, was fixed for a week-day. Boher objected to this arrangement but to no avail. They, however, put in no appearance on the appointed day and the referee awarded the match to "Liberties."

FIRST SENIOR COUNTY FINALS.

The first senior hurling and senior football finals of Limerick county were played together at the Grocers' Field on Sunday, 17th July, 1887.

The hurling decider proved a dour struggle, in which disputes were frequent, and lasted from 2.45 until 5.30 p.m. At half-time, the score stood: South Liberties, 0-3; Murroe, nil.

Murroe forged ahead in the closing moiety, and scored a goal, which was disputed. The referee, Paddy O'Brien, Chairman of the County Board, reserved his decision until later in the evening, when he awarded the goal and the match to Murroe, on the score of one goal two points and one forfeit point to three points and one forfeit point for South Liberties.

South Liberties appealed to the County Board but were unsuccessful. The Board, however, decided to re-open the Boher question, and they awarded that team the match given the "Liberties" before the latter met Murroe. The decision brought Murroe and Boher together in a second county final, played on this occasion at Ballysimon.

"TERRIFIC STRUGGLE."

It proved a terrific struggle,

fought at a furious pace. No score was conceded by either defence in a thrilling first half-hour of dour, determined hurling.

Excitement was unbounded when eight minutes from the re-start Boher secured a great goal. They looked all set for victory as further hot offensives were launched, but in a sharp Murroe assault Jim O'Brien (Kishikirk), one of the best back men in Ireland at the time ("He could stop a marble," his admirers claimed) went down before a hot charge by Murroe's star attacker, Dan Godfrey, and was unfortunate to suffer a broken nose.

The loss of this great player discouraged the team with the result that Murroe forged through for the scores which gave them the first county title.

THE BOHER TEAM.

The Boher team of that occasion will be read with interest:—John Ryan ("Jim"), captain (Killonan), Richard Power, goalkeeper (Caherconlish), Thomas Goonan, Joseph Goonan (Caherconlish), James O'Brien (Kishikirk), Wm. O'Connor, Michael McDonnell ("the best scoring forward in the country in his day"), Wm. Ryan ("Jer."), Wm. Meade (better known as "The Merchant"), all of Killonan; the brothers, Denis Hayes (Boher) and Patrick Hayes (Brittas), Kennedy O'Brien (Ballyart), James O'Brien (The Huts), who later went to live at Barrowstown, Tipperary; Thomas Lloyd, Patrick Lloyd (Grange), Paddy O'Brien (Bohermore), James Ryan ("Vil."), Tinneteriffe, Edmund O'Brien (Kishikirk), John Mulcahy (Knockeen), Patrick Harty (Highpark), Timothy O'Donnell (Killonan).

FADED OUT FOR A PERIOD.

Following their 1887 reverse Boher faded from the picture for a period, and it was not until 1895 we again find John Ryan leading a team to victory in the senior hurling championship, when they beat Castleconnell 6-6 to 5-2 at Corkanree.

A fortnight later, at Ballysimon, the Boher lads won from Smith O'Brien's 2-2 to 1-1, and on the 7th July, Boher Nationals qualified for their second county final by defeating Kilfinane Emmets, 2-7 to 1-3.

The decider was played at Corkanree on the 18th of August and proved a disappointing game, spoiled by frequent squabbles. St. Michael's beat Boher Nationals 2-3 to 0-1.

Boher was again much to the fore in the early stages of the 1896 championship, and had victories over Granagh and Mungret to their credit. An objection, however, by the latter Club, put them out of the running, and proved the last occasion John Ryan donned the old familiar colours, in which he gave such service to one of the most prominent and earnest teams of early G.A.A. days.